



Transnational Education 3.0

Assessing the Impact of Dubai's International Education Hub on Development and Sustainability

INQAAHE Conference 2025

Welcome



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Agenda

- Introduction (5 mins)
- TNE 3.0: a framework for assessing quality impact (15 mins)
- Discussion (10 mins)
- Developing an education hub in Dubai: insight from the Knowledge and Human Development Authority (15 mins)
- Discussion (10 mins)
- The University of Birmingham Dubai: A case study in developing excellence (15 mins)
- Q and A (20 mins)

Introduction

Session Structure

1

TNE 3.0- A new framework

2

KHDA- TNE Hub development

3

**University of Birmingham Dubai
– Case study**

What to expect

TNE ecosystems and national development

Consideration of metrics to assess quality and impact

Partnerships between IBCs and host authorities

Embracing industry relations

Introduction

Session Thread

Quality Assurance



Quality Impact

**QA = High quality
education systems**



**QI = Measurable
impact on national
agendas**

Audience considerations

Role of foreign
institutions

Role of QA in
partnerships

Monitoring
systems

Linking QA, HE,
partnerships and
industry

TNE 3.0: A framework for assessing quality and impact



TNE 3.0

A RESEARCH REPORT BY
TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION
CONSULTANCY

How transnational education can support sustainability and national economic development

Elizabeth Shepherd, Managing Director, THE Consultancy
Dr Ishan Cader, Director, THE Consultancy

Photo by JW_Unsplash

Mixed-Model Regional Hub

Example: **EGYPT**



- Government **strategy** supports multiple models of TNE, including dedicated **infrastructure** for IBCs
- Large ecosystem of private providers searching for
- Franchise partners or validation agreements
- Prestige local universities creating joint/ dual TNE degrees
- Greater **integration** required to connect to **innovation** hubs

Rapid Growth IBC Market

Example: **Uzbekistan**



- Growing **infrastructure** of IBCs from a number of different countries
- Multiple entry models including
- Government-financed and private-financed
- TNE supports **integration** into global economy
- Government strategy focus on **excellence** and **sustainability**

**TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION
GLOBAL TNE DATA AND
POLICY EVIDENCE**

Rapid Growth Franchise Market

Example: **Sri Lanka**



- TNE growth stimulated by non-degree awarding private institutions partnering with UK universities
- TNE serves government **strategy** to enhance choice and quality
- Dynamic local ecosystem of **entrepreneurship** in business and IT sectors
- TNE contributes to **workforce skills** development

International Campus Hub

Example: **Dubai**



- Mature **infrastructure** of IBCs and increasing interconnection to innovation hubs
- Strong **integration** with the global economy
- **Strategic** location to attract talent from Middle East,
- South Asia, Central Asia, Europe and Africa
- Growing focus on **sustainability** and linking TNE with economic growth and diversification

GLOBAL TNE DATA AND POLICY EVIDENCE

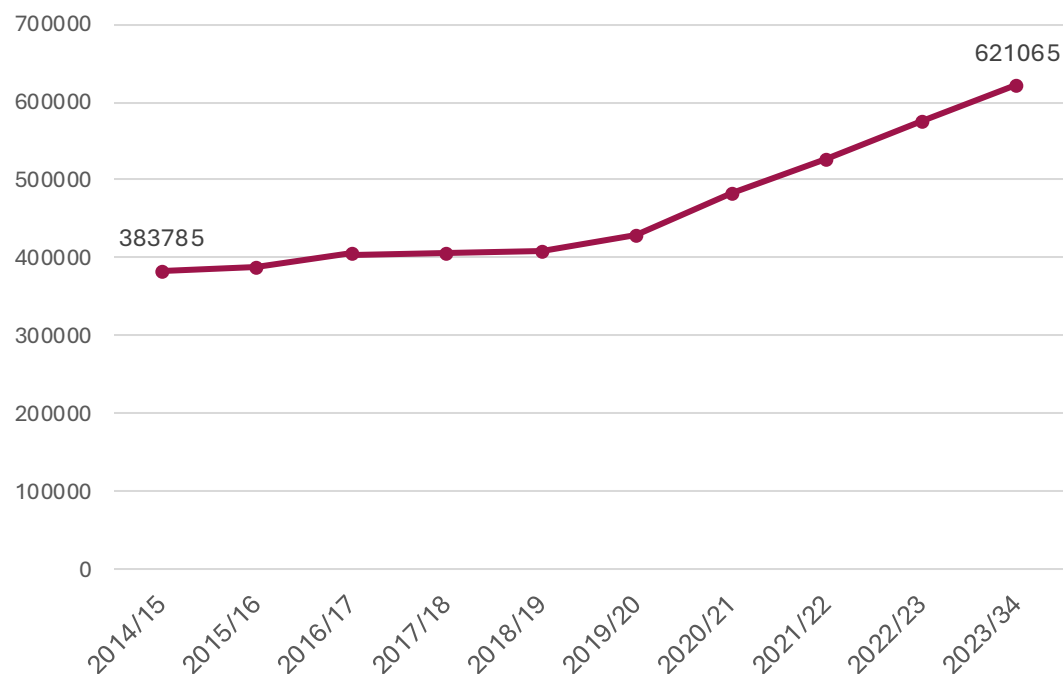
Times Higher Education (THE) has analysed TNE, internationalisation, sustainability, and national education development initiatives in 31 countries since 2022. Using the data, research and insight gained from policy, strategy and development activities conducted with universities and ministries of higher education, alongside THE's wealth of proprietary data on global higher education, within this report we present the sector-changing concept Transnational Education (TNE) 3.0.

**SINCE 2022 THE
HAVE ANALYSED TNE
INITIATIVES IN**

31

**COUNTRIES AND
TERRITORIES**

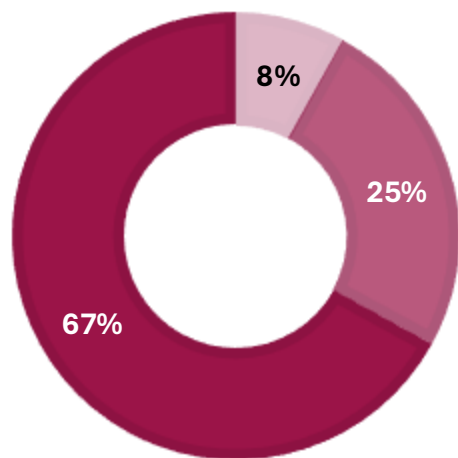
TNE is an important and **growing phenomena**, supporting student access to international education and capacity building in host countries



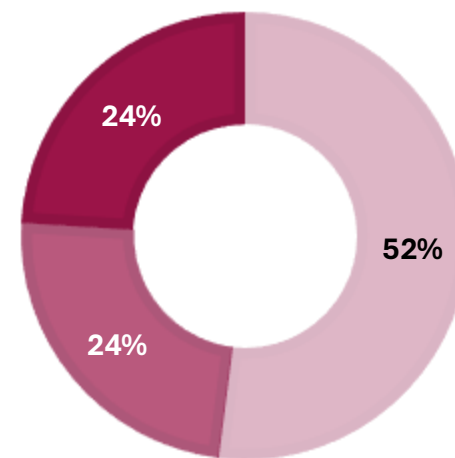
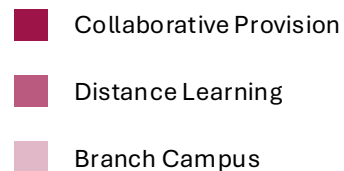
UK TNE has grown by **62%** in the last 10 years

