

# CAREERGuide





“ Today, above all, young people need hope for their future — a future where every one of them can be fulfilled and play an active role in galvanizing the development of their countries. If we approach this challenge from an economic angle, we can see that failure to invest in young people and to provide them with job opportunities constitutes a huge waste of any nation’s most important resource. We must trust in our youth to bring about change, invest in them — whether through education or the labor market — and harness their energy and ideas to drive development forward. In order to do so, we must provide them with an environment that allows them to express themselves and achieve social and economic security. ”

**HER HIGHNESS SHEIKHA MOZA BINT NASSER**

CHAIRPERSON OF QATAR FOUNDATION

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Produced by Qatar Career Development Center in collaboration with Qatar Foundation Communication Directorate.



Career Guide app  
available to download at:



# THE FUTURE IS YOURS TO SHAPE

The world our students are preparing for today is not the world in which we, their parents and educators, began our own careers. It is more dynamic, more unpredictable, and, if approached with the right mindset, more exciting than ever. Entire industries and professions are being rendered obsolete, while new ones we never even imagined are starting to emerge.

In this rapidly changing environment, strong technical knowledge will always matter. But it is no longer enough on its own. The students who will thrive in the years ahead are those who blend their academic skills with broader qualities: adaptability, resilience, ethical grounding, and a genuine appetite for lifelong learning. These are what enable young people to navigate disruption with confidence, to reinvent themselves when needed, and to keep moving forward even when the path is unclear.

Finishing high school or university, therefore, is not the end of the journey. It is the beginning of a much longer process of growth. Today, people shift industries, learn new skills, and take on career paths that are completely different from where they started.

What matters most is understanding what motivates you. A sense of purpose rarely appears in a single instant; instead, it reveals itself as you seek new experiences, speak with mentors, and identify what interests you. Along the way, the people invested in your success – your teachers, counselors, parents – can help you recognize strengths you might overlook in yourself. And just as importantly, the environment you choose can shape the person you become.

At Qatar Foundation, our ecosystem is designed to provide the experiences and opportunities that enable you to define your future path. It is a place where you can explore diverse disciplines, connect with a supportive and engaged community, and ready yourself for a world that is constantly changing.

This new edition of the Career Guide Magazine is a valuable companion for you on this journey. It brings together insights on some of the most relevant issues shaping the future of work, from careers in Artificial Intelligence and insights on how the job market is changing, to the importance of stress management, job-search strategies, and career counseling in schools. It also includes stories from professionals working in fields as varied as

genomics, urban planning, and interior design, offering real examples of what it means to grow a career with curiosity and resilience.

I encourage every student reading this guide to reflect on the ideas it offers, learn from the experiences of others that it contains, and use the tools it provides to support you in making informed choices about where you want your life to take you.

Always remember: the future is not something that will simply happen to you - it is something that, with intent, you can prepare for, and that you can shape.

## **FRANCISCO MARMOLEJO**

**President of Higher Education  
Qatar Foundation**





## RECORD PARTICIPATION MARKS BIGGEST YEAR YET FOR LITTLE EMPLOYEE

QCDC's Little Employee initiative continued its strong momentum in its sixth edition, attracting record participation and engaging more major organizations from across all sectors in Qatar.

Through the initiative, kids aged between 7 and 15 join their parents at their workplace for a full day of real-world exposure, designed to spark early career awareness and encourage career conversations with family.

The 2025 edition saw more than 1500 kids participating in events organized in collaboration with partner organizations, almost triple the number of last year.

These figures further cement the initiative's position as Qatar's largest career-awareness program aimed at children, while it continues to evolve into a national movement that organizations across the country are eager to join.





## CAREER COUNSELORS HUB BRINGS TOGETHER EXPERTS FROM ALL AROUND QATAR

More than 200 counselors from public and private schools participated in the 2025 Career Counselors Hub hosted by QCDC in Multaqa, Education City. The two-day event was in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the U.S. Embassy in Doha, and Qatar Foundation Higher Education.

## GET READY PREPARES QATAR'S YOUTH FOR CAREER SUCCESS

The Hub opened with remarks from QCDC leadership and partner institutions, followed by a high-level panel on maximizing the role of career counselors in Qatar's human resources development strategy. The discussion explored how unified standards, enhanced counselor capacity-building, and school-university-employer linkages can translate national strategies into daily impact for students.

The event also featured bilingual skills workshops, admissions briefings, and a networking exhibition linking counselors with universities, government bodies, and education organizations.

QCDC has partnered with the Ministry of Sports and Youth to launch Get Ready, a practical career-readiness track for young people across Qatar. The program delivers short, skills-focused workshops on CV building, interview practice, workplace etiquette, and goal setting. Co-designed with employers, the program reflects real-world hiring needs and was delivered in both Arabic and English.



## 250 STUDENTS TAKE PART IN THE SEVENTH EDITION OF MY CAREER - MY FUTURE

A total of 250 high school students participated in the seventh edition of My Career – My Future, QCDC’s flagship job shadowing program. The closing ceremony at Multaqa was attended by senior leaders from Qatar Foundation, led by Mr. Yousif A. Al-Naama, CEO of QF, alongside representatives from QCDC and 25 partner organizations, to honor the participating students.

Over the course of five days, the students were immersed in real-world work environments across diverse sectors, including medicine, aviation, judiciary, tourism, and engineering. They got the opportunity to

shadow professionals across dynamic industries, which helped them explore their interests, develop key skills, and align their academic ambitions with meaningful future career paths.

Participating entities ranged from Hamad Medical Corporation and Al Jazeera Media Network to Qatar Airways, North Oil Company, Ooredoo Qatar, Snoonu Trading and Services, Qatar TV, Qatar Olympic Committee, the Investment and Trade Court, and various other leading institutions in the public and private sectors.



## CAREER VILLAGE 2025 MARKS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL EDITION

More than 2000 students from 125 schools across Qatar participated in the sixth edition of the Career Village in 2025. The career-exploration initiative was organized by QCDC in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Labour.

Over the three-day event at KidZania Doha, students met with 200 career counselors and 37 leading organizations across 13 vital sectors of Qatar's economy that include Security, Public Administration, Aviation and Aeronautics, Technology Investment and Banking,

Education, Energy, Manufacturing and Retail, Transportation and Logistics, Medicine, Humanitarian and Social Work, Media and Public Relations, as well as Hospitality and Tourism.

The final day featured a high-profile panel discussion titled "From Guidance to Employment: The Role of Academic Counseling in Supporting Students' Paths to the Private Sector". The session addressed the national priority of increasing Qatari participation in private-sector employment, following the recent enactment of Law No. (12) of 2024 on Job Nationalization in the Private Sector. The discussion brought together over 75 career and academic counselors from schools across Qatar, with panelists from the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the Commercial Bank of Qatar, and a young program graduate now employed in the hospitality sector.

## QCDC PARTICIPATES IN NCDA 2025 GLOBAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

QCDC participated in the prestigious 2025 Global Career Development Conference, hosted by the National Career Development Association (NCDA) in Atlanta, USA, reinforcing Qatar's growing influence as a regional leader in career guidance and youth empowerment.

Representing the center, Mohammed A. Al-Yafei, Head of Career Programs and Services, delivered a presentation highlighting QCDC's pioneering efforts to promote experiential learning through job-shadowing and hands-on training programs.

QCDC's presence at NCDA 2025 forms part of its ongoing international engagement strategy, which focuses on capacity building, innovation, and reinforcing Qatar's leadership in sustainable human development.



## QCDC CONTINUES TO SUPPORT INCLUSIVE CAREER PATHWAYS

Throughout 2025, QCDC advanced its efforts to support inclusive career development through a focused mix of programs, partnerships, and practitioner training.

Through the EmpowerAbility program, QCDC continued to deliver practical, confidence-building activities for youth with disabilities, including skills sessions, community activations, and inclusive sports days. The program also offered training for counselors and employers on supported roles and reasonable adjustments, helping participants progress from volunteering to meaningful workplace exposure.

These efforts ensured that EmpowerAbility focused on turning readiness into real opportunities while reinforcing disability-inclusive career pathways.

QCDC also collaborated with Renad Academy through WeGrow to strengthen employability pathways for autistic and neurodivergent students by scaling skills labs, job-site shadowing, and coached internships. The program partnered with employers to design supported placements and provided families and counselors with targeted guidance to ease the school-to-work transition.

Through these initiatives, QCDC continues to turn inclusion from intent into impact, ensuring every learner can access meaningful work while advancing Qatar's human-capital goals in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.



# CSGDB ISSUES GUIDE TO IN-DEMAND SCHOLARSHIP MAJORS

The Civil Service and Government Development Bureau, in cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, has issued a comprehensive guide outlining the academic specializations in demand under the Government Scholarship Programme. The aim is to provide a clear roadmap for students as they plan their higher education journeys.

The guide is designed to help students make well-informed career decisions that align with national priorities by identifying majors that are increasingly needed within the government job market. By doing so, it supports the development of national cadres capable of contributing to the country's development.

The guide features more than 120 in-demand specializations distributed across seven main tracks, six bachelor's tracks and one diploma track, along with sub-tracks in emerging fields that are considered national priorities. These tracks were defined after an in-depth assessment of the needs of government entities.

Issuing this guide represents a key step in supporting Qatar National Vision 2030, particularly its pillars related to education, human resource development, in addition to building a knowledge-based economy. The Civil Service and Government Development Bureau urges students and parents to review the guide's contents and use it to shape their academic and career paths, thereby enhancing the alignment between education and job market needs in the years ahead.

To view the guide, please scan the following code:



## ABP LAUNCHES EDUCATION CITY IELTS CENTER



The Academic Bridge Program (ABP), part of Qatar Foundation's Pre-University Education, has launched its new IELTS registration and testing center, making it the first official center in Education City.

In addition to providing ABP students and university students across Education City with direct and convenient access to IELTS registration and testing services, the center will serve members of the wider community.

## CMU-Q INTRODUCES BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (CMU-Q), a Qatar Foundation partner university, has announced the launch of a Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence (BSAI). This four-year program includes courses in computer science, mathematics, statistics, and machine learning.

## BARZAN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OPENS ITS DOORS



Barzan University College (BUC), in partnership with Swinburne University of Technology, Australia, has officially launched its operations in Qatar. The university welcomed its first cohort of students in September 2025 across programs in Engineering, Computing and Digital Technology, Business and Management.

## HBKU UNVEILS NEW TRANSLATION MASTER'S



The College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Hamad Bin Khalifa University has launched a Master of Arts in Translation for the Creative Industries. The program is the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa region and merges the art of translation with the dynamic demands of diverse creative industries. It equips aspiring translators, content creators, and cultural mediators with the cutting-edge skills required to keep pace with developments in today's global creative markets.

## QF LAUNCHES REYADA

Qatar Foundation (QF) has launched the "REYADA" initiative, in partnership with HEC Paris and Duke Corporate Education, a leading provider of customized corporate education affiliated with Duke University in the United States. The program is designed to develop a sustainable pipeline of top-caliber talent that supports QF's future growth and impact in key sectors.





# CITY PULSE



**AbdulRahman  
Al-Mana**

**The young Qatari  
reimagining urban  
planning**



**When it's time to choose a major, many students in Qatar reach for the familiar: medicine, engineering, business, education, the military. Prestige, family expectations, and the promise of job security all play a part, along with limited awareness of other high-impact paths. And yet, every so often, a story breaks the mold.**

At the second 'Earthna Summit' in Msheireb, we met AbdulRahman Hamad Al-Mana, one of the most compelling young voices in urban planning. In recent years, he's become a recognizable face—and an ambassador—for a field that quietly shapes our lives. The session he moderated, "Future-Ready Cities: Smart, Sustainable, and Livable," made his passion unmistakable as he conversed with his guests on how to mend the broken link between nature and the city. What follows is his journey, his lens on the city, and his mission to put urban planning where it belongs: at the heart of national development.

## Finding the spark

Al-Mana grew up alongside Qatar's building boom: a curious kid watching desert turn into districts, scaffolding into skylines. Early on he wondered: Who draws the outlines of a city? How do we grow without losing our identity? Even so, the classic routes, such as architecture, civil or structural engineering, did not quite click. Then, in a high-school geography class, a documentary on adaptive reuse in New York lit a fuse. He dove into books and articles and discovered a field that blended design with society: urban planning. The connection stuck.

"At first, my parents were hesitant—it was an unusual choice," he recalls. "They wanted something stable and clearly defined. But as they saw how deeply I cared about cities and community, and how strongly I believed planning can improve people's lives, concern turned into full support. They stood by me every step of the way and celebrated every milestone."



### A vision takes shape

In 2016, Al-Mana graduated from Qatar Academy – Doha and headed to the College of Architecture, Art, and Planning at Cornell University, earning a B.A. in Urban and Regional Studies with a minor in Middle Eastern Studies. The degree reframed the city for him, not as a map, but as a living system where people, place, and policy constantly interact.



"I found in planning a beautiful mix of social and economic studies with design and engineering," he says. "The planner is the starting point, the one who sets the framework within which civil, structural, and architectural work happens. We decide where to build, what to build, and why. Planning isn't just a job; it's a responsibility to both society and place."

Back in Qatar, he joined the Ministry of Municipality as an urban planner. Over four years, he updated zoning and land-use plans, reviewed master plans for major projects, and refreshed design and planning codes. He later led the Spatial Plans Unit, overseeing municipal-scale masterplans and large developments across the country.

One of the toughest hurdles, he says, was the scarcity of young Qatari planners and limited specialization across institutions, often leaving a gap in the "common language" between planning and execution. "It sometimes diluted a fully integrated national vision," he notes. "I often found myself one of a handful of specialists coordinating with engineers, consultants, and decision-makers from very different backgrounds."

