



UNITED ARAB EMIRATES
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION
& SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

جائزة الإمارات
للتعليم العالي

UAE AWARD IN
HIGHER EDUCATION

الدورة الأولى 2026 FIRST EDITION

Guidebook for UAE Award in Higher Education



About the Award and Its Objectives



Under the patronage of
His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan,
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Chairman of the Education, Human Development and
Community Development Council

**The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
launches the UAE Higher Education Award.**



About the award

A national initiative that seeks to **Honoring excellence and innovation in the higher education and scientific research sector in the country**, and highlighting leading models that contribute to building a future higher education system that supports the national economy, enhances students' readiness for the labor market, and consolidates the UAE's position as a global center for knowledge and innovation.

In line with the UAE Vision 2031 to build a global knowledge economy, this award seeks to develop human capital, support scientific research and enhance the global competitiveness of the higher education system. By celebrating excellence, this award contributes to establishing a culture of innovation, partnership and future readiness in the higher education sector.

Its goals



Highlighting pioneering experiences in higher education institutions.



Honoring students, academics, and those with outstanding contributions.



Enhancing the quality and competitiveness of higher education institutions.



Stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship in the higher education sector.



Strengthening partnerships and the national impact of higher education.



Supporting the readiness of the higher education system for the future and establishing a culture of excellence and sustainability.

Main categories of the award

The award is organized annually **within 4 main categories that include 18 sub-categories**, keeping pace with the latest developments and national trends in the higher education system, which enhances the competitiveness of higher education, technical and vocational education institutions, stimulates the implementation of transformative projects, and supports influential academic and student competencies.

01  Category of leading universities and higher and vocational education institutions Leadership It aims to honor universities, higher education institutions, and technical and vocational education and training institutions in the UAE that achieve advanced levels of performance, impact, and future readiness.	02  Transformative Higher Education Projects Category Readiness It aims to honor transformative projects led by institutions, which contribute to qualitative shifts, sustainable development and enhanced future readiness in the higher education and scientific research sector.	03  Higher Education Pioneers Category Pioneers It aims to recognize the exceptional contributions of students, faculty and institutions that support entrepreneurship, that make outstanding contributions and leading models in the fields of education and research, and that promote a culture of innovation, ambition, and global competitiveness.	04  Influential Higher Education Partners Category National Impact It aims to honor leaders and strategic partners who have made a tangible contribution to the development of higher education, by highlighting effective leadership, impactful partnerships, and sustainable national impact.
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Subcategories

01 Category of leading universities and higher and vocational education institutions  For universities and higher education institutions - University category – Leading higher education institution - University category – Higher Education Institution A leader in economic and social impact - University category – Leading higher education institution in integrating the student journey - University category Leading higher education institution In readiness for the future  For vocational training institutions Leading Vocational and Technical Education and Training Institution category	02 Transformative Higher Education Projects Category  For universities, higher education institutions, and vocational training - The transformative project category involves impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors. - Transformative project category in lifelong learning and capacity building - Transformative project category in future readiness	03 Higher Education Pioneers Category  For the academic staff - Innovative Researcher Category - Academic Leader in Future Readiness category - A pioneer in impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors  For students Innovative Researcher Category  For scholarship students Higher Education Ambassador category  Entrepreneurial Pioneers - Emerging Entrepreneurs Category - Institutions that Support Entrepreneurship	04 Influential Higher Education Partners Category  For institutions affiliated with the economic and industrial sectors - Strategic Partnership Category in Higher Education - Best International University in Partnership with UAE Universities  For influential individuals and leaders in the higher education sector Exceptional Achievement Leader in Higher Education category
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Main and sub-categories of the award

01

Category of leading universities and higher and vocational education institutions

Leadership



For universities and higher education institutions

- University category – Leading higher education institution
 - University category – Higher Education Institution A leader in economic and social impact
 - University category – Leading higher education institution in integrating the student journey
 - University category Leading higher education institution In readiness for the future
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For vocational training institutions

Leading Vocational and Technical Education and Training Institution category

Subcategory 1: Higher Education Institution - Leading University

This category targets higher education institutions that have achieved the highest levels of overall institutional performance, according to the results of the Outcomes-Based Assessment Framework (OBF), reflecting their excellence in the quality of education, scientific research and innovation, enhancing their economic and social impact, their alignment with labor market needs and their readiness for the future.

Output-based assessment framework:

	1. Employment outcomes	2. Learning outcomes	3. Cooperation with partners	4. Research outputs	5. Reputation	6. Community participation
	It measures graduates' ability to obtain high-quality jobs.	It measures the quality and consistency of learning outcomes and skills acquisition.	It measures the effectiveness of partnership efforts in terms of employability and scientific research.	quality of academic and applied research.	It measures the level of recognition the university enjoys globally and locally.	It measures the university's impact on society as a whole.
the weight	25%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%

- i* The results of higher education institutions are calculated based on institutions that have obtained an (A) rating according to **the results of the Outcomes-Based Assessment Framework (OBF)**.
- i* Results are calculated based on the minimum performance **threshold of 80**. For the first sub-category of leading higher education institutions, noting that the maximum score is 100.

Subcategory 1: Higher Education Institution - Leading University

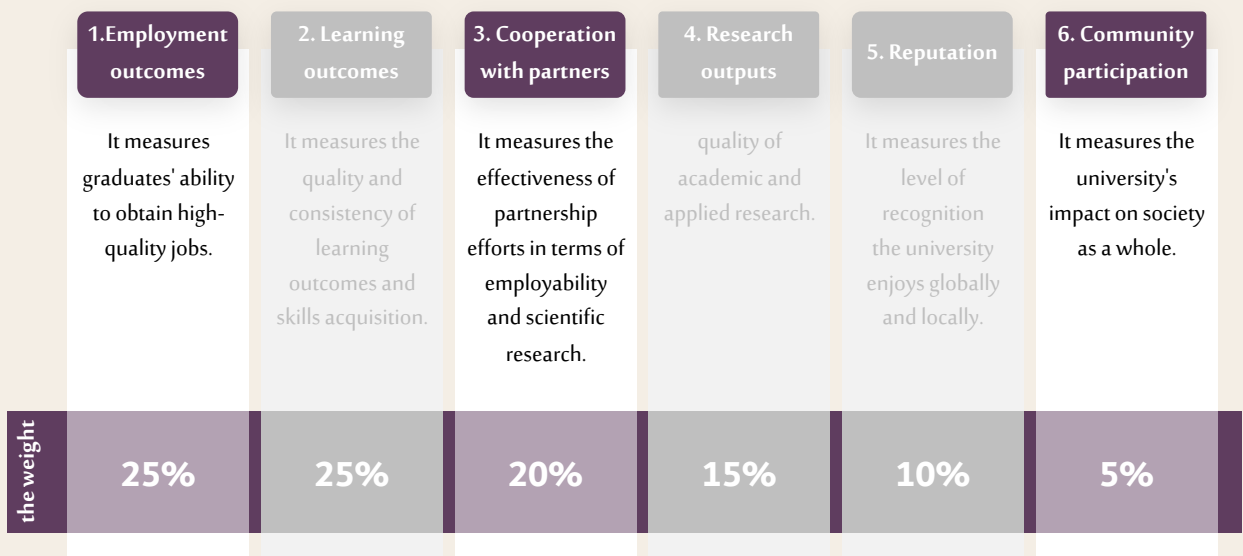
Detailed performance indicators for each axis within the output-based evaluation framework :

The foundation	Key Performance Indicator	Weight at the institutional level
1. Employment outcomes	1.1 Employment rate (percentage)	20%
	1.2 Employment rate in related jobs (percentage)	5%
2. Learning outcomes	2.1 Quality of student assessment (percentage)	7.5%
	2.2 Student Retention Rate (Continuing from the first year to the second year as a percentage)	5%
	2.3 Employer feedback during practical training (out of 5)	2.5%
	2.4 Employer feedback during recruitment (out of 5)	2.5%
	2.5% Success Rate in Obtaining Licenses and Certificates (Percentage)	5%
	2.6 Student satisfaction level with the learning experience (out of 5)	2.5%
3. Cooperation with partners	3.1 3.1 Job offers after completion of practical training (as a percentage)	5%
	3.2 Student participation rate in practical training programs (percentage)	8%
	3.3 Shared courses with sectors (as a percentage)	4%
	Sector contributions (in UAE Dirhams)	3%
4. Research outputs	4.1 Publication Rate (Issue per Year)	2.5%
	4.2 Weighted Citation Factor by Field (Number per Year)	1.5%
	4.3 Research The joint venture with the sectors (as a percentage)	2.5%
	4.4 Student participation rate in research (percentage)	4.5%
	4.5 Impact of scientific research (percentage)	2%
	4.6 Intellectual Property Granted (by number)	2%
5. Reputation	5.1 Global rankings of universities and disciplines (by number)	3%
	5.2 International Accreditation Status (%)	3%
	5.3 Student participation rate in international degree programs Double or joint (as a percentage)	2%
	5.4 International Research Collaboration (as a percentage)	2%
6. Community participation	6.1 Academic activities in which students participate (by number)	3%
	6.2 Community events and initiatives (by number)	2%

Subcategory 2: Higher Education Institution - Leading University in Economic and Social Impact

This category honors higher education institutions that have made a tangible impact on supporting the economy and society through their academic and research outputs, strategic partnerships and community initiatives, contributing to achieving national priorities and sustainable development.

Output-based assessment framework:



- i** Organizations in the economic and social impact category are assessed on the following output-based evaluation axes: employment outputs, collaboration with partners, and community engagement.
- i** Results are calculated based on the minimum performance threshold (**Threshold = 35**). This is for the subcategory of leading higher education institutions in terms of economic and social impact. The maximum score is 50.

Subcategory 2: Higher Education Institution - Leading University in Economic and Social Impact

This category honors higher education institutions that have made a tangible impact on supporting the economy and society through their academic and research outputs, strategic partnerships and community initiatives, contributing to achieving national priorities and sustainable development.

Output-based assessment framework:

	1. Employment outcomes	2. Learning outcomes	3. Cooperation with partners	4. Research outputs	5. Reputation	6. Community participation
	It measures graduates' ability to obtain high-quality jobs.	It measures the quality and consistency of learning outcomes and skills acquisition.	It measures the effectiveness of partnership efforts in terms of employability and scientific research.	quality of academic and applied research.	It measures the level of recognition the university enjoys globally and locally.	It measures the university's impact on society as a whole.
the weight	25%	25%	20%	15%	10%	5%

- i* Institutions in the Student Journey Integration category are assessed on the following output-based assessment axes: learning outcomes, research outcomes, and reputation.
- i* Results are calculated based on the minimum performance threshold (Threshold = 35). For the subcategory of leading higher education institutions in the student journey integration category. Note that the maximum score is 50.

Subcategory 4: Higher Education Institution - Leading University in Future readiness

This category honors higher education institutions that have demonstrated an advanced level of future readiness by adopting modern technologies, promoting innovation, preparing for future changes, and building a flexible educational system capable of keeping pace with national priorities and global trends.

