-ranked in the
Top 30
Universities in the UK
Complete University Guide 2019 and The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019

** BE IN THE KNOW **

Founded 1495

600 students at AFG College

Associated with five Nobel prize winners

20+ nationalities at AFG College

Our students have access to over 1 million volumes, 300,000 e-books and 21,000 journals

SIR DUNCAN RICE LIBRARY named one of the most beautiful in the world**

** CEO World magazine 2016

Female / Male Ratio 48 : 52 at AFG College

75% of research classified as world leading

In line with the 2014 Research Excellence Framework (REF) results

In the top 160 universities in the world

AFG College Founded 2017

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Bismillah Al Rahman Al Raheem,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our third annual report, which gives an oversight into the hard work and achievements that we have experienced over the last twelve months of operation, here in Qatar. It always amazes me how quickly the time passes and how much is so often achieved by all working on campus, and those back in Aberdeen.

The 2019/20 academic year built on the many successes that we have achieved since opening our campus back in 2017. We have significantly expanded the range of programmes on offer and the postgraduate offerings saw a marked increase in student numbers across the portfolio. This is testament to the quality of the courses that we have on offer, which are increasingly deemed as an essential component for progression in the workplace.

In November 2019 we held our first AFG/UoA graduation ceremony in Doha, where we recognized the achievements of our first graduates who had successfully completed their bachelor degree in business management, their Master of Science in international business or a Master of Business Administration. The event was a tremendous success and I was overjoyed to see so many of our graduating students cross the stage to receive their degrees as a recognition of their hard work and efforts. The ceremony was followed by a special dinner in February where alumni, staff from AFG and visiting faculty from the University were able to meet with their former students in an informal setting. During the dinner, alumni were treated to a presentation by Professor Ruth Taylor on the University’s strategic vision for the next twenty years, which our campus in Qatar plays a key role in.

This year has proven to be a challenging one, given the situation around COVID-19 and the need to adapt to what has, essentially, become an online world. I have had time to reflect on the circumstances that we find ourselves in, and I have been impressed with how AFG has managed to circumvent the impact of the pandemic and meet the expectations of students and stakeholders, head-on.

During the early days of the lock-down we all faced significant disruption to our daily lives, and our staff were quick to react to ensure a seamless transition to online delivery and they continued to provide the best possible education to our students. This served to alleviate any anxieties students had in what has been a very difficult time.

As we move forward as an institution and seek to expand our programme offerings into more specialized areas such as law, what has become evident to me is an overwhelming desire by many, across all sectors of society, to improve themselves in terms of education and opportunity. This is manifested by the large number of students who are enrolling and the number of enquiries that we are receiving for a range of programmes that we plan to offer in the coming years.

Despite the fluid situation AFG and our partner, the University of Aberdeen, are well placed for the year ahead and we are striving to meet the demands and rigours of providing the best possible higher education for our society.

Dr Sheikha Aisha bint Faleh Al Thani
Founder and Chairperson, AFG
The 2019-20 academic year has witnessed one of the most challenging years for the higher education sector. We commenced this academic year with great optimism, with plans to build on the many achievements and successes witnessed in our previous academic year. We introduced robust teaching and learning enhancement plans, including, additional technology and teaching spaces for our students, as well as new working environments for our growing academic and professional teams. In September, we welcomed back our returning students and new students joining us across our undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. In November we held our first graduation ceremony, with over ninety students receiving conferment of their University of Aberdeen degrees in the presence of guests and dignitaries.

Many other national and international events were planned for the spring and summer months, but sadly, the ever-increasing threat of COVID – 19 drew such plans to a shuddering halt.

As in all sectors, the world of education has had to adapt quickly to this new operating environment. In the face of this unparalleled pandemic, Qatar rallied its resources and tackled Covid-19 head-on with decisive and effective measures. We too acted decisively and with the support of our university partner and the Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education, we shifted to an effective online teaching model, moved our students to home study and our staff to home working.

Despite the changes we continued to forge ahead with our strategic plans. A successful submission to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the Spring, resulted in the approval of a further five new University of Aberdeen degree programmes which will be made available to students from September of this year. The introduction of these new degrees means that our Qatar campus now offers a total of ten degrees across six schools of the University.

