

2024-2025



INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTER

Annual Report

Prepared by

Ms. Fatima Al-Shuwaikh,

Director of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center



Submitted to

Dean of AFS

Dr. Mahmoud Alzgool

Executive Summary

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (IEC) at Gulf University is the university's strategic engine for turning ideas into impact. It expands the university's academic mission by enabling practical innovation, venture creation, and industry collaboration positioning Gulf University as a producer of solutions, not only graduates. For students, the Centre provides a clear pathway from classroom learning to market application through training, mentorship, and access to entrepreneurial networks, thereby strengthening employability and leadership skills. For the local Bahraini market, the IEC contributes to a more dynamic SME ecosystem by helping opportunity-driven founders validate ideas, build resilient business models, and create jobs in priority sectors.

The Centre's mandate aligns directly with Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, particularly its emphasis on competitiveness, fairness, and sustainability. By cultivating a knowledge-based economy and supporting private-sector growth, the IEC translates national priorities into tangible outcomes: skilled talent, investment-ready start-ups, and collaborations that accelerate diversification and long-term value creation. In doing so, the Centre acts as a bridge between academia and the marketplace, channeling research, creativity, and technology into practical, scalable ventures that benefit the Kingdom.

This year marked a pivotal new chapter for the IEC. The Centre launched a refreshed brand identity that communicates originality, infinite possibility, and real-world impact signaling a clear commitment to high standards and measurable results. The year's signature event, Entrepreneurship Week, was delivered in collaboration with UNIDO and brought together students, founders, experts, and investors for keynote dialogues, hands-on labs, and pitch activities that advanced market readiness. In parallel, the Centre introduced the GU Company Program, a structured pipeline that guides teams from problem discovery to prototype, market validation, and investment preparation reinforcing the university's role as a catalyst for new ventures.

Taken together, these initiatives position the IEC as a strategic asset for Gulf University and a meaningful contributor to Bahrain's innovation landscape. They demonstrate traction against national goals, elevate the student experience, and deepen engagement with the local economy. This report builds on that momentum by outlining our outcomes, partnerships, and next-stage priorities evidence that the Centre is not only aligned with Vision 2030, but actively delivering on it.

.About Gulf University:

Gulf University (GU) was established in the year 2001 by a decree of His Royal Highness, the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, with the core values of excellence, continuous development, diversity, collaboration, creativity, and sustainability. GU has a strong commitment to offer excellent education and produce graduates who are fit for the labour market with practical skills, creative and innovative in applying technology, effective communicators with critical thinking skills, and adaptable to a dynamic environment. GU alumni are truly global citizens spreading worldwide across diverse nationalities, especially in the GCC region. The university complies with the regulations of the Higher Education Council (HEC) of the Ministry of Education in its pursuit towards continuous quality enhancement in academics and administrative services. Gulf University (GU) is one of the first three licensed private universities in Bahrain and currently offers 4 Programs, namely, bachelor's in accounting & finance, bachelor's in human resource management, bachelor's in mass communication program, and bachelor's in the interior design engineering program. Our alumni are now close to 3,000, with more than 22 nationalities scattered all around the world. On the regional scale, Gulf University has close to 1,600 alumni concentrated in Kuwait and approximately 500 in Saudi Arabia.

GU Vision:

- Gulf University aims to be a distinguished higher education institution in Bahrain and beyond; its competitive graduates, impressive research, and enthusiastic contribution to communities' growth.

GU Mission:

- Gulf University, a private institution in the Kingdom of Bahrain, is keen to provide continuous higher education that nurtures students' attributes towards critical thinking, life-long and reflective learning.
- GU also encourages research activities with a sound impact both in academia and practice.

- GU's stimulating environment supports its highly skilled staff and graduates to compete in increasing socio-economic challenges and engage in the development of the Bahraini community and beyond.

GU Strategic Directions: GU strives to become a distinguished provider of higher education at the local, regional and international level through achieving excellence in academic programs, scientific research, national and international collaboration, continuous quality enhancement, hiring and retaining pioneering Staff, alumni engagement, delivered within an enriched campus with contemporary physical and learning resources. Figure 1 below clearly illustrates the seven strategic directions of GU.

About Innovation & Entrepreneurship Center:

The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of the Gulf works for aspiring and current project owners from our students, graduates, and society to create their innovative business ideas and turn them into real successful projects. In addition to that, ICE at Gulf university helps students and community members acquire the tools, develop the skills and cultivate the mindset of an entrepreneur so that they may create economic and social value throughout the kingdom of Bahrain and GCC as well.

IEC Vision:

The first center to support our current students, alumni, and society to transform their innovative ideas into real successful businesses that contribute to economic development.