How did he bridge the gap? By sharpening his negotiation and coordination skills, putting forward data-driven proposals aligned with global best practice, then tailoring them to Qatar's context. He also took on responsibilities beyond the job description and worked to encourage and mentor young talent into the field.

### A milestone to be proud of

Asked about a highlight, he pointed to leading the team that prepared Doha's submission for the Shanghai Award for Sustainable Cities, organized by UN-Habitat with the City of Shanghai.

"We built a comprehensive case that showcased Doha's urban sustainability; planning, environmental, and social initiatives, presented in a language global cities understand without losing our local voice," he says. "It took meticulous coordination and deep analysis of urban and environmental indicators in a very short time. Thanks to the team's effort, Doha won in the award's second cycle." Representing the ministry, and the country, at the ceremony to receive the award was, he says, "a moment of genuine pride," and a reminder of Qatar's growing stature in sustainable urbanism.

### What's next

Al-Mana is currently the Head of the Urban Visions & Policy Unit where he helps craft and update national strategies for the planning sector. Additionally, he was recently appointed as Head of the Urban Studio and Lab (Studio 18), which was established by the Ministry as an innovation and collaboration space for urban planners, engineers, architects, and young researchers. He hopes his path nudges more young people to explore planning, especially as Qatar balances rapid growth with environmental stewardship and quality of life.



Opportunities, he stresses, go well beyond the Ministry of Municipality. Qatar Museums needs people who understand architectural and urban heritage in both urban and rural settings. The Ministry of Transport needs planners for integrated transport systems. The National Planning Council drives policy at the country scale. Private sector consultancies and developers rely on planners across project lifecycles.

“With the rising need for homegrown planning talent,” he says, “we have to invest in preparing a new generation capable of leading the future of Qatari cities. I want to help build that pipeline and create an environment where young planners can bring their ideas to life—faithful to our values and identity.”

## More than just maps

Urban planning isn’t “draw lines, write a report, and call it a day.” It’s a knot of disciplines: sociology, economics, geography, geology, ecology, history, architecture, and engineering.

His advice to students: “Be curious, active, and proactive. Don’t stop at the classroom. Attend local and international conferences. Show up, take notes, speak up. Use social media to highlight the urban issues that matter here, like transport, environment, and quality of life. Make sure to join the conversations shaping the future of our cities.”

## AI is a partner, not a replacement

With AI changing the future of work, a familiar question looms: will it wipe out certain careers? In urban planning, his answer is clear: no.

“As cities grow more complex and datasets explode, planners use AI to make smarter, more informed decisions,” he says. “But planning is ultimately human: it demands cultural and social understanding, a sense of fairness, and the ability to negotiate competing interests. AI still needs thoughtful human direction; to serve people, not just systems, and to keep the city inclusive and just.”

## A voice for real change

Al-Mana wants to help mainstream urban planning in Qatar alongside engineering, because it directly shapes quality of life and the direction of growth.

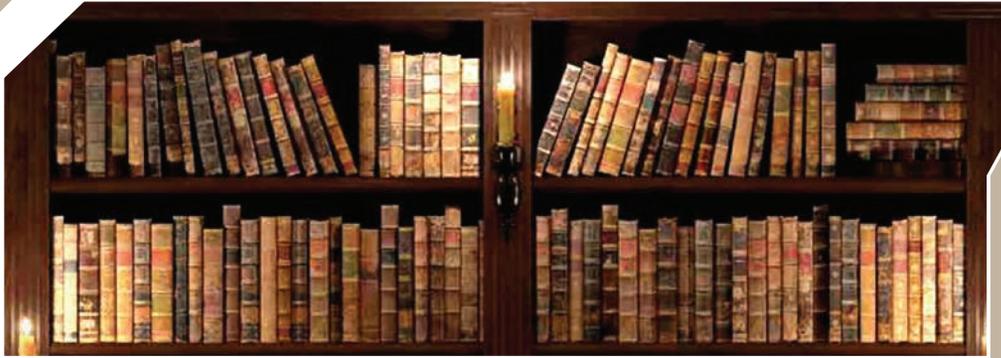
“Planners aren’t back-office technicians,” he says. “We’re essential national talent. We’re here to diagnose and fix our ‘urban illnesses’, from weak neighborhood connectivity to transport pain points to projects that miss a sense of place. I want planners in Qatar to get the professional recognition they deserve, and a seat at the decision table, not only at the implementation stage.”

## The journey continues

Proud of what he’s achieved, he’s just as clear-eyed about the road ahead. “This journey has let me help shape the contours of the modern Qatari city, balancing growth with a strong sense of place,” he says. “A city isn’t just buildings and streets. It’s an expression of our values and the vision we carry as a society. My role as a planner is to carry that vision and, in my own way, to engineer it into being.”

### Urban Literacy

Urban literacy is your ability to understand and navigate your city smartly and responsibly. It includes knowing how to access municipal and government services (in person and online), understanding how streets, squares, and public facilities are designed and used, and acting safely and respectfully in shared spaces. It also means knowing your rights and responsibilities as a resident and taking part in improving your neighborhood, protecting the environment, and elevating quality of life for everyone.



# CAREER DEVELOPMENT TERMS

## Transferable Skills

Transferable skills are a broad set of knowledge and competencies acquired from a variety of life situations such as education, work, and civic engagement that can be used in other settings.

## Employability

Employability refers to a combination of personal traits which enable individuals to enter employment, remain in employment, and progress in their careers.

Scan the QR Code to access the latest version of the APCDA Glossary of Terms and learn more career development terms in English and Arabic:



This glossary was compiled by a team of career development specialists from the Asia Pacific Career Development Association, reviewed, and translated through collaboration between Qatar Career Development Center and the Translation and Training Center at Hamad Bin Khalifa University's College of Humanities and Social Sciences.



# Need help figuring out your next career steps?

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# ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN QATAR

**STEADY  
STEPS  
& BRIGHT  
HORIZONS**

**A conversation with**

**Abdulrahman  
Al Emadi**

**Vice President  
Young Entrepreneurs Club**

Over the past few years, Qatar's entrepreneurship landscape has grown remarkably; fueled by clear public policies and a strong government-wide commitment to building a knowledge-based, diversified, and sustainable economy. Today, that support is reflected in a well-integrated ecosystem that spans schools and universities, awareness and mentoring programs, streamlined business set-ups, improved access to finance, and structured pathways into local and regional markets. The results are evident: Qatar now ranks among the world's leading entrepreneurial ecosystems, placing 11th globally on the 2024–2025 Global Entrepreneurship Monitor index.

## A Bold Initiative with Real Impact

Amid Qatar's growing entrepreneurship ecosystem, the Young Entrepreneurs Club (YEC) has emerged as a standout national initiative. What began as a volunteer youth effort quickly produced outsized results—earning official recognition in 2022. Today, the Club works to reach the widest possible pool of aspiring entrepreneurs, connect them with real-world business contexts, and help them learn directly from experienced founders. Through workshops, bootcamps, and networking events, YEC builds skills, opens doors to finance and markets, and helps transform ideas into viable ventures.

In this issue, we sit down with Abdulrahman Tareq Al Emadi, an entrepreneur since 2018 and the Club's Vice President, to explore how YEC is empowering Qatar's next generation of innovators and what the ecosystem needs next.

## How did the Young Entrepreneurs Club get started?

We began as a grassroots youth initiative, bringing together like-minded aspiring founders to exchange experiences. As the effort grew, the Club was formally established under the Ministry of Sports and Youth, with strong support from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Qatar Development Bank (QDB), and Qatar Chamber. That institutional backing gave us a solid platform to help young people navigate the entrepreneurship landscape and enter it with confidence. The Ministry's role was a turning point for the national entrepreneurship journey.

## Where does the Club sit within Qatar's current ecosystem?

Thanks to strategic partnerships with QDB, Qatar Chamber, and 'Snoonu,' the Club now operates as a semi-public, non-profit platform where creativity and innovation meet opportunity. We serve as a bridge between youth and founders on one side, and regulators and enablers on the other—closing gaps, speeding up learning, and channeling support to where it has the most impact.



### What sets your programming apart from other entrepreneurship initiatives?

We're built by entrepreneurs, for entrepreneurs. We understand the real needs of first-time founders and design programs grounded in practice, not theory. We extract lessons directly from the field so youth can learn from our success and avoid making the same early-stage mistakes. It's peer-to-peer, practical, and focused on execution.

### Is Club membership open to everyone?

Official membership is for those with a commercial registration, but our activities are open to all youth, citizens and residents, without prerequisites. Anyone interested in entrepreneurship can join our events and training and tap into our services in Qatar and abroad. Inclusivity is central to our mission.

### Have you met your targets for the first three years?

We've exceeded them. Thousands of young people have benefited from our workshops and summer bootcamps. Since launch, we've run around 50 interactive training workshops and three summer camps serving about 1,000 participants, most recently the Innovation Summer Camp 2025 in July. In parallel, we provided direct support to roughly 2,600 participants, showcasing their projects at dedicated platforms within conferences and forums and helping them develop further. Every forum we've joined became a networking hub where youth connected with dozens of organizations and discovered standout job opportunities. We also built a partnership network of 36+ local and international entities and launched 'yec.qa' to offer global entrepreneurial resources.

### How do you assess Qatar's entrepreneurship environment today?

The trajectory is positive. Over the past two decades, policy and institutional efforts have created strong foundations—incubators and accelerators, finance and advisory programs, and enabling infrastructure. That said, we still need to double down on easier access to regional and international markets and continue nurturing a bolder venture-investment culture nationally.

### What would unlock more tech startups?

**Three levers:** Research and Development (R&D) support that helps founders move from prototype to product; agile regulation that allows sandboxing and testing new business models; and deeper public-private partnerships to scale promising solutions globally.



## Is there momentum beyond tech?

Absolutely. The green economy, renewable energy, and creative industries are high-potential spaces aligned with Qatar National Vision 2030. They offer meaningful opportunities for youth to launch ventures that deliver both value and impact.

## What common mistakes do first-time entrepreneurs make?

Rushing to launch without a rigorous feasibility study or real market insight. There is too much focus on “the idea” and neglect of unit economics and operations, which are both critical to building something that lasts.



## What’s your core advice for aspiring entrepreneurs?

- Solve a real market problem; don't chase ideas that only sound good.
- Find a strategic co-founder or mentor who's been through this before.
- Build local and regional networks; opportunities are born from relationships.
- Invest in continuous learning; it compounds like interest.

## What’s next for the Young Entrepreneurs Club?

Progress, for us, is proof of growth, not an endpoint. We aim to broaden our reach, expand digital delivery, and step up support for early-stage and green startups. We're anchoring Qatar's position as a regional entrepreneurship hub in line with QNV 2030. Practically, that means growing partnerships, improving access to finance and markets, elevating the quality of training and mentorship, and measuring our impact consistently so we keep getting better.



# SPORTS COACHING

In sports, fans cheer on the champions—the sprint to the finish, the last-second goal, the medal ceremony. But those split-second moments are the result of years of work: structured training, careful planning, and the steady guidance of a seasoned coach leading a specialized team.

If you follow sports, you've already seen coaching in action. Coaches prepare athletes physically and mentally for competition. They help players identify their strengths, address weaknesses, and build strategies that peak at the right time. The job shifts depending on the sport, the age group, and the competitive level—each with its own demands, rhythms, and expectations.

Coaching a football squad is very different from coaching a tennis player. With youth athletes, a coach focuses on fundamentals: skill-building, confidence, safe development. With professionals, it becomes all about competitive readiness and results. The higher you climb, the bigger the support system around the coach: performance analysts, team doctors, physiotherapists, nutrition experts, and more. That's why strong leadership, clear communication, and emotional intelligence aren't optional; they're part of the job description.



So, could you become a coach? And does this path have a future in Qatar? Short answer: yes, and yes. Sports coaching today is a recognized profession with its own academic pathway designed to prepare students for the field. And as for its future in Qatar, the outlook couldn't be brighter.

Coaching sits at the heart of a global sports industry valued at more than \$2 trillion. Qatar's investment in sport is a clear trend and a long-term strategy that goes beyond hosting world-class events. It's about developing generations of athletes who can compete at the highest

levels. Aspire Academy is a prime example; for nearly two decades, it has supplied Qatar's national teams across multiple sports with champions who climbed continental and world podiums.

At the same time, there's a clear need for more homegrown coaches. According to Qatar's open-data portal, Qatar nationals make up about 14% of coaches working in sports federations (excluding the Qatar Endurance Committee), and roughly 4% in clubs. That gap represents a real opportunity for students who love sport and want a career shaping the next wave of talent.



To meet the demand, Qatar University announced the College of Sport Sciences in 2024. Starting Fall 2025, the college will offer a four-year Bachelor of Science in Sport Coaching delivered in Arabic. The curriculum covers coaching principles and methods, athlete performance and analysis, sports nutrition, psychology of sport and exercise, among other pillars. In short: it's a professional pathway, taught locally, aligned with the standards of a modern, multidisciplinary field.

Coaching is a calling. Passion for sport comes first, as it powers you through long seasons, tough losses, and the pressure of game day. From there, you build experience year after year, earning licenses and certifications that open doors to higher levels. You learn to understand people, to lead, and to stay curious. In coaching, standing still means falling behind.

