



UKH **ALUMNI ASSOCIATION** *NEWSLETTER*

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Your Dose of Inspiration

Stories and News

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Assistant Lecturer at UKH

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I am Sanarya Adnan Anwer, an Assistant Lecturer in Business and Management Department at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) and a PhD candidate in Business and Management at Erbil Polytechnic University.

My journey with UKH has been one of transformation, growth, and determination; a journey that has now come full circle as I return as an assistant lecturer to the very institution that shaped my career.

When I applied to UKH in 2012, higher education in Kurdistan lacked international standards and professional development opportunities. Most universities followed traditional teaching methods, but UKH introduced world-class education. Gaining entry was challenging, with a rigorous selection process and strict academic policies. Rumours even circulated about its potential closure due to its challenges. Despite the uncertainty, I saw UKH as my gateway to a brighter future. I convinced my parents, navigated the competitive admissions process, and took a leap of faith, which ultimately changed my life.

My time at UKH was more than just academic; it was a life-changing experience. The international curriculum, highly qualified professors, and the emphasis on research and critical thinking pushed me beyond my limits and prepared me for the professional world. After earning both my bachelor's and master's degrees in Business and Management from UKH, I built a career in HR and management, working with various companies and institutions in Erbil. Additionally, I gained experience as an assistant lecturer at several universities. However, no matter where I worked, my heart always remained with UKH. My ultimate goal was to return, not as a student, but as a mentor and educator. Now, I stand before students, guiding them, just as my professors once guided me. That is why I always say, "UKH is our second home, because I grew up here."

To every UKH student today: you have an opportunity that many before you did not. When I applied, no other institution in Kurdistan offered what UKH provides now: internationally recognised, industry-relevant education. Do not take this for granted. Work hard, stay committed, and push beyond your comfort zone. Employers seek more than degrees; they want leaders, problem solvers, and innovators. Build your critical thinking, leadership, and communication skills. Learn beyond the classroom, embrace challenges, and continue to grow. Your future is in your hands, so make the most of it.

HR Administration Manager at DNO

GULZHIN MOHSIN

It is with great pride that I write these words as a proud alumna of both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the Business and Management Department at the University of Kurdistan-Hewlêr (UKH).

I attribute a part of my professional success to the invaluable education and experiences I gained at this esteemed university.

At UKH, we were immersed in a supportive and stimulating academic environment where creativity and innovation were consistently encouraged. The university's combination of rigorous academic programmes and extensive opportunities for leadership, collaboration, and personal growth laid a strong foundation for my professional journey.

UKH provided us with numerous avenues to engage in student organisations like the Student Union, as well as various workshops on subjects such as leadership and women's empowerment. All of these played a crucial role in shaping our critical thinking, problem-solving

abilities, and interpersonal skills.

Networking events and internship opportunities were also provided through the annual career fair. In 2015, during my undergraduate studies, I had the privilege of securing an internship opportunity with Chevron, then one of the leading oil and gas companies in Kurdistan. This opportunity came through Mselect, with Chevron specifically seeking candidates from UKH due to the university's solid reputation for producing outstanding interns. To this day, as a professional in the Human Resources field, I am well aware that UKH graduates are consistently regarded as top-tier candidates by employers for various job openings.

All of these opportunities offered by UKH played a crucial role in shaping our critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and interpersonal skills. These experiences fostered resilience

and adaptability, qualities that are essential in today's competitive job market and equipped me with the confidence to pursue my career aspirations.

Following my graduation in 2016, I joined DNO, one of the prominent oil and gas companies in our region, where I have been employed ever since. In 2023, I was honoured to be selected by DNO for an international role within another business unit in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. I currently work as the HR Administration Manager, leading a team of five.

To the current students of UKH, I encourage you to embrace every opportunity that comes your way, trusting that the knowledge and experiences you gain here will serve as stepping stones to a bright and successful future.



HR Administrator at DNO Iraq AS

LAWZHA HAZHAR

My name is Lawzha Hazhar Rawandzy, and my journey with the University of Kurdistan-Hewler (UKH) began in 2011 when I enrolled in the Political Science programme. At the time, I had also been accepted into the College of Law. However, once I received my UKH admission, I had no doubt and accepted immediately with excitement. From my first day on campus, I felt that UKH was a place for growth, and I knew I was on the right path. I successfully graduated in 2016.

UKH provided me with more than just an education; it paved the way for opportunities, personal growth, and career development. The challenges, new beginnings, and lifelong friendships I built there became an integral part of my journey.

