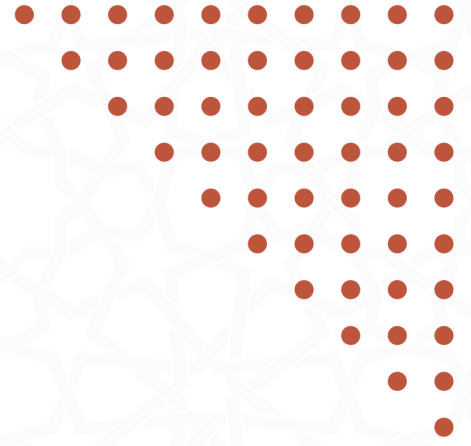




كلية الشرق الأوسط
Middle East College



MEC Annual Report

AY2024-25

Transforming Education for the World of Work



FOREWORD

This was the second year of our strategic plan cycle—a year in which we moved from design to delivery, from ambition to action. Across every directorate, department, and unit, we asked ourselves not simply whether we were busy, but whether we were making a difference.

This was a year of global expansion. We formalised mobility partnerships with JAMK University of Applied Sciences and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Finland), bringing the world closer to our students—and our students closer to the world.

This was a year of deepened industry integration. We launched the Hadatha Centre for Cyber Security with Oman CERT, established MEC as an approved centre of competency, partnered with Fortinet and Huawei, and placed our first faculty cohort into the MEC-Bridge programme—an innovative industry immersion initiative. We did not simply teach employability; we embedded it into the fabric of our curriculum, partnerships, and institutional identity.

This was a year of student success. Our graduates achieved a 70% positive graduate destination. Our Pre-Graduation Programme completion rate climbed from 23% to 72.4%. Our students presented 107 research papers at our annual conference, launched 13 new startups guided by MEC, and represented Oman on global stages from Italy to Saudi Arabia to Qatar. They reminded us that our mission is not to fill classrooms, but to transform lives.

As we move into AY 2025–2026, we do so with clarity. Our mid-term strategy review is underway. Our digital infrastructure will undergo its most significant upgrade to date. And our commitment to our students—their employability, entrepreneurial spirit, and success—remains unwavering.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our faculty, whose dedication shapes every graduate; to our staff, whose professionalism sustains every operation; to our partners, whose trust enables every collaboration; and to our students, who remain the reason this institution exists.

We set out to be a regional leader in graduate employability, entrepreneurship, and mobility. After AY 2024–2025, I am confident we are no longer simply pursuing that ambition—we are living it.

Dr. Saleh Al Shaabi
Dean, Middle East College



**Transforming education for the
world of work.**

REPUTATION, AWARDS & RANKINGS

MEC made significant strides in strengthening its presence regionally and internationally, with institutional recognition across multiple platforms.


- Shortlisted for two categories at the Times Higher Education (THE) Arab Awards 2025: Outstanding Student Support and Research Impact.
- Ranked in the 201–250 band of the QS Arab University Rankings 2025, reinforcing MEC's standing among leading regional institutions.
- Awarded the Hadatha Award 2025 for Academic Institutions in recognition of the Hadatha Centre for Cyber Security, established in partnership with Oman CERT.
- Awarded the HRM Summit Award 2025 (Bahrain) for the Pre-Graduation Programme, recognising innovation in student employability preparation.
- Received Special Mention at the UNIMED General Assembly 2024 (Turkey) for a student project, highlighting MEC's growing engagement in international academic forums.
- Achieved the highest response rate (96%) among all assigned institutions in the National Employer Survey 2025, reflecting strong employer engagement and institutional reputation.



GROWTH

Global Partnerships & Transnational Education


MEC significantly expanded its international footprint and mobility pathways.

- Formal agreements signed with JAMK University of Applied Sciences and Metropolia University of Applied Sciences (Finland) for student progression, credit transfer, and joint programme development.
 - MEConnect, a transnational education partner, launched operations in Bangalore, India, offering integrated solutions for universities and educational institutions. Through this initiative, MEC established partnerships with Jumeira University (UAE) and the Asian Institute of Design (India).
 - MEC joined the Arab Council of Students Training and Innovation (ACSTI) as the first Omani member and hosted a delegation in January 2025.
 - IAESTE collaboration secured for international internship exchange starting from Summer 2026.
 - International student intake grew significantly, contributing to a 30.2% increase in the total international student population on campus.
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ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Academic Portfolio

MEC continued to align its academic portfolio with emerging industry demands and global standards.