TNE accounts for **45%** of all international students enrolled on a UK degree

TNE can be delivered through **different models**, with **international branch campuses** more prevalent in some markets, including the UAE

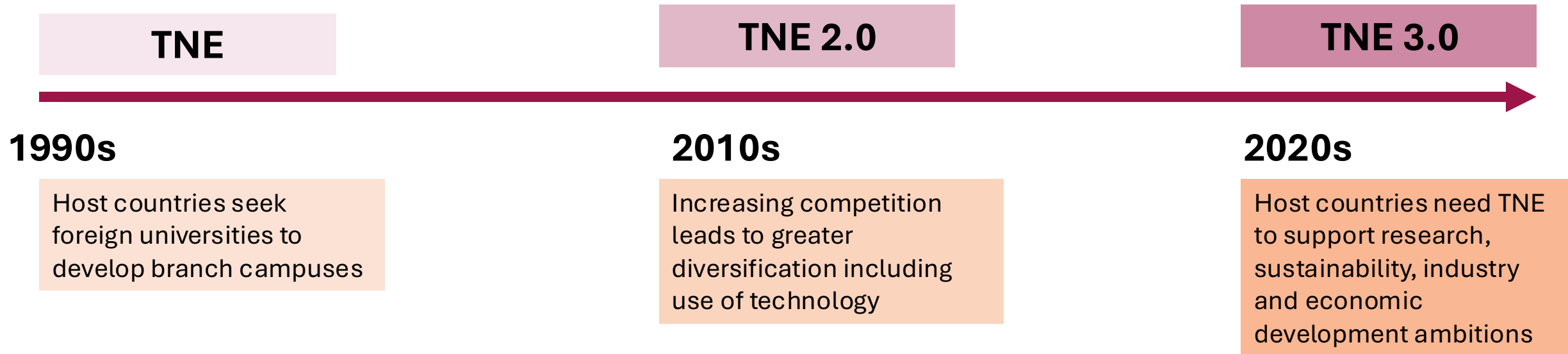


UK TNE- **Global**

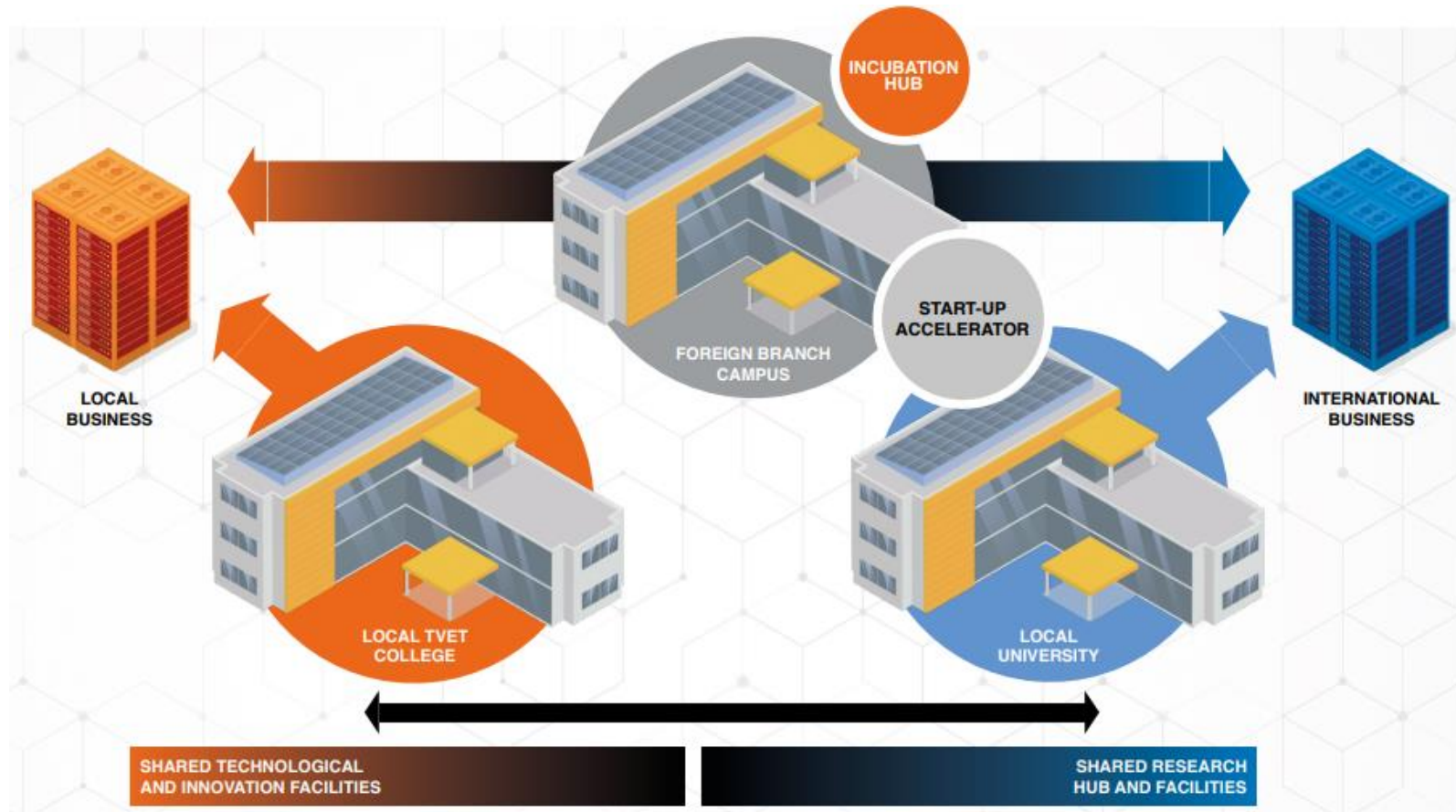


UK TNE- **UAE**

TNE 3.0 is an **ecosystem** and **framework** to enable greater of foreign universities on host countries' sustainability and development



TNE 3.0 places foreign universities at the **centre of a dynamic ecosystem** of innovation, research and entrepreneurship, empowering local growth and stimulating the internationalisation of commerce and industry



THE have developed a framework of 6 pillars to support governments monitor and evaluate the impact of TNE



Strategy

Alignment with national development



Integration

Integrate into local economic system



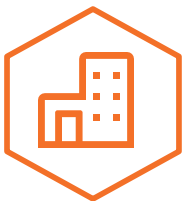
Innovation

Support innovation and entrepreneurship



Excellence

Develop excellence in research and teaching



Infrastructure

Impact on infrastructure of development



Sustainability

Evaluate impact on the UN SDGs

THE can leverage existing datapoints to monitor and evaluate TNE 3.0- and create new metrics