During my undergraduate years, I worked remotely as a translator, took on a part-time administrative role, and actively participated in volunteering activities. I contributed to UKH events, helped collect donations for refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), attended job fairs, trainings, workshops, conferences, and internships. Those five years were life-changing: I developed essential skills in academic writing, public speaking, critical thinking, and leadership. These experiences, lifelong memories, connections, and friendships shaped my personal and professional growth.

In 2016, I was accepted into the World MERIT 360 programme, focusing on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. I was selected for the programme of SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities and worked with a team to develop a proposal on reducing inequality, which we presented at the UN Headquarters in New York.

After UKH, I began working full-time with reputable NGOs such as QANDIL, UNDP and the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). After gaining experience in the humanitarian field, I decided to explore the oil industry. In 2019, I joined Rosneft Oil Company in Erbil, and I am currently working in the Human Resources Department at DNO Iraq AS.

UKH taught me to never stop developing myself. Today, I am a postgraduate student in Diplomacy and International Law at UKH, and I am also pursuing a CIPD Level 7 qualification.



IT Security Specialist at KRD Holding

SANA SHERKO

My name is Sana Sherko Abdulwahid, and I am an IT Security Specialist at KRD Holding. My journey into this exciting field, however, began at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH). Through my Computer Engineering degree in 2021, the university provided me with both a solid theoretical understanding and a practical skillset that proved essential for my future career. I remember feeling both the excitement of opportunity and the stress of responsibility as I prepared to enter the information security and cybersecurity landscape. UKH wasn't just where I earned my degree; it was the foundation for my career, encouraging my desire to contribute to the security of Kurdistan's industries in this increasingly digital world.

My professional path started as an Information Security Officer at Region Trade Bank. It was there that the problem-solving and critical thinking skills I developed at UKH truly came to the forefront. Being able to identify vulnerabilities and implement effective solutions led to my promotion to Deputy Information Security Manager, a significant moment of professional validation and proof of the strength of my UKH education.

Recognising the importance of continuous development, I committed myself to the challenging yet incredibly rewarding task of pursuing a master's programme in Computer Systems Engineering at UKH while working full-time. This deepened my understanding of key security areas. The invaluable support from my supervisor during that period further boosted my confidence and empowered me to embrace the challenges and opportunities ahead. To further enhance my professional capabilities, I participated in Fortinet Accelerate23 in Monaco and Fortinet Accelerate24 in Prague, gaining valuable insights into cutting-edge cybersecurity and network security technologies and connecting with leading experts. These experiences reinforced my dedication to strengthening digital security in Kurdistan.

Now, as an IT Security Specialist at KRD Holding, I'm excited to expand my impact and contribute to safeguarding our digital future. This role allows me to contribute to a stronger security posture across diverse industries, addressing unique challenges and protecting important assets.

To the current students of UKH, I offer this advice: fully engage yourselves in your studies, always seek to understand the 'why' behind the 'what'. Continuously learn and grow; the tech world is always changing, and staying current is key. Most importantly, be courageous: step outside your comfort zone, challenge yourselves, and don't fear failure. It is through these experiences that you will learn, grow, and ultimately become the leaders who will champion a brighter tomorrow, fortify global security, and drive the advancement of Kurdistan's technological industries.



Assistant Lecturer at Akre University for Applied Sciences

MAHABAD TITAN



I am Mahabad, the youngest faculty member at my place of employment. I currently teach at the university while also managing the Research & Analysis department at Darin Co. Additionally, I am collaborating on a co-publication with two esteemed professors from Germany and Iraq and learning French. I earned my master's degree in Applied Linguistics/TESOL from the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) in 2022.

I am honoured to share my journey as a proud UKH alumna. Coming from a background with very limited opportunities for academic and professional development, I always aspired to pursue higher education. Moving to Erbil to enrol at UKH was a turning point in my life. The transition was challenging, requiring adaptation to a new city, lifestyle, and environment. However, UKH provided more than just academic excellence; it fostered resilience, critical thinking, and a profound appreciation for knowledge. It played a significant role in shaping my ambitions and instilling in me the confidence to pursue my aspirations.

My career development has been a journey of continuous learning, discipline, and perseverance. After completing my master's degree, I began my academic career as a university professor, a role that has allowed me to shape and inspire future scholars. My time in academia reinforced my commitment to research, analysis, and lifelong learning, leading me to further expand my expertise beyond the classroom.

Seeking to apply my skills in a broader professional setting, I later joined Darin Group, where I now manage the Research & Analysis department. This position has given me the opportunity to apply analytical and research-driven approaches to real-world business challenges, further solidifying my expertise in research and analysis.

As I reflect on my journey, I am immensely grateful to God, my family, UKH, and everyone who has supported and guided me along the way. This experience has shaped who I am today, and I eagerly look forward to all that lies ahead.