Future-ready potential: The Future Readiness badge reflects the alignment of higher education institutions’ programs with future labor market needs and the extent to which they integrate AI-supported education and learning.



Reason: To assess the potential of higher education institutions to prepare for future trends.



Method: Higher education institutions prepare students for the next decade by aligning programs with the demand for emerging skills imposed by technological development, and integrating artificial intelligence and technological advancements into curricula and teaching methods.



How to measure:

	1. Alignment with future skills	2. AI-powered education and learning
	Do higher education institutions provide the skills necessary to prepare students for the future?	Does artificial intelligence improve the design, implementation, and evaluation of software?
Measurement	It measures the extent to which the skills that can be acquired in academic programs align with emerging future skills.	It assesses how effectively institutions integrate artificial intelligence into their teaching and learning practices to enhance the quality of education and future readiness.
the weight	50%	50%



The result: The assessment of future readiness potential is independent and will not affect the scores of the output-based assessment framework for the institutions concerned.

i Candidates are required to provide results higher than 80% for each axis.

Subcategory 4: Higher Education Institution - Leading University in Future readiness

The sub-evaluation criteria relevant to the category, according to the output-based evaluation framework:

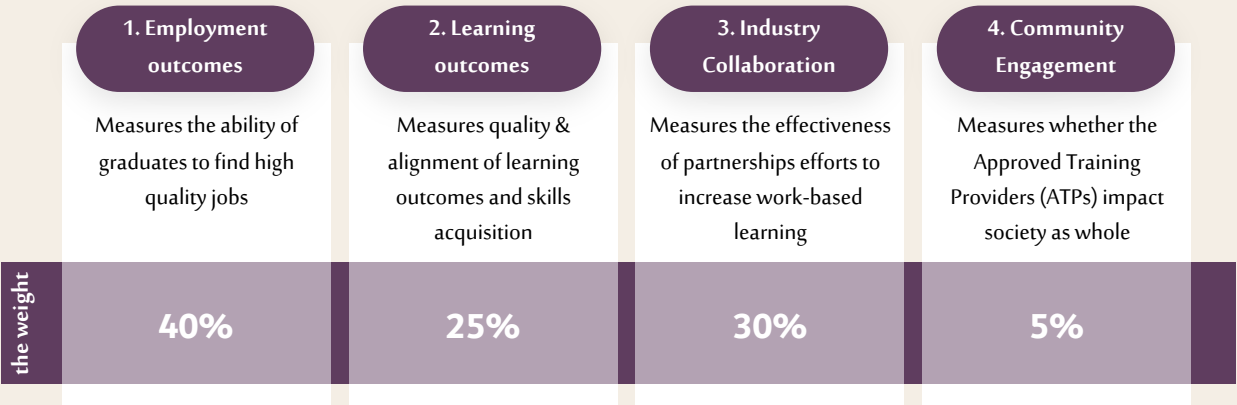
AI-enabled education and learning: which supports monitoring the efforts of higher education institutions in employing artificial intelligence in education and learning through 4 indicators .

Section	index		the weight
Program design (Artificial intelligence in curriculum design and learning)	1.1 Integrating artificial intelligence into the design and ongoing development of the software.	Is artificial intelligence used for guidance? Decisions regarding the design, support , enhancement , review, and continuous improvement of programs (e.g., curriculum structuring, course sequencing, content updating, and iterative improvements)?	20%
Presenting programs (Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning Processes)	2.1 Using AI-powered teaching tools with a learner-centered focus	Are AI-powered tools used to support learning - centered activities ? And teaching (such as personalized learning , content creation, private tutoring, or learning support)?	30%
Performance evaluation and analysis	3.1 AI-enhanced assessment and analysis of its results to support the continuous improvement of student performance.	Is artificial intelligence being used to support assessment processes (such as learning support feedback , student learning diagnosis, and performance tracking) and employing AI-powered analytics to improve student performance?	30%
Faculty readiness and institutional capacity	4.1 The extent to which support and training programs are available and implemented for faculty members to develop their competencies in employing artificial intelligence technologies.	Does the organization provide guidance, training , and structures that support the adoption of artificial intelligence in Learning and teaching?	20%

Subcategory 5: Leading Vocational and Technical Education and Training Institution

This category honors vocational and technical education and training institutions that have achieved outstanding performance in preparing national competencies, aligning their programs with labor market needs, strengthening partnerships with various sectors, and achieving educational outcomes with a sustainable economic and social impact.

Sub-assessment criteria according to the outcomes-based assessment framework for vocational and technical education and training:



i The results of leading vocational and technical education and training institutions are calculated based on institutions that have obtained an (A) rating according to the results of the Outcomes-Based Assessment Framework (OBF).

i The results are calculated according to the minimum approved performance threshold = 80 , noting that the maximum score is 100.

Detailed performance indicators for each axis within the output-based evaluation framework:

Programmatic Weighting	Institutional Weighting	KPI	Pillar
1. Employment Outcomes	1.1 Employment Rate (%)	%30	%30
	1.2 Employment Rate in Relevant Jobs (%)	%10	%10
2. Learning Outcomes	2.1 Completion Rate (%)	%5	%5
	2.2 Employer Feedback Post Work Placement (score out of 5)	%5	%5
	2.3 Success Rate in Professional Licenses or Industry Certifications (%)	%5	%5
	2.4 Student Satisfaction with Learning Experience (score out of 5)	%5	%5
	2.5 Assessment Quality Review (%)	%5	%5
3. Industry Collaboration	3.1 Job Offer Post Work-placement (%)	%5	%5
	3.2 Student Participation Rate in Work Placements (%)	%5	%5
	3.3 Joint Industry Apprenticeship Programs (%)	%20	%20
4. Community Engagement	4.1 Events with Learner Participation (#)	%3	%3
	4.2 Events & Initiatives for the Community (#)	%2	%2

Participation requirements

- 01 The organization must have **a valid license or accreditation** within the United Arab Emirates, and must not have had its license revoked or be subject to serious regulatory penalties during the past two years.
- 02 Submitting the required data according to **the Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBF) framework** And inclusion in the official national classification of higher education institutions issued by the Ministry.
- 03 The organization must have been in **actual operation for at least two years** prior to the application date.
- 04 **Violations proven according to the ministerial decision on penalties and administrative violations** will lead to immediate exclusion from the award.

Award application stages

Stage	Step	Description
Stage 1 Institutional nominations	1	The technical committee reviews the performance of institutions based on the results of the output-based assessment framework and prepares a preliminary list of nominated institutions.
Stage 2 Assessment and Reporting	2	Initial screening of applicant institutions is conducted based on eligibility criteria. By the technical committee.
	3	The final list of participating institutions is approved by the technical committee.
	4	A comprehensive report is being prepared that includes the arrangement Higher education institutions and vocational and technical education and training institutions across all subcategories of the award .
Stage 3 Results approval	5	results are approved by the supervisory committee .
	6	The final winners are approved by the award sponsor.
Stage 4 Announcing the winners	7	The official announcement of the winners and the organization of the awards ceremony.

02

Transformative Higher Education Projects Category

Readiness



For universities, higher education institutions, and vocational training

- The transformative project category involves impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors.
- Transformative project category in lifelong learning and capacity building
- Transformative project category in future readiness

Subcategory 1: Transformative project in impactful partnership with economic and industrial sectors

The projects aim to build effective partnerships with the economic and industrial sectors, and link education and research to the needs of the labor market, with a focus on artificial intelligence skills, digital skills, and advanced technologies.

Sub-evaluation criteria:

	1. Alignment with economic trends and the needs and expectations of priority sectors	2. Partnership design and implementation	3. Impact on education, learning, research, and employment	4. Sustainability, scalability, and knowledge transfer
	It measures the extent to which the project is linked to a priority economic or industrial sector, and the clarity of the need or gap that the partnership seeks to address.	It measures the quality of the partnership model in terms of role clarity, governance, each party's contribution, implementation plan, and exchange of resources and expertise.	It measures the actual results achieved by the partnership on programs, students, research, training, employment, or graduate readiness.	It measures the partnership's ability to continue after the initial implementation phase, its scalability or replication, and the mechanisms for transferring knowledge within the organization or sector.
weight	15%	20%	50%	15%
What is being evaluated	- Clarity of the targeted sector - There is a documented need - Project link to national or sectoral priority - Clarity of the beneficiaries of the partnership	- Partnership agreement or model - Partner roles - Governance mechanisms - Resources provided - Implementation plan - Performance monitoring	- Developing a program or course - Training or employment opportunities - Joint research projects, applied learning outcomes - Documented results on students or partners	- Sustainability plan - Ongoing resources - Expanding the partnership knowledge transfer - Generalizing the model - Developing usable tools or guides
Examples of evidence	- Needs study - Labor market data - Letters from industry partners - Link to a national or sectoral strategy - Skills Gap Analysis	- Memorandum of Understanding - Project plan - Governance structure - Roles and responsibilities - Financial or technical contributions from partners - Prototypes	- Number of students benefiting - Training opportunities - Job opportunities - joint projects - Learning outcomes - Applied research - Partner satisfaction indicators - Before/After Results	- Sustainability plan - Expand to other programs or institutions - Practical guide - Knowledge transfer workshops - Extended Agreement - Reproducible model

Subcategory 1: Transformative project in impactful partnership with economic and industrial sectors

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Alignment with economic trends and the needs and expectations of priority sectors 15%	The extent to which the project is linked to the state's economic orientations and the needs of priority sectors, and its ability to respond to real challenges or opportunities in the economic and industrial sectors.	There is no clear link between the project and economic trends or the needs of priority sectors.	There is a general or indirect connection to an economic or industrial sector, without a clear analysis of the need or gap.	The project partially addresses a specific sectoral need, with an acceptable understanding of the economic challenges or opportunities.	The project is clearly linked to an economic or industrial priority, and responds to a documented need of a beneficiary entity or sector.	The project offers an advanced strategic model that links education to the needs of a priority sector, with a sustainable mechanism for updating skills in accordance with labor market changes.
Partnership design and implementation 20%	The quality of the partnership design with the economic or industrial sectors, the clarity of the roles of the parties, the governance mechanisms, the implementation plan, and the exchange of resources and experiences between the educational institution and the partners.	There is no clear or documented partnership, or the cooperation is merely formal without actual implementation.	There is an initial partnership or general memorandum of understanding, but without clear roles or a complete implementation plan.	There is a partially implemented partnership, with acceptable roles and limited or incomplete outputs.	There is a fully integrated partnership with clear roles, a documented implementation plan, and joint activities such as training or applied projects.	There is an innovative and sustainable partnership, with clear governance and shared outputs that can be scaled within the organization or with other sectors.
Impact on education, learning, research, and employment 50%	The extent of the partnership's impact on developing programs, curricula, applied learning opportunities, joint research, and aligning educational outcomes with training and employment opportunities in the economic and industrial sectors.	There are no obvious effects on education, learning, research, or training and employment opportunities.	There are limited activities such as visits or meetings, with no clear impact on programs, students, or research.	There are preliminary or limited results in student learning, research, or training.	The project achieves a clear and measurable impact on student learning, training, employment, or applied research.	The project achieves a broad and sustainable impact, with continuous improvement in students' employability, and research or applied outputs of value to the sector.
Sustainability, scalability, and knowledge transfer 15%	The extent to which the partnership can continue and expand within the institution or across other sectors, and the documentation and transfer of the resulting knowledge to students, academic staff, partners, or the beneficiary sector.	There are no sustainability indicators, no expansion plan, and no knowledge transfer mechanism.	There is a general intention to continue or expand the partnership, without clear resources, a plan, or documentation.	There is an initial plan for sustainability or expansion, with limited transfer of knowledge or replicable practices.	The project has a clear model for continuity and expansion, with documented tools for knowledge transfer.	The project has an innovative, sustainable, and replicable model, with mechanisms for continuous improvement and structured knowledge transfer within and outside the organization.

