



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS · UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT

SDG 16: Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

16

Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions

16



PEACE &
JUSTICE

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies, provide access to justice, and build effective, accountable institutions — across our university and the Basra community.

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16.1 Introduction: the university and strong institutions

How can a university strengthen peace, justice, and accountable institutions — within its own walls and across the society it serves?

The sixteenth Sustainable Development Goal calls for peaceful and inclusive societies, access to justice for all, and effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at every level. A university — and a college of law in particular — sits close to the heart of this goal. It educates the lawyers, judges, and administrators on whom just institutions depend; it advises government and engages the wider community; and, in the way it governs itself, it can model the transparency, representation, and freedom that strong institutions require.

How Shatt Al-Arab University delivers SDG 16

A four-step approach



Figure 1. A four-step delivery approach.

SDG 16 framework at Shatt Al-Arab University

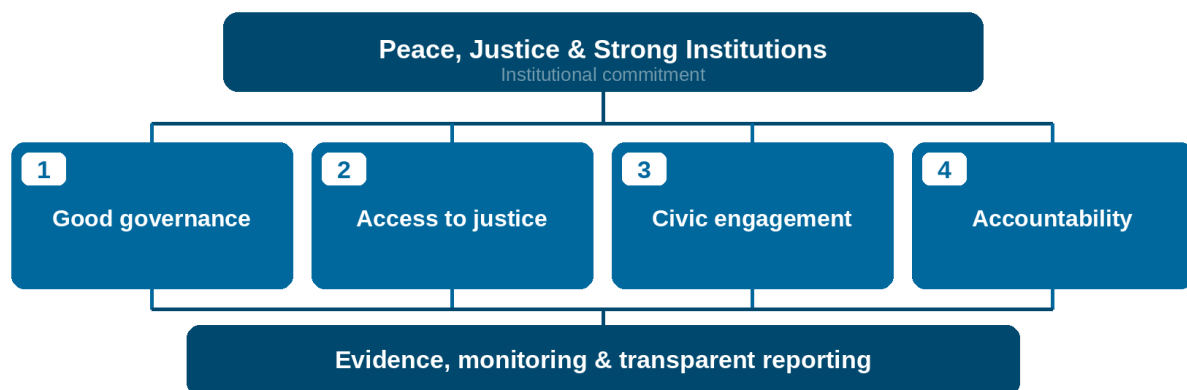


Figure 2. Institutional framework and reporting.

Shatt Al-Arab University, principally through its College of Law, contributes to Goal 16 across several connected fronts. It gives its academic staff, students, and administrators an elected voice in its own governance; it protects academic freedom; it offers expert legal advice to government bodies and engages beneficiaries from the public and private sectors; it helps educate policymakers and legislators; it takes part in government-oriented research on sustainable development; it hosts an open, neutral platform for debating the questions of the day; and it has graduated generations of lawyers who carry the principles of justice into Iraqi public life. This report brings these efforts together as a single, coherent contribution to peace, justice, and strong institutions.

16.2 Participation, representation, and academic freedom

Strong institutions begin at home. The university's own governance gives every part of its community — academic staff, students, and administrators — a genuine, elected voice, and it protects the freedom on which honest scholarship depends.

16.2.1 Elected representation in university governance

The academic staff are represented on the University Council by a member they elect themselves. This representative attends every meeting of the Council and is invited to all events bearing on the university's direction; elected annually by all academic members through the Academics' Union, the representative has a real right to influence the key decisions that shape the university's future.

Students are heard at every level when decisions are made. Student representatives carry the student voice to the university and are invited to the events that concern them; at each academic level, students elect a representative to their scientific department, responsible for conveying students' needs and problems so that they can be resolved in an academic manner. Beyond giving students a say, this involvement develops their relationship with the institution and sharpens skills such as strategic thinking and sound decision-making. Administrative staff, too, enjoy representation, able to raise their concerns directly and transparently — which strengthens administrative work and improves the university's procedures.

The value of this representation is concrete. This year the elected representative of the academics' union liaised and coordinated with the Basra Municipality Department and the governor to secure a plot of land for faculty members, alongside his work with the University Council to meet the needs and requests of the academic staff.

16.2.4 Participatory bodies that engage beneficiaries

The university runs many activities in which participatory bodies — government, the private sector, and graduate students among them — take part, carried out at the university's own expense in recognition of the role universities play in community service. These activities span all of the university's colleges. Recent examples from the College of Law include:

- 1. Community studies supporting municipal departments:** faculty members prepared studies, including work mechanisms for municipal departments, so that they can carry out their work efficiently and without wasting resources or effort.
- 2. Defining legal terminology in English:** studies prepared for the Presidency of the Basra Court of Appeal to help judges and judicial experts translate litigants' contracts correctly — particularly contracts to which the state is a party — so as to protect the state's rights toward companies, especially foreign companies that contract in English.
- 3. Training courses for government employees:** in May 2024, under Order No. 76/653 of 5 June 2023, the College of Law delivered two courses — one on the application of the State and Public Sector Employees' Discipline Act No. 14 of 1991 (as amended), with 55 employees from various Basra government bodies; and one on the rules for drafting and performing government contracts under applicable legislation, with 50 legal and administrative employees from across the governorate.

