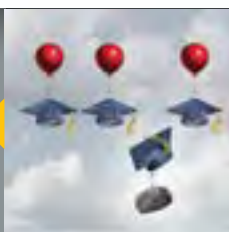


**HELPING
OMANI STUDENTS
MAKE INFORMED
HIGHER EDUCATION CHOICES**

YOUR **DECISION,** YOUR **FUTURE**

MAGAZINE SUMMER 2020

**THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING
INFORMED CHOICES**



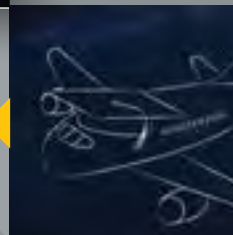
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OF COURSES**



**HOW TO WISELY
APPLY FOR
SCHOLARSHIPS**



**STUDY:
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ABROAD**



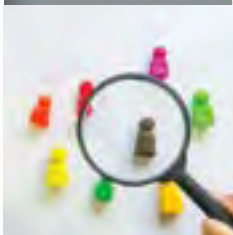
**CHOOSING
A SUITABLE
COURSE**



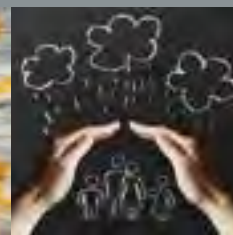
**FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS ANSWERED BY
THE EXPERTS**



**WHAT CAN
YOU DO WITH
A DEGREE**



**STAYING
SAFE
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SPECIAL FEATURES

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT: LISTS OF APPROVED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP & COUNTRIES



Your Decision, Your Future (YDYF) Magazine is a supplement to the Alam al-Iktisaad Wal A'Amal (AIWA) publication and published under the auspices of the YDYF National Awareness Campaign.

Colophon and Acknowledgments

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Late Avi Titus Das

Avi, who was an integral part of the YDYF magazine project since its first edition, lost his life after a long battle with cancer this year. An excellent colleague, and an even better human being, Avi will be missed by all those who worked and interacted with him.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD

We welcome your comments on this issue and would be happy to receive relevant articles for our next edition. Most of the contributors are Omani and this is a trend that we would like to encourage. Please contact us by email at ydyf@mohe.gov.om

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CYPRUS/ قبرص
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WHY LEARNING FRENCH IS GOOD (ARABIC & ENGLISH)
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INTRODUCTION, WORDS OF WISDOM & *ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND GRANTS*

“Youth are the wealth of a nation, its inexhaustible resource and the arms that build it. They are its present and future. We will always listen to them, and sense their needs, interests and aspirations which will definitely be accorded the attention that they deserve. On top of our national priorities is the education sector, with all its types and levels. It will receive full attention, and it will be provided with the supporting environment which motivates research and innovation. We will also provide it with all means of empowerment, since it is the base upon which our children will be able to participate in meeting the requirements of the coming phase of development.”

Excerpts from: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's Royal Speech on February 23, 2020



Throughout the Sultanate today education is flourishing. The Government of the Sultanate of Oman – guided by the Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Bin Said's vision and under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq – continues to lay emphasis on education as one of its pillars of modernisation that will also contribute effectively to nation's indigenous workforce. It is hard to imagine that just fifty years ago, when the Late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, may he rest in eternal peace, acceded to the throne, there were only three schools in the country and no colleges or universities.

As a student, your biggest challenge will be to find reliable resources to help you make well-informed and nuanced decisions about your higher education and future.

As part of our efforts to offer you a trustworthy medium, we begin with introducing ourselves and the Your Decision, Your Future (YDYF) National Awareness Campaign that has been supporting this project and providing you with an insight of who we are and what we aim to achieve.



In times of decision-making, it also helps to listen to words of wisdom from respected guardians of the society and we are privileged that we have been able to bring forth valuable insights from Her Excellency, the Minister of Higher Education, His Excellency the Undersecretary of Higher Education, and the Chairman of the YDYF Campaign Committee.

This section also includes thorough and detailed answers from experienced Ministry of Higher Education experts to queries about seats, grants, and scholarships, apart from tips on how to use pragmatic approaches when applying for scholarships, such as adhering to timelines and the right way to make an application, among other things.

DISCLAIMER: * Views, thoughts, and opinions expressed in this section are deemed to be accurate at the time of digital uploading of the magazine and the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and its YDYF National Awareness campaign and projects CANNOT be held liable. Given the circumstances, we would suggest that you keep yourself updated by accessing official and relevant websites.

INTRODUCTION, WORDS OF WISDOM FROM TOP OFFICIALS & ABOUT SEATS, GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

- ABOUT THE YDYF NATIONAL AWARENESS MULTIMEDIA CAMPAIGN
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- HOW TO WISELY APPLY FOR UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS
- SAVE THE DATES: SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE
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- DISPELLING MYTHS BEHIND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST REQUIREMENTS



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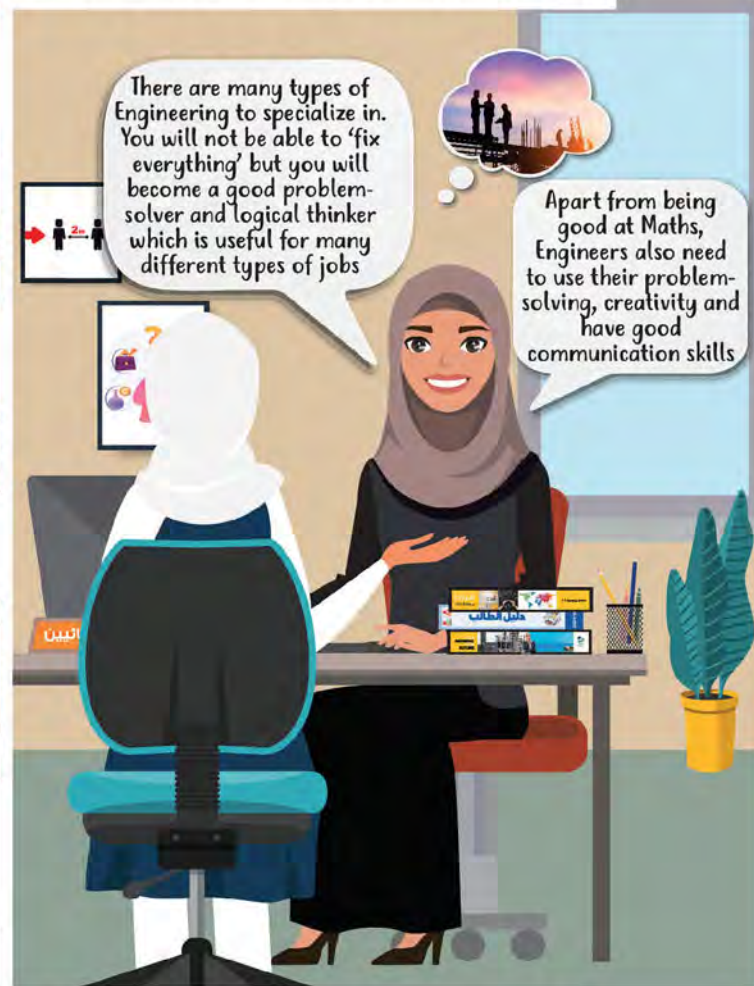
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DISCLAIMER: All information given in this section is based on facts available at the time of going to print. PLEASE NOTE that this information is SUBJECT TO CHANGES and will be updated accordingly. ENSURE THAT YOU CHECK THE MoHE, MoE and HEAC WEBSITES FOR ALL AND ANY UPDATES.

WHAT I USED TO THINK ABOUT ENGINEERS:



WHAT I KNOW NOW ABOUT ENGINEERS:



WHAT I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO STUDY LAW:



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ABOUT THE



THE YOUR DECISION, YOUR FUTURE NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The YDYF National Awareness Campaign is managed by a committee consisting of staff members from the Oman Ministry of Higher Education and Ministry of Education. The campaign is specifically designed to steer grade 10 (or year 11) and grade 12 (or year 13) students towards well-informed education choices, based on realistic expectations, especially on school subjects and areas of study that are best suited to their interests, capabilities, and career aspirations. This aim is achieved through projects that fall directly under the campaign, including targeted school visits, meetings with career counsellors, tailored presentations, and the wider reach of the social media. The campaign also supports externally sponsored, not-for-profit initiatives such as the YDYF magazine, which was founded in 2015 for Omani students, and a future website application due in the Summer 2020. The campaign also provides support for higher education events, including webinars.

WHO'S WHO

THE YDYF NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN is managed by a panel of Staff Members, who represent the following entities:

- **DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF SCHOLARSHIPS (MoHE):** Internal and external undergraduate scholarships and postgraduate studies are managed by this DG and they put together the annual plan as reflected in the annual HEAC student guide. They also follow-up on existing scholarship students, in cooperation with the overseas representatives and are experts when it comes to availability of courses and the eligibility criteria.
- **HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS CENTER – HEAC (MoHE):** They manage the electronic system to which you apply for scholarships, seats and grants.
- **THE NATIONAL CAREER GUIDANCE CENTER (MoE):** They supervise all career counsellors at all Government schools.
- **THE DG OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS (MoE):** They supervise the private schools, including the counsellors at these private GED schools, community and international schools

THE YDYF MAGAZINE

The bilingual (Arabic and English) publication allows thousands of Omani school students to make well-informed decisions on higher education. It also serves as a platform for young Omanis to share their advice and/or showcase their talents as we have involved Omani students, artists and journalists. The externally sponsored, not-for-profit magazine was founded by MoHE staff member in 2015 and published by a company from the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman and the content is produced and/or curated by higher education experts based in the Sultanate and abroad.

IN THIS ISSUE

The 6th edition of YDYF magazine is a theme-based one with focus on topics such as answers by experts to frequently asked questions, encouraging students to explore all study destinations and select courses based on realistic expectations. It also lists all approved Higher Education Institutions by type of



www.ydyfmagazine.com

scholarship and study destination. The issue will throw the spotlight on the needs of the evolving economy and job market of the main sectors as highlighted by the Oman Government and touch upon topics of student conduct overseas and staying safe, among other things.

The health crisis has meant that we have had to rethink our processes to ensure that it does not affect our commitment to students in any way. Hence, the decision was taken to proceed with a digital edition, which was published a bit later than initially planned, making sure that all information was updated in view of the situation at the time.

THE YDYF WEBSITE APPLICATION (WEB APP)



The bilingual web-based application is due in Summer 2020. An endeavour based on state-of-the-art technology and powered by Shell Oman Marketing Company as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)-activities and other entities in Oman and abroad, it aims to support young people to make informed decisions using reliable and trustworthy online sources. To that effect, all information in the app will be curated and vetted for accuracy to ensure that students are provided only with credible information to make informed higher education choices. Great care has been taken to make the app's interface user-friendly, making it easy to access and read through. Further details will be provided in due course through Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Higher Education Admissions Center (HEAC) channels.

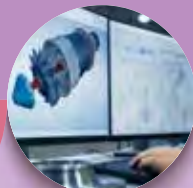
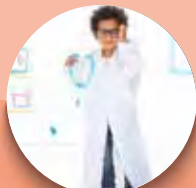
THE AIM IS FOR ALL STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (ALSO KNOWN AS MAJORS) RELATED TO AREAS THAT ARE DEEMED IMPORTANT FOR NATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND THE NATION'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS WHY THE GOVERNMENT OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS IN SPECIFIC UNDERGRADUATE COURSES IN BROADER AREAS SUCH AS

**INTERDISCIPLINARY
SCHOLARSHIPS**



**NATURAL &
PHYSICAL SCIENCES**

**ENGINEERING &
RELATED TECHNOLOGIES**



HEALTH



**AGRICULTURAL &
ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES**

**ARCHITECTURE &
CONSTRUCTION**



**INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY**

**MANAGEMENT &
BUSINESS**

CREATIVE ARTS



EDUCATION

**SOCIETY & CULTURE
(SOCIAL SCIENCES)
AND HUMANITIES**

**RELIGION &
PHILOSOPHY**

My son Omar wants to study abroad. While I understand this will benefit his overall educational and social development greatly, I am also concerned about his safety and mental health. It is a relief to know that Oman has overseas representatives in all study destinations, who are available to guide our children into becoming responsible adults.

I would like my son Omar, who is really good at Maths and Science, to become a doctor like his mother. But he prefers to study Engineering as he feels it would suit him better. We trust him to make an informed choice based on his consultations with counsellors. He also took an aptitude test to help him identify what suits his talents, skills, abilities and ambitions. Omar also took part in a job shadowing exercise and followed an engineer to understand the daily workings of the job.



I would prefer to study Renewable Energy Engineering in either the UK or Canada. Along with these choices, I will also list Renewable Energy Engineering in other countries, other related courses or perhaps explore a joint degree option. I understand that I have to list at least 12 options and preferably even more because as per the HEAC guidelines, even if I meet the eligibility criteria for my preferred course, it does not automatically mean that I will be awarded my first choice. Hence, I should keep my options open.

My first choice for overseas scholarships was Medicine, followed by STEM and Biological Sciences. My next choice was Medicine in Oman. The system awarded me a scholarship in Biological Sciences. However, I do realise that my preferences lie in studying Medicine and I would still have preferred to study Medicine in Oman rather than a different course in an overseas university.

ALL ABOUT SEATS, GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

DID YOU KNOW THERE IS A DIFFERENCE AMONG SEATS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND GRANTS THAT YOU WILL FIND IN THE SCHOLARSHIPS GUIDE FOR STUDENTS PUBLISHED BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSION CENTRE?

MY NAME IS ZAINA AND I AM IN GRADE 10 AND WITH THE SUPPORT OF MY FAMILY AND COUNSELLOR, I AM EXPLORING SUBJECT AREAS AND COURSES WITHIN THOSE AREAS AS I HAVE TO CHOOSE MY SCHOOL SUBJECTS. I ALSO ENGAGED IN JOB-SHADOWING. I WILL TELL YOU MORE ABOUT THIS IN THIS EDITION OF YDYF.

DID YOU KNOW THE LISTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS MAY DIFFER FROM ONE TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP TO ANOTHER?

MY NAME IS TALIB - I AM IN YEAR 13 AND I AM PLANNING TO COMPETITIVELY APPLY FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP AND/OR A SEAT. I WANT TO STUDY IN OMAN OR ABROAD. I AM MOSTLY FOCUSED ON MAKING SURE I CHOOSE THE RIGHT COURSE AND THE RIGHT CONTEXT FOR ME IN VIEW OF THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

WHAT IS A SEAT?

Please refer to the STUDY IN OMAN feature in this magazine, as well as the HEAC student guide

and websites of the institutions, for more information about the Government Higher Education Institutions.

WHAT IS A GRANT?

A study grant or financial aid offered by third parties such as companies in Oman and/or overseas universities. The universities are usually located in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.



WHAT IS AN UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP?

This is financial aid provided by the Oman Government to fund undergraduate studies pursued by a scholarship holder/recipient at either a private Higher Education Institution in the Sultanate (Internal Scholarship) or at one of the Higher Education Institutions abroad as recommended for scholarships (External Scholarship).

INTERNAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

These cover the tuition fees of private higher education institutions in the Sultanate and, in some cases, for example, when it concerns a student from a family with a low-income, an allowance is provided as well. Please refer to the STUDY IN OMAN feature for more information about the private Higher Education Institutions.

A FULL EXTERNAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

This enables recipients to study abroad at an approved Higher Education Institution (HEI) while the list of approved HEIs may differ from one type of scholarship to another - see below. An external undergraduate scholarship covers tuition fees, health insurance, a yearly return air ticket, a monthly allowance to cover basic living expenses, as well as a few other allowances to cover costs.

THE MAIN EXTERNAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS ARE:

- **SCHOLARSHIPS BY SUBJECT & STUDY DESTINATION (SSSD)**
- **STEM:** SCHOLARSHIPS THAT COVER COURSES IN SCIENCE (including health sciences but NOT Medicine or Dentistry), TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING OR MATHS
- **ESAM:** SCHOLARSHIPS THAT COVER COURSES IN EDUCATION, SOCIAL SCIENCES, ARTS OR MANAGEMENT
- **SCHOLARSHIPS IN MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY AT SPECIFIC UNIVERSITIES**
- **DIRECT ENTRY SCHOLARSHIP FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO DIRECTLY ENTER INTO THE FIRST YEAR OF AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSE**
- **For more information, please read the contents of this YDYF GUIDE.**

WHICH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED FOR EXTERNAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS?

Please refer to the lists **BY COUNTRY AND TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP** included in this magazine, while the list for DE001 (Direct Entry Scholarships) was published in October 2019. The lists of universities on the MoHE website consists of universities that have been recognised by the Ministry, but that does not automatically make them all an option for scholarship recipients as the list is for self-funding students too.



IMPORTANT NOTE

- Please note that the internal and external scholarships are administered by the Directorate-General of Scholarships on behalf of the Oman Government and we focus a bit on these scholarships in this magazine. However, this does NOT mean that we advise you only on internal and external scholarships.
- For more in-depth information about the seats and grants, you should visit the websites of the Government institutions and the organisations or universities that offer grants as listed in the HEAC scholarship application handbook.
- We also want to underline that although the content of this magazine is put together by a team headed by people who work for the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry cannot accept any liability for views, opinions or even errors in the content.

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR THE NATION

An exclusive interview with HE the Minister of Higher Education



Students are expected to study courses deemed relevant to needs of the nation's diversifying economy and human resource development ... Graduates should be capable of actively playing their part in national wealth creation, which will require a collective effort.



An educated, employable, entrepreneurial and highly skilled workforce is required to support the gradual transition to a sustainable knowledge economy.



Her Excellency

Dr Rawya Saud AlBusaidi, the Minister of Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman, needs no introduction: Her Excellency has been a guiding light in the world of education for many years now and continues to serve as a beacon of knowledge to both her peers and students. It is a privilege and honour for us to be able to talk to her in an exclusive interview, in which she enlightens us with her thoughts on the benefits of higher education for future graduates and how scholarships, seats and grants help steer students in the right direction. We also gain valuable insight from Her Excellency on why aligning higher education with the needs of the labour market is not an exact science. She also imparts much-needed words of wisdom to students, who represent the future of our nation.



YOUR EXCELLENCY, CAN YOU HELP EXPLAIN TO STUDENTS HOW UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS ARE MEANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO WHAT THE COUNTRY NEEDS?

HE Dr Rawya AlBusaidi: “The Sultanate’s scholarship recipients are meant to develop discipline-specific knowledge, generic or transversal skills, and competencies required for the further development and diversification of the Sultanate’s economy. There is naturally an expected return on the investment in scholarships as graduates should be capable of actively playing their part in national wealth creation.

“An educated, employable, entrepreneurial and highly skilled workforce is required to support the gradual transition to a sustainable knowledge economy, while our country, together with

the rest of the world, enters into the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We are all required to adapt to technological progress and certain soft skills such as problem-solving abilities, leadership, adaptability, and social and emotional intelligence, will all become even more important.

“Though matching higher education and student outcomes with the requirements of the labour market can never be based on an exact science, it is fair to say that scholarships are an effective instrument in guiding students into undergraduate courses related to areas deemed relevant for the national human resource development.”



YOUR EXCELLENCY, YOU MENTIONED THAT MATCHING HIGHER EDUCATION WITH THE NEEDS OF THE ECONOMY IS NOT BASED ON EXACT SCIENCE – CAN YOU EXPLAIN TO STUDENTS WHAT IS MEANT BY THAT STATEMENT?