PILLAR	HOST GOVERNMENT	FOREIGN UNIVERSITY
STRATEGY 	Evidence of national or territorial strategy/legislation that supports the creation of IBCs. Measuring Gross Value Added	 Bespoke data collection needed to analyse the strategy/ legislation contents
INNOVATION 	- SDG 9.2 Patents citing university research - SDG 9.3.1 Number of university spinoffs - SDG 9.4 Research income from industry and commerce	  Data from THE Impact Rankings, SDG 9
INFRASTRUCTURE 	- SDG 11.4.5 Affordable housing for students - SDG 7.2.1 Energy Efficient renovation and building - SDG 7.4.1 Outreach to local community for energy efficiency	   Data from THE Impact Rankings, SDG 7, and 11
INTEGRATION 	- SDG 8.4.1 Number of students with work placements for more than a month - SDG 10.3 the number of international students from developing countries	   Data from THE Impact Rankings, SDG 8, and 10
EXCELLENCE 	- Local vs international staff ratio - Research output score - Research influence score	  Data from THE World University Rankings
SUSTAINABILITY 	- SDG 12.2.1 Ethical sourcing policy - SDG 12.2.5 Policy for minimisation for plastic use - SDG 13.2.1 Low carbon energy tracking - SDG 13.4.1 Commitment to carbon neutral university	   Data from THE Impact Rankings, SDG 12, and 13

Our recommendations can make TNE 3.0 a reality, and move the dial from quality *assurance* to quality *impact*

PILLAR	HOST GOVERNMENT	FOREIGN UNIVERSITY
STRATEGY 	Clear strategy for linking the role of IBCs and other forms of TNE with national development goals, including identifying key sectors to prioritise for curriculum.	Ensure that proposed TNE offer can support the host government's wider developmental ambitions, including workforce skills development.
INNOVATION 	Enable local and international investor to support university-based research, patents and spin-offs.	Bring expertise in start-up incubation, acceleration, fundraising and industry links to invigorate the local ecosystem of innovation and entrepreneurship.
INFRASTRUCTURE 	Develop smart models of planning to ensure world class facilities and proximity between IBCs, local education and commercial districts.	Partner with host governments and local investors to develop smart campuses connected to the wider education and business ecosystem.
INTEGRATION 	Provide incentives to support foreign universities bring their whole institutional expertise and create systems of governance for TNE 3.0 ecosystems.	Be willing to forge formal partnerships with local universities, local TVET institute and local businesses and entrepreneurs, creating a dynamic loop of relationships to empower local growth.
EXCELLENCE 	Develop national-level metrics to benchmark progress in research, teaching, internationalisation, industry and sustainability with rigorous data collection.	Bring the institutional whole, and not just the teaching, to the TNE environment, making it research active and dynamic in partnership with local and regional institutions.
SUSTAINABILITY 	Prioritise energy efficiency measure, supported by clear and transparent targets that can be linked to UN SDGs. Work with businesses to ensure monitoring and evaluation systems can support the TNE 3.0 environment.	Work with all stakeholders to monitor and evaluate UN SDG progress, developing clear research-led policies to ensure long-term sustainability and offsetting initiatives.

Discussion (10 mins)

Does your country have international branch campuses or other forms of TNE partnership

What role does QA play in partnerships between local and foreign institutions?

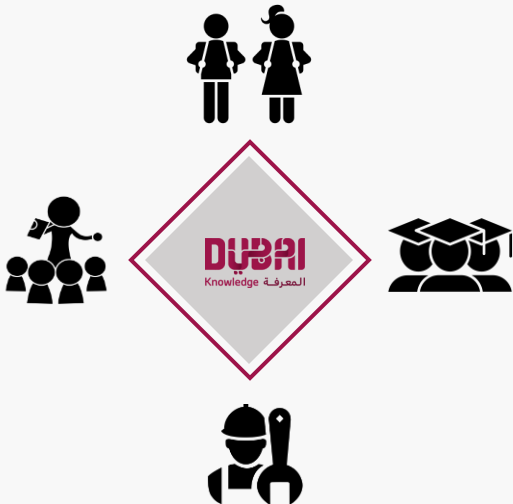
What kind of data is collected to monitor and evaluate the quality of TNE?

Developing an international education hub in Dubai: insight from KHDA



KHDA regulates the four sectors of education in the Free Zone, ensuring continued quality, improvement, and outcomes across education life cycles.

Law No. 2 (of 2021) concerning the Knowledge and Human Development Authority in Dubai



Higher Education Sector



Regulatory Oversight: KHDA serves as the regulatory authority for education in the Free Zone, overseeing all aspects of the education sector to ensure compliance with established standards and guidelines.



Licensing: KHDA licenses, approves programs, and accredits educational institutions to ensure quality and uphold standards.



Quality Assurance: KHDA monitors and evaluates the quality of education provided by institutions through comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms such as UQAIB.



Policy Development: KHDA develops and implements policies and regulations to enhance the overall quality and effectiveness of education in Dubai, addressing the evolving needs of students, educators, and the community.



Collaboration and Engagement: KHDA collaborates with various stakeholders, including educational institutions, government entities to foster partnerships and initiatives that promote innovation, excellence, and inclusivity in education.



Analysis and Research: KHDA conducts data analysis and research to inform evidence-based decision-making and policy formulation, ensuring that education initiatives are aligned with best practices and global standards.

