

SHAHEEN PAKISTAN

Module: Further Study in Saudi Arabia



SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	3
GENERAL INFORMATION	3
Which programs or specializations are most popular/reowned?	3
Job Prospects	3
Working while studying	4
OVERVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM	4
MISCONCEPTIONS	5
SECTION 2: UNDERGRADUATE STUDY	6
TYPES OF DEGREES	7
HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE	7
EDUCATION SELECTION IN PAKISTAN	7
APPLYING	9
OVERVIEW	9
SECTION 3: POSTGRADUATE STUDY	10
OVERVIEW	11
SECTION 4: GENERAL INFORMATION	12
(Applicable to all Applicants)	12
TRANSALABILITY KEY	13
BUDGETING	15
APPLYING FOR A VISA	15
ACCOMMODATION	15
GENERAL OPTIONS	15
SECTION 5: CONTRIBUTORS	16

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

GENERAL INFORMATION

Saudi Arabia is the largest Arab state in the Middle East, and boasts the largest education sector in the Gulf states. Saudi Arabia has over twenty-five public universities and eight private universities located in different geographic regions within the kingdom. The Ministry of Education governs all the universities. [Here](#) is a list of universities and colleges in Saudi Arabia. Though there are institutions that place restrictions on the admission of international students, there are many that welcome such applicants. Generally, the medium of teaching is Arabic, however medical courses and courses taught by many private education institutions are taught in English.

Which programs or specializations are most popular/reowned?

According to Times of [Higher Education](#), Saudi Arabia puts emphasis on Science and Technology. There are however, higher enrollment rates in Humanities/Social Sciences programs across the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia is particularly recognized for its programs in Islamic Studies and Arabic/Arab Studies.

Job Prospects

Oil and gas are the basis of the Saudi economy, alongside the logistics sector, consumer goods, and retail. Job opportunities are generally open in the engineering, construction, IT and telecommunications sectors for foreigners. Additionally, working as an [English teacher](#) is a common work path. Other sectors of employment can be viewed [here](#). If you wish to pursue a career in the Arabian peninsula, then going to universities (especially higher ranked universities) in Saudi Arabia can be a great option. It is important to look up the job prospects in specific markets within Saudi Arabia before making your decision, because some markets favor expats more than others. Also note that in a lot of companies within Saudi Arabia, locals are favored over non-locals.

However, it is important to note the following:

- Expat Arrivals also comments that amongst non-locals, there is bias for Western workers and a degree of discrimination against Asian candidates.
- Discrimination is also common against female workers, with employment for women often being restricted to education and health (as of 2017).
- Even though English is usually understood, it is recommended to learn the Arabic language to improve job prospects here.
- Employment in Saudi Arabia is almost always on a temporary basis. It is very difficult to get permanent residence there.
- It is recommended that you have good local contacts and a firm job offer before you consider working in Saudi Arabia. It is best if you have good high-level qualifications, relevant to what the job requires.
- Here is a useful resource to read on this topic: [Working in Saudi Arabia](#)

Working while studying

You are not allowed to work while studying in Saudi Arabia, i.e. the study permit does not give you permission to work.

Working in Saudi Arabia after graduation

In order to work in Saudi Arabia, you will need to secure a job offer. You can not apply for a work visa yourself; your [sponsor](#) will have to apply for it. In most cases, this sponsor is your prospective employer, who will have to act as your guarantor/guardian while you are working there.

OVERVIEW OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

Higher Education in Saudi Arabia is supervised by the government through the Ministry of Education. The Ministry supervises, coordinates, and plans with the administrations of these universities in accordance with the kingdom's needs. The table below outlines the different types of institutions that exist in Saudi Arabia.

Type of University	Description
State Universities	A list of all these universities can be found here . These are funded by the Saudi Government, and usually require you to be a Saudi national in order to attend. Students attending these universities typically do not pay any tuition fees. Places for international students are often rare, but do exist, however in order to be eligible you usually need to be an exceptional student because

	of the extremely low number of places.
Private Institutions	There are a number of private institutions available that do allow international students to apply. Students pay tuition fees at these institutions.
Girls' Colleges	
Community Colleges	2-3 year colleges that are usually owned and funded by the government. They exist to primarily serve the needs of the Saudi labor market, and give students diplomas that can either help them get into the labor market, or get them accepted into a university in the state. A lot of students who do not have the credentials to enrol directly into a university often opt for community colleges, as admission here is easier.

