



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS • UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT

SDG 5: Gender Equality

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

5

Gender Equality

5



GENDER
EQUALITY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls — across our students, staff, and the people of Basra.

Contents

*Sustainable Development Goal 5, Gender Equality · Evidence
Submission, Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2026.*

5.1 Introduction.....	3
5.2 First-generation female students.....	6
5.3 Student access measures.....	7
5.3.1 Tracking applications, acceptance, and enrolment.....	7
5.3.2 Access and participation policy.....	9
5.3.3 Women's access schemes: scholarships and mentorship.....	10
5.3.4 Encouraging women in underrepresented subjects.....	12
5.4 Senior female academics.....	14
5.5 Women receiving degrees.....	15
5.6 Women's progress measures.....	17
5.6.1 Non-discrimination policy and awareness activities.....	17
5.6.2 Non-discrimination for transgender people.....	31
5.6.3 Maternity policy and support.....	32
5.6.4 Childcare facilities for students.....	33
5.6.5 Childcare facilities for staff and faculty.....	34
5.6.6 Women's mentoring schemes.....	35
5.6.7 Tracking graduation outcomes.....	36
5.6.8 Protecting those who report discrimination.....	37
5.6.9 Paternity policy and support.....	38
5.7 Gender equality across the University's wider SDG portfolio.....	39
5.7.1 Dedicated institutional structures for women's empowerment.....	39
5.7.2 Women in the university workforce.....	40
5.7.3 Women's participation in graduation and research.....	40
5.7.4 Financial support enabling women's access.....	41
5.7.5 Empowerment, rights, and protection initiatives.....	42
5.7.6 Partnerships advancing gender equality.....	42
Research contributions (Scopus-indexed publications).....	43

5.1 Introduction

How does Shatt Al-Arab University advance gender equality and empower women across study, work, and community life?

How Shatt Al-Arab University delivers SDG 5

A four-step approach



Figure 1. A four-step delivery approach.

SDG 5 framework at Shatt Al-Arab University

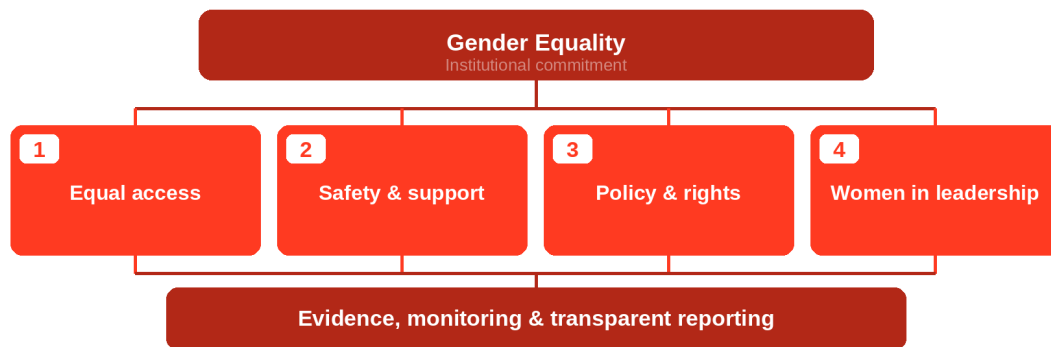


Figure 2. Institutional framework and reporting.

Education for Sustainable Development Goal 5 (ESD5) is central to advancing gender equality by guaranteeing equal rights, opportunities, and access to resources for all. Its aim is to end discrimination and violence against women and girls and to empower them to take a full part in every sphere of society — through gender-sensitive policies, protective laws, and the removal of harmful practices. As gender equality is a fundamental human right, promoting it is vital to a society's well-being, contributing to poverty reduction, better health, stronger education, and greater protection for both girls and boys.

At Shatt Al-Arab University this commitment runs through every part of academic life. The institution demonstrates its dedication to gender equality through careful evaluation of gender-specific data, proactive policies, and wide-ranging initiatives. By cultivating an inclusive and supportive environment, it works to guarantee equal opportunity for all students and staff; its governance structures, policies, and programmes are designed to eliminate discrimination and harassment while building a culture of gender sensitivity. The university monitors women's application, acceptance, and enrolment rates to safeguard diversity in admissions, and provides essential support — safety, security, and counselling — for a holistic and equitable campus experience.

