

## V. Timeline

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### Recent Milestones in the GCC's Higher Education Sector

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#### 2000

July: The Kuwaiti government issues Decree no. 34 for the establishment of private higher education.

September: The Arab Open University is established. The university is headquartered in Kuwait and has additional branches in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

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#### 2001

The Oman Accreditation Council (OAC) is set up to oversee the accreditation of HEIs and programs. OAC reviews amendments related to the National Qualifications Framework awarded by HEIs. In 2010, OAC is replaced by the Oman Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA).

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#### 2003

The Dubai Knowledge Park opens. It is the world's only free zone dedicated to Human Resource Management, and it's foreign-owned.

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#### 2004

Qatar University (QU) begins structural reforms following the recommendations of a commissioned study carried out by RAND Corporation, a US think tank. Following this, a number of QU's degree programs are accredited by international bodies. QU introduces more than 30 graduate programs by 2015, along with spending \$63 million on research between 2010-2011.

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#### 2005

Saudi Arabia establishes the King Abdullah Scholarship Program.

The Saudi National Center for E-Learning and Distance Learning is set up.

Law no. 3 (2005) establishes the Higher Education Council (HEC) in Bahrain.

June: Royal Decree no. 54 (2005) establishes The Research Council (TRC) in Oman. It is chaired by Sayyid Shihab Bin Tariq Al-Said, an adviser to Sultan Qaboos Bin Said Al Said.

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#### 2006

Law no. 30 establishes the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai (KHDA). KHDA is responsible for regulating private higher education in the emirate.

The Qatar Foundation launches the Qatar National Research Fund to provide resources for undergraduate and graduate students, in addition to established researchers in Qatar who partner with other researchers across the globe.

February 19: Paris-Sorbonne University signs an agreement with the Government of Abu Dhabi to provide first-rate higher education in the emirate. The Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi opens its doors in October 2006.

September: The Kuwaiti government establishes its internal scholarship program, which provides funds for nation-

als to study in private universities in at home.

### 2007

In Saudi Arabia, Technical and Vocational Training and Education (TVET) is brought under the authority of the Technical and Vocational Training Corporation.

The Abu Dhabi Vocational Education and Training Institute (ADVETI) is established.

February 25: The MIT & Masdar Institute Cooperative Program is set up in Abu Dhabi in order to integrate theory with practice, as well as to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

April: The Dubai International Academic City (DIAC) is established as part of TECOM Group. DIAC caters to the needs of the region's growing and diverse academic community, and it is the world's largest free zone dedicated to higher education.

### 2008

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa establishes Bahrain Polytechnic by Royal Decree no. 65.

### 2009

The King Abdullah University of Science & Technology (KAUST) is set up with an estimated \$10-15 billion endowment. KAUST is the first co-ed university in Saudi Arabia that uses English-language instruction.

George Mason University closes its branch campus in Ras Al Khaima, UAE due to financial issues.

December: NYU Abu Dhabi (NYUAD) opens the doors to its downtown campus. It is the first time a major US research university establishes a comprehensive liberal arts branch campus in the Gulf.

### 2010

The Saudi government's higher education spending triples between 2004-2010.

OAAA is established to continue OAC's accreditation role. OAAA focuses on enabling Omani graduates to compete in the job market, and to be able to contribute effectively to the country's sustainable development.

Royal Decree no. 30 (2010) tasks TRC with drawing up a national plan for scientific research in Oman. As a result, TRC becomes the main policymaking body and funding agency for scientific research in the country.

Michigan State University (MSU) closes its branch campus in Dubai after attracting only one-third of the expected number of students.

### 2011

The Saudi Technology Development and Investment Company (Taqnia) is set up.

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### 2012

More than 3,000 Kuwaiti students are granted internal scholarships for the 2012/2013 calendar year.

The Omani government establishes the Education Council with Royal Decree no. 48. The Council is the main policymaking body for education in Oman.

The Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS) is established. It aims to make Qatar a leading center for research and development and innovation.

### 2013

The number of HEIs in the Gulf now total 681 for Saudi Arabia, 81 for the UAE, 55 for Oman, 21 for Kuwait, 16 for Qatar, and 14 for Bahrain.

### 2014

Saudi enrollment in the King Abdullah Scholarship Program reaches close to 60,000 students for the 2014/2015 calendar year. This figure marks a 2,000 percent increase over the last decade. Saudi Arabia becomes the 4th-largest sending country to the US and the 5th-largest to Canada.

The Emirates Diplomatic Academy (EDA) is established in Abu Dhabi. EDA equips the UAE's current and future diplomats with the knowledge and multi-disciplinary skills to effectively serve their country.

June: HEC approves Bahrain's first National Strategy for Higher Education and Scientific Research (2014-2024).

### 2015

In Saudi Arabia, the Ministry of General Education and the Ministry of Higher Education are merged to form the Ministry of Education.

Kuwait's Minister of Education announces the availability of 30,923 seats for high school graduates to enroll in HEIs for the 2015/2016 academic year.

### 2016

Saudi Arabia unveils the final phase of its e-governance system "Faris," which covers all administrative affairs and personnel issues in the country's education sector.

May: The British Accreditation Council (BAC) partners with HEC in Bahrain to establish a national university accreditation system.

October: Khalifa University, Masdar Institute and the Petroleum Institute are unified under one umbrella university. This decision is made during a meeting headed by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, the crown prince of Abu Dhabi

### 2017

The Saudi Ministry of Education unveils a new initiative pairing its scholarship program with a job placement scheme.

January: The UAE Space Agency signs MoUs with eight universities in the UAE in order to support the space industry, and to share research and technology.