The College also prepares many legal consultations, delivered by lawyers and judges, which play a significant role in advancing sustainable development.

16.2.6 Academic freedom

The university gives its faculty members complete freedom in their research and studies: they are never required to include citations or references unrelated to their subject. A faculty member chooses an appropriate title for a study — within their field and useful to the country — and submits it to the head of department for inclusion in the annual scientific plan. Members may also speak freely about their work in the periodic seminars held regularly within the scientific departments, where their contributions are subject to free scientific discussion without pressure.

This freedom extends to career progression. Faculty members are free to complete postgraduate study and to pursue promotion to higher academic ranks: in 2023–2024, five faculty members completed the requirements for the doctorate. In teaching, members enjoy the freedom to choose how they present information to students and to draw on the latest theories and positions in their field.

A significant institutional change reinforced this culture. In 2024, Shatt Al-Arab University College became “Shatt Al-Arab University” — a transition that broadened its specialisations and opened new opportunities for employment and research, with the expectation of expanding its academic departments and admissions. The shift to university status in 2025 called for more faculty and, in turn, more research papers, articles, and books; some members earned their doctorates and two were promoted to the rank of assistant professor. All of this took place smoothly and freely, without pressure of any kind — whether in the choice of topic, title, or anything else.

16.3 Engagement with government and society

Beyond its own walls, the university puts the expertise of its academic staff at the service of government and society — advising public bodies, educating those who make and apply the law, contributing to national research, and providing an open forum for debate.

16.3.1 Expert advice to government

The university maintains close communication with government agencies and offers them advice grounded in the expertise of its academic staff. This free advice is

intended to help government, regional bodies, and the private sector develop their work and meet their goals, and faculty members provide it to a range of governmental and private agencies.

A clear example is the College of Law's set of notes on the working mechanism of the Committee for Considering Compensation Claims Submitted by Yazidi Survivors. Prepared by the College and submitted to the Iraqi Coalition for Just Reparations (C4JR) under the university's letter No. 175/216 of 2 May 2023, the notes were addressed to the Office of the Prime Minister, the Supreme Judicial Council, and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. In 2024, three College of Law faculty members were elected as president and members of the Union of Iraqi Jurists, Basra Branch, where they help convey the university's vision to official bodies, above all on legal matters. The College also cooperates with the Presidency of the Court of Appeal in supervising and refining legal research and its language, alongside consultations with esteemed lawyers and judges.

16.3.2 Awareness and education of policymakers and legislators

The university contributes to the awareness and education of policymakers and legislators through the participation of its faculty in specialised seminars and conferences, consistent with the Constitution and the principles of justice.

The College of Law took part in the Dialogue Project for Humanitarian Partnerships that Build Peace, implemented by the Iraqi Institution for Development with the support of the Center for International Dialogue. Its contribution came in the third dialogue session, held on 17 August 2023 in the district of Tel Kaif, on the mechanisms for applying the Iraqi Personal Status Act No. 188 of 1959 and its impact on peacebuilding — a session attended by representatives of sects and minorities, community leaders, civil-society activists, and legal experts. The College also helped prepare a study on the rights of Yazidi women survivors under Iraqi law and what the legislator must do to strengthen those rights, for which the university received a letter of thanks. In 2025, the theme of safety featured in many research titles, seminars, and workshops aimed at educating and raising the awareness of policymakers and legislators.

16.3.3 Participation in government research

In line with the sustainable-development strategy adopted and emphasised by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, the university has prepared proposals and projects that promote sustainable development and introduce students to the concept, its evolution, and its future effects.

The College of Law prepared lectures on sustainable development — its origins, definition, approach, and future implications, together with the seventeen development goals, their challenges, and the road map of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Up to the 2023–2024 academic year, these lectures were integrated into the human-rights course taught to all university students, so as to acquaint them with sustainable development and everything related to it in their practical lives. In 2024 the university held a symposium on women's rights and their protection from harassment and assault, alongside three courses on emergency medical assistance for sudden cases such as suffocation, drowning, and burns. It also ran related activities, including involving civil-defence personnel to teach the community how to handle emergencies, and continues to conduct community studies in law that foster sustainable development in the field.

16.3.4 A neutral platform and safe space for open dialogue

Through the College of Law, the university provides an independent platform on which legal, political, economic, and social events are discussed in the presence of interested professionals and students. This has become a fixed tradition of the academic year: contemporary issues are debated and opinions aired, with specialists — judges, economists, and law professors from within and outside the university — invited to take part. Recent sessions include:

4. **The National Oil Company Law:** its legal and economic implications, discussed both before the law came into force and again after its cancellation by the Federal Supreme Court, with economists from the University of Basra and the oil company present alongside faculty and students.
5. **Amending the Iraqi Constitution:** the possible methods and available mechanisms, examined by studying the weaknesses of the 2005 constitution,

ways to overcome them, and proposals for amendment — with constitutional-law specialists weighing how difficult amendment would now be, before faculty and students.