### **Peter Skoumal**

**Lead Athletics Coach  
Aspire Academy**



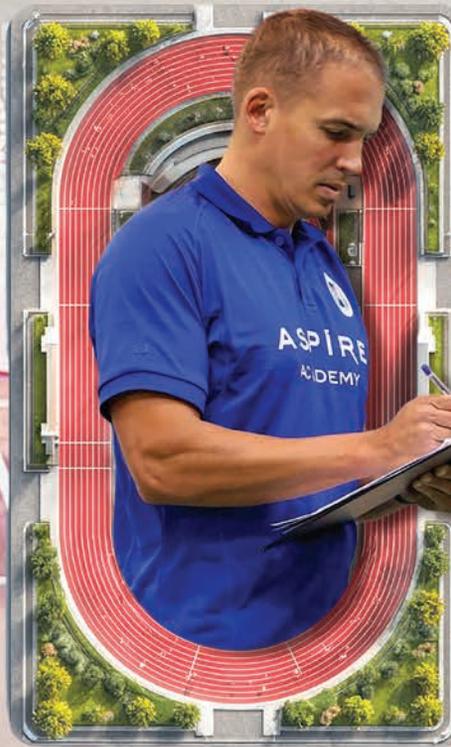
I grew up in a sports family. Both my parents were professional athletes before becoming coaches, and I spent much of my childhood on the track, where my love for sport took shape. Competing felt natural. Pole vault was my favorite, but I loved most of track and field sports, and I realized I could hold my own across several of them. That's why I chose the decathlon, one of the toughest competitions in athletics: ten events, including sprints, jumps, and throws, over two days. I had the honor of representing Hungary at continental and international championships and winning national titles along the way.

As my competitive career wound down, I began preparing for the next chapter. I studied at Semmelweis University, a leader in biomedical sciences, earning a coaching diploma in 2006 and then a bachelor's in sports management. From there, I committed fully to life as a coach.

What do I love most about this career? Being on the track every day. Working directly with athletes. Getting to know who they are and helping them grow. Every day brings a new challenge, and we face it together.

My advice for anyone who wants to succeed in coaching is simple: keep an open mind. Don't rely only on what you learn in the classroom; learn from everyone, especially coaches with more experience. Continuous learning isn't optional in this profession; it's the job. I'm in my forties and still learning something new every day. Coaching isn't a fixed set of recipes; it's an experience built through observation, experimentation, and reflecting on how others work. Believe in the impact of your role. Be patient and resilient. Stick to a methodical plan that moves you toward your goals, and always communicate with the athletes you coach.

To be a qualified coach, short courses alone aren't enough. Coaching has deep academic foundations. It is inherently multidisciplinary, intersecting with biomechanics, psychology, and nutrition, while increasingly integrating areas like physical rehabilitation and sport sciences. You don't have to be an expert in every field, but you do need a solid understanding



so you can build the right support system around your athletes and deliver results.

In Qatar, the success of standout athletes has inspired more young people into sport. Mutaz Barshim, the Olympic and world high-jump champion, is a prime example; his achievements encouraged many to try this sport. The same principle applies to coaching. Qatar needs more homegrown coaches, and it is a promising career path that deserves more attention, especially as the country's investment in sport continues to rise. This is the moment to build a strong generation of Qatari coaches.

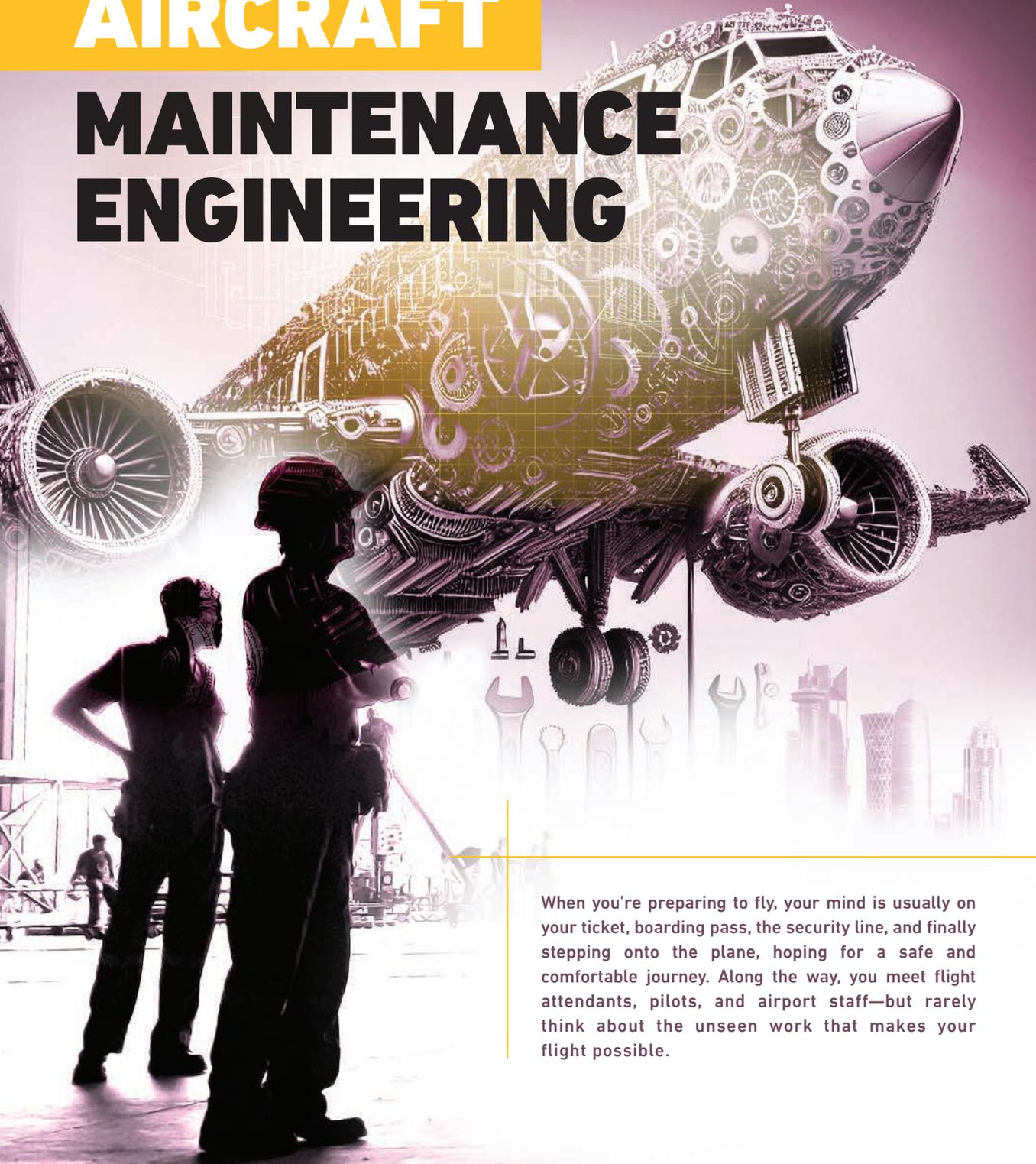
I'm proud to be part of Aspire Academy, where my work focuses on developing athletes in the U-14 and U-16 age groups. I still have plenty of ambition. My goal is to help make our program at Aspire the best in the world, so we can prepare a new generation of Qatari athletes to carry the national flag on the biggest stages: the Olympic Games, World Championships, and the Asian Games.

**Aspire Academy is a national elite sports academy. It combines school studies with elite training in sports to prepare graduates to represent Qatar at major sports events.**

**For more information about the academy and the programs it offers, please scan this QR Code:**



# AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE ENGINEERING



When you're preparing to fly, your mind is usually on your ticket, boarding pass, the security line, and finally stepping onto the plane, hoping for a safe and comfortable journey. Along the way, you meet flight attendants, pilots, and airport staff—but rarely think about the unseen work that makes your flight possible.

Behind the scenes, highly trained teams work with painstaking precision toward one shared goal: making sure you reach your destination safely. Every member of this system plays a vital role, performing specialized tasks where there's no margin for error. One of the most critical players in that operation? The aircraft maintenance engineer.

Aircraft maintenance engineers are the first line of defense in the sky and guardians of aviation safety. Their primary mission: inspect aircraft with exacting care, carry out routine maintenance, troubleshoot issues, and ensure every onboard system meets the highest international safety standards before takeoff.

According to civil aviation regulations worldwide, no plane is cleared to leave the runway without their official sign-off.

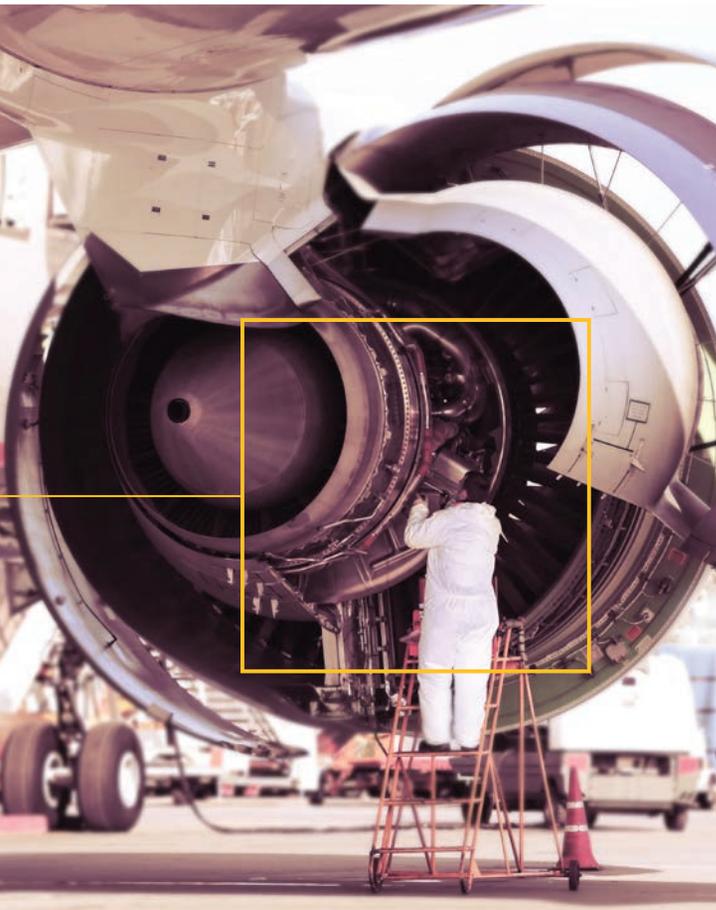
This profession branches into two main specializations. The first focuses on avionics—covering communications, navigation, autopilot systems, and sensors. The second deals with the aircraft's mechanical side: engines, airframes, and various mechanical and electrical systems. Each track requires its own academic training, hands-on apprenticeships, and a series of rigorous exams and interviews before engineers earn their professional licenses.

And here's the catch: a license for one type of aircraft doesn't automatically qualify you for another. Engineers must train and certify for each specific model they work on—a process that demands both dedication and precision.

While the job might sound like it's all about wrench turning, the reality is different. Maintenance engineers often lead specialized teams of technicians, guiding their work and making sure every task is done accurately and on time.

The outlook for aircraft maintenance engineering in Qatar is promising. As the aviation sector expands, the need for skilled national cadres is growing. If you're someone who enjoys math and physics, has an analytical mind, and feels drawn to technology and mechanics, this could be a career worth serious consideration.

To nurture the next generation of Qatari engineers, Qatar Airways offers the Al Darb program. It provides scholarships that cover a foundation year in math, science, and—if needed—English, followed by a 27-month Aircraft Maintenance Engineering diploma at the Qatar Aeronautical Academy. Graduates earn licenses recognized by both Qatar's Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA), then move on to two years of practical training at Qatar Airways' maintenance facilities in Doha.



## Fatima Al-Mohammadi

### Aircraft Maintenance Engineer Qatar Airways

After graduating from high school, I first enrolled in chemical engineering. But something just didn't click. The field didn't match my ambitions or reflect what I truly wanted to do. I spoke with my family, sought advice, and started exploring other engineering fields available in Qatar. That's when one option really caught my attention: aircraft maintenance engineering. It struck me as the perfect balance between theory and hands-on work, set in a dynamic and exciting environment.

In 2012, I decided to make the switch and joined the Qatar Aeronautical Academy—back then, it was called the Qatar Aeronautical College. Convincing my family wasn't easy, especially because they felt this wasn't a suitable career for a woman. It took time, long conversations, and a lot of persistence to show them how passionate I was and to clear up some misconceptions about the profession. Eventually, they came around, and from that moment on, they became my biggest supporters. Today, nothing makes me happier than seeing my mother speak about my work with pride in front of relatives and friends.

The early days weren't without challenges. The technical jargon in aviation was overwhelming at first. But I pushed through, focused on learning, and slowly mastered the theory before moving on to the practical side—repairing engines, replacing aircraft components, and applying everything I had learned in real-world situations.

After graduating, I completed my training, earned my licenses, and began my career with Qatar Airways. The rotating shifts were demanding in the beginning, but I quickly learned how to manage my time and adapt. Working in a male-dominated field never intimidated me. At Qatar Airways, we operate as one team, treating each other with professionalism, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to safety.

What I love most about my work is that no two days are alike. Every day brings a new challenge; one day it's an engine issue, the next it's an electrical system fault. There's always something new to learn. And the best moment of all? That feeling of pride and accomplishment when I sign off a plane as airworthy and watch it take off safely after a successful repair.

To any young Qatari thinking about this field, I say: go for it. This is a critical profession, and we need more national talent in it. Don't be afraid of the impact of artificial intelligence; while we rely on technology a great deal, human expertise and judgment are still irreplaceable when it comes to diagnosing and solving complex problems.

In the end, I can't help but acknowledge the remarkable success Qatari women are achieving across so many professional fields. In aircraft maintenance, I've always looked up to Samah Al-Sada, Qatar's first female aircraft maintenance engineer. She inspired me and showed me what was possible. Now, after more than six years in the field, I've stepped into a new chapter as a training supervisor, passing on my knowledge to the next generation of engineers. Helping prepare skilled, capable Qataris for the future is something I take immense pride in.



