



MOHAMED BIN ZAYED
UNIVERSITY OF
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



MBZUAI
**Student
Handbook**
2023-2024

mbzuai.ac.ae



**WELLCOME
TO WERBZUAT**

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A nighttime photograph of a modern university building with a large, curved facade. The building is illuminated with warm lights, and the sky is a deep blue. In the foreground, there are several palm trees and a fountain with several jets of water. The overall atmosphere is serene and modern.

THE UNIVERSITY MOTTO

POWER from
KNOWLEDGE
to **SERVE**



About MBZUAI

The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) is established in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, with a clear mission to drive AI knowledge creation and development, foster economic and social growth, and position the UAE as a hub for the international AI community.

The university, in addition to its academic offerings, will have a direct and indirect impact on AI advancement in the UAE in multiple ways including, but not limited to:

- Attracting international talents (students and faculty staff) and ensuring the transition to enter the UAE market
- Creating an active AI community and collaborating in AI research and publications
- Hosting conferences that attract AI experts to the UAE and the region
- Supporting technology and AI related startups in the UAE
- Supporting governments and businesses by providing AI consulting services and AI solutions/ applications
- Conducting training and workshops in various AI fields for government entities and businesses.

MBZUAI currently offers Ph.D. and M.Sc. programs in five AI specializations including machine learning (ML), computer vision (CV), natural language processing (NLP), robotics (ROB) and computer science (CS).

Vision, mission and strategic objectives



Vision

Drive excellence in knowledge creation, transfer and use of AI to foster economic growth and position Abu Dhabi as a hub for the international AI community.



Mission

Establish and continually evolve interdisciplinary, collaborative research and development capability in the field of AI, while educating students to be innovators and leaders with the breadth and depth to grow technology and enterprise in the UAE and globally.



Strategic objectives

As a unique institution, purpose built to lead the world in AI research, MBZUAI seeks to be a paradise for transformative research; a cradle for the best minds in computer science; and a hub for startups and high-tech innovation.

Its strategic objectives are:

- Attract the best talent focused on AI
- Develop, train, and retain talent for the UAE economy
- Lead Abu Dhabi's efforts to build and sustain an AI- based knowledge economy
- Develop real business applications in collaboration with industry and the public sector to enhance innovation, productivity, and growth
- Be the birthplace for high-tech innovation and AI startups in the UAE and the MENA region.



Academic programs

Overview

MBZUAI offers five M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs in the following areas of AI specialization:

Computer science (CS)

Recognized as the foundation of modern technology, computer science offers an intricate yet exciting academic journey, packed with the nuances of evolving innovation and multidimensional challenges. Our computer science degrees cover the sufficient breadth and depth in advanced computational theory, computational and combinatorial optimization, advanced data structures, and modern operating systems – all while exploring the rich landscape of software design and artificial intelligence. The curriculum is carefully designed to provide students with an in-depth understanding of the complex theoretical frameworks that drive the evolution of digital technologies and their diverse applications. We emphasize the development of rigorous problem-solving abilities, critical analytical thinking, and technical acumen. As a result, our computer science graduates will be armed with the essential tools to navigate and reshape the evolving landscape of technology – thus pushing the constant pursuit of progress and exploration in the field of computing.

Computer vision (CV)

This scientific field studies how computers can be used to automatically understand and interpret visual imagery. It aims to mimic the astounding capabilities of human visual cortex using machine vision algorithms. It studies how an image is created, the geometry of the 3D world and high-level tasks such as object recognition, object detection, and tracking, image segmentation and action recognition. Computer vision has important applications in augmented / virtual reality, autonomous cars, service robots, biometrics and forensics, remote sensing and security and surveillance.

Machine learning (ML)

The scientific study of algorithms and statistical models that computer systems use to effectively perform a specific task without using explicit instructions, relying on patterns and inference instead. These algorithms are based on mathematical models learned automatically from data, thus allowing machines to intelligently interpret and analyze input data to derive useful knowledge and arrive at important conclusions. Machine learning is heavily used for enterprise applications (e.g. business intelligence and analytics), effective web search, robotics, smart cities and understanding of the human genome.



Natural language processing (NLP)

NLP focuses on system development that allows computers to communicate with people using everyday language. Natural language generation systems convert information from the computer database into readable or audible human language and vice versa. Such systems also enable sophisticated tasks such as inter-language translation, semantic understanding, text summarization and holding a dialog. The key applications of NLP algorithms include interactive voice response applications, automated translators, digital personal assistants (e.g. Siri, Cortana, Alexa), chatbots, and smart word processors.

Robotics (R)

Our M.Sc. and Ph.D. in robotics focus on human-centred and autonomous robotics research and prepare exceptional students for careers at the cutting edge of academia, industry, and government. Our world-leading robotics researchers, students and industry partners collaborate to advance discoveries in various aspects of robotics, such as perception and applied machine learning, human-robot interaction, cognitive and soft robotics, and swarm intelligence.

Programs format

Students are required to complete all M.Sc. program requirements within two (2) years. The minimum degree requirements are 36 credits, distributed as follows:

Core courses	Number of courses	Credit hours
Core	4	16
Electives	2	8
Internship	1	2
Introduction to Research	1	2
Research thesis	1	8

Students are required to complete all Ph.D. programs requirements within four (4) years. The minimum degree requirements are 60 credits, distributed as follows:

Core courses	Number of courses	Credit hours
Core	4	16
Electives	2	8
Internship	1	2
Advanced Research Methods	1	2
Research thesis	1	32

Academic calendar 2023–2024

	Day	Date	Event
Fall semester (2023)	Mon–Fri	Aug 14–18	Students' orientation
	Mon	Aug 21	First day of classes
	Fri	Aug 25	Last day to add/drop courses
	Fri	Sept 1	Last day to apply for course withdrawal/ leave of absence without penalty
	Mon–Wed	Aug 14–Sep 6	Supervisors' selection process
	Fri	Nov 17	Publish the spring 2024 class schedule
	Mon–Fri	Nov 20–24	Early registration for spring 2024 semester
	Tue	Dec 5	Last day of classes
	Wed–Fri	Dec 6–8	Final exams preparation period
	Sun–Thu	Dec 10–14	Final exams period
	Fri	Dec 15	360 meeting – all faculty
	Tues	Dec 19	Faculty to submit grades
	Mon	Dec 25	Grades announcement
	Thu	Dec 28	Students' deadline to submit grade appeals
Winter break	Fri–Fri	Dec 15, 2023– Jan 5, 2024	Winter break for students
	Wed–Tue	Dec 20, 2023– Jan 2, 2024	Winter break for faculty

The official holidays observed by the university during the fall 2023 semester:

Occasion	Date	Holiday duration
Prophet Mohammed Birthday	Sep 26 or Sep 27, 2023	One day
Commemoration Day	Dec 1, 2023	One day
UAE National Day	Dec 2, 3, 2023	Two days

Spring semester (2024)	Day	Date	Event
	Mon	Jan 8	First day of classes
	Fri	Jan 12	Last day to add/drop courses
	Mon–Tue	Jan 15–Apr 30	Fall 2022 cohort – M.Sc. students/ application for Ph.D. articulation
	Fri	Jan 26	Last day to apply for course withdrawal/ leave of absence without penalty
Mon	Mar 25	Fall 2022 cohort – M.Sc. students’ final deadline for thesis submission	

Spring break	Day	Date	Event
	Mon–Fri	Mar 25–29	Spring break for students/faculty

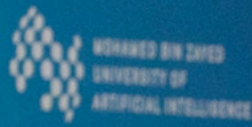
Spring semester continues (2024)	Day	Date	Event
	Thu	Apr 4	Fall 2022 cohort – M.Sc. students’ final deadline for thesis defense
	Fri	Apr 12	Publish the fall 2024 class schedule
	Mon	Apr 15	Fall 2022 cohort – Ph.D. students’ deadline to sit for the candidacy (oral) exam
	Mon–Fri	Apr 15–19	Early registration for fall 2024 semester
	Wed	May 1	Last day of classes
	Thu–Mon	May 2–6	Final exams preparation period
	Tue–Mon	May 7–13	Final exams period
	Tue	May 14	360 meeting – all faculty
	Thu	May 16	Faculty to submit grades
	Thu	May 23	Grades announcement
	Wed	May 29	Students’ deadline to submit grade appeals
	Mon	May 27	Qualifying exam for Ph.D. students – first attempt
	Mon	Jun 10	Qualifying exam for Ph.D. students – second attempt
Thu	Jun 13	Official Commencement ceremony	

Summer break	Day	Date	Event
	Wed	May 15	Start of summer break for students
	Mon	May 20	Start of summer break for faculty

The official holidays observed by the university during the spring 2024 semester:

Occasion	Date	Holiday duration
Eid Al Fitr Holiday	April 10–12	Three days

Future facing, world class, global.



MOHAMMED BIN ZAYED
UNIVERSITY OF
ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



MBZUAI
EXECUTIVE
PROGRAM





Getting started

Orientation program

All new students must undergo the student orientation program as soon as they join MBZUAI and prior to starting classes. It is essential to attend the orientation program.

The goal of the orientation program is to facilitate the new students transition to graduate studies by introducing them to the values, expectations, and resources of the MBZUAI community, which will be their home for the duration of their degree program. It will also focus on professional as well as personal development.

Student ID

Every student at MBZUAI receives an MBZUAI Identity card after being admitted and enrolled. The card is valid until the students complete their studies. These cards are issued by the Office of Campus Life. ID cards will be distributed to all students during orientation week.

The student should ensure to carry his/her card at all times around the university and should not allow anyone else to use this card.

Official letters

At times, students will be requested to supply an official 'No Objection Letter' by various government and/or private organizations (e.g., when purchasing a car, opening a new bank account). These letters should be initiated by the student and can be requested online using the E-Services in SharePoint.

