

# NEWSLETTER

May 2025



Grit, determination, fighting for the team, and standing firm are just a few expressions that the job of Head of the Preparatory Studies Centre (PSC), in Muscat demands. Being offered the opportunity to serve in this capacity may well be likened to an old Arabic saying, "المنصب تكليف وليس تشريف" (a high position is more ominous than an honor). In other words, while the role is rewarding, it also brings many challenges – ranging from handling extreme personal issues students face to conveying life-changing decisions to faculty members who have been my mentors and facilitators. The successful execution of this office has been deeply rooted in the collective dedication and unwavering support of the entire team. I am sincerely grateful for the efforts of everyone at the centre. Without their commitment and collaboration, the task would have been significantly more challenging.

The position of Head of the Preparatory Studies Centre (PSC) is a journey of learning

and discovery. Our teachers are truly remarkable. Despite having personal priorities, they dedicate themselves to their work, often without taking sick leave. It was the American publisher, Charles S. Lauer, who said "Leaders don't force people to follow – they invite them on a journey." I have observed teachers who inspire their students to do better, paving the way for their own journeys. They go the extra mile when they are given the freedom to sail their own ship. While this idea is not new, it's one that leaders should never forget. Their sense of responsibility and integrity leaves me in awe. One of my missions, therefore, is to find ways for teachers to better balance their work and personal lives.

I have always said that I have an open-door policy and welcome constructive criticism, suggestions, observations and advice. Going forward, I aim to be a leader with grit, a leader with soul, and a leader who makes a difference.

## Calendar

### Dates vary

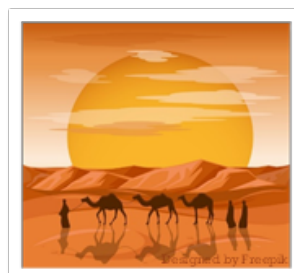
Quality educational webinars

### May 15

6th PSC Forum  
A Future-Focused Approach: Mediating between Teaching, Learning and Technology

### June 29

Official start to Summer vacation



"Do every task as if you have a personal stake in it."

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## Staff Profile Highlights



**Afreen Khan**

Afreen is the lady who wears many hats—level coordinator, lecturer, and more. With 22 years of teaching foundation students, she is quiet yet focused. She's constantly seeking ways to improve the teaching process and loves learning new things. Her dedication has greatly contributed to our centre's growth.



**Nafisa Al Ismaili**

Meet Nafisa who has been with us for 8 years. She is quiet with a shy smile, but don't let that fool you. She's fiercely passionate about teaching, guiding her students and shaping the community. She teaches, coordinates two levels and still finds time to rock IELTS classes for grades 11-12 in the summer.



**Satya Lakshmi K.**

With 23 years of teaching, Satya is a fountain of knowledge, loves sharing ideas and the mastermind behind our timetables. She ensures no classes clash and keeps schedules fair. Hardworking, fun, and always ready with a smile or a joke, Satya is a true gem!



**Dr. M. K. Kumar**

Dr. Kumar brings nearly 20 years of academic experience, excelling as a Professor, Researcher, Mentor, and more. His dedication to Graph Theory and Philosophy has earned him numerous awards. Dr. Kamal's commitment to excellence continues to inspire students and colleagues alike. We applaud Dr. Kumar's accomplishments and are delighted to have him as part of our institution.



**Nusaiba Al Siyabi**

Nusaiba has been with our institution for over 9 years and is the heart and soul of the centre's Continuous Education and Community Services team. From organizing staff socials to leading student competitions, she is the driving force behind countless successful events. Her hard work, dedication, and contagious smile bring joy to everyone, making her a key part of our academic community.



**O. P. Meneses Jr.**

Orly, aka Bond, joined the university in 2007. He is one of our go-to tech heroes, always ready to fix network issues or troubleshoot computer and software problems. With quick responses and dedication, he ensures everything runs smoothly. His focus and hard work guarantee the seamless operation of our centre. Thanks, Bond for always being there when we need you!