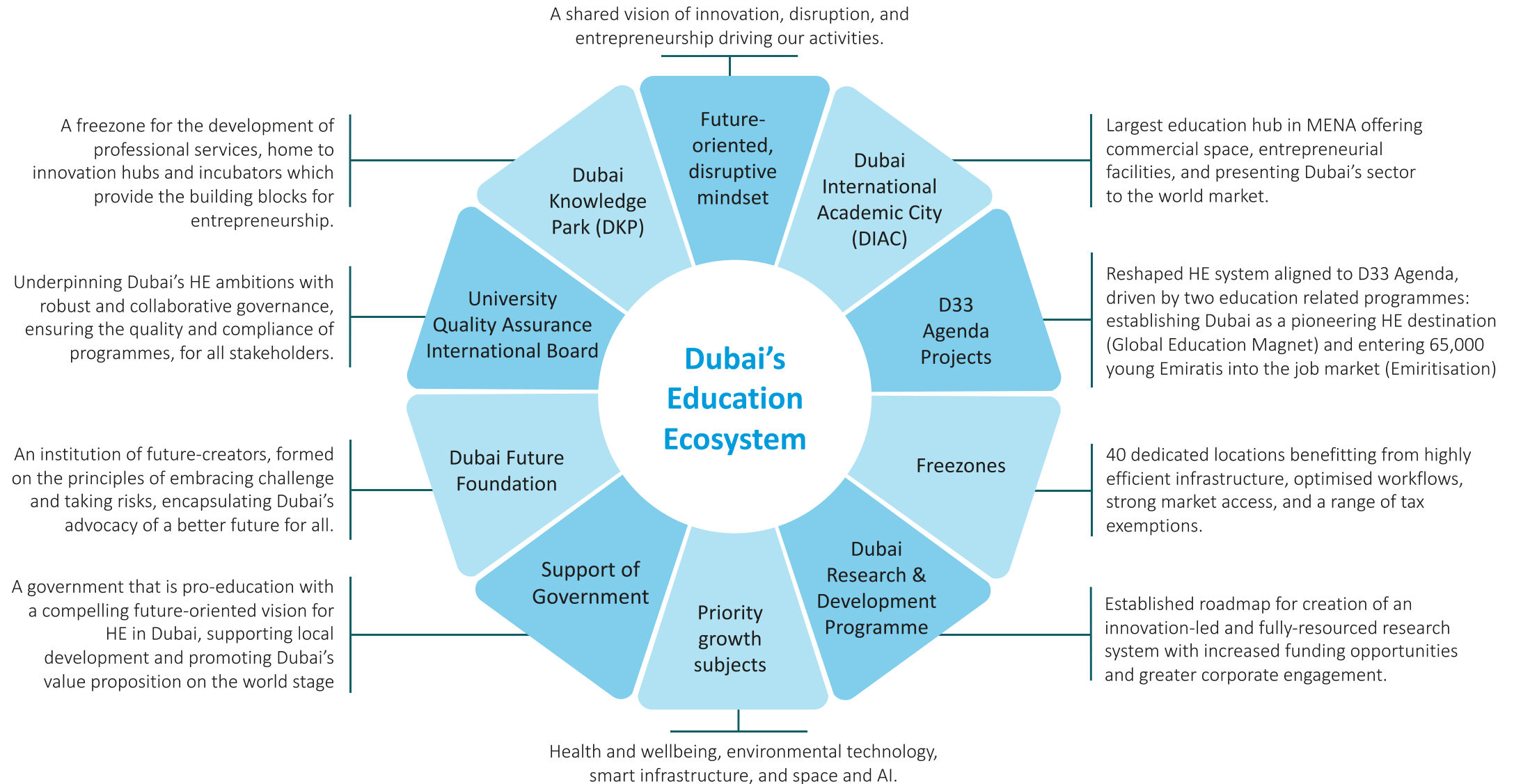


Community Engagement and Awareness: KHDA engages with the community to raise awareness about educational opportunities, rights, and responsibilities, promoting active participation and engagement in the education sector.



Continuous Improvement: KHDA is committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement in education, providing support, guidance, and resources to institutions and stakeholders to enhance educational outcomes and student experiences.

The Dubai Higher Education Landscape in Numbers



2000s ACCESS

- Launch of Dubai Knowledge Village (2003)
- Launch of Dubai International Academic City (2006) "Open Doors" Economic Model to elevate - Academic City concept attracting International Campuses
- Establishment of KHDA (2007)

2010s QUALITY

- University Quality Assurance International Board (2008)
- Executive Resolution 21. (2011)
- QBBG (Quality Beyond Borders Group)

2020s INNOVATION

- KHDA Ratings system for Higher Education excellence (2019)
- Administrative Resolution No. (51) of 2022
- D33 Strategy (2023)

International Campuses by Home Country

Dubai is home to a diverse range of **41 Higher Education Providers (HEPs)** from around the globe, offering internationally accredited qualifications.

Leading Countries

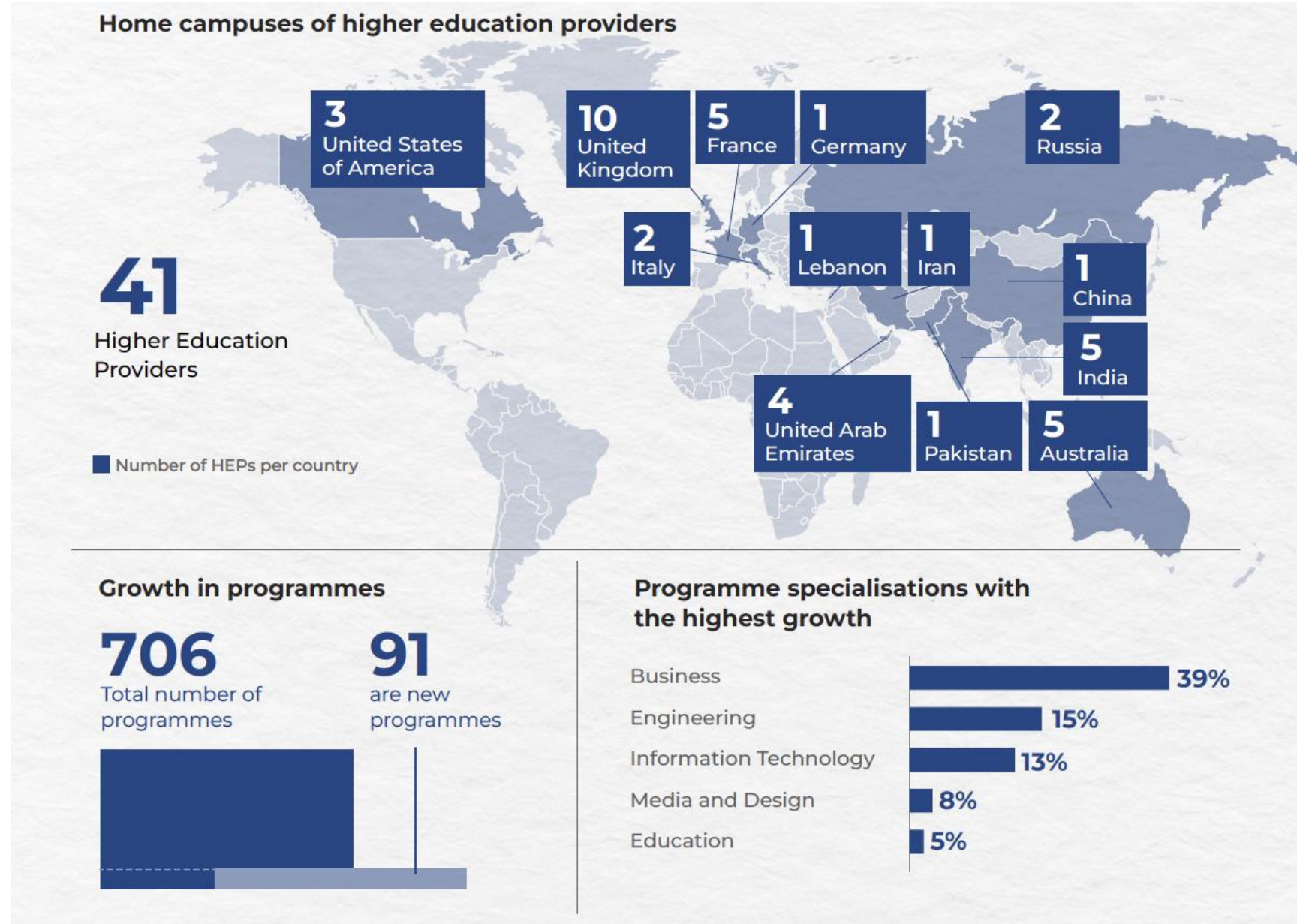
United Kingdom: 10 HEPs

Australia: 5 HEPs

France: 5 HEPs

United States: 3 HEPs

India: 5 HEPs



High Ranked Home Campuses and Specialist Programmes

Of the International Universities that have established themselves in Dubai, 14 have home campuses or specialist programmes with a Top 200 world rank. 1 home campus has a Top 250 World Rank.