Despite the unrivalled challenges we have faced, as college Principal, I am extremely proud of what we have collectively achieved this past academic year. We came together as a nation, as an institution and as individuals. We started this year operating within a traditional teaching and learning environment.

In March we effectively moved to a virtual model of teaching and working. From September we will embrace a blended approach to ensure the safety of our students and staff, whilst at the same time supporting the Qatar Government’s four phased reopening plans.

The COVID pandemic has fundamentally changed the way we work, learn, communicate, and socially interact. Many pundits refer to ‘the crisis’ and the uncertainty for the future, for me, I see the result of such a crisis as an opportunity. Disruption engenders change, change creates opportunity. Higher education should be at the forefront of this change.

Throughout this year and despite the economic uncertainty, our new Phase 2 campus 2022 launch plans remain in place. We continue to work collaboratively with our university partner and key governmental stakeholders to ensure that we are in the position to welcome students to our new campus in September 2022.

As we prepare to enter our fourth academic year, the sense of achievement and opportunity runs deep throughout our institution. Empowerment through education underpins Qatar’s 2030 Vision. Meaningful university education that enriches the lives of students is central to this vision. Moving forward we intend to continue to build on our achievements through the societal contribution of our graduates and staff. Our commitment to delivering a high quality learning experience in a wide range of relevant subject disciplines will, I am sure, make a positive contribution to achieving the Qatar National Vision 2030.

Mr Brian Buckley
Principal
Welcome to the 2019/20 annual report of AFG College with the University of Aberdeen. I’m very proud of the continued progress our partnership has made over the last year.

The continuing COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges to organisations around the world, but by working as a team we have done our very best to ensure the safety of our staff and students in Scotland and Qatar. It’s been great to see there is a strong working relationship across our campuses which has supported operations in Qatar throughout the year.

I’d like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work in Doha this year, particularly in response to the pandemic. It has been necessary to develop blended learning opportunities for our students and I’m very grateful for the fantastic progress that has been made in this regard.

Despite the impact of the pandemic, this has been an exciting year for the University as we celebrate our 525th anniversary. In February 2020, we launched Aberdeen 2040, a 20-year strategic plan which sets out our vision and ambition for the University over the next two decades so that we can remain true to our 1495 foundational purpose of being ‘open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others’.

In the last year the University has performed very well in the three UK league tables, which has given us an average rank of 25th. The University was also ranked 178th in the world by the Times Higher.

I am especially proud to say that we were ranked 1st in Scotland and 32nd in the world for international outlook. Our work in Qatar plays a significant part in this achievement and we will continue to build on that to provide the best opportunities for our students and staff.

The main developments in Qatar include the approval of several new undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, broadening our provision into law, education and the social sciences. We have also formed a joint board with AFG to oversee and advise on the development of the Phase 2 campus. This is an exciting opportunity to take our relationship with AFG forward to the next level and to deliver a world class facility for teaching and research across a broad range of subject areas. Key to its success is student and staff satisfaction and we will be consulting widely across all stakeholders to gain detailed insights on their campus requirements.

We are committed to providing an exceptional student experience wherever our students are studying, and this will form an important part of the design and construction of our new campus. Our aim is to deliver a University which is rooted in history but focussed on delivering an education designed to meet the needs of 21st century graduates and make the University of Aberdeen the first-choice institution for students in the Gulf.

The University has done incredibly well to adapt to the challenges the pandemic has presented, and we are still in a good position to make a positive and sustainable difference to the world around us through our excellent teaching and research.

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To become a leader in educational, social and economic development promoting research to affect positive local and international change.

In support of the Qatar National Vision 2030 AFG College with the University of Aberdeen seeks to play a leading role as a higher education institute in support of the development of the State.

We believe our goals should be aligned with the strategic vision of HH the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

As we develop as an institution, we envisage fostering an environment that will nurture the brightest and the best in order to develop a platform for research excellence in support of Qatar’s knowledge economy.

VISION

“The mission of AFG College with the University of Aberdeen is to prepare exceptional students, aspiring scholars and researchers who will be at the forefront of the global education movement and beyond. The group aims to spearhead the inclusion of smart technology in the educational process and aspires to be at the pinnacle of leadership and teacher education by providing cutting-edge training, professional development and higher education provision.