IEC Mission:

The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the University of the Gulf works for aspiring and current project owners from our students, graduates, and society to create their innovative business ideas and turn them into real successful projects and inspire them to work directly by providing them with support services such as training, consulting and research services and others one of the services is the failure of it during the start-up phase, which allows its projects to grow and flourish.

The Goals of the Center:

The Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship aims to achieve the following goals.

- Supporting entrepreneurship by discovering talented entrepreneurs.
- Creating a culture of innovation and risk tolerance by nurturing entrepreneurial values among students and enhancing the business capabilities of potential entrepreneurs.
- Promote successful innovative business ideas by identifying promising student projects and providing support services to market these ideas and inventions.
- Encouraging self-employment among university graduates.
- Create an effective network with entrepreneurship centers, business incubators, industry, and society at the national and regional levels to promote entrepreneurial projects.
- Providing potential and current business leaders with a set of effective services (consulting, financing, training, and research) that suit their stage of business.

Gulf University's Strategic Plan to Support Innovation and Entrepreneurship:

Gulf University's commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship is embedded in its strategic plan, mission, and core values.

This commitment is reflected in several key areas:

1. Mission Statement

The mission of Gulf University highlights the promotion of innovation and creativity to cultivate a professional workforce and intellectual capital within a stimulating multicultural environment.

2. Core Values

Core Value 6: Creativity emphasizes the crucial role of creativity and innovation. It states: "We foster creativity, innovation, and critical thinking skills to better serve the university and society. We encourage initiative and problem-solving abilities among our staff and

students, which are reflected in teaching, learning, research, and community services." This demonstrates Gulf University's dedication to prioritizing creativity and innovation, supporting the academic development of students and staff, and positively impacting the wider community through innovative solutions and thoughtful engagement.

3. Strategic Themes

Gulf University's strategic plan includes eight main themes, with STH4 focusing on Market Repositioning through Innovation and Internationalization. This theme underscores the university's dynamic approach to strengthening its position in the higher education sector locally and regionally. The strategic goal states: "Gulf University will reposition itself in the higher education sector in Bahrain and the region by participating in university rankings and innovative practices in teaching and learning." This approach highlights the university's commitment to elevating its profile through active participation in university rankings and integrating innovative approaches across its educational and operational framework.

Within the 5Theme Strategic Hub focusing on innovation and entrepreneurship, one key performance indicator (KPI) is the number of innovation and entrepreneurship projects undertaken by students and staff. This KPI measures the volume of innovative and entrepreneurial projects initiated and completed within a given timeframe, fostering a culture of innovation and entrepreneurial thinking across the university community.

4. Strategic Objectives

Gulf University emphasizes innovation as a key element in numerous strategic objectives to enhance its operations, partnerships, and learning environment:

- OB13: Building Meaningful Collaboration with Industry and Academia

This goal emphasizes the role of innovation in achieving societal impact through collaboration with industry and academia, aligning with strategic themes STH1 to STH4. It aims to use innovative methods to enrich the university's impact and effectiveness locally and regionally.

- OB22: Improving the Effectiveness of University Services

Innovation and digitization are coupled to streamline and enhance university services, in line with strategic themes STH2, STH5, and STH7. The goal is to modernize service delivery through innovative technologies and processes.

- OB22.IN02: Activating the Innovative and Technological Learning Unit

This initiative integrates innovation into teaching and learning by activating a dedicated module, aiming to improve learning outcomes through advanced teaching methods and techniques.

- OB35: Empowering Students and Staff

This goal focuses on empowering students and staff through classification, innovation, and digitization, aligning with STH5 and STH7. It includes fostering an environment that supports creative thinking and problem-solving, using digital tools to enhance learning and management processes.

These goals reflect Gulf University's strategic commitment to integrating innovation into all academic and operational practices, thereby enhancing its competitiveness and effectiveness in the higher education sector