- Six programmes completed Triennial Programme Review (TPR), including BSc Computer Science, BEng Civil Engineering, and BSc Archives & Records Management. Industry integration was central to the revisions, with identified areas where industry integration can be embedded into the curriculum to provide students with an more enhanced understanding and experience directly from the industry. Skills development through these integrations are aimed at aligning what the industry is looking for.
 - New programmes were developed in high-growth fields identified in consultation with industry partners across the Sultanate. To strengthen curriculum alignment with labour market needs, MEC convened its inaugural Programme Development Roundtable in November 2024, bringing together industry experts from Omantel, Nama Group, and other key organisations.
 - In parallel, MEC advanced the development of new academic models designed to enhance both student and industry outcomes. A flagship model is scheduled for launch in the upcoming academic year. This represents the first programme of its kind in Oman and the GCC, enabled through targeted partnership development.
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ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Teaching, Learning and Academic Performance

MEC delivered a rich, activity-driven campus experience that supported student skill development, industry exposure, and global engagement.

- 577 curricular and co-curricular activities were conducted (+17% increase compared to previous year), including workshops, guest lectures, and student competitions. In addition, 54 extracurricular activities aimed at skills building and developing the learner attributes in students.
- Industry and field trips increased significantly by 125%, providing students with direct exposure to workplace environments and industry practice.
- Short courses and trainings for students rose to 13, reflecting expanded capacity to deliver targeted skills development programmes. MOOCs completions reached 125 (+26% YoY), with 2,923 students obtaining professional certifications and MOOC credentials during the year.

Academic Performance

Consistent year-on-year improvement was recorded in both pass rates and average CGPA across Diploma and Bachelor programmes.

- Diploma pass rate increased from 82.83% (AY 22–23) to 88.71% (AY 24–25) , with average CGPA rising from 1.93 to 2.15.
- Bachelor pass rate improved from 92.55% (AY 22–23) to 95.23% (AY 24–25) , with average CGPA rising from 2.58 to 2.80.
- This upward trajectory is attributed to strengthened student support mechanisms, including general and core advising, supplementary examination support, peer tutoring initiatives, and remedial classes for bottleneck modules.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION & IMPACT

Research outcomes

MEC strengthened its contribution to College's research and innovation agenda through sustained output, increased funding success, and growing recognition.

- 224 research outputs were published, comprising 77 journal articles, 124 conference papers, 20 book chapters, and 3 books. The increase in conference publications reflects MEC's growing engagement with international forums such as IEEE, ICADAAI, and ICASF.
- 42 active funded projects were underway, including 25 new Block Funding Programme (BFP) 2024 grants awarded under MoHERI's Open Research Grant (ORG), Graduate Research Grant (GRG), and Undergraduate Research Grant (URG) categories, alongside 17 continuing projects from BFP 2023.
- One Strategic Research Grant was approved in the national priority area of food and waste management, with the agreement expected in Fall 2025. A further six Strategic Research Projects were submitted in domains including health, tourism, education, water resources, and sustainability.
- 4 patents and 1 copyright were filed with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) . In parallel, 20 faculty and students completed the WIPO DL-101 intellectual property course, and the Lens Patent Tool was adopted to strengthen prior-art and novelty searches.
- In the MoHERI UPGRADE Programme, MEC achieved 23 submissions, with four projects shortlisted nationally out of ten.
- 44 project proposals were developed and submitted for the MoHERI BFP 2025 Call.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION & IMPACT

Research Conferences

- 7th MEC Student Research Conference (May 2025) received 180 submissions, with 107 papers accepted and presented across multidisciplinary tracks. Proceedings are being prepared for publication in a reputed indexed journal.

Two major international conferences are in active preparation:

- 5th IEEE International Conference on Advanced Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence (ICADAAI 2026) , themed “Advanced Data Analytics and Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Smart Cities,” scheduled for April 2026 in HyFlex mode. IEEE approval and MoHERI keynote confirmation have been secured.
- 4th MEC TESOL Conference 2026, scheduled for February 2026 in HyFlex format, with Call for Papers circulated and submissions progressing.