Whilst preparing exceptional students to enter the workplace, we are conscious that there are segments of the working population that require a pathway to study that does not impact on their family or working commitments. We believe in the importance of unlocking the potential for study for those individuals and, thus to enable access we plan to offer full time day and evening classes where possible.

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STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

Future Programme Development

Although our initial focus has been on business degrees (UG & PG) we have a broader longer term strategy, which involves establishing provision for other schools and faculties of the University of Aberdeen bank of expertise. Our initial projected plans include introducing schools of engineering and social sciences, which we envisage will form the core disciplines on the new purpose built campus.

Undergraduate & Postgraduate Development

Our initial focus has been on delivering undergraduate business degrees in our first years of operation in Doha. We have used this time to actively seek feedback from our student body, as well as from industry and other external stakeholders, to gather data and ensure best practice in the teaching and learning experience we provide. We continuously review and collaborate with our programme development aims to ensure continued focus on alignment with the QNV 2030.
The Student Recruitment and Marketing department identifies and enrols new students to the degree programmes offered at AFG College with the University of Aberdeen. These programmes include two bachelors with honours degrees: Accountancy and Finance and Business Management, in addition to postgraduate degrees namely MBA Master of Business Administration and MSc International Business Management.

The enrolment for the academic year 2019/2020 resulted in the addition of 294 students across the different majors.

**Recruitment events included:**

- **Counsellors Information Sessions:** A total of fifty counsellors from public and private schools were welcomed to AFG College for two days of information sessions in November 2019. These sessions presented an overview of the University of Aberdeen and its history, the partnership with the Al Faleh Group and included a career development workshop conducted by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

- **Admissions Open Days:** Are designed to welcome interested candidates and their families to our campus allowing them to enquire about our programmes, entry requirements, fees structure, tour the campus and complete an application. These Open Days usually conclude with a masterclass given by one of our lecturers. These masterclasses give enquirers a closer understanding about the course delivery and a taste of our teaching and learning experience.

- **LLM international Commercial Law Launch Event:** We launched the LLM International Commercial Law programme in February 2020 with the aim to start the first cohort in April 2020, however due to the COVID-19 outbreak this will now take place in September 2020.

With the COVID-19 outbreak, the move to virtual recruitment events was inevitable and hence we shifted our emphasis to online recruitment activities. The virtual recruitment events were organised either jointly with the University of Aberdeen recruitment team or solely by the team here in Doha. The number of attendees varied between each web event, in an increasing mode as more people shifted to the online medium.

**Live Chat Series:** These events were in collaboration with the University of Aberdeen main campus and were conducted via different online platforms where prospective students sent comments and questions online and received an immediate ‘line’ response.

**Open Day Webinars:** These include UG Open Day, PG Open Day and LLM International Commercial Law webinars.

**Offer Holder Day Webinar:** This webinar was held in July 2020 as one last step before converting offer holders to registered students. Attended by 40 offer holders, programme leaders welcomed the attendees and gave them insights into the programmes. Other sections were presented by Student Services, as well as the Careers department.

**UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Our new UG joiners come with different backgrounds and academic qualifications; 20% are relevant diploma holders from Community College Qatar (CCQ), College of North Atlantic (CNA-Q) and Qatar Aeronautical College (QAC).

**POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

Like the previous academic year, the new postgraduate students are mainly alumni of Qatar University (34%). 48% are graduates of international universities. 15% are bachelor’s degree holders from local international universities. We also welcomed AFG/Aberdeen alumni wishing to proceed with their higher education.

**These students come from 26 countries**

- **52% Male**
- **64% Qatari**

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<tr>
<th>Other Academic Qualifications</th>
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<td>British Universities Abroad</td>
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<td>International Universities Abroad</td>
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<td>Local International Universities</td>
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Postgraduate Programmes

The two programmes, MBA and MSc have rapidly grown to three MBA class streams and a cohort of MSc students. The delivery mode and number of streams means courses run throughout the year. We now have a purpose-built learning centre for postgraduates. The building is equipped with state-of-the-art technologies and serves as a turn-key learning, lecture, workshop and tutorial facility.

