Arizona State University

in Saudi Arabia
ASU Charter

ASU is a comprehensive public research university, measured not by whom it excludes, but by whom it includes and how they succeed; advancing research and discovery of public value; and assuming fundamental responsibility for the economic, social, cultural and overall health of the communities it serves.

New American University

Arizona State University has become the foundational model for the New American University, a new paradigm for the public research university that transforms higher education. ASU is committed to excellence, access and impact in everything that it does.
We are proud that ASU is the academic home of more than 600 students from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and that the university has impacted the lives of more than 1,267 alumni.

We are committed to helping our students succeed — not just academically, but throughout their lives — and be prepared for a rapidly changing world where new careers are constantly evolving.

Our legacy of excellence in education grows because of the strengths of our award-winning faculty, who invest in collaborative, interdisciplinary and solution-focused approaches to research, education, and entrepreneurship.

We look forward to working with you to empower the workforce and leadership of the 21st century through discovery and impact.

Warmest regards,

Stefanie Lindquist, PhD
Senior Vice President of Global Academic Initiatives
Office of University Provost
Student enrollment

Phoenix hosts the second-largest international student population from Saudi Arabia.
– Open Doors Report, 2018

Saudi Arabia has the second-largest international undergraduate population at ASU.

300+ majors are approved by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

ASU hosted the top number of KFUPM exchange students in the U.S. in fall 2019.

604
Total number of students from Saudi Arabia enrolled at ASU.

503 (83%)
undergraduate students

101 (17%)
graduate students

400%
increase in attendance since 2009.

53%
of all students from Saudi Arabia choose STEM majors.

16%
choose business majors.

Yousef Alamoudi
Industrial engineering, junior
Sponsored by Saudi Arabian Cultural Mission

“I’ve never seen a university as diverse as ASU. I met lots of new friends from all over the world. I have friends from Japan, China, Korea, Brazil — all over the world. ASU has a lot of different activities and groups to join. After I graduate from ASU, I’m planning to go to grad school. I’m planning to be a lawyer and go to law school.”
Since I came here, ASU has been helping me to improve myself, to get to know myself even better and do my best for my future. They have the tutoring center, huge libraries, study rooms and many services here that will help you become a successful person. After I graduate I really want to work here in the U.S. in banking. ASU has resources like the career center where you can always go to ask questions, and that can give you opportunities to be in contact with companies. Every city I go, I have a friend. Here in the U.S. and all over the world. ASU has students from all over the world. I almost have a friend here from each country.
Student support and services

Saudi Students Club
The Saudi Students Club is considered the second home for Saudi students in the U.S. It represents the history, culture and traditions of Saudi Arabia to both American and international students at ASU. The SSC participates in many international and national activities through ASU and the community, and provides resources, assistance and networks for Saudi students to be successful at ASU and in the U.S. This organization has neither religious nor political activities, and it is open for any ASU student regardless of their race, gender, religion or age.

Muslim Students Association
The Muslim Students Association supports and encourages members to grow spiritually, morally and intellectually, and to contribute positively and productively to the ASU community. The association hosts Chai Chats, open exchanges that endeavor to further the understanding of Islam and enhance interfaith exchange at ASU. These goals are achieved by promoting fellowship, service and education.

Women on the Move
Women on the Move envisions Saudi women who are successful and engaged in both the larger university and U.S. communities in their academic, professional, personal, family and spiritual pursuits. The club supports Saudi women, both students and non-students, through activities, conferences and social gatherings coordinated by other Saudi women and their supporters. Women on the Move also works with the university community to help faculty, staff and students better understand the unique needs, challenges and opportunities of Saudi women in the U.S., and how they can collaborate and support Saudi women in being successful.

Nearby access to the Islamic Community Center of Tempe
This beautiful mosque, opened in 1984, is modeled after the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

Interfaith reflection and ablation rooms
ASU recently added an interfaith reflection room and ablation rooms to its Memorial Union to accommodate students who want to practice their religious beliefs, such as Wudu. The private rooms include a place to sit, running water, a hand-washing station and paper towels.

ASU Council for Arabic and Islamic Studies
The council was established to acknowledge the significant contributions of Arabic studies and Islamic civilization and cultures to the world at large, both historically and in the modern age. The organization hosts events and promotes cross-cultural understanding, multiculturalism, interfaith dialogue and diversity at ASU. The council also supports the teaching of Arabic, Persian, Turkish and other languages in collaboration with the study of sociology, history, politics, anthropology and religion, as well as collaboration between ASU and groups throughout the Arab and Muslim worlds.
Alumni

1,267
ASU’s alumni population from Saudi Arabia since 1981.

