

The ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit

Muscat, Oman
18-19 Feb, 2024

EVENT REPORT



Landmark event promoting international university exchanges and scholarship opportunities for GCC students abroad



The ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit is a landmark event created in close collaboration with the Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation. Held in Muscat, the event brought together **over 370 representatives** from global and regional higher education institutions and scholarship organisations from the public, private and government sectors in Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to foster strategic partnerships and advance the common goal of developing international education opportunities for students in the region.

The Summit opened with an inspiring speech by **the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, H.E. Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim Al Mahrooqi**, who outlined the significance of the event in the context of Oman's transformation into a knowledge-based economy and the goals of Vision 2040. Dr Rahma concluded that the Summit will facilitate greater collaboration between higher education providers, academics, students and other stakeholders, thereby supporting social and economic progress and transformation around the world.

This innovative two-day summit welcomed international sector experts to join Omani and Gulf government officials in **leading conference sessions and roundtable discussions** focused on the regional visions and opportunities for international collaboration. On the second day of the event, global educators and regional scholarship providers held **1,065 pre-scheduled one-to-one meetings** to explore new partnerships designed to expand and enhance the range of scholarships available to aspiring GCC students.

Great delegate feedback

In the post-event survey, the organisation of the Summit and the support and level of communication provided were rated as good or excellent by **87%** and **100%** of respondents respectively. This feedback reflects ICEF's ongoing commitment to ensuring that each event provides delegates with the most productive experience possible.

82% rated the number of new contacts they made as good or excellent and **88%** gave the same rating for the quality of the new contacts.

88% of respondents said they were likely to attend the ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit again in the future.



I had the privilege of attending this remarkable event. The organisation was impeccable, providing a seamless experience that facilitated not just attendance but meaningful engagement. It stood out as a phenomenal platform for networking, allowing us to connect with peers and leading figures from some of the foremost higher education institutions across the USA, Canada, UK, and Europe. The opportunities for benchmarking were invaluable, offering insights into best practices and innovative approaches in education that are being adopted globally. This event has undoubtedly set a high standard for how educational summits should be executed, emphasizing the importance of quality, diversity, and the potential for forging lasting partnerships. I am grateful for the opportunity to have been a part of such an enriching experience and look forward to future events that continue to bring together the best in the field of education.

Prof. Dr. Taqi Al Abdwani, Gulf College, Oman



Scholarship Organisations

A total of **179** representatives from **79** organisations attended the ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit. **49%** were attending for the first time. They travelled from seven countries across the Middle East: Saudi Arabia, Oman, UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq.

The quality of ICEF's events is consistently demonstrated by the number of senior executives in attendance, and at the ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit, a significant proportion of scholarship organisation representatives were at senior executive level.

Education Providers

A total of **149** educators from **89** institutions attended the summit in Muscat. The importance of the event was underlined by the fact that **31%** of the educators in attendance held senior management positions.

Educators came from **17** countries, with the top five being Oman, the USA, the UK, Canada and Australia.

For **35%** of educator delegates, this was their first ICEF event and we're confident it won't be their last.

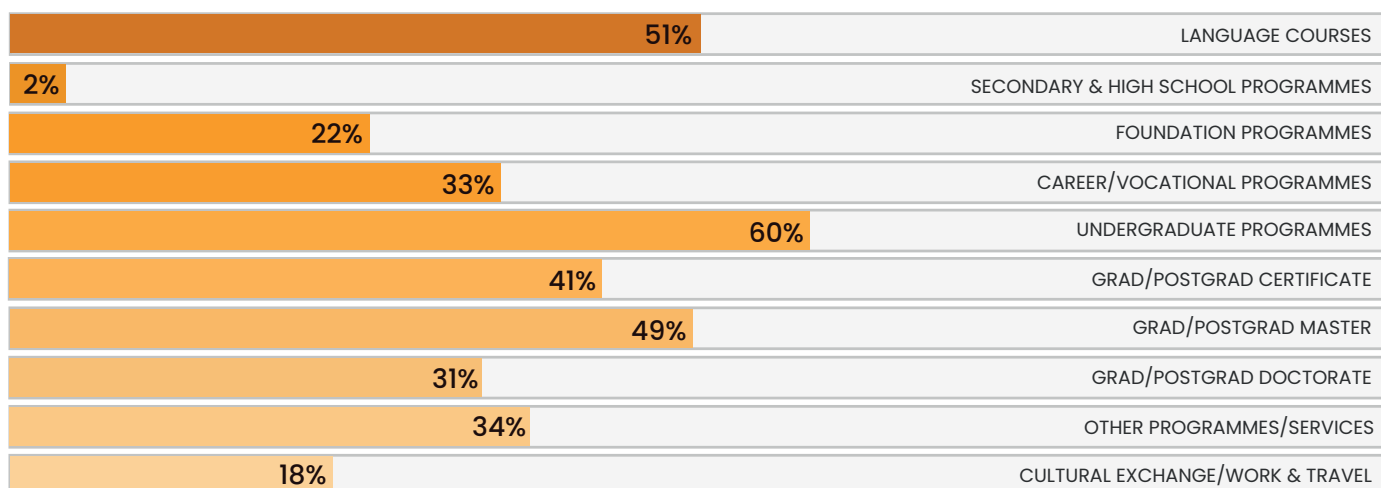


I felt the event will become a pivotal event on my annual calendar.

Charles Wilkerson, Tennessee Tech University, United States



EDUCATOR SEGMENT ATTENDANCE



Service Providers

ICEF events have always provided the ideal opportunity for international student mobility service providers to make valuable connections. At the Summit, they held productive one-to-one meetings with educators, government officials and scholarship providers representing thousands of international students from the region.

With so much change taking place in the industry, representatives from a range of

Conference sessions, roundtables and networking

Organised in partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation of the Sultanate of Oman, the ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit was a unique opportunity to bring together senior government officials, scholarship providers from across the region, senior decision-makers in international education and representatives from relevant service providers.

With the first day dedicated to a programme of conference sessions and roundtable discussions, participants focused on the Middle East region to ensure sustainable growth in outbound student mobility.

The Summit opened with two major conference sessions: a panel entitled “Regional Visions and the Opportunities for Universities and Scholarships”, featuring senior government officials from Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as Dr Fanta Aw, CEO of NAFSA: Association of International Educators, which placed regional visions in a global context and discussed the role of scholarships and opportunities for universities and scholarship providers.

The next session, “Maximising the Value of Scholarships in a Sustainable Way”, featured

services including recruitment platforms, government agencies, homestay options, student accommodation and visa support brought valuable industry expertise to the roundtable discussions on the first day.

This year’s Summit was attended by **25** representatives from **15** organisations. They came from **10** countries, with the top five being the UK, Canada, France, the USA and Australia.



key decision makers and policy leaders in international education from government departments, universities and service providers in Abu Dhabi, the US and Canada.

Delegates then chose two roundtable sessions from a selection of ten, moderated by senior officials from the British Council, Campus France, NAFSA, and the governments of Bahrain, Canada, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and the UAE, each of which detailed regional visions or global perspectives. The conference concluded with a plenary session in which key findings were shared.

Finally, participants were welcomed to the Al Bustan Palace for a farewell gala dinner hosted by the Sultanate of Oman. A spectacular finale to the ICEF Middle East Scholarship Summit, the dinner provided one last opportunity to network in style.

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