With the demand for the experienced, skilled and well educated to contribute to the fulfilment of Qatar’s domestic and international economic objectives, AFG-Aberdeen was nimble enough to identify how it could positively contribute to those objectives.

Our students hail from some of the most influential organisations in Qatar and we are very proud that they have made their first choice of postgraduate study with us. Developing strategic industry relationships using our current and future network is essential in maintaining successful postgraduate programmes. Positive student feedback from our satisfaction surveys means we were able to dynamically change their learning experience to better meet their needs and the needs of employers.

Our first cohort of graduates celebrated their achievements at AFG’s inaugural graduation ceremony. Government officials, visiting Aberdeen dignitaries, parents and family were all present to congratulate the successful students.

Covid-19 disrupted our face-to-face delivery and class-based courses were transferred seamlessly overnight onto our proprietary online platform with staff retraining to deliver remotely and new technologies and teaching approaches were employed. Student feedback has been positive and AFG continually push the envelope of possibilities to ensure we respond dynamically to the challenges of the pandemic.

New postgraduate programmes have been developed this year for the new academic year starting in September 2020. In 2020, AFG will offer PG programmes from two new University of Aberdeen faculties. Together with the UoA Faculty of Law, the official launch of the Master of Laws (LLM) was held earlier this year and with the Faculty of Education, the PG Diploma in Education with an internationally recognised teaching endorsement, was negotiated and promoted. This means AFG PG expands yet again with three faculty qualifications on offer, six class streams and more than 200 students.
This has been an extraordinary year for our undergraduate students, programmes and staff at AFG College with the University of Aberdeen. The year started at a strong pace with excellent recruitment to both of the two UG programmes; Business Management, and Accountancy & Finance. Thus, we were able to offer daytime and evening classes offering widening access to traditional and working students, as well as to returners to education and those who came with prior qualifications who benefitted from accelerated entry.

This was also the first year of graduation. Thirty-nine students graduated from AFG College with their University of Aberdeen MA Business Management, some of these students taking up the opportunity to travel with their families to Aberdeen to take part in the University of Aberdeen ceremony. A further one hundred students are graduating again this year. Many of our successful graduates have rejoined us on the very successful MBA and MSc International Business Management, and one has joined us as a new member of our academic support staff.

The academic year also started with many new staff joining AFG College from leading institutions, strengthening our teaching, professional and research capabilities. These included Abrar Hussain (ICAEW, CPA, CIMA), Dr Declan Bannon, Dr Gregory Brenner and Dr Tatiana Gladkikh. Several of these new staff were attracted from leading Scottish and UK higher education institutions. More recently AFG College has continued to recruit high quality staff, with teaching and research specialisms. The growing number of courses and faculty members has led us to expand our academic structure and introduce two disciplines: Accountancy and Finance and Business Management. This change has assisted with a more specific focus on discipline development and efficiency of programmatic delivery, learning and teaching.

In what was a very busy start to the academic year, the partnership between AFG College and the University of Aberdeen continued to deliver success stories. AFG Accountancy & Finance teams were runners up (Qatar) in the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) global competition. Our colleagues from the University of Aberdeen continued to support our students and staff here, with regular flying visits to complement the high quality teaching, with contributions to the student experience; we had over 30 visits during semester 1 alone!

This year we welcomed back one of our students from a semester spent in Aberdeen. This was a fantastically motivating example for students who have expressed their interest to study in Aberdeen in 2020-21. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, their travel and study in Aberdeen had to be postponed.

As we all now know, the start of 2020 and with it our semester 2 offered new challenges. As a result of Covid 19 and at the direction of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education we closed the campus. The response from AFG College leadership and staff was overwhelming. Courses, traditionally delivered in the classroom, were transferred overnight onto the online platform; staff were retrained on new technologies and teaching approaches; and, within 24 hours were delivering classes through Collaborate, Panopto, TEAMS, and MyAberdeen.