#4

Saudi Aramco
For many years, ASU has been the top destination for Saudi students who are fully funded by Aramco studies in various fields.

870
students from Saudi Arabia have become ASU alumni since 2012.
Alumni

Seham Abdulhameed Tomihi
Teaching English to speakers of other languages, MTESOL

Originally from Jeddah City, Seham believes learning English can enhance people’s lives, especially women’s, no matter where they live. In her MTESOL internship at ASU, she created curriculum materials designed to help Saudi Arabian women improve their business and professional English skills.

“For me, teaching is the best job in the world. I feel that the teacher is the candle who lights up the way of knowledge. There was respect for diversity and fair treatment. I am covering my face, so I thought that it would be so difficult to communicate with others in classes. I love how teachers and even my colleagues respect me.”

Maryam Alsuwailem
Biomedical engineering, BSE

“I can’t think of any place that would make me a better version of me than here at ASU. The diversity made me open-minded. The welcome made me confident. The support encouraged me to do what I dreamed. Looking back, I can’t believe I won in an invention competition, became a vice president for an organization, and volunteered in a research laboratory. In brief, I’m very satisfied with myself at ASU.”

Murtada al Mohsin
Chemistry, BS

Murtada came to ASU to study on a King Abdullah Scholarship. He says the ASU campus environment was friendly and welcoming to international students. He plans to gain work experience before possibly pursuing his master’s degree.

“The skills of scientific writing and how to write a research paper are some of the many things that I learned while at ASU. There were a large number of organizations and clubs available. It was amazing to meet so many students from around the U.S. and across the world and learn about different cultures and diversities.”
Houria Alabbas
Clinical exercise physiology, MS
Houria is an alumna of Global Launch, which helps ASU learners thrive in the global marketplace through academic preparation services, training in multilingual communication and professional skills development. The program taught her skills for success such as writing academic papers, citation styles and academic research, helping her advance in her graduate studies.

“I chose Global Launch because it was the most recommended program in [Saudi Arabia]. It gives you opportunities to improve your language skills — it is a place where you will find support all the time. We weren’t only learning the language. It is also about learning American culture and discussing other global issues, which opened my mind to many different topics.”

Mariam Alhabidi
Global technology and development, MS
While at ASU, Mariam explored entrepreneurship for women in Saudi Arabia and its potential to increase Saudi women’s sociocultural autonomy, financial independence and overall well-being. She went on to found Cr8ive Digital Marketing and Consulting in Abu Dhabi and Khobar, out of a passion to help youth find their place in the world. A CEO and self-styled digital entrepreneur, she focuses on technology development for entrepreneurs and now leads operations in three countries.

“Education is key. It mattered to my father that I became independent. That has instilled in me the belief that financial independence greatly helps women.”

Adwa Alhatlan
Biochemistry, BS
Adwa loves biology and chemistry, and made plans to major in medicine with hopes of possibly becoming a surgeon one day. To gain perspective and expand her world view, she also took an earth systems engineering and management class. Within this course, she found not only help and support from her professors, but they encouraged her to reach her full potential. She also interned with the Science is Fun program to teach and communicate science to highschool students.

“Transferring to ASU was challenging, but it had so many opportunities for my education and to be independent. In the end, I’m glad I did.”
Academic partnerships in Saudi Arabia

Transforming education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

From 2018 to 2019, more than 100 Saudi educators were welcomed to ASU through the Building Leadership for Change through School Immersion program. Supported by ASU’s Center for Advanced Studies in Global Education in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, the initiative was created by the Ministry of Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in direct response to their government's goal of investing in the future of their country by changing the educational landscape in their local schools. Its aim is to strengthen the values, skills, knowledge and attitudes of teachers, counselors and principals through university-led structured immersion in high-performing, English-speaking K–12 school systems.

The ministry designed the initiative to transform the Saudi Arabian education system to strengthen the country’s competitiveness, support economic diversification and provide the human capital required for the success of KSA’s Vision 2030 and National Transformation Program plans. The program includes orientation to U.S. educational institutions, English language training, technical knowledge and skills development by exploring topics like communication, collaboration and adult learning. Building Leadership participants are expected to be effective change agents when they return to Saudi Arabia.