## Al Darb

**Al Darb is a nationalization program designed by Qatar Airways to develop Qatari talent through fully funded scholarships and structured pathways to roles across the airline.**

**For more information, please scan this QR Code:**



# GENOMICS

Imagine a world where we not only treat disease but also predict and stop it before it appears. A world where we uncover more of the human blueprint and better understand what makes us unique, so we can craft new solutions that transform health. This is the promise of genomics today: a scientific revolution reshaping the face of medicine and deepening our understanding of life itself.



Genomics is closely linked to genetics within the broader field of molecular and cellular biology, which itself falls under the umbrella of biomedical sciences: disciplines focused on how the human body works at the levels of molecules, cells, and tissues.

To see the bigger picture, think of biomedical sciences as a bridge connecting research and medical practice, linking laboratory discoveries to clinical practice and even national health policy. They also include other core disciplines such as microbiology, immunology, biochemistry, hematology, histopathology, and cytopathology.

Genetics focuses on individual genes: what they do, the traits they carry, how those traits pass from one generation to the next, and how mutations can alter a gene's function and lead to disease.

Genomics, also called "genome science," takes a wider lens. It studies all the genes in the body, numbering in the thousands, to understand how they work together, interact, and respond to the environment.

This comprehensive view of genomics and its influence on health and disease makes it a pillar of precision medicine.

By integrating genetic data with a patient's medical history, lifestyle, and environment, clinicians can diagnose faster and more accurately, tailor treatments to a person's unique genetic makeup and even prevent certain conditions or lower their risk. Linking genetic variants to disease patterns strengthens prediction, supports new therapies for previously untreatable conditions, and ultimately improves both healthcare efficiency and societal productivity.

## A Wide Range of Roles

You might ask: what exactly do genomics professionals do? Their responsibilities vary by job and workplace, whether in research, clinical, or policy. Common tasks include DNA extraction; preparing sequencing libraries that record the order of genes in the genome under study; quality control on samples and data following specific standards and protocols; data analysis; and writing reports to interpret results in collaboration with physicians and specialists.

## From Cells to Genome



To better grasp genetics and genomics, it helps to revisit the basic biology of the cell.



Simply put, the human body is made of 'cells,' and inside each cell is a 'nucleus' that stores vital information in the form of 'DNA.'



DNA carries your inherited traits as specific instructions encoded in 'genes.'



Cells read and execute those instructions when they build 'functional proteins': the molecules that express traits such as eye and skin color and much more, according to the 'genetic code.'



If a 'mutation' occurs—any change to the nature or position of a gene on the DNA—it can cause a malformation or genetic disease or raise susceptibility to a condition.



'The genome' is the full set of an organism's genetic material, encompassing all its DNA. Think of it as the complete library of instructions that cells follow, while a single gene is one book within that library.

## A Growing Field in Qatar

Qatar has steadily built a high-performance biomedical ecosystem with genomics at its core. For over a decade, Qatar Foundation has played a leading role in this development.

It began with Qatar Biobank in 2012, established to collect bio samples linked to detailed health data. This was followed by the Qatar Genome Program to study the population's genetic structure and accelerate precision-medicine applications. In 2024, the Qatar Precision Health Institute was launched as a national umbrella to unify genomics and precision-medicine research and build on Qatar Biobank and Qatar Genome outputs, speeding up translation from research to clinical practice.

Together, these institutions are creating demand for researchers, clinical specialists, bioinformatics experts, technologists, and policy advisors; and opening meaningful pathways for students who love science to help shape the future of healthcare in Qatar.

## Where to Start?

Qatar offers several academic pathways into biomedical sciences that can set you on track for a career in genomics. Hamad Bin Khalifa University also launched M.S. and Ph.D. programs in Genomics and Precision Medicine in 2017. Here is a list of relevant programs in Qatar:

### Hamad Bin Khalifa University, College of Health & Life Sciences

- M.S. in Biological and Biomedical Sciences
- Ph.D. in Biological and Biomedical Sciences
- M.S. in Genomics and Precision Medicine
- Ph.D. in Genomics and Precision Medicine

### Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar

- B.S. in Biological Sciences

### Qatar University, College of Health Sciences

- B.S. in Biomedical Sciences
- M.S. in Biomedical Sciences

### **Aisha Al Maadeed**

#### **Laboratory Technologist Qatar Biobank**

I've loved science since high school, and biology always felt like home. That early curiosity grew with time and led me to major in Biological Sciences at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar. What pushed me from interest to commitment, though, were the health challenges I saw around me: diabetes, obesity, and other chronic conditions. I realized that biomedical research could drive solutions with a real, human impact. Biology gave me the foundation; our community's needs gave me a purpose.

At university, I found a rich environment for learning by doing. Joining Qatar Biobank gave me hands-on lab experience: DNA extraction, cryopreservation of Peripheral Blood Mononuclear Cells (PBMCs), and quality control across the sampling workflow. Later, I took on responsibilities in biosafety systems, risk management, and quality systems. That wider vantage point showed me how many moving parts must align to produce reliable biomedical research.

My family's support has been one of the biggest pillars of my journey. They noticed my love for science early on and encouraged me at every step, study decisions, internships, the works. That backing kept me motivated and helped me push through challenges.

Speaking of challenges, they are a part of any career journey, of course. My steepest learning curve was balancing highly detailed bench work with broader responsibilities like biosafety and risk oversight and management. It was overwhelming at first. I learned to plan my time with precision, seek advice from senior colleagues, and embrace a continuous-learning mindset.

What I love most about my job is that it has meaning and impact beyond the lab bench. When I extract DNA or validate quality systems, I know I'm contributing to large-scale projects that inform research and healthcare decisions. The field never stands still, and there's always something new to learn.

I'm particularly proud of my work with the Qatar Precision Health Institute. Projects focused on biospecimen quality and risk management are vital because they protect the integrity of the data researchers rely on. Contributing to population-health studies that can shape the future of care in Qatar is a source of real pride for me.

For anyone considering this path: master the core technical lab skills and cultivate a sharp eye for detail. Equally important are critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork. You'll draw on them constantly in class and on the job. On a personal level, curiosity and patience are essential. Results don't appear overnight, but the long-term impact is absolutely worth it.

To students, I'd say: give biomedical science serious thought. It's a field with a bright future in Qatar, especially with the country's sustained investment in genomics and precision medicine. And opportunities aren't limited to hospitals. Research institutes, public health, pharma, and even entrepreneurship, all need people fluent in this space.

Don't overthink where to start. If science intrigues you, deepen that interest early through internships and hands-on experiences. Volunteer in labs, join research programs, and let real work clarify your passions. Consider pairing biology with data science, business, or public health; that blend can set you apart and open more doors.

For more information on genomics and precision medicine, please scan this QR Code:





# EMPOWERING CHANGE

## TOWARD A MORE INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE



Interview with

**Sabika Shaban**

Disability advocate and founder of Qatar Disability Resource (QADR)

When Sabika Shaban launched the Qatar Disability Resource (QADR) in 2018, her mission developed from a deeply personal experience. As a parent, she had faced the challenge of finding reliable, accessible information and guidance for families raising children with disabilities in Qatar. What began as a small network to help families feel understood has since evolved into a national platform connecting about two thousand stakeholders, including families, educators, and professionals, driven by a shared commitment to inclusion.

Today, Sabika is recognized as one of Qatar's leading voices in disability advocacy. A researcher, community builder, and changemaker, she serves on several national

boards and taskforces, works as an administrator at Hamad Bin Khalifa University, and is pursuing a PhD in Education at the University of Cambridge. Her research focuses on disability and inclusive education in the Gulf, an area she hopes will shape more equitable futures for learners across the region.

In this interview, Sabika reflects on QADR's journey from a grassroots idea to a nationwide community hub. She discusses the challenges of building inclusion within evolving systems, the lessons learned along the way, and her vision for a more connected, lifelong support network for people with disabilities. She also offers valuable advice for employers on embracing neurodivergent talent and guidance for parents seeking to nurture their children's potential with confidence and compassion.



## From Idea to Impact

### To what extent has QADR achieved its original goals?

When I first started QADR, its foundational mandates were to connect and to inform. Within just the first few months, it made meaningful strides that far exceeded my initial goals. The wonderful part about goal setting is that it is never static; the horizon can keep moving as you continue the journey. As I took on new roles as a community activist and a researcher, QADR's mission evolved as well. It expanded to include more practitioners, broadened the range of disabilities represented, welcomed adults with disabilities, and strengthened its effectiveness as a bridge within the community.

QADR has grown into a trusted platform for both families and practitioners alike. It engages in advocacy, supports research, and provides a safe, empowering space where many community members have found their own voices, as well as their support groups.

### What major challenges did you encounter along the way?

One of the biggest challenges has been navigating systems that are still shaping their understanding of what meaningful inclusion truly means. At times, progress slows because of institutional inertia, limited collaboration across sectors, or a narrow perception of disability. Working both within and beyond formal institutions has taught me how to adapt my activism to fit the realities of our context and to find ways to keep moving forward, even when change feels gradual.

Another challenge has been the emotional labor involved. QADR is intensely personal. It is grounded in my own experience as a parent and in the stories of countless families and self-advocates whom I care about deeply. That creates both a sense of purpose and a constant need to manage expectations - my own and others'. Progress can be slow, and while each individual win is meaningful, lasting systemic change requires time, patience, and persistence.

### What key lessons have you learned from the whole experience?

One of the most important lessons I have learned is to never wait for perfect conditions before moving forward

with a project you truly believe in. Persistence matters more than perfection. I have learned to trust the process, stay true to the values that guide QADR, and celebrate small victories along the way. Above all, I have learned to keep the voices of disabled people and their families at the heart of everything that I do.

### What is next for the project?

Looking ahead, I see two key priorities already taking shape. The first is developing an online repository to host our community-generated guides and resources, making them easily accessible to all. The second is strengthening QADR's role in shaping progressive disability policymaking in Qatar, ensuring that the insights and experiences of our community continue to inform lasting change.

## Rebuilding The System

### What do you hope for when it comes to building a sustainable support system for people with disabilities?

Through my work with QADR, I have seen how families often struggle to navigate systems that are well-intentioned but fragmented. For me, a sustainable support system means coordinated, lifelong care that does not depend on personal connections or the ability to self-advocate. It is a system built on responsiveness, one that hears the experiences of people with different disabilities and inclusion needs, as well as their families.

I hope to see a shift from one-off "awareness sessions" to more meaningful, action-oriented programs that focus on building capacity and driving real change. For too long, uncertainty about how best to offer support has left many talented individuals excluded from career development, for instance, and employment opportunities.

### How can we achieve this?

To move forward, with particular reference to the neurodivergent population, we must design solutions that are systematic and supported by policy, practice, and culture for people with different neuro-profiles, across all stages of life, from early childhood to employment and beyond. This requires breaking down silos, co-creating initiatives that respond directly to community needs, and ensuring that inclusion becomes an everyday reality rather than the exception.

### **How can career guidance and development play a central role in building a better future for neurodivergent individuals?**

The first and most critical step is to develop career experts who are genuinely committed to inclusive, neurodiversity-aware career development. Building this foundation ensures that guidance and support are rooted in understanding and empathy, not assumption.

Equally important is the need for career professionals to co-create mechanisms that respond to diverse needs. This begins with active engagement with neurodivergent people with different conditions, abilities, and ages, and mapping their journeys to identify the points where their experiences “diverge” from those of neurotypical youth. The key is shifting the question from “What support does this person need?” to “What environments help them thrive?”.

Career development programs that include inclusive mentorship, internships, and exposure to different fields can open doors that were once closed. These initiatives have powerful potential to challenge and transform the systems around them, and open possibilities for mindset shifts of employers, peer employees, and other stakeholders.

### **Around the world, neurodivergent individuals have achieved remarkable career success across many sectors. Are you seeing similar stories emerge in Qatar?**

We are beginning to see some encouraging stories of success, but the limitations of the current system are also clear. Many neurodivergent individuals, particularly those with ADHD, have learned to adapt quietly in the workplace, often without formal accommodation or open disclosure. Actually, in several cases I have encountered, people were only diagnosed later in life, after already securing employment. Without a culture of privacy-protected formal disclosure and structured support, many continue to navigate their careers largely under the radar.

Furthermore, individuals with autism remain underrepresented in the mainstream workforce, though some who have benefited from consistent high-quality support throughout their early development are pursuing promising paths in art, academia, medicine, and other fields. These journeys are still unfolding, and the transition into formal employment continues to be a significant challenge for many.

### **What do you think helps some neurodivergent individuals succeed while others still face barriers in finding or keeping jobs?**

One factor that consistently appears across success stories is the presence of a champion; someone who believes in the individual and actively supports their path, whether a parent, teacher, mentor, or employer.





However, success should not depend on the chance presence of a single advocate. It must be embedded in accessible, sustainable systems that allow neurodivergent individuals to pursue meaningful careers as readily as anyone else.

### **What are the most common misconceptions about the capabilities of neurodivergent individuals?**

Unfortunately, a common misconception about neurodivergent individuals stems from the way many employers view people primarily as "capital", prioritizing efficiency and conformity over creativity and inclusion. This mindset often fuels misconceptions that neurodivergent individuals are fragile, unproductive, or a drain on resources. Much of this misunderstanding comes from the fear of the unknown and lack of awareness. It is also quite common for all stakeholders—like parents, educators, employers, policymakers, and even youth with disabilities themselves—to underestimate their own potential and the value they can bring to an organization.

