



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM | DUBAI
دبي



University of Birmingham Dubai 2030 Strategy

We advance
We activate

birmingham.ac.uk/dubai

Foreword from the Provost

It is with great pride and a strong sense of purpose that I introduce the University of Birmingham Dubai 2030 Strategy. This document represents both a moment of reflection and a clear statement of our ambition for the future, one that builds on our achievements to date while setting a confident course for the years ahead.

Since our establishment, our Dubai campus has grown in scale, reputation, and impact. We have developed a vibrant academic community, expanded our educational portfolio, strengthened our research activity, and built meaningful partnerships across the United Arab Emirates and the wider region. These accomplishments are a testament to the dedication and talent of our staff, students, and partners, and to our shared belief in the transformative power of education and research.

This strategy is firmly aligned with the University of Birmingham's 2030 Strategic Framework, reflecting our collective ambition to be recognised among the world's global top 50 universities. At the same time, it speaks directly to our unique context in Dubai, embracing the opportunities presented by a dynamic, globally connected city and responding to the priorities of the United Arab Emirates and the region. It is this dual alignment – global in outlook, local in impact – that defines our distinctive contribution.

At its heart, this strategy is underpinned by our commitment to excellence across all that we do. Central to its delivery are two foundational pillars: 'Education' and 'People and culture'. Our commitment to a transformative, future-focused educational experience ensures that our students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive and lead in a rapidly changing world. Equally, our people are the driving force behind our success. By fostering a culture of excellence, inclusion, and belonging, and by investing in the development and wellbeing of our staff, we create the conditions in which innovation, collaboration, and impact can flourish.

These core pillars enable and amplify our broader ambitions across 'Research', 'Engagement and impact', 'Civic and global', and 'Sustainability'. Together, they form an integrated framework through which we will realise our vision, delivering meaningful impact locally, regionally, and globally.

As we look to the future, we do so with confidence and clarity. We are ambitious in our goals, realistic in our planning, and unwavering in our commitment to continuous growth and improvement. Above all, we remain guided by our civic mission: to be a force for progress, opportunity, and collaboration, both within Dubai and across our global community.

I invite you to engage with this strategy and to play your part in shaping the next chapter of our exciting journey.

Professor Yusra Mouzugi

Provost, University of Birmingham Dubai campus



Universities play a defining role in shaping societies, advancing knowledge, enabling opportunity, and driving change.

In 2016, the University of Birmingham took a decisive step in extending that role globally, establishing its Dubai campus as a platform for education, research, and engagement in one of the world's most dynamic and innovative regions. This was not simply expansion, but intent. It was about placing Birmingham's strengths where they could have the greatest impact.

As we approach the tenth anniversary of that decision, the scale of progress is clear, as is the opportunity that lies ahead.

“

We propose to establish a branch campus in the United Arab Emirates that represents the best of our University: starting with high-quality teaching but in due course establishing itself within the Gulf as a research institution... the scope of the regional market as an expanding educational hub means that this is a major opportunity with the potential to enhance significantly the international scale and reputation of the University in line with the Birmingham Strategic Framework.

The Council, University of Birmingham – April 2016

Our two campuses have developed in partnership, grounded in reciprocity and shared purpose. Together, they form a connected global system, enabling knowledge exchange that extends beyond geography. The Dubai campus now stands as a hub for learning, a meeting point for cultures, and a place where ideas are tested and applied.

'One University, Two Campuses' defines us. We are one academic community, aligned in ambition and connected in delivery.

The next phase calls for sharper focus, faster progress, and confidence in the choices we make.

This strategic plan sets out how that will be achieved.

A distinctive position

Our distinctiveness is reflected in how seamlessly we operate across different settings.

We bring together global academic strength, regional relevance, and a clear civic purpose. This combination allows us to respond to local priorities while contributing to international debates and discovery.