The Women's Affairs Division is the cornerstone of this effort. Through awareness seminars and campaigns, and in partnership with internal and external bodies, it addresses issues such as violence prevention, combating discrimination, and protection from harassment and exploitation. It also works to empower women by raising their awareness of medical and psychological health and of their legal and political rights, and by developing their leadership, planning, and decision-making skills — enabling them to contribute actively in academic, professional, family, and social life. In doing so, the university sets a leading example among institutions striving to achieve gender equality and empower women.

Within the University's wider institutional strategy, gender equality is approached not as an isolated compliance exercise but as a cross-cutting priority woven through admissions, teaching and learning, research, human-resource management, and community engagement. The institution frames its response to Sustainable Development Goal 5 as a sustained programme of transformation rather than a series of discrete events, organised around an explicit theory of change: by widening equitable

access for women, reinforcing the support available to them during study, accelerating their progression into academic and senior decision-making roles, and protecting all members of the community from discrimination and harassment, the University expects to raise the participation, retention, and leadership of women measurably across its colleges over successive academic cycles.

This strategy is deliberately shaped by the distinctive context of Basra and southern Iraq, where economic pressures, infrastructural constraints, and prevailing social expectations have historically limited women's full participation in higher education and the wider labour market. The University positions itself as a regional catalyst for change, aligning its gender-equality objectives with national policy — in particular Iraq's Third National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security — and with the indicator framework used by the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. Strategic ownership rests with senior leadership in concert with the Women's Affairs Division, supported by the quality-assurance and human-resource units, so that objectives are owned at the highest level, progress is examined against gender-disaggregated indicators, and accountability is distributed across faculties rather than concentrated in a single office.

The sections that follow are organised to mirror the student and staff lifecycle and to map the University's activity against the internationally recognised targets of SDG 5 — from the elimination of discrimination (Target 5.1) and violence (Target 5.2) to women's full and effective participation in leadership (Target 5.5) and the use of enabling policy and technology to advance empowerment (Targets 5.b and 5.c). Each section presents the relevant evidence, interprets it in strategic terms, and identifies

the priorities through which the University intends to consolidate progress and close the gaps that remain.

5.2 First-generation female students

In the 2025–2026 academic year, 4,537 students began degree study at the university, of whom 1,614 were women — 35.6% of the intake. Of these new entrants, 2,142 were first-generation university students (47.2% of the intake), and 856 were first-generation women — 53.0% of all women starting a degree and 40.0% of all first-generation entrants. Across the institution as a whole the student body numbers 10,575. These figures reflect the university's commitment to educational equity, actively supporting women from families with no prior access to higher education, and the impact of its inclusive admissions and outreach.

Category	Number
Total number of students	10,575
Students starting a degree	4,537
First-generation students starting a degree	2,142
Women starting a degree	1,614
First-generation women starting a degree	856

Read strategically, these figures establish a baseline rather than an endpoint. The presence of first-generation women among newly enrolled students is a meaningful indicator of social mobility, signalling that the University's outreach is reaching households with no previous experience of higher education; sustaining and increasing this share is therefore treated as a deliberate equity objective rather than an incidental outcome. The University intends to monitor first-generation enrolment as a distinct cohort, to examine its retention and completion against the wider student body, and to direct mentorship, financial aid, and academic support toward the points in the student journey where first-generation women are most at risk of disengagement.

5.3 Student access measures

5.3.1 Tracking applications, acceptance, and enrolment

Does the university systematically measure and track women’s application, acceptance, and entry rates?

Yes. The university systematically tracks women’s application, acceptance, and enrolment as part of its commitment to a diverse and inclusive environment. In the 2025–2026 academic year, of 4,537 students starting a degree, 1,614 were women — 35.6% of the intake — while 2,142 entrants were first-generation students, including 856 first-generation women. The table below sets out the intake by gender; graduation outcomes are reported under sections 5.5 and 5.6.7.

Metric	Female	Male	Total
Students starting a degree	1,614	2,923	4,537
Share of intake	35.6%	64.4%	100%
First-generation students	856	1,286	2,142