MISCONCEPTIONS

- You cannot gain a Saudi nationality/passport by simply studying and then working there for a time period.
- There is a large Pakistani community in Saudi Arabia, so there will always be a place to fit in if you're studying abroad there by yourself.

SECTION 2: UNDERGRADUATE STUDY

TYPES OF DEGREES

Types of Undergraduate Degrees	Duration (Full time programs)
Associate Degree. These are two year degrees for students who do not want to commit to a 4 year degree (perhaps because they want to work after 2 years, or strengthen their academics before transferring to a more reputable institution).	2 years in length
Bachelor degrees. These are offered in a host of different fields and subjects.	Typically 4 years
Medicine, Engineering, and Pharmacy Bachelor's degrees	Typically 5-6 years

It is important to note that a few universities unfortunately still don't have all degree streams open to female students. Some public universities also don't allow international students in particular programs, and only allow Saudi nationals to enrol. Make sure you are aware of these sorts of requirements when doing research on different universities.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE

In order to be eligible for admission into an undergraduate program in Saudi Arabia, students must have completed their 12 year secondary school education.

EDUCATION SELECTION IN PAKISTAN

British Curriculum (O Levels/IGCSEs/A Levels) OR International Baccalaureate

This will help you prepare best for Saudi universities, as you will find the knowledge you gain from there will help you through most of your first year. A good performance in your first year is a good way to get a Dean's List scholarship (if applicable for the university).

Specific universities will usually have subject and score requirements for A Levels/IB on their website, so make sure to look out for these. At AlFaisal University for example, you need 24 IB Points to get into a Pharmacy degree, as mentioned in the tables provided [here](#).

Pakistani Curriculum (Matriculation/HSSC)

You will typically need to get your HSSC evaluated or "equalized" by the Saudi Ministry of Education and present their evaluation to the universities you wish to apply to. If the ministry does not think you are qualified enough to gain direct entry into a Bachelor's program, you may be eligible to apply to that

specific university's one year Preparatory Program. You can find out more information about these programs on specific university websites. You can find out more information about equalization [here](#).

Subject Specialization

Depending on the university and degree, you are often required to have gotten particularly higher grades in the subjects that are necessary for your bachelor's stream.

APPLYING

OVERVIEW

Application Components

- Application Form
- Proof of Secondary Education
- Transcripts
- Proof of Proficiency in English Language
 - TOEFL
 - IELTS
 - Good score in SAT I English in some universities can also be used in this case
 - If none of these are taken, some universities will allow you to sit in their own English proficiency test.
- Other standardized tests that may be required:
 - SAT I/II
 - Qiyas tests: Qudraat and Tahseely, which are offered by the Qiyas establishment. You can only take it once you have a residency permit, as you have to register for it using your permit ID. Therefore taking this test is only possible if you already have immediate family members in Saudi Arabia with a residence permit. Then they can apply for you to come and get you a residence permit, and then you take this test.

Application Cycle

The application deadlines vary across institutions/faculties/programs. Some have rolling enrollment, while some may only have a Fall semester enrollment cycle similar to most universities in the USA. Some universities may accept applications for both Fall and Spring Semester. It is important to look up these dates well ahead of time when doing your research.

Application Process and Timeline

For most universities, you will get to choose what program you are applying for, or at least give preferences. In some universities (such as Princess Nourah) you will get sorted into a program according to your grade, and may be able to give a preference (but this will only be followed if you have the grades to enroll in that program).

SECTION 3: POSTGRADUATE STUDY

APPLYING

OVERVIEW

Application Components

- Application Form
- Proof/Diploma/Certificate of Undergraduate/Master's education
- Transcripts
- Proof of Proficiency in English Language
 - TOEFL
 - IELTS
- Other standardized tests that may be required:
 - GRE
- Letters of Recommendation (sometimes required)
- Personal Statement (sometimes required)
- Research Proposal (sometimes required)
- Interviews (sometimes required)

Application Process and Timeline

There is no central application portal; you must apply directly to the university. Check each university's individual application process and follow their guidelines closely.

SECTION 4: GENERAL INFORMATION

(Applicable to all Applicants)

TRANSLABILITY KEY

How applications to Saudi Arabia are different to those to the US and the UK?

