

Dhofar University: SWOT Analysis and Outline of Strategic Plan

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- ☛ Continuous governmental support
- ☛ Full support and commitment by visionary founders
- ☛ Strong academic and administrative support by AUB
- ☛ Successful recruitment of qualified international faculty
- ☛ Quality curriculum benchmarked against international standards
- ☛ A quality assurance board to manage quality control
- ☛ Academic leadership in the region of Dhofar
- ☛ Steady increase in student enrollment
- ☛ Establishment of a quality international school

Weaknesses

- ☛ Remote location of Salalah away from major activities in the capital
- ☛ Shortage of qualified Omani faculty and senior staff
- ☛ Low academic standards of students applying to join the University
- ☛ Low level of motivation to study among substantial numbers of students
- ☛ Limited job opportunities for DU graduates in the Dhofar region

Opportunities

- ☛ Develop relationship with the private sector in order to fund DU programs
- ☛ Expand existing programs and add new ones
- ☛ Capitalize on the beautiful environment to increase enrollment and attract qualified students particularly in the summer (Khareef)
- ☛ Initiate collaboration with selected regional and international universities
- ☛ Lack of other universities in Dhofar region
- ☛ Play a leading role in developing private quality higher education in the Sultanate

Threats

- ☛ Perseverance in the long-term struggle to establish a quality higher education institution

- ☛ Fierce competition with private and public universities in the Sultanate and other countries
- ☛ Attracting and retaining qualified faculty, staff, and management
- ☛ Raising sufficient funds to sustain quality education and reaching a balanced budget
- ☛ Community pressure to adopt open admission of students
- ☛ Gaining adequate support from the private sector

Strategic Plan for 2009-2014

Vision

Dhofar University aspires to occupy a recognized position among the institutions of quality higher education.

Mission

Dhofar University strives to achieve excellence in teaching, research, and community service, in an open learning environment conducive to creativity and innovation and to the acquisition of cutting-edge professional knowledge.

Objectives

- To ensure academic excellence in all fields of study offered at the University.
- To enable students to explore their capabilities and take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered at Dhofar University in order to develop to their full intellectual potential.
- To produce morally responsible individuals who are highly competent in their fields of specialization and well prepared to succeed in life.
- To produce life-long self-learners committed to serve their society.

Values

The core values of Dhofar University are:

- Academic excellence
- Individual responsibility
- Life-long learning
- Quality
- Continuous improvement

Strategic Goals

- I. Reach Education Excellence
- II. Promote Research Aligned with the National Research Strategy
- III. Enhance Quality of Services
- IV. Nurture individual responsibility and life-long learning
- V. Enhance Relations with Community

Mechanism of Implementation of Strategic Goals

- I. Reach Education Excellence**
 1. Raise the criteria of admission of new students
 2. Apply Oman Accreditation Council's (OAC) standards for quality
 3. Graduate academically qualified students
 4. Maintain and periodically revise high quality curriculum
 5. Attract and retain highly qualified faculty
 6. Improve measures of assessment of student learning
 7. Attain national accreditation from the OAC
 8. Complete construction of the new campus
 9. Establish programs for faculty professional development
 10. Establish a student aid fund with pledged support from donors
 11. Offer scholarships to outstanding Omani students to pursue graduate studies
 12. Enhance the use of modern teaching methods and the integration of technology in teaching
- II. Promote Research Aligned with the National Research Strategy**
 1. Foster a productive research environment through grants, support in identifying funding sources and writing proposals, support for the University Research Board and for participation in international scientific meetings
 2. Identify and develop at least one center for research excellence such that DU would occupy a distinctive niche in that research area
 3. Acquire equipment and technology that facilitate research activities
 4. Recruit faculty who are able to initiate and sustain research projects
 5. Establish an annual prize for the most outstanding researcher at DU
- III. Enhance Quality of Services**
 1. Strengthen and expand the role of the Quality Assurance Board
 2. Assess current policies and procedures and develop improved versions
 3. Develop policies and procedures that stress quality of services
 4. Set explicit benchmarks of assessment for quality and continuous improvement
 5. Design and implement training programs on service excellence

6. Establish programs for staff professional development
7. Improve communication and coordination among various DU units
8. Improve student services including advising, career guidance, counseling and extra-curricular activities.

IV. Nurture Individual Responsibility and Life-Long Learning

1. Ensure that the academic programs promote individual responsibility and life-long independent learning.
2. Create a learning environment that encourages and rewards University values such as offering awards to students who best reflect and promote those values
3. Implement a code of student and staff conduct that emphasizes professional ethics and individual responsibility.

V. Enhance Relations with Community

1. Strengthen and expand CEC programs in order to provide training and services that are needed by the local community and are also in areas of DU strength
2. Offer consultation services through a newly established unit
3. Foster cooperation with local and national organizations in various economic sectors such as industry, commerce, and education
4. Support development projects in the region by offering DU expertise at cost and volunteering by its students, faculty and staff
5. Empower local disadvantaged individuals and groups through free or reduced-cost training, education, and consultation