

King Abdulaziz University, founded in 1387H/1967G, is named after the founder and first King of modern-day Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz bin Abdul Rahman al Saud. In 1974, KAU made the official transition from a "national university" to a "government university", enabling it to grow with the aid of the government's financial, organizational, and logistical support. At the same time, the College of Shariah and the College of Graduate Studies, originally founded in Makkah in 1369H/1949G, were made a part of KAU before falling under the umbrella of Umm Al-Qura University after it was established. From its then-remote location on Jeddah's eastern perimeter, King Abdulaziz University has grown tremendously over the years and today presents the profile of a major modern University with student enrolment now hovering around 80,000, a far cry from its inaugural class of 98 students. Paralleling the growth of enrolment, the University's reputation has also grown exponentially and today it is considered one of the top institutions of higher education in the Kingdom. KAU's main campus in Jeddah comprises both a men's and women's campus, which is in accordance with Islamic custom. The two campuses are identical, with each offering students the same cultural, recreational, and athletic facilities as well as libraries that offer the most up-to-date technology to students and faculty members. Over its nearly five decades of existence, KAU has made an indelible mark on the educational terrain of the Kingdom, the Middle East, and the entire world, focusing its efforts on preparing students for the real-world jobs awaiting them. The University's influence stretches to all corners of the Kingdom, establishing branches and launching satellite campuses that have gone on to become independent institutions of higher education. KAU established Taibah University in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, which became independent in 1424H/2003G; Tabouk University and Jizan University, both of which have since become independent institutions; and the North Borders University as well as ArAr College and Rafha College. In addition to its physical expansion, KAU's curricula have expanded to include numerous scientific and theoretical fields of study as well as offering degrees in disciplines such as Marine Sciences, Geology, Nuclear Engineering, Medical Engineering, Meteorology, Aviation, and Mineralogy. King Abdulaziz University is also recognized as a leader in opening the doors of higher education to the Kingdom's female population. The men's and women's campuses and their educational programs were established simultaneously at the time of the university's founding and have enabled medical students of both genders to cooperate in becoming MDs. Fully cognizant of its role as a "government university" and the responsibility to the Kingdom's educational system that entails, King Abdulaziz University offers a wide range of programs to full-time students, working students, disabled students and to those who live too far from any campus to study in person. The Deanship of Distant Education is integral not only to reaching these students and addressing their needs, but it is also instrumental in developing the pedagogical technology vital to the success of such programs now and in the future.