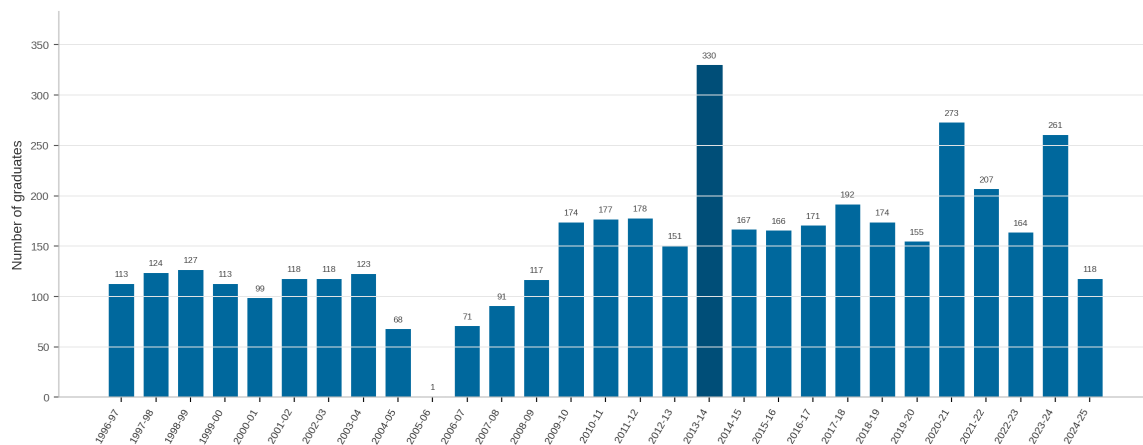
6. **International arbitration on the Ceyhan oil port:** the political, legal, and economic effects of the arbitration rulings issued in Iraq's favour against Turkey, dated 1 April 2023.

In connection with these sessions, guidance was given on choosing research topics, titles, seminars, and features in a way that focuses on the contemporary events shaping the country.

16.4 Educating for justice

16.4.1 Graduates in the field of law

Among the university's most enduring contributions to strong institutions is the steady stream of law graduates it sends into Iraqi public life. Since the 1996–1997 academic year, the College of Law has graduated cohort after cohort of lawyers — the people who go on to staff the courts, advise government, and uphold the rule of law. The chart below traces the number of graduates by academic year, and the full figures follow.



The record shows both the College's longevity and its growth: output rose markedly from around 2009 onward, reaching a peak of 330 graduates in 2013–2014 and sustaining strong cohorts since, including 273 in 2020–2021 and 261 in 2023–2024. The complete figures are set out below.

Academic year	Graduates	Academic year	Graduates
1996-1997	113	2011-2012	178
1997-1998	124	2012-2013	151
1998-1999	127	2013-2014	330
1999-2000	113	2014-2015	167
2000-2001	99	2015-2016	166
2001-2002	118	2016-2017	171
2002-2003	118	2017-2018	192
2003-2004	123	2018-2019	174
2004-2005	68	2019-2020	155
2005-2006	01	2020-2021	273
2006-2007	71	2021-2022	207
2007-2008	91	2022-2023	164
2008-2009	117	2023-2024	261
2009-2010	174	2024-2025	118
2010-2011	177		

16.5 Conclusion

Taken together, the work set out in this report shows how Shatt Al-Arab University — led by its College of Law — advances peace, justice, and strong institutions on several fronts at once. It governs itself through elected representation and protects academic freedom; it engages government and the wider community through expert advice, training, research, and an open platform for debate; and it educates, year after year, the lawyers on whom just institutions ultimately depend.

These efforts reinforce one another: representation and freedom build a credible institution, engagement carries that credibility outward into public life, and legal education renews the supply of people committed to justice. The university's contribution to Goal 16 is, by its nature, ongoing — a standing commitment to model accountable institutions at home and to strengthen the rule of law across Basra and Iraq for the generations to come.

Research contributions (Scopus-indexed publications)

Shatt Al-Arab University's research is indexed in Scopus and mapped to the UN Sustainable Development Goals by Elsevier - the same data source the THE Impact Rankings use for their research metric. The university currently records 179 documents from 59 authors (Scopus ID

60109790; last updated May 2026). The chart below shows how this output is distributed across the goals.



Figure. Scopus-indexed publications by SDG (data source: Scopus).

The following publications are mapped to SDG 16 in the Elsevier/Scopus SDG dataset (3 documents):

#	Publication title	Source & year
1	A blockchain-based federated identity framework for secure multi-domain IoT interoperability <i>Saleh, O.J., Abbas, W.F., N.Sabeeh, L., et al.</i>	Journal of Robotics and Control (JRC), 2026
2	Fashion waste management in the age of artificial intelligence: strategies and challenges <i>al-Hassan, R.A.M., Alyousuf, A.N.J., Jasim, Z.A., Kamil, K.J., Yaseen, A. T.</i>	Ethical Consumption and Responsible Innovation in Fashion Through AI, 2026
3	A comprehensive method of e-government transition for viable development in Iraq <i>Mutar, A.F., Abdullah, A.R., Jasim, O.M., Saare, M.A., Lashari, S.A.</i>	Bulletin of Electrical Engineering and Informatics, 2022