The “She Leads” mentorship initiative: in February 2026, the College of Civil Engineering launched the “She Leads” Academic Mentorship Initiative to support first-year women — especially those from first-generation or marginalised backgrounds — through structured peer-to-peer mentorship. It paired 120 new students with 35 senior mentors across departments, with monthly sessions on academic planning, overcoming impostor syndrome, balancing study and home life, and careers in male-dominated fields, alongside three workshops led by women faculty and alumni (“My Journey in Academia”, “From Graduate to Leader”, and “Women in STEM and Business”). In feedback, 89% of mentees felt more academically confident, 76% of mentors reported stronger leadership and communication skills, and over 92% asked for the programme to continue. Analysed as an intake profile, the data reveal a clear strength in access: women make up 35.6% of new entrants, and first-generation students

account for 47.2% of the intake — evidence that the university’s outreach reaches households with no previous experience of higher education. Notably, 53.0% of women entrants are first-generation students, so the university’s widening-access effort and its advancement of women reinforce one another. The decisive question is what happens after entry — whether equitable access carries through to completion, qualifications, and progression into employment and leadership — and the university therefore treats women’s representation among graduates, reported in section 5.5, as the key downstream measure of its progress on SDG 5.

Sustaining women’s progression through to graduation requires understanding the pressures that bear on it, which in the regional context are frequently bound up with caregiving responsibilities, financial pressure, and the cumulative effect of under-representation in particular disciplines. The University’s response is correspondingly multi-dimensional — combining the mentorship and access schemes described below with maternity provision, childcare support, and flexible assessment — and is underpinned by a commitment to track women’s progression cohort by cohort so that interventions can be evaluated and refined. Initiatives such as the “She Leads” programme are positioned within this framework as targeted instruments for building the confidence and academic resilience that sustain women through to graduation.



5.3.2 Access and participation policy

The university maintains an access and participation approach that treats admissions, faculty recruitment, and administrative appointments as processes to be conducted fairly, transparently, and without bias, so that individuals of any gender have equitable opportunity to advance. This is reinforced by proactive outreach to encourage women into under-represented fields, structured support during study, and regular, data-driven review of gender representation across admissions, appointments, and programmes.

These commitments are formalised in the university's Gender-Inclusive Admissions Policy, whose pillars include an equity-focused admissions review conducted by committee members trained in gender sensitivity and bias prevention; priority consideration for first-generation women and applicants from economically disadvantaged regions; reserved places and tuition waivers for qualified female candidates who meet equity-based criteria; and periodic audits of the gender balance of accepted cohorts to refine outreach. The policy is reinforced by campus-wide measures — safe spaces and anti-harassment protocols, professional counselling and mental-health support, and inclusive leadership and workplace practices — that together secure women's participation well beyond the point of admission.

5.3.3 Women's access schemes: scholarships and mentorship

Does the university provide women's access schemes such as mentoring, scholarships, or other provisions?

Scholarships: the university offers annual scholarships for women from low-income backgrounds, awarded on a structured and equitable basis that prioritises financial need alongside academic dedication, to remove financial barriers to higher education. These include awards for international women students from low- and lower-middle-income countries (with applicants welcomed from Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and beyond via the university website) and for local students, with particular attention to those from low-income families, orphans, and widows.



Mentorship: mentorship is embedded in the university's educational framework. Faculty engage proactively with students who face attendance or participation difficulties, working with them to identify underlying challenges — balancing work and study, personal obstacles, or gaps in comprehension — and to build effective learning strategies. The programme also develops time management, study habits, and critical thinking, sets measurable goals, and fosters the confidence and resilience that help students take ownership of their education.

5.3.4 Encouraging women in underrepresented subjects

Does the university encourage applications by women in subjects where they are under-represented?

STEM Shadowing Program (2026): this initiative let senior women in computer science, engineering, and medicine mentor high-school girls, who shadowed university classes, labs, and projects for a full week. More than 150 girls took part; 75% reported greater willingness to pursue a STEM major (15% undecided, 10% not interested). The university plans to make it an annual event with Basra's Directorate of Education.