The Dubai campus operates as a connecting point between systems, sectors, and ideas. It links global expertise with regional opportunity, and translates knowledge into practical application.

This position provides a clear basis for strategic differentiation.



Our ambition

Our ambition is to set the benchmark for international branch campuses, contributing to regional progress while strengthening the University of Birmingham's position as a leading global institution.

This is delivered through the full breadth of our mission. Education, research, and knowledge transfer sit at the core, supported by a clear set of priorities:

- Developing highly-employable graduates ready for global careers
- Delivering research that addresses regional and global priorities
- Acting as a centre for knowledge exchange and lifelong learning
- Extending the University's global reach through our position in Dubai
- Maintaining a financially sustainable and efficient operation
- Building a community defined by shared purpose and civic responsibility

Since opening in 2018, the campus has grown in scale, confidence, and reputation. Student numbers have increased, partnerships have expanded, research has matured, and academic provision has developed. Agility has been a defining strength, allowing us to respond to change while maintaining quality.

The next stage requires a shift in pace and precision. Growth will be more targeted, impact more visible, and delivery more focused, in support of our ambition to become a global top 50 university.

Our ambition for Dubai will be defined by excellence and measured by impact.





Dubai campus Strategic Plan

Our approach is guided by three principles:

- Alignment with the University of Birmingham Strategic Framework
- Alignment with Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, and regional priorities
- Recognition of our context as an international campus

Activity is fully aligned with the University of Birmingham's six strategic pillars:

- Education
- People and culture
- Research
- Engagement and impact
- Civic and global
- Sustainability

In Dubai, our strategy places the 'Education' and 'People and culture' pillars at the heart of our development, ensuring our campus grows as both a centre of excellence and a vibrant community.

These areas are interconnected. Progress in one fuels progress in all. Education draws on research, research informs engagement, and all activity contributes to wider impact.

Throughout this strategy, there is a consistent emphasis on excellence, transformation, impact, and collaboration. Our shared values of ambition, innovation, responsibility, collaboration, and openness shape how this is delivered.

In a competitive global environment, this plan provides clarity on priorities and ensures that effort and investment are directed where they will have the greatest effect.

Our collective values of ambition, innovation, collaboration, responsibility, and openness underpin an institutional culture of excellence that empowers our people to thrive.

Six strategic pillars – Dubai in practice

The University of Birmingham's six pillars provide the overarching strategic framework.

In Dubai, there are two central pillars plus four supporting pillars – all advanced through locally defined priorities that reflect regional context, opportunity, and contribution.

UoB Strategic Framework 2030	UoB Dubai Strategy 2030	Education	■ Teaching with a focus on employability ■ Student-centric experience ■ Future-focused pedagogy
		People and culture	■ Culture of excellence ■ Wellbeing, inclusion, and belonging ■ Values-driven leadership
		Research	■ Relevant and impactful research ■ Supportive research culture ■ Collaboration across disciplines
		Engagement and impact	■ Societal benefits through partnerships ■ Trusted regional networks ■ Linking research assets
		Civic and global	■ Dubai as a global pivot ■ Civic partner in UAE development ■ Cross-cultural dialogue
		Sustainability	■ Financial sustainability ■ Sustainability in education and research ■ Sustainable operations and behaviours



Education

The educational experience at the Dubai campus is designed to be future-focused, student-centric, and closely aligned to the needs of industry and society.

Building on the University's academic strength, the Dubai Economic Agenda (D33), and United Arab Emirates national priorities, the focus is on delivering a student experience that prepares graduates for an ever-changing world.

Ensuring employability sits at the centre of our teaching and learning design. Teaching integrates academic knowledge with practical application, supported by the use of advanced technologies including AI. Stronger links with industry, government, and professional bodies provide students with exposure to real-world challenges and clearer routes into employment. This is not simply about readiness for work, but readiness to shape it.