Administration and important information

UAE entry permit and residency visa

MBZUAI Students must have a valid entry visa to enter the UAE (depending on their nationality). This permit will be issued and sent prior to leaving home. The validity of the visa depends on rules at the current time; they may be valid for 30 or 60 days from the date of issue. Therefore, entry to the UAE must be within this period.

For the initial processing of the entry permit(s) and insurance procedures, students will need to send the education certificate (bachelor's/master's), photocopy of the passport, and color passport photo with white background. Please send the requested documents to admission@mbzuai.ac.ae.

It should be noted that there should be at least six months' validity on passports for entry into the UAE and application for the residence visa.

When all the relevant documents have been received, the admissions office will process and email a copy of the entry permit(s).

Students will need to show a copy of the entry permit to the airline/immigration at their point of departure. Students with certain nationalities must undergo a pre-medical test and pre-approval for the entry permit in the home country through the UAE consulate before their departure.

Upon arrival in the UAE, a public relations officer (PRO) will handle the residence visa procedures. The residence visa will be stamped on

the passport.

To start these procedures, students should report to Campus Life office, as soon as possible after their arrival, with the following documents:

- Original entry permit
- Passport

A PRO will book an appointment for the medical test, Emirates ID application typing, fingerprint scan (for the Emirates ID), and issue health insurance to complete the required documents for the residence visa.

Emirates ID card

As per the law of the Population Registry and the Identity Card program, all nationals and legal residents of the UAE must obtain the Emirates ID card.

Students will be required to obtain an Emirates ID card for themselves and MBZUAI will reimburse the cost of the Emirates ID card.

For further information, please see www.emiratesid.ae.

Driving license

To obtain a driving license, students should visit the Abu Dhabi Police Department's Office. Regulations for obtaining a driving license vary by nationality. Therefore, this department will advise of the latest regulations and provide guidance regarding the process required for obtaining a driving license.

Note: Students can only apply for a driving license when they have obtained their residence visa.

Embassies and consulates

There are many foreign embassies and consulates located in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Embassies and consulates are generally open from 8:45 a.m. to 1:30 p.m, Monday to Friday. Some may close early on Fridays.

Some embassies have websites while others do not. For a comprehensive list of embassies and consulates in the UAE, please see: www.indexuae.com/Top/Government/Embassies_and_Consulates.

Electricity

Electricity is 220 volts at 50 cycles per second. Transformers are readily available in the market for electronic equipment that runs on 110 volts. If students bring their personal computer for use in their home, they will need to purchase a transformer. Some computers switch either manually or automatically from 110 to 220 volts.

UAE newspapers

Newspapers are readily available in both English and Arabic, and delivery is available to campus housing. To view the comprehensive list of available newspapers, please view the following link: <http://www.onlinenewspapers.com/une.htm>

Potable water

Tap water in the Emirates is safe to drink. However, most people prefer bottled water, which can be delivered to individual campus housing weekly, at a cost of approximately 10 dirhams per five-gallon bottle.

Useful websites

For additional information on working and living in the UAE, the following websites will prove useful:

<http://visitabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx>
<https://www.abudhabi.ae/portal/public/en/homepage>

Dress code

MBZUAI has a multicultural environment that respects the norms of UAE society. Students must not behave or dress in a way that may offend cultural sensitivities. The following points must be observed regarding student dress at the university.

- No offensive wording, drawings, or pictures are allowed on clothing.
- Clothing or attire must not interfere with the safe operation of duties or equipment.
- In respect for the needs for identification and security, we request all female students to forgo face-covering veils while on campus.
- Students should not wear revealing clothes. “Revealing clothes” refers to clothing that has very sheer fabric or clothing that is tight. Blouses, etc should have no cleavage visible. The lower back, abdomen and upper arms should be covered. Skirts should be below the knee.
- All students are to wear appropriate business attire when representing the university on official trips such as conferences, summits and meetings with external organizations.

Examples of acceptable clothing:

- **Female students** – UAE National attire, long skirts/pants/dresses with length that covers the knees, long-sleeve blouses, smart T-Shirts, jumpers, jackets, and suits (note: no sleeveless).
- **Male students** – UAE National attire, business suits, sports jackets, blazers, trousers/slacks, smart T-shirts and shirts.

Available services for students on campus

From the time students are admitted into MBZUAI until graduation, access shall be provided to a range of support services, facilities, and programs at the campus. Students have access to a range of other services, such as: advising, IT support, health services and insurance, prayer rooms, dining facilities and student lounges.

Premises, resources and physical setting

MBZUAI is based in Masdar City, one of the world's most sustainable urban communities, a low-carbon development made up of a rapidly growing clean-tech cluster, business free zone and residential neighborhood with restaurants, shops and public green spaces, surrounded by a student-friendly environment with all the needed amenities. The campus spaces are designed to be fully supportive of an optimal educational experience and compliant with local authorities' regulations as well as international educational standards.

Recreational facilities

MBZUAI is equipped with a sports facility, a sizeable male and female gym, and a swimming pool.

MBZUAI apartments

The residences at MBZUAI 1A is split into four blocks, comprising three floors of apartments, while 1B contains additional housing blocks of four floors each. The blocks are divided into male and females. Each male and female apartment has a bedroom, kitchen, toilet and shower, living/dining, and study

area. Some of the apartments comprise more than one bedroom. All apartments have private balconies.

Common system in 1A building apartments:

- A master switch is provided in each room at the entrance to activate all MEP systems (lighting, AC and water).
- The lights work with motion sensors as per occupancy (the timing of this is adjustable). They can also be controlled by switches, which are available inside the room.
- AC units are installed on the ceiling – thermostats are not available to control the temperature inside the rooms as per building design. The AC unit's temperature can be controlled from the building management system (BMS) based on request.
- Centralized fresh air is available and is fed to each room and the corridors.
- Hot and cold water is available all the time; the washbasin taps work with sensors.
- Each room is equipped with an electric hot plate, fridge, microwave, and furniture.
- All the room entrance doors are secured with a centralized access control system (access cards will be provided accordingly).



- Window blind curtains are available and can be operated manually.
- A common laundry room is available in each residential building.
- Centralized garbage chutes are available in each floor with designated bins (general waste, plastic, organic, and aluminum cans).

Common system in 1B building apartments:

- A master switch is provided in each room in 1B building apartments – the user must insert the card in the master switch to activate all MEP systems (lighting, AC and water).
- The lights work with motion sensors as per occupancy (the timing of this is adjustable). They can also be controlled by switches, which are available inside the room.
- AC units are installed on the ceiling, and the temperature can be controlled by thermostats, which are available in each room.
- Centralized fresh air is available and is fed to each room and the corridors.
- Hot and cold water is available all the time; the washbasin taps work with sensors.
- Each room is equipped with two types of hot plate – an electric hot plate and induction hot plate (only induction pans will work on the induction hot plate) – a fridge, microwave, and furniture.
- All the room entrance doors are secured with a centralized access control system (access cards will be provided accordingly).
- Window blind curtains are available, and can be operated manually.
- A common laundry room is available in each residential building.
- Centralized garbage chutes are available in each floor with designated bins (general waste, plastic, organic, and aluminum cans).

Catering arrangements

All apartments are equipped with an electric cooker, fridge, and microwave, but no oven. Cookware, crockery, and cutlery are not provided. Apartments in 1B blocks have shared freezers on each floor.

1A blocks have small freezers in their refrigerators. There is also a canteen on site where breakfast, lunch, and dinner can be purchased. Additionally, a number of retail outlets including restaurants and cafés are located on campus.

Bedrooms are equipped with a bed, built-in wardrobe, and bedside cabinet. Bedding is not provided. Bathroom facilities consist of a shower, toilet, and sink. Towels are not provided. Dining table and chairs, study desk and chair and soft furnishings are provided.

Laundry

There is a laundry located within each of the blocks. There are also a number of common lounges and external balcony areas within each of the blocks. Students are responsible for providing their own laundry detergent. The use of washing/drying machines is free of charge in all facilities.

Majlis/common areas

Common areas are provided on the podium level of the campus. Male and female majlis areas are located in 1A and 1B. Common space can be found in 1B and in the Learning Center and restaurants, cafés, and the canteen.

Cleaning

The common areas are cleaned frequently. It is the resident's responsibility to clean their own apartment. The Campus Life & Facilities team will carry out random checks of the student dorm to ensure cleanliness.

Prayer rooms

There are both male and female prayer rooms located within the campus. In 1B building, there are two prayer rooms for males and females. The male prayer room is located in the Hydro residential building and the female prayer room is located in the Tidal residential building.

In 1A building, there are also male and female prayer rooms. The male prayer room is located in the Knowledge Center building and the female prayer room is located in Biomass residential building.

Parking

At the Masdar City campus, parking is permitted at the North Car Park. Parking spaces are available for faculty, staff, and students and cannot be reserved.

Transportation

Bus services, routes and fared taxis

All taxi services in UAE use meters around the city so you will not need to negotiate fares. Drivers in Abu Dhabi speak English and there is a central national transport phone number that can be used to locate the nearest available taxi: 600 535353.



Banking facilities

First Abu Dhabi Bank

Tel: 02 681 1511

www.bankfab.com

Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank

Tel: 02 672 0000

www.adcb.com

Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank

Tel: 02 610 0600

www.adib.ae

Citibank

Tel: 02 674 2484

www.citibank.com/uae

HSBC

Tel: 600 55 4722

www.hsbc.ae

Most banks have several branches in each city. Contact the bank or visit their website for details of the most convenient branch for you.