### **Where do you see the main challenge?**

One of the main challenges lies in how communication styles are often mistaken for competence. A different way of expressing oneself is frequently seen as a deficit rather than a reflection of a unique perspective or strength.

At the same time, navigating a world that is full of people with different abilities, capacities, and profiles, is a skill that is rarely taught in formal settings. People either learn about neurodiversity when they discover their own diagnoses or have family members who are neurodivergent, or are in a disability-related profession. Until we broaden our definition of ability, and disability, in the workplace, we risk overlooking the contributions and value that neurodivergent individuals can bring.

## **Key Steps**

### **What message would you like to share with employers who may hesitate to hire neurodivergent candidates?**

I encourage employers, particularly HR professionals, to take proactive steps to address the uncertainties around inclusive employment.

Start by learning about neurodiversity and neurodivergence, inviting trainers, and creating opportunities to meet and listen to neurodivergent individuals. These interactions can be transformative, turning what may seem like a complex challenge into a feasible, rights-based opportunity for growth.

Next, reflect on your own values and those of your institution. Consider how poorly the current reality of highly-exclusionary hiring and retention practices reflect institutional values, and where change is needed for better alignment.

Finally, start small if you feel less prepared for neurodivergent employment. Nervousness is natural, but can be redirected into opportunities for growth. Small steps could include offering internships or time-bound contracts with clearly defined tasks. Seek partners who can help support employment transitions, learn best practices, and adapt them to your unique context. Inclusive employment is not about lowering standards. It is about widening the lens through which we recognize and value talent.

### **What advice do you have for parents who want to prepare their neurodivergent children for career success from a young age?**

When it comes to preparing children for career success, it is important to recognize that they may not follow conventional paths, and that is perfectly okay. What matters is starting early: encouraging curiosity, building routines that foster confidence and communication, and providing exposure to different experiences.

The advice comes from a place of humility, as I speak both as a parent of two neurodivergent children and as someone aware that neurodivergence is an incredibly broad spectrum. We can never fully understand the potential of our children unless we are intentionally "discovering" them rather than assuming their abilities are fixed.

This process becomes easier when you partner with fellow parents who share their own stories or with professionals who appreciate and nurture every aspect of our children. With the right supports and systems in place, our horizon continues to expand when it comes to neurodiverse opportunities in the workplace.

# MONEY MATTERS

## Why You Should Boost Your Financial Literacy



It's the middle of the month, and your paycheck has already vanished. You rack your brain as to where it all went; there were no emergencies or surprise bills. Maybe it was the professional-grade camera you've been eyeing for ages? The deal was too good to pass up, even though you've never done serious photography. You rationalize: it might come in handy on your summer trip.

Still, chunks of your income are unaccounted for. Do you swipe your credit card? Take out another loan? The money will always come back...right?

Sound familiar? Even if you're still in school and haven't started earning, this scenario is common worldwide. Often, the issue isn't the size of your paycheck; it's the lack of financial literacy. Left unchecked, it can spiral into mounting debt and money stress, limiting your choices and leaving you vulnerable when life throws a curveball. The good news: you can avoid this trap.



## What Is Financial Literacy?

Being financially literate means having the knowledge, skills, and smart habits, to make informed decisions about your money. It's about understanding the value of money, managing it wisely, and building routines that set you up for long-term financial security.

Here's the thing: you'll be dealing with money at every stage of life. The stronger you grasp the basics, like the relationship between income and expenses, the importance of saving, and the role of investing and long-term planning, the better you'll be at achieving your personal and professional goals. A big paycheck alone won't ensure financial security. Without money skills, impulse spending, debt accumulation, and paycheck-to-paycheck living become real risks. Healthy financial habits give independence, resilience in emergencies, and freedom from debt traps. They also help you avoid scams and poor financial deals.

Bottom line: the financial choices you make now will pay off—or cost you—later.

## A Ripple Effect: Beyond the Individual

Financial literacy doesn't just affect individuals. It influences economies. Consider the 2008 global financial crisis. Millions lost jobs, home prices collapsed, and trillions in household wealth disappeared. Investigators found that poor financial decisions by individuals—such as taking on loans they couldn't afford, or misunderstanding mortgage risks, and placing blind trust in lenders and brokers—contributed to the collapse.

The crisis exposed just how fragile people's financial knowledge was. According to the World Economic Forum, only about one third of the world's population meets the basic standard for financial literacy. That means the majority are making financial choices without fully understanding the consequences.

And the stakes go beyond dollars and cents. Studies show that financial stability affects decisions about education and careers, and that money stress can hurt job performance and stall career growth. Equally, research from the Global Financial Literacy Excellence Center finds that societies with higher levels of financial literacy save more, carry less household debt, weather recessions better, and enjoy stronger long-term economic stability.

Governments have taken note. Qatar, for example, has made financial literacy a priority since the 2008 crisis. The Qatar Central Bank was tasked with promoting financial education under the 2012 law, and the 2017–2022 financial sector strategy identified it as a core objective.

In recent years, collaboration among financial institutions has intensified, with the shared goal of raising public financial literacy levels. One standout initiative: the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has added Financial Literacy as an elective subject for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders, starting in the 2024–2025 academic year.

Everyone now recognizes the same truth: financially literate citizens make for a stronger economy and a more resilient society. That means more savings in the bank, smarter investments backed by solid planning, thriving businesses that create jobs, and fewer people weighed down by unmanageable debt.

# NINE TIPS FOR SMARTER FINANCIAL DECISIONS

Now you know why financial literacy matters. But the real question is: how do you start making better money decisions? And what small changes in your daily habits can help set you up for long-term financial security?

Here's a set of practical, no-nonsense principles that can help you take control of your finances.



## Time Is Money

Your time is your most valuable asset. Spend it wisely. Invest it in things that bring lasting value: learning a new language, building a skill that could open career doors, improving your health, or strengthening meaningful relationships.

On the flip side, losing hours to endless scrolling on social media or marathon gaming sessions can quietly drain away opportunities you won't get back. Think of it as a hidden withdrawal from your future savings account.



## Plan Before You Spend

Random and thoughtless spending is the fastest lane to money trouble. Start with a simple budget, track your weekly or monthly expenses, set aside a fixed amount for savings, and work toward goals like buying a laptop, funding a trip, or covering other big-ticket items. Even a modest plan puts you on the path to financial stability.



## Spend With Intention

Pause before you buy. Give yourself time to think and ask: Do I really need this? Is it worth the price? Keep a record of your spending, whether in a notebook or a budgeting app. This will reveal your real spending habits over time.

You might be surprised at what you discover. For example, spending QAR 20 on coffee every workday adds up to more than QAR 5,000 a year. That doesn't mean you should give up your favorite latte, it just means you should be aware of how small, daily choices shape your financial future. Moderation is key.



## Make Saving a Habit

Never underestimate small, regular savings. Over time, they snowball into something substantial.

What you save today becomes your cushion in a crisis and gets you closer to your goals. Take the advice of legendary American investor Warren Buffett: "Do not save what is left after spending, but spend what is left after saving."





### Invest Wisely

Money loses buying power over time—what QAR 10 buys today is far less than it bought 20 years ago. That’s why investing matters. At its core, investing means putting part of your income into assets that can generate returns or grow in value.

Of course, investing comes with risks. Understand the details before committing, know your priorities, and never invest in something you don’t fully understand.



### Borrow With Caution

Borrowing may look like the easy way to get what you want, but every loan comes with strings attached. Ask yourself: Do I truly need this, or am I just giving in to impulse?

Understand the long-term impact of taking out a loan, using credit cards, or signing up for “buy now, pay later” services. Only borrow when you’re certain you can pay it back on time. What seems like a manageable debt today could become a heavy burden tomorrow.



### Focus on Growth, Not Just Your Paycheck

When starting your career, don’t just chase the highest starting salary. Instead, look for jobs that will help you learn, grow, and build your skills and professional network. The experience you gain early on will shape your future earning potential and market value.



### Protect Yourself in the Digital World

Most of our financial transactions now happen online, which means digital awareness is no longer optional. Stay alert to online scams, download apps only from trusted sources, and stick to secure payment platforms. Learn your digital rights, especially around privacy and data protection.

Be cautious when shopping online. Read the fine print before subscribing to any service: check for hidden fees, automatic renewals, and cancellation policies, and don’t fall for flashy ads promising “once-in-a-lifetime deals” or “instant wealth”. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.



### Keep Learning

Seek out financial knowledge. Attend workshops, join courses, and read books that expand your money skills. Remember, not all advice applies universally. Financial authors write from their own realities, shaped by different laws, markets, and income opportunities. Use their insights as guidance, not as a one-size-fits-all formula.

### The Bottom Line

Managing money is a lifelong learning process. Keep building your knowledge. Make clear, thoughtful plans. Be patient with your decisions. And most importantly, learn from your mistakes so you don’t repeat them. Your future self will thank you.





## YOUR QUICK GUIDE TO DEALING WITH STRESS

**Exams around the corner? Anxiety kicking in? You are aiming for grades that will get you into the university you always hoped for, but the time left is not enough to cover everything?**

You try to make up for lost ground, but instead you find yourself procrastinating, unable to focus, and even spending more time on social media? Struggling to sleep?

All these are common signs of stress.

First, you need to understand that stress is a natural response that most people experience. It often shows up when demands exceed their mental, physical or financial capacity, or when they sense a threat or the possible loss of someone or something important. It may also be a result of delaying a crucial decision or step.

In the example we mentioned earlier, the stress stems from study pressure, which is often called academic stress. But in fact, stress can result from many other triggers, so it is vital to handle it in ways that preserve your balance and effectiveness; in short, to manage it.

## Why manage stress?

Ignoring stress can lead to serious consequences. It starts by reducing your ability to handle daily tasks and staying focused, then it can quickly undermine your quality of life and social relationships. Over time, chronic stress strains the body as it increases the release of hormones like Cortisol and Adrenaline. This can increase the risks of heart disease, weaken immunity and disrupt digestion.

In today's fast-moving and pressure-filled world, stress management became an essential skill that can help protect your health, performance and relationships.

To achieve this, pay attention to early warning signs of stress, identify the root causes, and take practical steps to bring it under control.

Stress can have many signs, and responses vary widely from one person to another, according to its intensity, the level of threat, and the underlying causes. At times, you can avoid stress by eliminating its triggers, but in other cases, you will need to confront it.

## Common Signs of Stress

Physical	Cognitive and Behavioural	Emotional and Social
Fatigue	Failing to Concentrate	Anxiety
Headache	Boredom	Mood Swings
Insomnia	Procrastinating	Impatience
Shortness of Breath	Reduced Productivity	Isolation
Trembling	Loss of Appetite	Guilt
Indigestion	Overeating	Frustration



## BOOSTING YOUR CAREER

To help you better understand how stress impacts your mental health, we have met with Ammar Karim, Clinical Psychologist at Espoir Psychiatric Center. We discussed the best ways to manage stress and the broader importance of mental health, in addition to knowing how to distinguish between stress and deeper conditions that require professional support.

We started with academic stress, which is one of the most common challenges students face. It is often tied to performance anxiety and high expectations which sometimes are self-imposed, while other times come from parents or older siblings. Fear of failure adds another layer of pressure.

Stress can be harmful, but it is not always bad, as Ammar explains: "Stress itself is inevitable, and in the right amount, it can even be useful. When stress is too high, it becomes overwhelming and debilitating. It can harm learning and overall wellbeing. When it's too low, it leads to boredom and low motivation. Students need an optimal level of stress which is enough to energize action, like studying for an exam or meeting a deadline, without tipping into burnout."

Based on his extensive experience in dealing with students, our guest shares evidence-based techniques that can be used to manage stress:

1

### Time management

Time management is a misnomer, because we cannot manage time itself, but we manage ourselves within the time we have. Research shows that students who study in a structured way and set realistic goals report better mental health and lower stress.

Start by setting achievable goals and follow a scheduled study plan.

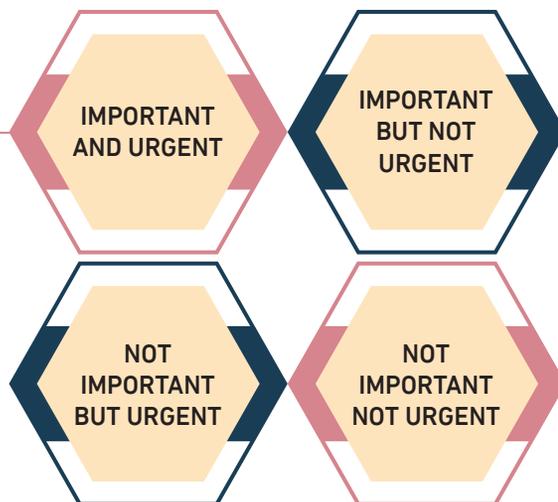
A practical tool I use with students is the Eisenhower Matrix. It is a method for managing time more effectively and deciding what to delegate.

Tasks are categorized along two dimensions: urgent vs. non-urgent, and important vs. not important. Students often find themselves spending time on activities that are neither urgent nor important. These activities consume their time. They should focus on what is both important and urgent, and also on what is important but not urgent.

For example, exam and coursework deadlines are urgent and important. If they miss them, there are consequences. But they also need to invest in things that are important yet not urgent like their values and priorities. If you value friendships, family, self-development, or a hobby but don't give them time, your mental health and self-esteem will suffer over time.

Students often get stuck in "firefighting" tasks that feel urgent but are not truly important like emails, interruptions, phone calls. These should be delegated or minimized.

Another unhelpful quadrant is time-wasting: gaming, excessive social media, and other activities that don't yield positive results. We often slide into these when we're burnt out.