HE Dr Rawya AlBusaidi: “Changes are inevitable as an economy is evolving and so are the requirements in terms of human capital. Unforeseen circumstances, like the current Covid-19 health pandemic, can also have an unmitigated economic impact.

“The labour market for certain professions that are in high-demand as of now may one day become saturated, while some jobs may even become obsolete. At the same time, there are currently many professions that present new career avenues such as an app developer, big data analyst, or social media manager, to name a few.

“There is a continuous need to update our knowledge and skills to be able to adapt to all these changes.

“In addition to this, when it comes to employability many factors apart from education are always at play, including possessing the right attitude. I would also like to emphasise the importance of entrepreneurial skills to encourage students to create their own future jobs.”

“An educated, employable, entrepreneurial and highly skilled workforce is required to support the gradual transition to a sustainable knowledge economy; while our country, together with the rest of the world, enters into the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We are all required to adapt to technological progress and certain soft skills such as problem-solving abilities, leadership, adaptability, and social and emotional intelligence, will all become even more important.”



YOUR EXCELLENCY, YOU MENTIONED THAT SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS ARE EXPECTED TO DEVELOP BOTH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS – CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THIS?

HE Dr Rawya AlBusaidi: “I believe that a reputed university education, whether you are pursuing a professional or a more generic degree course, can help students develop not only knowledge but also generic skills, such as problem-solving abilities, innovative and critical thinking skills, creativity, teamwork, leadership, social and emotional intelligence, communication skills and the ability to become familiar with technology. These skills add to

your adaptability and can help one prepare for a variety of careers.

“The current pandemic and its impact on our lives demonstrate once again that graduates should be able to adapt by applying skills they already have to a new scenario and help create a positive outcome by tackling challenges and becoming part of the solution.”



THE MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INFLUENCES CAREER CHOICES BY OFFERING SCHOLARSHIPS IN SPECIFIC AREAS OF STUDY DEEMED RELEVANT TO THE LABOUR MARKET: IS THE MINISTRY ENCOURAGING A DIVERSIFICATION IN PROGRAMME OFFERINGS?

HE Dr Rawya AlBusaidi: “The Ministry has always listed eligible programmes that serve a broader array of economic sectors, which ensures that eligible scholarship applicants have a variety of choices. I also want to underline that the Ministry of Higher Education offers different types of undergraduate

scholarships to study in the Sultanate of Oman or abroad, including a few types of scholarships that allow students to choose any undergraduate degree course of their own choice, based on their own interests and own market research, once they have been competitively awarded a scholarship.”



RESEARCH SHOWS THAT THIS APPROACH OF OFFERING SCHOLARSHIPS COVERING PARTICULAR AREAS OF STUDY, COULD POTENTIALLY ATTRACT STUDENTS WHO MAY NOT HAVE A NATURAL AFFINITY FOR A PARTICULAR AREA OF STUDY – HOW DOES THE MINISTRY TACKLE THIS CHALLENGE?

HE Dr Rawya AlBusaidi: “Any qualified scholarship applicant has to list a number of options in order of personal preference, whether they are applying for scholarships in specific areas of study and/or the scholarships allowing them to choose any undergraduate course. It is important to keep in mind that scholarship regulations do make students accountable for the scholarship they have been competitively awarded.

“Students should therefore make sure to take into consideration their own ambition(s), interests, talents and the needs of the ever-changing economy as part of their overall and

responsible higher education decision-making process and make sure they base their decisions on verified facts sourced from trustworthy media. Students should make sure that their motives for choosing course(s) are well reasoned.

“Sometimes scholarship students do find themselves in programmes that turn out to be not well-suited to their talents and interests because in hindsight they realise that they did not choose the right area of study. However, by-and-large, the scholarships system works to the advantage of students and the country.”



THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR VALUABLE INSIGHTS, YOUR EXCELLENCY, WE DO HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION: WHAT ACCORDING TO YOU, YOUR EXCELLENCY, SHOULD STUDENTS ALWAYS KEEP IN MIND WHEN THEY ARE PURSUING THEIR HIGHER UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE STUDIES, WHETHER IN THE SULTANATE OR ABROAD?

HE Dr Rawya AlBusaidi: “We always advise our students to make the most of this golden opportunity by making informed choices prior and during their studies that rely on facts and research, rather than hearsay and unfiltered sources.

“It is perfectly normal to feel out of place or even experience anxiety as it takes time to adapt to a higher education system. However, do not make any hasty decisions such as requesting for a transfer to another institution, course or country; a request that may not even be granted for legitimate reasons.

“In today’s complex and interconnected world, students should also exercise sound judgment when dealing with other people, including through social media. Last but not least, it is important to follow the tenets of human decency while interacting with others, which is a value we have inherited from our great ancestors.

“As the Sultanate’s student ambassadors, you are expected to conduct yourself ethically, honestly, and with integrity, no matter what the circumstances are.

“I would like to wish our students all the best in all of their endeavours.”



“Students should make sure to take into consideration their own ambition(s), interests, talents and the needs of the ever-changing economy as part of their overall and responsible higher education decision-making process – they should make sure their motives are well-reasoned and they base their decisions on verified facts sourced from trustworthy media”

TOWARDS A GREAT FUTURE: A GENERIC CHECKLIST OF KEY DEFINITIONS FOR OUR YOUNGEST READERS

An editorial note to our youngest readers who are still in grade 10 or 11: On the following page, we have included a glossary that provides key definitions of some of the more typical words that you may have come across in this exclusive and very informative interview with Her Excellency Dr Rawya AlBusaidi. You are advised to use this glossary as it is important for you to familiarise yourselves with these important terms.



DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE:

The knowledge that is specific to the discipline or a profession. For example: Knowledge of Mathematics and Statistics for an Economist, knowledge of Legal Framework for a Lawyer, knowledge of the human body for a Doctor, so on and so forth.



A PROBLEM-SOLVER:

This refers to the ability to identify or foresee an issue/challenge and come up with creative solutions to help solve (potential) problems.



TEAMWORK & LEADERSHIP:

Good Leaders are able to encourage and bring the best out of their team. After all, you are only as good as your team.

ALL ABOUT KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES



GENERIC OR TRANSVERSAL SKILLS:

Are also commonly referred to as transferable skills. They are abilities you can transfer from one job to another and therefore known for their versatility, which allows you to adapt to new roles, jobs, and changing circumstances. They can be applied to a variety of jobs, not just one specific job, and in a different context, e.g. problem-solving abilities, social skills and emotional intelligence.



WILL YOU BE INNOVATIVE?:

This refers to your ability to create something new that will add value to your organisation and/or society as a whole.



TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTABILITY:

We all need to keep adapting to rapid technological progress during our studies and after graduation.



COMPETENCIES:

The abilities that allow you to do something efficiently and in orderly manner (e.g. ability to plan and organise your work).



CREATIVE & CRITICAL THINKING

This means you weigh up every move you make and its short-term and long term consequences. Think, for example, how you are choosing which course(s) suit you.



CORE VALUES

This refers to your Integrity, Honesty, Ethics and Responsibility in view of your higher education decisions.



EMOTIONAL & SOCIAL

INTELLIGENCE:

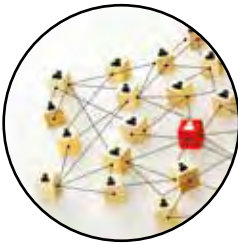
This refers to the ability to handle your emotions as well as those of others you communicate with for work. It also means that you have the ability to effectively manage and utilise unique talents and skills of members in your team. Emotional & Social Intelligence are important assets that cannot be automated (replaced by a machine).

ALL ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE ECONOMY



DIVERSIFICATION

An economy that does not rely on one main economic sector for creation of national wealth– e.g. Oman is diversifying away from a fuel-based economy through other sectors such as, among others, Logistics, Tourism, Mining ...



RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In this context, it means in return for the Government investing funds in higher education, there is the expectation that one day the recipients (graduates) of that investment will contribute to the economy of the country through their jobs, thereby adding value.



NATIONAL WEALTH CREATION

'Wealth' here is not just a tangible monetary value. National wealth creation also refers to the progress made by the country as part of the collective effort of its people.



ENTREPRENEURIAL

Referring to the ability to create, to be innovative, and take a risk to try and create your own job.



KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Also known as knowledge-based economy, this can be defined as an economy that relies more on knowledge and high-level skills to further its progress.



FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

The term refers to the state of technological progress and automation. Though, not all skills can be automated.



MATCHING

In this context, it is about research into aligning higher education outcomes with the needs of the ever-changing economy.



PANDEMIC

A health situation that affects the entire world.



EVOLVING

Changing and/or developing.



ECONOMIC IMPACT

External circumstances that affect the economy, either negatively or positively. An example of negative impact would be the novel Coronavirus, which has slowed down economies around the world.



SATURATED

In this context, the number of employable people in a particular area is more than the number of available jobs in that area.



OBSOLETE

No longer relevant or required (e.g. due to the 4th Industrial Revolution, certain jobs may no longer be required).



EMPLOYABILITY

How suitable and likely you are to be able to do a certain job based on your knowledge, skills, competencies and attitude.

BE PREPARED FOR THE UNEXPECTED

His Excellency Dr Abdullah Mohammed Al Sarmi, Undersecretary of Higher Education and Head of a Special Ministry of Higher Education Committee dealing with the impact of the Covid19- situation, shares golden words of advice for students and the future of our nation ...

The Government is carefully monitoring the Covid-19 or novel Coronavirus pandemic, including its social and economic impact. The Ministry of Higher Education recognises that the disruption caused by the pandemic to the daily lives of our students, and to your normal ways of studying, has been significant. At the same time, it also caused many students to swiftly adapt and adopt a remote learning method. We understand that this is a challenging time for all of you. However, we can assure you that contingency plans are in place based on different possible scenarios and we will keep you informed as and when we have any important updates.



Having said this, no one should expect a return to teaching and learning exactly as they were before the pandemic. We are still deliberating on what the academic year 2020/21 might look like and what the implications are likely to be for students in a post lock-down world. However, everything possible is being done to limit any impact the coronavirus may have on students. The safety and wellbeing of our students remains our highest priority.

Dr Abdullah M. Al Sarmi

*Undersecretary of Higher Education
Head of Special MoHE Covid-19 Committee*

**Disclaimer: Given the circumstances, at the time of publishing this magazine, the editorial team would like to underline that it has tried its best to bring you updated information based on what current contingency plans involve but this might be subject to changes. Please regularly check the MoHE and HEAC websites and social media pages for further updates.*

DEAR STUDENTS, MY CHILDREN,



HE Dr Abdullah M AlSarmi
Undersecretary of Higher Education
Sultanate of Oman

“YOUR CHOSEN COURSE OR SPECIALISATION SHOULD REFLECT ON ITS POSSIBLE FUTURE MANIFESTATIONS THAT COMBINE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS WITH THOSE OF COMMUNICATION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INNOVATION.”



It is such a pleasure, my children, to see you all reach this phase in your school education journey, where you are all deciding and deliberating your higher education choices and areas of specialisation that will satisfy your ambitions and aspirations.

Your schooling, reading, experiences, and interaction with professionals and experts, along with the hopes of your parents, all contribute significantly in shaping your conviction on your preferred choice for study.

AN EVER-CHANGING WORLD

All these factors are important in creating beliefs towards your desired specialisation. However, I would emphasise

that you allow your preferences, interests, and academic performance to be the core drivers in selecting your specialisation. Remember that your decisions today will be your job for possibly the next forty years of your life.

Keep in mind that you are living in a different era from that of your parents. You are living in a world that is constantly changing and as it evolves, it keeps creating new avenues for advancement, which lead to constantly mutating educational specialisations, among other things. What was relevant as a desirable profession in your parents' time, has paved way for new ones that the world did not know before this.

INDUSTRY 4.0

The future, albeit unforeseen, predicts a fast changing and evolving structure in the job market where most professions will be based on technology without limitations. What this means for you as a student is that you must choose your course based not just on the present reality but also based on the needs of the future.

The FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION envisages a labour market that is smart technology-based where jobs are creative and innovative. These are jobs that will incorporate artificial intelligence in every aspect and require Big Data analytics on both local, regional, and international levels.

What makes you a global citizen of the future? You will not only be required to perfect your chosen area of specialisation but also master future skills that depend on innovation and the ability to adapt and accommodate and acquire new knowledge. Your chosen course or specialisation should reflect on its possible future manifestations that combine information technology and artificial intelligence skills with those of communication, entrepreneurship, and innovation.

A BRIGHT FUTURE

I am confident that the future is bright and each one of you will become a creative scientist in your own chosen profession, thus, taking on the onus of contributing to Modern Oman's future and humankind at large.



May Allah bless you all and guide you on the path of goodness and knowledge.

DEAR STUDENTS, PARENTS AND COUNSELLORS

We meet again as our team presents the 6th edition of Your Decision, Your Future (YDYF) magazine, which has been created specifically to help our students make well-informed decisions on their future higher education.

The magazine is published under the auspices of the YDYF National Awareness Campaign to ensure that it continues to be a valuable repository of trustworthy information and is available for all Omani students in grade 10-12 (and equivalent), their parents and counsellors to make calculated decisions when choosing suitable areas of study and the destination in which to study them.



The magazine content has been tailored specifically to encourage our students to choose courses based on realistic expectations, wisely rank their scholarship options, get your questions answered by experts from the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Higher Education, explore information provided by approved Higher Education Institutions, learn from advice from employers and other students, expand your world view and delve

into other relevant topics such as learning remotely, language skills and staying safe during your studies.

The global health crisis has brought a dynamic shift to life as we knew it. However, it will not stop any of us from learning and moving forward while developing new knowledge and generic skills that will allow you to adapt to changes.

KEEP CALM AND



READ, READ, READ

As we all learn to navigate the physical distancing etiquettes and many of us orient ourselves to work and learn from our homes, we want to ensure that our students, their parents and counsellors still have access to the best possible resources available to them.

Hence, we have taken the decision to primarily bring out the 6th edition of YDYF magazine as a digital edition.



In these unprecedented times, our message to you, dear students, parents and counsellors, is that 'We are in This Together'! And even though we might currently not be able to physically interact with you at your schools or the Ministry of Higher Education, thanks to technological platforms, we are always here to ensure that you have access to all the necessary information.

We want to continue to assist you to move forward and choose the right educational path that will turn you into valuable assets for our nation's growth and progress and global citizens.

You can reach the editorial team [via e-mail ydyf@mohe.gov.om](mailto:ydyf@mohe.gov.om) and offer suggestions and comments that will be useful in contributing to the development of the content of this magazine.

Stay safe and remember:

Your Informed Decision is your Future!



Hamad Khalfan Al Harthy

Chairman of the Your Decision, Your Future National Awareness Campaign Committee

ARE YOU COMPETITIVELY APPLYING FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND/OR GRANTS?

HOW TO WISELY APPLY FOR UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND/OR GRANTS BASED ON ADVICE BY THE HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS CENTER (HEAC) AND THE DIRECTORATE-GENERAL OF SCHOLARSHIPS, OMAN MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

PHASE I: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STEPS

- **REGISTER AS AN UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANT** with the **HEAC & LIST AT LEAST 12 and PREFERABLY EVEN MORE DIFFERENT SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND GRANTS** based on your predicted marks to be earmarked as an undergraduate scholarship applicant*.
- You can make changes in your order of preference during Phase 2 (see next page)
- All undergraduate scholarships, seats and grants have been given different codes by the HEAC - e.g. SE followed by a number.
- If you face any technical issues or have any queries, please contact the HEAC through the department for customer services.

MEETING THE SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PLACE

- Scholarships are awarded using fair criteria and on a competitive basis. However, meeting the requirements as published in the HEAC student guide does **NOT** guarantee you a scholarship and/or a scholarship of your preference. The number of eligible candidates may exceed the number of available places.

TOP-DOWN APPROACH

- The HEAC electronic system uses a top-down approach (**NOT** a bottom-up approach) To begin with, **you will compete for your first choice and if other candidates are competitively selected for that option, you automatically compete for your second option and so on!**
- Hence, some students end up with a scholarship for their preferred course(s) and others do not. Some candidates may become prospective self-sponsored students.

DO YOU MEET FURTHER REQUIREMENTS SET BY INSTITUTIONS?

- Every scholarship, seat or grant consists of one specific course or more courses and the requirements are based on prerequisites set by approved Higher Education Institutions.
- In case a scholarship consists of more than one course, you will need to make sure you meet the criteria of the specific course (you are interested in) as set by the approved universities.
- The Ministry of Higher Education **CANNOT** guarantee that you will meet the further requirements of a specific course.



SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AWARDED ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS AND THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES MAY EXCEED THE NUMBER OF PLACES.

RANK YOUR OPTIONS WISELY. DO NOT PLACE ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONLY ONE BASKET. AT THE SAME TIME, ONLY CHOOSE COURSE(S) YOU ARE REALLY INTERESTED IN!

2

PHASE II: CHANGE OF PREFERENCE PERIOD

During this period, registered scholarship applicants can make changes in their undergraduate scholarship application based on their actual grades. This means you can make changes in the order of preference of your options or even omit/add options as long as you have registered as a candidate before the end of Phase 1.

ALWAYS RANK YOUR PREFERRED OPTIONS FIRST. BUT 'BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR' BECAUSE YOU MIGHT BE AWARDED ONE OF YOUR PREFERRED OPTIONS AND THEN YOU WILL HAVE TO STUDY THIS COURSE. MAKE SURE YOU THINK TWICE AND MAKE WELL-INFORMED CHOICES!

BEAR IN MIND WHILE RANKING YOUR OPTIONS AS PART OF YOUR UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

- YOU SHOULD LIST YOUR MOST PREFERRED SCHOLARSHIP FIRST BUT, AT THE SAME TIME, THIS SHOULD NOT BE YOUR ONLY LISTED OPTION!
- DO NOT PLACE ALL YOUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET, AS THEY SAY
- DO NOT ONLY LIST OPTIONS IN YOUR PREFERRED STUDY DESTINATION(S), EXPLORE ALL OPTIONS AND DO NOT ONLY LIST 12 OPTIONS!
- Even if you are not selected for your most preferred choice, you will still automatically **compete** for your second choice and so

on and you will equally compete against other applicants for any of your choices, including against those who perhaps listed that option you listed as second as first, etc.

- The system does **not** discriminate based on how you ranked your options and will just select the students based on their grades (as per the criteria)
- **IN VIEW OF ALL YOUR OPTIONS, YOU MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT THE NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES MAY EXCEED THE NUMBER OF PLACES.**
- **DO NOT CHOOSE A SCHOLARSHIP IN A COURSE YOU HAVE LITTLE OR NO INTEREST IN! YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR CHOICES!**

- **ALWAYS FOCUS ON THE AREA OF STUDY FIRST** and do not choose something because your cousin or friend is studying in that country or at that institution. Trust us, what suits them need not necessarily suit you!
- Do NOT let any unverified information about availability or possible competition from other qualified students dishearten you. **There are no guarantees but YOU SHOULD still choose** and opt for what you really want to study first.
- **HOWEVER, BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR** because in case you are awarded one of your preferred options, remember that you are no longer on a waiting list for any of your lower ranked options. So, choose wisely!

