



University of
KURDISTAN
Hewlêr



UKH Alumni
Association

UKH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume 3- Issue 5

UKH ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Who We Are

The University of Kurdistan Hewlêr Alumni Association is dedicated to supporting a vibrant network of over 2,500 graduates of the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr. We work to institutionalise alumni relations and create meaningful opportunities that strengthen lifelong bonds between the university, its graduates, and the wider community. The association is composed of a committee that organises events and programmes by the alumni, for the alumni.

What We Stand For

We believe in building bridges between alumni, students, and respected local and global partners. Through structured activities, mentorship schemes, professional events, and strategic collaborations, we aim to enrich academic, professional, and social experiences whilst fostering mutual growth.

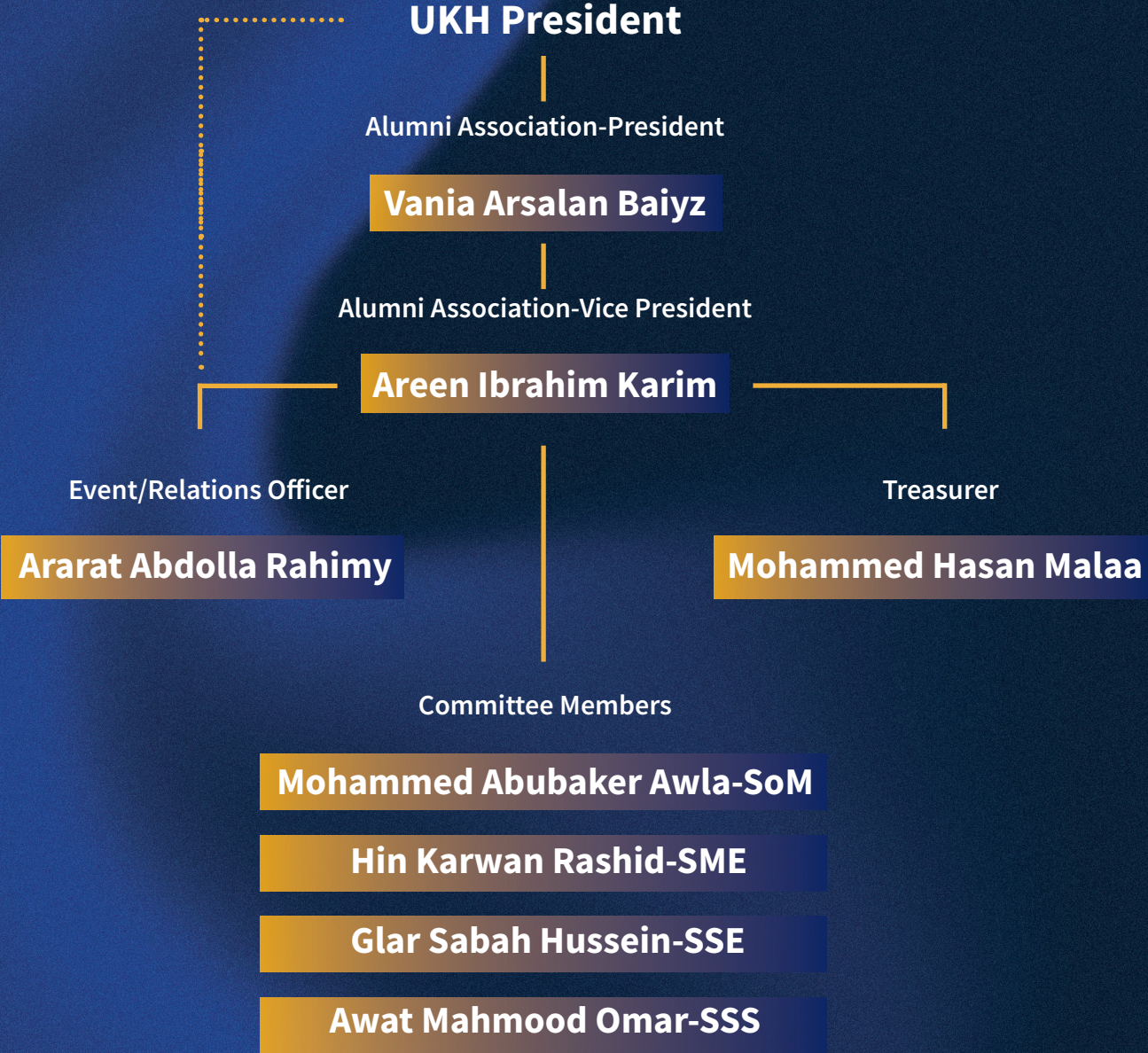
Our Vision

The vision of the UKH Alumni Association is to cultivate a connected and influential alumni community that contributes to societal advancement and actively promotes the global prestige and academic excellence of the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr.