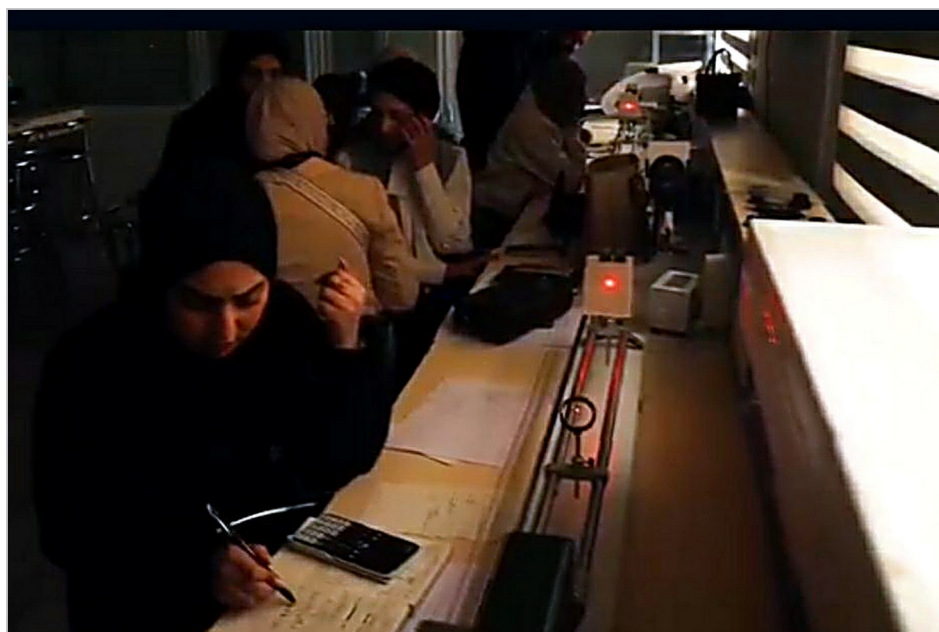
STEM Her Way (2026): this campaign encouraged women to pursue science and engineering degrees through science fairs, guest lectures by successful women alumni, and hands-on lab experiences for high-school girls. Over 320 participants joined, and survey data showed 71% expressed increased interest in STEM.

These efforts are reinforced by targeted outreach, mentorship, and partnerships with universities, community organisations, government bodies, and NGOs, and by the creation of new departments in medicine, engineering, technology, and the sciences to widen pathways for under-represented groups, particularly women.

These outreach activities form the upstream element of a deliberate pipeline strategy. By engaging high-school girls before the point of application, the University seeks to influence subject choice at the stage where gendered patterns of participation are first established, addressing Target 5.5's concern with women's full participation by widening the pool from which future scientists, engineers, and clinicians are drawn. The strategic intention is to convert short-term exposure into sustained enrolment by linking school outreach to scholarships, in-study mentorship, and visible women role models within the faculties, and to evaluate each

cohort so that the most effective interventions can be scaled in partnership with Basra's Directorate of Education.





5.4 Senior female academics

Of a total of 650 employees, the university has 380 academic staff, of whom 65 hold senior academic positions and 14 are women — a representation rate of roughly 21.5% for senior women academics. Women therefore hold more than one in five of the university’s most senior scholarly roles, a level that points to equitable promotion practices and a pipeline of qualified women being actively mentored toward leadership. The university treats raising this proportion further as an explicit objective, and the key figures are summarised below.

Indicator	Number
Total employees	650
Academic staff	380
Senior academic staff	65
Female senior academic staff	14
Female senior academics (%)	21.5%

Senior academic staffing by gender (Times Higher Education Impact Rankings fields 5.4.1—5.4.4).

To strengthen this further, the university runs a “Women in Leadership Track” — a structured advancement framework that equips mid-level women faculty with the strategic, pedagogical, and administrative skills for senior roles through leadership workshops, one-to-one mentorship, and

performance-based fellowships. Early internal assessments are positive, with more than 60% of women participants reporting increased confidence in pursuing leadership positions.

In strategic terms, women's representation among senior academic staff is a central indicator against Target 5.5, which concerns women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership. At roughly 21.5% it shows real progress from a low base, yet remains below women's 35.6% share of the student intake, marking senior-level advancement as the priority the university is working to close. The institution treats this not as a fixed achievement but as a pipeline to be maintained: the "Women in Leadership Track" is designed to ensure that the proportion of senior women reflects, and ultimately exceeds, the proportion of women in the wider academic workforce, by preparing mid-career staff for departmental, committee, and executive roles. Succession planning, transparent promotion criteria, and the deliberate inclusion of women on decision-making bodies are the mechanisms through which the University intends to protect this position over the long term.



5.5 Women receiving degrees

In 2026 the university launched “Future Women in STEM & Beyond”, an outreach initiative for women high-school students in Basra, offering on-campus lab visits, orientation workshops, and academic advising to build confidence and long-term interest in science and technology careers — part of a strategic effort to raise women’s enrolment in STEM and foster gender-balanced participation.

The university also tracks graduation outcomes by field of study. In the most recent graduating cohort of 529 students, 224 were women — 42.3% of graduates, approaching gender parity. The breakdown by field is set out below.