Facilitating a student-centric experience that extends beyond the classroom. We are committed to creating an inclusive and vibrant campus that supports academic achievement alongside personal development, wellbeing, and the development of wider skills. Providing opportunities for leadership, creativity, and global engagement forms part of this broader offer.

Positioning our campus at the forefront of future-focused teaching and learning. We will champion innovative, agile, digital, and interdisciplinary teaching, investing in and celebrating educational leadership, and teaching excellence to establish our campus as a regional model of transformative pedagogy.

People and culture

The strength of the institution depends on its people and the environment in which they work.

Realising this strength depends on creating an environment where people feel valued, supported, and inspired to contribute to our collective success.

Fostering a culture of excellence underpins activity across the campus. High standards are expected and recognised, and success is understood as both individual and collective. This creates an environment where people are encouraged to contribute, innovate, and take ownership.

Championing staff wellbeing, inclusion, and belonging in all aspects of campus life. Dubai's diversity is a source of strength, bringing different perspectives and experiences that shape how our campus operates and strengthens our culture. We will foster a culture in which wellbeing, inclusion, and a sense of belonging are prioritised, ensuring staff feel supported, empowered, and able to perform at their best.

Advancing leadership at all levels. Leadership is not limited to formal roles, but is embedded in the everyday actions, behaviours and decisions that shape our culture and community. Grounded in our values, we are committed to developing confident, inclusive and reflective leaders who can navigate complexity, inspire others and contribute to a culture of excellence, wellbeing and continuous improvement.

Through this approach, the Dubai campus continues to strengthen its contribution to the University's wider reputation and ambition.





Research

Research activity is shaped by the need to deliver both academic quality and real-world relevance.

The Dubai campus operates within an environment where applied research and knowledge transfer play an important role in economic and societal development. This creates opportunities to connect research activity directly with regional priorities.

Focusing on relevant, impactful research with global reach. Ensuring that research communities can grow and collaborate effectively will produce higher quality outputs. By strengthening the link between research and teaching, research does not just sit alongside education, it actively informs and enhances it.

Inspiring a supportive, high-performing research culture. Creating a supportive research environment will enable colleagues to develop their work, build networks, and engage with emerging areas of knowledge. Over time, this positions the campus as a credible and valued contributor within the regional and wider research landscape.

Driving collaboration across disciplines, campuses, and partners. Placing collaboration at the centre of our approach, working across campuses and disciplines and with partners in academia, government, and industry. These partnerships support access to funding, increase visibility, and extend impact. Through Dubai's strategic position, we will enable Birmingham's research to travel further and engage more directly with emerging global challenges.

Engagement and impact

Our impact is driven by the purposeful partnerships we build and nurture.

Our activities are shaped through partnership with government, industry, and communities. This ensures that our core activities remain relevant and that outcomes can be applied in practice.

Accelerating economic development, social wellbeing, and sustainable growth within the United Arab Emirates. This is achieved through research projects, education programmes, and knowledge exchange. We will focus on improving quality of life and societal wellbeing, including sustainable and responsible growth.

Convening and strengthening regional networks to address shared challenges. Bringing together key stakeholders to build collaborative networks that respond to regional priorities and strengthen civic capacity. Using our influence and disciplinary breadth, we will build capacity and convene collaboration that channels research, education, and lifelong learning into regional solutions.

Linking research assets across campuses to drive regional relevance and global reach. Connecting our Dubai and Birmingham research assets with regional partners and governments will address shared challenges. By enabling engaged, cross-boundary collaboration, we will deliver impactful solutions that extend our global reputation and reinforce our presence in emerging markets.





Civic and global

What is civic for Dubai is global for Birmingham, and vice versa.

This interconnectedness gives our campus a unique opportunity to fulfil our broader mission and deliver on both local responsibility and global engagement.

Driving our ambition forward, acting as a strategic hub that extends the University's global reach. Through research, partnerships, and educational engagement, we contribute directly to our ambition to be amongst the world's top 50 universities, increasing our visibility in emerging markets and amplifying our impact through a distinctive and meaningful civic presence.