3

PHASE III: SCREENING & INTERVIEWS

- During this period, **INTERVIEWS** (WHERE APPLICABLE) TAKE PLACE AND an independent and **unbiased screening** committee(s) will screen all scholarships with additional requirements.
- It is very important to provide the Ministry with an accurate phone number and phone number of at least one of your caregivers/ guardians and e-mail address.
- The HEAC might send you important information about interview dates and so on. You may not receive these messages while abroad so always provide an extra number and e-mail address. Students, in the past, have missed out on great opportunities because they did not provide accurate contact details!

A FEW CLARIFICATIONS

YOU ARE ADVISED TO TAKE AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST: THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS RESULTS DO NOT AFFECT YOUR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AS A SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANT

- You are advised to take an English language proficiency test, if you have not already done so.
- An English language test result will NOT affect your competitive advantage: the HEAC electronic system will NOT screen based on English language test results.
- Your result will facilitate future placement procedures as this will help to understand your entry level.
- **NOT** all students will require an IELTS for UKVI (Refer to the article: Debunking myths about English language tests).



IF YOU ARE PLANNING FOR THE DIRECT ENTRY SCHOLARSHIP (DE001)

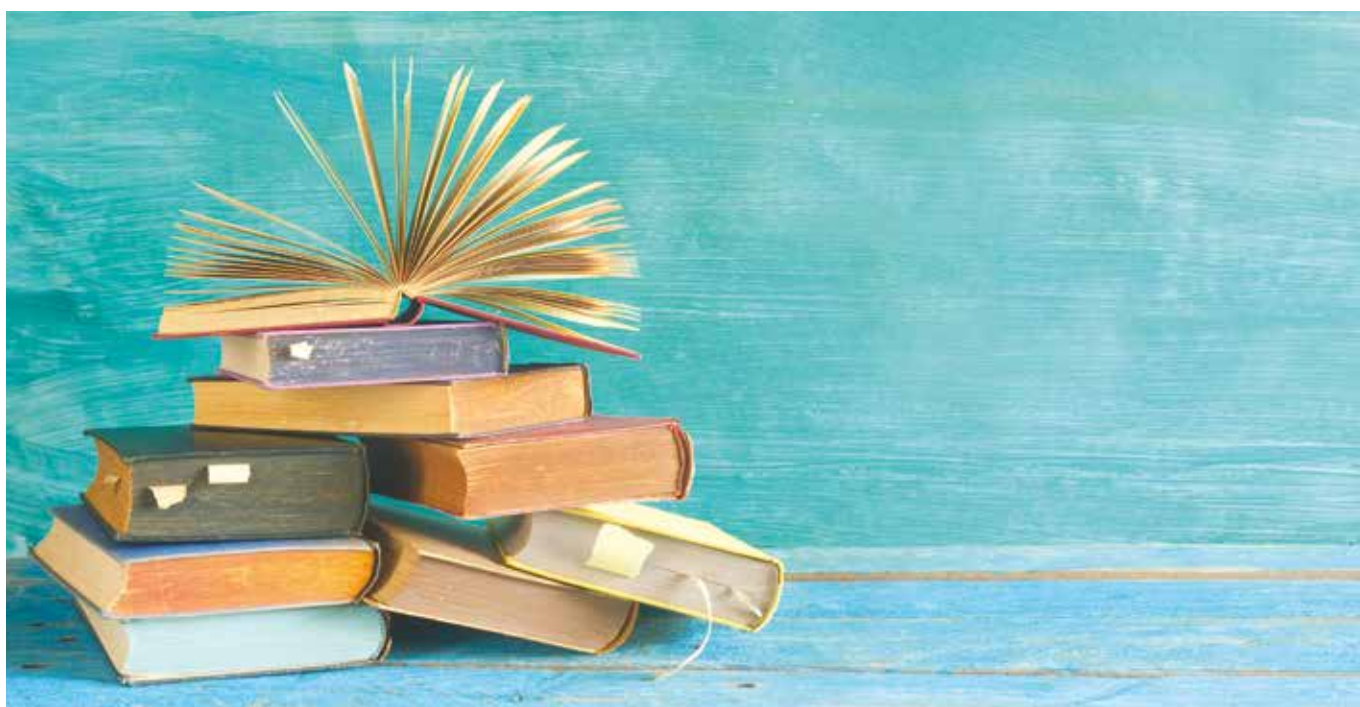
- You have to upload at least a conditional letter of acceptance issued by one of the universities approved for DES by the end of the change of preference period and an unconditional LoA (or proof of enrollment) by July 18, unless you did not yet receive your school grades by July 18 (in which case, you will HAVE to continue to competitively apply based on a conditional LoA).
- The minimum grades published in the HEAC guide ensure a certain standard but it is up to the universities to make sure you meet further requirements.
- Make sure that you are referring to the correct list of approved

universities as published in October 2019 and in this magazine.

- Check application deadlines set by Higher Education Institutions when planning to competitively apply for the Direct Entry Scholarship.
- Acceptance letters issued by universities – other than the approved one and/or that cover pathways or foundation programmes – will be disqualified.
- Meeting criteria of DES does not mean you should not list other eligible scholarships, seats and/or grants as meeting criteria does NOT guarantee a place.

INTERVIEW-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

This means you need to sit for an interview in July and only those who pass the test will be able to continue to competitively apply for that scholarship, among other options. The interviews for external undergraduate scholarships in Medicine and Dentistry will be via a virtual platform.



4

**PHASE IV:
SCHOLARSHIPS,
SEATS AND GRANTS
ARE COMPETITIVELY
AWARDED BY
THE ELECTRONIC
SYSTEM**

- If, upon registration, your personal details shown in the system is not correct, you have to contact your career advisor or principal in the school to correct it.
- News about who has been awarded a scholarship will be sent to you and you will be given time to accept your offer.
- Also, you should complete your registration on time with the institution or department concerned.
- Even if you are awarded a scholarship, this does NOT automatically mean that you can study that particular course as additional requirements, set by the university, usually apply.


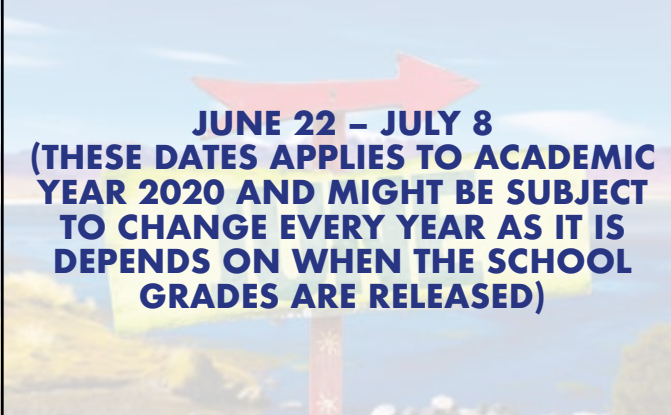



For example, you are awarded a scholarship to study Medicine, but you may still have to sit for an interview, successfully complete a foundation programme and take an aptitude test.

- The Ministry CANNOT guarantee progression and this is also clearly mentioned in the handbook. **Strict rules apply when requesting for a transfer to another course** and ALTHOUGH you may have the right to submit a request for a transfer, this does NOT automatically mean that this request will be granted by the Ministry of Higher Education. Hence, choose YOUR OPTIONS wisely?

**This section was put together with the help of the Higher Education Admissions Center (HEAC), Ministry of Higher Education and the DG of Scholarships*



SAVE THE IMPORTANT DATES: SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIMELINE, TESTS & INTERVIEWS IN VIEW OF THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2020/21

<p>REGISTRATION AND ORIENTATION PERIOD FOR UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND/OR GRANTS WITH HEAC.GOV.OM</p> <p>ADVICE: DURING THIS FIRST SCHOLARSHIP REGISTRATION PHASE, MAKE SURE TO SELECT AT LEAST 12 OPTIONS, WHILE YOU ARE ADVISED TO ADD MORE SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND GRANTS IN PREFERRED AREAS OF STUDY AS SCHOLARSHIPS ARE COMPETITIVELY AWARDED</p>	 <p>APRIL 1 – JUNE 1 (EVERY YEAR)</p>
<p>CHANGE OF PREFERENCE PERIOD – DURING THIS PERIOD YOU MAKE CHANGES IN THE WAY YOU RANKED YOUR OPTIONS AND CAN ALSO ADD OPTIONS TO INCREASE CHANCES OF BEING COMPETITIVELY AWARDED A SCHOLARSHIP, HOWEVER, ONLY SELECT OPTIONS BASED ON WHAT YOU WANT TO STUDY (=PREFERRED COURSES)! YOU WILL BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR YOUR OWN CHOICES SO MAKE WELL-INFORMED DECISIONS!</p> <p>DES APPLICANTS WILL HAVE TO UPLOAD AT LEAST AN CONDITIONAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE END OF THIS CHANGE OF PREFERENCE PERIOD!</p>	 <p>JUNE 22 – JULY 8 (THESE DATES APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2020 AND MIGHT BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE EVERY YEAR AS IT IS DEPENDS ON WHEN THE SCHOOL GRADES ARE RELEASED)</p>
<p>DIRECT ENTRY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS (EXCEPT FOR THOSE WHO DID NOT YET RECEIVE THEIR SCHOOL GRADES) HAVE TO UPLOAD AN UNCONDITIONAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE AND/OR PROOF OF ENROLLMENT ISSUED BY ONE (NOT MORE THAN ONE!!!) OF THE UNIVERSITIES THEY APPLIED TO – PLEASE ALSO REFER TO THE CHOOSING A SUITABLE COURSE - INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIPS SECTION FOR ANSWERS TO FAQS!</p>	 <p>JULY 18</p>
<p>SCREENING OF DES APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS FOR INTERVIEW-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS (THE INTERVIEWS WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND AND UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO WILL TAKE PLACE ONLINE – SEE TIPS ON HOW TO PREPARE FOR THESE INTERVIEWS IN 'CHOOSING A SUITABLE COURSE' SECTION.</p>	 <p>JULY 18 – JULY 28</p>
<p>SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND GRANTS ARE COMPETITIVELY AWARDED BY THE HEAC ELECTRONIC SYSTEM ON A COMPETITIVE BASIS</p>	 <p>AUGUST 11</p>
<p>COMPLETE REGISTRATION – INSTRUCTIONS WILL FOLLOW AND ALSO REFER TO THE 'THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND' SECTION OF THIS MAGAZINE</p>	 <p>AUGUST 11 – AUGUST 18</p>

DISCLAIMER: All information given here is based on facts available at the time of going to print. PLEASE NOTE that this information is SUBJECT TO CHANGES and will be updated accordingly. So PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU CHECK THE HEAC WEBSITE FOR ALL AND ANY UPDATES.

YOUR SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION: DO'S AND DON'TS

THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE IS A DON'T (NOT ADVISABLE) BUT WHY?!



THE FOLLOWING CHOICES HAVE BEEN MADE BY A STUDENT WHO HAVE FOCUSED ON THE COURSE (IN HIS/HER CASE: CIVIL ENGINEERING) AND RELATED COURSES HE/SHE WANTED TO STUDY, WHICH IS GREAT AS HE/SHE CHOSE A VARIETY OF COUNTRIES, INCLUDING OMAN.

HOWEVER, THERE IS SOMETHING MISSING ... WHAT IS IT?



ANSWER:

- Although it is very good that this student primarily focused on their area of interest, they did not list enough options. The student should have kept in mind that even if you meet the eligibility criteria of the preferred options that does not mean you should assume you will be competitively awarded any of these options as the number of eligible candidates by scholarship may exceed the number of places.
- Do not place all your eggs into one basket.**
- However, also do not just randomly add options that you are not interested in. If you are competitively awarded a scholarship, seat or grant, you will be held accountable for your choice and cannot not just assume you can transfer to another course, country and/or university.

ADVICE: This student should list more than 12 options and not place all his/her eggs into one basket but only provided he/she lists scholarships, grants and/or seats that covers courses and related courses that he/she is genuinely interested in and that are aligned with his/her skills and abilities.

THE FOLLOWING EXAMPLE IS A BIG DON'T (= NOT ADVISABLE) BUT WHY?!



THE FOLLOWING CHOICES HAVE BEEN MADE BY A STUDENT WHO FOCUSED ON THE COUNTRY (IN HIS/HER CASE: THE UNITED KINGDOM)

ANSWER:

- THIS IS A BIG DON'T! WHY? Well, they just seem to have randomly selected any scholarship allocated to the United Kingdom based on meeting the criteria but unless she/he has such a broad interest, this list is not based on informed choices at all. Here, we would say: be careful what you wish for because you might get something you are not even interested in while you will be held accountable for your choices as per the scholarship rules and regulations.
- You must have heard that you can submit a request to transfer to another course. But then you should also realise that the committee reserves the right to **NOT** grant you your request in order to safeguard fair competition and treatment of all students. Besides, this student only listed 12 options while the advice is to list **more than 12 options**, provided they all concern courses and related courses you are interested in.

ADVICE: This student obviously did well in all school subjects, which gives him/her a lot of options to choose from. However, this student should really focus on his/her area(s) of interest and then choose accordingly. Consider more countries, including Oman, as it is very important to study a course you are really interested in.

Also, competitively applying for scholarships in courses you are not interested in is unfair to students who are interested in those particular courses as they have to compete against you!

This student should also list more than just 12 options as scholarships are competitively awarded, which means that for every scholarship, seat and/or grant, the number of eligible candidates may exceed the number of available places allocated to that particular scholarship!

01

DE001 – DES (because I have a letter of acceptance for direct entry into one of the universities approved for this scholarship that concerns a direct entry into a Civil Engineering course)

02

SE380 – STEM (because this would allow me to study Civil Engineering and I could submit the same letter of acceptance I used for DES in case I am not competitively selected for DE001)

03

SE502 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING IN THE UK

04

SE501 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING IN THE USA

05

SE508 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING IN GERMANY

06

SE515 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING IN THE NETHERLANDS

07

SE504 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING IN IRELAND

08

SE756 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING IN CANADA

09

SE529 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING MALAYSIA

10

SE500 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING AUSTRALIA

11

SQ200 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING AT SQU IN OMAN

12

BS013 – CODE THAT INCLUDES CIVIL ENGINEERING AT NIZWA UNIVERSITY

01

STEM – AS HE/SHE WANTS TO STUDY RENEWABLE ENERGY ENGINEERING IN THE UK OR A RELATED COURSE BUT DOES NOT HAVE A LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE IN PLACE

02

SE489 – THIS CODE INCLUDES RENEWABLE ENERGY ENGINEERING IN THE UK

03

SE502 – THIS CODE INCLUDES ENGINEERING COURSES OTHER THAN RENEWABLE ENERGY ENGINEERING IN THE UK...(THIS IS STILL AN UNDERSTANDABLE CHOICE AS IT CONCERNS ENGINEERING)

04

SE561 – THIS CODE INCLUDES EARTH SCIENCES AND RELATED COURSES IN THE UK (OK, PERHAPS THIS STUDENT IS PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN COURSES RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY BUT WE ALREADY START TO WONDER WHY HE/SHE DID NOT LIST A SCHOLARSHIP IN (RENEWABLE) ENERGY ENGINEERING ALLOCATED TO A COUNTRY OTHER THAN THE UK)

05

SE610 – ASTRONOMY ETC IN THE UK (DOES THIS STUDENT HAVE A BROAD INTEREST – AGAIN, WHY NOT CHOOSE OTHER COURSES IN ENERGY ENGINEERING IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE UK)

06

SE540 – LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE – SAME COMMENT THAT APPLIES TO CHOICE NUMBER 5

07

SE509 – MARINE TECHNOLOGY WITH NAVAL ARCHITECTURE IN THE UK (OK, NOT IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS ENGINEERING BUT STILL UNDERSTANDABLE ALTHOUGH WE WOULD HAVE ADVISED TO START EXPLORING ENERGY ENGINEERING AND RELATED COURSES IN COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE UK, INCLUDING OMAN, FROM HERE ONWARDS)

08

SE810 – LAW IN THE UK – SAME COMMENT THAT APPLIES TO CHOICE NUMBER 5

09

SE557 – SURVEYING OR QUANTITY ENGINEERING IN THE UK – SAME COMMENT THAT APPLIES TO CHOICE NUMBER 5

10

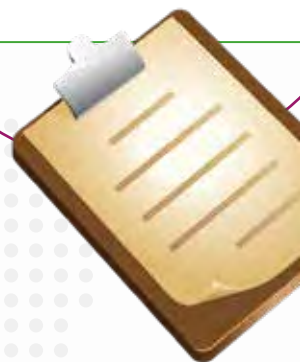
SE773 - AQUACULTURE & FISHERIES IN THE UK – SAME COMMENT THAT APPLIES TO CHOICE NUMBER 5

11

SE621 – COMPUTER SCIENCE IN THE UK – SAME COMMENT THAT APPLIES TO CHOICE NUMBER 5


12

SE643 – BUSINESS IN THE UK – SAME COMMENT THAT APPLIES TO CHOICE NUMBER 5




A FEW *Frequently asked questions* AND *Common Misconceptions* ABOUT SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND GRANTS ANSWERED/CLARIFIED

1. I AM EXPECTING TO ACHIEVE VERY HIGH SCHOOL GRADES... DOES THIS MEAN I SHOULD ONLY LIST 12 PREFERRED OPTIONS AS PART OF MY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION THROUGH THE HEAC?

- 
- First of all, it is great that you are expected to achieve good grades and if you meet the scholarship requirements in view of the course(s) you prefer to study, then you have the potential or chance to be competitively awarded this scholarship, so go ahead and apply!
 - The Ministry, in close cooperation with researchers and the approved Higher Education Institutions, ask for minimum requirements on all the programmes covered by scholarships, seats and/or grants.
 - These scholarships eligibility criteria (=requirements) have been published in the HEAC Student Guide.
 - These requirements are usually high for rigorous courses such as Medicine, Dentistry and STEM programmes
 - BEAR IN MIND, however, that there is strong competition for all scholarships, seats and grants due to their popularity among eligible candidates.
 - Scholarships are competitively awarded and the number of eligible candidates – this means students who meet the minimum scholarships criteria like you hopefully did – may always exceed the number of available places per scholarship and this has always been a fact.
 - **TO PUT IT SIMPLY:** A number of these students, who are applying for the same scholarships as you, may have achieved similar or even higher grades than you have.
 - Hence, there is nobody who can guarantee you will be competitively awarded a scholarship and/or any of your preferred options.
 - **ADVICE FROM HEAC AND DG OF SCHOLARSHIPS:** You are advised to select more than 12 options by including more study destinations where your preferred course(s) are offered. Remember, however, you should primarily focus on selecting a COURSE that suits you, not e.g the country where you would like to study as you will be held accountable for the choices you make – therefore, be careful what you wish for!

2. IN THE HEAC STUDENT GUIDE, THEY SOMETIMES INCLUDE THE NAMES OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND SOMETIMES ONLY THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY AND/OR COURSES – WHY IS THAT? AND HOW WILL I KNOW AT WHICH UNIVERSITY I WILL STUDY? SHOULD I REFER TO THE LISTS OF HEIS UPLOAD TO THE MOHE WEBSITE?