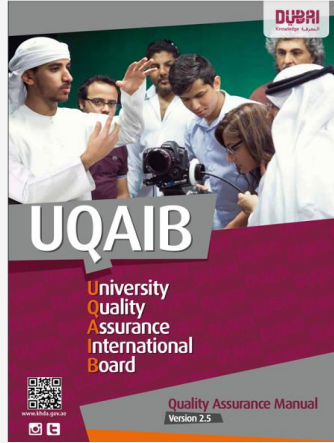
QS World University Rankings		QS Rankings (Business & Finance)		QS Rankings (Global MBA)	
 MANCHESTER 1824 The University of Manchester	34	 London Business School	7	 ESCP BUSINESS SCHOOL	27
 UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM DUBAI	80	 LUISS	67	 BAYES BUSINESS SCHOOL CITY UNIVERSITY OF LONDON	53
 UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG IN DUBAI	167			 Georgetown UNIVERSITY	54
 Curtin University Dubai	174	QS Rankings (Trade)		Masters in Management	
 HERIOT WATT UNIVERSITY	256	 HULT INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS SCHOOL	25	 IN NORMANDIE BUSINESS SCHOOL	121-130
		QS Rankings (Law)		QS Rankings (Art & Design)	
		 UNIVERSITÉ PARIS II PANTHÉON-ASSAS	101-150	 istitutomarangoni the school of fashion, art & design	50-100

Higher Education Numbers from the Free Zone

The data reflects the dynamic growth of transnational higher education in Dubai's Free Zone, driven primarily by the increasing influx of international and expat students. The consistent rise in these cohorts highlights Dubai's strategic position as a global education hub, attracting diverse student populations while maintaining a stable base of Emirati learners. This trend underscores the city's appeal as a destination for quality international education and its capacity to accommodate diverse academic needs.

- 41 Universities
- 42,023 total students
- 14,157 international students
- 20.4% YoY growth





In 2008, KHDA established the **University Quality Assurance International Board (UQAIB)** made up of international quality assurance (QA) experts.

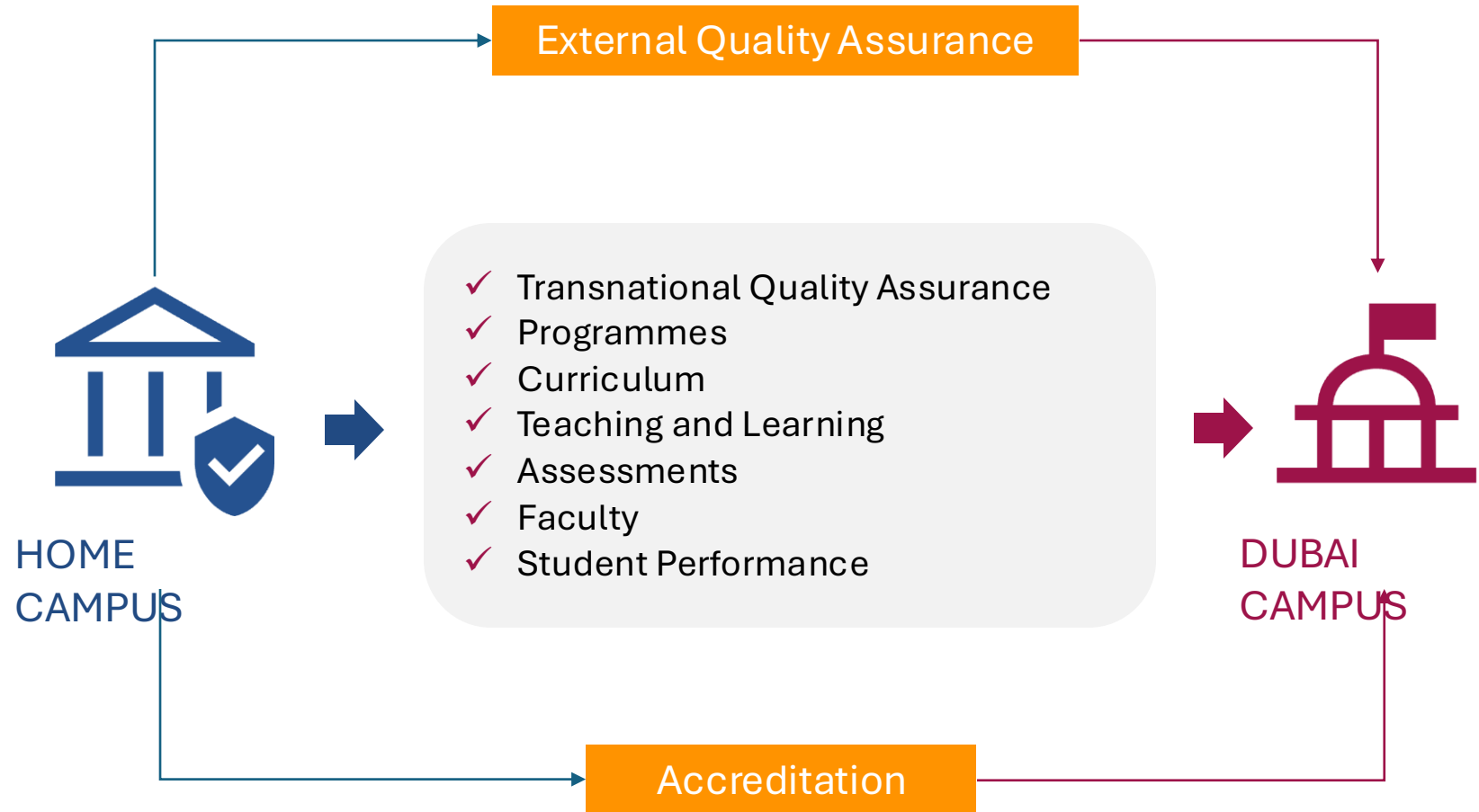
UQAIB plays an advisory role to KHDA to maintain appropriate oversight of the quality of higher education offered by foreign Higher Education Providers operating in the Dubai Free Zones.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Investigation and recommendations on new higher education providers.
- Review and recommendations on new academic programmes.
- Quality assure reviews of international branch campuses.
- Conduct field visits to international branch campuses.
- Undertake audits in specific circumstances.
- Continuous improvements of the Higher Education Quality Assurance Manual.