Our Mission

The mission of the UKH Alumni Association is to foster and establish a dynamic, supportive, and enduring network of graduates committed to personal, academic, and professional growth. Through active engagement, collaborative initiatives, and knowledge-sharing platforms, the association seeks to empower and enrich alumni pursuits.

THE NEW STRUCTURE OF THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION





ASHKAR

RASHID

Operations Manager and Business Developer at Shipzone

Looking back on my journey, I am proud to say that it began at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH); a place that did not simply hand me a certificate, but equipped me with the mindset to think critically, adapt to change, and solve problems with confidence.

While studying at UKH, I explored translation and graphic design, later forming a team to launch web development services. At the same time, I balanced two roles: IT Officer for a research institution and part-time IT Liaison at UKH. These early experiences laid the foundation for my professional career.

After earning my BSc in Computer Engineering (2017) and MSc in Computer Systems Engineering (2020), I joined SEED Foundation, where I developed and led the IT unit for nearly five years. This role gave me the opportunity to work across departments, particularly in digitalising daily operations.

I was involved in resolving issues and improving processes within my unit and beyond, including manual and policy development, training, project implementation and supervision, systems management and ad-

ministration, and technological advancement alongside day-to-day operations.

This cross-functional exposure deepened my understanding of organisational processes and strengthened my passion for operations and business development. Today, I manage the operations department of an international shipping and logistics company, coordinating with multiple teams in the USA, UAE, China, and Erbil.

Alongside my operational responsibilities, I continue to oversee system development and administer existing systems. Working closely with logistics, finance, sales, and marketing departments, I apply my technical background and diverse experience to drive efficiency, streamline workflows, and support growth.

To the younger generation and current students: you do not need to have everything figured out yet. What matters most is developing problem-solving skills and the ability to adapt and learn independently. Above all, build your network and stay informed about emerging industries; these will open doors you cannot yet imagine.

Hima Karwan

Laidlaw Scholar at HEC Paris

My journey at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) was not without challenges. It took me five years to complete my Bachelor's Degree in Petroleum Engineering, as I had to repeat my first year after failing several modules. At the time, this felt like a setback; little did I know, it was the beginning of my resilience and determination.

UKH taught me lessons that extended far beyond the classroom. I learned that true progress requires consistent effort and preparation, regardless of the goal, whether big or small. I believe success is less about the specific degree you earn, and more about the dedication and mindset you bring to your journey.

Academically, UKH equipped me with the knowledge and fundamentals necessary to build my career. Yet, one of the most important realisations I had was that no institution can fully prepare us for our professional paths. The responsibility to grow lies within us. This became clear during my third year, when I had the opportunity to intern with TTOPCO. The knowledge and skills I had gained at UKH allowed me to adapt quickly, communicate effectively, and contribute to technical discussions. But to truly excel, I needed to take ownership of my own development through continuous learning and curiosity.

Today, with six years of experience in the energy sector, I look back and see how every stage, my early struggles, my time at UKH, and my first professional steps shaped the person I am today. I began my career as a Junior Field Engineer with SLB and, within five years, advanced to Senior Field Engineer. Seeking a new perspective, I then transitioned to an oil operator, TotalEnergies, where I worked as a Well Intervention and Integrity Engineer. The greatest challenge I had to overcome during these years was not external; it was internal. I had to break free from self-doubt, rigid expectations, and the fear of failure. Each disappointment became an opportunity to grow, reminding me that setbacks are not the end, but rather the beginning of change.

I have now chosen to follow my curiosity and seek further exposure by pursuing a new academic path. Awarded the Laidlaw Scholarship, I am preparing to undertake my master's degree in business and management at HEC Paris in France.



To current students, my advice is this: embrace difficulties as part of your growth. Your failures do not define you; they prepare you. One philosophy that continues to guide me comes from *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz: be impeccable with your word, don't take things personally, don't make assumptions, and always do your best. These principles remind me that success is not a final destination, but a lifelong journey of learning, resilience, and self-discovery.