Masdar Park

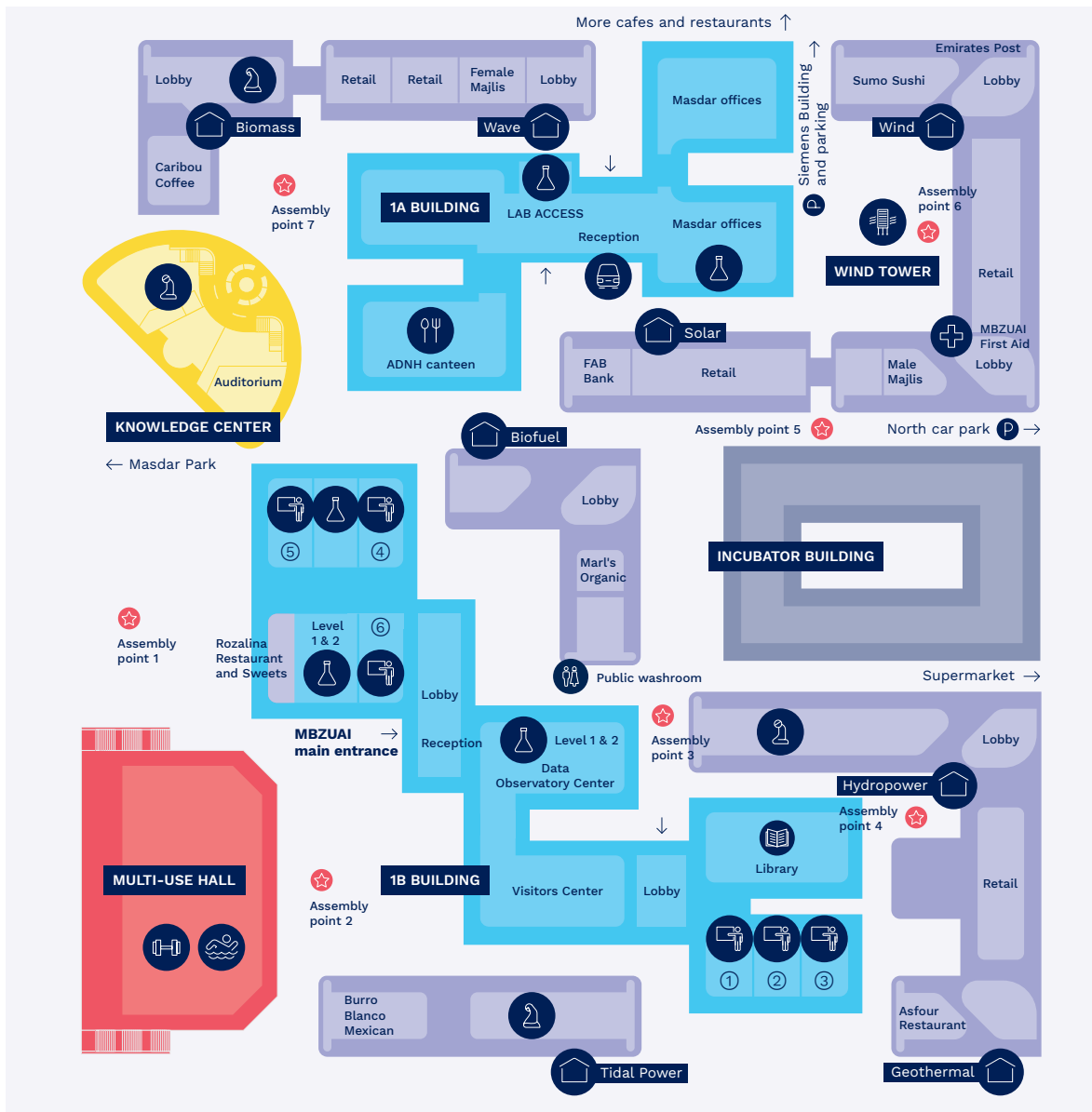
Masdar Park is a 2,500 square meter green space adjacent to campus, open daily from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. The park features a children's playground, a music wall and art installations themed on sustainability. Visitors can charge their phones and digital devices using the park's solar-powered benches and interact




















with The Tree of Light made from recycled building materials. The Tree of Light changes color when touched. For more information, visit <https://masdar.ae/en/masdar-city/the-city/recreation>.

Travel and tourism

The Abu Dhabi Department of Culture and Tourism and Visit Abu Dhabi provide information regarding travel and tourism:

<http://visitabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx> <https://www.abudhabi.ae/portal/public/en/homepage>



- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
|  MBZUAI campus facilities |  Classrooms |  Canteen |  Medical Center |
|  Knowledge Center |  Laboratory |  Wind tower |  Gym (male and female) |
|  Recreation |  Library |  Student residences |  Public washroom |
|  Residential and retail |  PRT station |  Male prayer room |  Car park |
| |  Swimming pool |  Female prayer room |  Assembly point |
- mbzuai.ac.ae

Health, wellness and safety

Health and safety

The MBZUAI is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for our students, staff and visitors. However, students are expected to take responsibility for their own actions and not put themselves or others at risk.

Any occupational health and safety issues identified will be taken seriously and addressed promptly. If a student identifies any health and safety risks or has any health and safety concerns, they must contact Campus Life promptly to report any injuries or incidents that occur. Smoking is not allowed on the MBZUAI campus.

Security

MBZUAI is accessible only to authorized individuals. All MBZUAI premises have security gates with security personnel stationed at each entrance.

These security officers will only allow those who are properly authorized to enter the campus.

Fire drills

In case of fire, each academic department has procedures to follow. Students should learn where emergency exits, fire alarms and fire extinguishers are located. In the event of a fire drill or emergency, students must follow the directions of their professor or security personnel.

Medical emergencies

If a student is seriously ill, he/she should contact either the Control Room 24/7 on 02 811 3100 or Main Reception 24/7 on 02 811 3369

Health services

On-campus assistance is available in the form of first aid kits placed around the campus for minor injuries. Students may use their health insurance cards provided by MBZUAI to visit a hospital or medical center for more serious injuries.

- MBZUAI will provide each student with health insurance during their academic journey.
- The health card can be used for medical services in emergency cases and for basic routine treatment. A policy list will be provided stating the coverages included and allocated limits.
- In the event of a serious injury, call an ambulance by dialing 999. For minor injuries or medical complaints, a medical clinic is available on campus which is located in the Solar building podium and is available 24/7. The clinic is fully equipped and ready to accommodate all first aid needs.

Student IT services at MBZUAI

About IT Department

The Information Technology department is responsible for the planning, delivery, and support of the university's main computing facilities. This includes the university's network systems, email and calendaring, management services, research IT and student computing facilities. The IT department also provides support for teaching and learning in several classrooms.

Staff and students are provided with full IT support via the IT department's Helpdesk, which can be contacted via telephone, email or walk-in during normal business hours.

Service	Hours	Contact details
Telephone support	Mon–Thurs, 8:00 am–5:00 pm Fridays: 7:30 am–12:00pm	02-8113000 (external). Extension 3000
Email support	Mon–Thurs, 8:00 am–5:00 pm Fridays: 7:30 am–12:00pm	helpdesk@mbzuai.ac.ae
Walk-in support	Mon–Thurs, 8:00 am–5:00 pm Fridays: 7:30 am–12:00pm	Level 1, Building 1B

Internet access and student email

MBZUAI students can connect their laptop, mobile phone, or tablet to the MBZUAI wireless network to get fast secure internet access. Students in residences can also connect to wireless networks. Connections from outside campus are secured using a virtual private network (VPN).

In the first instance, help desk staff will help set up the required username and password. It is the student's responsibility to keep their password secure and not misuse it. If a student forgets their password, they should contact the IT Helpdesk. Before a student is given a password to access the internet and their email account, he/she shall be required to sign the MBZUAI Acceptable Use Policy. Student email is considered an official form of communication between MBZUAI and the students. Users of the internet are governed by the MBZUAI Acceptable Use Policy.

MBZUAI website and portal and e-Services

The MBZUAI website contains a wealth of useful information, including news channels, links to the available library resources, research activities, the academic calendar and more. Students can find the MBZUAI Catalogue on the website. It contains detailed information about programs, MBZUAI's policies, procedures, and requirements.

The MBZUAI website has a link to the restricted access MBZUAI portal. Students can access their email through the portal and will be offered a full e-Services Portfolio. Students gain access to the portal with their username and password. This can be done using a computer on the campus, at home or anywhere with an internet connection.



In addition to the services mentioned above the following is a list of other systems and services that may be of interest.

- Student Information System (SIS)
- Class schedule
- Program curriculum
- Student careers and alumni services
- Student Handbook
- Housing manual
- Microsoft Office 365 (email, MS Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and OneDrive)
- Printing services
- Learning management system (Moodle)
- MATLAB

Labs and computing

The IT department operates the computer labs located on level 2 of building 1B. The labs are set up for teaching but are available for students when teaching is not taking place. There are 64 machines available in the labs. Adjacent to the labs, there are 40 machines that are available 24/7 for student use on a first come, first served basis. There are also several shared screens, keyboards, and mice available for student use with their own laptops.

Access to high performance computing (HPC) resources

Ph.D. students are granted access to the MBZUAI HPC resources at MBZUAI and must adhere to the fair use policy that is in place. Masters students can apply for access to HPC resources with the express permission of their supervisor. Details can be obtained from the IT Helpdesk.

Student representation

There are two representatives of the Graduate Student Council (GSC) that serve on the IT Committee. The two representatives meet bi-weekly with the Director of IT to discuss student IT needs and issues and can be contacted at gsc@mbzuai.ac.ae. The council also operates a SharePoint site.

[Graduate Student Council - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

IT Helpdesk contact details

There is an IT Helpdesk located on Level 1, Building 1B on campus to help students with general IT queries. The helpdesk provides a walk-in service, a telephone service (extension 3000) and an email service: helpdesk@mbzuai.ac.ae.

The helpdesk operates during university business hours, Monday to Friday.

Learning resources

MBZUAI has an equipped library and technological resource on campus to assist students in the effective completion of their academic work and research assignments. The following facilities are available to students on campus: library, technology, and computer-based services and research laboratories.

The MBZUAI library provides print and electronic resources, facilities, and services to support the academic, research and professional information needs of the students, faculty, and staff of MBZUAI.

Membership

The library is open for the purpose of study and research to enrolled MBZUAI students, current faculty and staff, alumni, visiting researchers, and approved guests.