In partnership with the University of Aberdeen assessments were redesigned and approved, even for courses that required examinations by their own professional bodies. It was an amazing coming together of resources, which was welcomed and recognized by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and our students. This agility is a key characteristic of AFG College – a ‘can do’ attitude that accepted the challenge and met it.

This year our blended learning approach continues to deliver the highest quality experience for our students and staff. We are also eagerly anticipating HEA accreditation of those members of staff who have submitted their HEA applications this summer. We expect that all of our colleagues will be recognized by this prestigious UK professional body by the end of 2020.
The ceremony was graciously attended by the Qatar Prime Minister and Minister of Interior H.E. Sheikh Abdulla bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani, H.E. the Minister of Education and Higher Education, Dr Mohammad bin Abdulwahed Al Hammadi and United Kingdom Ambassador to the State of Qatar, Mr Ajay Sharma. Other distinguished guests included AFG faculty who were resplendent in their academic regalia and most importantly, the friends and family of those graduating.

In addition to celebrating the hard work and dedication of those graduating students, the University of Aberdeen awarded AFG chairperson and founder Dr Sheikha Aisha bint Faleh Al Thani, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws. The award was conferred on Sheikha Aisha in recognition of her services to education and philanthropy.

The ceremony concluded with a moving speech from graduating student Jassim Mohammad Al Misned, who congratulated his fellow graduates and thanked the University for their role in supporting students’ aspirations.
LLM International Commercial Law Launch

The official launch of our LLM postgraduate programme specializing in International Commercial Law, was held at the Sharq Village Spa & Resort, with a number of dignitaries, academics and applicants in attendance. This was another milestone for AFG-University of Aberdeen because it is the first programme offered by the law faculty and marks AFG's move towards being a comprehensive institution.

The event was jointly hosted by AFG College principal Brian Buckley and the University of Aberdeen head of law, professor Greg Gordon. Professor Gordon gave an overview of the course structure and how this innovative programme equips students with a detailed understanding of specific areas of business law, its practical application and the linkages to how global commerce is governed by complex transnational agreements.

Mr Faisal bin Rashid Al Sahouti (Qatar International Court CEO) was the special guest speaker at the event and highlighted the role of the International Court in Qatar. More importantly he emphasized that the provision of locally-based law programmes, like the LLM in Qatar are essential in order to develop future leaders and scholars who will play a key role within the industry and better contribute to the national plan.

Member of Parliament’s visit

The University of Aberdeen alumnus and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary British-Qatar Group, the Rt Hon Alistair Carmichael MP, took time out from his official schedule to visit the campus in February this year. Mr Carmichael, who was visiting Qatar as part of a larger official parliamentary delegation that fosters a deepening of the relationship between both countries, met with AFG College principal Brian Buckley and then mingled with students and faculty.

Mr Carmichael was appreciative to have the opportunity to visit Aberdeen’s first international operation and was interested to learn of future plans for a purpose built campus that will accommodate a growing number of multi-disciplinary academic programmes.

Mr Carmichael completed his LLB at the University of Aberdeen in 1992 and went on to a successful career as a solicitor in the North East of Scotland, first as a Procurator Fiscal Depute and then in private practice. He was elected as an MP for Orkney and Shetland in 2001. During his parliamentary career he has held a number of senior positions within the Liberal Democrat party and is currently Home Affairs spokesperson.
Qatar National Sports Day

This year’s National Sports Day event proved to be a huge success with participants in a range of sporting activities. Students, staff and members of the local community competed in the annual 3km fun run, whilst others enjoyed activities provided by Phitt Studio and Bounce.

Events like the National Sports Day are an important part of our annual calendar. Such activities are an example of how AFG espouses our culture of fostering greater links with the community and promoting the importance of both physical and mental health.

We would also like to recognise the support and contribution that we receive from our sponsors and stakeholders. Their input ensures a successful and enjoyable day that raises morale and helps to contribute to the continued wellbeing of the community and the institution.

“The National Sports Day is a key element of H.H. the Amir’s vision and paves the way for current and future generations to follow healthier ways of living”

Dr Sheikha Aisha bint Faleh Al Thani
AFG Chairperson
For the second year in succession, AFG College with the University of Aberdeen celebrated International Women’s Day with a conference that supported a range of women’s issues with an emphasis this year on the need for greater parity between the sexes, whether this be in the workplace or in society as a whole.