## 2

### Physical and mental activity

Another key strategy for managing stress is regular physical activity. There's substantial research on this. For example, a 2014 paper in the Sports Medicine journal found that people who exercise regularly report lower cortisol levels and better emotion regulation. Exercise helps release built-up stress and gives you a healthy way to burn off excess energy.

It doesn't have to be weightlifting. Any movement helps: walking, jogging, or team sports. Anything that gets you moving should be part of stress management. Choose what fits your age, ability, and preference, then make it a regular part of your routine.

Mental activities are also essential. Reading in particular is a habit worth building into your routine. A 2009 study by the University of Sussex found that just six minutes of reading a day can reduce stress levels by nearly 70 percent.

Mindfulness is another effective tool to manage stress. Begin with simple breathing practice. Use relaxed or diaphragmatic breathing. Fix your attention on the breath; air flowing in, pausing in the belly, then flowing out. Keep returning your focus there whenever it wanders. The goal is to anchor your attention to a single point. No overthinking, worrying, or dwelling on the past; you're simply in the moment, focusing on each in-breath and out-breath.

## 3

### Balanced lifestyle

Think of Maslow's hierarchy of needs: the foundation is basic needs like sleep and nutrition, which students frequently neglect, especially before exams, when they try to pull all-nighters.

There's no universal "magic number" for sleep; some people function well on six hours, others on eight. What matters is getting adequate, consistent rest.

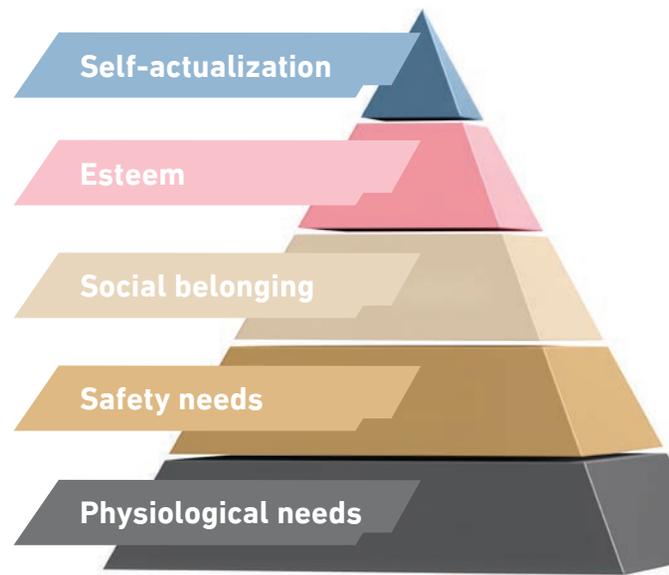
Then comes nutrition. What you put into your body affects how you function. Some foods may tire you or make you feel sluggish; others support steady energy and mood. In the same way you'd use the best fuel and oil for a car, your body performs better with quality nutrition. Aim for a balanced diet.

Equally important is social connection. In Maslow's hierarchy, beyond basic needs, we have belonging, love, and acceptance.

Regular, meaningful interaction with friends and family supports emotional wellbeing and resilience. Excessive use of social media can undermine real social connections.

We live in an era of online "friends" and likes, but social-media friends are often superficial. You may have a large number of followers, but you will likely never know most of their names.

Online "friends" don't provide the same benefits as genuine friendships. They rarely help you work through difficulties or discuss real issues. People generally function better with a sense of community and belonging. Humans need genuine social stimulation and real-world interaction. Nothing can replace face-to-face relationships.





### Dealing with tough situations

In many cases, the source of stress is beyond our control, like losing a loved one, falling ill, or being subjected to bullying. In such situations, ignoring or suppressing your feelings will not ease the pain, and can intensify them, leading to more serious consequences and deeper psychological problems, as Ammar explains:

“Make space for grief. You need a safe space to talk through what happened and learn how to cope. It is not about forgetting; you won’t forget a loss.



Over time, though, you can come to terms with it and see it differently. Talk to someone you trust, like a family member or a close friend, and don’t hesitate to seek professional support if you feel you need it. When you do not talk about it, you keep everything in your head and become your only point of reference, viewing the situation through your own bias.”



### Stress or something more serious?

Now, you have learned how stress can impact our lives and why you should never ignore its signs, but how to tell the difference between stress and more serious issues like depression?

People often use clinical terms as pop language. “I am depressed,” or “I am OCD” without proper clinical assessment.

The experienced psychologist advises to notice how long the symptoms last, and monitor their consistency and severity. “Stress tends to come and go, tied to specific situations like exam deadlines or work pressure. Low mood or depression is usually persistent. Look for core symptoms of depression, especially loss of interest or pleasure, when activities you used to enjoy like seeing friends, gaming, hobbies no longer feel rewarding, and you have little motivation to do them. You might also struggle to switch off and sleep well, or notice your appetite shift in either direction; overeating or not eating at all. Monitor your daily functioning at work, school, and relationships. If common tasks start to feel like a chore or become overwhelming, that’s another clue. People suffering from depression may also see themselves through a harsh, negative lens, believing they lack intrinsic value,” he says.

“If these feelings continue for more than two weeks, without improvement, that points beyond routine stress, and it would be better to seek professional help from a therapist as soon as possible,” he adds.



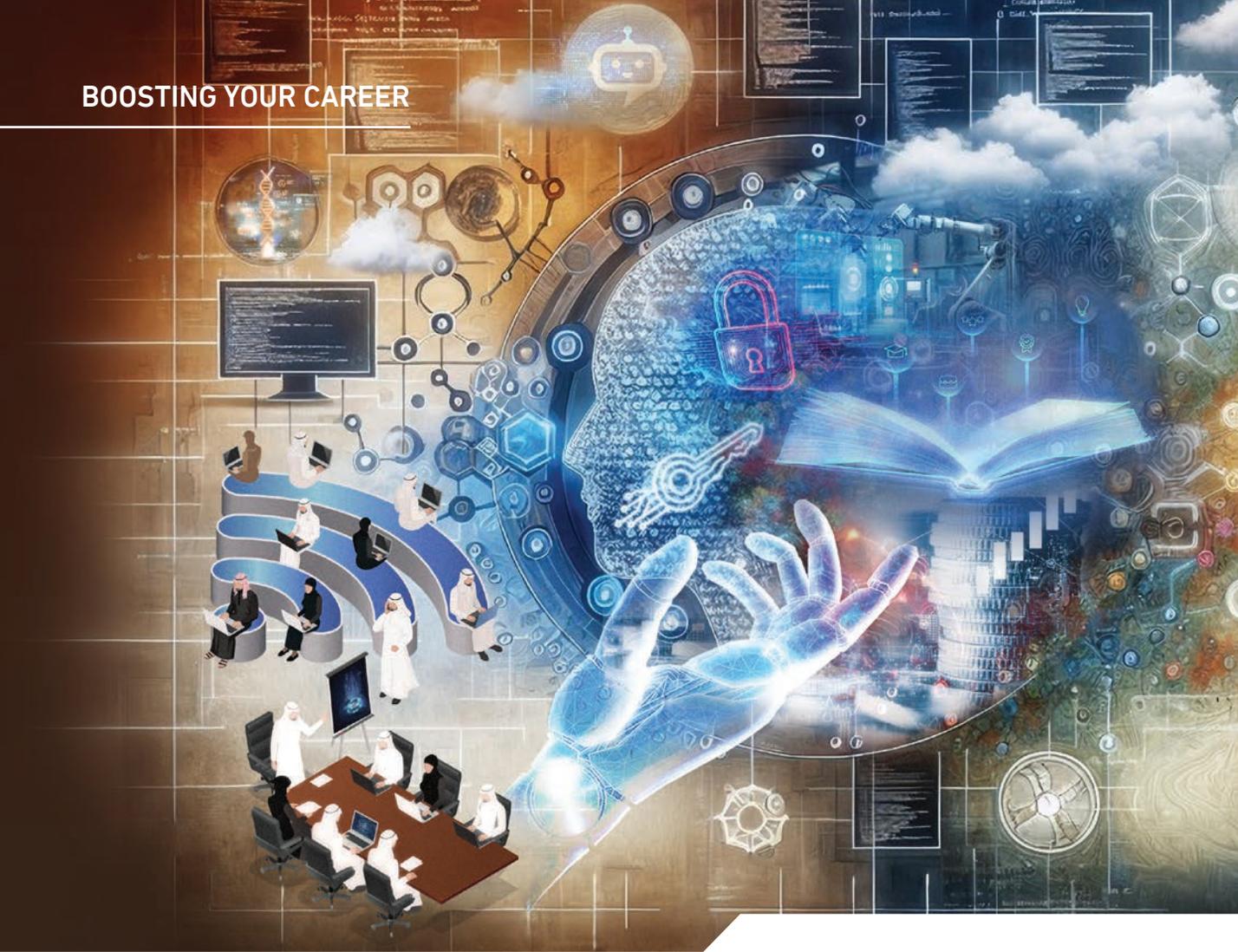
## **Mental health is no less important than physical health**

Ammar praises the significant steps Qatar has taken in recent years to raise awareness of mental health and reduce the stigma some still associate with therapy. He advises young people to closely monitor their emotions and not to hesitate to seek professional help if they go through difficult times and don't feel comfortable sharing what they are experiencing with family or friends.

He offers this final advice to our young readers: "Mental health should be taken as seriously as physical health. Seeking therapy is a preventive move toward wellness, and it merits the same priority as any other aspect of health.

Real improvement should come from within, and therapists can offer a non-judgmental space where you can open up, explore your feelings, and see things from a different perspective. They can help you clarify and develop your guiding philosophy, which is the set of core beliefs, values and principles that steer your decisions and help you face challenges and solve problems. Your philosophy helps you know your "why", treat challenges as opportunities to grow, and view failures as lessons, instead of focusing on failure itself, or blaming yourself. You will learn to channel your energy into improving your performance and reaching your potential."

BOOSTING YOUR CAREER



# BUILDING YOUR CAREER IN THE AGE OF AI

**WHAT HAS  
CHANGED AND HOW  
TO GET READY**

Just a few years ago, the rapid rise of generative AI reshaped how millions of people work, learn, and make decisions. What began as a tool for writing, translation, research, and visual content quickly evolved into something more personal: a digital adviser many now consult on decisions related to health, finances, and education. Despite the risks, its convenience makes it hard to put aside.



**By 2030, the global AI market is expected to surpass the one-trillion-dollar mark—five to seven times its current size.**

Governments and international organizations have responded by developing strategies along two main tracks. The first views AI as a driver of economic and social development, investing in innovation, growth, and improved services. The second focuses on protection: building strong legal and regulatory frameworks that safeguard privacy, ensure fairness, and reduce potential harms. AI has moved far beyond a promising technology; it is now a defining global issue tied to the future of work and society.

For young people especially, cutting through the hype and anxiety is essential. They need skills that equip them to participate in shaping the future, not just observe it. Critical thinking will help them distinguish fact from exaggeration, while technical skills will enable them to use AI tools effectively. Above all, they need deeply human strengths: creativity, communication, empathy, and ethical judgment, qualities no machine can authentically replace. With this combination, young people can shift from being worried spectators to active contributors.

In the pages ahead, we offer a clearer look at how AI is transforming education and work. Two AI experts share practical insights drawn from years of hands-on experience, helping readers understand what to expect and how to prepare.

AI hasn't only changed individual habits; it has transformed the world of work. A global race to acquire new skills has begun, and entirely new roles have emerged. Professionals across industries now rely on AI for writing, research, planning, and content creation. Students, meanwhile, are rethinking their majors and career paths as they face unsettling questions: Which skills will remain uniquely human? Which ones will shift to machines? How far will AI really go and could entire professions disappear?

Opinions on these questions are sharply divided. Some, including prominent AI pioneers, warn of severe risks: large-scale job losses, loss of control over the technology, and major social disruption. Others take a more balanced view, arguing that AI will reshape work rather than erase it, primarily by enhancing productivity while preserving the human role. They emphasize that the true impact of AI depends on the choices societies make: how we use it, and what rules we put in place to govern it.

**A 2023 McKinsey & Company report estimated that generative AI could contribute between \$2.6 and \$4.4 trillion to the global economy annually through productive gains. As AI tools become embedded in software and business workflows, that impact could nearly double to \$6.1 and \$7.9 trillion a year.**

# AI and the Future of Work

The world's leading institutions, from the International Labour Organization to the World Economic Forum, are focused on a single question: What will AI do to our jobs? Their conclusion is clear: we are living through a fundamental transformation in the nature of work.

Public debate is split between two narratives. One warns of widespread job losses as entire professions face technological displacement. The other highlights emerging opportunities, with new roles created by AI technologies—many of which we cannot yet fully imagine. Yet both perspectives agree on one point: future career success will depend on a blend of advanced digital skills and deeply human soft skills.

A key concern is the future of entry-level roles, which traditionally serve as launching pads for new graduates. Will AI pull the ladder before young professionals can even attempt to climb up?

The data offers a sobering perspective. The International Labour Organization's 2025 report projects that generative AI will fundamentally reshape nearly one-quarter of the world's jobs, with routine office work most affected. These tasks, long the backbone of entry-level positions, are among the most vulnerable to automation.



Meanwhile, The World Economic Forum's 2025 Future of Jobs Report predicts that AI and information-processing technologies will remain the primary drivers of labor-market change through 2030. While they estimate that 92 million jobs will be displaced, they also anticipate the creation of around 170 million new roles. In other words, for every job lost, almost two new ones are expected to emerge.

## Which jobs are most at risk?

This rapidly shifting landscape presents a major challenge for young people entering the workforce. They're expected to continually upgrade their skills to meet evolving employer demands, while education systems struggle to keep their curricula aligned with the pace of change. Jobs most vulnerable to AI are those built around routine, repetitive tasks—roles that require little creativity, empathy, critical thinking, or ethical judgment. In most cases, the threat is not full replacement but partial automation. Positions that still rely on distinctly human abilities are far less likely to disappear, even as AI takes over their more predictable components.