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## UTAS - Muscat hosts 6th PSC Forum - **Unlocking Your Potential**

The Preparatory Studies Centre (PSC) at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Muscat held its 6th PSC Forum on 15th May 2025 under the theme, “A Future-Focused Approach: Mediating Between Teaching, Learning, and Technology”. The one-day event was chaired by Ms. Ghada Sarhan, Staff Professional Development Coordinator, and supported by Dr. Anood Salim Al Shibli, Head of the PSC. It provided an engaging and forward-thinking platform for academic exchange, innovation, and professional growth.

The forum featured two plenary presentations and 15 interactive sessions. The program brought together educators and specialists from across Oman to explore future-oriented practices in English Language Teaching (ELT), Mathematics, and Computing Skills.

This year's plenary speakers, John Hughes and Terrie Craddock, addressed timely issues facing educators today. Hughes' session, “Navigating a Sea of Authenticity, Artificiality and Ambiguity,” explored the growing role of AI in the classroom and the need for critical thinking in an age of artificial content. Craddock's talk, “Empowering Future Education,” focused on the value of emotional learning and the importance of helping students become self-aware, independent learners.

The forum encouraged creative, student-centered teaching, ethical and effective technology integration, and strengthened collaboration across academic departments. Participants praised the event's focus on innovation, inclusion, and relevance to real classroom challenges.

**VIDEO LINK:** [https://youtu.be/QPm\\_LZVQrQo?si=WjuNGhA7oTUcu7ci](https://youtu.be/QPm_LZVQrQo?si=WjuNGhA7oTUcu7ci)





## Tahira Fida Hussain Abdul Husain

This collection of paintings by Tahira Fida has a vibrant and abstract composition. It features intricate patterns and textures with a mix of bold colors such as orange, purple, yellow, and pink, set against a textured off-white background. The design incorporates dynamic and organic forms, blending geometric elements with free-flowing shapes. The use of contrast between the dark central elements and the lighter background enhances the depth and complexity of the artwork, creating a sense of movement and energy.

Her style stands out due to her distinctive approach to combining abstract expressionism with cultural and artistic intricacies.

- 1. Textural Depth:** creates a three-dimensional effect, inviting viewers to not only see but almost feel the composition.
- 2. Fusion of Organic and Geometric Forms:** creates a balance that feels both dynamic and harmonious.
- 3. Vivid Color Palette:** brings energy and contrast to the artwork, making it visually striking and emotionally engaging.
- 4. Cultural Influence:** gives the paintings a unique identity that differentiates them from mainstream abstract art.
- 5. Sense of Motion:** artwork appears alive with movement, as if the forms and colors are in a constant state of transformation.

Overall, Tahira's art is a thoughtful blend of tradition and innovation, offering viewers both aesthetic beauty and meaningful layers to explore.



## Living and Working Abroad

### Emel Ozari

Feeling homesick is one of the most common and strongest emotions that an expatriate experiences. A never-ending comparison between home and the country one works and lives in is constant. I guess that is how we try to make sense of and accept or reject the new surroundings. Some people can manage the feeling of homesickness very well and adapt to their unfamiliar environment, but unfortunately others cannot handle this emotion gracefully.

Over time, one comes to realize that feeling homesick is mostly about missing family, loved ones and the unconditional acceptance from the community one is born and raised in. The feeling of shared experiences and old, pleasant memories is what an expat cherishes and misses the most. What the expat does not realize in the beginning is that family does not have to be by blood and friends can be made with others in any part of the world. One can build a community around themselves with likeminded people, regardless of language, faith, or skin color. Once new bonds are formed and experiences gained with new people, the ache of homesickness lessens and one starts to understand that home is not a place on the map, but a feeling we carry in our hearts wherever we go.

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## Did you know?