Subcategory 2 : The Transformative Project in Lifelong Learning and Capacity Building

This category targets projects that offer an organized and effective model for continuous learning and skills and capabilities development, whether for students, graduates, employees, or community groups, through flexible and measurable learning pathways that contribute to raising academic, professional, or vocational readiness.

Sub-evaluation criteria:

	1. Alignment with the trends of lifelong learning and capacity building	2. Project design and implementation	3. Impact on the continuity of skills and abilities development	4. Sustainability, scalability, and knowledge transfer
	It measures the extent to which the project is related to a clear need to develop specific skills or abilities within a clear target group.	It measures the quality of learning experience design in terms of objectives, pathways, content, learning methods, assessment tools, and implementation mechanisms.	It measures the results achieved by the project in developing the skills of the beneficiaries and the continuation of learning or development after the end of the program.	It measures the program's ability to be sustained, reused, expanded to other categories or institutions, and to transfer its content or methodology.
weight	15%	20%	50%	15%
What is being evaluated	- Identifying the target audience - Identifying skills or abilities - Its connection to the labor market or national priorities - Clarity of the training gap	- Clarity of learning objectives - Path design - Content quality - Learning flexibility - Assessment tools - Follow-up mechanisms	- Improve skills - Acquired certificates - Career mobility and growth - Improved performance - Learner continuity - Applying skills practically	- Content sustainability - Expanding the number of beneficiaries - Train the Trainers - Methodology Transfer - Pattern replication capability
Examples of evidence	- Training needs analysis - Skills Framework - Labor market data - Survey results - Linked to national or institutional initiatives	- Program plan - Training curriculum or content - Learning platform - Assessment tools - Implementation schedule - Follow-up reports - Prototypes	- Before/After Results - Completion rates - Certificates - Skills assessment - Success stories - Indicators of employment or promotion - Beneficiary satisfaction	- expansion plan - Ongoing platform - Train the trainers - Implementation partnerships - Methodological guide - Reusable tools

Subcategory 2 : The Transformative Project in Lifelong Learning and Capacity Building

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Alignment with the trends of continuous learning and capacity building 15%	The extent to which the project is related to lifelong learning trends and skills and abilities development, and its responsiveness to the needs of learners, employees, graduates, or targeted community groups through flexible and continuous learning pathways.	There is no clear link between the project and continuous learning or capacity development.	There is a general reference to lifelong learning, but without a clear definition of the target group or the skills to be developed.	The project addresses a specific training or skills need , either partially or for a limited group.	The project clearly aligns with the needs of the future labor market, targeting skills such as artificial intelligence and digital skills.	The project offers an advanced model for lifelong learning, linked to labor market transformations, and capable of continuous updating according to future skills.
Project design and implementation 20%	The quality of the project design and methodology, the clarity of its objectives, its educational or training pathways, implementation mechanisms, evaluation methods, and the suitability of learning tools for the target groups.	There is no clear plan or systematic design for the project, or the implementation is undocumented .	There is a general idea or limited training activities without a clear path or appropriate evaluation mechanisms.	There is an acceptable project design, with basic learning objectives and pathways, but implementation or evaluation is limited.	There is an integrated design that includes flexible learning paths, clear implementation mechanisms, and follow-up for skills acquisition.	The project offers an innovative and flexible learning model, using digital tools, professional certifications, or microlearning, with continuous improvement of the educational experience.
Impact on the continuity of skills and abilities development 50%	The extent to which the project achieves a tangible impact in raising the skills and capabilities of the beneficiaries, enhancing opportunities for professional, academic or career development, and continuing learning after the end of the program or initiative.	There are no clear results or indicators of impact on skills or abilities development.	There are limited outputs such as attendance or participation, without clear evidence of skills development.	The project achieved an acceptable impact in developing some skills or abilities, but the impact is limited or unsustainable.	The project achieves a clear and measurable impact on raising the skills and professional readiness of participants, with results such as completion rates or certificates earned.	The project achieves a qualitative and sustainable impact on capacity building, with the actual application of skills at work, a career transition, or an expansion of learning opportunities.
Sustainability, scalability, and knowledge transfer 15%	The extent to which the project can continue and expand within or outside the organization, documenting the resulting knowledge and experiences, transferring them to other groups, or converting them into a replicable model.	There are no sustainability indicators, no expansion plan, and no knowledge transfer mechanism.	There is a general intention to continue or expand without a clear plan, resources, or documentation.	There is a preliminary plan for sustainability or expansion, with limited knowledge transfer or partial replication.	The project has a sustainable and scalable model, with clear tools for knowledge transfer such as training platforms or manuals.	The project has a sustainable and innovative model for lifelong learning, which can be generalized to other categories or sectors, with continuous improvement mechanisms and extended learning networks.

Subcategory 3 : Transformative Project in Future Readiness

This category recognizes projects that deliver innovative educational, research, institutional, or technological solutions in response to future transformations. These projects should enhance the readiness of students, institutions, or academic programmes for future skills, strengthen AI readiness through artificial intelligence technologies adoption to support the competitiveness of the higher education sector in alignment with labour market needs and the knowledge economy

Sub-evaluation criteria:

	1. Alignment with future skills and AI readiness	2. Project design and implementation	3. Added value, results, and achieved impacts	4. Sustainability, scalability, and knowledge transfer
	It measures the alignment of the project with future trends, and the extent to which it contributes to enhancing the readiness of students or institutions for artificial intelligence, in order to support meeting the requirements of higher education and the future labor market.	It measures the quality of the project design and methodology, the implementation plan, governance, resource and risk management, the suitability of implementation tools for the target group, and the extent to which advanced technologies are used in implementation .	Measures the extent to which the project has achieved tangible outcomes in enhancing the educational experience, strengthening readiness for the adoption and application of AI technologies, and delivering sustainable, measurable impact	It measures the project's ability to continue, expand, and transform into an institutional practice or a model applicable to other institutions or programs.
weight	25 %	15 %	45 %	15 %
What is being evaluated	• Determining the future direction • Identifying future skills • Its connection to students, programs, or the institution • Link to the use of artificial intelligence technologies • A clear link to the inputs of future trends in higher education	• Clarity of goals • Implementation plan • Roles and responsibilities • Governance resources • Risk management • Appropriate implementation tools and advanced technologies for implementation, testing, and launch.	• Measurable results • Improved skills or readiness • Program development • Improve the experience • Applicable outputs • Institutional adoption	• Project sustainability • Expansion • knowledge transfer • Generalizing the experience • Integrating the project into policies or processes
Examples of evidence	- Trend analysis - Labor market studies - Future Skills Framework - Link to a national strategy - Link to future skills, data analysis sources, and decision making - Supporting data or reports	- Project plan - Governance structure - timetable - Monitoring mechanisms - Implementation reports - Tools or platforms - Risk Record - Prototypes	- Before/After Indicators - Number of beneficiaries - Learning outcomes - Performance indicators - Impact reports - Certificates of Use - Application results	- Sustainability plan - operational resources - Expansion within the organization - Practical guide - Training workshops - official adoption - Generalization plan

Subcategory 3 : Transformative Project in Future Readiness

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Alignment with future skills and AI readiness 25%	The extent to which the project relates to future skills and emerging trends in higher education and the labor market, such as digital skills, design thinking, artificial intelligence, sustainability, entrepreneurship, flexible learning, or interdisciplinary specializations.	There is no clear link between the project and future skills or emerging trends.	There is a general reference to future skills without clear translation in the project design or outputs.	The project addresses some future skills or emerging trends within a limited scope or for a specific target group.	The project applies a clear alignment with future skills, such as artificial intelligence, digital skills, advanced technologies or green skills.	The project presents an advanced model that anticipates future trends and clearly links them to the state's priorities, the digital economy, sustainability, and innovation.
Project design and implementation 15%	The quality of the project design and methodology, the clarity of its objectives, its implementation plan, governance mechanisms, distribution of roles, resource and risk management, and the suitability of implementation tools for the target group.	There is no clear plan or systematic design for the project, or the implementation is undocumented.	There is a general project idea with a limited plan or incomplete partial implementation.	There is an acceptable implementation plan and relatively clear objectives, but governance, follow-up, or documentation of results is limited.	There is a comprehensive project design, with clear objectives, modern tools, monitoring indicators, and documented implementation.	The project features an innovative and advanced design, effectively utilizes emerging technologies, and has governance for implementation and continuous improvement.
Added value, results, and achieved impacts 45%	The extent to which the project achieves clear added value, measurable results, and tangible impacts on students, the institution, academic programs, or graduates' future readiness.	There are no clear results or effects, or the outputs are not measurable.	There are initial or limited outputs with no clear impact on beneficiaries or the institution.	The project achieved acceptable results or a limited impact that can be partially measured.	The project achieves a clear and measurable added value in student readiness, program development, or service improvement.	The project achieves a qualitative and sustainable impact, with innovative and scalable outputs such as applied solutions, prototypes, or impactful institutional improvements.
Sustainability, scalability, and knowledge transfer 15%	The extent to which the project can continue after the initial implementation phase, its potential for expansion within or outside the institution, and the documentation and transfer of the resulting knowledge to students, academic staff, or partners.	There are no sustainability indicators, no expansion plan, and no knowledge transfer mechanism.	There is a general intention to continue or expand without a clear plan, resources, or documentation.	There is a preliminary plan for sustainability or expansion, with limited knowledge transfer.	The project has a sustainable and scalable model, with clear tools for transferring knowledge within or outside the organization.	The project has an innovative, sustainable, and replicable model, with mechanisms for continuous improvement and structured knowledge transfer that supports the wider adoption of successful practices.

Participation requirements

- 01 The initiative or project must be an actual implementation and not just in the planning stage, with results to be achieved and a measurable impact.
- 02 Applications must be submitted through the university and higher education institution to which the project belongs and with official accreditation.
- 03 Each university, higher education institution is allowed to nominate only one project in each category, provided that each nomination application is in a separate mailing with supporting evidence.
- 04 The approved nomination forms published on the official award page must be used.
- 05 Supporting evidence of the results and impact achieved (such as performance indicators, beneficiary data, or achievement reports) must be provided.
- 06 All data provided must be accurate, verifiable, and supported by evidence.