The importance of the day is marked annually across the globe and is an opportunity for women and men to come together to highlight the essential roles that women play in all dimensions of economic and social life. Despite the great advances in the role of women over the last century, there still remains a significant disparity for women in many aspects of life that needs to be addressed.

This year’s speakers were drawn from a diverse mix of women who represented industries including the media and IT along with our very own graduate, Khalood Al Khori, a world-class equestrian endurance champion.

Al Jazeera English senior news anchor, Nastasya Tay hosted the event and also spoke of her experiences as a journalist and the obstacles she experienced throughout her ten-year tenure as a correspondent in hotspots around the world. Her presentation was followed by Microsoft Qatar country manager Lana Khalaf who spoke about the challenges of attracting young female talent into a male dominated sector such as IT and how Microsoft has developed unique ways of engaging female talent from an early age.

“At a time when humanity is facing such enormous challenges, the only way we can move forward in confronting them is together – with empathy and compassion.”
“Covid-19 has affected the productivity of individuals differently so it is vital for students to maintain a positive outlook during this time of great uncertainty. AFG College and The University of Aberdeen has developed an incredible careers and employability team that has helped many students to think beyond Covid-19 and focus on future career development by sharing online webinars and updates on job opportunities.

“A few of my university colleagues and I applied to one of the internships programmes on offer by Al Emadi Enterprises and was afforded an opportunity to work on the ONEMAROON project with ALHAZM. This is an e-commerce project that offered candidates two opportunities as either an Operations Management Intern or Digital Marketing Intern. Throughout the programme, I gained experience with frameworks and techniques that were used and applied to model development. It was a fantastic opportunity to be able put my academic studies into real-life experiences and I encourage all students to be part of the wonderful internship programmes the University offers.”

The Careers and Employability Service at AFG College with the University of Aberdeen supports students by providing consultation and advice needed for effective career planning, opportunities for skill development, networking and connecting with sector representatives and different employers.

The inaugural Leadership Academy was held on campus in January 2020. Twenty students took part in three interactive sessions. The first session, presented by Emad Saif from Qatar University Entrepreneurship Centre, explored the different meanings of leadership and teambuilding through a LEGO serious play workshop. The second session, presented by Amar Benaissa from Injaz Qatar, revolved around leadership and emotional intelligence. The final workshop session using Belbin’s teambuilding roles was presented by Rhona Gibson from UoA Career and Employability Services.

“Over the summer break I worked at Snoonu as a Financial Investment and Legal Corporate Intern. As part of my internship, I drafted and reviewed contracts, consolidated assets and investments, and provided assistance with finance related tasks.

“This internship was a great learning experience for me as it provided exposure to some of the best in-country industry practices as well as giving me the opportunity to expand my social and professional network by connecting with industry players. I believe that internship experiences like this play an essential role in preparing graduates for meaningful career futures after graduation, and I am thankful to the University and Snoonu for providing me with this opportunity.”

In February 2020, we hosted our first Careers Fair on campus with the participation of 14 companies and organisations represented by: Qatar Airways, Deloitte, KPMG, Milaha, HSBC, Arab Bank, J.Portman, Ashghal, Qatar Gas, Standard Chartered Bank, EButler, TechnoQ, Injaz and the Jusoor Institute. Many job internships and offers resulted from this ongoing career fair initiative.

We value our collaboration with employers and partners who can bring insight and opportunities to our students and graduates.
Our Speaker series launched with a presentation from Dalia Mogahed who gave an insight into the issues that she has faced as a muslim woman in the workplace and the wider society. Ms Mogahed drew on her own experiences through her work as the director of research at the US-based Institute for Social Policy and Understanding. Ms Mogahed then spoke about her time on the President’s Advisory Council for Faith-Based and Neighbourhood Partnerships, a position she was appointed to by former US President Barack Obama.

Shefa Ali, a life coach spoke on setting powerful goals and her presentation, centred on using emotional intelligence to cope during difficult times, proved inciteful and relevant given the current Covid-19 crisis.