Field of study	Total graduates	Female graduates	Female %
STEM	329	137	41.6%
Medicine	0	0	0.0%
Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences	200	87	43.5%
Total	529	224	42.3%



The disciplinary breakdown shows women approaching parity overall (42.3% of graduates) while remaining slightly lower in STEM (41.6%) than in the arts, humanities, and social sciences (43.5%). This near-parity marks a substantial advance for the university, and its outreach and

mentorship programmes are aligned to close the residual STEM gap at source, while the establishment of new departments in medicine, engineering, technology, and the sciences is intended to widen the pathways available to women and to raise their representation in fields that carry significant economic and social influence.

5.6 Women's progress measures

5.6.1 Non-discrimination policy and awareness activities

Does the university have a policy of non-discrimination against women?

Yes. The university's non-discrimination policy rests on a set of clear commitments: to gender equality and the removal of barriers to women's full participation; to equal access to education and employment through fair, transparent, and unbiased processes; to proactive outreach and support for women in under-represented fields; to the prevention of discrimination and harassment under a zero-tolerance policy with confidential reporting and clear disciplinary procedures; to institutional partnerships and advocacy with government, academic, and civil-society bodies; to continuous, data-driven evaluation and improvement; and to expanding academic opportunities through new departments in medicine, technology, and the sciences.

These principles are put into practice through a sustained programme of awareness activities. During 2026 the Women's Affairs Division, with partners across and beyond the university, delivered the following:

1. Developmental Training Programme for Heads of Artistic and Cultural Activities Units — enhancing creative skills and cultural awareness among students.

2. Iraqi Universities Chess Championship (men, women, and people of determination) — fostering intellectual creativity and a spirit of fair competition.
3. “Early Detection and Prevention of Breast Cancer” seminar (24 October 2026, with the Basra Health Department), by Dr. Wafaa Abdul Kareem Ali.
4. “Early Detection and Prevention of Breast Cancer” Pink October campaign (24 October 2026, with the College of Arts, English Department) — brochures and a supportive awareness stand.
5. “Supporting Women’s Development: Self-Respect, Self-Efficacy, and Protection” seminar (7 November 2026, with Computer Engineering Technologies), by Assistant Lecturer Zarka Mohammed Ali.
6. “Legal Protection for Working Women under Iraqi Labour Law and Social Security” seminar (17 November 2026, with the Department of Law), by Assistant Lecturer Zeinab Haider Hashim.
7. “Drugs and False Happiness” awareness seminar (2 December 2026, with the Basra Health Department), by Dr. Fatima Mathna Muften and Dr. Youssef Mohammed Al-Hassoun.
8. “Say No to Drugs” awareness campaign (3 December 2026, with the Faculty of Arts, English Department) in the university’s central square.
9. Field visit to the Addiction Centre at Al-Fayhaa Hospital (12 December 2026, with the Faculty of Arts).
10. “Domestic Violence and Its Impact on Families and Society” seminar (23 December 2026, with the University of Basra), by Dr. Nada Razzaq Fadel.
11. “Harassment” seminar (17 February 2026), by Assistant Professor Dr. Nada Razzaq Fadel, under the Third National Plan for Women, Peace, and Security (Protection and Prevention).
12. “Family Upbringing and the Role of Women in Preparing Generations” seminar (12 March 2026, with the College of Arts), by

Assistant Professor Dr. Aqil Mohammed Jassim, under the Third National Plan (Participation and Institutional Reform).

13. “Cyber Extortion” seminar (5 March 2026, with the Colleges of Law and Engineering), by Dr. Zuhair Jassim Kharibit with national-security specialists.
14. “Human Development, Decision-Making, and Empowering Women’s Capabilities” seminar (7 April 2026, with the College of Technical Engineering), by Assistant Lecturer Zahraa Kazem Farhoud, under the Third National Plan (Participation and Institutional Reform).
15. “Medical Waste and Its Impact on Public Health” seminar (24 April 2026, with the Quality Department), by Mr. Kamil Mahdi Salim Al-Badr, under the Third National Plan (Protection and Prevention).



























Taken together, this programme of seminars, campaigns, and field activities constitutes a structured response to Targets 5.1 and 5.2 — the elimination of discrimination against women and of violence in both the public and private spheres. Rather than standing as isolated events, the activities are coordinated by the Women’s Affairs Division around recurring strategic themes: legal awareness and rights, health and well-being, protection from harassment and exploitation, and the development of leadership and decision-making capacity. Their alignment with the pillars of Iraq’s Third National Action Plan for Women, Peace, and Security situates the University’s work within a national framework, and the University intends to strengthen the programme further by measuring its reach and impact and by extending participation across every college.