Award application stages

Stage	Step	Description
Stage 1 Submitting applications	1	The higher education institution nominates projects through Fill out the nomination forms and send them via the award's official email address through the approved coordinator.
	2	Applicant institutions submit comprehensive nomination applications that include an explanation of efforts and results according to the approved criteria for each subcategory , and attach supporting evidence.
Stage 2 Evaluation	3	assessment is conducted to verify that eligibility criteria and application requirements are met.
	4	Additional information or clarifications may be requested as needed to complete the assessment, either through a field visit or via video call to evaluate the nominated projects.
	5	Projects are evaluated according to the approved standard using an evaluation tool and determining the final score for each project.
Stage 3 Results approval	6	The results are reviewed by the technical committee to ensure quality and consistency.
	7	The results are presented to the supervisory committee for approval.
	8	The final winners are approved by the award sponsor before the official announcement.
Stage 4 Advertising and feedback	9	The winners are officially announced and an awards ceremony is organized.

i Applications are submitted through the main coordinator, who is designated by the organization, by sending the application to the award team according to the announced channel for receiving applications and within the specified timeframes.

Nomination Submission Form for Transformative Higher Education Projects Category

- 01** Subcategory:
The transformative project in effective partnership with economic and industrial sectors

To download, click
on the image or
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The image shows a QR code and a nomination submission form for Subcategory 01. The form is titled 'Form for Nomination Submission' and includes a header with the logo of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The form is divided into several sections, including a header section, a section for the nominator's details, a section for the project details, and a section for the project's impact. The form is designed to be filled out by the nominator and submitted to the relevant authorities.

- 02** Subcategory:
The transformative project in lifelong learning and skills development

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code




The image shows a QR code and a nomination submission form for Subcategory 02. The form is titled 'Form for Nomination Submission' and includes a header with the logo of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The form is divided into several sections, including a header section, a section for the nominator's details, a section for the project details, and a section for the project's impact. The form is designed to be filled out by the nominator and submitted to the relevant authorities.

- 03** Subcategory:
The transformative project in future readiness

To download, click
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The image shows a QR code and a nomination submission form for Subcategory 03. The form is titled 'Form for Nomination Submission' and includes a header with the logo of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The form is divided into several sections, including a header section, a section for the nominator's details, a section for the project details, and a section for the project's impact. The form is designed to be filled out by the nominator and submitted to the relevant authorities.

03

Higher Education Pioneers Category

Pioneers



For the academic staff

- Innovative Researcher Category
 - Academic Leader in Future Readiness category
 - A pioneer in impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors
-



Students

- Innovative Researcher Category
 - Higher Education Ambassador category (For scholarship students)
-



Entrepreneurial Pioneers

- Emerging Entrepreneurs Category
- Institutions that Support Entrepreneurship

Subcategories and evaluation criteria for the Higher Education Pioneers category – Academic Staff

Evaluation Criteria	Subcategory 1 Innovative researcher for the academic staff category	Subcategory 2 Academic leader in future readiness	Subcategory 3 A pioneer in impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors
	It is awarded to the academic who has succeeded in transforming his research outputs into practical solutions that address real challenges in strategic sectors, and whose efforts have resulted in the protection of intellectual property (patents) and models that are manufacturable or field-implementable.	It is awarded to the academic who has succeeded in leading a radical transformation in teaching methods by creating courses that integrate emerging technologies with specialized knowledge, to deliver an exceptional learning experience that produces students ready for the future job market.	It is awarded to the academic who has succeeded in building effective bridges between the university and vital sectors, and has contributed to the transfer of technology and specialized expertise to raise the efficiency of national institutions and support the knowledge economy.
	Addressing national challenges: - Presenting a research output that has been field-tested and proven to be significantly more effective than existing solutions. - Obtaining a "certificate of approval or adoption" from a governmental or private entity that confirms the successful application of research findings in solving an existing problem. - Obtaining a patent resulting from the outputs of applied research. - Achieving sustainable and measurable results and impact that reflect the added value of research innovation.	Curriculum engineering and innovative learning outcomes: - Designing academic courses that link theories with the practical applications required in the labor market. - Producing tangible learning outcomes (prototypes, entrepreneurial projects) resulting from the course. - Developing "hybrid" courses that combine the academic aspect with internationally accredited professional certifications.	Strategic alliances with the business sector: - Providing specialized technical solutions that have contributed to addressing operational challenges in economic sectors. - Activating channels for knowledge transfer ensures that educational outcomes are aligned with employment requirements. - Providing opportunities for training and employing students in economic sectors.
	Sustainability and competitive financing: - Attracting external funding (Research Grants) from the private sector or international organizations to support his applied project. - Establishing or leading a specialized research laboratory or "innovation unit" that has achieved self-sufficiency through research and development contracts.	Advanced use of educational technologies: - Integrate artificial intelligence or virtual reality tools to enhance interaction and personalize learning. - Creating interactive digital platforms or content that facilitate access to and dissemination of knowledge. - Developing "digital assets" (such as educational games or smart applications) registered in the name of the academic or university.	Technology transfer and digital transformation: - Transferring innovations and technical expertise from the academic environment to institutions and the private sector, or vice versa. - Developing smart systems or digital solutions has contributed to improving productivity in the targeted sectors. - Contributing to the formulation of national policies or standards that enhance the competitiveness of the economic sector.
	Utilizing emerging technologies: - Using emerging technologies in developing the solution or research. - Building research databases or "open platforms" contributes to accelerating the pace of innovation in the scientific community.	Academic leadership and student support: - Leading development initiatives to transfer educational innovation experiences to colleagues and other departments. - Obtaining international educational awards or accreditations for innovative programs he designed. - Achieving a tangible improvement (with statistical evidence) in graduate employment rates or employer satisfaction.	National added value and sustainability: - Achieving a tangible economic or environmental impact through projects that have reduced costs or increased quality. - Launching national initiatives to transfer rare specialized knowledge to national cadres outside the university. - Developing registered "technical solutions" that have led to solving a strategic national problem or reducing dependence on imports.

Subcategory 1: Innovative Researcher for the Academic Staff Category

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Addressing national challenges 30%	The researcher's ability to transform his research outputs into applied solutions or implementable models to address priority national or sectoral challenges, with evidence of the effectiveness or applicability of the solution and its transformation into a tangible impact.	There is no clear link between the research and a national challenge or strategic priority, or the research outputs are purely theoretical without evidence of applicability.	There is a general connection to a national challenge, but without a clear solution, an applied model, or sufficient evidence of the effectiveness of the outputs.	The research offers a partial solution to a specific national challenge, through a testable model or solution, but the impact is limited or not sufficiently documented.	The research presents a clear, practical solution to a specific national challenge, with verifiable evidence such as publication in a peer-reviewed or Q1 journal, experimental results, a prototype, limited field testing, or a letter of interest from a stakeholder. At this level, the solution has moved beyond theoretical description to a preliminary demonstration of feasibility.	The research presents an advanced, innovative model for addressing a significant national challenge, with strong evidence of applicability, adoption, or scalability. Appropriate evidence at this level includes: a granted patent or published patent application; a product, platform, or tool in actual use; adoption of the solution by a government or industry body; application across multiple sectors; documented results in terms of efficiency, quality, cost, safety, or sustainability; or an impact that extends beyond the organization to a sectoral or national level.
Sustainability and competitive financing 40%	The researcher's ability to attract competitive research funding or external support, and to establish a sustainable research path such as a laboratory, research unit, partnerships, research and development contracts, or marketable or protectable outputs.	There is no evidence of research funding, external support, partnerships, or a sustainable research path.	There are limited or preliminary efforts to obtain research support or collaboration, without clear results or proven continuity.	There are partnerships, limited funding, or scalable research outputs, but without a sustainable path or clear institutional impact.	There is documented evidence of competitive research funding, external support, or active partnerships, with an ongoing research pathway producing scalable outputs. Examples include: competitive research grants, research and development contracts, partnerships with government or industry entities, funding from a funding agency, establishment of a laboratory or research group, supervision of students within the research pathway, or protectable outputs such as patent applications or preliminary registrations.	There is a sustainable and advanced research pathway supported by strong or recurring competitive funding, strategic partnerships, and research outputs with high potential for protection, manufacturing, or commercialization. Appropriate evidence includes: major or recurring competitive grants, R&D contracts with the sector, granted or published patents, technology licenses, a startup or advanced-stage product, adoption, manufacturing, or use agreements, or a sustainable research center/laboratory producing a clear knowledge or economic impact.
Employing emerging technologies 30%	The extent to which emerging technologies are used in developing solutions or research, such as artificial intelligence, big data, open platforms, modeling and simulation, robotics, biotechnology, or others, accelerates the pace of innovation in the scientific community.	There is no clear use of emerging technologies in the research or solution.	There is limited or descriptive use of an emerging technology with no apparent effect on the quality of the research or its results.	There is partial employment of an emerging technology that has helped in developing the research or improving some of its outputs.	There is a clear and effective deployment of emerging technologies as a core part of the research, such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, big data, the Internet of Things, robotics, modeling and simulation, extended reality, biotechnology, or advanced materials. At this level, evidence must demonstrate that the technology has improved the accuracy of results, reduced time or cost, increased the efficiency of the solution, or enabled an application that was not possible with traditional methods.	There is an innovative and advanced application of emerging technologies that results in a high-quality, scalable, or adoptable solution, such as an intelligent platform, an improved algorithm, a usable digital tool, an automated system, a proven predictive model, a patented technology, or a technological product implemented in a beneficiary sector. At this level, technology is not merely a facilitator, but a central driver of innovation and research excellence.