Collections

Collection development focuses on scholarly and academic publications in the interdisciplinary field of artificial intelligence, and additional resources are collected to support professional, teaching and learning needs and interests. All resources are discoverable through the library's single-search interface and materials available for borrowing include books, periodicals, course reserve materials and equipment.

- Physical collections are classified and arranged according to the Library of Congress Classification System.
- Open collections (main collection, reference, and periodicals) are browsable.
- Access to closed collections (course reserve collections) is mediated by library staff.
- Licensed electronic resources include bibliographic and full-text content and are available and accessible through university-provided credentials.
- Access to faculty open access affiliated publications and MBZUAI student theses and dissertations is available through





- the institutional repository, eCommons.
- Multiple copies of student textbooks are not typically purchased by the library; however, the library maintains a limited number of copies of required textbooks that are only available in print and makes these available on course reserve (short-term loans) to students.
 - Access to electronic textbooks is available through library eBook platforms or eRental platforms. Links to these resources are provided on the learning management system (Moodle) or directly through the library portal.

Facilities

The library provides stable Wi-Fi, study space, printing and scanning facilities, access to course reserve and other collections, and an opportunity to consult in person with library staff on resource and research needs.

Services

Students are provided with personal library accounts (My Account) to renew books, place holds, review outstanding fines and fees, and create booklists. Other eServices include title recommendations and requests, interlibrary loan requests, and resource and research consultations.

Librarians provide research and resource support, publish online guides, and host instruction through scheduled sessions and individual consultations, onsite and online.

Inter-library loans (ILL) and document delivery services are available to support students' resource needs not met by the library, and if available from a partner library or document delivery service.

Quotas may be applied, and materials obtained through ILL are strictly intended for individual use.

An institutional repository, eCommons, is maintained by the library to curate and disseminate faculty scholarship and MBZUAI student theses and dissertations. Students are required to submit a digital copy of a correctly formatted and approved thesis/dissertation to meet graduation requirements.

Loan rules and periods

Student identification is required to borrow physical materials and university-provided credentials are required to access licensed electronic content.

- Main collection material is available for long-term borrowing (three weeks or longer) by enrolled students, faculty, and staff of MBZUAI.
- High demand material, including course reserve items and equipment, is available for short-term borrowing and access may be restricted to in-library use.
- Items located in reference, periodicals, special collections, and archives are normally not available for circulation outside the library (non-circulating).
- Electronic content may have indefinite or varying periods of loan and can be accessed via the library's website or individual URL links provided on the learning management system (Moodle).

Materials are checked out and returned at staffed circulation desks. All patrons remain responsible for items checked out in their names.

- Overdue notices are sent as a courtesy.
- Fines may be levied for the late return of items, in accordance with notices displayed in the library and on the library's website and are charged at rates determined and approved annually by the Academic Committee.

- Fines will continue to accumulate until an item is returned or reported missing, and up to 20 days for long-term loans and 50 hours for short-term loans, at which stage, patrons will receive a statement for the replacement cost, including administrative charges and accumulated fines. Exceptions may apply.
- Students are required to clear all outstanding fines and fees directly with the finance department and borrowing privileges will be suspended for students with outstanding fines and fees of AED 300 or more.
- Items that may not be renewed online through the My Account service include recalled and overdue items, course reserve items, and books borrowed from another library (interlibrary loans).
- Patrons may request a hold on an item currently checked out to another patron and the library reserves the right to recall an item. All items may be recalled for inventory purposes at the end of each semester.

All borrowing policies and fines are published on the [Library website > Services > Borrowing policies.](#)

Library hours

Library opening hours support access to physical resources, facilities, and services and are posted on the library website.

Use of resources and facilities

Students are expected to acquaint themselves with the library's policies and regulations and refrain from any behavior that interferes with the right of others to access resources or use the library for the purpose of research and study. Library staff are empowered to interpret and enforce library policies, suspend privileges, and refer serious breaches of conduct to the Director of Educational Affairs.

- Facilities and equipment, including the library computers, are intended to support MBZUAI academic and research programs and use may be mediated to ensure equitable access and appropriate use.
- The use of computing and network resources, and licensed electronic resources must comply with the university's policies, licenses, contracts, and applicable laws.
- The use of the library's printing and scanning equipment for the reproduction of copyright-protected material requires compliance with copyright laws and conventions.
- Posting notices, taking photos or video recording in the library, requires permission from the Head of Library Management.
- With the exception of covered drinks (for example, coffee and tea), food and drinks should not be consumed in the library, and single-use plastic is discouraged.

For more information, please refer to the [MBZUAI Library Resources and Services Policy.](#)



Registrar's office

Academic policies

All academic policies, including requirements for academic progress, attendance, grading, academic integrity and grievance, are detailed in MBZUAI Catalogue for further clarification.

The Registrar's Office provides quality support services to students that include, but are not limited to, maintaining and preserving the accuracy, integrity, confidentiality, and security of all academic records. In addition, the office provides services to create and support course registration, classroom assignment, degree audit, enrollment verification, and issue transcripts and diplomas.

Supervisor's selection process

- MBZUAI will provide the appropriate infrastructure and student advising framework to allow students to complete their education and research in a timely and productive manner.
- Student advising shall be impartial and focus on students' needs rather than those of individual departments or the university.
- During the initial weeks of the first semester of study, faculty will showcase their research by means of presentations.
- During that time, students are given the opportunity to schedule 1:1 meetings with any faculty they want to meet.



- After meeting with the supervisors, each student is asked to submit, via an e-form, their top three choices of faculty (no more than one co-supervisor is permitted during the first year of study, but students still need to provide a ranked list of faculty).
- Wherever possible, the preferences of students who have identified a preferred MBZUAI supervisor prior to their arrival at the university will be honored. Accordingly, they should submit their preference via the e-form, as outlined above, and include a comment noting the rationale for the preferred supervisor. However, the following should be noted and will be applied:
 - There is no guarantee that the preferred supervisor will be assigned.

Course registration

Each student must meet with her/his supervisor prior to the

announced registration period to advise on the courses needed in the following semester. The student should complete the course/s online registration in order to be considered officially registered.

Course enrollment

Students are required to make steady progress towards meeting degree requirements and must successfully pass all program components (taught courses, internship and thesis/dissertation) within the normal allowed time to completion.

M.Sc. students should complete 26 credits of taught courses, 2 credits against internship and 8 credits against thesis/dissertation.

Ph.D. students should complete 26 credits of taught courses, 2 credits against internship and 32 credits against thesis/dissertation.



Attendance

- Class attendance is not mandatory unless specified as a requirement in the course syllabus. However, all MBZUAI students are strongly encouraged to attend in person as there is a correlation between attendance and academic achievement.
- If attendance is a course requirement, the instructor will keep track of attendance in his/her classroom.
- Students should be aware that they are not allowed to work more than 20 hours per week to ensure that they are not overloaded by paid work, which will inhibit the time that they can attend their classes or affect their study outcome.

Add and drop

A student may only change his/her schedule during the add/drop period as designated in the university calendar. If the deadline has passed, a student cannot change their class schedule unless they provide evidence for extenuating circumstances and after the approval of the supervisor, department chair/deputy and the Registrar.

Course withdrawal

A student who encounters unanticipated difficulty in a course may withdraw from a course until the end of the second week from the start of the semester (as per the university calendar) through a “Course Withdrawal Request Form”, approved by the student’s primary supervisor, department chair/ deputy, and the registrar.

Withdrawing from a course after the deadline results in academic/ financial penalty and requires the



approval of the academic supervisor and the Provost through a “Course Withdrawal Request Form”.

- In case the course withdrawal will result in the student being underload (less than 12 credits), then Provost approval is required in addition to the above approvals.

Leave of absence

A student may request a leave of absence for one semester only during the period of study at MBZUAI for extenuating circumstances by submitting the “Leave of Absence Request Form”, approved by the academic advisor and the Provost.

If the student requests to extend the leave of absence for another semester, he/she should submit an appeal to the Appeal Committee.

If the student exceeds the approved leave of absence duration without a formal notification, he/she will be considered withdrawn from the university and financial penalties will apply.

Complete withdrawal

- A student may voluntarily withdraw from the university after the approval of the Appeal Committee and subject to the terms and conditions of the scholarship contract.
- Students should be aware they shall pay to the university all expenses including tuition fees, monthly allowances, medical expenses, and any other expenses incurred by the university during the period of study.
- If the student submits legitimate justification for withdrawal to the Appeal Committee, the university may, if it deems necessary, exempt the student from all or some of the obligations stipulated in the scholarship contract.
- The student should complete the clearance process, which can be initiated by submitting the application for “Complete Withdrawal from university”.

Grading system

From Fall 2022 intake onwards, the following grades and guidelines have been used at MBZUAI:

Grade letters, points, percentages and descriptors			
Grade	Grade points	Percentage	Grade definition
A+	4	97.0 – 100%	
A	3.7	92.0 – 96.99%	
A-	3.5	87.0 – 91.99%	
B+	3.3	80.0 – 86.99%	
B	3	75.0 – 79.99%	
B-	2.7	71.0 – 74.99%	
C+	2.3	67.0 – 70.99%	
C	2	64.0 – 66.99%	
C-	1.7	60.0 – 63.99%	
F	0	0.0 – 59.99%	Failing grade in coursework
U	0	0	Unsatisfactory in Internship/Thesis (Research)
WF	0	0	Withdrawal after the add/drop week

For all cohorts admitted prior to Fall 2022, the following grades and guidelines are used at MBZUAI:

Grade letters, points, percentages and descriptors			
Grade	Grade points	Percentage	Grade definition
A	4.0	95-100	Exceptional
A-	3.7	89-94.99	Excellent
B+	3.3	83-88.99	Very Good
B	3.0	77-82.99	Good
B-	2.7	71-76.99	Average
C+	2.3	65-70.99	Below Average
C	2.0	59-64.99	
C-	1.7	50-58.99	
F	Fail	Less than 50	Failing grade in coursework
U	Fail		Unsatisfactory in internship/ thesis/research
WF	Withdrawal after the add/drop week		

Additional letter grades are used to denote special cases. These letter grades do not have corresponding grade points, and hence are not used in calculating a student's grade point average.