IEC Operational Plan 2024-2025

Areas	Objective	Initiative	Tasks to be reflected in the action plans	Sources of Initiative	Target / Milestone (PIs)	responsibility	Time Frame		Budget	Progress (Actual Achievement)	Evidence of Achievement	Line Manager Notes	QADC notes
Innovation and Entrepreneurship	OB20: Utilize and support student potential and interest.	OB20. IN01: Transform student initiatives to entrepreneurial project by providing facilities and services	Conduct an entrepreneurship workshop to transfer a successful initiative to projects		At least 1 project annually	Director of IEC	December,23	Jan,24	BD24200	100% of the entrepreneurship workshop was successfully conducted, transferring a successful initiative to projects.	Annual report 2023-2034, Social media ,		
			Provide a feasibility study and assistant for successful initiatives			Director of IEC	October,23	Feb,24		No progress made (0%) in providing a feasibility study and assistance for successful initiatives.			
		OB21. IN01: Collaborate with external bodies to contribute towards society, environment and entrepreneurship	Involving Students with external Activities/ workshop (Tamkeen & Injaz & Golden Trust)		At least 1 collaborative project to promote social innovation	Director of IEC	November,23	March,24	BD12100	100% progress achieved in involving students with external activities/workshops (Injaz)	Annual report 2023-2034, Injaz Report		
		OB21. IN02: Build Relationships with Sponsors to conduct Entrepreneurship related events	Connect students with external bodies		Involving Students with external bodies (Hope & Injaz...Fablab etc)	Director of IEC	December,23	April,24	BD13750	100% progress achieved in securing internships with Fab Lab Bahrain.	Fab Lab Bahrain agreement ,, Annual report 2023-2034,		
		OB21. IN03: Activate incubator services to support community initiatives	Conduct an agreement with Bahrain Business Incubator Centre		At least 2 services	Director of IEC	January,24	May,24	BD15400	100% progress achieved in conducting an agreement with Bahrain Business Incubator Centre	Bayan Sweet Incubator Cafee proposal , Annual report 2023-2034		
			Create innovation labs at GU in collaboration with external professional bodies.			Director of IEC	December,23	July,24		No progress made (0%) in creating innovation labs at GU in collaboration with external professional bodies.			

IEC CENTER ACTIVITIES IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2024-2025

To cultivate the talents, skills, and innovative capacities of students, the Centre provides specialized consultancy for aspiring entrepreneurs. This includes leveraging institutional support to encourage creativity, nurturing student-led innovations, and identifying promising projects that merit further development. Tailored support services are offered through structured consultations with the Centre, in alignment with the annexed action plan.

The University continues to operate under a hybrid model, prioritizing flexibility while remaining steadfast in its commitment to ensuring the health and safety of all students.

Accordingly, the Activities of IEC referring to the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences during the academic year 2024-2025 are as follows:

No.	Activity Name	No. of students/Instructors	Date
1	INJAZ Sustainability Hackathon organized by BISB.	15	13-15/10/2024
2	INJAZ Company Program	15	1/11/2024- 22/2/2025
3	Entrepreneurship Week in Collaboration with UNIDO	Up to 150	13-17/4/2025
4	DAY 1: ENTREPRENEUR DAY in Collaboration with UNIDO	15	13/4/2025
5	DAY 2: FOOD FESTIVAL	50-70	14/4/2025
6	DAY 3: LEADERSHIP IN ACTION	35	15/4/2025
7	DAY 4: WOMEN IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP	30	16/4/2025
8	DAY 5: FUTURE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP: AI & INNOVATION	65	17/4/2025
9	AI FOR BUSINESSES.	15	1/7/2025
10	GU Company Program	30	15/7/2025- 1/11/2026

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (IEC) at Gulf University plays a vital role

In cultivating a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship among students, graduates, and the wider community. Positioned as a catalyst for transforming creative ideas into viable business ventures, the Center navigates a landscape marked by both promising opportunities and pressing challenges that shape its ability to deliver on its strategic and operational goals.

On the opportunity front, the IEC is well-placed to leverage strategic partnerships, diversify funding channels, harness cutting-edge technological advancements, and expand its outreach through digital and online platforms. These prospects offer considerable potential to enhance the Center's visibility, impact, and contribution to the entrepreneurial ecosystem of Bahrain. Yet, these opportunities are tempered by a series of significant threats. Chief among them is the ongoing challenge of securing consistent student commitment and active engagement in the Center's initiatives, which remains the cornerstone of its success. Additionally, the absence of a dedicated incubator facility within the university limits the ability to systematically nurture and scale promising student projects into sustainable enterprises. Other hurdles include limited resources, complexities in organizing large-scale events, and the constant need to ensure that programs remain relevant and impactful within Bahrain's rapidly evolving economic environment.

Effectively addressing these challenges while strategically capitalizing on emerging opportunities is essential for the IEC to strengthen its role as an engine of entrepreneurial growth and to advance Bahrain's long-term vision of economic diversification and innovation-driven development.

The annual review of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (IEC)

highlights areas of progress alongside targets that were not fully realized. While notable achievements such as the successful signing of three MOUs with DOO Mena, China Smart City, and HUB Bahrain represent important milestones in expanding the Center's collaborative network, several challenges continue to limit the full execution of IEC's operational plan.

Collaboration and Partnership Challenge

Despite the successful establishment of MOUs with key partners, other planned collaborations were not fully formalized. Limited engagement and insufficient responsiveness from certain external stakeholders slowed progress, leaving additional partnership opportunities unrealized.