- Oman is the oldest independent country in the Arab world.
- The national animal of Oman is the Arabian oryx. It's also the national animal of Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

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## Published Articles

### Interacting New Tsallis holographic dark energy

Umesh Kumar Sharma<sup>a</sup>, Nisha Muttathazhathu Ali<sup>b</sup>, Abdulla Al Mamon<sup>c</sup>, Pankaj<sup>d</sup>

a Department of Mathematics, Institute of Applied Sciences and Humanities, GLA University, Mathura 281 406, Uttar Pradesh, India

b Information Technology Department, University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Muscat, Oman

c Department of Physics, Vivekananda Satavarshiki Mahavidyalaya (affiliated to the Vidyasagar University), Manikpara 721513, West Bengal, India

d School of Basic and Applied Science, IILM-University, Knowledge Park-II, Greater Noida 201306, Uttar Pradesh, India

Published in Chinese Journal of Physics

Published: June 2024

Publisher: Elsevier BV

#### ABSTRACT

We constructed the evolution of a flat FRW universe filled with New Tsallis holographic dark energy (NTHDE) and matter (dust) that interact with each other via a well-known source term. Assuming the hubble horizon IR cutoff length, [we] extracted the governing equation for the NTHDE density parameter's evolution and solved it numerically to find the evolution of other relevant cosmological parameters, e.g., equation of state and deceleration parameters. We then repeated [the] same findings when the radiation component was included. According to our findings, the cosmos has a normal thermal history, with radiation, dark matter (DM) and dark energy (DE) eras occurring one

after the other until dark energy eventually takes over entirely in the [distant] future. We also found that according to the values of the parameters  $(\delta, b_1^2, b_2^2)$ , the NTHDE equation of state parameter can be either quintessence-like or phantom-like or very close to cosmological constant during the cosmic evolution. This fascinating feature of the scenario is achieved without the use of an explicit cosmological constant term, and it arises purely from modified cosmology through an interacting NTHDE with varying  $\delta$ . Finally, the hubble parameter's evolution is examined and contrasted with the most recent hubble parameter results.

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### Cosmological model in Barrow holographic dark energy

Pankaj<sup>a</sup>, Remya A<sup>b</sup>, Umesh Kumar Sharma<sup>c</sup>

a School of Basic and Applied Science, IILM-University, Uttar Pradesh, India

b University of Technology and Applied Sciences-HCT, Muscat, Oman

c Department of Mathematics, Institute of Applied Sciences and Humanities, GLA University, Uttar Pradesh, India

Published in International Journal of Modern Physics

Published: February 2024

Publisher: World Scientific Publishing Company

#### ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the cosmological evolution of Barrow holographic dark energy (BHDE) in a flat FLRW-universe. We take into account a time-dependent scale factor  $a(t) = [\sinh(kt)]^{\frac{1}{n}}$ , where  $k$  and  $n$  are positive values, to find the solutions to field equations. This scale factor results in a smooth transition of the universe from its previous decelerating stage to its most recent accelerating stage. Using the Granda-Oliveros cut-off, we examine the chronology of the deceleration parameter, equation of state parameter, and density parameter, and we

analyze the positive aspects of the BHDE model. Using the Granda-Oliveros cut-off, we examine the chronology of the deceleration parameter, equation of state parameter, and density parameter, and we analyze the positive aspects of the BHDE model. Negative pressure values in this model suggest dark energy dominance, resulting in the universe's acceleration. We use the statefinder parameters  $(r, s)$  to improve the accuracy of the results of the dark energy model that is similar to the  $\Lambda$ -CDM model.

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## Staff Accomplishments & Appointments



**Dr. Reddappa Bonu**

**Congratualtions to Dr. Bonu on the successful completion of his Ph.D. in Reading.** This remarkable achievement is a testament to his unwavering passion for advancing knowledge and academic excellence.

A versatile and resourceful individual, Dr. Bonu has been a cherished and reliable member of our centre for over 14 years. Beyond his impactful role as a lecturer, he has consistently contributed to the university community by coordinating inter-collegiate and social events, fostering a sense of unity and engagement among students and staff alike.