To students, I say that education is not just about acquiring knowledge and skills; it is about transforming your vision and future. Stay curious, dedicated, and open to opportunities, as they can lead to unimaginable possibilities.

Student Affairs Assistant at UKH

ZHIWAR ZYAD



My name is Zhiwar Zyad Aziz, and I graduated from the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) in 2016 with a bachelor's degree in business and management. After gaining eight years of valuable career experience, I rejoined UKH in September 2024 as a staff member in the Student Affairs Department.

My career journey began with six years in education: two years as a teacher and four years as an academic coordinator at SABIS International School. Following this, I worked for two years in the finance department at Empire World. These roles equipped me with a broad range of experience and honed my skills, both in soft skills such as communication and leadership, as well as in technical working skills. This diverse experience has greatly influenced the approach I take in my current role, where I am thrilled to support and guide students through their academic journeys. I'm passionate about preparing them for their future careers through various volunteering activities and programmes, while applying

my background to enhance their university experience.

Reflecting on my journey, I am grateful for the opportunities UKH has provided me with. The university's commitment to excellence, community, and the development of practical skills has always been a source of inspiration. UKH not only gave me the academic foundation I needed but also prepared me for the challenges of the professional world. The skills and experiences I gained here were instrumental in shaping my career, enabling me to confidently transition from education to the corporate sector, and now back to a role that supports students.

I encourage current students to make the most of their time at UKH, as it serves as a solid foundation for future success. The resources, academic environment, and support structures in place here equip students with everything they need to thrive both during and after their time at the university.

Content Creator/Consultant

SOMA JABBAR

I graduated from the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr in 2017 with a degree in Petroleum Engineering. Shortly after, I made the life-changing decision to immigrate to Canada. To expand my knowledge, I took a course in Oil and Gas Field Operations and decided to stay and build my career there.

When COVID hit, while most people were staying at home, I saw an opportunity. I started a YouTube channel to share what I knew about Canada: life as an international student, studying, working, and adapting to a new country. As my audience grew, I realised how much I loved creating content and helping others navigate similar journeys. Four years ago, I moved to Calgary to work

with a software company, RES, which develops world-class energy software for project management, risk assessment, and cost control across the energy sector. Despite my busy schedule, I continued creating content and sharing valuable insights. Over time, I found my true passion in education, helping students from Kurdistan and beyond understand their opportunities abroad.

After obtaining my Canadian citizenship, I returned to Kurdistan for a visit and took another step forward. I opened my own consultancy office in Erbil. Now, I help students choose the best universities and colleges in Canada and other countries, as well as assist with visitor and work permit applications.



My time at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr played a significant role in shaping who I am today. Beyond academics, UKH taught me essential skills like communication, creative thinking, and adaptability: things that truly matter after graduation. It will always have a special place in my heart, and I'm proud to be a UKH alumna.



Private Tutor

RAHMAH NIHAD

My passion for engineering and chemistry-related subjects has driven me to pursue both a BSc and an MSc in Petroleum Engineering at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr.

I embarked on this enriching journey in 2018, entering a campus characterised by hospitality and a strong commitment to education. The University of Kurdistan Hewler (UKH) provided me with the courage to face new challenges in all aspects of my life. Being a student at UKH has shaped my character and significantly influenced my career, not only in Petroleum Engineering but also in other academic disciplines.

Throughout my university years, I made the most of every available opportunity, including part-time jobs, summer internships, volunteer work, and full-time positions. At the outset of my studies, I worked as a private tutor for students ranging from primary school to university level. I found great satisfaction in sharing my knowledge with others during their times of need, which reinforced UKH's strong educational foundation. Additionally, I had the opportunity to intern in both the private and public sectors, with organisations such as DNO ASA, Weatherford, Fakher Mergasori School, and Sarwaran School. These experiences enabled me to refine essential skills such as multitasking, time management, and perseverance under pressure.

Driven by a passion for academia, I pursued an MSc in Petroleum Engineering and continued my journey as an academic teacher at the International School of Choueifat in 2022. This role allowed me to expand my expertise by offering private tutoring courses at various levels, including AP, SAT, and IELTS. The dynamic environment at UKH, coupled with the skills I developed, enabled me to explore further opportunities in the business world, such as taking courses in forex trading at VCG Markets, thereby enhancing my skill set.

My advice to the younger generation is to maintain a flexible mindset and seize any opportunity that comes your way, whether it is directly related to your field of study or not. Always maintain a positive attitude, regardless of your circumstances. Keep pushing forward, persevering, and nurturing your mind. Your time will come, so trust in yourself and believe in the process.