Subcategory 2: Academic Leader in Future Readiness

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Curriculum engineering and innovative outcomes 30%	Designing academic courses that link theories with the practical applications required in the labor market, and producing tangible educational outputs such as prototypes, entrepreneurial projects, or applicable solutions, while developing learning pathways that integrate academic achievement with internationally recognised professional certifications..	There is no clear evidence of curriculum development or linking it to future skills or the labor market.	There are limited or individual updates to the content of a course or learning activity, but they do not reflect a systematic redesign of the course, nor do they produce clear applied learning outcomes such as practical projects, prototypes, or usable solutions.	There are acceptable learning outcomes that link academic knowledge to some practical applications, and may include classroom activities or limited projects, but the scope of application is still limited to a course or a limited group of students, and without sufficient evidence of its impact on student readiness or its connection to the labor market.	There is a clear and integrated curriculum or course structure that links theories to practical applications required in the job market and produces tangible learning outcomes such as prototypes, applied projects, or solutions related to professional challenges. Evidence also shows a structured instructional design that integrates future-oriented skills, such as artificial intelligence, digital skills, analytical thinking, green skills, or emerging technologies, with clear mechanisms for assessing outcomes.	There is a sophisticated educational model to emulate, integrating future skills, the job market, and practical application into a scalable or institutionally accredited learning system. Evidence shows that the outcomes extend beyond the course itself to a broader impact, such as the model's adoption in other programs or departments, the production of projects suitable for incubation or professional use, or linking the course to professional certifications, external partnerships, or clear career paths, with the mature application of emerging technologies where applicable.
Advanced use of educational technologies 40%	Integrating AI tools, virtual reality, or interaction and personalization technologies, creating interactive digital platforms or content that facilitate access to and evaluation of knowledge, and developing digital assets such as educational games or smart applications registered in the name of the academic or university, while continuously developing skills in AI and emerging technologies and employing them effectively in teaching and learning.	There is no evidence of the use of modern or emerging educational technologies.	Limited use of traditional digital tools with no clear impact on the learning experience.	The use of educational technologies or digital tools to enhance learning is acceptable, but without clear innovation or sufficient impact measurement.	There is a comprehensive and effective integration of emerging educational technologies such as artificial intelligence, artificial assistance intelligence, generative artificial intelligence, virtual or extended reality, simulation, interactive platforms, educational analytics, and learning personalization tools. Evidence shows that these technologies have contributed to improving the student experience, increasing engagement, personalizing learning, measuring outcomes, supporting self-directed learning, and enhancing students' readiness for future digital and professional environments.	There is an innovative and scalable digital learning model that includes a platform, application, digital asset, or advanced learning experience supported by emerging technologies or AI-assisted tools. Evidence shows that technology is not merely an aid but an integral part of learning design, and that it has improved the quality of learning, the efficiency of teaching, and students' future readiness, with clear potential for adoption in other courses, programs, or institutions. As well as evidences on continuous learning and upskilling to cope with the fast technological advancement.
Academic leadership and student support 30%	Leading development initiatives to transfer educational innovation experiences to colleagues and other departments, obtaining international educational awards or accreditation for innovative programs he designed, and achieving tangible improvement in graduate employment rates or employer satisfaction.	There is no evidence of academic leadership or direct support for students in the area of future readiness.	Limited participation in student support or educational development activities without a clear impact.	An acceptable contribution to supporting students or transferring educational practices within the department or program, with a limited impact.	There is clear leadership for educational or mentoring initiatives that support students' future readiness, such as transferring innovative teaching practices to colleagues, leading the development of a course, lab, or student initiative, or supporting applied projects linked to the job market. This can include, where applicable, enabling students or colleagues to use artificial intelligence tools and emerging technologies responsibly and effectively.	There is exemplary institutional academic leadership that extends beyond the course or department to a broader impact within and beyond the institution. Evidence includes sharing best practices with colleagues, adopting innovative teaching programs or models, receiving awards or educational recognition, and demonstrably improving student readiness, graduate employability, or employer satisfaction, while building an institutional culture that supports future skills and emerging technologies where applicable.

Subcategory 3: Academic leader in impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Strategic alliances with the business sector 30%	Providing specialized technical solutions or applied projects in cooperation with the economic and industrial sectors, in a way that contributes to achieving sustainable and measurable results and impact in the transfer of knowledge, enhancing skills, improving employment opportunities, and supporting the competitiveness of economic sectors.	There are no clear partnerships with economic or industrial sectors, or the cooperation is formal and undocumented.	There are partnerships or limited contact with the sector, but without clear outputs or a direct impact on students or the institution.	There are acceptable partnerships with economic or industrial entities, with some outputs such as limited training or joint activities.	Effective and documented partnerships exist with the business sector, encompassing clear roles, implementation mechanisms, and verifiable outcomes such as training or employment opportunities, applied projects, professional workshops, sector participation in program development, or the transfer of specialized knowledge. Evidence shows that these partnerships have helped align education with labor market needs or address operational challenges within a specific organization or sector.	There are sustainable and impactful strategic alliances with economic or industrial sectors, based on clear governance, mutual benefits, and scalable outputs. Evidence shows that these partnerships have achieved sustainable and measurable results and impact, in the form of the development of applied solutions, sustainable training and employment pathways, academic programs linked to the needs of the sector, and the transfer of rare specialized expertise, making them an institutional model to follow in linking higher education to the economy and labor market.
Technology transfer and digital transformation 40%	Transferring innovations and technological applications from the academic environment to institutions and the private sector or vice versa, developing smart tools or digital solutions that have contributed to improving productivity in the beneficiary sectors, and contributing to the formulation of national policies or standards that enhance the competitiveness of the economic sector.	There is no evidence of the transfer of technology or digital solutions relevant to the economic or industrial sector.	There is limited use or general description of the technology without actual application or clear impact on the beneficiary sector.	There is a partial technical initiative or application, with a limited impact on improving processes or productivity.	There are clear technological or digital solutions that have been implemented or tested with economic or industrial entities, such as smart devices, digital platforms, artificial intelligence applications, AI assistants, data analytics models, or automation solutions. Evidence shows that these solutions have contributed to improved performance, productivity, service quality, or the transfer of applied knowledge between academia and industry.	There is advanced and sustainable technology transfer between the university and the industry, encompassing digital solutions, smart tools, or AI-assisted applications with documented impact, and which are adoptable, scalable, or protected by intellectual property rights. Evidence shows that these solutions have contributed to enhancing industry competitiveness, developing national standards, policies, or practices, or reducing reliance on external solutions, reflecting a sophisticated model for digital transformation and technology transfer.
National added value and sustainability 30%	Achieving a tangible economic or environmental impact through projects that have reduced costs or improved quality, launching national initiatives to transfer rare specialized knowledge to national cadres outside the university, and developing registered technical solutions to solve a strategic national problem or represent dependence on imports.	There is no clear national added value, or no verifiable economic, environmental or knowledge impact.	There is a limited or indirect contribution to national value, without clear indicators of impact or sustainability.	There is an acceptable added value such as a limited improvement in quality or efficiency or knowledge transfer within a narrow scope.	There is a clear contribution to achieving economic, environmental, or knowledge-based impact through projects or partnerships that have improved efficiency or quality, transferred specialized expertise, or supported national talent. Evidence shows verifiable indicators such as the number of beneficiaries, process improvements, professional skills development, implementation of technical solutions, or the use of advanced technologies in a specific entity or sector.	There is a high and sustainable national added value, encompassing a tangible economic, environmental, or knowledge-based impact, the transfer of rare specialized knowledge, or patented or implemented technical solutions that address a strategic national challenge. Evidence suggests that the impact is scalable or replicable, supports national competitiveness, reduces dependence on foreign sources, or builds sustainable national capabilities, with the potential to leverage emerging technologies or artificial intelligence tools where applicable to enhance both impact and sustainability.

Participation requirements for academic staff members

- 01 The candidate must be a full-time faculty member at a licensed higher education institution within the United Arab Emirates.
- 02 He must have taught academic courses during the past two academic years at any of the educational levels (Bachelor's, Master's or PhD).
- 03 For each nomination, the tangible impact of the achievements (economic, educational, or societal) must be clearly demonstrated.
- 04 Nominations must be submitted through the educational institution (individual applications are not allowed).
- 05 A candidate may not apply for more than one individual category in the same session.
- 06 Maximum number of nominations: One academic staff member per higher education institution.

Nomination Submission Form for the Higher Education Pioneers category – Academic Staff

- 01** Subcategory:
Innovative researcher for the academic staff category

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code



- 02** Subcategory:
Academic leader in future readiness

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code



- 03** Subcategory:
Academic leader in impactful partnerships with economic and industrial sectors

To download, click
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Subcategories and evaluation criteria for the Higher Education Pioneers category – Students

Subcategory 1 Innovative researcher for the student category		Subcategory 2 Ambassador of Higher Education		
It is awarded to the scholarship student who has implemented initiatives and achieved accomplishments that enhance the role of the scholarship student and enable him to be a role model and representative of the country abroad.		It is awarded to the student who has succeeded in transforming scientific research or innovative ideas into applied solutions, prototypes, or entrepreneurial projects that address gaps in the market or priority sectors.		
Evaluation Criteria	Practical and commercial value: - Transforming research into a licensed and enforceable product or patent. - The extent to which the private or governmental sector adopts and actually applies the research outputs.	%25	Knowledge and technical returns: - Applying modern techniques or practices from the country of study contributes to the development of academic or professional work within the country. - Providing innovative studies or solutions to address national challenges based on the scholarship experience.	%25
	Addressing national challenges: - Linking innovation to national priorities (food security, renewable energy, health, space). - The solution's efficiency lies in saving costs or increasing productivity compared to traditional solutions.	%25	Academic diplomacy: - Enhancing the country's academic reputation and actively participating in conferences and events - Providing studies or solutions based on the scholarship experience that address national challenges.	%25
	Utilizing emerging technologies: - Using emerging technologies in developing the solution or research. - Ensuring the security and functionality of the developed technological solution in complex technical environments.	%25	Utilizing emerging technologies: - Producing digital knowledge or awareness content that reflects the country's image positively and achieves a tangible impact in the academic or research field. - Enhancing future readiness by acquiring digital skills and employing artificial intelligence, digital transformation, or modern technologies to serve in the field of study or the academic community.	%25
	Growth and spread: - The ability to attract funding or investment for an innovative project. - Participating in business incubators or winning competitive innovation awards at the national level.	%25	Transfer and consolidate expertise: - Conducting workshops or transferring rare specialized skills to national cadres during or after the scholarship. - Developing knowledge tools and platforms for scholarship recipients, guiding them, and enhancing the country's positive image internationally.	%25

Subcategory 1 : Innovative Researcher for Students

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Applied and commercial value 25%	The extent to which an innovation or project can be transformed into a product, service, business model, applied solution, or an investable or marketable opportunity.	The research or idea is still theoretical, and there is no viable product, service, prototype, or output.	There is an applied idea or concept for turning research into a product or service, but without a working model or validation from users or the market.	There is a prototype or applied output that has been initially developed, with limited testing or a preliminary demonstration, but without sufficient results to prove its practical or commercial value.	The output has been implemented or tested with users or a beneficiary, and there are preliminary results that demonstrate its usability or the existence of clear practical or commercial value.	The research was transformed into a product, service, or applied solution that is actually used, with documented results that prove commercial or applied value, such as adoption by one party, actual users, a patent or license, market demand, or sustainability and continuity indicators.
Solving national challenges 25%	The extent to which innovation is linked to a national priority or challenge such as health, education, sustainability, energy, food security, economy, quality of life.	There is no clear link to a national challenge or national priority, or no evidence to explain the problem that the innovation addresses.	There is a general association with a national challenge, but the problem is not sufficiently explained, and there is no data or evidence to support the need for a solution.	The innovation addresses a specific national challenge through a limited model or experiment, but the solution's effectiveness or superiority compared to existing solutions has not yet been proven.	The solution was applied or tested to a specific national challenge, with preliminary results showing its impact in reducing cost, increasing productivity, improving quality, reducing time, or addressing a clear gap.	The solution offers a proven and measurable national impact, with comparative results or supporting performance indicators, and demonstrates a clear capacity for adoption or expansion in a vital sector or with a relevant national entity.
Employing emerging technologies 25%	The extent of use of modern technologies such as artificial intelligence, data, digital platforms, robotics, 3D printing, virtual reality, or others.	There is no actual use of emerging technologies, or the technology is mentioned descriptively without a real role in the solution.	There is an initial attempt to use an emerging technology, but it is limited and not impactful on the core of the solution or has not been tested.	An emerging technology was employed in the prototype or limited trial, with its role in developing the solution being demonstrated, but without sufficient measurement of performance, safety, or reliability.	The technology was employed effectively and demonstrably within the solution, with preliminary results showing that it improved efficiency, accuracy, quality, or usability compared to traditional methods.	Emerging technology represents the core of innovation excellence, and has been tested in an operational or semi-operational environment, with evidence of performance, safety, reliability, integrability, scalability, and results that prove it has added qualitative value to the solution.
Growth and spread 25%	Measures the project's potential for scalability and sustainability, including its ability to attract funding, investment, or strategic partnerships that support its successful implementation and growth.	There are no indicators of growth or expansion, and no clear plan for continuation or expansion.	There is a general intention to grow or expand, but without an implementation plan, resources, support, or serious indicators.	There is an initial growth plan or participation in an event, competition, or incubator, with initial interest, but without clear results in expansion, support, or adoption.	There are clear growth indicators, such as incubation, institutional support, partnerships, beta users, seed funding, a competitive award, or a viable expansion plan.	The project has demonstrated sustainable growth through successful adoption, commercialisation, or expansion, supported by strategic partnerships, funding, investment, or incubation that enables long-term sustainability and scalability.