MAXIMISING YOUR CHANCES: HOW APPLICANTS SHOULD APPROACH JOB APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS

Navigating today's competitive job market requires more than just qualifications on paper; applicants need preparation, strategy, and confidence to stand out. To shed light on how candidates can best prepare for job applications and interviews, we spoke with our UKH alumna, Shara Sabir, who holds an MA in Applied Linguistics in English and is an experienced HR expert. In this interview, she shares valuable insights and practical advice for graduates aspiring to secure their place in the professional world.

Q1: What are the most important steps a candidate should take before submitting a job application to ensure it stands out to employers?

Before submitting any application, candidates should approach the process with preparation and intention, rather than applying at random. The first step is to carefully read the job description and fully understand the responsibilities, qualifications, and skills required. This enables them to assess whether the role truly aligns with their background, strengths, and career goals.

Equally important is applying selectively. Submitting applications indiscriminately, particularly for positions well beyond one's current level of experience, often leads to repeated rejections and may create a negative impression with employers. Thoughtful, targeted applications demonstrate professionalism, maturity, and significantly increase the chances of success.

Q2: How should candidates tailor their CVs and cover letters to highlight their skills and experiences effectively for a specific role?

Candidates should begin by carefully reading the job description and gaining an understanding of the employer's values, mission, and vision. This allows them to identify what the organisation is genuinely seeking. A strong CV and cover letter should then highlight the skills, experiences, and achievements that directly correspond with the job requirements. By aligning their application with both the role and the employer's culture, candidates show genuine interest and improve their likelihood of being shortlisted.

Q3: From an HR perspective, what behaviours and attitudes make the strongest positive impression during a job interview?

Candidates create the strongest impression when they combine professionalism with genuine respect. Greeting the panel warmly and expressing thanks at both the beginning and end of the interview sets a positive tone. Dressing appropriately formal but not excessive signals seriousness about the opportunity.

Confidence is essential, but it should be balanced with humility. Candidates who actively listen, remain composed, and answer thoughtfully come across as mature and reliable. Maintaining eye contact with all panel members shows engagement, while a polite and respectful manner throughout reinforces professionalism. Altogether, these

behaviours indicate that the candidate values the process and is prepared to represent themselves in the best possible way.

Q4: What strategies can candidates use to provide strong, evidence-based answers that demonstrate their competencies in an interview?

One highly effective approach is the STAR technique (Situation, Task, Action, Result), which helps candidates structure their answers using clear, real-life examples. STAR can be applied even by recent graduates, drawing on university projects, internships, or voluntary work. To prepare, candidates should reflect in advance on a few strong examples that highlight key skills such as teamwork, problem-solving, or adaptability.

When responding, candidates should link their examples to the role and, where possible, align them with the employer's values, mission, and objectives. This demonstrates genuine interest in the position and shows a willingness to contribute to the organisation's goals. If asked a question they cannot fully answer, candidates should reply diplomatically, avoiding "I don't know", and instead emphasise their readiness to learn. Finally, answers should be clear, focused, and natural, as authenticity is always more compelling than memorised responses.

SHARA SABIR

HR Expert





Reband Muhammad

General Manager at Power Solid

From an early age, I understood that growth often follows unconventional paths. After earning a Bachelor's Degree in Politics and International Relations from the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH), I sought to apply my academic knowledge in meaningful ways. Unexpectedly, my professional journey began in tailoring — a field far removed from politics. Yet, this experience instilled in me discipline, precision, and an uncompromising attention to detail, all of which would later prove invaluable.

Driven by a passion for communication and cultural connection, I transitioned into education, teaching English in various organisations. I went on to establish my own training centre under the Wise Organization, offering English language instruction and other academic programmes. Teaching honed my ability to listen, explain with clarity, and lead with empathy — skills that naturally prepared me for leadership.

As my career developed, I entered the corporate sector, where I applied the diverse skills I had cultivated over the years. My dedication, time management, and commitment to excellence led to steady advancement, ultimately resulting in my appointment as General Manager of Power Solid, a leading renewable energy company in Iraq.

In this role, I bring together the lessons from every stage of my journey — meticulousness from tailoring, communication from teaching, and critical thinking from academia. Leading a company in a complex, fast-evolving sector demands not only strategic decision-making but also cultural fluency, reliability, and vision.