We are incredibly proud of his accomplishment and the dedication he has shown throughout his journey. As a socially engaged and forward-thinking academic, we look forward to the continued contributions he will make to our institution.

Join us in celebrating this significant milestone and in wishing Dr. Bonu all the very best in his future endeavors!



**Dr. Neeraja Mote**

**Let us begin by warmly congratulating Dr. Mote on the successful completion of her Ph.D. in English.** This remarkable milestone truly reflects her unwavering dedication, hard work, and passion for her field. Her journey has been marked by perseverance, resilience and an exceptional ability to multitask, all of which have contributed immensely to the continued growth of our academic community.

Dr. Mote has been a valued member of our teaching community for 11 years, actively enriching the Media & Communication Department. Her contributions, especially in her role as Data Management and Newsletter Coordinator, have been both consistent and impactful, managing and posting university news across UTAS and UTAS Muscat's social media platforms and other media channels with dedication and precision.

Well done, Dr. Mote—your success is richly deserved. We celebrate your achievement and eagerly anticipate the continued contributions of your diverse talents in the years to come.

*welcome*

We warmly welcome everyone who joined our centre in various roles in the 2024-25 academic year.

We're excited to have you with us and look forward to the wonderful contributions you'll make! 😊

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### Deputation & Seconded Appointments

Dr. Amal Al Hajri  
Amna Al Muslamani  
Bachra Bouzaiane  
Farida Al Manji  
Saleh Al Rahbi

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### New Hires Part-time

Abdulaziz Al Balushi  
Ali Al Hinaai  
Asma Al Harmali  
Farhat Samad  
Ghafran Al Mamari  
Hamed Al Suqri  
Khadija Al Farii  
Maythaa Al Balushi  
Reem Al Jahwari  
Salema Al Barwani  
Siham Al Fulaiti  
Uhood Al Shabibi





## Turning Midterm Disappointment into Determination

Hana Ali Salim Al Alawi

For many students, the midterm exam period is a battlefield. After weeks of studying, late nights, and anxious days, the results arrive and for them, it is a mix of relief and disappointment. For some, those grades are affirmations of hard work and for others, they may bring the shocked dismay of unexpected results. But here is the truth, nothing is impossible. Your journey does not end with one grade. In fact, it's just the beginning.

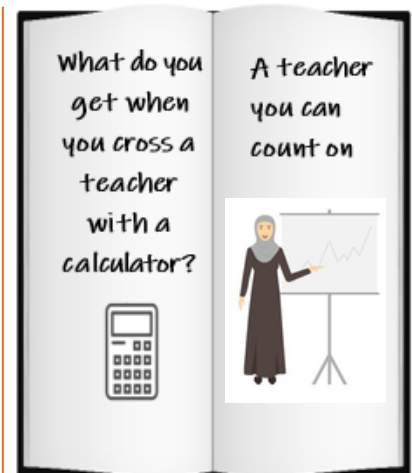
The feeling of seeing a grade lower than expected can be disheartening. The weight of a single exam can feel like it defines your worth, casting doubt on your dreams and making the path ahead seem challenging. Yet, let us remember something crucial. Growth does not happen in comfort zones. Growth often comes from those moments of doubt, frustration, and struggle. It is here, in the wake of setbacks, that resilience is born.

Imagine every great achiever, every innovator, every leader. Their success stories were not based on perfect scores or flawless records. They were filled with missed opportunities, failed attempts, and wrong answers. They were stories of persistence, of dusting off disappointments and standing up again.

A midterm result is not a final verdict. Each challenge in life and every setback is an opportunity to push beyond what you think is possible. This is your chance to prove that nothing is impossible, not because there aren't any difficulties but because there is strength within you to overcome them.



