

# Report on Women Empowerment at Al-Turath University

**Date:** November 2023

**Committee:** Al-Turath University Women Empowerment Unite

<https://uoturath.edu.iq/en/women-empowerment-2/>

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## Introduction

Al-Turath University's Women Empowerment Unit is committed to advancing SDG 5, focusing on gender equality and empowering women in academia and the broader community. This report highlights the university's significant achievements, policies, and programs that support women's access to education, leadership roles, and professional growth, including an increase in female leadership, expanded childcare facilities, and specialized scholarships.

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## Current Initiatives

### 1. Women in Leadership

- Increased Representation: As of 2023, women hold 14 out of 31 department head positions and 6 out of 14 dean roles. Additionally, a woman serves as the Vice-President for Scientific Affairs.
- Key Management Roles: Twelve women occupy prominent management roles in university centers, including research, IT, and media departments.

### 2. Empowerment Programs and Events

- Women Empowerment Seminars: 72 seminars were held in 2023, addressing women's development, hosted in collaboration with the Continuous Education Department.
- Symposiums on Women's Issues: TU has hosted health-focused events like the Breast Cancer Awareness Symposium and discussions on women's political rights, supporting awareness and empowerment.

### 3. pregnancy and maternity

- Maternity Leave Policy: Seven female employees received pregnancy and maternity leave, in accordance with Law No. 25 of 1960, amended in 2017 by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research.
- Expanded Childcare Facilities: TU extended its kindergarten and nursery facilities to support female employees balancing work with childcare needs.

#### 4. Application and Acceptance Rates

- Tracking and Expansion Efforts: TU tracks women's application and acceptance rates, seeing a 29% increase in female applications over the past year due to expanded evening study options. The women's acceptance rate is higher at 87%, with a notable graduation rate of 95% for women, compared to 91% for men.
- Al-Turath University has recently expanded its offerings by introducing new departments and evening study programs, resulting in a significant increase in applications. This growth reflects TU's strong reputation for supporting women through dedicated empowerment programs and inclusive policies. The number of applications from women has notably risen, with an overall application rate increase of **29%** over the past year. This positive trend highlights the university's commitment to creating accessible educational opportunities for all, especially for women seeking flexible study options.
- Currently, the overall acceptance rate at TU is **79%**, while the acceptance rate specifically for women is higher, at **87%**. This indicates a proactive approach in supporting female applicants. Additionally, there has been a notable increase in the number of women starting degree programs at TU, from **2,074** in previous years to **3,892** this year (2023).
- Al-Turath University is dedicated to increasing women's application and acceptance rates by promoting empowerment programs and expanding support. TU plans to boost outreach through partnerships with schools, community groups, and online platforms, highlighting mentorship, scholarships, and flexible study options like evening classes. By showcasing the achievements of female students and alumnae, TU must inspire more women to apply, fostering a welcoming, equitable environment where women can thrive. Through these programs we expecting to increase the application and acceptance rate by **5%**.
- During 2022-2023 academic year, women graduation rate is 95% compared to 91% graduation rate for men.
- For more details visit <https://uoturath.edu.iq/en/about-en/statistics-center-2/>

#### 5. Nondiscrimination Policies

- Al-Turath University adheres to the non-discrimination policies established by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, as well as the Iraqi Constitution, which mandates equality among all citizens. Article 14 of the Iraqi Constitution explicitly states: "Iraqis are equal before the law without discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, origin, color, religion, sect, belief or opinion, or economic or social. [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iraq\\_2005.pdf?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Iraq_2005.pdf?lang=en) By following these national guidelines, TU ensures equal access to educational opportunities and resources for all students, regardless of gender, thereby fostering an inclusive and supportive academic environment.

## **6. Women's Scholarship**

- TU offers Women's Scholarship Program provides full tuition coverage for low-income female students in dentistry. Open to both Iraqi and international applicants, the scholarship supports women from admission through to graduation, encouraging diversity in higher education. This initiative reflects TU's commitment to empowering women and fostering gender equity across a broad range of academic fields.

## **7. Women's Handicraft Cooperative**

- A new initiative, the Women's Handicraft Cooperative empowers local women by teaching them marketable craft skills and supporting them with grants and access to markets, including seasonal bazaars held on campus.

## **8. Women Empowerment Unite**

- Women within its academic community. The university has established a specialized Women's Empowerment Unit that oversees and implements various initiatives aimed at supporting and advancing women's roles in academia and beyond. This unit organizes activities such as seminars, workshops, and community outreach programs to address issues pertinent to women's development and empowerment. By fostering an inclusive environment, Al-Turath University ensures that women have access to the resources and opportunities necessary for their personal and professional growth.

<https://uoturath.edu.iq/en/women-empowerment-2/>

## **9. Political Empowerment of Women symposium**

- As part of its ongoing commitment to supporting women, Al-Turath University held the Political Empowerment of Women Symposium. This event marked an important step in the university's efforts to promote gender equality by encouraging women to participate in politics and leadership roles. The symposium brought together students, faculty, and community leaders to discuss the challenges and opportunities women face in the political arena. Through expert-led discussions, participants explored strategies to empower women to take active roles in decision-making and policy development, reinforcing TU's dedication to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for women's advancement.
  - <https://uoturath.edu.iq/en/2023/09/al-turath-holds-symposium-on-political-empowerment-of-women/>
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## Recommendations

To enhance TU's contribution to SDG 5 and strengthen our position in the THE Impact Rankings, we propose the following recommendations:

### 1. Extend Women's Scholarship to other disciplines

- Al-Turath University needs actively to encourage women to apply in disciplines where they are underrepresented through the expanded TU Women's Scholarship. Originally launched in 2022 for the College of Dentistry, this program is highly recommended to be extended to cover multiple fields across the university, providing full tuition support to low-income female students in disciplines such as engineering, computer science, and business—areas where women have traditionally been less represented. Open to both Iraqi and international applicants, the scholarship aims to create pathways for women in these vital fields, supporting their academic journey from admission to graduation. By widening the scope of this scholarship, TU demonstrates its commitment to gender diversity, ensuring that women have equitable access and support across a broad range of academic disciplines.

### 2. Students, Staff, and Employees Kindergarten and Nursery

Al-Turath University is committed to supporting its students, staff, and employees by providing essential childcare facilities, including a kindergarten and nursery, to help working parents balance their professional responsibilities with family care. These facilities play a crucial role in fostering a supportive and inclusive campus environment, aligning with the university's dedication to meeting the needs of its community members. **However**, to enhance the quality and capacity of these services, the childcare facilities require significant renovations to update and improve the space for the children's comfort and safety. Additionally, increasing the number of qualified caregivers and nannies is essential to meet the growing demand and ensure that every child receives adequate attention and care. By investing in these improvements, Al-Turath University aims to provide a more robust, family-friendly environment that fully supports its community, enabling parents to focus confidently on their roles within the university.

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