

جامعة الشرقية  
A'SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY



## Industry and Community Engagement Strategy

2021/25

GV0006

### Approvals

This document has been approved by

Name	Date
1. Board of Trustees	20 June 2021

### Implementation and Responsibility

Document owner	Contact person	Date of Implementation
Vice Chancellor	Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research	20 June 2021

### Revision history

Version	Author/ Reviewer	Revision(s) made	Date
NA	NA	NA	NA



A'Sharqiyah University

**Industry and Community  
Engagement Strategy  
2021-2025**

## Introduction

A'Sharqiyah University (ASU) received formal approval of establishment in 2009 and admitted its first batch of students in Fall of 2010 with 211 registered students. By 2021 the student population at ASU had exceeded 4,600 students. The University has high aspirations for the future as articulated in its vision and mission. The University currently has five Colleges, specifically:

College of Applied and Health Sciences  
College of Arts and Humanities  
College of Business Administration  
College of Engineering  
College of Law

In addition, the University has a Centre for Language and Foundation Studies which provides preparatory training for students in Mathematics, English Language and Information Technology prior to joining the Colleges.

The University moved to its new campus in September 2017. The new campus has excellent facilities including lecture halls, offices, and a dedicated student services center.

## Our Mission

ASU Advances knowledge through innovative learning and applied research that will contribute to the **economic and social development** of the region by providing a conducive environment enhanced by international collaboration.

## Our Vision

ASU aspires to be a leading higher education institution in Oman that promotes authentic values, innovation and **socio-economic development**.

## Our Values

**Endeavour:** We will seek to perform our best in everything that we undertake to achieve our individual and the University's collective goals.

**Respect:** We will treat our students, staff and all the University's stakeholders with consideration and regard.

**Openness and Trust:** We will be honest, sincere and trustworthy in all our dealings with the University's internal and external stakeholders.

**Accountability:** We will throughout the University be highly committed and responsible for our actions and performance.

**Social Responsibility:** *We will consider the impacts of our actions and the University's activities on the welfare of our students, staff, the wider community and the environment.*

**Creativity:** we will seek new ideas, approaches, and opportunities for the benefit of our students, staff and the wider society.

## Graduate Attributes

The attributes of the A'Sharqiyah University graduate are these:

- Knowledge of a discipline
- ***Commitment to national development and Omani ethical values***
- Innovative Spirit
- Global Insight
- Adaptability to changing environments

## **Context**

The University's Strategic Plan 2014-2020 set an explicit strategic objective 4.1 to contribute to the community's cultural, social and economic development. Measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the University's community engagement activities included number of cultural engagement activities, no of social activities, number of services provided and number of SMEs/ entrepreneurs supported.

In Academic Session 2019-20, the ***Industry and Community Engagement Committee*** was set up as part of the University committee structure. The committee is Chaired by the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research (DVCAAR) and reports to the University Academic Board although in its first year of operation, it was chaired the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Resources and Institutional Support (DVCRIS). The purpose of the Industry and Community Engagement Committee is to ensure that the University's engagement and relationships with its national and international stakeholders including industry, employers, professional bodies, other education providers, alumni and the community at large are well planned, managed, monitored and evaluated on a regular basis for effectiveness and mutual benefit. The Industry and Community Engagement Committee supports, facilitates and oversees performance of several duties and responsibilities which are defined in its terms of reference.

In the Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the University reaffirmed its mission and vision and in particular to contribute to the nation's social-economic development. In addition, the University agreed in Commitment 1.8 to prepare students for the world of work after graduation and to maintain good relationships and services for our alumni. In Commitment 4.1, the University confirmed its aspirations to contribute to the community's cultural, social and economic development.

This ***Industry and Community Engagement Strategy*** complements the approved initiatives in the Strategic Plan 2020-25. Furthermore, it provides guidance to Colleges, Centre for Language and Foundation Studies (CLFS) and the service departments within the University on the strategies and initiatives which will strengthen the University's engagement and relationships with its national and international stakeholders. These strategies are consistent with our values of ***social responsibility*** and the declared objective of the University to produce graduates who are committed to ***national development*** as one of the distinguishing attributes.

## ***Relationships with Business, Industry and Employers***

University- Industry collaboration brings benefits to both parties. It allows each party to rely on the other for their strengths. Industrial partners can provide funding and also contribute experience of product commercialization. The University can contribute research expertise and ability to solve complex problems. This helps to drive innovation and development of new products and processes to improve industrial efficiency.

Industrial partners can also provide guidance and feedback in taking ideas from laboratory to market. Industrial partners can provide internships and good high skills jobs for the University graduates. Internships offer University students opportunities to be mentored by industry experts which is crucial for

training and skills development. Students who undertake internships will be better equipped for the world

of work on graduation. In addition, they will be highly skilled in industrial technology and its applications. Industrial collaboration will therefore help the University to improve its graduate employability. Industry experts can also provide feedback to the University on their skills needs, curriculum and program content and changes needed to produce better graduates.