Each chapter of my path has been a purposeful step towards becoming a dynamic, well-rounded leader. My bilingual foundation enables cross-cultural collaboration, my early professional experiences fostered resilience and precision, and my years in education continue to inspire a people-centred leadership style. Today, I lead with integrity, driving sustainable success while remaining grounded in the skills and values that shaped my evolution.

Marcel Jameel Maqdasi

Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Officer with UNHCR Iraq

When I first walked through the gates of the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) in 2010, I carried more doubt than hope. I did not have much trust in what it could offer me to shape my future or give me purpose. Yet, over time, that doubt transformed into deep respect and pride. UKH did not just meet my expectations; it redefined them.

In 2015, shortly after graduating, I began working with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as a humanitarian worker. This role exposed me to the difficult realities faced by displaced communities and sparked a profound passion for humanitarian service. Over time, I took on various positions within the humanitarian field, which further inspired me to pursue higher education to broaden my knowledge and strengthen my abilities.

In 2019, I earned my Master's Degree in International Studies at UKH while navigating the challenges of being a new mother and working full-time. This journey transformed me profoundly, revealing my true strengths and reshaping how I see myself. I learned that with unwavering dedication and self-belief, what once seemed like a distant dream can become a fulfilling reality. Moreover, the education I received deepened my expertise in humanitarian studies and has been central in shaping both my career and my ongoing commitment to humanitarian work.

Today, I proudly serve as a Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Officer with UNHCR Iraq. In this role, I help facilitate safe and legal resettlement opportunities for refugees, enabling them to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope.

To the current students of UKH, my heartfelt advice is to believe in yourselves, seize every opportunity, and never underestimate the power of small beginnings. To the inspiring women of UKH: every step comes with

sacrifice, pressure, and moments of self-doubt, but trust in your strengths and keep moving forward at your own pace. To all the mothers balancing work, studies, and family life as I once did: the journey is tough, but it can also be your greatest source of strength and pride. It teaches resilience, patience, and the importance of setting priorities. My journey at UKH was empowering in every sense. It enabled me to uncover strengths I never knew I possessed, shaped my values, and gave me a voice that I now use to advocate for those in need. Let my story be a reminder: with passion and dedication, there are no limits.



WHERE OUR ALUMNI ARE MAKING AN IMPACT



China
United States
United Kingdom
Poland
Sweden
Norway
France
Austria
United Arab Emirates
Spain
Turkey



Shabaz Musa

Benefits Administrator at Sardar Group

After graduating from high school in my hometown of Rwandz, I was determined to pursue a university that would provide not only a world-class education but also an environment in which I could grow socially and prepare for my future. UKH immediately stood out as the perfect choice, and my journey began when I enrolled in the department of Natural Resources Engineering, majoring in Mineral Resources Engineering.

During my time at UKH, I gained far more than an academic degree. The university gave me opportunities to engage in social activities, take part in charity initiatives, and build lasting friendships. It provided a balanced environment where academic achievement went hand in hand with personal growth, giving me the solid foundation I needed to face future challenges.

After graduation, my career path took an unexpected turn. Rather than working in a field directly related to my degree, I entered the healthcare sector – a completely different area from my academic background. I began with a medical company, which soon led me to join the

leading medical diagnostic centre in the city and indeed in the country.

In that role, I was the only person working in a medical department without a medical degree. Despite this challenge, I adapted quickly, worked hard, and eventually became a Patient Services Supervisor, leading a team of 50 staff members in the patient services departments. This experience taught me that determination and transferable skills can open doors, even in fields that may at first appear unrelated to one's studies.

Today, I serve as a Benefits Administrator in the Human Resources Department at Sardar Group. Reflecting on my journey, I can confidently say that none of these achievements would have been possible without the education, opportunities, and personal development I experienced at UKH. My advice to current students is this: be open to opportunities, even if they lie outside your field of study. Skills are transferable, and every experience adds value to your career journey.

Dina Jameel Adhamat

Human Resources Manager at Bee Cable

In 2010, when the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) was still not widely known, my father encouraged me to apply. His belief in me gave me the courage to take that step; a decision that became the turning point of my life. My years at UKH were both rewarding and challenging. I faced language barriers, demanding coursework, and the pressure of adapting to a diverse academic environment. There were moments of self-doubt, but each challenge pushed me to grow stronger, more resilient, and more determined to succeed. UKH was not just a place to study; it was where I learned to overcome obstacles, collaborate with people from different backgrounds, and believe in my own abilities.