Research Capacity Enhancements

- MEC AI Centre was formally approved by MoHERI; implementation is underway, encompassing space allocation, infrastructure development, and staff recruitment. The Centre is envisioned as a national hub for applied AI research, data analytics, and innovation-driven teaching.
- Consultancy capacity was strengthened through registration and subscription to the Oman Tender Board and Tenders Online platforms. Commercial registration updates were initiated to broaden MEC’s eligibility for national consultancy participation. CRC awareness sessions and regular circulars through the Corporate Communication Gateway (CCG) were issued to keep departments informed of emerging opportunities.

RESEARCH, INNOVATION & IMPACT

Environmental Sustainability and SDGs

- MEC submitted its UI Green Metric 2025 ranking report, covering 31 academic programmes across environmental, social, and governance indicators.
- Student-led sustainability projects gained international recognition: Smart Drones for Agriculture won at the Sustainable Food Security Forum 2025, AI-Optimised Biogas was shortlisted for Start Cup Italy 2025, and four projects were selected for Falling Walls Lab 2025.
- The Environmental Sustainability Index recorded operational challenges related to campus expansion and increased utility demand. Corrective actions, including paperless initiatives and recycling partnerships, have been initiated.



EMPLOYABILITY, INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Employability Support and outcomes

MEC reinforced its position as a regional leader in graduate employability

- Positive Graduate Destination Rate: The Positive Graduate Destination Rate reached 70% , comprising 63% of graduates in employment and 7% pursuing further study. This outcome is based on the AY 2023–24 graduate cohort of 1,011 students, of whom 24% had secured employment by Fall 2024, rising to 63% by the end of AY 2024–25.
- 2,923 students completed professional certifications and MOOCs, reflecting MEC's sustained emphasis on embedding industry-recognised credentials into the student skills development pathway.
- 590 internship opportunities were facilitated, 412 job opportunities were identified within Oman through employer engagement.
- 130 industry expert talks were delivered, providing students with direct exposure to labour market trends, professional practice, and employer expectations.
- MEC-Bridge (Faculty Industry Immersion Programme) was approved in May 2025 and implemented as a new structured initiative, placing four faculty members in industry settings during semester breaks. Placements included 4 academic staff at Thunder Logistics LLC, at Omantel, and Sarooj Construction LLC. The programme is designed to equip faculty with direct industry exposure, enabling them to deliver more applied and contextually relevant learning experiences to students.
- MECNEXT Career & Internship Day was held in May 2025, hosting 20 employers and attracting over 200 students and alumni. The event included a range of activities where participants received direct feedback from employers.
- Employability Week was introduced as a new initiative in AY 24–25 providing students with opportunities to interact with industry experts, receive mentorship, showcase employability skills, and network with companies. Participating organisations included Omantel, Nama Group, Arab Open University, and a freelance professional.

EMPLOYABILITY, INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Centres of Competency (Industry-Integrated Skills Hubs)

- Hadatha Centre for Cyber Security was established in collaboration with Oman CERT (MTCIT). The agreement was signed in September 2025 at COMEX, and the Centre was launched in October 2025. MEC received the Hadatha Award 2025 for Academic Institutions in recognition of this initiative.
- Fortinet Academy and Huawei Academy – MEC secured Approved Academic Partner status with both organisations.
- Under discussion: Huawei Certified ICT Academy (with Huawei Oman), Logistics Innovation Centre (with Integrated Logistics Solutions Oman – ILS Oman), and a Telesales Centre with Awasr (currently under legal formulation). The Awasr centre is intended to offer on-campus internships and freelancing opportunities.



EMPLOYABILITY, INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Entrepreneurship Ecosystem