Other letter grades	
Grade	Description
I	Incomplete
TC	Transfer
W	Withdrawn
EX	Course exemption
S	Satisfactory in internship/thesis/research

Term grade point average (TGPA). The grade point average for a term or semester is calculated by dividing the sum of the quality points earned in that term or semester by the number of credit hours attempted.

Cumulative grade point average (CGPA). The cumulative grade point average is calculated by dividing the sum of the quality points earned in all terms and semesters by the credit hours attempted in all those terms and semesters. This average is used to assess the student's overall academic standing at the university.

At the end of each semester, student grade point averages are used in determining academic actions (good standing, probation, dismissal, etc.) and scholarship decisions.

Conversely, academic actions and scholarship decisions will be updated if a student's grade point average is altered due to approved faculty grade changes.

Incomplete grade

Students are expected to complete their course(s) in the semester in which they are registered. In exceptional circumstances, a student may be allowed to complete a course in the following semester after securing permission from the course faculty member through an "Incomplete Grade Request Form". A grade of "I" (incomplete) will be assigned for the course. Students must complete the course requirements no later than the first week of the following semester. Failure to meet the deadline, will cause the student to receive a grade of "F" for the course.

All final grades must be submitted by faculty members into the Student Information System within the deadlines specified by the Registrar. The chair of each program must approve the submitted grades prior to the announcement of final grades by the Registrar's Office.

A student may appeal a grade issued by MBZUAI. The student's ability to appeal a grade once submitted is strictly controlled in the context of the Student Grievances and Appeals policy.

Grade appeal

Final course grades are officially reported by the instructor at the end of an academic semester and recorded by the Registrar's Office. Officially recorded grades can only be changed with the approval of the course instructor and department chair. A request to change a grade may be initiated in writing by the student or the course instructor. A student may appeal an officially recorded grade by submitting a Change Grade Request Form within three working days of when the final grade was posted to the Registrar's Office. Grade appeals will be processed as per the provisions in the Registrar's Office Policy Manual.



Academic standing

Good standing: students shall be considered in 'good academic standing' if they maintain the required minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) as per their intake year.

Academic probation

A student will be placed on academic probation for a semester if:

- The CGPA is lower than the required CGPA as per the intake year.
 - The student receives a third (C) grade during his/her study tenure.
 - The student receives an "F" in any course in any semester.
- The student receives a grade of unsatisfactory (U) for thesis/ dissertation credits.

If the student is placed on academic probation, then:

- a. The student should retake the course/s that led to the drop of the CGPA.
- b. The student should pay the tuition fees of the repeated course/s only.
- c. The student should report on a bi-weekly basis to the supervisor and must not achieve less than the required CGPA according to their intake year by the end of the semester.



Academic dismissal

A student will be given academic dismissal from MBZUAI if his/her CGPA remains lower than the required CGPA as per the intake year for two consecutive semesters. A student who has been given an academic dismissal from MBZUAI may submit an Academic Appeal Request.

Special probation

A student who has been granted an academic appeal against dismissal will be placed on special probation for one semester. The student should achieve the required minimum CGPA as per their intake year for that semester to be placed in good standing and continue his/her studies at MBZUAI.

If the student could not achieve the required CGPA, then he/she will be academically dismissed, and he/she will not be entitled to any further appeals.



Student grievances/ financial obligations

Grievances against grading or evaluation of academic work

Stage one

If a student suspects that an error has been made in recording a final grade, the initial recourse for the student should be to contact the faculty formally (via email). A student must be able to provide copies of graded assignments along with any other relevant documents to support the appeal. If an error is detected, faculty members should submit a “Change Grade Request Form” to the Registrar with justification copying the department chair within three working days from the date of posting the grade.

Stage two

If a meeting and thorough discussions with the faculty member alone does not resolve the student’s concern, the

student should formally (via email) contact the department chair. The department chair will meet with the student and the faculty member, providing an independent review. If an error is detected, faculty members should submit a “Change Grade Request Form” to the Registrar with justification copying the department chair within five working days from the date of posting the grade.

Stage three

If after having completed both levels of communication, the dispute persists, a student wishing to challenge a final grade formally, must submit an Appeal Statement Form to the Appeal Committee, chaired by the Provost, within seven working days of when the final grade was posted.



The student's submission must do the following:

- Demonstrate having followed the above required channels of communication with both the faculty member and department chair.
- Demonstrate that communication with the faculty member regarding the grade was initiated within five working days of when the final grade was posted.
- Provide copies of graded assignments along with any other relevant documents to support the appeal.
- Describe in detail the conditions and factors that led to the perceived grievance and the actions taken during the resolution process.

Actions by the Appeal Committee

- If a member of the Appeal Committee was in any way involved in a student grievance,

they shall recuse themselves and a replacement will be randomly selected from MBZUAI faculty or staff.

- The committee investigates and consults with all the parties involved and after consideration of the case, the committee by a majority vote decides on an appropriate action:
 - Dismiss the grievance.
 - Uphold the grievance and address it by instructing appropriate reparations including changes in the student's academic record no later than the end of drop/ add week of the following semester as indicated in the university academic calendar.
- Decision of the committee is final.



Grievances against dismissal, suspension, and withdrawal from a program/withholding or termination of the scholarship

- The student submits an Appeal Form within three working days from posting the academic standing or posting the decision that led to the withholding or termination of scholarship to the Appeal Committee.
- The student's submission should describe in detail the conditions and factors that led to the perceived grievance and the actions taken during the resolution process.
- The committee investigates and consults with all the parties involved and after consideration of the case decides on an appropriate action as below:
 - Dismiss the grievance.
 - Uphold the grievance and address it by instructing appropriate reparations including changes in the student's academic record/

status no later than the end of drop/add week of the following semester as indicated in the university academic calendar.

- Decision of the committee is final.
- The final decision should be communicated to all concerned parties.

Financial obligations:

Financial obligations are calculated based on the below entitlements received by the student according to the rational of appeal:

- 100% paid tuition fees
- Monthly stipend
- Accommodation in university dorms/housing allowance
- Health insurance for expat students
- Annual ticket allowance for expat students.

The complete withdrawal from the university:

The financial obligations are calculated according to the below

and students are requested to settle the payment of:

- Tuition fees of all registered credit hours.
- All previously paid monthly stipends.
- Accommodation allowance if any.
- Cost of the health insurance incurred during tenure of study at MBZUAI.
- Cost of the paid ticket allowance (excluding the onboarding ticket).

Dropping a course after the deadline

If the student requests to drop a course after the deadline while continuing his/her studies, then the financial obligations are calculated according to the below and students are requested to settle the payment of:

- The tuition fees payment of the dropped credit hours only.

Note: the student will still be entitled to all other benefits.

Leave of absence

The student requests to suspend his/her studies for a semester. Therefore, all the scholarship benefits will be terminated for the suspension duration.

When the request is initiated within the deadline, no academic/ financial penalties apply. However, when the request is initiated after the deadline, the financial obligations are calculated according to the below and students are requested to settle the payment of:

- The fees of all the registered credit hours of that semester.
- The paid monthly stipend for that semester if any.

- Cost of health insurance for that semester.
- Cost of the paid ticket allowance (excluding the onboarding ticket).

Retake of a course due to failure

If a student fails a course, he/ she should repeat the course in the following semester. The financial obligations are calculated according to the below and students are requested to settle the payment of:

- The retaken fees of the repeated credit hours.

The student is entitled to appeal against the financial obligations pertaining to the above actions to the Appeal Committee which consists of:

- The primary supervisor
- The department chair
- The Provost

The committee members discuss and agree to approve/ reject the appeal and on the % of the waiver. The Registrar's Office communicates the final decision with the student, finance department and all parties.

Below is the students' payment plan of the tuition fees against course withdrawal, leave of absence, and complete withdrawal after the deadline.

No obligations	Within the deadline
Payment of 25% of the tuition fees	After one week from the deadline
Payment of 50% of the tuition fees	After two weeks from the deadline
Payment of 75% of the tuition fees	After two weeks from the deadline
Payment of 100% of the tuition fees	After four weeks from the deadline

Program	Fee per one credit hour
M.Sc.	AED5,000
Ph.D.	AED6,600



Career Services and Internships team

The Career Services and Internships team aims to empower students and graduates to access AI-related internship and employment opportunities by offering a high-quality personalized service.

Students will have the opportunity to explore career options through the provision of accurate and relevant information on AI career pathways and up-to-date labor market information.

Students shall be able to book individual appointments via the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal to review career needs and identify realistic courses of action to follow-up including developing, evaluating and implementing education, employment, career, entrepreneurial decisions and plans.

Students shall receive support with developing professional materials (resumes, cover letters, internship/job applications, LinkedIn, and e-portfolios).

The Career Services and Internships team will facilitate opportunities for employer engagement including (but not limited to):

- An annual internship and opportunities fair.
- Interviews with industry partners and relevant research organizations
 - Networking events – engagement in conversations with professionals from AI
 - Industry partner sessions – organizations sharing industry knowledge and company insights.
- A range of workshops will be offered to help students develop their employability skills and obtain appropriate internship and employment opportunities such as networking skills, job search strategies and mock interview preparation.



- Students shall have access to a database of internship and job opportunities via the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal, achieved through close partnerships with industry. Signposting to other departments and agencies as appropriate will be offered (for example, personal counseling).
- The Career Services and Internships team will develop and recommend appropriate AI-related information and resources.

What is expected from students using the service?

Students are expected to keep confirmed appointments with the Career Services and Internships team. Students should advise the team, 24 hours prior to the appointment, if they are unable to attend.

