

A portrait of Dr. Omar Al-Ansari, Vice President of Qatar University. He is wearing a white thobe and a white ghutra with a black agal. He has a short beard and is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

**Dr. Omar Al-Ansari, Vice
President of Qatar
University in an interview
with Sout Al-Jami'ah**

**Introducing
new academic
programmes that
keep pace with
Qatar's strategy
2030**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Omar Al-Ansari, in a comprehensive interview with Sout AI-Jami'ah

Introducing new academic programmes that keep pace with Qatar's strategy 2030



Develop university educational model that meets current and future national needs

INTERVIEW BY ABDULLAH AL MARI AND MOHAMMED ABU SHERIDAH

Dr. Al-Ansari stressed that the approach between the needs of the local labor market and accelerating global trends in higher education is one of the challenges facing the university due to its keenness to compete with prestigious universities in the world, while preserving its identity and position in the local scene.

He added that the university has developed new models that enhance the contribution of faculty members to scientific research and community service.

In an interview with Sout AI-Jami'ah, the Vice President added that the university has introduced new programs to meet the requirements of Qatar

Vision 2030, noting that the developed models aim to meet current and future national needs.

Al-Ansari spoke in details about the scholarship plans, applicable standards and objectives, noting that the various departments are implementing five-year plans that clarify the disciplines required for them. He added that the university has sent 111 scholarship students from all disciplines. On the ability of graduates to keep pace with the requirements of the labour market, he stressed that the feedback from business partners and stakeholders indicates that QU graduates have the competence and excellence required to meet the challenges when they join the workforce. The following is the full text of the interview:

What are the major challenges facing academic development at QU, and what visions and strategies have you developed to deal with them?

The needs of the local labor market in accelerating global trends in higher education may be one of the challenges facing the university. This is due to QU's keenness to compete with the world's most prestigious universities, and at the same time, trying to preserve its identity and position in the local scene. In order to achieve this balance, the university maintains its presence in international academic forums while establishing close relations with stakeholders and partners in the country.

Universities elevate whenever they tend to adopt the concept of diversity in practice, not just in words, and reality shows diversity in faculty members of the university, and the diversity of scientific schools to which they belong. What is the importance of this and is it achieved or not?

There is no doubt that we, as individuals, develop and elevate by getting acquainted with different experiences and cultures, with our pride in our identity and culture, which we represent. This principle applies to faculty members. The university has faculty members from more than 60 nationalities and our openness to dialogue and acceptance of others is one of the most important features of our university, which attracts many faculty members willing to enrich their experiences.

We know that QU is the national university and it bears social responsibilities of a strategic nature, but the challenge remains its graduates' ability to meet the needs of the labor market efficiently and effectively. To what extent do you think the university has succeeded in achieving these two goals?

Feedback from stakeholders and the labor market indicates the efficiency and excellence of the university's graduates and their performance in relation to their peers from local and international universities and this makes us proud. This is the most important output of the university.

To what extent does QU target education and scientific research? Do you have indicators that support that, and what is the ratio of postgraduates to undergraduate students?

Qatar University has developed a comprehensive model on how to benefit from the expertise of faculty members and develop their expertise at the same time, through the creation of a framework for faculty members' contributions and research. Accordingly, each faculty member at the university is expected to teach courses, publish research, and contribute to community service inside and outside the university campus. Postgraduate students represent 5% of the total students of QU, while undergraduate students represent 95%.

The developments in the labor markets along with the rapid leaps in the world of educational technology are prompting a continuous review of the academic specializations offered by the university. This led to freezing programs that are no longer able to meet the goals assigned to them, and introduction of programs that keep up with the labor market needs and aligns



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with the global trends. So what are the programs that have been suspended, and those introduced and adopted recently, and what are the justifications for these transformations?

Only one program was frozen in the fall 2020 due to the low demand of students. Along the same lines, several new programs have been introduced at various levels, such as:

- Bachelor of Arts in Applied Geography and GIS (Geographical Information Systems)
 - Bachelor of Science in Physics
 - Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts
 - MA in Health Professions
 - Master of Science in Human Nutrition
 - Bachelor of Science in Mechatronics Engineering
 - Master of Science in Gas and Process Engineering
 - Executive Master of Leadership
- The university has also offered a number of specializations to give the student more depth:
- Specialization in Cyber Security
 - Minor in Actuarial Mathematics
 - Minor in Business Analytics
 - Minor in Railway Engineering

- Minor in Engineering Project Management
 - Minor in Food Safety
 - Minor in Public Health
- The College of Nursing was also added to be the eleventh college of Qatar University.

These programs come as part of the academic planning process carried out by the university on the basis of the university's strategy 2018-2022, its vision and mission. The programs are also based on the importance of academic planning for the sustainability of the university and its role to materialize Qatar National Vision 2030, Qatar's national strategy and the importance of developing models for higher education designed to meet current and future national needs.

To what extent are scholarship plans for Qatari faculty members connected to the academic planning, and transformation strategic plan of the university and scientific schools abroad?

The strategic plan of the university is the umbrella under which the university develops its academic plans that introduces various programs and specializations at the faculties and departments. In this context, the academic departments develop five-year plans that clarify the majors they offer now and in the future, according to the outputs of the academic planning process and the majors that need to be developed. Qatari faculty members work closely with Qatari scholarship students to attract them in these specializations and meet the academic departments' needs for distinguished national competencies.

Can you tell us how many students have been sent abroad on scholarships, criteria for scholarships, follow-up mechanisms and evaluation of their performance annually? Finally, what are the conditions and criteria for scholarship?

With regard to the number of students on scholarships studying abroad, the criteria for scholarships, the mechanisms for following up and evaluating their performance annually, as well as terms and criteria for

scholarships includes-

1. Preparing students to study abroad for 111 scholarships in various disciplines, their performance and educational attainment are monitored through the scholarship office and scientific departments.
- Scholarship terms:
 1. Obtaining a bachelor's degree from universities accredited by Qatar University, and the bachelor degree must be obtained by full-time study.
 2. Must have a cumulative GPA (grade point average) of no less than 3.00 out of 4.00 or its equivalent.
 3. An IELTS score of 5.5 or its equivalent for programs taught in English.
 4. The applicant's age should not be more than 28 years for a master's degree, and not more than 35 years old PhD scholarship.
 5. Pass the personal interviews.



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