5.6.2 Non-discrimination for transgender people

At present the university does not maintain, nor currently foresee, a dedicated policy on non-discrimination for transgender individuals. This position reflects the prevailing cultural, social, and legal context of the region, in which the subject of gender identity remains outside recognised institutional and legal frameworks. The university’s broader non-discrimination principles nonetheless uphold equity, fairness, and dignity

for all within the values and legal boundaries of the Iraqi educational and societal system, implemented through general principles of fairness and professional conduct.

5.6.3 Maternity policy and support

Does the university have a maternity policy that supports women's participation?

Yes. The university maintains a clear and supportive maternity policy protecting the rights of women academic and administrative staff, as well as enrolled students, during pregnancy and after childbirth, so that women can take a full part in academic and professional life without interruption or disadvantage. By offering a structured framework, the university supports work-life balance, the retention of women's talent, and a more inclusive academic workforce.

In line with Iraqi labour law, the policy provides paid maternity leave for staff, with the option of a further period of unpaid leave; adjusted teaching loads or temporary relief from committee work on return; the temporary deferment of study or examinations for student mothers; and access to medical guidance through partnerships with local clinics for maternal care. Together these provisions ensure that neither staff nor students face setbacks in their academic or professional development on account of maternity.

“Motherhood & Academia” awareness campaign: to mark International Women's Day (March 2026), the Human Resources Department and the College of Nursing launched a week-long campaign to support academic mothers — staff and students — and to dismantle the stigma that maternity hinders advancement. It featured an expert panel (“Balancing Research, Teaching, and Motherhood”), the launch of a Maternity Rights Handbook distributed electronically, a student-designed poster campaign (“Support

Her Journey – Maternity is Not a Barrier”), and a testimonial video of women who resumed their academic paths after maternity.



5.6.4 Childcare facilities for students

The university provides a dedicated, child-friendly support area on campus for student mothers. While not a formal childcare facility, this calm and safe space allows children to remain for short periods while their mothers attend nearby lectures or activities. Equipped with basic learning materials, comfortable seating, and hygiene amenities, and located close to the main

academic buildings, it is informally supervised by staff volunteers and student assistants, easing the burden of childcare. Plans to enhance the facility, guided by student feedback, are under review.



5.6.5 Childcare facilities for staff and faculty

The university also provides a flexible on-campus support space for women faculty and staff, accommodating the short-term presence of children in a safe, organised environment near administrative offices and faculty halls. Open to academic and non-academic staff, it is especially

helpful during exam weeks, workshops, and committee meetings, while Human Resources facilitates flexible scheduling and remote-working options for staff with young children.

Support feature	Students	Staff & faculty
Child-friendly campus area	Temporary support space	Dedicated support space
Location accessibility	Near lecture halls	Near admin / faculty buildings
Availability at peak times	During lecture times	Exam weeks, meetings, workshops
Flexible schedule for mothers	Not applicable	Available upon request
Remote-work options	Not applicable	Allowed under HR policy
Supervision arrangement	Student volunteers	Informal staff coordination
Target group	Student mothers	Female staff & faculty

Childcare support for students compared with staff and faculty.

5.6.6 Women's mentoring schemes

Does the university have women's mentoring schemes in which at least 10% of women students participate?

The university runs mentoring schemes through its student-support structures that offer guidance, resources, and networking tailored to women students. These include peer mentoring (senior students supporting newcomers), faculty mentoring on academic and career paths, workshops on planning and skills, and networking with alumnae and professionals. A specialised division within the Deanship of Students' Affairs supports women balancing study with family commitments, offering counselling for student mothers, personalised help for expectant students, academic assistance with deadlines, health and wellness counselling, encouragement of physical activity, and flexible, accommodating assessment arrangements.

These schemes are delivered principally through the university's Women's Studies provision and its Student Support structures. The former offers peer mentoring, faculty mentoring on academic and career paths, and

workshops on planning and skills together with networking with alumnae and professionals; the latter provides academic mentoring for students facing difficulties, personal-development support in leadership and life skills, counselling and guidance for well-being, and skill-building workshops on time management, stress relief, and effective study strategies.



5.6.7 Tracking graduation outcomes

The university tracks graduation outcomes by gender as part of its wider institutional reporting; the most recent gender-disaggregated results are set out by field of study in section 5.5, where women account for 42.3% of the 529 graduates in the latest cohort. A formal scheme dedicated to modelling women's likelihood of graduating relative to men's, and to closing any residual gap, is still being developed, and the gender-disaggregated admission and graduation data reported throughout this document provide the foundation on which it will be built.