Designed by Freepik



**Teacher:** Why Are You Late?  
**Student:** Because Of The Sign On The Road.  
**Teacher:** What Type Of Sign?  
**Student:** The Sign That Says, "School Ahead, Go Slow."!

Designed by jo.pinterest.com

**Question By A STUDENT !!**



**If A Single Teacher Can't Teach Us All The Subjects, Then.. How Could You Expect A Single Student To Learn All Subjects??**

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You can't be best friends with everyone, but you can:-

- ✓ notice everyone
- ✓ be friendly to everyone
- ✓ make room for everyone
- ✓ root for everyone
- ✓ empathize with everyone

Designed by jo.pinterest.com

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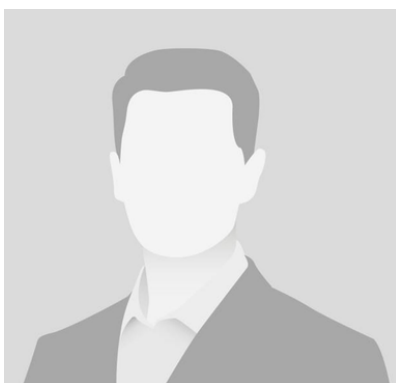
## Lecturer Retirement Announcement



**Naheed Jilani**

After 23 years of dedicated service, Naheed is retiring. Her hard work, patience, and quiet, friendly nature have left a lasting impact on all of us and will always be cherished.

We are deeply grateful for her invaluable service and wish her retirement be filled with happiness, peace, and wonderful moments.



**Retna Balan**

After many impactful and inspiring years of dedicated service, Balan is retiring. His dedication and excellence have touched and shaped countless lives over the years.

We are deeply grateful for his many contributions and wish him abundant health, joy, and fulfillment in this new chapter of his life.



**S. Nazarudeen**

After 12 years of service, we extend our heartfelt thanks to Sulaiman on his retirement. His meticulous work, and steadfast dedication have ensured academic excellence and fairness throughout his tenure.

Best wishes for a fulfilling and joyful retirement filled with health and happiness.



**Shujaat Ali**

After almost 19 years of dedicated service, Shujaat is retiring. His thoughtfulness, dedication, kindness, patience, and teamwork will be deeply missed. His contributions have been invaluable.

We are profoundly grateful for his contributions and wish him joy, relaxation, and fulfillment in this exciting new chapter of his life.



**Thomas Kutty**

We bid farewell to Thomas who has decided to embark on a new chapter in his life after 13 years of dedicated service with us. His gracious and smiling nature, tireless commitment to student learning and academic excellence have been deeply appreciated.

We thank Thomas for his many contributions and wish him health, happiness, and success.

*Thank You*

PSC-Muscat extends its heartfelt gratitude to all our retiring colleagues who prefer to keep their retirement private. Your wisdom, guidance, and unwavering dedication will continue to inspire and shape countless generations of students.

We wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

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## Lost Smile

Nusaiba Al Siyabia

Father,  
I gather all the English words I know  
To declare what you mean to me  
My heart doesn't dare to stop  
praying  
The pathway glows  
Your healing hands on my forehead  
Implant advice, govern my  
intelligence

Father  
The echo of your hearty cheer  
Skip-and-a-hop, my hand in yours  
Present or not, chatter on my  
tongue  
You are my second lung

Father,  
Your wristwatch ticks on my night  
table  
Your walking stick breaks my heart  
Once its dignity was strident  
But no more is its owner's luminous  
hand upon its head.  
It weeps  
"Our man has left us with no care!"

Father,  
No, not true, I tell your belongings  
Your essence resides in them  
Doesn't your pair of footwear  
Rid me of fear  
And steadies me?

Father,  
I never tire of repeating  
You are my second lung.

