



Awards Arab World 2025

Outstanding Support for Students

Institution Name	National University of Science and Technology
Submission title or project name	Counsellor NU
Nominee / key personnel	Amal Al Ghailani, academician at the College of Medicine and Health Sciences, National University of Science and Technology (Oman)
URL	
Submission	<p>In response to the urgent rise in student mental health needs during the Covid-19 pandemic, the National University of Science and Technology, Oman developed Counsellor NU, a digital mental health support platform. Informed by in-depth interviews with students and counsellors, and validated through pre- and post-analysis during pilot testing, the initiative offers 24/7 virtual counselling, culturally tailored self-help resources, psychological screenings and crisis support. Counsellor NU increased student engagement with counselling services by 63 per cent and raised satisfaction rates from 54 per cent to 88 per cent. Embedded within the university's student services strategy, the platform ensures accessible, confidential support across all campuses, strengthening student well-being, resilience and academic success through a sustainable, evidence-based digital model.</p>



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Institution Name	Saint Joseph University of Beirut
Submission title or project name	Empowering futures: career advancement model
Nominee / key personnel	Entrepreneurship and Career Office team
URL	usj.edu.lb/sip
Submission	<p>Saint Joseph University of Beirut developed an innovative support package through its Career and Placement Office (SIP) and its Entrepreneurship and Competencies Center (EC²) to meet students' evolving needs, particularly during periods of socio-economic instability. The initiative integrates career counselling, AI-enhanced mentorship, digital services, job fairs and entrepreneurship promotion. More than 500 students participated in advising days, while 140 engaged in a 12-session mentorship programme. The e-SIP platform ensured continuity during crises, offering resources, job matching and virtual events to over 600 users. Students benefited from 1,300 job offers, while EC²-supported start-ups achieved national and international recognition. Saint Joseph's hybrid model, combining in-person and digital support, has led to strengthening employability and multiple award-winning ventures. Key achievements include maintaining services during crises, integrating AI for personalisation, and building a scalable model. Moving forward, Saint Joseph aims to enhance AI-based advising, expand alumni mentorship, and develop market intelligence systems to better guide students and academic programmes.</p>



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Institution Name	An-Najah National University
Submission title or project name	TESI: a model of crisis-resilient higher education and student empowerment
Nominee / key personnel	Professor Kherieh Rassas (vice-president for partnerships and global initiatives); Dr Marcello Scalisi (director of UNIMED); Dr Abdel Salam Khayyat (vice-president for academic affairs); Professor Saed K. Khayat (director of the Centre for Grants and International Projects); Dr Mustafa Ghanem (external programmes coordinator); Dana Abdulhamid (programmes coordinator)
URL	https://tesi.najah.edu/en/
Submission	<p>In response to the destruction of Gaza's higher education sector, An-Najah National University launched the Technical Education Support for Higher Education Students Initiative (TESI) in partnership with UNIMED. TESI provides displaced Gazan students with free, accredited online courses as visiting students, supported by over 550 volunteer instructors from more than 50 countries. The initiative combines academic continuity with emotional and practical support, offering orientation sessions, offline learning tools and a robust digital infrastructure. As of late 2024, more than 8,700 students had been issued registration numbers, and nearly 2,000 had completed courses successfully. TESI has become a global model for crisis-resilient education, showcasing how innovation, compassion, and international collaboration can protect the right to education in times of conflict. With strong international partnerships and a focus on sustainability, TESI continues to expand its impact and reaffirm the principle that no student should be left behind.</p>



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Institution Name	Middle East College
Submission title or project name	Bridging potential to performance: MEC's student success story
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Priya Mathew
URL	
Submission	<p>Middle East College (MEC) serves about 4,400 students with a balanced gender distribution, primarily from public schools of Oman (90 per cent of students are Omani nationals). Our student success framework holistically addresses academic achievement, well-being and professional development, aligned with the pivotal elements of MEC's value proposition: qualification, experience and networking. The Student Success Centre, staffed by psychologists and counsellors, supports struggling students with "core advisers" who develop personalised intervention strategies addressing motivation, attendance and academic challenges. Student success mentors promote support services, while our customised Learning Experience Platform provides access to a host of services and tracks engagement. Additional resources include the Centre for Academic Writing, research opportunities, industry readiness initiatives, and initiatives to promote international mobility. Results show significant improvements in student outcomes in terms of academic achievement, employability skills and personal development. Our comprehensive approach has enhanced retention and achievement while fostering self-determined learning.</p>