Resource Constraints

The goal of providing adequate facilities and financial support for students' entrepreneurial projects was not achieved. Persistent financial limitations and budgetary restrictions hindered the development of an enabling infrastructure to nurture and scale student-led ventures.

Event Organization Difficulties.

Efforts to expand the portfolio of events such as exhibitions, workshops, and networking activities were constrained by logistical challenges and limited resources. These barriers reduced the scope of student exposure and the visibility of the Center's initiatives.

Student Engagement Issues.

Sustaining strong student participation in entrepreneurial activities remains a core challenge. Many students demonstrate initial interest but lack long-term commitment, which undermines the continuity and impact of IEC programs in both physical and hybrid settings.

Technological Integration.

The objective of fully embedding advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR), into the Center's operations has yet to be realized. Resource constraints and gaps in technical expertise delayed the adoption of these tools.

Strategic Goal Alignment

Certain strategic objectives particularly those aimed at deepening innovation outcomes and strengthening entrepreneurial project support were not achieved in full. Misalignment between ambitious goals and available resources remains a limiting factor.

Recommendations for the College of Administrative and Financial Sciences for the Academic Year 2024-2025

Drawing upon the insights of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center (IEC) annual report, together with the analysis of prevailing challenges and emerging opportunities, the following recommendations are advanced to elevate the Center's influence, strengthen its operational effectiveness, and ensure alignment with its strategic objectives:

1. Deepen Partnerships and Collaborations

- Proactively expand and formalize strategic alliances with universities, industry leaders, government entities, and international organizations to broaden the Center's ecosystem and create impactful opportunities for students.

2. Expanding Access to Funding

- Pursue diversified funding avenues, including competitive grants, venture capital, angel investors, and government-backed entrepreneurship programs, to ensure sustainable financial support for student projects and Center initiatives.

3. Accelerate Technological Integration

- Integrate advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and immersive tools (AR/VR) into the Center's programs and operations to enhance innovation capacity and student readiness for future markets.

4. Enhance Student Engagement

- Establish structured mentorship schemes, regular feedback mechanisms, and dynamic, hands-on workshops to foster deeper student commitment, sustained participation, and experiential learning.

5. Optimize Resource Utilization

- Secure additional funding streams while strategically reallocating existing resources to maximize efficiency, ensure equitable support, and enhance the impact of planned activities.

6. Leverage Hybrid Event Models

- Design and implement hybrid events that seamlessly combine physical and virtual participation, thereby expanding accessibility, mitigating logistical constraints, and increasing stakeholder reach.

7. Realign Strategic Priorities

- Recalibrate strategic objectives to reflect available resources, ensuring that operational plans are realistic, achievable, and capable of delivering measurable outcomes.

8. Institutionalizing Continuous Improvement

- Embed a culture of reflection and enhancement by systematically evaluating processes, programs, and initiatives, ensuring ongoing adaptability and excellence.

PHOTO GALLERY









































Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Center
Gulf University - Kingdom of Bahrain



AI Innovation Based Competition
Gulf University - Kingdom of Bahrain



الجامعة الخليجية
GULF UNIVERSITY

يعلن مركز الابتكار وريادة الأعمال في الجامعة الخليجية
عن انطلاق مسابقة الابتكار في الذكاء الاصطناعي

AI Innovation Competition "How to Train your AI Dragon"

الفئة المستهدفة:
طلبة كافة كليات الجامعة وتشمل:

- كلية العلوم الإدارية والمالية
- كلية الاتصال وتقنيات الإعلام
- كلية الهندسة
- كلية القانون

آخر موعد لتقديم الفكرة: **10 سبتمبر 2025**
تاريخ انتهاء المسابقة وإعلان النتائج سيحدد لاحقاً.






Innovation & Entrepreneurship
Center
Gulf University - Kingdom of Bahrain



AI Innovation Based Competition
Gulf University - Kingdom of Bahrain



الجامعة الخليجية
GULF UNIVERSITY

تهدف المسابقة إلى:

تمكين الطلبة من جميع الكليات لتطوير حلول مبتكرة
تعتمد على الذكاء الاصطناعي وتعزيز مهاراتهم التقنية
والريادية ضمن بيئة تدريبية متكاملة.

وتشتمل على:

- ✓ تدريب عملي مع خبراء الذكاء الاصطناعي
- ✓ تطوير النماذج الأولية والحلول التطبيقية
- ✓ جلسات إرشادية ودعم من متخصصين
- ✓ جوائز مالية وفرص احتضان للمشاريع الفائزة
- ✓ شهادات تقدير لجميع المشاركين

انضم إلى المسابقة وصمم حلولاً تصنع فرقاً حقيقياً في العالم!

التسجيل متاح الآن عبر مركز الابتكار وريادة الأعمال



REGISTER NOW!

END OF REPORT