- 
- As explained on the previous pages there are internal and external undergraduate scholarships, seats and grants.
 - These scholarships, seats and grants are all listed in the annual HEAC student guide in which all undergraduate courses covered by scholarships, seats and/or grants have been listed as per the category (broader area) to which they belong according to the OAAA in the Sultanate of Oman (e.g. Health, Engineering and so on)
 - The lists of universities that have been uploaded to the MoHE website are HEIs that have been approved by the Equivalency & Qualifications Department. This means that they will recognise the degree.
 - However, this does **NOT** automatically mean that all these HEIs listed on the MoHE website are also approved/recommended for scholarships as other deciding factors apply when selecting suitable HEIs for each type of scholarship.

• **ABOUT THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HEIS) APPROVED FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND GRANTS**

- i. We prefer the term HEIs as not all diploma and/or Bachelor's degree-awarding Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) call themselves universities – e.g. in Oman, there are the COLLEGES OF APPLIED SCIENCES, in the U.S. there are INSTITUTES OF TECHNOLOGY and so on and so forth.
- ii. The **SEATS** are distributed over the Government institutions in the Sultanate to which they have been allocated.
- iii. The **GRANTS** are sponsored by third parties other than the Government and they select the approved HEIs based on the course and country.
- iv. The **INTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS** are distributed over the private Higher Education Institutions in the Sultanate to which they have been allocated.
- v. The **EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS** are as follows:
 1. **MEDICINE & DENTISTRY**
 2. **STEM & ESAM**
 3. **DES**
 4. **SSSD**

a. MEDICINE & DENTISTRY

- i. These scholarships in an undergraduate degree in Medicine have been allocated to specific Medical and Dental schools (part of universities) in the United Kingdom, including Scotland, Ireland, Cyprus, Bahrain and New Zealand.
- ii. The Ministry of Higher Education has agreements with these universities in view of a number of places on their foundation programmes. This does not, however, mean that the Ministry can guarantee progression to the first year of the undergraduate degree course as further requirements may apply (including an interview and/or aptitude test)

b. DES = DIRECT ENTRY SCHOLARSHIP

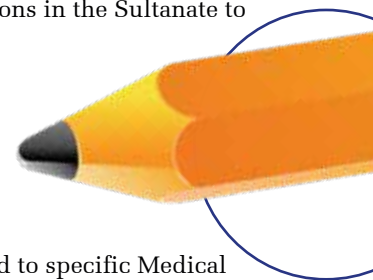
- i. Covers all undergraduate degree courses but covers only an undergraduate degree course (DIRECT ENTRY) NOT language courses and/or foundation programmes.
- ii. The list of approved HEIs for this scholarship for the academic year 2020/21 was published as early as October 2019 as this is the only scholarship that require scholarship applicants to upload a letter of acceptance issued by one of these approved HEIs and applying to universities takes time and sometimes you need to apply as early as November of your final school year!
- iii. Refer to the lists of HEIs uploaded to HEAC website in October 2019 and to the lists of approved HEIs in this magazine: STUDY DESTINATIONS AND APPROVED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP.

c. STEM & ESAM

- i. **STEM** = Scholarships in courses that fall under SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, (APPLIED) MATHS (BUT NOT MEDICINE OR DENTISTRY!)
- ii. **ESAM** = Scholarships in courses that fall under EDUCATION, SCIENCE, ARTS/ARCHITECTURE AND MANAGEMENT
- iii. For more details, please also refer to the third section CHOOSING A SUITABLE COURSE in this magazine under interdisciplinary scholarships.
- iv. **STEM & ESAM** recipients can all choose from a list of universities and countries once competitively awarded the scholarship, however, nobody can guarantee the availability of your preferred course in your preferred country and/or an acceptance by any university as HEIs may set their own (further) requirements.
- v. We have, however, listed the approved HEIs by country in the magazine section: **STUDY DESTINATIONS AND APPROVED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP**

d. SSSD = SCHOLARSHIPS BY SUBJECT & STUDY DESTINATION

- i. As the name of the scholarship implies, these scholarships are distributed over a variety of courses (subjects) available in a number of countries (study destination).
- ii. **THERE IS A LIST OF HEIS THAT HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR SSSD AND THEY HAVE BEEN LISTED BY COUNTRY IN THIS MAGAZINE – PLEASE REFER TO THE FOURTH SECTION: STUDY DESTINATIONS AND APPROVED HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS BY TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP.**
- iii. SSSD scholarship recipients may indicate at which university they would prefer to study by putting together a top 5 choices or even submit a letter of acceptance from one of the approved universities once competitively awarded this scholarship but the Ministry reserves the right to be involved in the university selection procedures and cannot guarantee an acceptance by your preferred HEI(s).
- iv. For a few SSSD scholarships, you DO find the name of the HEI in the HEAC book this is because there is only one or maximum two HEIs in that country offering this specific course covered by the scholarship.



3. ONCE COMPETITIVELY AWARDED A SCHOLARSHIP, SEAT AND/OR GRANT, CAN I SUBMIT A REQUEST TO TRANSFER TO ANOTHER COURSE OR MAJOR AT A LATER STAGE?

- Strict terms and conditions have been put in place to safeguard fair competition and 'diversity'. Hence, when applying for a scholarship, please choose your preferred programmes very wisely.
- Students are NOT encouraged to choose a programme they are NOT interested in. If you submit a request to transfer to another programme, your request to change your programme may be rejected by the scholarships committee, especially if you request to study a programme that it is NOT within the same area of study and/or category as the initial programme in which you were awarded a scholarship and/or if a transfer would result in an extension of the duration of the course.
- **STRONG WORD OF ADVICE:** The committee reserves the right to hold you accountable for your choice(s) so please make an informed decision and choose something that balances your passion, talent and capabilities, with those of the needs of the job market.



4. ONCE I HAVE SECURED A SCHOLARSHIP THAT CONSISTS OF MORE THAN ONE COURSE DOES THIS AUTOMATICALLY MEAN I HAVE SECURED GUARANTEED ADMISSION TO A PREFERRED PROGRAMME?

- The Ministry of Higher Education cannot guarantee that you are able to secure admission to a certain undergraduate degree programme and/or Higher Education Institution: Some programmes may have further subject-specific requirements and/or require additional interviews or entrance tests as part of a particular University's admissions procedures.
- Also, you may not yet satisfy English language and/or direct entry requirements set by the higher education institution and therefore you may have to first enroll in a pre-session course, e.g. an English language course (for the duration of maximum one year) and/or a foundation programme in order to meet the university's English language requirement or any other conditions of a Bachelor's degree programme.

FOCUS FIRST ON 'WHAT' YOU WANT TO STUDY AND NOT ONLY ON 'WHERE'. COMPETITIVELY APPLY FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, SEAT AND/OR GRANTS THAT COVER WHAT YOU WANT TO STUDY, PROVIDED YOU MEET THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA BUT BEAR IN MIND THAT THERE IS ALWAYS A COMPETITION FOR SCHOLARSHIPS, SEATS AND/OR GRANTS - TRY AND EXPLORE ALL SCHOLARSHIPS THAT COVER THE COURSE(S) YOU PREFER, DO NOT LIMIT TO ONLY ONE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION AND/OR STUDY DESTINATION.



DESCRIPTIONS OF INTERDISCIPLINARY SCHOLARSHIPS BASED ON ANSWERS TO FAQs BY THE EXTERNAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS DEPARTMENT, MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

In this section, we look at what is referred to as interdisciplinary scholarships in the HEAC Student Guide and experts from the Directorate-General of Scholarships have answered the below most frequently asked questions (FAQs) about these types of scholarships. For course descriptions, please refer to the other categories in this section. At present, interdisciplinary undergraduate scholarships, listed in the HEAC Student Guide, cover the following three different external (for study abroad) undergraduate scholarships: STEM, ESAM and DES.



TYPE OF SCHOLARSHIP	
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QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM	ANSWER RE ESAM	ANSWER RE DES
WHICH COURSES DOES THE SCHOLARSHIP COVER?	<p>THE STEM SCHOLARSHIP COVERS COURSES THAT ALL UNDER THE SCIENCES (NATURAL& PHYSICAL, AGRICULTURAL & ENVIRONMENTAL AND ALSO HEALTH SCIENCES, HOWEVER, THE STEM SCHOLARSHIP DOES NOT COVER MEDICINE OR DENTISTRY!</p> <p>STEM also covers courses in Engineering, (Information) Technology and (Applied) Maths.</p> <p>The list of eligible courses has been published in the HEAC Student Guide.</p> <p>IF you want to STUDY VET OR MPHARM ON THIS SCHOLARSHIP, this will be subject to approval.</p> <p>Do not choose this scholarship if you want to study a course that does not fall under any of the areas If you want to study E.G. LAW, this is not the right category for you!</p>	<p>ESAM COVERS COURSES IN EDUCATION, ARCHITECTURE*, ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES/HUMANITIES (SOCIETY & CULTURE) AND/OR BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT.</p> <p>The list of eligible courses has been published in the HEAC Student Guide.</p> <p>Do not choose this scholarship if you want to study a course that does not fall under any of the areas. If you want to study e.g. Science or Engineering, this is not the right scholarship for you!</p> <p>*Architecture and related courses no longer fall under STEM (except for Architectural Engineering, which is NOT the same as Architecture (Refer to the generic course descriptions on the following pages)</p>	<p>DES applicants can submit a letter of acceptance issued by one of the HEIs approved for this scholarship and in ANY UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE COURSE, including Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy* and Veterinary Medicine and including courses that are not listed in the HEAC Student Guide, assuming you did your own market research and as long as it concerns an undergraduate degree course and starts in the AY 2020/21 (not earlier than August 2020).</p> <p>*Integrated MA degrees are NOT undergraduate degrees! MPharm is one of the few ‘M’ degrees that are treated as an undergraduate degree – that does NOT apply to all!</p>
WHAT IF I WANT TO STUDY A COURSE THAT IS NOT LISTED IN THE HEAC STUDENT GUIDE?	<p>The list of eligible courses that fall under either STEM or ESAM are listed in the HEAC student guide by area of study and in alphabetical order. however, if there is an undergraduate course that you feel belongs to ESAM or STEM under either and is not listed. Please submit a request to study that major in August and this will be subject to approval as terms and conditions apply!</p>		

QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM	ANSWER RE DES
DOES THIS SCHOLARSHIP COVER A LANGUAGE COURSE AND/OR A FOUNDATION PROGRAMME?	<p>YES. If required due to the language skills and/or type of curriculum pursued by the scholarship recipient, STEM/ESAM DO cover a PRE-SESSIONAL LANGUAGE COURSE AND/OR FOUNDATION PATHWAY.</p> <p>A pre-sessional language course is for students who do not yet meet the language requirements set by the university.</p> <p>A foundation pathway is for students who do not yet meet the direct entry requirements set by the university – this can be due to the subject-mix you took but this is usually due to the TYPE of school curriculum you pursued – it has nothing to do with your intelligence but with whether your curriculum prepared you sufficiently enough for the undergraduate degree.</p> <p>We must underline that a foundation programme is a bridging course that takes maximum a year to complete, not something to make up for what you did not do at school.....</p>	<p>NO, DES does NOT cover any pre-sessional language course or a foundation pathway, including integrated foundation programmes (freshman year in the USA and Canada is NOT the equivalent of a foundation!)</p>
QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM	ANSWER RE DES
DO I NEED TO SUBMIT A LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE TO COMPETITIVELY APPLY FOR THIS SCHOLARSHIP?	<p>NO – STEM/ESAM Recipients can choose the course and study destination once competitively awarded this scholarship in AUGUST, however, they should make sure they meet the further requirements set for the course they prefer to study AND that the course they prefer is available at undergraduate level in their preferred study destination! If they have a letter of acceptance in place, they can submit this to their administrator who will liaise with the overseas representative as this will be subject to approval as terms and conditions apply!</p>	<p>YES – in order to be earmarked as a DES applicant, a letter of acceptance issued by ONE of the universities which means proof that you have met the further requirements set by universities, which is also the reason why the Ministry does not set subject-specific requirements for this type, the DES, scholarship.</p>
QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM	ANSWER RE DES
WHICH HEIs HAVE BEEN APPROVED FOR THESE SCHOLARSHIPS SCHEMES?	<p>The list of Higher Education Institutions approved for STEM/ESAM are listed by country in this magazine – the last section entitled 'bilingual lists of approved HEIs by country and type of scholarship'. In most countries, except for the U.S., the list of approved HEIs consists of a combination of HEIs approved for SSSD and DES (the other external scholarships) combined BUT you can only study in countries where the Ministry has an overseas representative in place (hence, most of the countries as listed in the last section of this magazine, except for Bahrain and Cyprus).</p> <p>The Ministry of Higher Education, however, cannot guarantee an acceptance by any of these institutions and students should also check if their preferred major/course is available in the country they prefer as e.g. in the USA and Canada, professional degree courses (e.g. Law) are hard, if not impossible, to find at undergraduate level.</p>	<p>The list of Higher Education Institutions approved for DES are listed by country (see last section) in this magazine, except for some of the Asian and European countries. Please refer to a circular that was uploaded was uploaded to official MoHE websites in October 2019 to access a complete list of approved higher education institutions by country and/or continent.</p>

QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM/DES		
WHY DID THE MINISTRY NOT MERGE STEM, ESAM AND DES INTO ONE SCHOLARSHIP – LIKE STEAM?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEM AND ESAM are not merged because although the SUBJECT-SPECIFIC entry requirements are flexible due to these scholarships covering such a wide variety of options (also making students more responsible for making sure they meet further requirements of the course they prefer – AKA if you failed in Chemistry and Physics, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for you to study Engineering, etc). However, it would be safe to say that for most STEM areas, one needs PURE MATHS or at least 1 to 2 LAB SCIENCE subjects. For many courses covered by ESAM, however, Science-subjects are not always required. DES cannot be merged with STEM and ESAM as the main difference is that for DES you need to submit a letter of acceptance issued by a University that proves you are eligible to directly enter into an undergraduate degree. Also, NOT all HEIs that have been approved for STEM and ESAM are also options for DES. Make you sure you refer to the correct lists! 		
QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM/DES		
DOES INTERDISCIPLINARY MEAN I CAN STUDY A DOUBLE-MAJOR OR JOINT-DEGREE?	<p>NO, Interdisciplinary does NOT automatically mean you can study a double degree (or double major). A joint degree or double major that would allow you to study “multiple subjects or majors (even across different disciplines) throughout your time at university and graduate in two or even three subjects” is ONLY allowed if it is offered by the University as a combined degree as such and provided it does not result in an extension of the normal duration of the undergraduate degree course.</p>		
QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM/DES		
CAN MY COURSE INCLUDE AN INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT OR INTERNSHIP?	<p>INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENTS ARE ONLY allowed if it is offered by the University as a combined degree as such, NOT if it is something OPTIONAL, and provided it does not result in an extension of the normal duration of the undergraduate degree course.</p>		
QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM	ANSWER RE ESAM	ANSWER RE DES
WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL AND HELPFUL SCHOOL SUBJECTS FOR COURSES?	<p>STEM:</p> <p>GENERAL EDUCATION DIPLOMA (GED): Pure Mathematics + 1 of Biology, Chemistry or Physics + English</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS (IQ): Mathematics + 1 of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Design (&) Technology, Environmental Science, Geography, Computer Science or IT(GS)</p>	<p>ESAM:</p> <p>GENERAL EDUCATION DIPLOMA (GED): 1 of Pure Mathematics OR Applied Mathematics + English plus a certain grade in all other school subjects</p> <p>INTERNATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS: 2 of Mathematics, Mathematical Studies, Accounting, English, Arabic, Business, Economics, Geography, Law, Psychology, Philosophy, Arts, Computer Science, IT(GS), (Global) Politics, History, Sociology</p>	<p>FOR DES, SUBJECT-SPECIFIC CRITERIA ARE SET BY THE INSTITUTIONS</p> <p>In order to competitively apply for DES, you need two things:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet the minimum grades published in the HEAC student guide 2. A letter of acceptance issued by ONE of the universities which means proof that you have met the further requirements set by universities, which is also the reason why the Ministry does not set subject-specific requirements.

QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM/DES	
WHY ARE THE GRADES FOR DES NOT THE SAME AS FOR E.G. STEM/ESAM SCHOLARSHIPS? I MEAN, FOR DES YOU SEEM TO ASK FOR LOWER MARKS?	<p>Because for DES, students will have to meet requirements set by reputed universities for direct entry into an undergraduate course which are already quite rigorous. The Ministry of Higher Education set a minimum grade to safeguard the standard/quality.</p> <p>For STEM and ESAM, the grades are based on what high-achievers are expected to obtain, while the subject-specific criteria consist of what are deemed essential subjects across MOST of the courses covered by the broader areas. However, as mentioned earlier, further requirements may apply for specific courses and we cannot guarantee that you meet the requirements that apply to your preferred course(s).</p>	
QUESTION	ANSWER RE STEM/ESAM	ANSWER RE DES
CAN I TRANSFER TO ANOTHER COUNTRY AND/OR HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND/OR COURSE ONCE AWARDED THIS SCHOLARSHIP?	<p>As explained, STEM/ESAM scholarship recipients choose the course and country (after they confirmed, based on their own research, that the course they prefer is available at undergraduate level in their preferred study destination and that they took all essential school subject that are required for this course). The overseas representative will then explain the options based on the situation of each student (e.g. language level, type of curriculum they pursued, etcetera). However, once the student chose the study destination, accepted their allowance etc and is enrolled in a specific course, they can NO longer transfer to another country.</p> <p>As per the scholarship law, students reserve the right to request for a transfer to another course, however, the scholarships committee reserves the right to NOT grant them such requests in order to safeguard fair competition and treatment, while there is also a maximum duration for studies. In other words, be careful what you wish for (choose) as you WILL be held accountable for your choices!</p>	<p>DES applicants are required to upload a conditional letter of acceptance by the end of the change of preference period and an unconditional letter of acceptance by July 18 (unless they did not yet receive their final marks). The conditional letter of acceptance can be issued by a different university and a different courser than the unconditional letter of acceptance. However, both have to concern a DIRECT ENTRY AND once they submitted a unconditional letter of acceptance, they can NO longer transfer to another country or course (unless it concerns a university that is ranked higher than the one that issued the unconditional letter of acceptance and they did not yet start with their studies).</p>
QUESTION	ANSWER RE DES	
WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CONDITIONAL AND UNCONDITIONAL LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE?	<p>Higher Education Institutions issue conditional LoAs based on your predicted grades and other criteria/requirements.</p> <p>An unconditional letter of acceptance or proof of enrollment means an official letter or message from the university confirming they offered you a place on an undergraduate degree course (some universities do not print another letter of acceptance).</p> <p>The Ministry of Higher Education reserves the right to confirm the authenticity of proofs of enrollment.</p>	
QUESTION	ANSWER RE DES	
IF I MEET THE CRITERIA OF ANY OF THESE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGH-ACHIEVERS, DOES IT STILL MATTER WHAT I LIST AS OTHER OPTIONS AS PART OF MY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION?	<p>YES, how you rank all your options, it matters a lot because, as explained in several features and the HEAC Student Guide, meeting the criteria does not guarantee a place! What? Well, because you are competitively applying which means that the number of eligible applicants may exceed the number of places.</p> <p>If you meet the criteria of DES and/or STEM and ESAM, you should – of course, list them as your preferred options (provided they allow you to study the course you prefer as you will be accountable for your choices!). However, do not put all your eggs into one basket and wisely rank your other options based on what, not WHERE, you want to study!</p>	



QUESTION	ANSWER RE DES
I AM AN A-LEVEL STUDENT AND NOT EXPECTED TO RECEIVE MY FINAL MARKS BY THE END OF THE CHANGE OF PREFERENCE PERIOD – PLEASE ADVISE	A-level and remark students continue to competitively apply based on their predicted marks until they receive their actual grades. Please contact the HEAC for more information.
QUESTION	ANSWER RE DES
ARE DES SCHOLARSHIPS ONLY FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS?	No, all Omani school leavers, regardless of their school curriculum, are provided with an equal opportunity to competitively apply for an undergraduate scholarship, provided they meet the minimum criteria. However, students who still need to improve their language skills and/or pursue a foundation programme, should aim for a STEM/ESAM or SSSD scholarship while they also indirectly benefit from not having to competitively apply against students who do not have to pursue a language and/or foundation programme and who put DES as their first option, instead of STEM/ESAM or SSSD.....This is called streamlining of the types of scholarships.
IF YOU HAVE MORE QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE THE EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS DEPARTMENT THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC SERVICES.	