Industrial collaboration will enable the University to contribute to incubation of ideas and business start-ups. Industry will also benefit by gaining access to good scientists in their fields of specialization. Industrial partners can in the process reduce their research and development costs and risks. University-Industry collaboration offers opportunities for industrial partners to develop improved technology, process and products and contribute to a better quality of life.

University – Industry collaboration will impact the economy of the A’Sharqiyah region by developing skills that are most relevant to the local economy. The designation of Al Mudhaibi by the government under Madayn Vision 2021-25 as one of the four new industrial cities by 2025 is a welcome development. The University will seize the opportunities presented by this development and contribute to delivery of the government’s objective of elevating the Sultanate of Oman into a regional manufacturing and ICT hub.

A’Sharqiyah University will pursue the following activities to strengthen its relationships with business and industry. The University will hold conferences and workshops on topics of interest to local companies. The University will engage with leaders of business and industry and through the Industrial Advisory Council to seek advice on curriculum development, research and consultancy opportunities. The University will undertake research and development and contribute to solutions to industrial challenges through the EJAAD platform. The University will seek and host business leaders to provide guest lectures on industrial developments and best practice to enrich the learning experience of students. The University will seek and sign Memoranda of Understanding with industrial partners to provide opportunities for students to undertake internships. Financial contributions from business and industry to fund scholarships, bursaries, student prizes, research and innovation grants, etc. are strongly encouraged and welcome.

### ***Relationships with the Professions and Professional Institutions\****

Professional Institutions further and promote the career development of its members. They protect the professional reputation and image of practitioners and the general public. Professional Institutions are to be found in a whole arrange of disciplines and those of immediate relevance to A’Sharqiyah University include veterinary medicine, engineering, law, education, etc. In Engineering and Veterinary Medicine, professional qualifications and professional registration is a mandatory requirement for professional practice. The University will offer free student membership in professional institutions. Professional bodies play a very important advocacy role and represent common professional interests to the media and decision-makers in government and funding agencies.

The University encourages its staff to gain professional qualifications and to maintain membership in professional institutions. Service on committees of professional institutions is encouraged. Academic staff should encourage students to gain student membership in professional institutions and formation of student chapters of professional institutions at the University is strongly supported. Annual membership fees in professional institutions and professional registration costs will remain the responsibility of individual members of staff. Membership of professional institutions will be taken into account in annual staff performance appraisals and promotions decisions. Membership in professional institutions will:

- enable students and staff to gain access to knowledge and information sources including journals and conference publications, online resources, evening events, local branch networks, etc.

***\*Professional institutions should not be confused with professional accreditation agencies. Professional institutions are learned societies or associations that assist in promoting the career development of their members. Professional accreditation agencies promote and advance excellence in higher education by providing professional recognition of academic and professional qualifications including degrees and diplomas.***

- provide opportunities for networking with other like-minded experienced professionals.

Equally important to the University is professional accreditation of its programs. Professional accreditation of programs will provide the following benefits:

- It will confer credibility on the programs themselves and their graduates in the eyes of other institutions, employers, and government departments.
- It will provide opportunities for feedback on program content and will accord opportunities for continuous improvement of the programs.
- It will aid student recruitment.
- It will contribute to improving graduate employability as employers on the whole will prefer to hire graduates from accredited programs.
- It will make it easier for ASU graduates to gain professional registration and admissions to higher degree programs.
- It will give the University competitive advantage in seeking funded scholarships from government and multinational corporations.

Overall, the University will pursue national and international accreditation for its programs in all majors whenever applicable. The accreditation bodies of high priority and relevance to the University at present are the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND).

### ***Relationships with other Education providers***

The University will seek to form partnerships with other universities both nationally and internationally where there is an alliance of goals and ideas. Such partnerships and collaboration will provide opportunities for cultural awareness, research collaboration, benchmarking of curriculum content, learning and teaching, and research performance, student and staff exchange programs. Further areas for national/international collaboration with other universities will include the following where possible:

1. Joint research activities and publications.
2. Development of joint undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs.
3. Cooperation on programs of basic and applied research and technology transfer.
4. Exchange of invitations to scholars for lectures, talks and sharing of experience.
5. Exchange of invitations to scholars to participate in conferences, colloquia and symposia.
6. Exchange of information in fields of interest to both institutions.
7. Exchange of faculty members and students for study and research.
8. Exchange of administrative staff for capacity building.
9. Conduct shared extracurricular student activities.

### ***Relationships with Alumni***

Our Alumni are the University's ambassadors. The University will continue to strengthen its connections with its alumni by providing opportunities that facilitate continued involvement and engagement. Alumni



will be given the opportunities to provide feedback on areas where the University can improve further its learning, teaching approaches and facilities. The University will hold an alumni congress every two years to provide networking opportunities among past and present students and staff of the University. Communication with the alumni will be maintained through an alumni newsletter, social media platforms, face-to-face talks and events, program or college reunions etc.