Embedding ourselves as a partner of choice in the national development of the United Arab Emirates. We will work closely with government, industry, and civil society to address regional challenges, develop talent, and support the strategic sectors that shape the economic, social, and environmental future of the region.

Prioritising the activation of cross-cultural dialogue. Established at the intersection of continents and cultures, our diverse community is one of our greatest strengths. Our Dubai campus connects global perspectives with local realities, fostering cross-cultural dialogue and intercultural understanding that enriches our students, strengthens our partnerships, and contributes to the University's wider mission as a globally engaged institution.

Sustainability

Sustainability is approached in its broadest sense, spanning financial, environmental, and social priorities across our operations, education, research, and wider impact.

Our 'Sustainability' pillar builds on the University's commitment to social responsibility, while reflecting the distinct priorities of our Dubai context. We take a broad view, recognising sustainability in environmental, social, and economic terms, aligned with the United Arab Emirates' focus on inclusive growth, equity, and diversification.

Ensuring financial sustainability underpins our ability to grow and deliver our mission as a global, research-intensive university campus. Growth is managed carefully, with attention to efficiency and the development of diverse income streams. This ensures that the campus can continue to invest in its core activities.

Embedding sustainability across our education and research. By integrating sustainability throughout our academic activity, we equip students to be global citizens and leaders of change, while advancing research in areas of long-term significance. Our interdisciplinary, high-impact research harnesses global expertise and regional partnerships to deliver meaningful contributions to the United Arab Emirates' national sustainability ambitions and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Leading a culture of sustainable operations and behaviours on campus and beyond. We will lead by example through responsible financial, environmental, and social practices, engaging staff, students, and partners to extend our impact beyond the campus. We will build a resilient, future-ready community committed to sustainable change locally, regionally, and globally.

Taken together, this approach supports long-term resilience and aligns with both institutional and regional priorities.



Our strategy – measuring success

Turning ambition into delivery

Within this strategy, we set a clear direction. Success will be judged, not by intent alone, but by the difference our outcomes have for our students, our people, our partners, and the wider region we serve.

Progress will be measured through a clear set of indicators aligned to our strategic priorities and the University of Birmingham's wider governance framework. These measures allow us to track performance, demonstrate impact, and adapt proactively as our context evolves. They form the basis of our accountability, with University governance overseeing delivery against our strategy and ambitions.

Core indicators will measure student success, staff engagement, research performance, partnership strength, and financial sustainability. Combined, they are supported by a range of quantitative and qualitative measures that inform decision-making, guide the prioritisation of targeted investment, and ensure our approach remains responsive to emerging opportunities and challenges.

These Key Performance Indicators will be supported by additional measures linked to each area of focus and embedded within our planning processes. This will ensure that performance can be tracked consistently and that progress remains aligned with strategic intent.

This is an approach that promotes accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement as we work toward our 2030 goals.

Celebrating success





Our enabling strategies

Successful delivery will be driven by targeted action plans that translate the University of Birmingham Dubai's strategic priorities into practical initiatives. These will be supported by professional services that are responsive, efficient, and aligned to institutional goals.

Clear governance, defined accountability, and effective collaboration across the University will underpin implementation, ensuring priorities translate into sustained, meaningful progress.

Delivery will be disciplined, outcomes-focused, and aligned to the scale of our ambition, demonstrating our commitment to students, partners, and the societies we serve.

From Birmingham to Dubai, our campus turns the 2030 Strategy into a living legacy of excellence and global influence.





[birmingham.ac.uk/
dubai/about/contact](https://birmingham.ac.uk/dubai/about/contact)

 @birminghamdubai

 @unibirminghamdubai

 /unibirminghamdubai

 /university-of-birmingham-dubai

Designed by



**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**

Creative
Media

Academic City
Dubai
United Arab Emirates