“Education is the new oil.”
– Adel Mari, Saudi teacher, leader

Memorandum of Understanding:
King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
ASU, local business inspire entrepreneurship students
Global Launch — a global training unit at ASU — welcomed students from King Abdullah University of Science and Technology in Saudi Arabia, via the Institute of International Education. Global Launch, in partnership with ASU lecturer Steve Cho from the Technology Entrepreneurship and Management Program in the Ira A. Fulton Schools of Engineering, developed a curriculum to teach students about creating their own businesses, learning skills in marketing, finance, advertising and networking with venture mentors from Venture Devils, part of ASU’s Entrepreneurship and Innovation program. At the end of the program, students utilized their knowledge of entrepreneurship by pitching their business ideas to a panel of judges from CO+HOOTS, a coworking space in the metro Phoenix area. Global Launch has also hosted students from Saudi Arabia to study language programs.

Integrating and supporting Saudi women at U.S. universities
With the start of Saudi Arabia’s King Abdullah Scholarships Program in 2005, there has been a significant number of Saudi students studying abroad. The majority come to the U.S., representing the fourth-largest international student population, and more than 30% of these students are women. Women face unique challenges while abroad. To boost their success, ASU offers support programs, such as the International Student Success Center, ASU Council of Arabic and Islamic Studies, and a student-based women’s group, Women on the Move.

King Abdullah University of Science and Technology
ASU visited with King Abdullah University of Science and Technology’s Gifted Student Program.

King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals
ASU has an agreement to provide educational opportunities to students from KFUPM through one semester of study at ASU. Students can then transfer the course credits earned at ASU back to KFUPM to be used toward their degree. Between 2018 and 2019, ASU hosted 51 students from KFUPM — each fully funded by the Ministry of Education.

Ministry of Education
ASU participated in the International Exhibition and Conference on Higher Education in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2017. The event was organized by the Ministry of Education, and ASU President Michael M. Crow was the keynote speaker.

SABIC custom eMBA program
Between 2012 and 2015, a custom executive education eMBA program was piloted in the Thunderbird School of Global Management with Saudi Basic Industries Corporation. Working closely with senior leaders from the petrochemical conglomerate, Thunderbird professors taught customized business courses in English at the SABIC Academy in Riyadh and at Thunderbird’s campus near Phoenix, Arizona. Fifty-three SABIC leaders completed degrees, and participants delivered four projects exploring solutions to challenges looking forward to the business’ 2025 goals.

Saudia
Saudi students sponsored by Saudi Arabian Airlines have previously studied professional flight training at ASU.
Research funding

2016–2019 papers co-authored by ASU and Saudi Arabian researchers

124 co-authored papers with 20 collaborating institutions from 2016 to 2019.

Research awards

$6,991,652 in funding, from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labor and Social Development

Six grants of nearly $7 million were made to ASU researchers since 2016 to support investments in technology, education and leadership programs, and skills and career-readiness programs in Saudi Arabia.
Entrepreneurial leaders at ASU

Constantine Balanis partnered with the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on a $1 million project to develop and advance basic research on electromagnetic, artificial magnetic conductors, or AMC surfaces. Balanis is a Regents Professor in ASU’s School of Electrical, Computer and Energy Engineering. He is a Life Fellow of the IEEE, distinguished educator and author of 10 books in his research area, which includes computational electromagnetics, smart antennas and microwaves.

Larry Mays received the Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water – Surface Water Prize in 2014 in Saudi Arabia “for his comprehensive work in surface water hydrology and water resources engineering, culminating in three leading and innovative textbooks in the field, and for applying this extensive knowledge base to develop optimization models in practical hydrology for current problems, including real-time optimal dam release during flood conditions and watershed development in urban areas.” As a professor in ASU’s School of Sustainable Engineering and the Built Environment, Mays’ research in hydrosystems engineering has focused on the application of optimization — and risk and reliability analysis — to the design, management and operation of water infrastructure systems.

Mark Woodward is a prominent anthropologist who has been engaged in the study of Islam and politics and religion in Southeast Asia since the late 1970s. He received a National Endowment for the Humanities grant, whose aim was to help bring clarity to the understanding of Salafism. Woodward says that Salafism “is the driving force behind movements ranging from al-Qaeda to quietist groups living pious lives in self-imposed social isolation.” His team has conducted research in Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Southern Thailand and Saudi Arabia. Woodward is a member of the Center for the Study of Religion and Conflict at ASU.
#1 in the U.S. for innovation

ASU ahead of Stanford and MIT

– U.S. News & World Report, 5 years, 2018–2022

#1 in the U.S. for global impact

#5 in the world

– Times Higher Education

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