Students are expected to keep confirmed appointments with

industry partners, such as on-campus/ off-campus or virtual interviews. Students should advise the Career Services and Internships team, 24 hours prior to the interview, if they are unable to attend.

Students are requested to represent MBZUAI in a professional manner, and for professional materials such as their resume/LinkedIn account to be approved by the Career Services and Internships team prior to sharing with industry partners. Students can review appropriate resources via the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal, MS Stream and the MBZUAI Student Opportunities LinkedIn page, prior to attending an industry partners event and/or interview.

Students are asked to respond to requests for information as needed, for example, up-to-date / accurate student information, internship, employment and graduation data.

Internships

Internships are credit-bearing experiences that add considerable value to a student's overall educational experience (two credit hours). At least one (1) internship is mandatory for M.Sc. and Ph.D. students as a graduation requirement.

For M.Sc. students, the internship should be conducted during the summer months (mid-May to mid-August), be six weeks in duration and align with the working hours of the host organization. While it is preferable to have the internship relate to the student's research area, it is not a necessary requirement.

For Ph.D. students, the internship is recommended to take place upon completion of the qualifying examination and all required courses. The duration of the internship should be three months during the summer (mid-May to mid-August).

The internship shall be conducted with the support of the Career Services and Internships team, the MBZUAI supervisor and industry partner. The criteria and learning outcomes of the M.Sc. internship and Ph.D. internship can be viewed in the MBZUAI Internship Student Guides (The MBZUAI Student Internship Guide Master's Programs and MBZUAI Student Internship Guide PhD Programs, are available via the Career Services and Internships team).

The student may either select an internship opportunity from the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal or

discuss with the team if they have found their own opportunity.

The internship should be conducted in-person or follow a hybrid approach (three days in the office and two days virtual/remote).

While discouraged, it is possible to complete the internship requirement via an unpaid research internship at the university. The topic of the research internship should be clearly demarcated from the thesis/dissertation topic. Students must attend one of the internship orientation workshops conducted by the Career Services and Internships team.

Regarding evaluation of the internship, the host organization shall complete an internship evaluation form. The student shall submit an internship self-reflection report, and deliver an oral presentation to the MBZUAI supervisor, for which the MBZUAI Supervisor shall award an evaluation of Pass or Fail.

Internship requests from industry partners or MBZUAI students, which differ from the criteria listed above, shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with all relevant internal stakeholders. In particular, requests must be agreed in partnership with the student's MBZUAI supervisor, and the Provost's Office, to ensure ongoing priority is given to MBZUAI commitments.

If applicable, necessary measures are put in place to ensure that course learning outcomes will be met, and all assessment tasks satisfactorily completed.

Internship procedure:

If an internship has been secured independently:

- Students should book an appointment with the Career Services and Internships team, who shall support throughout the internship process, including finalizing the details of the internship with the industry partner.

Applying for an internship opportunity via the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal:

- If successfully selected by the industry partner, the student should inform the Career Services and Internships team. The learning outcomes of the internship shall auto-populate the relevant field on the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal, upon selecting the program specialism.
- Students are expected to be diligent, thorough, responsible, and professional with all assigned tasks.
- Students should adhere to the rules and regulations of the company where they are working during the period of the internship.
- Confidentiality in the workplace has to be observed at all times, including posts regarding the company on social media.

- Non-attendance must be reported to both the host organization and the Career Services and Internships team.
- Students should try, when possible, to arrange medical appointments out of work hours. Sick leave letters should be submitted to both the host organization and the Career Services and Internships team.
- Students should dress and behave in a professional manner, in accordance with the organization's dress code.
- Students should track hours completed via the MBZUAI Student Careers Portal.

Upon completing the internship:

- The host organization shall be asked to submit the Industry Partners Evaluation Form to the Career Services and Internships team.
- Students will be asked to complete a post-internship self-reflection report and deliver an oral presentation to their MBZUAI supervisor. Please review the relevant MBZUAI Internships Students Guide (M.Sc. or Ph.D.).

Please note that receiving payment or an appreciation certificate is decided by the host organization.

For more information, please email: Careerservices@mbzuai.ac.ae



Research

Directed research

Directed research is an important part of all M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs. It is essentially a one-on-one independent study, which the student arranges individually with a professor. It is the responsibility of both the student and the supervisor to formulate a set of reasonable goals, plans, and criteria for success for each semester.

Directed research expectations that all students should meet

- A student may opt to do directed research part time while completing coursework. Once all coursework is completed, directed research

should become full time.

- The student should contact the professor in the relevant field to discuss options and arrange regular meetings at mutually agreed-upon times. Courses taken while working on a thesis include RES 799 (Introduction to Research Methods, M.Sc., semester three) and RES 899 (Advanced Research Methods, Ph.D., semester three).
- Students from the 2023 cohort must enroll in RES 799 (M.Sc.) or RES 899 (Ph.D.), and will receive two credits on completion.

Supervisors are individually responsible for adequately supervising this portion of the M.Sc. and Ph.D. programs.



Evaluation of student's progress

Evaluation and feedback on a student's progress are important both to the student and to the faculty. Students need information on their overall progress to make long-range plans.

Master's student review

At the end of every semester, each student is asked to submit a Student Progress Evaluation Form that summarizes their progress to date. Depending on the semester, this will include such aspects as coursework, thesis components completed, publications, conferences, internship(s) and graduate assistant roles. Based on this summary, the student's supervisors will comment on and

evaluate the student's progress. This evaluation will be reviewed during an all-faculty meeting to identify any student whose progress has not been satisfactory. The evaluation considers all components of the program using indicators and information sources described below.

Students are informed of the results of this evaluation, which may include specific recommendations for future work or requirements that must be met for continued participation in the program.

Components and indicators

In their evaluation, the faculty consider the following components – though naturally only some of these components will be

applicable in any given semester and they are not equally important at every stage of a student's career.

- Courses taken: evaluated by the course instructor – with a brief prose evaluation/summary grade.
- Directed research: evaluated by research supervisor and other collaborating faculty.
- Thesis: status summarized by the thesis supervisor and commented on by members of the thesis committee.
- Departmental/community service: reported by the student and evaluated by relevant faculty.
- Other: lectures given, papers written, etc – evaluated by cognizant faculty.

The faculty's primary source of information about the student is their supervisor and the student self-evaluation. The supervisor is responsible for assembling the above information and presenting it at the faculty meeting. The student should make sure the supervisor is informed about participation in activities and research progress made during the semester.

Each student is asked to submit a summary of this information via a self-evaluation to the faculty at the end of each semester. This self-evaluation is used as student input to the evaluation process and as information on activities, and becomes part of the internal student record.

It is strongly recommended that the student and supervisor meet prior to the faculty meeting to review the information provided in this self-evaluation.

Recommendations

Based on the above information, the faculty decide whether a student is making satisfactory progress in the master's program. If so, the faculty usually suggest goals for the student to achieve over the next semester. If not, the faculty may make more rigid demands of the student; these may be long-term (e.g., finish your thesis research over the next two semesters) or short-term (e.g., select and complete one or more specific courses next semester; prepare a thesis proposal by the next review period).

Ultimately, permission to continue in the program is contingent on whether or not the student continues to make satisfactory progress toward the degree. If a student is not making satisfactory progress, the faculty may choose to terminate the student from the program.

The faculty also decide whether financial support should be continued for each student. Termination of support does not always mean termination from the program – details regarding termination of support are provided in the student's evaluation letter.

Doctoral student review

At the end of every semester, each student is asked to submit a Student Progress Evaluation Form that summarizes their progress to date. Depending on the semester, this will include such aspects as coursework, thesis components completed, publications, conferences, internship(s) and Graduate Assistant roles. Based on this summary, the student's supervisors will comment on and evaluate the student's progress. This evaluation will be reviewed during an all-faculty meeting to identify

any student whose progress has not been satisfactory. The evaluation considers all components of the program using indicators and information sources described below.

Students are informed of the results of this evaluation, which may include specific recommendations for future work or requirements that must be met for continued participation in the program.

Components and indicators

In the evaluation, the following components are considered – though naturally only some of these components will be applicable in any given semester and they are not equally important at every stage of a student’s career.

- Courses completed: evaluated by the course instructor.
- Qualifying and candidacy exams: see below for exam details.
- Directed research: evaluated by research supervisor and other collaborating faculty.
- Graduate assistantship: evaluated by the course instructor and by students.
- Internship: evaluated by the host organization supervisor and MBZUAI supervisor.
- Thesis: status summarized by the thesis supervisor and commented on by members of the thesis committee.
- Departmental/community service: reported by the student and evaluated by relevant faculty.
- Other: lectures given, papers written, etc. – evaluated by cognizant faculty.

The primary source of information about the student is the Student Progress Evaluation Form and the student’s supervisors. The student is responsible for assembling the above information and presenting it in their progress form. The student should make sure that all relevant information about participation in activities and research progress made during the semester is included in the form. This is used as the student input to the evaluation process and as information on activities, and becomes part of the internal student record.

Recommendations

Based on the above information, the supervisor decides whether a student is making satisfactory progress in the Ph.D. program. If so, the supervisor usually suggests goals for the student to achieve over the next semester. If not, the department chair (or deputy chair), in consultation with the supervisor, may make more rigid demands on the student; these may be long-term (e.g., finish your thesis research over the next three semesters) or short-term (e.g., select and complete one or more specific courses next semester; prepare a thesis proposal by the next progress evaluation).

Ultimately, permission to continue in the Ph.D. program is contingent on whether the student continues to make satisfactory progress toward the degree. If a student is not making satisfactory progress, the department chair may choose to terminate the student from the program.

The thesis process

M.Sc. students

Thesis

The thesis must describe a piece of original research work and must describe it well. It is evidence of proficiency, high attainment, and ability to do research in a specialized area of AI that the department relies upon to certify the qualifications of the M.Sc. degree.

Furthermore, it is the most important basis on which the scientific community judges the initial achievement and potential of that individual.