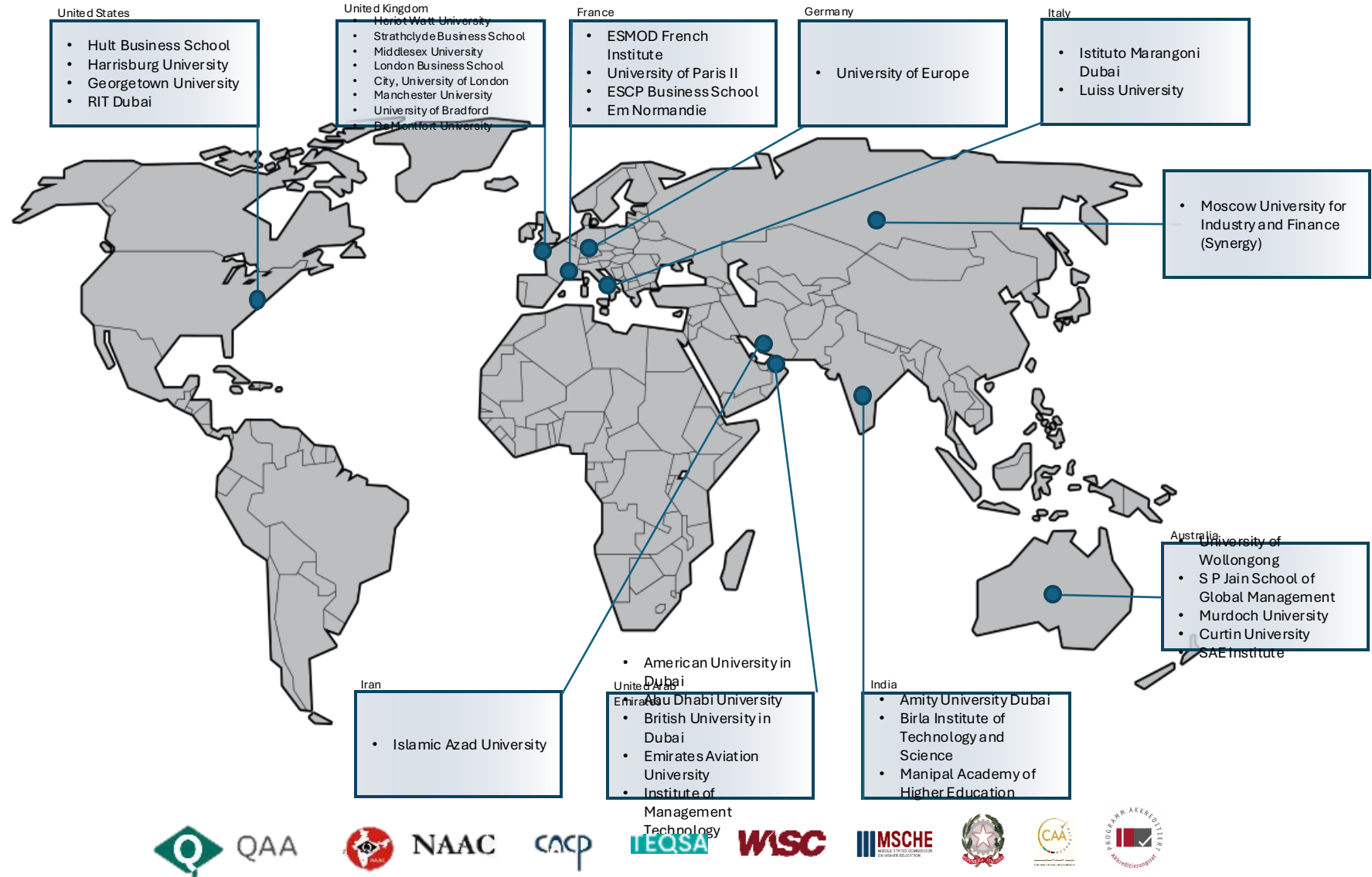


- Dubai ensures high academic standards through a dual-campus model.
- Programmes are delivered locally under the oversight of the home campus, maintaining consistency in curriculum, teaching, and assessments.
- Accreditation from the home institution and independent external reviews guarantee quality, relevance, and global recognition.



Accrediting Bodies

- Commission of Academic Accreditation (CAA)
- The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA)
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education
- National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)
- Commission Nationale de la Certification Professionnelle (CNCP)
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA)
- WASC Senior College and University Commission
- Ministero dell'Istruzione, dell'Università e della Ricerca (MIUR)





“2033 will mark 200 years since the foundation of Dubai: the year in which Dubai will be the most important global business centre, and by then we would have completed the Dubai Economic Agenda 2033”

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum

2023

Dubai Economic Agenda D33

A Destination for leading universities and cutting-edge programmes

A skilled, future-ready workforce

A globally renowned brand, pioneering international higher education, leading by example

Dubai Education Agenda E33

University Attraction
Incentives and opportunities for leading universities

City of Students
Best in class programmes and opportunities

Research Agenda
Bridging Universities and Industries

Dubai as a top global HE destination, with an increased economic contribution to the Emirate

2033

Discussion (10 mins)

Does your country have a national economic or social agenda? (e.g., 10-year government strategy)

How well are the institutions aligned to these agendas?

What role does QA and TNE have in assuring greater alignment between HE and national ambitions?

University of Birmingham Dubai: A case study in developing excellence



125 Anniversary

In 2025, we will celebrate 125 years of the University of Birmingham. This milestone marks a legacy of driving change and shaping society. We are proud to have fostered a global community of leaders and problem-solvers through our ambitious approach to education and research.

Unbound by convention, we've consistently pushed boundaries to address global challenges: building a thriving planet, advancing life-changing technologies, connecting cultures, improving global health, and fostering a fairer world.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to unlocking new potential, building on our achievements, and changing how the world works.



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125
years

We celebrate
We activate
birmingham.ac.uk/dubai



University of Birmingham

- Founded in 1900 by Royal Charter
- First planned Civic University
- Broad comprehensive university
- Ranked **80th** in QS Global Top 100 universities
- Member of the UK **Russell Group** of research led universities



University of Birmingham – Some Numbers



- - 9000 staff
- - 40,000 students
- - 350K+ alumni
- - 9 Nobel Prize winners
- - 5 colleges
- - 26 schools
- - over 110 Research Institutes
- - Number 1 most targeted universities in the UK by graduate employers (2024)



UNIVERSITY OF
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Birmingham 2030

sets out our aspiration to establish Birmingham in the **top 50** of the world's leading universities.



UNIVERSITY OF
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Strategic Intent

- Expand our global footprint as part of growing our global activity, influence, impact and revenue.
- Developing an international branch campus to create a second hub for increased international engagement and reach.
- Full HE eco-system mission – Education, Research, Knowledge Exchange
- Building our civic mission by contributing to the needs and ambitions of the place we are operating in. Dubai, UAE, GCC, Middle East and the wider region (India, Pakistan, North Africa, Central Asia)

Why Dubai and the UAE?