Subcategory 2 : Higher Education Ambassador (Scholarship Students)

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Knowledge and technical returns 25%	The extent to which the scholarship student applies modern techniques or practices from the country of scholarship that contribute to the development of academic or professional work within the country, or provides innovative studies and solutions to address national challenges based on the scholarship experience.	There is no clear evidence of a cognitive or technical return from the scholarship experience, or that the contribution is merely descriptive without application.	There is a limited or general contribution to the transfer of knowledge or practice from the country of study, without a clear model or verifiable impact.	There is an initiative, study, or knowledge/technical practice associated with the scholarship experience, with a limited impact within an entity or narrow scope.	There is a clear application of a practice, technique, or knowledge solution learned from the scholarship, and it has contributed to the development of academic or professional work or to addressing a specific national challenge.	There is a documented qualitative knowledge or technical return, resulting in an innovative and scalable application or solution, and has clearly contributed to the development of academic or professional practice within the country.
Academic diplomacy 25%	The extent to which the scholarship student contributes to enhancing the academic reputation of the country through active participation in conferences and events, or by presenting studies and solutions based on the scholarship experience that address national challenges.	There is no evidence of academic representation of the state or significant participation in external events or platforms.	There is limited participation or attendance at events without a clear role or documented impact in enhancing the country's image.	There is acceptable academic engagement such as presenting research or participating in an event, but the impact on academic reputation or international presence is limited.	There is active and documented participation in academic conferences or events, with a positive portrayal of the country or the presentation of solutions related to the scholarship experience.	The country has a leading and influential academic presence on international platforms, with quality contributions or achievements that enhance the country's academic reputation and provide solutions relevant to national challenges.
Employing emerging technologies 25%	The extent to which digital knowledge or awareness content is produced that reflects the country's image in a positive way, or the implementation of digital initiatives and modern applications such as artificial intelligence, digital transformation, or modern technologies to serve the field of study or the academic community.	There is no evidence of the use of emerging technologies or the production of digital content with cognitive or educational value.	There is limited or traditional use of digital technologies without innovation or a clear impact in the field of study or the academic community.	There is an acceptable use of modern technologies or knowledge-based digital content, but within a limited scope and without sufficient impact measurement.	There is a clear and effective use of emerging technologies or digital initiatives that serve the field of study or the academic community, with a noticeable impact.	There is an innovative and advanced use of emerging technologies or impactful digital content that reflects the country's image positively and achieves a scalable cognitive or academic impact.
Transfer and consolidate expertise 25%	The extent to which the student conducts workshops or transfers rare specialized skills to national cadres during or after the scholarship, or develops knowledge tools and platforms for scholarship recipients, guides them, and enhances the positive image of the country internationally.	There is no evidence of transfer of expertise or support for scholarship recipients or national staff.	There is a limited contribution in sharing experiences or providing general guidance without clear organization or impact.	There is an initiative or activity to transfer expertise, such as a workshop or mentoring session, but on a limited scale or without clear sustainability.	There are documented efforts to transfer specialized expertise or support scholarship recipients or national cadres, through workshops, knowledge tools or guidance platforms with a clear impact.	There is a sustainable and impactful initiative to transfer and consolidate expertise, including organized training or guidance for national cadres or scholarship recipients, and producing tools or platforms that are sustainable and expandable.

 Scores are calculated according to the approved minimum performance threshold = 80 for the Pioneer category, with the maximum score being 100.

Participation requirements for students in higher education institutions

General criteria that apply to all students in all subcategories:

- 01 Maximum number of nominations: One student at each level (Bachelor's, Master's, PhD) per institution.
- 02 The initial screening is done by the educational institution, and the applications are submitted to the ministry by the institution.
- 03 A candidate may not apply for more than one individual category in the same session.
- 04 The approved nomination forms published on the official award page must be used.

Criteria for exceptional subcategories:

01 Subcategory: **Innovative Researcher**

- Outputs may include: peer-reviewed scientific publications, patents, innovative projects, participation in or winning scientific or innovative competitions.
- Nominations must be submitted through the educational institution (individual applications are not allowed).

02 Subcategory: **Emerging Entrepreneurs**

- The nominated project in the emerging entrepreneurs category must not be older than five years from the date of opening the nomination process, and this is calculated based on the date of establishment, registration or start of activity, whichever is earlier. Also, the nominated project must be the first project established by the entrepreneur.
- Nominations must be submitted through the educational institution (individual applications are not allowed) except in the case of graduates.

03 Subcategory: **Education Ambassador category**

- This includes academic performance (GPA), participation in scientific research, and academic or international activities.
- Nominations must be submitted through the education attachés, who provide support to students to fill out nomination forms, attach evidence, and select appropriate nominations (individual submissions are not allowed).

Nomination Submission Form for the Higher Education Pioneers category – Entrepreneurship Pioneers

01 Subcategory:
Innovative student researcher

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code



02 Subcategory:
Ambassador of Higher Education
(for scholarship students)

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on the image or
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Subcategories and evaluation criteria for the Higher Education Pioneers category – Entrepreneurship Pioneers

		Subcategory 1 Emerging Entrepreneurs (Students and Alumni)	Subcategory 2 Institutions that support entrepreneurship
		It is awarded to the student and graduate who has demonstrated outstanding entrepreneurial thinking by transforming an innovative idea into a business model or promising entrepreneurial project that possesses the elements of growth and sustainability and contributes to supporting the knowledge economy.	This category honors higher education institutions that have succeeded in building an integrated system to support entrepreneurship, by enabling students and researchers to develop their ideas and turn them into projects and startups, and promote a culture of innovation, which contributes to supporting the national economy.
Evaluation Criteria		Academic affiliation and innovative outputs: - Transforming scientific knowledge into tangible outputs (product, service, or prototype) that address real-world challenges. - Providing innovative solutions that go beyond traditional methods.	Institutional environment that supports entrepreneurship - Institutional policies and governance that support entrepreneurship. - Infrastructure that includes centers, incubators, accelerators, or innovative laboratories. - Strategic partnerships with government and private entities to support the entrepreneurship ecosystem.
		Commercial viability and growth: - Developing a business model that ensures the financial sustainability of the project and its ability to survive and compete in the market. - The project's potential for expansion and attracting initial investments supports the project's transition to commercial reality.	Entrepreneurial Empowerment - Designing and implementing training, mentoring, and capacity building programs for entrepreneurs. - Enabling students to develop ideas into prototypes or entrepreneurial projects . Provide mentorship and mentoring opportunities from experts and entrepreneurs.
		Utilizing emerging technologies: - Using emerging technologies to develop the project and improve the efficiency of operational processes. - Employing digital solutions to increase the added value of the final product and ensure its readiness for competition.	Transforming innovation into startups - Transform student projects or innovations into startups or entrepreneurial projects. - Supporting business model development and venture entry. - Promoting the sustainability and growth of startups.
		National impact and knowledge economy: - Contributing to supporting the knowledge economy by creating specialized solutions that increase added value in the vital sectors of the country. - Representing national entrepreneurship in international forums.	Investment and Economic Impact - Attracting funding, investment, or sponsorship for student projects. - Attracting investors or supporting partners to expand entrepreneurial projects. - Achieving economic impact through the growth of startups, job creation, and strengthening the national economy.

Subcategory 1: Emerging Entrepreneurs

Evaluation scale						
Element and weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Academic affiliation and innovative outputs 25%	Transforming scientific knowledge into tangible outputs (a product, service, or prototype that is applicable or scalable, and providing innovative solutions that go beyond traditional methods).	There is no clear link between the project and the student's specialization or academic experience, and there are no tangible innovative outputs.	There is a general or limited connection to the academic specialization, with an initial entrepreneurial idea that is incomplete or an unclear outcome.	There is a prototype or initial product/service linked to academic knowledge, offering a solution that is partly different from traditional methods, but the application is still limited.	Academic knowledge has been transformed into a clear product, service, or business model, and has been tested or used by a target group, with evidence that it offers innovative value beyond traditional solutions.	The project employs academic knowledge with distinction to produce an innovative output that is mature, actually used, and has a clear advantage in the market or sector, with results that prove its superiority or qualitative difference from traditional solutions.
Business viability and growth 25%	Developing a sustainable business model that demonstrates market value, financial viability, and the ability to attract funding, investors, incubation, or strategic partnerships.	There is no clear business model, and no evidence of the project's viability, competitiveness, or revenue generation.	There is an initial concept of the business model, but without verification of the market, customers, revenue sources, or a clear financial plan.	There is a preliminary business model, with limited market experience or initial indicators such as customer interest, trial users, or a scalable growth plan.	The project has a clear business model, and has been commercially tested or has begun to achieve growth indicators such as customers, initial revenue, partnerships, incubation, or investment interest. With interest from supporters, investors, or incubation programs.	The project has proven its commercial viability through revenues, actual customers, financing or investment, market expansion, or documented growth, with a clear ability to sustain, compete, and expand locally or regionally.
Employing emerging technologies 25%	Using emerging technologies in project development and improving the efficiency of products or services offered, and employing digital solutions to increase the added value of the final product and ensure its readiness for competition.	There is no actual use of emerging technologies or digital solutions, or the technology is mentioned in general terms without a clear role in the project.	There is limited or traditional use of the technology, but it does not add clear value to the product, service, or operational processes.	An emerging technology or digital solution has been used in the product, service, or operation, but the impact is still limited or not adequately measured.	Emerging technology has been clearly employed in product development, improving operational efficiency, enhancing customer experience, or boosting competitiveness, with initial evidence of its effectiveness.	Emerging technology is an essential part of a project's differentiation and business model, supporting scalability and competitiveness, with documented results in improving efficiency, reducing costs, increasing added value, or expanding market access.
National impact and knowledge economy 25%	Contributing to building a knowledge-based economy by developing specialized solutions that increase added value in vital sectors of the country, and representing national entrepreneurship in international forums.	There is no clear national impact, and no direct link to the knowledge economy or vital sectors of the state.	There is a general or indirect link to a national sector or economic priority, but without a clear impact or evidence of added value.	The project initially contributes to addressing a need or supporting a vital sector, with a limited initial impact or one that can be scaled up.	The project offers clear value to a vital sector or national priority, and contributes to supporting the knowledge economy through a specialized solution, innovative product, job opportunity, or local partnership.	The project achieves a proven national or economic impact, such as increasing added value in a vital sector, creating job opportunities, attracting investment, representing national entrepreneurship on local or international platforms, or scalability as a competitive Emirati solution.