- 84 active student ventures were supported through the Innovation Hub and Incubation Centre. Of these, 13 new startups were initiated during AY 24–25 with dedicated support from MEC's innovation and entrepreneurship programmes. These incubated ventures received targeted mentoring and prototype development support to prepare them for commercialization and investment readiness.
- 21 startup support programmes were conducted, focusing on mentoring, business modelling, investor readiness, and commercialisation. 121 one-to-one incubatee meetings were conducted to review progress, address challenges, and provide tailored guidance to incubated startups.
- Two editions of MEC Souq were held: Fall 2024 featured 54 student and alumni exhibitors, with Ms. Khoula Al Harthy, CEO of Injaz Oman, as chief guest. The Spring 2025 edition attracted 350+ visitors, providing market exposure and networking opportunities for emerging ventures.
- InnoSpark 2025 showcased 78 initial-stage ideas, shortlisted to 35 finalists through interactive sessions. A Startup Pitch Competition held in May 2025 saw 17 students present innovative concepts to a judging panel representing Zubair EDC, Al Jabar Mena, SMEs Authority, and Sharakah. Two workshops were also delivered, including a session on "Entrepreneurship and Funding Mechanisms for Small Enterprises" by the SMEs Development Authority, attended by 70+ students.
- NuqtaAI, a student-led startup, advanced to the Injaz Oman finale (September 2025) after excelling in exhibition and report stages, marking a significant milestone in entrepreneurial growth and investor readiness.
- Students gained global exposure through participation in major international events: LEAP Expo (Riyadh, February 2025) , Web Summit (Qatar, February 2025) , and the Arab Entrepreneurs Summit (Qatar, November 2024) . A virtual Summer Entrepreneurship Session was also conducted in August 2025 with Mr. Turkey Al Balushi, Founder of Remedy, attracting 16 participants.

EMPLOYABILITY, INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Industry Partnerships

During AY 24–25, MEC signed 29 new MoUs, strengthening collaboration across industry, entrepreneurship, and academic mobility.

Key Industry Partnerships (Oman)

- Oman CERT (MTCIT) : Established Hadatha Centre for Cyber Security; agreement signed at COMEX 2025, Centre launched October 2025. MEC received the Hadatha Award 2025 for Academic Institutions.
- Zubair EDC (The Zubair Corporation) : Collaboration on entrepreneurship awareness, incubation, and startup mentoring. Strategic planning consultation conducted for 20 startups.
- Awasr: Internships, guest lectures, site visits, and student projects. Telesales Centre under legal formulation to offer on-campus internships and freelancing opportunities.
- Fortinet and Huawei: Approved Academic Partner status secured for Fortinet Academy and Huawei Academy.
- Under discussion: Huawei Certified ICT Academy, Logistics Innovation Centre with ILS Oman.
- Other industry partners: Agreements signed with Miles Engineering Consultancy, Thunder Logistics, Aramex, Omantel, National Records & Archives Authority, Oman Across Ages Museum, and Ministry of Manpower, among others.

Entrepreneurship & Innovation Partnerships

- Innovher Startup Accelerator (India) : MoU signed to develop MEC's incubation centre and support startup ecosystem growth in Oman and GCC.
- Tarbiat Modares University (Iran) : Collaboration on technology park, joint research, and student training.
- SMEs Development Authority: Delivered workshop on "Entrepreneurship and Funding Mechanisms for Small Enterprises" (May 2025), attended by 70+ students.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT

Fostering active alumni engagement

MEC continued to strengthen its alumni engagement framework, delivering measurable impact across employment, mentorship, and institutional participation. Alumni Engagement Index recorded 134 against a target of 150, reflecting sustained contributions across multiple engagement pillars.

- Alumni contributed 236 internship opportunities and facilitated 96 job placements for recent graduates. A further 203 expert sessions were delivered by alumni, supporting teaching, learning, and career readiness.
- **MEC Alumni Association** was formally established, with guidelines and election processes approved by the College Board in Fall 2024. A council was elected across four leadership roles: President, Vice President, Head of Employability Support, and Head of Events and Media.
- **Notable Alumni Wall – “From MEC to the World”** was launched, honouring graduates who embody the institutional vision of being Enterprising, Resilient, and Impactful.
- **Selah Mentorship Programme** concluded its first cohort in December 2024, with 10 of 12 job seekers securing employment while retaining mentor relationships. A second cohort launched in September 2025 with 23 mentees and 18 mentors.
- 17% of alumni participated in upskilling activities (target 15%), including the Archives Documentation Forum, MEC Souq (featuring 12 alumni exhibitors), and Alumni Café sessions on AI, blockchain, and logistics careers.
- Alumni satisfaction was measured at 3.77/5, based on responses from graduates of AY23–24 cohort. Educational experience satisfaction rated 3.84, while skills and competencies satisfaction rated 3.70.

ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

Students and Staff

Students

Despite national scholarship reductions, MEC maintained stable enrolment and delivered continued improvement in student academic performance.