5.6.8 Protecting those who report discrimination

Does the university protect those reporting discrimination from educational or employment disadvantage?

Yes. Established in 1993, the university's policy protects individuals who report discrimination — whatever its basis — ensuring that reports are handled with confidentiality and fairness and without fear of retaliation. The approach rests on a clear policy framework; strict confidentiality and a non-retaliation guarantee; multiple reporting channels, including secure online and anonymous options; a fair, impartial, and timely investigation process; alignment with applicable legal frameworks; access to counselling, legal guidance, and advocacy; regular training and awareness; and continuous monitoring and improvement.

Student grievance process: a structured, three-tiered process ensures complaints are addressed promptly and fairly. Level I provides initial complaint resolution; Level II refers unresolved matters to the University Complaints Handling Committee; and Level III provides final review by university leadership. Dedicated Anti-Discrimination and Complaints Committees, each with a chairperson and designated members, oversee complaints and ensure due process, with formal written submissions supported by documentation where available.

The protection of those who report discrimination is, in strategic terms, the safeguard on which the credibility of every other commitment depends: policies of equal access and non-discrimination carry weight only where individuals can raise concerns without fear of disadvantage. The University therefore treats its reporting channels, complaints committees, and non-retaliation guarantee as core elements of institutional governance rather than as procedural formalities, and commits to keeping them under regular review so that they remain accessible, impartial, and trusted.

Looking ahead, the University's strategic priorities for SDG 5 are clear and mutually reinforcing: to close the gap between women's enrolment and their graduation; to raise women's representation in STEM and in senior academic leadership; to formalise the tracking of women's progression and graduation outcomes so that policy is driven by evidence; and to consolidate maternity, childcare, and flexible-working provision into a coherent framework that enables women to combine study and work with family life. Progress against these priorities will continue to be reviewed through gender-disaggregated data and reported in successive submissions, reflecting the University's understanding of gender equality as a sustained institutional commitment rather than a destination.

5.6.9 Paternity policy and support

Does the university have a paternity policy that supports women's participation by ensuring that non-gestational parents can participate in childcare duties?

Yes. Shatt Al-Arab University supports the participation of non-gestational parents in childcare through a combination of paid leave, flexible working arrangements, and a workplace culture that treats childcare as a shared family responsibility. Alongside these measures the university offers practical support — including access to on-site or subsidised childcare —

to help working parents balance their professional and family lives, so that the arrival of a child need not interrupt either parent's career or study.

The university's parental-leave framework is structured in three stages: a fully paid prenatal leave for expectant mothers of 30 days before childbirth; a fully paid postnatal leave of 60 days following the birth; and an optional half-paid maternity leave of a further 90 days after the first two stages. By guaranteeing protected, paid time around childbirth and enabling shared caring responsibilities thereafter, the policy underpins the retention of women's talent and advances the equal sharing of unpaid care work that lies at the heart of Target 5.4.

5.7 Gender equality across the University's wider SDG portfolio

Evidence of the University's commitment to gender equality is not confined to the initiatives described above; it recurs throughout the University's wider work on the Sustainable Development Goals, where the advancement of women appears as a consistent cross-cutting theme. This section consolidates the gender-relevant evidence reported under other goals — reduced inequalities, decent work, good health, peace, and partnerships among them — and maps it to the targets of SDG 5, so that the full institutional picture is visible in a single place.

5.7.1 Dedicated institutional structures for women's empowerment

Alongside the Women's Affairs Division, the University operates a dedicated Women's Empowerment Unit and a Psychological and Educational Counselling Unit, both reporting directly to the dean. Established to confront discrimination and harassment in all their forms, these units organise seminars and events that build a fair and respectful campus environment and give women a clear institutional channel for

support. Their existence reflects the principle, central to Target 5.c, that gender equality is sustained through standing policy and structures rather than episodic activity; together with the Women's Affairs Division they distribute responsibility for women's welfare across more than one office and embed it within the University's governance.