Subcategory 2: Institutions that support entrepreneurship

Evaluation scale						
Item & Weight	Description	Limited 0-20	Basic 25-40	Average 45-60	Advanced 65-80	Outstanding 85-100
Institutional environment that supports entrepreneurship 30%	Measure the organization's readiness to build an integrated institutional ecosystem for entrepreneurship, through policies, governance, infrastructure, and strategic partnerships that promote innovation and entrepreneurship.	There is no clear institutional framework to support entrepreneurship, and efforts are limited to sporadic initiatives without effective policies, governance, or partnerships.	There are initial policies or initiatives to support entrepreneurship, with some partnerships or supporting facilities, but they do not constitute an integrated institutional ecosystem.	There is a relatively clear institutional system that includes policies, governance, and infrastructure, with actual implementation and supportive partnerships, but its impact is still limited.	The Foundation has an integrated ecosystem of entrepreneurship that includes governance, infrastructure, and partnerships, and shows clear evidence of the sustainability of its implementation.	The Foundation has an integrated entrepreneurial ecosystem that constitutes a national model for supporting entrepreneurship, supported by effective governance, strategic partnerships, and advanced infrastructure
Entrepreneurial Empowerment 15%	It measures the extent to which the Foundation succeeds in enabling students and entrepreneurs to develop their entrepreneurial ideas and skills, through training, mentorship, and capacity building programs.	There are no clear programs to empower students in the field of entrepreneurship.	There are training programs or initial activities, but their impact on the development of entrepreneurial projects is limited.	The Foundation provides training and mentorship programs on a regular basis, and has contributed to the development of prototypes or entrepreneurial projects for a number of students.	The Foundation provides an integrated system for entrepreneurial empowerment that has contributed to raising students' readiness and developing quality entrepreneurial projects.	The Foundation has a pioneering system for student empowerment, which has resulted in the graduation of entrepreneurs who are able to develop innovative projects with economic and societal value, with evidence-proven results.
Transforming innovation into startups 25%	It measures the institution's ability to transform student ideas and innovations into viable startups or entrepreneurial ventures, thereby enhancing the economic value of higher education outcomes.	There is no evidence of projects or innovations being turned into startups or entrepreneurial ventures.	There are limited prototypes or projects, but they have not moved to advanced stages.	The Foundation has successfully converted a number of projects into startups or entrepreneurial projects, with initial results in implementation or market entry.	The Foundation has achieved clear results in establishing sustainable startups or entrepreneurial projects, supported by effective business models and partnerships.	The Foundation has an outstanding track record of transforming innovations into successful and sustainable startups, which have grown and become role models at the national level.
Investment and Economic Impact 30%	It measures the sustainable economic impact of the projects and startups generated by the Foundation, and the extent to which they succeed in attracting financing and investment, and achieving added value to the national economy..	There is no evidence of economic impact or attracting funding or investment for the resulting projects.	There are initial attempts to attract funding or build supportive partnerships, with limited economic impact.	The Foundation has attracted funding, investments, or partnerships that have supported a number of projects, with measurable initial results.	The Foundation has achieved a clear economic impact through the growth of startups and the attraction of funding and investment, with sustainable results.	The Foundation has achieved a sustainable and measurable economic impact through successful startups that have attracted funding and investment, created job opportunities and enhanced the competitiveness of the national economy, making it an institutional model to follow.

Participation Requirements for institutions Supporting Entrepreneurship

General criteria applicable to all organizations in the Entrepreneurship category

- 01 The Foundation must have implemented an institutional system or programs to support entrepreneurship and have directly contributed to enabling students or researchers to develop entrepreneurial projects or startups, while providing evidence that proves the role of the Foundation in achieving those results.
- 02 The initiatives or programs must have been implemented during the last three years prior to the date of the opening of the candidacy and have achieved measurable and evidence-based results and impact.
- 03 The supporting system is still in place, and the Foundation has a record of the current members of this system.
- 04 Nominations may include incubators, accelerators, innovation centers, or offices specialized in entrepreneurship, provided that the nomination is submitted in the name of a higher education institution.
- 05 The same initiative or program may not be nominated in more than one category within the same cycle of the Award.

Nomination Submission Form for the Higher Education Pioneers category – Entrepreneurship Pioneers

- 01
- Subcategory:

Emerging Entrepreneurs
(Students and Alumni)

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code



- 02
- Subcategory:

Institutions that support
entrepreneurship

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code



Application process for the award for pioneers in higher education (academic staff/students)

Stage	Step	Description
Stage 1 Submitting applications	1	The Higher Education Institution, through the Accredited Coordinator, nominates students/academics/institutions supporting entrepreneurship by filling out the nomination applications and sending them through the approved email of the Award. *
	2	The Higher Education Institution submits comprehensive nomination applications that include an explanation of the efforts and results according to the approved criteria for each sub-category, and shares supporting evidence to the award email eha@mohesr.gov.ae .
Stage 2 Evaluation	3	assessment is conducted to verify that eligibility criteria and application requirements are met.
	4	Additional information, clarifications, or interviews with candidates may be requested as needed to complete the final assessment.
	5	Projects are evaluated according to the approved standard using an evaluation tool and determining the final score for each project.
Stage 3 Results approval	6	The results are reviewed by the technical committee to ensure quality and consistency.
	7	The results are presented to the supervisory committee for approval.
	8	The final winners are approved by the award sponsor before the official announcement.
Stage 4 Advertising and feedback	9	The winners are officially announced and an awards ceremony is organized.

i For students in the Higher Education Ambassador category (scholarship students), student nominations are submitted by the Higher Education Attachés in coordination with the International Education and Scholarship Department.

04

Higher Education Partners Category

National Impact



For institutions affiliated with the economic and industrial sectors

- Strategic Partnership Category in Higher Education
- Best International University in Partnership with UAE Universities



For influential individuals and leaders in the higher education sector

Exceptional Achievement Leader in Higher Education category

Selection Criteria for Higher Education Partners – National Impact

(Indicative differentiation criteria only)

	Strategic Partnership in Higher Education	Best International University in Partnership with UAE Universities	Pioneer of Exceptional Achievement in Higher Education
	It is awarded to institutions outside the academic sector (business sector partners, government/private sector) that have contributed exceptionally to supporting the higher education system and achieving integration between academic outcomes and national economic needs.	It is awarded to the International University that has contributed to building effective strategic partnerships with UAE universities, which has resulted in academic, research, innovation, or development initiatives with a sustainable impact, which contributes to the development of the higher education system, enhancing its competitiveness, and transferring global knowledge and expertise to the UAE.	It is awarded to individuals, influencers, academic and strategic leaders who have made exceptional contributions throughout their careers to the development of higher education, and have had a lasting impact on policies, institutions, or sector outputs, or have published books and contributed to building generations.
Selection Criteria	- Supporting and funding joint applied research, establishing innovation laboratories, and transforming research outputs into applicable products or solutions. - Empowering competencies and future readiness, by launching training and qualifying programs for rare digital and specialized skills, providing direct employment pathways for scholars and graduates, and contributing to the development of academic curricula. - Supporting scholarships and specialized programs related to future technologies and artificial intelligence, sponsoring student entrepreneurship projects and transforming them into institutionally supported startups, and activating international cooperation agreements that contribute to the transfer of knowledge and technology to the UAE.	- Building long-term strategic partnerships with UAE universities, based on common goals and clear governance, and contributing to the development of the higher education system. - Transfer of global expertise and practices, and build academic and research capacities, through exchange and professional development programs and joint initiatives. - Implementing joint research and innovation projects that have contributed to the development of educational or technical solutions, promoting innovation and transferring knowledge between institutions. - To achieve a sustainable and measurable impact in raising the quality of higher education, enhancing the competitiveness of UAE universities, and supporting the UAE's national priorities.	- Leading institutions to achieve qualitative leaps in global rankings, issuing sober scientific literature and research, and concluding strategic academic partnerships with the best international universities to exchange experiences and research, and attracting international academic and research competencies that contribute to raising the quality of national outputs. - Institutionalizing the employment of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies in all educational and administrative processes, innovating flexible educational models that respond to rapid labour market changes, and developing smart digital infrastructure that ensures the sustainability and leadership of higher education in crises and the future. - Formulating transformational policies or initiatives that have become a role model at the national level, achieving exceptional performance indicators in the employment rates of graduates and the quality of their innovative research, and representing Emirati higher education in international forums as a leading model for educational leadership and generation-building.

i An international university may not be nominated by more than one institution within the same country. In the event of duplicate nominations, the first nomination application that meets all eligibility requirements shall be considered, or coordination shall take place among the relevant entities in accordance with the decision of the organizing committee.

Application process for the Higher Education Partners category – National Impact

Stage	Step	Description
Stage 1 Start nominations	1	The nomination process is initiated internally by the award's technical committee in coordination with the relevant authorities. This may include consultation with selected higher education institutions, in accordance with approved guidelines.
Stage 2 Submitting internal nominations	2	The relevant departments within the ministry submit nominations through a structured nomination form, which outlines the key achievements, contributions, and justifications related to the strategic objectives of the award.
Stage 3 Review and Recommendation	3	supervisory committee reviews all submitted nominations, evaluates supporting evidence, and prepares a shortlist with formal recommendations for consideration.
Stage 4 Final approval	4	The award sponsor approves the final list of honorees.
Stage 5 Announcement and recognition	5	The winners are officially announced and honored during the awards ceremony.

Stages of Applying to the Best International University in Partnership with UAE Universities

Stage	Step	Description
Stage 1 Identifying the Nominated University	1	The higher education institution selects one international university with which it deems it has achieved a strategic partnership with which it has a sustainable impact.
Stage 2 Complete the nomination form	2	The instituion fills out the nomination form, documenting the nature of the partnership, the results, the impact achieved, and attaching supporting evidence.
Stage 3 Review and Approval of the Application	3	The institution officially approves the nomination application before it is submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
Stage 4 Technical Evaluation	4	The Evaluation Committee reviews nomination applications and verifies evidence in accordance with the Award's criteria and the approved evaluation procedure.
Stage 5 Verification and interviews (when needed)	5	The Committee may request additional information or hold meetings with representatives of the International Foundation or University to verify evidence or supplement information.