## A Call for Optimism

To better understand how AI is reshaping the world of work, we spoke with Dr. Sanjay Chawla, Chief Scientist at the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

QCRI, established in 2010 under Hamad Bin Khalifa University, supports Qatar Foundation's mission to strengthen the country's innovation and technology capabilities and guide its transition from a carbon-based to a knowledge-based economy. Dr. Chawla's research focuses on mining and machine learning. He contributed to Qatar's first National AI Strategy (2019) and co-authored a 2021 report on the impact of AI on employment in the country, which clearly highlighted that white-collar jobs are likely to be more affected by AI than blue-collar jobs.

"Clearly, there are indications that some job tasks, like programming, are being impacted by AI.

The technology is being used more for job augmentation, as we had predicted in our AI for Jobs report. AI is an excellent tool for idea generation. However, due to the problem of 'hallucination', when Generative AI makes occasional mistakes, output must be verified, for which some level of expertise is required," Dr. Chawla explains.

Regarding agentic AI, systems capable of breaking down complex tasks into smaller, coordinated subtasks, Dr. Chawla believes it is too early to assess the full impact on advanced jobs, as the technology is still evolving. His advice is straightforward: avoid using AI for high-risk tasks where mistakes could be costly, but feel free to use it for medium or low-risk tasks where it can genuinely improve efficiency and performance.

## Will we lose our cognitive abilities?

As reliance on generative AI grows, many worry that constant use of tools like ChatGPT could weaken our cognitive abilities. If we turn to AI for every answer, will we eventually lose our ability to think for ourselves?

According to Dr. Chawla, the evidence so far does not support these concerns. He believes AI will not erode critical thinking or problem-solving skills, but it may change how we apply them. The key, he says, is in how we choose to use AI. It should be treated as a tool that enhances our thinking, not a substitute for it. As long as we maintain that balance, our cognitive abilities will be just fine.

"The jury is out on that. Similar arguments were made about calculators forty years ago. The fact is that new technology always displaces jobs, but there is no real evidence that human critical thinking and problem-solving skills are negatively impacted. In fact, the evidence points in the other direction. Take the example of chess. Although AI platforms can easily beat humans, the game's popularity among humans is growing," he explains.

## Balanced perspective

Amid growing concerns among students about their academic and career prospects in the age of AI, Dr. Chawla offers a balanced outlook, one that is both realistic and optimistic. Rather than viewing AI as a threat or competitor, he encourages students to adopt a smart, proactive approach: embrace AI, understand its fundamentals, and explore it according to their interests. But he stresses an important distinction: AI should be used as a knowledge enhancer, not a shortcut.

Learning to work with AI is no longer optional for professionals across all sectors. Labor market reports indicate that AI-related skills are now among the most sought-after by employers. For professionals already in the workforce, acquiring these skills is crucial to staying competitive.

Dr. Chawla notes that today's situation mirrors the moment computers first entered the workplace. Everyone, regardless of age or experience, had to learn basic computer skills to remain relevant. The same is now true for artificial intelligence. He urges professionals to actively look for opportunities within their daily workflow to integrate AI tools—starting with small, manageable use cases and ensuring that AI is used in a reliable and responsible manner.

His core advice is clear: "Get familiar with the basics of AI and understand both its strengths and weaknesses. Current AI technology is known to have a capability–reliability gap. Everybody needs to be aware of that and use it in a judicious and prudent manner," he says.

Dr. Chawla also believes generative AI could significantly accelerate Qatar's tech sector. He offers a compelling example: "If the State can deploy its own AI cloud and use both internal and external talent to build locally relevant AI applications in fields like Oil & Gas, and healthcare, then with the leverage that GenAI provides it can gain a competitive edge over regional competitors."



### Fanar

A generative AI model designed specifically for the Arabic language. Built on a robust linguistic framework and powered by advanced algorithms, Fanar excels in Arabic-centric thinking, understanding nuanced meanings, and capturing subtle linguistic distinctions.

Discover more by scanning this QR Code:



# How to start a career in AI?

By now, it's clear: AI is not just a trend. It is a defining force shaping the future of work and it's evolving at lightning speed. Embracing AI, learning to work with it, and leveraging it will be essential to developing your career.

But what if you want to build your career within AI itself? If you're a student mapping your professional path, you may be asking: Is this the right field for me and if so, where do I start? While only you can decide your fit, we can point you in the right direction.

We spoke with Dr. Maria Nazir, Assistant Professor in Artificial Intelligence at City University Qatar in partnership with Ulster University. She teaches in the Bachelor of Engineering in Artificial Intelligence, the first program of its kind in Qatar, launched in 2023. Her experience spans machine learning, healthcare, and explainable AI, while her research focuses on artificial intelligence in medical imaging, image processing, computer vision, and machine learning for data analysis.

Dr. Nazir is passionate about shaping the next generation of AI leaders. She believes AI suits students who enjoy problem solving, logical reasoning, and creativity. "If you're interested in how technology may replicate human intelligence, such as vision, speech, or decision-making, you're already thinking like an AI researcher. Strong interests in mathematics, statistics, computer science, and data analysis form a solid basis." She explains further, "however, curiosity, persistence, and ethical awareness are equally vital, because AI is about altering how society utilizes technology responsibly, not just the technical aspects."

Alongside writing, content creation, translation, and customer service, programming is among the fields most impacted by generative AI. Some have argued that coding is no longer worth learning, while others question computer science as a career choice.

The reality is different. Generative AI is transforming software development, but mostly in positive ways: it boosts productivity and handles routine tasks, while human developers remain essential for understanding context, designing complex systems, ensuring security, and reviewing AI output. Simple websites or prototypes can be generated by AI, but building robust, scalable applications remains a human job.

In short, AI has completely reshaped programming. Developers are now architects, supervisors, and critical editors, focusing on the most creative and complex work. AI is a powerful co-pilot, not a replacement.

"Computer science offers the logical and mathematical foundation for AI. While modern AI technologies simplify some coding tasks, understanding how algorithms function behind the scenes is crucial. Programming allows you to use, customize, and create AI technologies. Combined with critical thinking, creativity, and subject knowledge, it makes students more versatile in an AI-driven world," she says.



## Dr. Maria Nazir highlights some key career tracks in AI:

### Current Occupations

Machine Learning Engineer	Create and implement AI models
Data Scientist	Extract insights from complex datasets
AI Research Scientist	Push the frontiers of new algorithms
Computer Vision/NLP Specialist	Focus on image recognition, language modeling, and multimodal AI
AI Specialist in Healthcare, Finance, and Robotics	Apply AI to domain-specific challenges

### Emerging Occupations

AI Ethicist
AI Safety Engineer
Human-AI Interaction Designer
AI Policy Specialist

Despite the advances of agentic AI, Dr. Nazir believes it is unlikely to replace leadership or complex decision-making roles: "These roles require judgement, empathy, ethical reasoning and responsibility, and they are all unique to humans. Instead, I envision AI as a powerful collaborator taking over routine jobs while humans focus on creativity, strategy, and innovation."

Finally, Dr. Nazir offers essential advice for anyone looking to break into the AI field.

- Build a solid foundation in mathematics, programming, and logical reasoning - the "language" of AI.
- Explore free AI tools, coding lessons, and small projects, such as chatbots or data analysis.
- Stay curious about real-world challenges like healthcare, climate change, education, and social issues. AI is a tool; the best AI specialists understand which issues are worth solving.
- Cultivate ethical thinking and ask yourself not only what AI can accomplish, but also what it should do.
- Consider sustainable approaches and support green AI initiatives.



# CAREER GUIDANCE IN QATAR

## FROM MOMENTUM TO A COHERENT SYSTEM

### A Conversation with Dr. Hamda Al-Naimi

Over the past two decades, Qatar has worked to align its education and labor systems more closely with the Qatar National Vision 2030. Along the way, career guidance has emerged as the practical bridge connecting the Vision's human, social, economic, and environmental pillars, where strategy and policy meet delivery. Since 2015, Qatar Career Development Center (QCDC) has played a convening role, launching dialogue platforms and coordinating efforts across ministries, universities, and employers. The "Career Guidance Stakeholders Meeting", held in 2018 and again in 2022, helped cement partnerships and laid the groundwork for a national, integrated framework.

In this interview for Career Guide, we look at that journey through the lens of one of the field's leading voices: Dr. Hamda Hamad Al-Naimi, a career guidance and development expert. We discuss the progress Qatar has made, what still needs to change, and the practical steps practitioners and decision-makers can take to professionalize the field and scale its impact.

## A Milestone for the Region

In May 2025, Dr. Al-Naimi became the first career counselor in the Gulf region to earn the National Career Development Association's (NCDA) Facilitating Career Development (FCD) Master Trainer credential. The designation enables her to prepare and certify FCD instructors, who in turn train practitioners to help individuals plan, choose, and advance along their career paths. This achievement is one more step in a record of service that spans collaboration with major public and educational institutions in Qatar, including nearly three years at QCDC as Senior Career Development Specialist.

## A Turning Point

Dr. Al-Naimi did not set out to become a career counselor. She began as a high-school mathematics teacher after earning a B.Ed. from Qatar University, followed by a master's degree in secondary education and teaching from Ohio University in the United States. At the time, a clear gap had opened between the outcomes of independent secondary schools and the admission requirements of Education City universities. In response, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education introduced academic advising in schools, and the school principal asked her to lead the effort.

"One year in that role changed the way I saw my purpose," she recalls. "Teaching advanced math to students who had no clear sense of what they wanted to study or who they hoped to become felt like putting the cart before the horse. The new vantage point gave me a deeper understanding of students' needs. I saw a real deficit in career decision-making. Guidance had to come before instruction."



**Graduates of the FCD program may pursue two international credentials: NCDA's Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP) and the Global Career Development Facilitator (GCDF) from the Center for Credentialing & Education.**

Determined to build a stronger academic foundation, she pursued a Ph.D. at the University of Reading in the U.K., specializing in higher education career guidance. Her dissertation examined how Qatari 12th-graders make educational and career choices—what influences them and why—based on a year-long field study in two public secondary schools, one for girls and one for boys.

## What the Research Shows

The study found that parents and older peers exert the strongest influence on students' academic and career decisions. For students who were undecided or hesitant, paternal pressure stood out as the most decisive factor. The research recommended intentionally involving parents and older peers in school-based career guidance and raising families' awareness of their pivotal role.

Almost eight years later, Dr. Al-Naimi still sees fathers as the primary influence; sometimes for the better, by supporting realistic choices, and sometimes to students' detriment, by pushing beyond their abilities or limiting ambitions due to cultural or social constraints. Even so, she detects a positive shift: "Students' decisions have improved, better aligned with their abilities and with labor-market needs. In my view, that is largely because scholarship platforms now publish clearer, more accessible labor-market information. Interestingly, that information has shaped parents' thinking even more than students."

### From Momentum to System

For Dr. Al-Naimi, empowering career guidance is the most reliable way to create sustainable change, helping students choose pathways that fit their aptitudes and ambitions while also serving the country's long-term economic diversification. She believes Qatar has made meaningful progress in recent years through the efforts of ministries, institutions, and universities. However, turning that progress into a durable impact requires one unified, coherent national framework. "There are good actors everywhere, but if we are serious about elevating career guidance in Qatar, we need a clear coordinating body, whether a unit reporting to the Cabinet or a professional association, to bring every partner to the same table."

Her message resonates across audiences—students, parents, employers, and policymakers alike. Career guidance must be placed where its strategic value is recognized as a mechanism that steers Qatar's workforce toward national goals.

She also urges learning from peers across the GCC, noting Saudi Arabia's "rapid advances in a short time," while emphasizing that Qatar has been a regional pioneer in institutionalizing the field. However, "exchange accelerates institutional learning," she argues.

### Standards, Licensing, and Public Trust

Professionalization is the next frontier. Dr. Al-Naimi encourages academic advisors and career development practitioners to pursue accredited learning pathways and international credentials as a matter of routine professional development. Just as important, she calls for a national reference authority to license practitioners, set standards of practice, monitor performance, and regulate service delivery: "We must ensure that those advising our young people are authorized and equipped with the competencies, knowledge, and tools the job demands. This protects families from unqualified providers and builds public confidence in the profession."



Some argue that international models of career guidance don't translate well to Gulf societies. Dr. Al-Naimi disagrees. Empowering people to become productive contributors is a universal core purpose, she says, and adaptation is both possible and necessary. "In the United States, you might see these practices applied first in complex cases, supporting individuals reentering society after incarceration, for example. In our context, we begin from a different starting point: students who simply need direction to chart a path. With thoughtful cultural and institutional adaptation, global best practices work here."

### The AI Question

Artificial intelligence will have a certain and growing impact on guidance and advising, yet it will never replace the human connection between counselor and student. Dr. Al-Naimi advocates for practical, cautious adoption. "AI can be a powerful tool, but it should streamline the counselor's work, not do it for them. Practitioners must understand AI's errors, biases, and limitations and safeguard student data. Professional judgment, grounded in training and experience, must have the final word."

Given the rapid evolution of AI, she urges continuous monitoring and research to harness its benefits responsibly.



## Key to Career Success

Dr. Al-Naimi closes with advice for anyone seeking progress in their own career. "Build yourself honestly and deliberately. Start with a candid self-assessment of your strengths and weaknesses. Close the gaps. Strengthen both your technical and life skills: time management, problem-solving, and communication. Today, these are non-negotiable for a successful career. They help you execute and overcome challenges that technical skills alone can't solve."