**EXPERTS* FROM REPUTED UNIVERSITIES SHARE
TIPS ON HOW TO APPLY TO UNIVERSITIES IN THE UK, USA,
AND CONTINENTAL EUROPE**

Are you currently in grade 11 or year 12 and planning to independently apply to well-reputed universities around the world? Read the advice provided by experts from the University of Pennsylvania – an Ivy League University in the United States of America, University College London (UCL) in the United Kingdom*.

FIRST OF ALL, TRY YOUR LUCK!

Applying to a highly ranked research-led university in ANY country is very competitive as they receive large numbers of applications for limited spaces and are very selective.
Having said this, however, you **SHOULD NOT BE DISCOURAGED** to apply; you will not get an offer to study at the university if you do not try...

THINK ABOUT WHAT SUITS YOU!

Remember: Choosing a university should be as much about what suits your personal situation and learning style(s) as it is about the picking the right course and it is important to look beyond where and what you will study and consider the student experience.

Editorial Note: The following is based on inputs provided by experts from reputed universities about applying to universities (not just the ones they represent!) in the United Kingdom, United States of America and the Netherlands. However, we do encourage you to apply to universities in countries other than these three countries.

PLANNING TO APPLY TO A UK OR US UNIVERSITY FOR DIRECT ENTRY?

• PLANNING TO APPLY TO A UK UNIVERSITY? USE UCAS!

- ➔ Applications to **UK UNIVERSITIES** for undergraduate study are through **UCAS, THE UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ADMISSIONS SERVICE**,
- ➔ **UCAS** allows you to apply to 5 choices, however if you are interested in applying to Medicine then you are limited to 4 choices for medicine and your 5th choice needs to be in a different subject area (other than Medicine).

**• PLANNING TO AN US UNIVERSITY?
USE THE COMMON APP!**

- The **COMMON APPLICATION**, which is accepted by nearly 900 schools (HEIs) in the United States, including some colleges located outside the U.S., helps streamline one essential part of the admissions process for students.
- To start, applicants can go to commonapp.org and click on the “Apply Now” button to get details about how to create an account and log in to work on an application through the platform.

NOTE: BEAR IN MIND that in the UK, Omani General Education Diploma-certificate holders will always have to pursue at least a foundation programme, and cannot directly enter into an undergraduate degree, no matter how intelligent they may be! This has to do with the type of curriculum you have pursued.

NOTE: BEAR IN MIND that freshman year is considered direct entry into an undergraduate degree programme and General Education Diploma-certificate holders are eligible to apply to US universities for direct entry, provided they meet all the requirements set by the universities.



01

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT AND APPLY FOR THE PROGRAMME, NOT PRIMARILY THE UNIVERSITY

“Before you move, make sure you think about why you want to study in the U.S. Many students get sucked into the admission mania without looking beyond to the years that follow. Knowing what you want from college is more important than knowing how to get in.”

“In the UK, undergraduate degree programmes tend to be very specialised, allowing you to focus on your chosen subject from day one. Make sure to read the programme descriptions, on the universities’ website, and do not select a programme based on the title alone. It is important to select a programme that is right for you.”

“When choosing what to study, look at the modules and courses you will be taught as there is more to a degree than just a name. An example is Computer Science and Information Technology where there is a great deal of crossover in course content - a computing degree, software engineering degree, and computer networks degree all share strong similarities. The same is the case for business degrees.”

02

LEARN SOME ADMISSION LANGUAGE

- a. “In any (direct entry) admission language, **“HOLISTIC ADMISSION”** and **“FIT”** are words you need to know and key concepts you need to understand.
- b. **HOLISTIC ADMISSION** is the process used by selective (hard to get into) universities to decide who is accepted. Universities look at the whole applicant – not only test scores, grades, and what you have done, but also who you are. This determines your “fit” with their university.
- c. Think of **UNIVERSITY “FIT”** the way you think of clothing “fit” – some clothes are more or less comfortable and some are more or less “you.”
- d. **DID YOU KNOW? “UNIVERSITY FIT CAN BE AN EXPLANATION WHY A STUDENT WITH LOWER GRADES OR SCORES MIGHT BE ACCEPTED, WHILE A STUDENT WITH PERFECT GRADES AND SCORES MIGHT BE DENIED.”**

03

MAKE SURE YOU ARE EXPECTED TO MEET THE MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

“Make sure you expect to achieve the minimum entry requirements for the degree programme you are interested in applying for. The entry requirements for each programme will be listed on the universities’ own websites or in their prospectuses. It will state what grades, qualifications and subjects are required for each programme. It is important that you meet the requirements in order to be considered.”

04

KNOW THE FACTS ABOUT SAT/ACT SCORES IN THE US & ABOUT APTITUDE TESTS AND ASSESSMENTS IN THE UK

“In the US, test scores are really important to some schools and less important to others. Fairtest.org lists over 1,000 test optional schools that do not require the SAT or ACT for admission, just note specific international student requirements. However, consider taking tests early, even before your final year of high school, and remember to look at your scores in a range that is, which is different than the language tests.”

“In the United Kingdom, some programmes, such as Medicine and Law, will require you to take an admissions test. This is an external test and you will need to check the registration deadline for the test, when are the test dates, what the test includes as well as the deadline to take the test. Other programmes may request additional information in the form of a separate essay or a portfolio for art/design-based programmes. You need to be prepared to submit what is requested by the deadline the university sets.”



05

UNDERSTAND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

“Universities will ask you to demonstrate proficiency in English, or to take an approved English language test, including **TOEFL** or **IELTS** that measures your ability to read, write, listen, and speak in English, if English is not your first language. Visit the universities website to find out which English test is accepted and what level English is required for the programme.”

06

ARRANGE FOR ACCESS TO ALL YOUR COURSE WORK AND SCHOOL GRADES

“In holistic admission, all pieces of your application are important, but your coursework and grades, which are listed on your transcripts, will always be most important. We understand that in Oman, grade 12 results usually matter most, but holistic admission tries to understand your overall academic performance. Therefore, U.S. universities look at all of your academic work, beginning with grade 9, to create a picture of you as a student. They look at performance trends over time, results across all subjects, and your academic choices, including how much you challenged yourself.”

07

WRITE A GOOD PERSONAL STATEMENT

“In the UK, you choose the programme you want to study at university when you apply. The personal statement is your chance to show universities why you want to study the programme and it is an opportunity for you to highlight your passion for the subject. Admissions tutors will often use the personal statement as the deciding factor on the application and it is a way for you to differentiate yourself from the competition.”

TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE A PERSONAL STATEMENT WHILE APPLYING TO UK UNIVERSITIES

- i. As a general guide, you should tailor your statement, which is limited to 4000 characters, to the 80/20 rule.
- ii. This means that 80% of your statement should be about the programme you are applying to.
- iii. You need to demonstrate that you are genuinely excited, passionate and curious to study the programme and you should identify qualities, skills and experiences you have as it relates to the programme.
- iv. The remaining part of the statement should be about your extra-curricular activities but it is always important to pull out the skills you have gained from those experiences and how it relates to academia.
- v. Your personal statement is sent to all your university choices on your UCAS application. This is why it is important to apply for a similar programme across all five of your university choices, as you will need to tailor the personal statement to the programme and not to the university.”



08

ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

“Most of your day is spent in class, which is reflected in your transcripts. Your extracurricular activities – what you do when you’re not in class- help an admission counsellor understand your interests and passions. Are you an athlete, musician, maker, artist, poet, or programmer? Do you dedicate your time to serving your community or perhaps you have to use your time helping your family? There are no activities that are better than others. **IN FACT, THE ONLY BAD ACTIVITY IS NO ACTIVITY.** Whether or not your school offers organisations, how you spend your time out of class is up to you. U.S. universities want to see students who get involved. What you choose to get involved in says a lot about who you are, which (again) relates to your “fit” with a school.”

09

DO NOT JUST FOCUS ON THE RANKINGS

“Choosing a university should be as much about what suits your personal situation as it is about the picking the right course and with most Universities being in the top 200 globally; it is important to look beyond what you will study and consider the student experience. Do you want a big city or a small one? Is there a particular sport you want to play? Do you want to live on a campus? Is cost of living a deal-breaker? These are questions that can be answered by looking at websites but also visiting open days and participating in online information sessions.”

10

ARRANGE FOR A TEACHER'S REFERENCE

“A teacher at your school, often supplies the reference, so it is important to ask a teacher who knows you best to write the reference. You will not be able to submit the application to UCAS without the reference.”

11

DOUBLE CHECK YOUR APPLICATION

“Ensure that all aspects of your application are completed, proof read and in order. An incomplete application can delay a decision and may reduce your chances of being accepted.”

12

SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION ON TIME AND PATIENTLY AWAIT A DECISION

“Make sure you are aware of all deadlines and that you are prepared to submit your application on time. As long as you are applying before the deadline, you will have equal consideration on your application. Applications for some universities fall as early as on October, while other programmes have a more flexible application deadline.”

“Top ranking research-based universities are selective in terms of extending offers to prospective students and a decision on the application can take longer to receive as they will be considering every eligible applicant for the programme of study.”

ENRICHING YOUR CROSS-CULTURAL KNOWLEDGE WHILE STUDYING ABROAD

Often one of the questions that springs to our minds when making decisions related to our higher education is, 'Should I find options in my home country? Or should I go abroad?' If the answer takes you the latter, then the next logical step would be weighing in on the pros and cons (advantages and challenges) of choosing to step out of your comfort zone.

Let us begin by telling you that it is not an easy decision at all. Everyone dithers when it comes to choosing the known safety and security of the world around them and exploring new ones.

INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

When you choose to study abroad, you find yourself preparing for an enriching experience of what is called cross-cultural knowledge. You find yourself among people from different walks of life and diverse cultures, who have all come together in one place to learn and master their chosen skills to obtain the necessary educational qualifications.

In this melting pot, you, firstly, become a spokesperson and ambassador for your own culture. You carry forward the rich culture and heritage of Oman and transfer the abundance of goodwill and interpersonal relationships that have been the hallmark of the Sultanate's unique world identity for many years.

STUDENT AMBASSADORS

DISCOVER HOW OTHER WORLDS FUNCTION

Moreover, everyone you come in contact with offers you the opportunity to discover how other worlds function, learn a new language or even languages, contributing both to your cultural sensitivity and to your cultural intelligence. You gain a new first-hand perspective of the other country and culture(s). Opinions that might have been formed through popular cultural but often stereotyped references evolve into a deeper, more relevant and current understanding of the people and their way of life, while you will also realise what values and norms many humans from all over the world have in common.

Moreover, everyone you come in contact with offers you the opportunity to discover

Opinions that might have been formed through popular cultural but often stereotyped references evolve into a deeper, more relevant and current understanding of the people and their way of life, while you will also realise that certain values and norms are universal.



"Cultural Intelligence (as defined by Plum, 2007) means the ability of an individual to make himself understandable to others by finding a productive treatment in situations of cultural difference, i.e., the ability to act appropriately in different cultures with the ability to have an open mind that absorbs new and peculiar information about those cultures," she says and adds, "Therefore, students wishing to complete their studies abroad should acquire cultural intelligence skills."

WHAT IS CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE

ROLE OF SCHOOLS

She says role of the school in its various stages is crucial in giving students the attributes and cognitive qualities that will help them succeed in solving their social problems such as flexibility in thinking and openness to cultures and others' experiences. This helps students interact and participate with individuals from other cultures, build human relationships with those around them, and create the right environment to achieve the process of learning and reach their academic ambition.

One study recommends the necessity to study students' thinking methods at different levels, and train them on how to process their thoughts, so that they can cope with the demands of globalisation and to keep pace with cultural currents, without having an impact on changing their personality, identity, principles, customs and values, while taking what is useful and avoiding anything that goes against their principles, upbringing, religious and human values.

WORKING ON STUDENTS' THOUGHT PROCESSES

ENCOURAGE OPEN-MINDEDNESS

According to Al-Foori, there is a need to prepare a curriculum targeting graduates to become open-minded. This can be achieved by offering them a range of characteristics such as; intuition, cognitive ability, analytical skills and evaluation, usage of evidence and proof in choosing alternatives when making decisions, looking for a relationship of cause to result, flexibility, expression of thoughts, research, investigation, frequent reading, information and problem solving. "This will enable them to develop intelligence in communicating with other cultures with an open mind capable of distinguishing and responding to different thoughts."

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

To drive her point home, Fatma Al-Foori uses the example of Khaled, a young man studying in America, who was able to build good relationships with his American colleagues. During one of their tours, he was invited to join them in a Church, and he decided to accept the invitation because he had a desire to explore more. However, after leaving the church they invited him to convert to their religion, to which he replied saying, "If you were to accept and join Islam, then I will join your religion." This response astonished his colleagues and it was never spoken of again. She asks, "Khaled may have had an open mind, but do all students have that? And would their response be similar to Khalid's?" The answer lies in shared responsibilities, Al-Foori says. "We hold a shared responsibility to increase cultural awareness, to prepare generations with forward thinking and open-mindedness that facilitates coexistence with other cultures."

A number of students graduating with a general education diploma are allocated seats for external scholarships in different countries. "Academically, this category is normally prepared knowledge wise, but are they culturally equipped to accept other cultures through coexistence and dialogue?", asks Al-Foori and adds, "We do not want our students to live in isolation and introversion as a result of fear to engage or to be accepted by others. We expect them to maintain their own identity and act as ambassadors for their country from a scientific and cultural perspective. It is inevitable that students should be characterised with cultural intelligence (cognitively, physically, and emotionally). This is considered one among numerous forms of intelligence witnessed in the 21st century as a result of research conducted by experts in social psychology and management sciences.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF STUDENTS

"Different cultures (values, customs, and traditions) put students under psychological pressure that might cause social problems. Consequently, this forms an obstacle and hinders the process of blending in the new environment where the student lives. The more students are informed about cultural differences between civilisations, the better they adapt to live in harmony with others taking such differences into consideration. Students adjust emotionally and control their actions to peacefully coexist within different cultures."



Fatma Khalfan Khamis Al-Foori

Head of Curriculum – National Career Guidance Center, Ministry of Education highlights the importance of Cultural Intelligence and what is expected of students when they are studying abroad.



EXPERT ADVICE: THE MINISTRY'S OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES AND DIRECTOR OF EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS DEPARTMENT ON CODE OF CONDUCT, SAFETY, CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION & MAKING INFORMED DECISIONS

KNOW YOUR MINISTRY'S OVERSEAS REPRESENTATIVES

CULTURAL ATTACHÉS

Cultural Attachés are part Cultural Attaché Offices (CAOs) and are assigned to diplomatic missions abroad and fall under the jurisdiction of the office of His Excellency the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Higher Education.

- Liaising with overseas Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and following up on academic progress students studying abroad, fall among their purview.
- There are CAOs in the UK (UK, Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands fall under their jurisdiction), Malaysia, Australia (also NZ under their jurisdiction) and United States of America (this includes Canada as well)

COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES

They are part of the CAOs (e.g. in the Netherlands) and/or Consulate-General (e.g. New Zealand) or they are an entity within that country (E.g. DAAD in Germany and SFERE in France)

EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIP DEPARTMENT

The external scholarship department, belongs to the DG of Scholarships in Oman and main tasks include preparing the annual scholarship plan, facilitating the student outflow and co-ordinate with country representative, follow-up on progress, issues (if any) and requests.

PRESENTED BELOW ARE A FEW USEFUL AND IMPORTANT WORDS OF ADVICE FROM THESE TRUSTWORTHY SOURCES TO CONSIDER:



ON PARAMETERS WHEN CHOOSING COURSE AND OVERSEAS STUDY DESTINATION

RESPONSE FROM THE CAO IN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

- "Firstly, check if the university is accredited. This means that the university has to be officially recognised by higher education bodies worldwide. Ensure that you look at universities chosen by the Cultural Attaché Office are accredited and the programme as well.
- "Also take into consideration the university facilities such as housing, libraries, computer access, health centres, and culture and entertainment. Large research universities will have large budgets to invest in faculty, classroom technology and research and development labs for science, engineering and other fields of study. Of course, academic quality, employment statistics and international reputation can help match your university choice with your priorities be it career wise or pursuing graduate studies.
- "Also, if you know what field you would like to study, use that to your advantage. Get the school's job statistics for your desired fields' departments. If possible, seek out career professionals in that field and their input."
- Finally, in terms of choosing a study destination, do consider your preferences. Some students have strong preference as to whether they would like to live in a big city or somewhere a little quieter. School and residence location can have a big impact on their overall college experience. Choosing a university with your proffered location in mind can help make your student life easier and more enjoyable."



ON MANAGING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES AND ADAPTING TO THE LAWS OF THE LAND

RESPONSE FROM THE CAO IN LONDON, THE UK

- "Do not be fazed and take things one day at a time. Allow yourself to settle down and make yourself aware of the rules and regulations of the country. Keep in mind that what might be allowed or acceptable in Oman, may not be allowed in the UK and vice versa. If at any point you have difficulty understanding what is being said or are unsure how to interpret its meaning or proceed, be forthright, ask questions and learn."
- "Never sign any legal document before you are fully aware of the contents and understand it and can commit to it. Never ignore any e-mail or letter addressed to you from a well-known organisation. While there is freedom of speech in UK, it is subject to laws of the land and therefore we would advise all students to be careful and aware when using the social media as this could affect their scholarship and visa status."
- "We would always advise you to refrain from getting involved in political or religious debates be it online or offline. If you are staying with host families, do not expect them to clean up after you. You will be expected to tidy up your bed, do your own laundry and do the dishes after eating. Do not expect them to help with your studies either."
- "Remember that as an Omani student studying abroad, you are the country's cultural ambassador as well. So as much as it is your duty to study well and obtain high grades, so is it your responsibility and privilege to educate the world about Omani heritage and culture that teaches kindness, hospitality and peace."



ON REEL VERSUS REAL EXPECTATIONS

FROM THE CONSULATE-GENERAL'S OFFICE IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

- "Keep in mind that the realistic expectations of studying at a university outside of your own hometown might vary significantly to your perceived expectations. It's important to remember that university is about self-management and self-motivation, and that they have to be responsible for your own learning, time management, enrolment and attendance."
- "You shouldn't be afraid of asking for help when you need it, there are a lot of services on campus to support you. Academic expectations can be difficult and demanding at university, compared to school. It can be quite normal for students with top high school marks to sometimes struggle at university."
- "To overcome these expectations, it is recommended that you research as much information you can about the country and location you will be living in during your study period, also research about the university itself. Many universities have social media pages you can join to gather more information."
- "It is also recommended that all new student attend orientation at their new university. This will allow you to meet new people, speak to past students about the courses that you have considered to study, this opportunity will also set the expectations for you."