Nomination Submission Form for the Best International University in Partnership with UAE Universities

01 Subcategory:
Best International University in
Partnership with UAE Universities

To download, click
on the image or
scan the QR code

The image shows two pages of a nomination submission form. The left page is the front cover, featuring the UAE Ministry of Education logo and the title 'Form for Nomination Submission for the Best International University in Partnership with UAE Universities'. It includes a section for the nominator's details and a QR code. The right page is the back cover, which is a continuation of the form with multiple sections for detailed information, each with a header in Arabic and a table for data entry. The form is designed with a clean, professional layout using orange and grey accents.

Incentives and recognition for categories of the Emirates Higher Education Award

Incentives and rewards

The value of the prizes for the first cycle of the Emirates Higher Education Award is divided as follows:

01	Category of leading universities and higher and vocational education institutions	Winners receive: • Award shield and certificate of appreciation • Special discounts on certain related services (in accordance with approved legal frameworks) • Priority in processing transactions and services
02	Transformative Higher Education Projects Category	
03	Higher Education Pioneers Category	Student categories: • First prize - 40,000 dirhams • Second place winner - 30,000 dirhams • Third place winner - 20,000 dirhams
		Academic staff categories: • First prize - 50,000 dirhams • Second place winner - 40,000 dirhams • Third place winner - 30,000 dirhams
04	Influential Higher Education Partners Category	Special tribute

Governance structure, roles and responsibilities

Proposed governance structure

The entity	Purpose	Roles and responsibilities	Formation
01 Award sponsor	The results and winners are finalized by the award sponsor. His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan Minister of Foreign Affairs, Chairman of the Council for Education, Human Development and Society		His Highness Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Chairman of the Education, Human Development and Society Council
02 Supervisory Committee (Strategy)	Defining the strategic direction of the award, ensuring its alignment with national priorities, and approving its final outputs.	- Adoption of the general framework of the award and its objectives. - Adoption of award categories, criteria and evaluation framework. - Budget approval and operating model. - Final results and winners approved. - Ensuring alignment with national policies and the ministry's priorities. - General oversight of governance and ensuring integrity and transparency. - Guiding the development of the award in future cycles.	- His Excellency the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research - Leaders from the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. - Head of the Academic Accreditation Commission - Director of the National Qualifications Center - Director of Strategy and Future Management - Legal and financial representative. * The committee may also seek assistance from experts and stakeholders from within or outside the ministry as it deems appropriate to undertake specific tasks .
03 Technical Committee	Design, implement, and manage evaluation and operational processes efficiently, ensuring the quality and fairness of the results.	- Developing evaluation standards and performance indicators. - Preparing guidelines, assessment models and tools, standardizing assessment methodologies and ensuring their quality. - Managing the receipt of applications and verifying eligibility. Organizing evaluation processes according to approved timeframes. - Ensuring integrity and managing conflicts of interest. - Preparing and submitting final reports and recommendations to the supervisory committee. - Propose continuous improvements to the award mechanisms. - Documenting the evaluation outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned. - Responding to participants' inquiries and providing technical clarifications.	Ministry-appointed specialists, consultants, liaison team, experts in higher and vocational education policies, quality assurance, research, innovation, strategy and future specialists, and IT specialists
04 Evaluation and Arbitration Committees	Ensuring that nominations are evaluated and judged according to the approved criteria and that the final results and recommendations of the award are adopted.	- Conduct assessments according to the approved timeframes (including interviews and visits when needed). - Entries are evaluated according to the approved criteria. - Review and verify the results and check the evidence. - Preparing and submitting final reports and recommendations to the Executive Committee. - Propose improvements to the award mechanisms. - Documenting the evaluation outcomes, best practices, and lessons learned.	Internal or external specialists and experts – as needed – in evaluating universities, higher and vocational education institutions, evaluating transformative projects and student candidates, academic staff members, identifying strengths and opportunities for improvement, setting conformity scores, and preparing feedback reports where applicable at the award category level .

Permissions matrix

Activity	Award sponsor	Supervisory Committee	Technical Committee	Residents
Adoption of categories and standards	Approval	recommendation	Prepared by / Official	
Announcing the launch of the course	Approval	recommendation	Prepared by / Official	
Receiving applications		Information	Prepared by / Official	
Eligibility check		Approval	Prepared by / Official	
Conflict of Interest Management		Approval	Prepared by / Official	
Technical evaluation		Information	Supervision and review	Prepared by / Official
Preparing for interviews and visits		Information	Prepared by / Official	Information
Conducting interviews and field assessments			Supervision and review	Prepared by / Official
Review of results and variance		Approval	Prepared by / Official	
Preparing final reports		Approval	Supervision and review	Prepared by / Official
Approval of winners	Approval	recommendation	Prepared by / Official	
Publishing results and reports	Approval	recommendation	Prepared by / Official	
Measuring the impact after the course	Information	Approval	Prepared by / Official	

Responsibilities of the lead coordinator in the educational institution

Each educational institution is required to designate a main coordinator as a link between the ministry and the educational institution, and he shall be entrusted with the following tasks:

- 01 Addressing the award team with the contact details and information for the lead coordinator.
- 02 Promoting and marketing the award within the institution level.
- 03 Coordination with stakeholders in the educational institution to ensure that the institution's data related to the output-based assessment framework is updated through the electronic linkage system with the ministry.
- 04 Ensuring that candidates have access to the award forms and requirements published on the award page.
- 05 Receiving and sorting initial applications internally within the organization.
- 06 Conducting initial assessments, identifying final candidates, and obtaining their approval from the leadership of the educational institution.
- 07 Providing nomination forms and supporting evidence for each category and sending them to the award team at the ministry within the specified timeframes.
- 08 Coordination with candidates at the educational institution to attend interviews (if required and at the request of the award team).
- 09 Coordination with the organization's leadership and the candidates to attend the workshops and the award ceremony.

General Provisions

Candidates for the award categories	Award Management and Evaluation Committees
1. All information provided by candidates must be accurate, verifiable, and supported by documented evidence such as official reports, publications, certificates, or letters of endorsement. 2. Incomplete applications or those that do not meet eligibility or documentation requirements will not be considered. 3. Violations proven according to the ministerial decision on penalties and administrative violations will lead to immediate exclusion from the award. 4. Submitting any application that involves plagiarism, forgery, misrepresentation of data, or unethical practices is prohibited. 5. The candidate must be from a higher education institution or a TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) institution and affiliated with a licensed institution within the United Arab Emirates, unless otherwise stated in the requirements of the relevant category. 6. For institutional categories (higher education institutions, TVET institutions, and academic programs), participation is conditional upon: submitting the required data according to the OBF output framework. - And inclusion in the official national classification of higher education institutions issued by the Ministry. 7. For the emerging entrepreneurs category, the nominated project must not be older than five years from the date of opening nominations, calculated based on the date of establishment, registration, or commencement of activity, whichever is earlier. The nominated project must also be the first project established by the entrepreneur. 8. Applications must be submitted through the candidate's affiliated institution and with official accreditation. 9. Detailed eligibility requirements specific to certain award categories will be issued if needed.	1. The award administration is committed to the confidentiality of all data and information submitted, and uses it only for the purposes of evaluation and judging. 2. No information relating to nominations or evaluation results may be disclosed except in accordance with the approved official procedures. 3. All members of evaluation committees must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest. 4. In the event of a conflict of interest, the appraiser in question will be excluded from the appraisal process in accordance with the approved procedures. 5. The award administration reserves the right to verify all information and documents submitted and to take appropriate action in the event of inaccurate or misleading information. 6. The award administration also reserves the right to: • Withholding any category of the award. • Or, ranking positions will not be awarded if the submitted nominations do not meet the required standards of excellence.

General Provisions

The eligibility criteria for technical and vocational education and training institutions to participate in the evaluation within the Higher Education Award are as follows:

- 01 The organization must have institutional accreditation and have been operating for more than three years.
- 02 The number of graduates with the basic qualification (full diploma) must exceed 300 learners.
- 03 The organization must not have any recorded violations or cases of non-compliance.
- 04 All the evidence required for the output-based assessment framework must be fully submitted, with a confidence level for the evidence of at least 70% or more.

Measuring the impact of the award on higher education institutions, students, scientific research, and partnerships

Award Implementation Performance Indicators	Indicators of the impact of implementing the award
- The level of satisfaction of higher education institutions with the award. - The average number of applications received that met the requirements. - The number of best practices that have been published or disseminated to the sector.	- The number of institutions whose results have improved according to the output-based assessment framework. - The number of research outputs that have been translated into practical application. - Number of partnerships implemented with the economic sector. - Number of student or entrepreneurial projects that were supported or incubated.

Award Categories Evaluation Mechanism

Main categories	Nomination mechanism	Assessment tool
01 Category of leading universities and higher and vocational education institutions	No application is required as the data is read according to the electronic linking system between the Ministry and higher education institutions .	Specific criteria are set according to the axes of the output-based evaluation framework, and the evaluation is carried out according to the results available in the electronic linking system .
02 Transformative Higher Education Projects Category	• Applications for nomination are submitted by the higher education institution according to a specific form and with supporting evidence and through the channels specified by the Ministry (each higher education institution designates the main coordinator for submitting applications).	The assessment tool includes main and sub-criteria and a rating scale for each category, ensuring a standardized scoring mechanism and increasing consistency among assessors. For each category, the tool presents the main criteria, relative weights, and maturity levels (from limited to pioneering), along with guiding descriptions to help assessors select the
03 Higher Education Pioneers Category	• Within the category of Higher Education Ambassador (scholarship students), nominations are made through coordination with the academic attachés.	appropriate rating based on the quality and verifiability of the submitted evidence.
04 Influential Higher Education Partners Category	No nominations are required from outside the ministry, and nominations are provided by the ministry according to clear research and consultation mechanisms.	There are no evaluation tools, but rather guidelines for selecting candidates.

Steps for evaluating nomination applications for relevant categories

- 01 Transformative Higher Education Projects Category
- 02 Higher Education Pioneers Category

01  File preparation	Open the evaluation file for the selected category.	Verify the candidate's data (name, reference number, university) .	Review the ruler to understand the evaluation criteria.
02  Entering grades	Enter the score for each criterion (0–100) in the evaluation box.	The system supports evaluation by one, two, or three evaluators.	The cells in yellow are for manual input.
03  Results calculated automatically	Calculating the average and harmonic score automatically.	Calculating the variance between residents : - Disparity > 20: Requires committee discussion - Variance ≤ 20: Acceptable	The ranking (position) is updated automatically among the candidates.
04  Review of overall results	Go to the overall results page.	Compare the scores of all candidates in one place.	Export the final results and share them with the relevant committee.
05  decision making	A score ≥ 80: qualifies for the final stages .		A score < 80: Does not qualify for the final stages .

Timeframe for the Emirates Higher Education Award

The timeframe for the award in 2026



i All timeframes are linked to the final approvals for the award dates .

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For further information or feedback:

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

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