The purpose of this key is to show how the application processes for Saudi Arabia compare to applications in the UK or the US (in terms of timelines, component requirements, degree types etc.) This information should allow you to: i) look at the field-specific tips given for USA or UK; then ii) adapt these tips for an application to another country (using the 'translatability key' in that country's profile). Please refer to the table below:

TRANSLABILITY KEY	Are they required?	Compare importance to UK/USA
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE	For Bachelor's: Most Saudi universities will not require a personal statement from you.	For Bachelor's: This is not an important part of the application process.
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION	For Bachelor's: Most Saudi universities will not require letters of recommendation from you.	For Bachelor's: This is not an important part of the application process.
STANDARDIZED TESTS	<p>English proficiency tests are usually required by most universities with similar score requirements as the USA and UK. Some universities may require Arabic proficiency as well, and will carry out an Arabic proficiency test.</p> <p>Some fields/universities may have some entry-tests/other standardized tests that you may be required to take. For example, you may be required to take competency tests for certain programs/universities.</p> <p>Some schools and programs will require you to do the GRE and/or GMAT in order to gain admission just like the USA.</p>	<p>Having the required English proficiency proof is equally as important in Hong Kong as it is in the UK and USA. You will not be granted admission without this.</p> <p>Entry tests (whether those are field-specific or general aptitude tests) are extremely important when required. Often, they become the most important part in securing admission.</p>

<p>TRANSCRIPTS (which qualifications are accepted; if they are not, then what happens?)</p>	<p>For Bachelor's: Many universities will accept the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) like the USA (depending on your grade) but ONLY if you have them equalized/evaluated from the Ministry of Education. If your qualifications are not listed as acceptable on your university website, you can usually opt for a Preparatory Year, much like a Foundation Year program in the UK.</p>	<p>Very important — in many programs, this will be one of the most important parts of your application. Higher ranked public universities will expect you to have a grade of at least 85% for a number of Bachelor's programs.</p>
<p>INTERVIEWS</p>	<p>For Bachelor's: These typically do not take place.</p>	
<p>TIMELINE - The application deadlines vary across institutions/faculties/programs. Some have rolling enrollment, while some may only have a Fall semester enrollment cycle similar to most universities in the USA. Some universities may accept applications for both Fall and Spring Semester. It is important to look up these dates well ahead of time when doing your research.</p>		

BUDGETING

As an international student, you will have to account for a lot of costs besides just the tuition fees. These include:

1. Travel expenses
2. Health insurance
3. Accommodation and living expenses
4. Travel and sightseeing
5. Textbooks and other course materials
6. Food and drink
7. Miscellaneous

APPLYING FOR A VISA

If you have gained admission into a post-secondary institution in Saudi Arabia, you will need to apply for a visa/entry permit. In order to be eligible to apply, you will have to meet the conditions stated [here](#).

Note: "The validity of your student visa may also cause confusion as the dates will be noted in lunar months, as used in the Islamic '*Hijrah*' calendar, rather than the calendar used in the Western world. This can mean the validity of your visa may expire a couple of days sooner than you expect, so be sure to work out your leaving day with this in mind to avoid an over-stay fine." (Information taken directly from [QS Universities](#))

ACCOMMODATION

GENERAL OPTIONS

Halls of residence are very rare in Saudi Arabia, so international students will typically rent private accommodation through their university. The costs of this can be fairly expensive, ranging between 3,500 SR (US\$950) and 4,500 SR (US\$1,200) [June 2019 exchange rates] for a small apartment in Riyadh, although prices are cheaper the further from the city you go. (Information taken from [QS Universities](#)) You may be able to opt into a transport system to and from the campus as well.

Note that some universities (mostly public universities) will provide you with accommodation, or provide hostels.

SECTION 5: CONTRIBUTORS

This information was compiled with the valuable help of SHAHEEN volunteers.

We thank our volunteers for their contribution, and hope their tips and advice will help you in your application.

In addition to that, the following sources were consulted in developing this country profile:

[Studying and living](#), [PhD study in Saudi Arabia](#), [List of universities](#), [New job opportunities for Saudi expats in near future](#), [Saudi Arabia Guide](#), [Working in Saudi Arabia](#), [University jobs in Saudi Arabia - everything you need to know](#), [Working in Saudi Arabia](#), [7 reasons to study abroad in Saudi Arabia](#), [Study in Saudi Arabia](#), [3 facts about earning a degree in Saudi Arabia](#), [Saudi Arabia](#).