ON CODE OF CONDUCT & STAYING SAFE ABROAD

FROM THE CAO IN WASHINGTON D.C., THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- "It is important that you be successful in your academic study, abide by regulations and laws of your university and in the state where you study, be friendly, help others, participate in university activities, represent your culture in gatherings."
- "In terms of staying safe both on and off-campus, it is good to adopt some good practices like:
- Checking with your peers before you decide where to live or with whom;
- Checking reviews in trusted online websites about the places of where you may want to live.
- "Do NOT rush in making a quick decision of where to live. Take your time in deciding. If you decide to live with a roommate, make sure that person is trustworthy. Ask about him/her in the department and around. It is important to go to the "right" place at the "right" time. In other words, don't blame anyone but yourself if you have an unfortunate accident if you are attacked after midnight in the middle of an area with a notorious reputation."

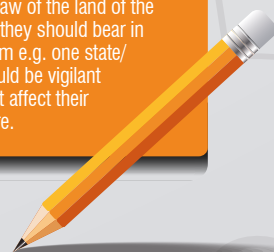
ON CODE OF CONDUCT

KHALID AL SHAQSI, DIRECTOR OF THE EXTERNAL SCHOLARSHIPS DEPARTMENT

- "Code of Conduct is a common practice in many major institutions and it defines the relationships between members benefiting from the institution."
- The code of conduct issued by the Ministry of Higher Education addresses the relationship between students and the Ministry and the other parties that represent the ministry. It also highlights the rights and responsibilities of each party."

STUDENTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Students are required to provide the CAO or any supervising authority with up-to-date and accurate academic reports and records upon issuance of these documents by the higher education institution.
- They are also required to maintain communication in a proper and polite manner with higher education institutions, supervisors, peers and Ministry officials.
- Students must have enough knowledge of the rules in Oman, especially the Civil Law and also the Scholarship law and all the regulations based on it
- Once they are in the host country, students must ensure that they abide by the law of the land of the country during their studies – they should bear in mind that the law can vary from e.g. one state/province to another. They should be vigilant as their code of conduct might affect their Visa status and residency there.



DISPELLING MYTHS BEHIND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TESTS IN VIEW OF SCHOLARSHIP REQUIREMENTS

As a school student, you must have been told on many instances that you might have to sit for an English Language test when competitively applying for scholarships, in particular external scholarships and/or when applying for courses to international universities. However, there is unfortunately a lot of misinformation, due to misinterpretations and fears, regarding the English Language Tests.

With a few exceptions, including France and Germany, the English language has been adopted as the medium (=language) of instruction for all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and programmes in the Sultanate and abroad. Therefore, most scholarship students need strong English language skills for their future higher studies. If you are not yet fluent in English, do not worry, you will be provided with the opportunity to spend maximum one year improving your English language skills in case you are competitively awarded a scholarship.

The Ministry of Higher Education selected HEIs in the United States, the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, New Zealand and also in the Netherlands, Ireland, Bahrain, Cyprus and Malaysia where the HEIs offer programmes in English. To avoid a late start, we encourage all prospective external

scholarship applicants to complete an ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY test, which could include IELTS or TOEFL or even another English language test provided this is accepted in the study destination and by the HEI, and we included some advice on how to prepare for an IELTS exam. Should you be competitively selected to pursue your higher undergraduate studies abroad, we will reimburse the cost of a limited number of IELTS or TOEFL tests as part of a one-time allowance.

WHY DO STUDENTS HAVE TO TAKE AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST?

- In view of all other scholarships, you are encouraged to sit for an English Language Proficiency test because, among other things, it will help to facilitate placement procedures based on your entry level (e.g. do you first have to enroll in an English language course, etc)
- Based on your score, it will be decided in which level you will be placed
- Your ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY test result will tell the Ministry and university if your English is good enough to start with a foundation, first year of the undergraduate degree course or if you first need to pursue an English language course.
- You need to be proficient in the medium of instruction (usually English, except for in Germany and France) to help succeed in your academic studies.
- It is important that you sit for the test within a timeframe to avoid delays in the Ministry's decision-making process on whether a student should first pursue a language course or can start with the foundation programme.

WHAT IF I ACHIEVE A LOW SCORE ON MY ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST – WILL THIS AFFECT MY SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION?

- NO, IT WILL NOT AFFECT YOUR CHANCES!!!!
- While the Ministry of Higher Education and/or universities recommend that you take a language test, it is important to keep in mind that it is okay if you have achieved a low score. You do not need to repeat the test over and over again in order to get a high score.
- Students are ADVISED to take a test for placement procedures, unless specified otherwise.

WHY DOES THE MINISTRY ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO TAKE THE IELTS FOR UKVI (UK VISA PROCEDURES) TEST IN VIEW OF EXTERNAL UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS?

- At present, IELTS for UKVI is required (a MUST) for student visa procedures in view of who wants to pursue a foundation programme in the United Kingdom.
- The reason IELTS is recommended for UKVI is that NO one can predict who will competitively apply for a scholarship allocated to the UK, who will be competitively awarded a scholarship to the UK and/or what their entry level will be!
- Remember that the UKVI test is available only in the capital city (Muscat) and scores neither affect your scholarship applications, nor are they necessary for ALL visa procedures, not even in the UK (e.g. students who first have to pursue a language course, do NOT require an IELTS for UKVI).
- If you are wondering about whether or not you should take the UKVI test, do check with your school career counsellor, the universities and authorities on what alternative tests can be taken and remember that these tests will help save time spent on travelling to Muscat.

WHAT IS IELTS AND HOW CAN YOU PREPARE FOR THE TEST? AND WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN IELTS AND IELTS FOR UKVI?!

- IELTS is a test of your English and a test of all four skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing. The better your English is, the better your chances are of getting the score you need so do as much as you can to improve your English before you take the test.
- IELTS and IELTS for UKVI ARE THE SAME in terms of format, content, scoring and level of difficulty.
- However, 'IELTS for UKVI' is a UK government approved Secure English Language Test (SELT). Basically, the security settings are tighter when it comes to taking the IELTS for UKVI exam.
- The Test Report Form which contains your results is slightly different to show that you have taken the test at an official IELTS for UKVI location, which is approved by the UK Home Office.
- Read the information provided by the only two IELTS for UKVI test providers in Oman on the following pages for more information.

DISCLAIMER: All information given here is based on facts available at the time of going to print. PLEASE NOTE that this information is SUBJECT TO CHANGES and will be updated accordingly. So PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU CONTACT THE RELEVANT AUTHORITIES FOR ALL AND ANY UPDATES.



IELTS academic for UK visas and immigration “UKVI”

If you want to study in the UK below degree level or if you need a SELT test for a direct application to UK visas and immigration, then this is the test for you. It involves listening, reading, writing and speaking.

If I take an IELTS test for UK visa purposes, can I use my result in other countries / for other purposes?

Yes. IELTS test results are accepted by more than 10,000 organisations worldwide, including universities, colleges, governments and employers across the world.

How often can I re-take IELTS for UKVI?

There are no restrictions on retaking the test, you can take them as often as you like.

How is my IELTS test different if I take it for UK visa purposes?

Separate sessions are held for UKVI applicants. You must ensure you register for an 'IELTS for UKVI' test date at the locations listed at www.takeIELTS.org/IELTS-UKVI/book-IELTS-UKVI. The IELTS test for UK visa purpose is designed to meet certain administrative requirements that are specific to UK visas and immigration. Test report forms will be slightly different, to show that test takers have taken the test at an IELTS UK visa session. There are no differences in the test format or questions. The actual test taken is the same – same content, examiners, format, level of difficulty, scoring and so on.

I've already taken a regular IELTS few months back, However I was chosen for a scholarship in the UK, can I still use my result to apply to UK visas and immigration?

No, you must submit the result that shows that you have taken the IELTS for UKVI test.

How often is an IELTS for UKVI test available? And where?

The test is held three times a month at the British Council's test venue in Muscat.

see the list of dates and locations at: www.takeIELTS.org/IELTS-UKVI/book-IELTS-UKVI



We're here to help you get your IELTS journey back on track following the Covid-19 suspensions

Along with free materials to help you prepare, we're putting measures in place to ensure your safety on test day:

- We'll be regularly sanitising all our test venues
- We'll be following local guidance on test takers and staff wearing masks and gloves
- To ensure social distancing, we'll be asking everyone to keep 2 metres apart at all times

You'll also receive further information on our safety measures in your confirmation email once you've registered.

#HereToHelp

Book your test now to resume your IELTS journey takeielts.org

Resume your IELTS journey with our free preparation materials



British Council is a proud co-owner of IELTS.

**IELTS™****IELTS for UKVI****IELTS**www.idpieelts.me

Planning to go to the UK? Here's how an IELTS test can help!

The UK is one of the top destinations for people who want to study or move abroad. The country's thriving economy, sophisticated education and healthcare systems, and rich cultural diversity make it the first choice for thousands who want to build a better future overseas.

But if you're thinking about moving to the UK, whether for study, work or migration, you will have to prove your English language skills through taking an English test that is approved by the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Department, as well as the institution you're applying for.

Read on to find out how an IELTS for UKVI test can get you there!

First, what is IELTS for UKVI test?

IELTS for UKVI is an official Secure English Language Test (SELT) approved by the UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI) Department for visa applications to the UK. So, if you're applying for a UK visa, or looking to start your undergraduate or postgraduate studies at a UK university or college, you'll need to prove your English language proficiency through taking this test.

I'm applying to study in the UK, which IELTS for UKVI test should I take?

The required IELTS for UKVI test depends on the admission requirements of the UK institution you are applying for. So, you need to check the institution's website first to know about the test they need you to take, before booking your IELTS test.

But generally speaking, if you are going to study in the UK, you will need to take one of these two tests:

- **IELTS for UKVI Academic:** This is for people who want to study at Undergraduate or Post-graduate levels in UK and for people who also seek professional registrations there.
- **IELTS for UKVI General Training:** This is for people who want to train or study in the UK below the degree level, and for people who want to

migrate to the UK under certain visa categories.

IELTS Life Skills is another IELTS for UKVI test, but it is unlikely that you will need to take this test to study. IELTS Life Skills is only for people who want to apply for 'family of settled person' visas, or for indefinite leave to remain or citizenship in the UK. It is not required if you want to apply for an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in the UK.

What is the difference between an IELTS test and an IELTS for UKVI test?

The IELTS for UKVI tests are taken at a UKVI-approved test centre and must meet the administrative requirements outlined by the UK Home Office. To show that the test was taken in a UKVI approved test centre, your Test Report Form (TRF) will look slightly different.

However, the test format of IELTS for UKVI (AC and GT types) is the same as the other IELTS (Academic and GT) tests in terms of content, format, scoring and level of difficulty. This means that IELTS for UKVI is also accepted outside of the UK.

How can I choose my IELTS for UKVI test?

Your IELTS test type depends on your visa and the institution you are applying for in

the UK. We encourage you to check the test requirements on your institution website and the UKVI website before registering to take the test.

If I take an IELTS test for UKVI, can I use my result in other countries/for other purposes?

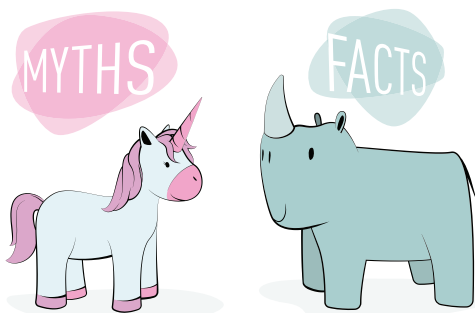
Yes. Your IELTS for UKVI General Training or IELTS for UKVI Academic scores can be used to apply for study, work or migration visas across the globe. IELTS test results are accepted by over 10,000 organisations worldwide, including universities, colleges, governments and employers.

You however cannot use IELTS General Training or IELTS Academic scores to apply for a UK Visa.

Where can I take IELTS for UKVI test in Oman?

You must take your IELTS for UKVI test at an official test center approved by the UK Visa and Immigration Department. IDP IELTS Oman test center is authorized to offer IELTS for UKVI testing services. Check out the test dates and register for your test at their website:

<https://www.idp.com/oman/ielts/book-my-ielts-test/muscat-ielts-ukvi/>



CHOOSING A SUITABLE COURSE

ZAINA

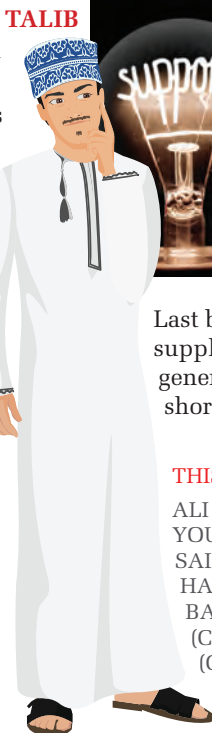


The first and most important choice you should make is **WHAT** you would like to study. Focus on which courses or course suit(s) **YOUR** skills, abilities, talents and ambitions!

However, with so many different options to choose from, we understand that as a young student stepping up and making an informed choice can be a daunting task. Choosing a suitable course will be based on your own decision-making process, but at least we can help you make these decisions based on accurate, transparent, and easy-to-grasp information that relies on facts and research rather than hearsay and unfiltered sources.

In this section, we have included advice* experts from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, current students, and alumni, graduates who found a job as well as from the counsellors or career specialists from different schools in Oman.

We have also introduced our Omani student mascots, Zaina and Talib, who will explain how they are exploring their options based on reel versus real expectations.



Last but not least, as a special and separate supplement to this section, we have put together an generic overview of undergraduate courses and their short definitions.

THIS SECTION'S GUEST CONTRIBUTORS:

ALI HAMAD SALEH AL GHANBOUSI (COUNSELLOR), YOUSSEF BIN NASSER AL-SARHANI (COUNSELLOR), SAIF BIN HAR EB AL GHAFRI (COUNSELLOR), HALIMA AL BULUSHI (COUNSELLOR), DENISE BARKER (COUNSELLOR), DR ADNAN FZEA (COUNSELLOR), MOHAMMED ALI AL BALUSHI (CAS GRADUATE), ALSHEFAA YAHYA ALYAZEEDI (STUDENT), MAUD ALSUQRI (STUDENT), RAJ HAM LAI (STUDENT), WED LASH KO (STUDENT), ALI AL FARSI (STUDENT), ROUYA ALSAID (STUDENT), AMR KASHOOB (STUDENT), SULTAN AHMED ALNIYABI (STUDENT), ALA ALFARSI (STUDENTS), NADIR BAIT SALEEM (STUDENT), AND THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SULTANATE OF OMAN.

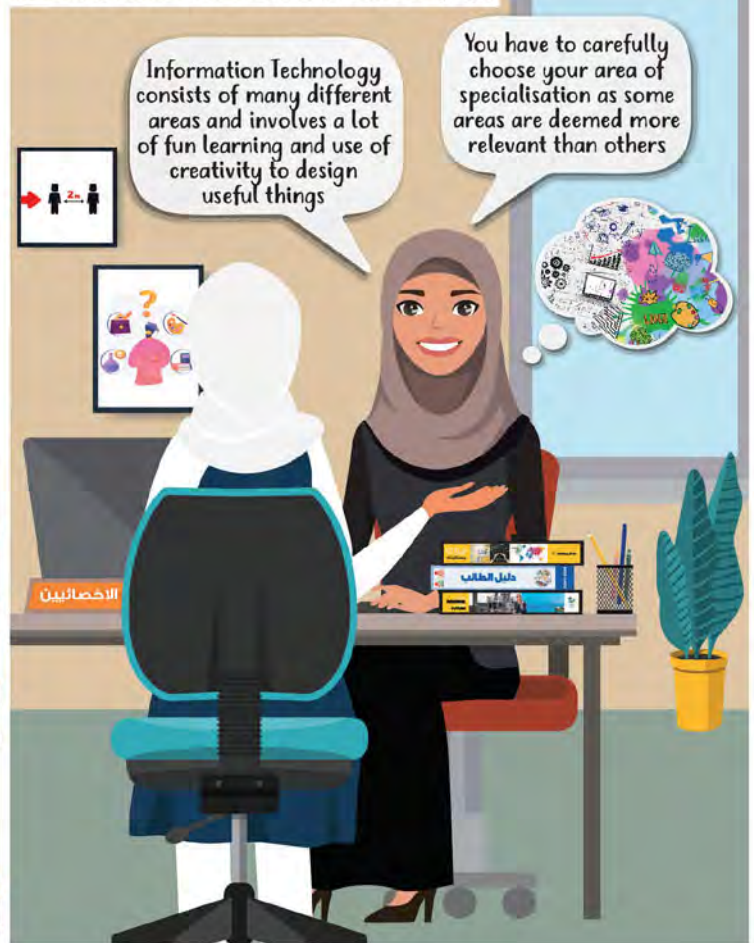
Disclaimer: Although the content of this section has been painstakingly put together by experts from the Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to make sure you, dear students, are provided with accurate and comprehensive information, in case of any ambiguities and/or discrepancies between the content of this section and what has been published in official Government publications, please note that in such events, the content of official Government publications shall prevail.

Though the content of YDYF Magazine has been vetted for accuracy by YDYF National Awareness Campaign (run by the MoE and MoHE) they CANNOT be held liable for the views expressed here by guest contributors which belong solely to the authors.

WHAT I USED TO THINK ABOUT STUDYING INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT):



WHAT I KNOW NOW ABOUT INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT):



WHAT I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO WORK IN THE TOURISM SECTOR:



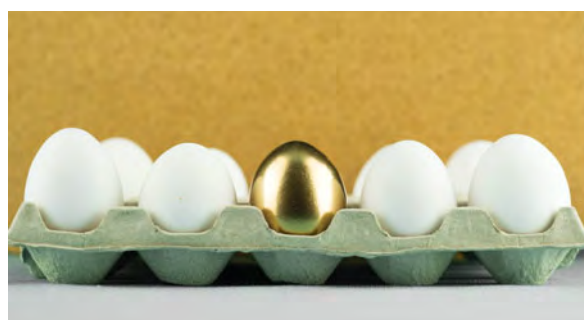
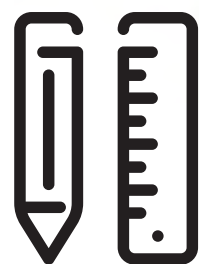
WHAT IT IS REALLY LIKE TO WORK IN THE TOURISM SECTOR:





(THE IMPORTANCE OF) CHOOSING A SUITABLE COURSE

The course or major, as well as the teaching and learning methods, have to be a right fit for you and everyone is unique with distinctive talents and capabilities. We have included advice from experts from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, as well as from your peers and counsellors.



It is important to understand your own unique talents, skills, capabilities and further develop these in order for your future employer(s) and/or you to capitalise on these strengths

“EVERYONE IS A GENIUS. BUT IF YOU JUDGE A FISH BY ITS ABILITY TO CLIMB A TREE, IT WILL LIVE ITS WHOLE LIFE BELIEVING THAT IT IS STUPID” – ALBERT EINSTEIN

HEART & MIND: TAKE A BALANCED APPROACH

Your passion or your intrinsic interest is what drives you and will usually allow you to go that extra mile during your studies and career. It encourages you to be the best version of yourself and to pursue interests and turn your talents into meaningful career options. Your pragmatism or extrinsic motivation (e.g. the possibility of successful job prospects that are also considered to be useful in contributing to your nation's economic needs) will direct you towards a path that is holistic.