Saleh Al Mansouri
Saleh is an entrepreneur who has developed a small business buying and reselling new gadgets by utilizing technology to connect the seller and the customer. Saleh co-founded Maktapp QSTP – LLC and Fatora Payments Solution and is also an officer in the Qatar Armed Forces. Sheik Mohamed bin Abdulla Al Thani’s head of international strategic investments, Sheik Mohamed bin Abdulla Al Thani was the second speaker of the series and spoke to a large and highly engaged postgraduate audience. Sheik Mohamed had interesting insights into some of the many complex financial arrangements that he had been an integral part of, including advising on BeIN Group’s acquisition of US media company Miramax and his instrumental role in assisting the QIA (Qatar Investment Authority) in purchasing shares in the Empire State Realty Trust, owners of the Empire State Building in New York.
Alumni Dinner & 525 Launch

In February the University of Aberdeen marked a significant milestone in its history, by celebrating their 525th anniversary. To mark the occasion and to tie in with the launch of the University’s new 2040 strategic vision, AFG held a dinner at the Kempinski hotel in Doha attended by our recent graduates. Along with AFG/UoA graduates, an invitation was extended to UoA alumni who live or work in the Gulf region.

The dinner was an opportunity for AFG College principal Brian Buckley to launch the Qatar alumni group, which joins a growing number of chapters around the world. These chapters are used to encourage alumni to maintain links with the institution as well as to foster the wider opportunities available to graduates through the vast network of alumni operating across the globe.

During the dinner University of Aberdeen vice principal for education, Professor Ruth Taylor delivered a speech outlining the University’s strategy for the next twenty years and how the Qatar campus would play a pivotal role in these plans. As part of the strategy the University has committed to fulfilling a number of tenets which fall under four key pillars; inclusiveness, interdisciplinary, international and sustainable.

Articulation agreements

We have continued to engage with the academic community here in Qatar, working with the University of Aberdeen Business School in facilitating new articulation agreements offering further study opportunities for applicants completing programmes at other institutions.

In February an agreement was reached between the University of Aberdeen and The Academic Bridge programme (ABP – part of Qatar Foundation pre-university education). The agreement allows successful graduates of ABP to study on our undergraduate business management and accountancy and finance programmes joining with advanced standing.

In addition to the signing with ABP, an agreement with the University Foundation College (UFC) was finalised, whereby those meeting with the agreed pre-requisites will be permitted entry to the second year of our business management degree programme.
COVID-19
response

The whole world was affected by Covid 19 and our College was no exception. We immediately set up a working group with our colleagues at the University in Aberdeen to review how best to combat this unique situation. On guidance from the Ministry of Education & Higher Education all in-class teaching was suspended and we implemented our online teaching plan which the University of Aberdeen had been planning for. This involved the use of revised teaching platforms such as the online “Collaborate” facility which allowed lectures and seminars to be delivered live online and simultaneously recorded for future viewings.

As an institution we were fortunate to have students who adapted well and took a mature approach to this unprecedented situation. We had students arranging seminars and talks, offering encouragement to their peers on maintaining a positive mental attitude.

“How to maintain good physical and mental health during these difficult times!”
Student Webinar

“It was inspiring to see how quickly both faculty and students were able to adapt to the challenges that we faced in those early weeks. It was a steep learning curve for many, but these lessons can be carried forward and incorporated into a more blended-learning approach that will, no doubt, be a key element of the university experience into the future.”

Stephen Fettes
Undergraduate Lecturer.
Research Activity
and Knowledge Creation

Having established an excellent reputation for teaching over the last three academic years, we have increasingly been able to attract faculty who excel in teaching and relevant high quality research outputs. To this end our academic staff have been working with international recognized publications across a number of disciplines including: accounting, corporate social responsibility, food security, organizational behaviour and tourism (overtourism).

This year we have submitted an application to the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) to have a listed and approved Research Office. The ability to draw funds from the QNRF, which is the main government body here in Qatar which underpins and supports research, will be a major benefit for our faculty who are already involved in projects supported by the QNRF. Our academics have recently submitted a QNRF-MME cluster grant application with researchers from Qatar University and Western Sydney University, drawing on their experience of working on a QNRF project relating to the enhancement of vegetable production.