The education and experiences I gained at UKH gave me the confidence, skills, and vision to advance in my career. After graduation, I began working in the education sector, delivering the International Baccalaureate curriculum and supporting students with essay writing, topic selection, research design, and academic writing. This experience refined my teaching and mentoring skills, yet I had always aspired to broaden my career path. This ambition led me to transition into the corporate world, joining Darin Group, where I advanced from a junior position to senior responsibilities. Those years deepened my understanding of organisational structures, people management, and the importance of aligning human capital with business objectives.

Today, I serve as Human Resources Manager at Bee Cable, overseeing the full spectrum of HR functions, including recruitment, payroll, compliance, employee relations, and engagement. I have actively contributed to strengthening the company's culture by implementing initiatives that enhance employee engagement, such as recognition programmes, team-building activities, and training workshops. Working in a collaborative and fast-paced telecommunications environment, I have learnt that innovation, teamwork, and accountability are



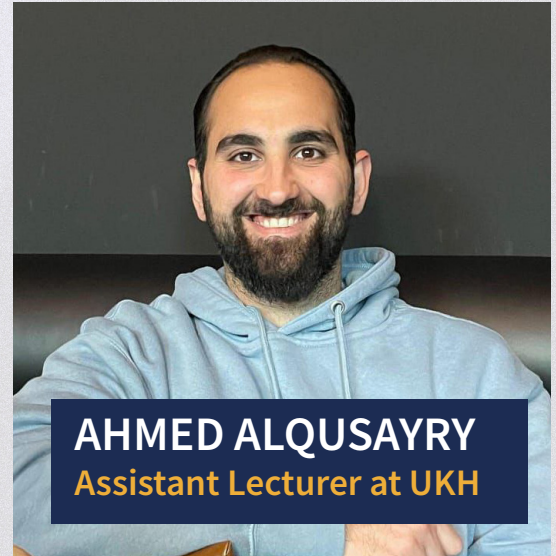
central to success. Ultimately, over the past nine years, I have grown from an entry-level professional into a leader who values teamwork, accountability, and innovation.

Being part of the UKH alumni community has further enriched my journey, connecting me with inspiring and accomplished individuals. It is a source of pride to belong to such a vibrant and supportive network.

Looking back, I am deeply grateful for my father's encouragement, as UKH was the starting point that shaped my professional path. My message to current students is this: embrace challenges, keep learning, and trust that hard work will open every door you dream of.

WHAT TODAY'S JOB MARKET EXPECTS FROM COMPUTER ENGINEERS

To explore what employers are looking for in computer engineering graduates, we interviewed Mr Ahmed Saaddaldin, one of our distinguished BSc and MSc alumni in Computer Engineering, and currently an Assistant Lecturer at UKH. In this conversation, he shares his insights on the skills, knowledge, and qualities that make graduates stand out in today's fast-evolving job market.



AHMED ALQUSAYRY
Assistant Lecturer at UKH

Q1: What are the most critical technical and professional skills you expect computer engineering graduates to have when they enter the job market?

Since computer engineering is hardware-oriented and given the limited presence of major computer hardware manufacturers in the region, graduates should also be prepared to adapt their skills toward software and systems-related roles where opportunities are more abundant. That said, strong programming fundamentals and solid problem-solving abilities remain critical. It's equally important to balance knowledge of both hardware and software, as many roles require an understanding of both domains. Even proficiency with simple tools like MS Office should not be underestimated, since they are part of everyday professional life.

Q2: In your experience, what skill gaps do you often notice in fresh graduates, and how can universities help bridge those gaps?

The main gap I often observe is a lack of real hands-on experience. Many students complete their degree with good theoretical knowledge but limited practical skills. Another common weakness is communication and public speaking. Universities can help address this by offering more internships, encouraging teamwork, and making presentations a greater part of project work.

Q3: With rapid changes in technology such as AI, cloud computing, and cybersecurity, which areas should computer engineering students prioritise to stay competitive?

Technology moves quickly, and it is impossible to master everything. My advice is to specialise in one emerging field, such as AI or data science, while also maintaining a broad understanding of cloud and software systems. This blend of depth and breadth makes graduates both specialised and adaptable.

Q4: Beyond technical expertise, which soft skills or personal competencies make the biggest difference for success in the workplace?