Other than job security and passion, also take into consideration your learning abilities. Ask yourself: Am I more practical (an applied learner who learns by doing) or more research-oriented (more of an academic who likes to read and do research)

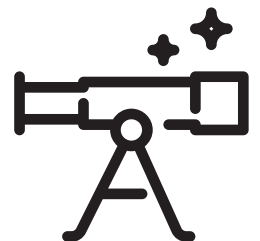
VINCI ”



- Alpha [Latin] stands for languages, arts and humanities.
- Beta [Latin] stands for mathematics and sciences.
- Gamma [Latin] stands for social sciences, including economics and law.
- Some students are interested in all these areas and good at all school subjects, while some find they are good at Maths and Science, but cannot manage to become fluent in a language other than their own.
- Some notice that they are good at learning languages but not good with numbers, etc.
- There's nothing to worry. You are still intelligent and although being creative and tech-savvy is a good combination, keep in mind that there are plenty of Engineers and IT experts, who are not exactly Shakespeare.



Good grades and an ideal mix of subjects will definitely add to your advantages. For Omani students who are currently in grade 10, it is important to strategically choose subjects they will study from Grade 11 to Grade 12. These subjects will help them meet requirements set by Higher Education Institutions, which may vary according to programmes.



You have to do your own research when it comes to learning about the needs of the ever-changing economy and also understand that these needs are always subject to changes. This has also been explained in the interview with Her Excellency the Minister of Higher Education and other experts featured in this edition of YDYF.



TEST THE WATERS: VISIT COMPANIES & CONSIDER JOB SHADOWING WHILE STILL IN SCHOOL

A visit to organisations and/or companies that are related to your possible course choices help. You can ask or request them to allow you to spend a few days job shadowing (following around a professional) to understand the day-to-day workings of that job or career.



TEST THE WATERS: (VIRTUALLY) VISIT UNIVERSITIES

Visiting, including virtually visiting, a university and attending (virtual) open days allows you to open up your mind to possibilities and also zone in on what might be up your street. Keep in mind that studying for a degree is not the same as working as a professional with a degree.

You could also take an online aptitude test to find out more about what suits you and your interests and skills. Also, keep an eye out for the YDYF website application: ydyf-app.com



READ ABOUT THE COURSE CONTENT

Once you have narrowed your options down, educate yourself by reading more about the course outline and curriculum. These allow you to weigh the details and compare them with your interests, aptitude and learning skills.

NARROW DOWN YOUR OPTIONS

Look at the broader area of study that will narrow your options to majors within that area. Even if you are unsure about the specific major or course, you will still be able to finalise the broader area.

YOUR INTUITION IS YOUR GUIDE

Take advice from everyone and use that advice to reach your own decision. Often, we allow ourselves to second-guess the decisions we have taken because it does not match our parents' expectations. No one wants to hurt parents but remember that first and foremost, your parents are expected to have your interests at heart.



WORDS OF ADVICE: TALK TO YOUR PARENTS & SCHOOL COUNSELLORS

Your parents and your school counsellors are your guides and they are always at hand to gently nudge you towards your decisions. Reach out and talk to them. They might be able to offer a perspective that you have not been able to see before. They can also advise you on what approach to take when making decisions and show you where your strengths lie.



So, if your intuition (gut feeling or inner voice) says that a particular course is where your future career or careers lie, then collect evidence and present it to your parents respectfully and help them see how passionate and dedicated you are to the chosen course. Again, an aptitude test might be helpful as an independent guide. The website icares.com is an example of a free of charge aptitude test to assess your skills and interests and is available in many languages, including English and Arabic.

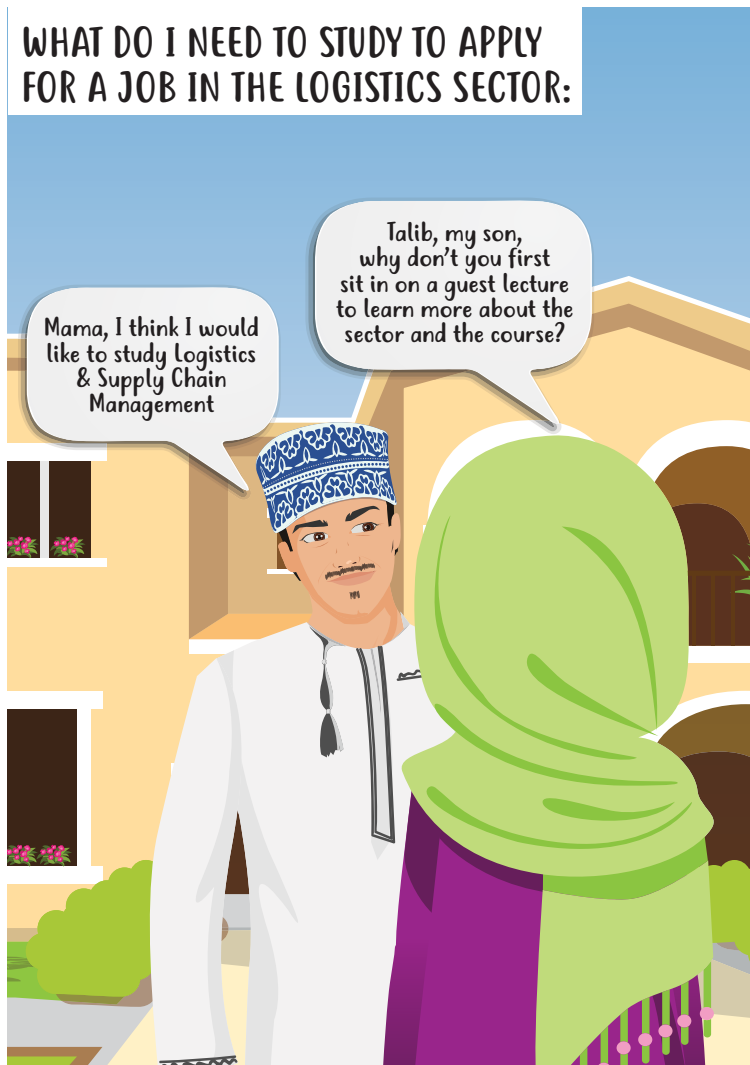
WHAT IS IT REALLY LIKE TO WORK IN THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR?



I MET WITH REAL HEALTHCARE WORKERS AT A HOSPITAL TODAY!



WHAT DO I NEED TO STUDY TO APPLY FOR A JOB IN THE LOGISTICS SECTOR:



SITTING IN ON A GUEST LECTURE:



TIPS FROM EXPERTS: CAREER COUNSELLORS

Apart from parents, if there is anyone a student often turns to for guidance it is the Career Counsellor in their school. They are experienced professionals who not only understand the nuances of educational decisions but are also well-equipped to communicate with the student on their level. Your Decision, Your Future Magazine spoke to professionals from schools across the Sultanate and asked them for their advice to students, who are at the critical juncture of their journey towards higher education.



Your future course or major HAS to be a right fit for you to avoid spending time in a programme that holds little interest or, worse, dropping out and risking your scholarship (if applicable).

So how does one go about choosing the right direction according to the counsellors?

YOUR INTERESTS, NOT YOUR EXPECTED EXAM RESULTS, SHOULD DRIVE YOUR CHOICES



“My advice to students [who are attempting to apply to higher education institutions] is always to avoid selection based on assumptions that are driven by their expectations on exam results. They should choose courses based on their true interests and their knowledge about educational institutions and the disciplines offered.”

Saif bin Hareb Al Ghafri, career counsellor from Abdullah bin Omar School Basic Education (grade 5-12)



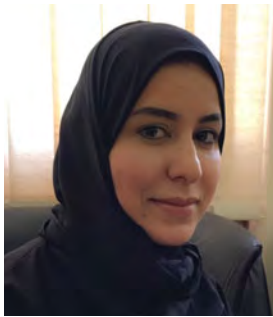
RANK YOUR OPTIONS WISELY: CHOOSE THE COURSES THAT SUIT YOU FIRST, NOT THE STUDY DESTINATION OR WHAT YOUR COUSIN STUDIES

“My advice to our students is to prioritise their options according to their preferences and interests. I would also say first list options of specialisation rather than of university. Students should NOT allow friends to influence the decision. Every student has different interests from each other.”

Youssef bin Nasser Al-Sarhani, school counsellor from Ahmed bin Saeed Al-Khalili School (grade 11-12)



“It is important to obtain approval of the parents or guardian, especially to study abroad”

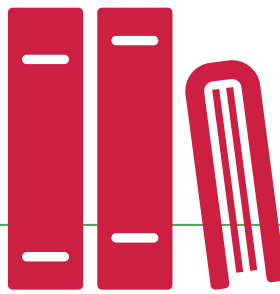


MAKE WELL-INFORMED CHOICES CONSULT THE AUTHORITIES & MA- SURE YOUR PARENTS APPROVE YOUR CHOICES

“Students should consider universities approved by the Ministry of Higher Education in the Sultanate of Oman. The selection should be based on preference and an understanding of the merits of joining that institution, whether it is in the Sultanate or abroad. It is [also] important to obtain approval of the parents or guardian, especially to study in foreign countries, particularly young girls.”

“Students should explore more about the countries, the customs, the advantages, the universities and make use of ‘Your Decision Your Future Magazine’ to do so. They can learn from the experiences of senior students on scholarships”. (dot missing after scholarships).

Halima Al Bulushi, career counsellor from Dohat Al Adab Basic Education School (grade 10-12)



ADVICE TO PARENTS ON HELPING THEIR CHILDREN TO PREPARE FOR ACADEMIC LIFE AND MAKING CHOICES ABOUT THEIR FUTURE STUDIES

“The role of the family is clear and evident, especially at the stage of university life and the selection of courses and whatever it implies with regards to selection of the academic professional, technical and scientific specialisations, the requirements of the Omani labour market and keeping abreast of all developments that occur at the level of different jobs and professions in the governmental and private sectors in a way that guarantees the student a bright and promising future and in order to achieve the goals of students and their future aspirations. Dear parents and guardians, be the support and aid to your child.”

Ali Hamad Saleh Al Ghanbousi, counsellor from Al Heddah School for Basic Education

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-EVALUATION EXERCISES

“Students are encouraged to engage in an initial self-evaluation exercise to determine what course/career pathway is a good fit for their interests and abilities. Career-focused aptitude tests (many are freely available online) can help students to make that judgment. In terms of finding a university that is a good match, students are prompted to use various platforms such as Unifrog and BridgeU through which they can generate a personalised search, which provides results that are aligned with their academic profile and preferences (for example, location, campus size or ranking). Staying abreast of trends in the job markets and emerging industries can also help students to determine the level of demand for professionals in each field.”

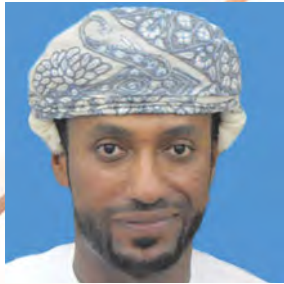
Denise Barker, counsellor from the American British Academy (ABA)

ROLE OF COUNSELLORS

“The classic role of a school counsellor is to assist students with their application to the higher education. Hence, much of the guidance in the past would focus on explaining the application process and preparing documents. However, in the past decade, the role of counselors has progressed into a more comprehensive guidance system that involves assisting students with academic, personal, social and behavioural needs.”

Dr Adnan Fzea, career counsellor from The Sultan's School

YOUR DECISION, **YOUR FUTURE**



By Mohammed Al
Balushi, communications
specialist and graduate
from Sur College of
Applied Sciences,
Sultanate of Oman

ENCOURAGING ADVICE FROM STUDENTS PURSUING HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is indeed a phase that requires special attention from students.

Undoubtedly, choosing your university course is one of the life's tough decisions to be made, as it requires the involvement of various factors, such as one's interest, the country of study, apart from feedback received from other people that includes peers, friends, parents and other relatives and elders.

Some argue that in order for students to properly weigh between the pros and cons of a certain major or course, they need to put in sufficient efforts into researching the local and even global job markets. Also, for some joining posts they feel content with is the ultimate goal of their higher education journey.

While some strongly believe that proper exploration of future job prospects should be the key driver for students when embarking on a certain course, others have a very positive attitude towards the norm

that decisions on university courses should be established based on one's interest, including childhood passion, for instance.

The argument that could be made here is that students need to be cautious that, as time goes on, they may not have the same energy and motive in practicing the profession they selected keeping the job market in mind. Instead, they should put interest on the top of their priorities during the course selection stage and never compromise that with the wages they expect to receive after joining a particular position in their chosen career.

WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM OTHER STUDENTS (YOUR PEERS)?

Your Decision, Your Future Magazine interviewed a group of Omani and non-Omani students studying abroad to find out what factors these students considered while navigating through the proper paths, which helped them eventually settle on their chosen courses, and to what

extent these courses have met their expectations.

With the whole world taking special measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be interesting to hear the experience each of the students have gone through so far, with regards to the crucial decision they had made on staying abroad, during this exceptional period of history, or returning to their home lands.



STUDENT ADVICE

ALSHEFAA YAHYA ALYAZEEDI

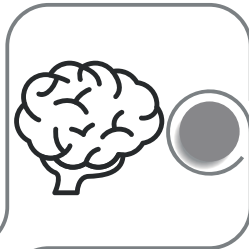
COURSE NAME & YEAR:

Bachelor of Medicine and
Bachelor of Surgery, (Year 2)

UNIVERSITY NAME: University
of Glasgow

COUNTRY: The United Kingdom

We spoke to students from various years and universities to offer their perspective on studying abroad and choosing the right courses.



MAJD AL SUQRI

COURSE NAME & YEAR: Neuroscience and Psychology
(Senior Year)

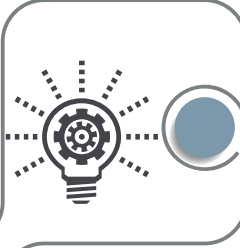
UNIVERSITY NAME: University of Colorado Boulder

COUNTRY: The United States of America

RAJ HAMLAI
**Course Economics (Year of
2023)**

University Name: UCLA
University of California Los
Angeles

Country: The United States
of America



NADIR BAIT SALEEM

COURSE NAME & YEAR: Physics
(Freshman year)

UNIVERSITY NAME: University of Minnesota

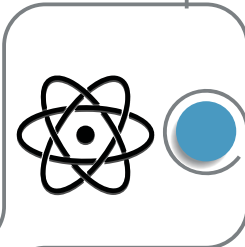
COUNTRY: The United States of America

WED LASHKO

**COURSE NAME &
YEAR:** Actuarial
Science (Freshman
year)

**UNIVERSITY
NAME:**
Pennsylvania State
University

COUNTRY: The
United States of
America

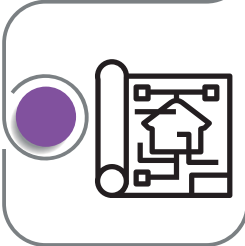
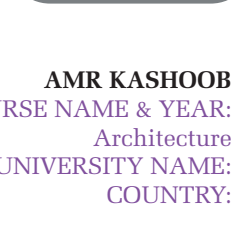


ALI AL FARSI

COURSE NAME & YEAR: Business Administration in
Innovation & Entrepreneurship and Hospitality Management
with a minor in Sustainability (Senior Year)

UNIVERSITY NAME: The George Washington University
(GWU)

COUNTRY: The United States of America

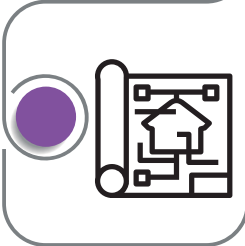


AMR KASHOOB

COURSE NAME & YEAR:
Architecture

UNIVERSITY NAME:

COUNTRY:

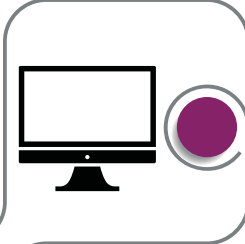


SULTAN AHMED ALNIYADI

COURSE NAME & YEAR:
Computer Programming C++
(CSE100) (Sophomore year)

UNIVERSITY NAME: Arizona
State University

COUNTRY: The United States
of America



ALA AL FARSI

COURSE NAME & YEAR: Business
Administration (Year 2)

UNIVERSITY NAME: The George
Washington University

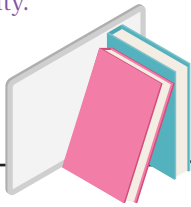
COUNTRY: The United States of America



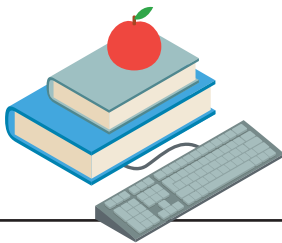
"IT IS A BIG-TIME COMMITMENT AND A LOT OF WORK, SO I WOULD NOT WANT TO GO INTO SOMETHING I AM NOT PASSIONATE ABOUT."

WHEN CHOOSING A COURSE, WHAT WERE THE SPECIFIC PARAMETERS YOU USED TO DECIDE ON YOUR PREFERRED COURSE? WHAT ROLE DID YOUR PASSION PLAY IN MOTIVATING YOU TO CHOOSE THE COURSE?

AMR KASHOOB: I was always interested in Architecture, and that's why I decided to study that in university.



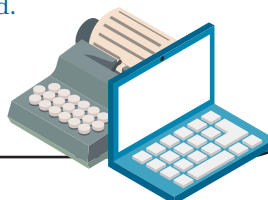
MAJD AL SUQRI: I thought about what areas of Science I enjoy learning (biology, chemistry, etc.) and it helped me narrow down what area I'm interested in. I also considered all the possible postgraduate programmes that I could pursue with my degree. I talked to several people in the field who helped me to balance the pros and cons of choosing my major. I've always had a passion for learning more about diseases and hence tried to focus on pursuing that.



RAJ HAMLAI: I chose my course based on my career goals. I hope to work in either business or finance, so I decided Economics would be a good fit for me. Furthermore, I also made sure I had an interest in my course and passion for the subject before choosing it. It is a big-time commitment and a lot of work, so I would not want to go into something I am not passionate about.

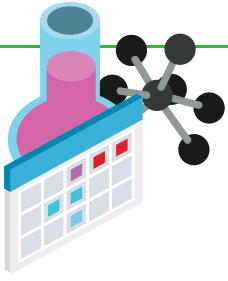


WED LASHKO: When I chose my course, I talked to a lot of people elder than me and asked questions about the job market in Oman. I was advised by many of them to pursue a career in actuarial science. I was always very inclined towards maths and that played a big role in me feeling like I can succeed in it. Also, I know there are many career opportunities available as it's uncommon major that's demanded.



WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO





NADIR BAIT SALEEM:

Passion played a large role in my choice of a Physics major. I had always enjoyed the subject and felt that it would be a good fit for me. I also felt that a future career as a researcher would be a worthwhile and impactful one.

ALSHEFAA YAHYA ALYAZEEDI: 'Whoever kills a person it is as though he has killed all mankind. And whoever saves a life, it is as though he had saved all mankind.' (Quran 5:32) This valuable lesson and my passion for learning about the human body and its workings, helped me make my decision to be a medical student and choose medicine.



ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE
INFORMED CHOICES AND REACH
YOUR POTENTIAL?

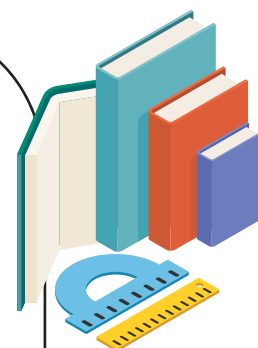


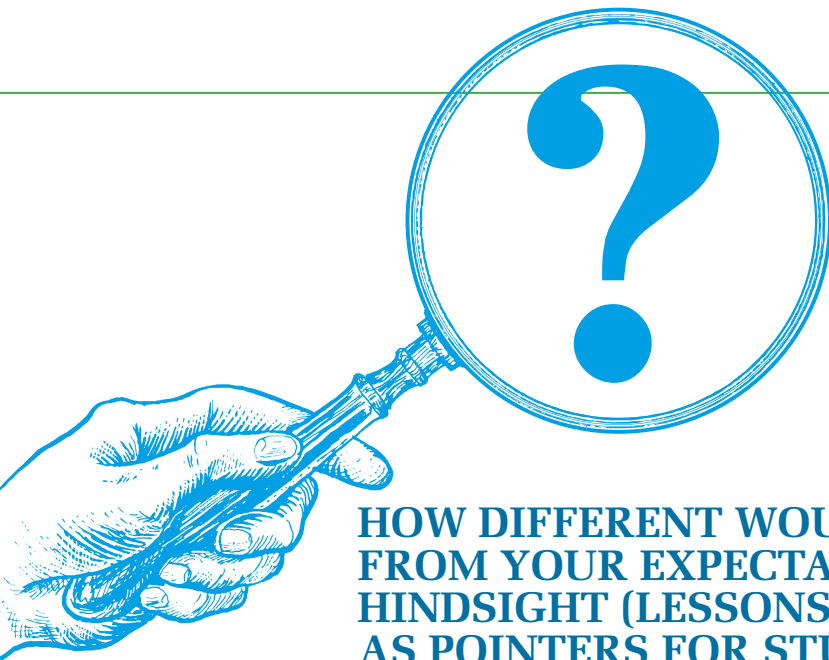
ALI AL FARSI: I assessed many different parameters before choosing a specific course such as quality of instructor, relevance to my major and minor, amount of interaction involved (the more the better) and size of the class. My passion played a significant role in choosing my major based on which I decided which classes to take at GWU. As I am extremely passionate about entrepreneurship, I decided to major in business thereby, most of the classes I took during my time at GWU were related directly or indirectly to business.



ALA AL FARSI: The process of choosing my course was a very interactive one, which began from my childhood. I have always been fascinated with business and dealing with people. Due to this passion, I knew that I wanted to do something that was business related. Before pursuing my specific course, I decided to do some further research on what I wanted to gain from my degree and which college will best suit these needs. Some parameters that helped me in my research were the diversity of the area, the community, faculty members and the school curriculum.

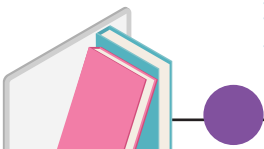
SULTAN AHMED ALNIYADI: There are two important things a student should focus on. First: The course content so the student knows what they'll be learning in this course. Plus, this helps the student to be more excited to take the course. Second: The instructor of the course should be highly rated and intelligent. I always check the rating in ratemyprofessor.com. On the other hand, the course was about programming and I have passion for anything related to computers. This passion played a big role in me choosing this course and allowed me to go through it with patience and joy.






"I DID NOT REALISE HOW OVERWHELMING IT COULD GET....HOWEVER, I GOT THROUGH IT AND I GOT USED TO IT. MY ADVICE TO THE STUDENTS WHO ARE NOW DECIDING ON A HIGHER EDUCATION PATH IS TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE COURSE BEFORE CHOOSING IT."

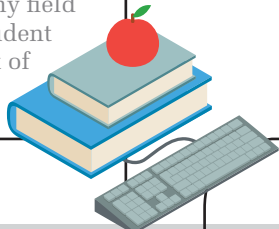
HOW DIFFERENT WOULD YOU SAY IS THE COURSE FROM YOUR EXPECTATIONS? ANY SPECIAL HINDSIGHT (LESSONS LEARNED) THAT CAN SERVE AS POINTERS FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE NOW DECIDING ON A HIGHER EDUCATION PATH?



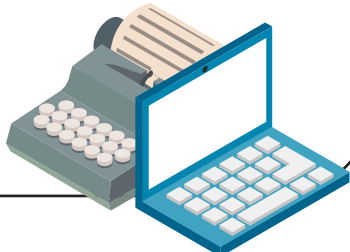
AMR KASHOOB: I had the mindset that high school was the only time I would have to study hard. I entered university with this same mindset, which I realised was wrong because the truth is that I have had to work as hard if not harder at university. My advice to students is that it is good to know where your passions lie but keep exploring course options till you completely understand yourself and your capabilities before you make a decision.



RAJ HAMLAI: I think this course is pretty similar to what I expected. In general UCLA is a very rigorous institution, but I knew that going in. I would recommend looking at all the specific classes you will be taking in your major at the university to give you a better idea if you are actually interested in the subject.



MAJD AL SUQRI: I expected to have more of a hands-on experience and study in labs. In reality, there are few lab visits and the programme focusses more on the research field than the medical/clinical field (which is how I thought it would be). We read a lot of research papers and design research projects and that has helped me gain new skills of designing and analysing. I'd recommend students to research on how a major is taught. For example, if you're considering chemical engineering, keep in mind that you'll do a lot of lab work, analysing data, taking higher level chemistry classes, and you'll generally need a good background in maths. In my field there are a lot of big concepts that a student has to grasp and apply and there's a lot of memorisation and writing.



WED LASHKO: My course is going to be harder than expected because before starting I didn't know that I might have to take 7 external exams from the SOA to get a certificate. I still don't have much knowledge on this, but I will when I speak to the head of the department. I would advise students to do extensive research on the courses they're going to have to take because they might get surprised once they start. Speaking to a student already pursuing the major can help a lot. Something, I feel I should've done earlier is to find people in the course who could have given me a clearer and real picture of what this major involved.



ALI AL FARSI: Some classes were very different than what I expected whilst some were exactly what I expected and sometimes even exceeded my expectations. It is all about one's mindset. Sometimes a student might initially not enjoy a class or find it challenging; however, if one takes it on with a positive attitude then he/she is ensured to develop and learn something new. One should never take a class just because it is easy and should always take classes that are somewhat challenging to try to maximise the benefits, especially if the class is directly related to one's field of study.



NADIR BAIT SALEEM: The course has been more difficult than I expected, but it is still rewarding. I would recommend that any student going into higher education be prepared to try their best and leave expectations that it might be easy. At the same time, I would definitely recommend that they be excited that they are going to learn more in their field of choice.

ALSHEFAA YAHYA ALYAZEEDI: I underestimated it to be honest. I did not realise how overwhelming it could get in terms of having to take in so much information every year. However, I got through it and got used to it. My advice to the students who are now deciding on a higher education path is to find out more about the course before choosing it. They should reach out to senior students and reassure themselves of the amount of learning materials they are expected to learn each year, and then decide if that course would work for them or not. It is too risky to choose a course without researching about it.



ALA AL FARSI: I expected the courses to be similar to what I experienced in school, where I had a fixed schedule with no options or flexibility. Contrary to my expectations, university has the flexibility of choosing various classes, and designing a schedule that suits one's needs provided it is within the parameters of the course requirements.

SULTAN AHMED ALNIYADI: Well, my expectations were that the course would be easy because I took programming in high school. However, I've learned a lesson that one should not underestimate the course even if it sounds easy. Not underestimating will prepare you to face everything that comes your way and it will result in good scores in the course.

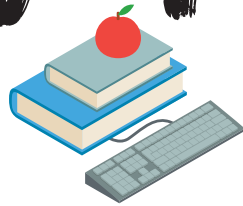




APART FROM PHYSICAL WELLBEING, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO ENSURE YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING. AS SOMEONE WHO IS NOW STUDYING ABROAD, WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU GIVE TO THOSE STUDENTS WHO WILL SOON BE DOING THE SAME – THINK OF TACKLING ACADEMIC AND CULTURAL SHOCKS AND/OR HOMESICKNESS.

AMR KASHOOB: My advice would be to make sure to take a breath and do not panic; everyone is here to help, and they want you to succeed. Tackle one problem/task at a time and focus only on that. Most importantly, don't be afraid to take the necessary measures to protect your mental health. Do what will make you happy and will give you peace.

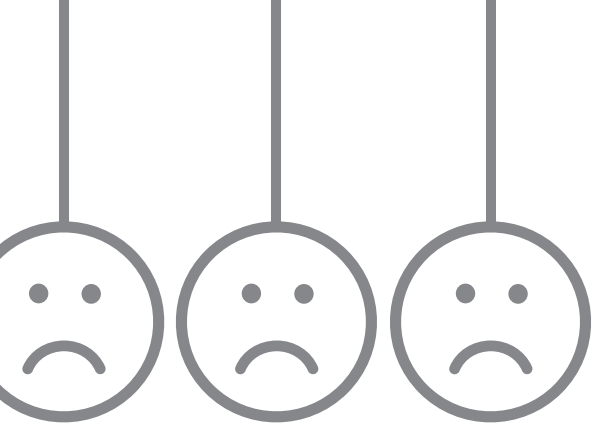
BE KIND TO YOUR MIND



MAJD AL SUQRI: Surround yourself with friends and keep in touch with your family. If you feel like you need help, talk to someone. Universities abroad have great resources for students' wellbeing. Make it a habit to start studying early on for exams and don't procrastinate on doing assignments to the last minute. Go to instructors' office hours very often, it's very helpful in understanding the material better. It also gives your instructor a good idea about who you are as a student in case you ask for a recommendation letter. Try your best to enrich your education journey with working in labs and designing projects to build your resume. Don't miss out on joining student clubs, they're fun!

RAJ HAMLAI: I went to an American high school in Oman, so there wasn't much of a cultural shock. I did find myself getting homesick at the very start of my experience, but it went away quickly as I made close friends and felt more comfortable at my school. Socialising was a really big part of me feeling comfortable at my school and reducing my homesickness. In addition, making sure I was still talking to my family and friends from back home often has helped me a lot.



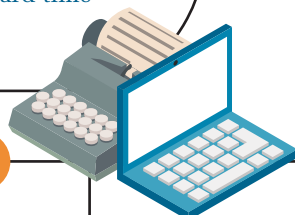


ALSHEFAA YAHYA

ALYAZEEDI: Studying abroad requires big responsibility from the individual and lots of patience. If the person feels ready to handle all his responsibilities with no help from anyone else, he/she should go for it, and trust their Lord as he will always be there to help. If the person feels he/she cannot be away from home and cannot handle big responsibilities, it is better for him/her to be with their families and study at home. Some days will be really overwhelming especially with the academic pressure and homesickness, so it is best keep in mind all these challenges before making any decisions.

WED LASHKO: If a student is experiencing culture shock, I think it helps to surround yourself with your Arab community to give yourself a feeling of home. Also, something else that can help tackle homesickness is finding a group of friends that share your interests. I feel that a student should be capable of making friends and making connections otherwise he/she is going to find a hard time studying abroad.

NADIR BAIT SALEEM: I would recommend staying in contact with family members through online avenues (I recommend WhatsApp for chatting and Discord for video calls) and also being mentally grounded helps. Try to remember your roots and personality and not let your new surroundings change you.

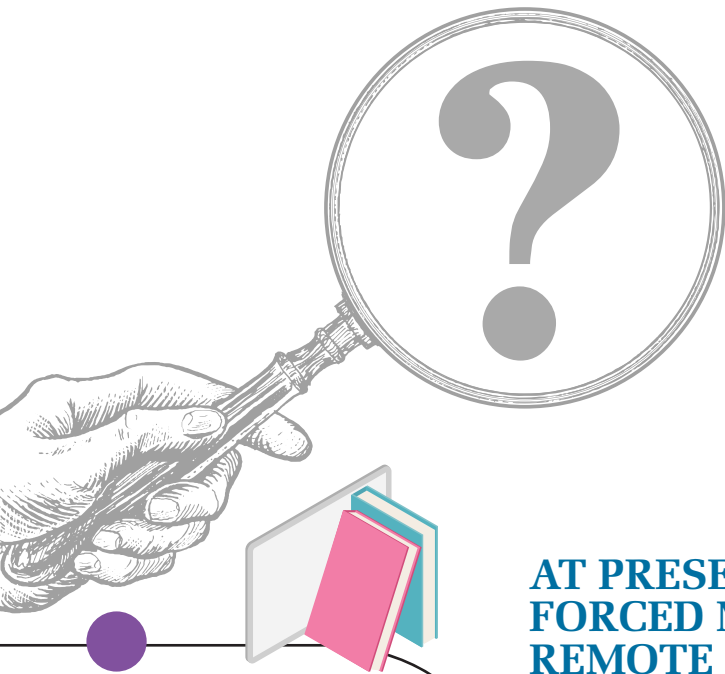


ALI AL FARSI: Many different things can be done to ensure mental wellbeing. I would advise students to join an organisation or club that one is interested in. It also helps to choose your friend group carefully. It helps to try and stay in the dorms/housing facility offered by the university for the first year at least and try to find a roommate, who shares similar hobbies and interests as you do. Take advantage of academic resources provided by the university such as the Writing Center and speak to a counsellor often, especially during the first couple of years abroad. Most importantly, abide by your values, morals, and beliefs but be open minded.

ALA AL FARSI: I would advise students who are planning to study abroad to first research the place before even looking at the university. The reason that I give so much importance to the place is because the location has a large impact on the overall university experience in terms of opportunities and experiences gained. One should keep in mind places that make one feel comfortable. Some people, for example, prefer college towns, whilst others opt for larger and more cosmopolitan cities. One way to reduce homesickness is to build strong friendships early, especially with people in the same university as you. One helpful way to connect with people even before attending your university is by communicating online with other students who are planning to join the same university as you.

SULTAN AHMED ALNIYADI: For all students that will study abroad soon, homesickness or culture shock is something that all students have experienced at some point. Don't be worried or regret the day you decided to study abroad. It's just a matter of time before you feel better and enjoy studying abroad. Focus on yourself and trust yourself that one day you'll be a successful student. As a second-year student, I loved studying abroad which made me responsible for myself and overcome many problems whatever they are. I hope every student will reach this point.

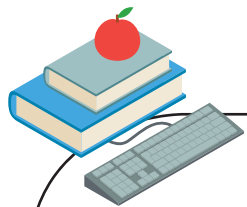




"ADAPTING TO VIRTUAL CLASSES IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE THAT IS UNKNOWN TO MANY OF US, BUT I SEE THIS CHALLENGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY THAT WILL ENABLE US TO GAIN NOVEL EXPERIENCES, WHICH IN TURN WILL HELP US BETTER EVOLVE AND MOTIVATE US TO RISE HIGHER."

AT PRESENT, THE CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE FORCED MANY STUDENTS TO ADOPT A REMOTE LEARNING METHOD. IF THIS APPLIES TO YOU, HOW DID YOU COPE WITH THIS? AND WHAT WOULD YOUR ADVICE BE THOSE WHO MIGHT FIND THEMSELVES IN SIMILAR SITUATIONS? DID YOU DECIDE TO TRAVEL BACK TO OMAN OR DID YOU STAY ABROAD?

AMR KASHOOB: I decided to stay back in the US and continue doing my classwork here. It felt more comfortable and also, I'm moving to a new apartment next semester, so I did not want too many upheavals when moving on to the next semester. Hopefully, we can return home soon.



MAJD AL SUQRI: I decided to travel back home in March. I couldn't find food and hand sanitisers as the whole country was facing shortage and my mom was worried about me. I'm still trying to figure out remote learning but it's a bit difficult with the time difference. I think keeping up with your classes and checking your e-mail on daily basis helps.



RAJ HAMLAI: I decided to travel back to Oman for remote learning. It is better for me to be with my family and not stuck alone on campus. Remote learning isn't too different from what we actually do at the university. We watch our lectures online, do homework online, tests online, etc. In terms of remote learning, creating a weekly schedule has helped me a lot to stay on track and do work consistently. This ensures that I do a reasonable amount of work every day rather than rushing to do my work. Also, making sure that I wake up and sleep at a reasonable time has helped me stay productive.





WED LASHKO: I decided to travel back. I feel like adapting to online learning is a struggle for everyone because it creates lack of motivation. I am not sure I can give any advice regarding this, because I'd rather be on campus for my lessons.



ALSHEFAA YAHYA ALYAZEEDI: I decided to travel back home to Oman as my university allowed us to do so, given the Covid-19 outbreak. Also, I felt it was the best that I be close to my family in these extraordinary situations. Remote learning method is fun and enjoyable for me and I find it very interesting. But I miss the actual face-to-face learning. It was not as easy to cope with in the beginning because I was surrounded by my family and distractions. However, once my exam deadline came closer, I became more motivated to get work done and focus on my studying.

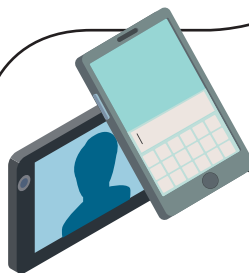


NADIR BAIT SALEEM: I returned to Oman as my parents and family members were very concerned about me and the university, I confirmed that all courses would be conducted online for the remainder of the semester so there was no risk to my education. I recommend trying to set schedules for remote learning and taking it seriously. There are many students that treat online learning as a vacation, but this is not productive and can lead to issues down the line. I also recommend that they catch all online lectures and classes along with keeping up with homework and assignments by regularly checking schedules and emails. Some other advice I have heard include continuing to take showers and practicing good hygiene and exercising and moving regularly to keep yourself healthy.



ALI AL FARSI: I decided to travel back to Oman as I felt I would be safer and more comfortable in my own country surrounded by family members in case I needed support. The transition to remote learning was challenging however, with the resources available to us today, it was possible, and learning continued via live or recorded lectures. My advice is to try and stay calm and work closely with the professor and other students to ensure a smooth transition. One issue I faced was time difference. However, if one communicates effectively with the instructor, they will be more than willing to work with you and accommodate as much as possible.

SULTAN AHMED ALNIYADI: I decided to return to Oman because I did not want my family to stay worried during these uncertain times. In addition, I feel when such a worldwide problem occurs every individual should trust their country before anyone. United States is definitely a safe place but my country comes first. Furthermore, going through quarantine alone abroad could have result in boredom. I find being quarantined with your family is more pleasant and safe. On the other hand, remote learning is kind of difficult for students trying to achieve their goals in their studies. However, remote learning has taught us many things as we focus on our studies. Many of us have learned to use technology and get more conversant with it to help us in the future. In addition, this pandemic has shown us that life was enjoyable and comfortable when we were not in quarantine so after this crisis it will help us respect this lovely life we took for granted before.



ALA AL FARSI: I decided to return home (Oman) as I feel that during hard times like this, having family support or support of close ones can significantly benefit one's mental wellbeing. Of course, the prevailing circumstances caused a spontaneous shift in the way many of us experienced university; from sitting in lecture halls to sitting thousands of miles away in our own rooms. Adapting to virtual classes is a unique experience that is unknown to many of us, but I see this challenge as an opportunity that will enable us to gain novel experiences, which in turn will help us better evolve and motivate us to rise higher.