- Growing knowledge economy with ambitious expansion plans
- Dubai's location and accessibility for UoB strategic markets
- First of our type in Dubai
- Positive regulatory environment
- Opportunity for 100% ownership, management and operation
- Stability and security

The Plan

Three significant phases:

- Phase I (Project): Feb 2016 – Sept 2018
- Phase II: (Establish & Transition) Sept 2018 – Sept 2022
- Phase III: (Grow mission to scale) Sept 2022 – onwards

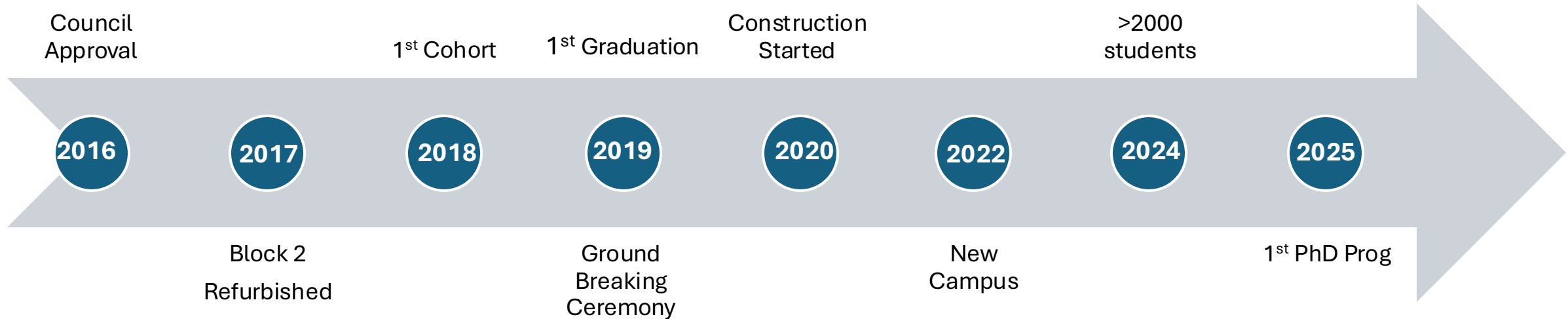


Progress

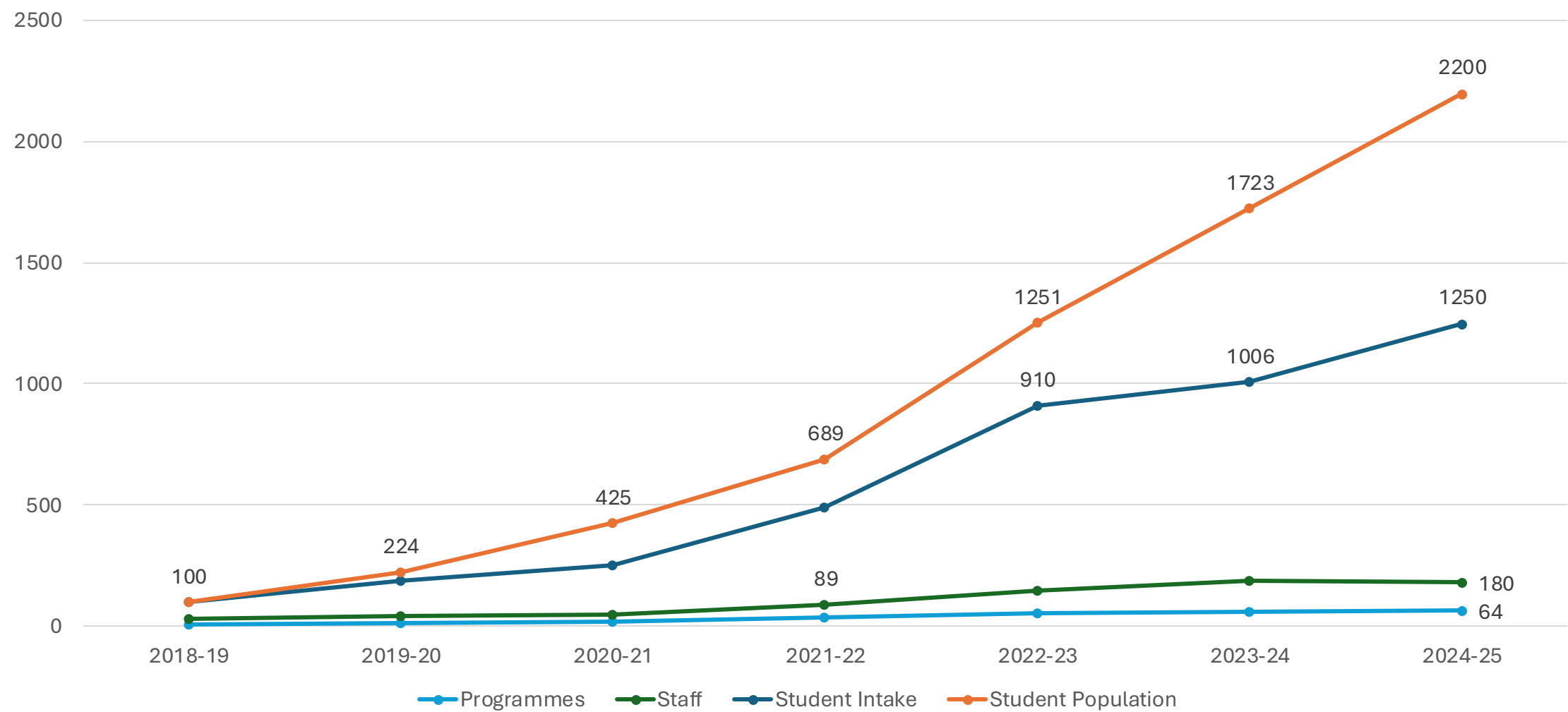
- Officially Opened 20th April – HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Dubai Executive Council
- Campus accommodate 3,500 students, can be extended to 5,000
- Offering 73 academic programmes for 2025-26
- Academic mission to partner with Dubai and the UAE, share knowledge, best practice, develop skills and grow research
- Long term commitment to Dubai/UAE - 32 year lease