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Institution Name	Taibah University
Submission title or project name	Innovation Pioneers Bootcamp: transforming ideas into impact
Nominee / key personnel	Deanship of Student Affairs
URL	https://www.spa.gov.sa/ar/N2238649?type=news&uuid=N2238649
Submission	<p>The Innovation Pioneers Bootcamp at Taibah University is a student-centred initiative designed to foster creativity, innovation and problem-solving. Targeting students from universities across Medina, the boot camp provides a dynamic setting where participants identify real challenges in university life – spanning academic, health, social and technological areas – and work collaboratively to develop practical, innovative solutions. Over four days, students receive mentorship from experienced peers and facilitators, engage in workshops on entrepreneurship and design thinking, and progress from ideation to prototype development. The initiative emphasises hands-on learning and empowers students to turn ideas into actionable projects with lasting impact on campus life. Projects are presented to expert panels and often continue beyond the event into national competitions or university adoption. The boot camp not only builds essential skills such as leadership, collaboration and creativity, but also reinforces the role of students as active contributors to institutional development and changemakers within their communities.</p>



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Institution Name	King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals
Submission title or project name	KFUPM's Irshad platform: transforming mental health and student support
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	<p>Mental health is a growing concern among university students, requiring accessible and effective support systems. Recognising this need, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals introduced academic and psychiatric services in 2000. To streamline access, the university launched the Irshad platform in 2019 – a comprehensive, in-house solution offering free academic, psychological, behavioural, financial and social support. Irshad (which means “guidance” in Arabic) allows students to request help directly, while faculty and staff can refer students or peers in need. Its integration with key departments enables real-time, coordinated support. Since its launch, Irshad has handled more than 7,000 cases, significantly improving student well-being and academic performance. National and international institutions, including King Saud University and Arizona State University, have praised the platform’s innovation. King Fahd University is now enhancing Irshad with AI tools for greater interactivity, reaffirming its commitment to holistic student development and mental health awareness.</p>



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Institution Name	Abu Dhabi University
Submission title or project name	Student innovation meets AI: redefining support through ADU Connect
Nominee / key personnel	Dr Chakib Farhat; Roula Al Qasem; Sabri Abbas; Deenaz Kanji; Duha Lababidi; Dr Ghassan Aouad; Dr Hamad Ebrahim Ali Odhabi; Dr Barry O'Mahony; Stephen D'Cunha; Merlyn Kulapurath; Bisharah Al Sarraf
URL	
Submission	<p>Developed by students, ADU Connect is an AI-powered platform transforming student support at Abu Dhabi University. Launched in 2023, it integrates academic, co-curricular and wellness services into a unified ecosystem. Its AI engine personalises student journeys, recommending skill-building events (such as debate clubs for public speaking) and tracking 60,000-plus volunteer hours aligned with UAE sustainability goals. With 57 per cent engagement at the AI Ain campus and 51 per cent at the Abu Dhabi site (2024-25), the platform maps activities to employability skills such as leadership and critical thinking, enhancing graduate employability via AI-driven Co-Curricular Transcripts. The Academic Success Centre module reduced the number of at-risk students by 15 per cent and boosted peer tutor applications by 20 per cent, fostering academic resilience. ADU Connect also aligns with the UAE's Vision 2030, informing curriculum updates. Supported by 629 logged events and student testimonials, this innovation crafted by students for students showcases how AI and youth-driven creativity can redefine higher education.</p>



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Institution Name	Khalifa University
Submission title or project name	KUBee AI-powered academic assistant
Nominee / key personnel	
URL	
Submission	<p>Khalifa University's KUBee, an AI-powered academic assistant, improves both student and adviser experiences by providing real-time, personalised academic guidance. For students, KUBee offers immediate access to accurate information on degree requirements, course sequencing and academic policies through a chatbot and an online portal. This empowers students to make informed decisions, plan their courses effectively and track their academic progress, resulting in increased confidence and engagement. For advisers, KUBee reduces the burden of routine enquiries, allowing them to focus on personalised mentorship and strategic support. The system's AI-driven course planning and registration tools streamline the advising process, while providing valuable data insights into student progress and course demand. Since its launch, KUBee has reduced registration office email enquiries by 50 per cent, enhanced student satisfaction and improved academic planning and progression. KUBee represents a transformative solution for efficient, AI-supported academic advising.</p>