Technical skills can get you through the door, but soft skills often determine how far you progress. Strong communication, confidence, and teamwork make a lasting impression. Being proactive and adaptable is also vital, especially in industries that change rapidly. Above all, a mindset of continuous learning is what ensures long-term relevance.

Zina Saad Hussein Al-Aghidi

Assistant Lecturer at UKH

My journey with the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) has been one of transformation and growth; a journey that has now come full circle as I return as an Assistant Lecturer at the very institution that shaped my career. When I began my Master's Degree in Business Administration at UKH in 2020, I was seeking not only knowledge but also an environment that would challenge me to grow and unlock my potential. UKH provided exactly that: world-class education, inspiring faculty, and opportunities for continuous development.

My master's studies laid the foundations for my career as a lecturer and professional trainer in Business and Management, building on my earlier role as Head of Department and Lecturer of Business Administration at Kurdistan Capital Institute (KCI), where I gained eight years of experience in teaching and professional training. Inspired by the knowledge I acquired at UKH, I was able to merge academic learning with professional expertise to deliver high-quality education; an opportunity made possible by the strong foundation that UKH provided. Today, I am proud to serve as an Assistant Lecturer in Business and Management at UKH while also pursuing my Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).

Over the past decade, I have built a career as a lecturer, trainer, and researcher, becoming a Certified Management & Business Educator (CMBE) and a Fellow of Advance HE (FHEA). These milestones reflect my commitment to delivering high-quality education, fostering innovation, and creating meaningful learning experiences for my students. These opportunities for professional development were made possible by UKH, and for that I remain deeply grateful.

Returning to UKH not only as an alumna but also as an educator feels like coming full circle. This institution has been central to my growth, and I am dedicated to giving back by mentoring the next generation of leaders.



To current UKH students, I encourage you to embrace every opportunity the university offers; step beyond your comfort zone, invest in your skills, and remain committed to lifelong learning. The future is full of possibilities, and UKH provides the foundation to turn them into reality.

Hussein Saber

Director at R&D Risk Management Office

My time at the University of Kurdistan Hewlêr (UKH) was more than an academic chapter; it became the bedrock upon which both my professional and personal life have been built. At UKH, I earned my Bachelor's Degree in Politics and International Relations, followed by a master's degree in international studies.

These programmes were instrumental in sharpening my analytical skills and enhancing my multilingual abilities, empowering me to approach complex challenges from both local and global perspectives.

Beyond the lecture halls, the wider university environment was a true catalyst for growth. My life at UKH was enriched with activities that nurtured leadership and collaboration. I had the privilege of serving as Head and Coordinator of the UKH Chess Club, where I organised annual tournaments that brought together students, staff, and even instructors in a spirit of friendly competition. I also contributed to the student-led newspaper *What's Up* in 2013 and *Your Voice* magazine in 2018; experiences that reflected the vibrant student life at UKH, where a growth mindset was fostered from day one. Most importantly, the relationships I built during those years became pillars of my career, teaching me that success is always a collective endeavour.

Carrying these lessons forward, I began my professional journey. After completing my bachelor degree, I entered the NGO sector and later served at the government's Department of Foreign Relations. Motivated to continue my development, I pursued my master's at UKH while working, a true test of discipline. During this period, an opportunity in the private sector arose, and I joined R&D Risk Management Office as an Operations Assistant. Step by step, I earned promotions by applying the principles I had learnt, particularly the positive, growth-oriented mindset first cultivated at UKH.



Today, as Director of Research and Development and Risk Management Office, I continue to build my career on the principles of teamwork, adaptability, and continuous growth. The love for learning that began in the UKH library remains with me to this day; I make it a habit to read and learn continually, ensuring that my professional journey evolves with purpose and vision.

To the current students of UKH, my advice is this: focus on building practical skills you can carry throughout your career and complement your academic knowledge with strong communication, leadership, and analytical abilities.

FACTS ABOUT UKH ALUMNI

Graduated Students

2010 *to* 2024

2554

UG Alumni

59.21%

PG Alumni

40.56%

PhD Alumni

0.23%

School of Medicine Alumni

2.62%

School of Social Sciences Alumni

21.84%

School of Management and Economics Alumni

34.43%

School of Science and Engineering

41.11%

Male Alumni | Female Alumni

55% | 45%

Employability Rate

85% - 90%



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