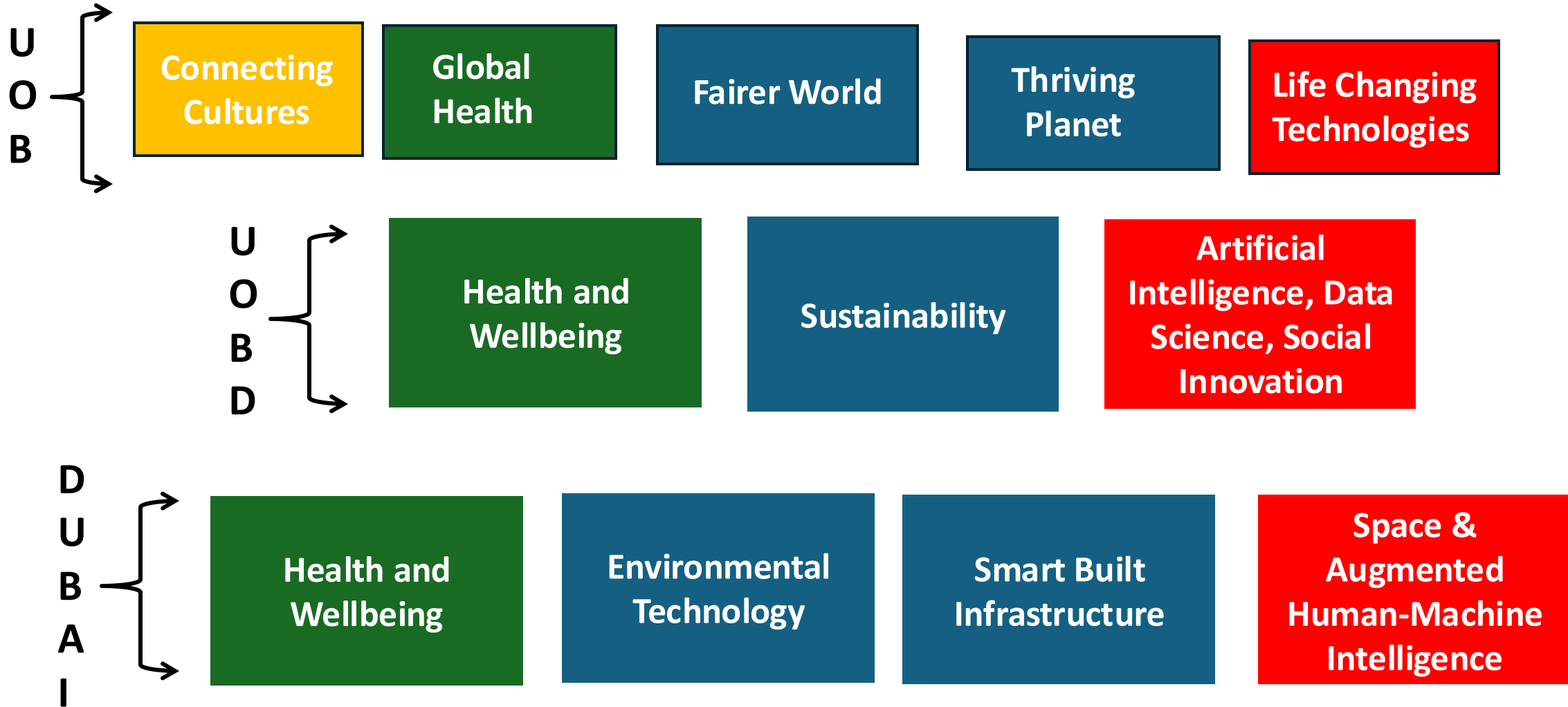
UoBD – Project Timeline



Growth since 2018



Connected Research Themes



Funded projects ~ £1m



UK Science and Innovation Network (2021)
-microfluidics (Malboubi) – 205k AED



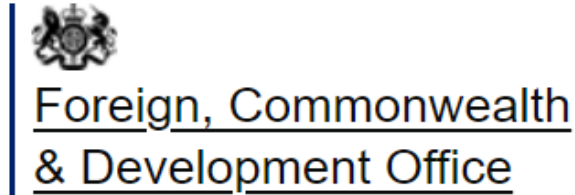
Al Qasimi Foundation (RAK) (2022)
-Inclusive education (Benson) – 310k AED
-Urban Planning (Radfar) – 120k AED



Early Childhood Authority (Abu Dhabi) (2023)
-childhood obesity (Bayoumi) – 450k AED



ESRC – Disabilities Under Siege (2022)
– (co-I Benson), 230K AED (of £2m, PI-Kiwan)



FCDO Gulf Strategy Fund (2023)
– Youth education / Sustainability (PI-Round, co-Is-Jeffery & Keogh) – 685K AED



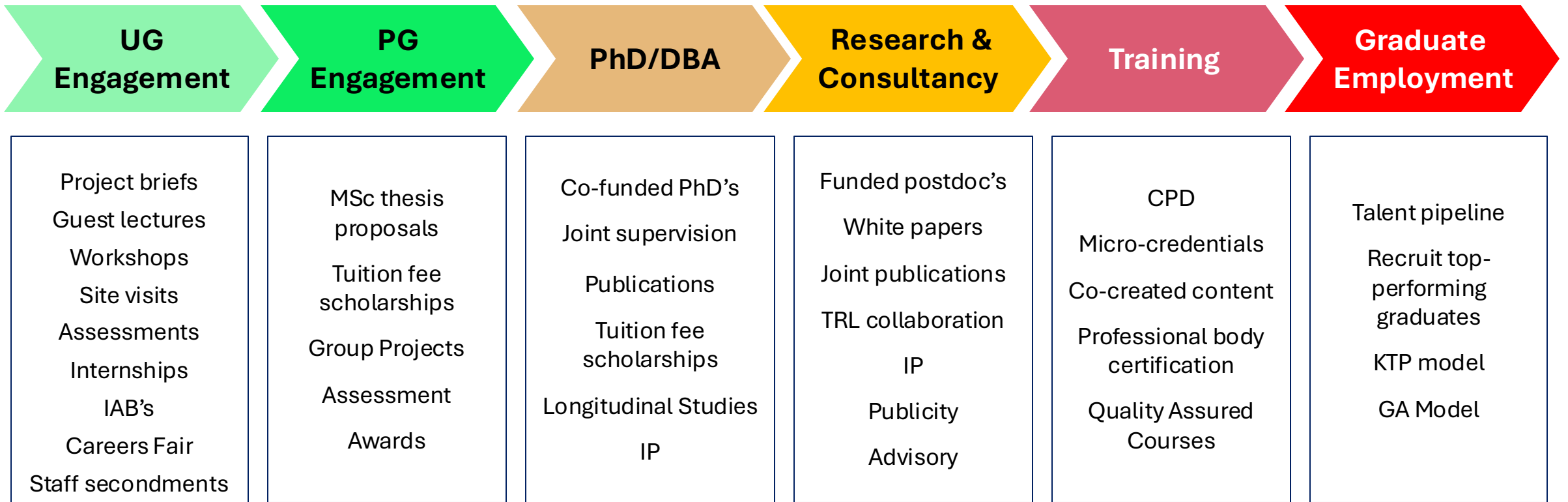
MoE – Inclusive Education (2024)
– (Benson) – 1.19M AED



DFF – Arabic AI Language Models (2025)
– (Agarwal) – 1.5M AED



Engagement Model



UAE Partner Matrix

KEY PARTNERS



MOVE TO KEY
PARTNER
STATUS

STRATEGIC PARTNERS



MOVE TO
STRATEGIC
PARTNER
STATUS

MOU/NDA – ACTIVE PROJECT



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Current- Next Phase

- Continued transition from previous scale
- More intensive growth phase to a steady state
- Education vision more well established – growing the scale
- Significant external stakeholder engagement
- Realisation of the research related vision
- Realisation of the knowledge exchange vision

Conclusions

1

As TNE evolves, governments and institutions can **empower TNE to transform nations** through monitoring and evaluation

2

TNE hubs can take time to develop; **governing authorities can enable impactful development** through agility and growth programmes

3

Institutional excellence for IBCs requires **ambition and partnership development-** involving the triple helix of government, industry and academia