Thesis committee

The student's supervisor chairs the thesis committee. All other committee members, including the external member, should be agreed upon before the thesis proposal presentation. Members of the student's committee must accept the responsibility of meeting with the student regularly to ensure that the research is progressing well.

The thesis committee must consist of at least one department faculty, two members of faculty, and/or other approved faculty and an external committee member. Thesis committees and any changes to committees are subject to departmental approval.

Depending on circumstances, thesis committee members (including the chair) may be physically or virtually present for the thesis proposal (preferably at least two present physically) and defense (preferably at least three present physically).

Thesis proposal

The student submits a written proposal to the faculty. The student also orally presents the thesis proposal to interested faculty and students in a public colloquium.

A thesis proposal should:

- Explain the basic idea of the thesis topic (e.g., the problem to be solved and the approach to solving it).
- Argue why that topic is interesting (e.g., what contributions to the field would be made in carrying out the proposed work).
- State what kind of results have already been obtained and what further results are expected.
- Argue that these results are obtainable within a reasonable amount of time.
- Demonstrate the student's personal qualifications for doing the proposed work.

The main purpose of the thesis proposal is to demonstrate to the faculty that the chosen thesis topic is significant, and that the student's approach has a reasonable chance of success. A thesis proposal gives the faculty the opportunity to pass such judgment at the start of the work and not at the end.

We want to minimize the chance that a thesis will be turned down when almost completed. We expect students to present their thesis proposals as early as possible. A thesis proposal should be short, about five–10 pages.

A thesis proposal should **not** be:

- A dry run for the thesis
- A summary or abstract of the thesis
- The first chapter or part of the thesis
- A technical report
- A survey of the field
- An annotated bibliography.

Any included list of references or bibliography should serve the purpose of supporting the assessment of the state of the field and the student's personal qualifications.

To provide ample notice to the public, at least two weeks in advance of the oral presentation, students should provide the Department or Deputy Chair with one hardcopy of the thesis proposal, an online copy of the proposal's abstract, and a list of the thesis committee members, including the external member. The program coordinator posts the public announcement of the thesis proposal presentation.

Upon completion of the thesis proposal, the student must complete a master's Candidate Contractual Agreement Form provided by the program coordinator.

Thesis defense

The student's thesis committee decides whether to accept the thesis based on its content and the outcome of the thesis defense, which is a public presentation describing the contributions of the thesis.

At least one week in advance of the oral presentation, students must provide the program coordinator with:

- one hard copy of the thesis abstract
- a digital copy of the abstract in text format .rtf, .txt, or .docx, (No .pdf please)
- a list of all thesis committee members.

The program coordinator posts the public announcement of the thesis defense.

Before the thesis defense, the entire thesis committee is expected to have read the entire thesis, to have given comments to the candidate, and to have given approval for scheduling the public defense.

This means that a copy of the complete thesis document should be provided to the whole thesis committee a minimum of six weeks in advance of any proposed date for the defense. Significant deviations from this rule must be approved by the department chair. Committee members should meet briefly before the thesis presentation to discuss any issues.

The presentation by the candidate is normally about 45 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer period that will be as long as needed. The thesis committee chair (supervisor) determines who may ask questions and in what order and brings the discussion to a close at the appropriate time. The question-and-answer period is followed by a closed-door session attended by only the members of the thesis committee. The options of the committee are:

- to approve without corrections
- to approve subject to minor changes – to be approved later by the thesis chair only
- to require a resubmission after major changes and re-approval of the entire committee
- not to approve the thesis.

All members of the committee are required to sign a final oral examination card, indicating that the student has passed the thesis oral examination. In addition, the thesis committee chair, and the department chair sign a final certification sheet when the student submits the final version of the thesis.

Every student must read and adhere to these more detailed process rules.

The thesis process

Ph.D. students

Qualifying exam (QE)

All Ph.D. students are required to undertake a qualifying exam (QE). This exam should normally be taken after the completion of all coursework. The QE is a written exam that tests students underpinning AI knowledge and skills. Passing the exam is an excellent indicator that the student is well prepared to commence the research thesis.

Students are allowed two attempts at the QE. Those students who fail the QE twice will be dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

Candidacy exam (CE)

This oral exam should be taken two semesters after the QE, normally at the end of the fourth semester. In the CE, the student should present the progress made on the research thesis since the QE and the thesis proposal. A positive outcome from this exam indicates that the student has surveyed the research topic thoroughly and made substantial progress (e.g., literature review, research plan, thesis proposal, etc.).

The CE committee (CEC) should be composed of the following members:

- two (2) members from the department (voting members)
- one (1) member from a different department (voting member)
- chair from outside the department (non-voting member)
- supervisor (non-voting member).

Thesis proposal

The student submits a written proposal to the CEC. A thesis proposal should:

- Explain the basic idea of the thesis topic (e.g., the problem to be solved and the approach to solving it).
- Argue why that topic is interesting (e.g., what contributions to the field would be made in carrying out the proposed work).
- State what kind of results have already been obtained and what further results are expected.
- Argue that these results are obtainable within a reasonable amount of time.
- Demonstrate the student's personal qualifications for doing the proposed work.

The main purpose of the thesis proposal is to demonstrate to the faculty that the chosen thesis topic is significant, and that the student's approach has a reasonable chance of success. A thesis proposal gives the faculty the opportunity to pass such judgment at the start of the work and not at the end. We want to minimize the chance that a thesis will be turned down when almost completed. We expect students to present their thesis proposals as early as possible. A thesis proposal should be short, about 15–20 pages.

A thesis proposal should **not** be:

- A dry run for the thesis
- A summary or abstract of the thesis
- The first chapter or part of the thesis
- A technical report
- A survey of the field
- An annotated bibliography.

Any included list of references or bibliography should serve the purpose of supporting the assessment of the state of the field and the student's personal qualifications.

To provide ample notice to the public, at least two weeks in advance of the oral presentation, students should provide the Department Chair or Deputy Chair with one hard copy of the thesis proposal, an online copy of the proposal's abstract, and a list of the thesis committee members, including the external member. The Department Chair or Deputy Chair posts the public announcement of the thesis proposal presentation.

In case the result of the exam is not satisfactory (failure), the student has one full term to rectify the situation and take the exam again. In case of two failures, the student is automatically dismissed from the Ph.D. program.

Doctoral candidate agreement

Upon completion of the thesis proposal, the student must complete a doctoral candidate contractual agreement form.

Thesis

The thesis must describe a piece of original research work and must describe it well. It is evidence of proficiency, high attainment, and ability to do research in a specialized area of AI that the department relies upon to certify the qualifications of the Ph.D.

Furthermore, it is the most important basis on which the scientific community judges the initial achievement and potential of that individual.

Dissertation defense

This exam should be taken not earlier than two semesters after the CE, and no later than the last term of the four-year Ph.D. program duration. Under special circumstances, these rules could be amended but will require the prior approval of the Provost/Associate Provost of Academic Affairs. At least three journal/conference publications should have been published/accepted throughout the four-year program.

The committee for this exam is composed of the CE exam in addition to an external examiner as specified below:

- two (2) members from the department (voting members)
- one (1) member from a different department or college (voting member)
- one (1) external examiner (outside the university, voting member). The external examiner must be approved by the Provost/ Associate Provost of Academic Affairs



- chair from outside the department (casting vote member, if required)
- supervisor (non-voting).

The student's thesis committee decides whether to accept the thesis based on its content and the outcome of the defense, which is a public presentation describing the contributions of the thesis.

At least one week in advance of the oral presentation, students must provide:

- one hard copy of the thesis abstract
- a digital copy of the abstract in LaTeX or text format (.rtf, .txt, or .docx – not .pdf)
- a list of all thesis committee members.

Before the thesis defense, the entire thesis committee is expected to have read the entire thesis, to have given comments to the candidate, and to have given approval for



scheduling the public defense. This means that a copy of the complete thesis document should be provided to the whole thesis committee a minimum of six weeks in advance of any proposed date for the defense. Significant deviations from this rule must be approved. Committee members should meet briefly before the thesis presentation to discuss any issues.

The presentation by the candidate is normally about 45 minutes, followed by a question-and-answer period that may be as long as needed. Please remember that at least three thesis committee members (including the chair) must be physically present for the thesis defense. The thesis committee chair determines who may ask questions and in what order and brings the discussion to a close at the appropriate time. The question-and-answer period is followed by a closed-door session attended by only the members of the thesis committee. The options of the committee are:

- to pass without corrections
- to pass subject to minor changes – to be approved later by the thesis chair only
- to require a resubmission after major changes and re-approval of the entire committee
- to fail the thesis.

All members of the committee are required to sign a final oral examination form, indicating that the student has passed the thesis oral examination. In addition, the thesis committee chair, the department chair (or deputy chair), and the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs sign a final certification sheet when the student submits the final version of the thesis.

Every student must read and adhere to these more detailed process rules.

Points of contact

Students and supervisors enjoy a close working relationship in our programs. If students have problems, whether related to their research or not, they should feel free to speak to their supervisors. If doing so may not be possible or if students simply want a second opinion, they should feel free to discuss any issues with:

- the department chair (or deputy chair); and, if unresolved
- the Associate Provost of Academic Affairs; or
- the Provost.

Graduate assistants

Graduate assistant selection and engagement

- Students may be selected as graduate assistants to assist faculty members in their course delivery tasks. Selection will be based on a student's academic results during their studies and their soft skills and proficiency. Thus, to be eligible for the Graduate Assistantship program, students must fulfill the following criteria:
 - Attain at least B+ in the course that the assistant will contribute to.
 - Demonstrate proficiency in terms of soft skills (e.g., communication and social skills, character or personality traits). Students may be evaluated through an interview conducted by the concerned faculty member or through informal observation.
 - Additional criteria set by the Provost and approved by the President such as previous experience in similar projects or courses, experience in carrying out literature searches, etc.
 - Selected students will receive a financial compensation on an hourly basis, decided by the Provost.
- The use of graduate assistants should not exceed six hours per week.
- The supervisor faculty member may assign different tasks to the graduate assistant that include, but not be limited to:
 - Preparation of laboratory material.
 - Marking of student assignments.
 - Assistance with exam organization.
 - Marking of exams.