"Make lifelong learning your default. A graduate degree without the will to keep updating and sharpening your skills quickly loses its value and limits your ability to keep pace with a changing field."



## THE ACADEMIC ADVISOR

# Q&A

### Ibtisam Mohammed Al-Yafie

Head of Academic and Career Guidance  
Schools and Student Affairs Department - MoEHE

Starting with this issue of Career Guide, we are introducing a new section that shines a light on the reality of academic and career guidance in Qatar's schools, through the eyes of the practitioners on the ground, and the policymakers who shape the system. In each installment, we'll ask why our guests chose this field, unpack what their day-to-day work looks like, explore the hurdles they face and how they navigate them, and hear their hopes for the future. This is also an opportunity to address their messages to you all directly.

For our debut, we sit down with Ms. Ibtisam Mohammed Al-Yafie, Head of Academic and Career Guidance at the Schools and Student Affairs Department, Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE).

Before taking on her current role, Al-Yafie spent years as an academic counselor at Amna bint Wahab Secondary School for Girls. She is a Certified Career Services Provider (CCSP), accredited by the National Career Development Association (NCDA), and holds British Council accreditation. She began her career as an English teacher after graduating from Qatar University's College of Arts and Sciences.

#### Why did you choose academic counseling and, specifically, career guidance?

I was drawn to the work because it helps students plan their academic and career futures in line with their strengths, interests, and labor market realities. Career guidance isn't just "giving advice." It's about co-creating realistic career plans that improve a student's odds of success and smooth their transition into the world of work. For me, it's a way to serve society: preparing a generation that can chart its path with confidence, make informed decisions, keep pace with change, and ultimately give back to the country.

#### What are the biggest challenges on the ground?

Meeting a wide spectrum of student needs with limited time is the toughest. In many schools, a single counselor serves a very large student body, which adds considerable pressure. There's also a lingering gap in awareness among some students and parents about the value of academic and career guidance; this limits the reach I have.

### **How do you work around those challenges?**

I rely on disciplined planning: clear work plans, tight scheduling, and modern counseling methods that account for individual differences. That includes one-to-one sessions, group guidance, and structured workshops. Just as important, I bring parents into the conversation, by holding awareness sessions and joint meetings which help pull everyone in the same direction. Helping the community understand that guidance drives student success can make all the difference.

### **Where do parents fit in, and what helps most?**

Parents play a pivotal role by creating a supportive home environment where students feel safe to express interests without fear of judgment or comparison. Through attentive listening and open, calm dialogue, young people gain a better understanding of themselves.

Second, avoid imposing choices; steering a student into a major based on family preference or tradition can stifle genuine and unique potential.

Third, engage positively: attend school guidance events and stay in contact with counselors to understand opportunities and planning timelines.

Finally, champion lifelong learning and personal responsibility so students own their choices and build careers that match their abilities and ambitions, and most importantly, bring them fulfillment.

### **Your top piece of advice for students mapping their career paths?**

Start with self-exploration: know your strengths and interests, then connect them to real opportunities in the labor market. A successful path isn't only about "hot" fields. It's where passion, capability, and opportunity meet. Keep learning, because in a fast-moving market, adaptability is your strongest asset.

### **What keeps you passionate about this field?**

Watching students discover the right-fit path and balance their interests with real opportunities is what drives me. Moments like these inspire me to keep growing, stay curious, and learn continuously. As the field evolves, I stay up to date with new theories, tools, and practices because our students deserve nothing less.

### **How have international certifications shaped your practice?**

They've opened doors to global best practices and tools and helped me align my work with internationally recognized professional standards, then adapt them to our local context. The result is better quality guidance and more grounded, realistic planning with students.

### **What ambitions are still on your horizon?**

I want to keep sharpening my skills and leverage new technologies to support students more effectively. I'm also eager to help design and deliver integrated guidance programs that strengthen students' self-awareness and decision-making.

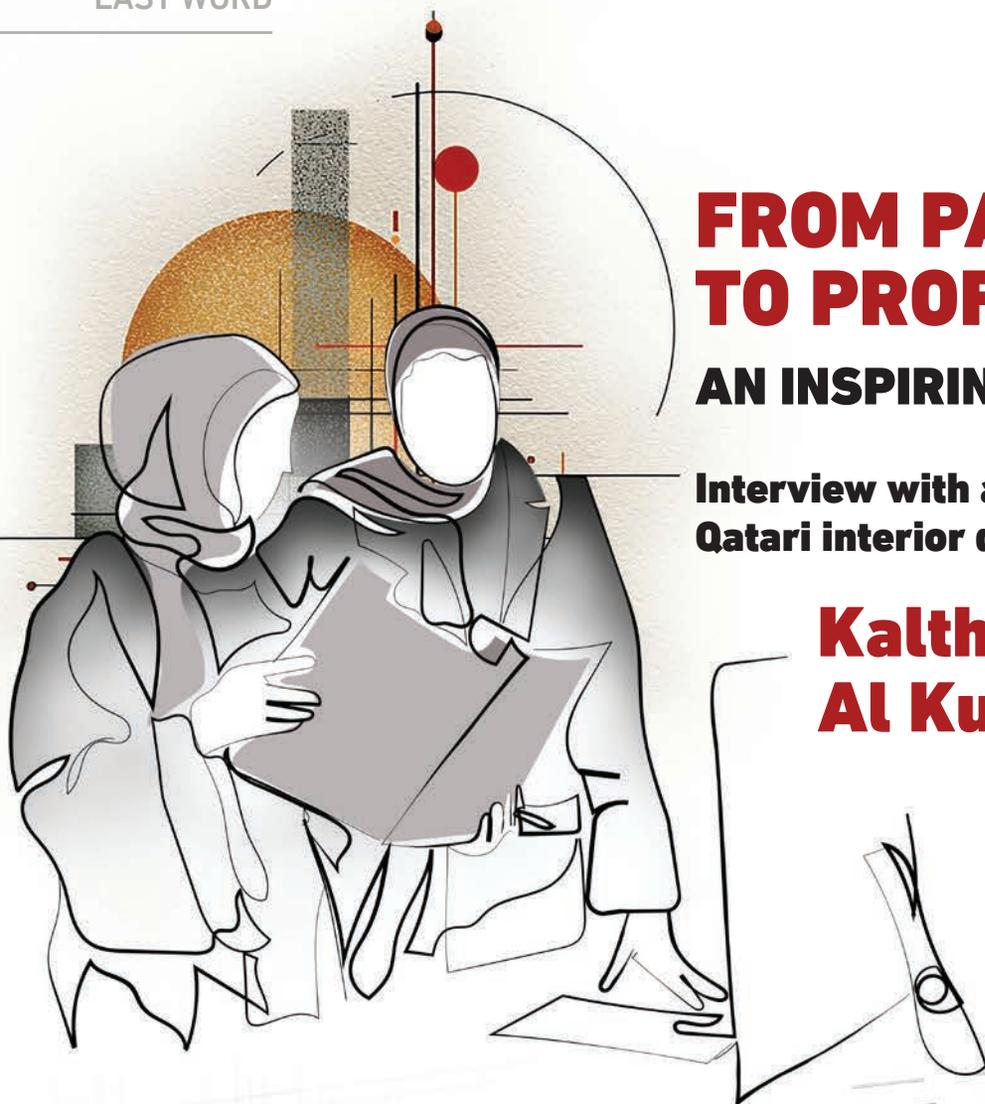
I also hope to help shape Qatar's guidance ecosystem through innovative initiatives and partnerships with schools, universities, and employers, making career guidance an essential part of how we prepare students for the future. On a personal level, I strive to lead by example by continuously learning, sharing knowledge, and collaborating, leaving a positive impact wherever I work and, most importantly, in the lives of the students we support.

# FROM PASSION TO PROFESSION

## AN INSPIRING JOURNEY

Interview with award-winning  
Qatari interior designer

**Kaltham  
Al Kuwari**



**We often map out meticulous plans, only to discover, through trial and experience, that we need to change course. That takes an open mind, a willingness to read the signals life sends us, and above all, faith that we can reach our goals despite the bumps along the way. Few stories capture that truth better than that of Kaltham Al Kuwari, one of Qatar's standout names in interior design.**

Together with her business partner and longtime collaborator, Aisha Al Mohannadi, Al Kuwari founded 'Design House Interiors,' now among the most recognized interior design firms in the local market. Despite this success, her path to the studio floor began somewhere else entirely.

Raised in a family that nurtured her love of art and drawing, Al Kuwari grew up in an environment that encouraged her to explore careers aligned with her strengths. As a high schooler, she found herself torn: study fashion design, her first passion, or pursue graphic design, a field she also enjoyed and for which she already had a solid foundation? She enrolled at VCUarts Qatar with a plan to decide later; the first year there is a foundation year that introduces students to design and its many branches.

## **A Decisive Turn**

By the end of that year, she chose interior design. We asked her how she came to that decision. "What I learned in a few months changed the way I saw art," she says, "Taste is relative. You don't judge an artist by their personal taste; you judge them by their ability to shape an idea and communicate it in a distinctive, valuable way."

She continues: "I tried different design disciplines during the foundation year. When I entered the fashion studio, I realized it didn't match who I am or what I expected. Interior design, on the other hand, opened a new horizon. I learned it's about far more than décor, color, and finishes; it's the study of space and its effect on people. The way you place furniture, plan circulation, and use light can influence a person's mood, and even their health. That human dimension drew me in, and I knew I had to go deeper."

Al Kuwari excelled in the VCUarts Qatar Honors Program and, on her professors' encouragement, applied for, and became the first student from the college to receive, the Qatar Education Excellence Award. After graduating, she joined the interior design department of a contracting company. The reality, however, fell short. "It was a major disappointment," she recalls, "Many local companies developed a scope of work and then outsourced the actual design to external firms. My job became sending briefs to those offices. I wanted to design myself, to work on projects where I could leave my mark and apply what I learned. I didn't want to lose my passion."

## **A Turning Point**

With few immediate alternatives, Al Kuwari chose patience: building experience and adding skills while keeping the dream of launching her own company alive. A business course proved pivotal.

The instructor emphasized that many industry giants, like Apple and Facebook, were launched by people in their early twenties. Don't wait for the "perfect" moment, he urged; it rarely arrives. If you have an idea that serves your community and meets real market needs, start now. Begin while your responsibilities are lighter and your time more flexible: conditions that may change later.

"I was deeply moved," Al Kuwari says, "Why wait to 'gain experience' when I could gain it by working on my own project? I also realized the local market needed interior design firms attuned to Qatari culture; many companies were expatriated and naturally reflected their own aesthetics. That sealed it for me: I would start my own firm."



### First Steps

Another lesson from that course stuck: collaborative partners are critical. No one can do everything alone. “The first person who came to mind was Aisha Al Mohannadi,” she says, “We’d studied together and always collaborated on projects. We hadn’t spoken in months after graduation, but when I called, she loved the idea. We aligned on everything. We didn’t need much capital as we were providing a service, not selling a product. We were the only two employees. We got the licenses and founded ‘Design House Interiors’ in 2018.”

At first, they met prospective clients in public spaces. As trust grew, so did commissions. They eventually rented a small office and divided responsibilities, prioritizing execution quality and visibility over early profits, until the team began to scale.

### Remarkable Growth

Seven years on, the client base has expanded sharply, and the team has grown to around 30. Their services have widened as well. Beyond interiors, the firm now designs products and runs in-house lines for furniture, lighting, and carpets. Last year, they added landscape and outdoor spatial design, and this year, interior architectural services, façade design, and architectural drafting.

What sets their work apart, Al Kuwari said, is translating client needs into designs that are beautiful and genuinely functional. “We pour everything we have into each project. We take pride in our craft. Our passion shows, and clients feel it. Nothing compares to reading a message from a client who tells us our design changed their daily life. Interior design can reshape how people live in and relate to their spaces. We’ve seen it again and again.”

She credits her partnership with Al Mohannadi as vital to sustaining that success. “I’m lucky to have her. Running a company alone, while also being a mother and managing a household, is incredibly demanding. Entrepreneurship doesn’t leave much time for rest, holidays, or even family. We complement each other. I handle operations and administration; Aisha brings a refined artistic sensibility and a gift for presenting ideas in compelling ways.”



## Headwinds and Openings

In Al Kuwari's view, the toughest challenges for interior design firms in Qatar are commercial and operational rather than demand-driven: rising costs and permitting processes that can be relatively complex. Product design added new hurdles: customs clearance, high shipping costs, and the risk of damage with limited compensation. As for competing with larger firms, she sees it as 'healthy,' as different tastes require diverse options, and excellence wins clients in the end.

On artificial intelligence, especially in creative sectors, her take is measured. Claims that AI will replace interior designers are overstated. "Designers must use AI tools to speed certain tasks," she says, "and that requires clear thinking and the skill to write precise prompts. But AI can't replicate what hinges on human sensibility. It lacks the singular aesthetic sense that distinguishes one designer from another: its output mirrors training data drawn from others' work. You may get something visually appealing, but it cannot match what a seasoned interior designer creates."

## Ambition with a Purpose

Al Kuwari aims to keep developing the firm and broadening its services alongside her partner. However, ambitions extend beyond business growth. "I'm shaping an initiative that gives back to the community," she says, "The idea is still forming, but the direction is clear: I want to use what I've learned to build something that leaves useful knowledge and a lasting, positive impact. It's the least I can do for my society."

## Parting Advice

So, should students specialize in interior design? "It's a wonderful field," Al Kuwari says, "but success hinges on genuine passion and a willingness to put in the work. If you have talent and you're serious about developing your skills, doors will open. If you're only after a degree and a job title, the road will be difficult. The profession is in demand, but opportunities are naturally fewer than, say, accounting in the financial sector."



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