### ***Relationships with the Community at Large***

At A'Sharqiyah University, we believe that staff and students are expected interact with the local community in the region in their own right as citizens and residents on a regular basis. The University has many other connections with the local community including participation of our education students in the teacher training programs in local schools. Following our belief and commitment as a center of intellectual activities, the University will always seek to promote the public good. The University will use its resources, facilities and expertise to contribute solutions to the social, economic, educational and environmental challenges of our time. Members of the local community will have access to University facilities including the Learning Resources Centre, the Masjid, meeting venues and any other facilities such as sports facilities when they become available. The University will through the Centre for Community Services and Continuous Learning offer short courses and upskilling programs for the benefit of the local community.

The University is a community of learning and will remove any perceived barriers of access and encourage public participation in all opportunities and programs on offer for the benefit of the local community. Members of the community will be encouraged to attend any public lectures hosted at the University. University students and staff will participate in local community development activities such festivals, fundraising for good causes and volunteering activities, provision of legal aid, veterinary services, summer schools, cultural events, etc.

Participation in higher education following completion of grade 12 secondary education in the Sultanate of Oman has consistently exceeded 70 percent in the last five years. This is welcome news and the University will continue its engagement with schools not only for purposes of student recruitment but also to raise pupil aspirations and widen student participation in higher education. Activities which will be encouraged include open days, invitations to secondary school teachers and pupils to visit the University, science workshops, staff volunteering activities by giving talks in schools on their professional disciplines, service on School Parents-Teachers Committees, etc.

A'Sharqiyah University student societies at present conduct extracurricular activities with other HEIs, schools and other community institutions. Our students also attending activities organized by the other schools, HEIs and Communities. Such activities will continue to be encouraged and supported by the University.

### ***Implementation of this Strategy***

College Deans, Directors of Units and Heads of Non-Academic Departments are responsible for implementation of this Strategy. College, Departmental and Unit operational plans shall be prepared annually taking into account this strategy. All plans shall be monitored annually.

At the end of each academic year, the Deputy Vice Chancellors for Academic Affairs and Research shall evaluate the overall University's performance for Industry and Community Engagement activities and report to the University Academic Board through the University's Industry and Community Engagement Committee taking into account the Key Performance Indicators and targets in the table below.

No.	Key Performance Indicators	Target for 2020/21	Target for 2021/22	Target for 2022/23	Target for 2023/24	Target for 2024/25
1	<b><i>Relationships with Industry and employers</i></b> No of CPD courses offered for industry.	1	5	7	9	10
2	No of active MOUs with industrial partners.	10	12	14	16	18
3	No of consultancy bids submitted through the EJAAD platform annually.	3	5	5	5	5
3	No of consultancy projects funded by industry through the EJAAD platform annually.	1	1	2	2	3
4	Proportion of students who successfully complete an internship on time.	80%	85%	85%%	90%	90%
5	Increase in the number of ASU students that are funded by industry and their employers.	37	40	40	42	42
6	<b><i>Relationships with the Professions</i></b> Proportion (Number) of staff who hold active membership in professional institutions.	10% (10)	20% (22)	30%(36)	40% (52)	50% (65)
7	Number of activities held in collaboration with Professional Institutions.	2	5	10	12	16
8	Proportion of students who are student members in Professional Institutions.	5%	7%	8%	10%	10%
9	<b><i>Relationships with other Education providers</i></b> Number of MOUs with other HEIs in which the University is involved	11	13	15	17	20
10	Proportion (Number) of conference papers published with co-authors from other HEIs.	75% (20)	76% (38)	77% (42)	78% (46)	80% (52)
11	Proportion (Number) of journal papers published with co-authors from other HEIs.	75% (70)	76% (75)	77%(83)	78%(91)	80% (104)
12	Number of externally funded projects with co-PIs from other HEIs or funded projects at other Institutions with ASU staff as co-PIs.	1	2	2	2	2
13	<b><i>Relationships with Alumni</i></b> Number of alumni success stories highlighted in the media.	5	10	15	20	25
14	Percentage (Number) of alumni who participate in a college event such as teaching, research, curriculum review, or career talks, etc.	5% (215)	8% (350)	10% (500)	12% (600)	15% (750)

	<b><i>Relationships with the Community at large</i></b>					
15	No of events, such as lectures, workshops organized for the Community.	20	30	35	40	45
16	Proportion (Number) of staff who are members or participants on external committees including conference scientific committees and boards.	5% (5)	10% (11)	25% (30)	40% (52)	50% (65)
17	Number of activities such as lectures, workshops presented by members of the community.	10	15	17	20	22