- Total student population remained steady at 4,325, reflecting effective retention strategies and sustained student engagement.
- Direct and self-funded students increased by 7.6% , demonstrating the success of institutional marketing efforts and growing confidence in MEC's academic offerings.
- International student enrolment saw notable growth, with total international students on campus reaching 349, a 30.2% increase over the previous year. New international intake rose significantly, driven primarily by expanded recruitment pathways and emerging market partnerships.

Staff

MEC continued to invest in talent, diversification, and nationalisation, strengthening the profile and capability of its workforce.

- Total staff numbers were maintained at a level consistent with institutional priorities, with academic staffing held steady and administrative roles right-sized to support operational efficiency.
- Omanisation exceeded national targets, reaching 27.78% among academic staff (target 16%) and 84.16% among administrative staff (target 74%).
- Gender balance remained within institutional KPIs, with female staff representing 42.29% of the workforce.
- Faculty profile continued to diversify: 29% hold regional experience beyond Oman (target 10%), and 10% bring industry experience of at least two years (target 3%).
- Staff retention remained high at 88.55% , contributing to institutional stability and continuity.
- The Talent Management Index significantly surpassed its target, recording 168 against a target of 125, reflecting strong performance in staff development, retention, and capability building.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION & INFRASTRUCTURE MODERNISATION

Transformative year for MEC

AY 24–25 was the most transformative year for MECFuture and enterprise systems.

MECFuture Platform

- Phase 1 completed (Spring 2025): 5,400+ users, 8,000+ content entries, 290 assessments, 2,300+ event attendees.
- New features: H5P interactive content, advanced assessment tools (match-the-following, multiple response, question timers, tab-switch restrictions, passcode protection), custom notifications, proxy login, and enhanced Turnitin integration with direct similarity viewing. Feedback Studio to follow in AY 25–26.
- Employability tools upgraded with job recommendations, career insights, and skill mapping.
- Moderation workflows activated for content governance.

Enterprise Systems

- ERP: Finance and HR modules (Odoo) went live.
- E-payment gateway launched.
- Call centre (Extraaedge & Astecs) : UAT completed, CRM operational.

Infrastructure

- SD-WAN implemented; dedicated Boys' Hostel link established; five internet connections optimised for redundancy.
- Network upgrade RFP completed; deployment scheduled Fall 2025.
- VDI expansion underway with new thin clients.

Data & Analytics

- Dashboards onboarded: admissions, income variance, student performance tracking.

Technology Services

- Microsoft 365 engagement sustained.
- Motadata Remote Support agents and ServiceOps ticketing system deployed across all endpoints.

STRATEGIC PROGRESS & FUTURE OUTLOOK

MEC navigated national scholarship reductions and evolving enrolment trends while delivering against key strategic KPIs. Institutional performance remained resilient, with several indicators exceeding or approaching targets. Areas identified for continued focus will guide priorities in the coming year.

KPI Highlights

- Positive Graduate Employment Rate: 70% (target 80%)
- Alumni Engagement Index: 134 (target 150)
- Regional Industry Engagement Index: 126 (target 150)
- Research & Innovation Index: 94 (target 120)

Areas of Focus for AY 2025–26

- Consultancy growth: Strengthening industry-linked revenue streams through targeted partnerships and internal capability development.
- Environmental sustainability: Embedding sustainable practices across operations and academic activities, supported by revised institutional KPIs.
- Graduate employability: Expanding international employment pathways through activated global mobility partnerships.
- Student mobility: Increasing outward and inward participation in semester exchange and international internship programmes.

Mid-Term Strategy Review was initiated in September 2025. Findings and revised KPIs will be presented to the Board in early 2026.

SUMMARY

AY 2024–25 was a year in which Middle East College moved from ambition to action. We expanded our global footprint, deepened industry integration, and delivered measurable impact across employability, innovation, and student success. Our graduates achieved a 70% positive employment outcome. Our students launched 13 new dedicated startups, presented 107 research papers, and competed on international stages.

As we embark on the next phase of our strategic journey, we do so with clarity and conviction: MEC is no longer simply pursuing regional leadership in employability, entrepreneurship, and mobility—we are defining it. Our mission—Transforming Education for the World of Work—continues to guide every partnership, every programme, and every graduate we shape.