Please refer to the 'Use of graduate assistants' section of the Academic Programs Policy and associated procedure.

Student conduct

Students should conduct themselves in a manner that contributes positively to the university environment in which respect, civility, diversity, opportunity, and inclusiveness are valued. They are expected to act honestly and responsibly and respect the university regulations, policies and guidelines to assure the success of both the individual and the community. Any student at MBZUAI must respect other students, faculty members, staff and the public. The Code of Conduct sets out the right and responsibilities of students at MBZUAI.

The purpose of the code is to:

- Inform students of their rights and responsibilities.
- Define the general standard of conduct expected of students.
- Provide examples of conduct that may be subject to disciplinary action.
- Clarify the procedures that the university will follow to address allegation and cases of non-academic misconduct.
- Provide examples of disciplinary measures and potential sanctions that may be imposed by the university in case of violations.
- Students are expected to be aware of, and to conduct themselves in accordance with the code.

Students' rights and responsibilities

MBZUAI seeks to create an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves its educational mission. MBZUAI assumes that all students come to the university for a serious purpose and expects them to be responsible individuals who demonstrate the highest standards of ethical behavior, honesty and academic integrity in their pursuit of knowledge.

Unethical behavior is not worthy of members of the university community and will be dealt with severely. Academic dishonesty in any form undermines the very foundations of higher education and will not be tolerated.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, fabrication and falsification, misconduct in research, plagiarism, and recycling or multiple submissions.

The **Academic Integrity Policy** explains in greater detail the behaviors that are considered academic misconduct. The **Academic Integrity Procedure** sets out the steps and processes associated with the policy and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Academic Integrity Committee, faculty and students in the academic integrity processes.



Graduation and commencement

A student must successfully pass all program components (taught courses/internship and thesis) within the allowed time and maintain the required CGPA (based on the catalogue year) or better to qualify for graduation.

For fall 2022 intake onwards:

- Internship will be considered as a graduation requirement in addition to all program components (courses and thesis).
- A student must successfully pass all program components (taught courses, internship, and thesis) within the allowed time and maintain an overall CGPA of 3.3/4.0 or better in order to qualify for graduation.



Master's degree

- A master's degree consists of 36 credit hours.
- The normal time to complete for a master's program is two years, and the maximum time to complete is four years, inclusive of any approved leave of absence.

Doctoral degree

- A Ph.D. degree consists of 60 credit hours.
- The normal time to complete for a Ph.D. program is four years, and the maximum time to complete is six years, inclusive of any approved leave of absence.



Student life activities

Student activities

All student entities and clubs are to be formed and governed by the policies and guidelines drawn up by the campus life department and MBZUAI's vision, mission and strategic objectives.

The campus life department is committed to offering its students extracurricular activities in the areas of culture, recreation, and sports. Extracurricular activities are to be in line with the MBZUAI's policies and procedures.

The campus life department is committed to providing the facilities, planning, and resources needed to promote approved student activities.

The campus life department will aid in the planning and coordination for the successful execution of student activities. The execution of the activity is the responsibility of the organizer(s).

If the activity is to take place off-campus, prior approval and coordination with the campus life department is mandatory.

Student council

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) at MBZUAI is the elected student body authorized by the university administration to articulate student views and interests and be the voice of students.

Students who stand for election to the council should meet the following requirements:

- Be a full-time graduate student
- Maintain a GPA of 3.5 or above
- Be free from any academic violation
- Be in good financial standing with MBZUAI
- Have completed all admissions criteria
- Should be able to serve one complete year in the position.

The election of the council will take place on campus and will be announced by the campus life department.

Student clubs and groups

The campus life department encourages students to be positive examples of on-campus student leadership. Student clubs are a great way to develop interest and leadership. They empower and enrich students offering them the



opportunity to enhance personal development; while providing excellent networking opportunities with like-minded members of the university community.

Active clubs must meet the following requirements:

- Be MBZUAI enrolled students.
- Register with the campus life department.
- Have at least four main club members.
- Sponsor at least two activities on campus each year. Typical activities could include, but are not limited to, participating in the annual club fair, hosting a fundraiser, coordinating a service project, sponsoring a program or attending a conference.

Community spirit

Our sense of community is well-known as a distinguishing aspect of MBZUAI. It is one of the reasons many students choose to come here. MBZUAI is proud of its strong community spirit, which we foster through close working relationships between students and supervisors, among faculty, and among students.

People volunteer their time, energy, intellect, talent, and other skills to do many of the things that keep our environment running smoothly. These

efforts include organizing seminars, maintaining software packages, serving on departmental committees, grading for a graduate course, planning and running social activities, giving tours, and hosting visitors.

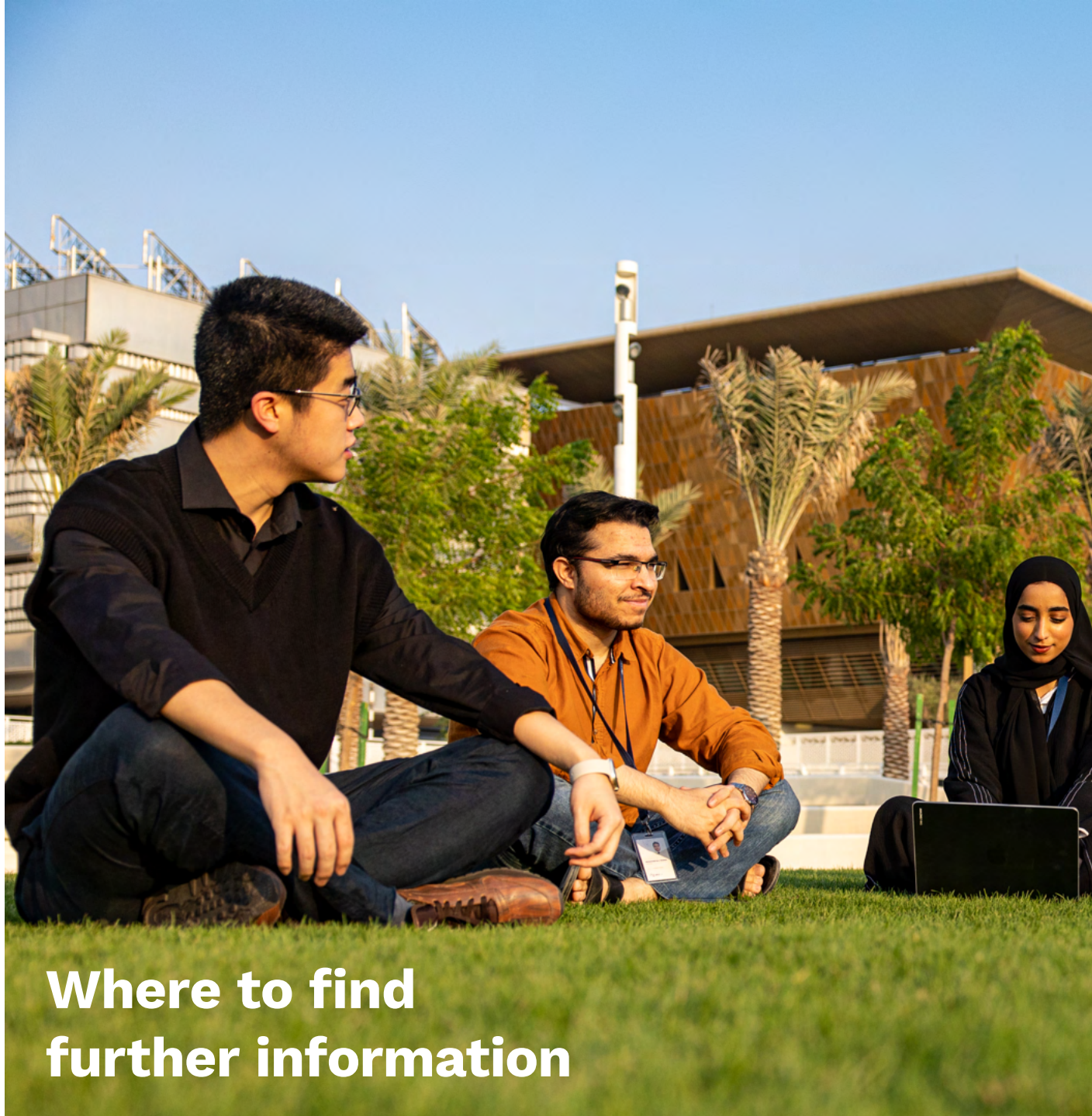
Student housing

MBZUAI provides student housing. Living at MBZUAI residences offers students the opportunity to develop their social skills in tandem with their academic potential, while forging lasting friendships and participating in social activities.

Students enrolled at MBZUAI will be entitled to on-campus accommodation for the duration of their study.

Recreation facilities include a variety of options for sports, leisure and cultural activities that exist on campus and in the surrounding Masdar community.

Students will be provided with accommodation containing en-suite facilities, kitchen and living area with internet connection. Facilities on campus for all students include a gym, multipurpose areas for sports activities, restaurants, coffee shops, laundry, plus a canteen that is open for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. When visiting the campus, students must collect the key to their on-campus accommodation from the facilities department.



Where to find further information

For more information on examinations, grades, averages, and other academic policies, please refer to the MBZUAI Catalogue.

For other further inquiries, please find below the list of contacts:

Office of the President

president@mbzuai.ac.ae

Provost Office

provostoffice@mbzuai.ac.ae

Admission

admission@mbzuai.ac.ae

Registrar

registrar@mbzuai.ac.ae

Career and internship

careerservices@mbzuai.ac.ae

Campus Life

campus.life@mbzuai.ac.ae



IT Helpdesk

Research

Facilities management

Finance

Human resources

Security

helpdesk@mbzuai.ac.ae

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