5.7.2 Women in the university workforce

The University's commitment to gender equality extends to its own employment practices, which apply a clear non-discrimination policy: pay and advancement are determined by qualification, experience, and position, with no differentiation on the basis of gender, race, religion, or sect. Women form a substantial part of the workforce, and the University has adopted as explicit objectives the advancement of women's rights at work — equal pay and opportunity, greater representation of women in leadership, and wider workplace diversity. The headcount and one month's payroll, disaggregated by gender, are set out below; among staff on guaranteed, insured contracts, twenty of the one hundred and twenty-three posts are held by women, and the University continues to convert competent colleagues to permanent posts on equal terms. Read alongside the finding that women hold close to half of senior academic positions, these figures evidence progress against Target 5.5 on participation and leadership and Target 5.a on equal access to economic resources.

Group	Headcount	Monthly expenditure (IQD)
Male staff	165	240,825,760
Female staff	37	28,294,407
Total	202	269,120,167

Academic and administrative staff and one month's payroll by gender (source: University SDG 8 report).

5.7.3 Women's participation in graduation and research

The University maintains balanced and equitable ratios between male and female graduates, sustained by policies that support students' progress and

an inclusive learning environment in which all can complete their studies on equal terms. The gender breakdown of final-stage student research projects by department is set out below. The pattern is instructive: in several departments — notably Business Administration and English Language — women account for a majority of those completing research projects, while in law, accounting, and computer science they remain under-represented. This mirrors the disciplinary pattern identified earlier in this report and reinforces the case for the University's targeted outreach in science and the professions under Target 5.5.

Department	Students	Males	Male %	Females	Female %
Law	164	117	71%	27	29%
Business Administration	92	44	48%	48	52%
Computer Science	96	60	63%	36	37%
Accounting	179	130	73%	49	27%
English Language	133	61	46%	72	54%

Final-stage student research projects by department and gender (source: University SDG 10 report).

5.7.4 Financial support enabling women's access

Equitable access to higher education depends on removing the financial barriers that fall most heavily on women from low-income households. The University's social-solidarity measures — full scholarships, partial fee reductions of between twenty-five and seventy-five per cent, and flexible instalment arrangements — are allocated without regard to gender and reach women and men in comparable numbers, as the figures below show. By keeping places open to capable students irrespective of means, these measures directly support the elimination of discrimination in access set out in Target 5.1.

Financial-support category	Male	Female	Total
Full scholarship (complete fee exemption)	10	10	20
Fee reduction (25%—75%)	55	30	85
Flexible instalments	All students	All students	All students

Beneficiaries of financial support by gender (source: University SDG 10 report).

5.7.5 Empowerment, rights, and protection initiatives

Beyond the seminar programme documented earlier, the University marks and advances women's empowerment through further activities recorded under other goals. It observes International Women's Day each 8 March with a ceremony held under the patronage of the University president, who has publicly affirmed women's role as leaders of educational and economic institutions and as full partners in the community. The Women's Empowerment Unit has delivered sessions on women's empowerment as concept and reality — examining the question from Islamic, Arab, and international perspectives and the place of women in leadership — and on digital transformation as a route to expanding women's employment through information and communications technology, a theme that speaks directly to Target 5.b on the use of enabling technology to empower women.

The University's work to eliminate violence against women, addressed under Target 5.2, is reinforced by activity reported across several goals: a campus solidarity stand against violence against women organised by the Women's Affairs Division; a "Combating Violence against Women" awareness campaign run with the College of Arts; a symposium on women's rights and their protection from harassment and assault; and, through the College of Law, a study on the rights of Yazidi women survivors under Iraqi law and the legislative reforms needed to strengthen them. Together these initiatives extend the University's protective commitment from its own campus to questions of women's rights and safety in the wider society.

5.7.6 Partnerships advancing gender equality

None of this work stands alone. The University advances its gender-equality agenda through sustained partnerships — with the University of

Basra, the Basra Directorate of Education, the College of Nursing, the Basra Health Directorate, and a range of civil-society organisations — that give its initiatives reach and durability. Documented collaborations include a domestic-violence seminar, a planned annual STEM shadowing programme for schoolgirls, and a “Motherhood and Academia” campaign supporting women who combine family responsibilities with academic careers. In partnership with the Basra Health Directorate, the Women’s Affairs Division has also delivered health-focused sessions for women, including early-detection-of-breast-cancer seminars and a programme on the legal protection of working women under Iraqi Labour Law. Reported in detail under SDG 17, these partnerships embody the collaborative approach on which lasting progress toward gender equality depends.

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).

Under Elsevier's current SDG mapping, the university's Scopus-indexed output is not yet specifically tagged to SDG 5. The institution's wider research base of 179 documents continues to grow, and the evidence of activity for this goal is set out in the sections above.