Dear Father,  
Your friends' eyes roam the skies  
They are orphaned they tell me  
Then draw back  
But I smell your favorite scent on  
their fingers

And then soft rains catch us by  
surprise  
Salty tears run down our cheeks  
Your friends and I laugh like school  
children

Grief is prayer  
And prayer cleanses  
I understand, Father



## “Walk and Talk”

Ishraqa Ibrahim Omer

The PSC Social Committee organized a delightful “Walk and Talk” activity at Ghubrah Park, Muscat on December 29, 2024. The event was a wonderful opportunity for staff members to engage in casual conversations while enjoying the serene environment of the park.

The activity kicked off at 8.30 AM with a brief chat among the staff members. Participants got together and chatted as they walked along the paths. The weather was perfect, with a gentle breeze and clear skies, making it an ideal setting for the event.

Everyone actively participated and enjoyed the outdoor experience. The informal setting allowed for open and relaxed conversations, fostering a sense of camaraderie and team spirit among the staff members.

The event concluded with a group photo and a light refreshment session, where participants shared their thoughts about the activity. Many expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to interact with colleagues in an informal and stress-free atmosphere.

Overall, the “Walk and Talk” activity was a great success, promoting physical as well as mental well-being. We look forward to organizing more of such events in the future.

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## Public Health Awareness Event: “A Journey to Healthy Living”

Dr. Faiza Al-Hasani

The Pharmacy Department, in collaboration with the Bakers Studies Center-Muscat, conducted the second Public Health Awareness Event titled “A Journey to Healthy Living.” The event was held at Army High School (a Cycle Two school) in Boston on April 30, 2025. It aimed to raise awareness about key public health issues and promote healthy practices within the community. The event included various interactive activities, informative materials, and health-related topics.

Pharmacy students delivered insightful presentations on the gastrointestinal

system (GIT), the respiratory system, medication safety towards patients' safety and drug interactions with food, herbs, other drugs, and diseases. Many students and staff members attended, and the presenters received positive and encouraging feedback from the audience, especially from students who were impressed with the performance of our UTAS presenters.

The event was organized by Dr. Faiza Al-Hasani, Lecturer of the English for Pharmacy Course, and Ph. Sumaiya Al-Zaabi, Senior Lecturer in Pharmacy Practice. Sixteen first-year pharmacy students were actively involved in this event.



# PSC-Muscat Events 2024-2025



**"Style Chic & Decent" Workshop**



**Teachers' Day**



**Cultural Day**



**English Society Awareness Program**



**RHS Awareness Program**

**Let's walk and talk...**



**Chess anyone?**



## PSC-Muscat Events 2024-2025



**Sustainability Week: Beach Clean-up**



**Relaxing Art - Staff Activity**



**Self-Defense Session from Pro MMA Fighters**



**Speak on the Spot Competition**



**English Cafe**



**Embracing World Traditions**



**Korean Club**

## PSC-Muscat Events 2024-2025



**Intercollegiate Debate Champions**



**UTAS Talks**



**World Mental Health Day**



**Brain Squeezers Competition**



**Oman Cancer Association Awareness Walkathon**



**Walk and Talk**



## World Book Day Celebration

### Dr. Neeraja Mote

The World Book Day Celebration was held on the 23rd of April in the Preparatory Study Centre, Foyer A, from 10 AM to 2:00 PM. The event was a remarkable success, bringing together both students and staff to share their love of literature and appreciate the power of books. Aligned with the UN's English Language Day and honoring Shakespeare's legacy, the event featured a series of engaging 15–20-minute book reviews presented by enthusiastic participants. There were 29 book reviewers, including staff and students. Some of the books reviewed were *Moby Dick*, *The Alchemist*, *Before the Coffee Gets Cold*, *The Wreck of the Zanzibar*, *Sayamur*, *Les Misérables*, *Atomic Habits*, *The Court of Owls*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Ikigai*, *A book of Rumi*, *A Journey Through Time*, *Pet Semetary*, *The Timekeeper*, *The genius of being*, *Project Hail Mary*, *Anne with an E*, among others. Each presentation offered unique insights and personal reflections, creating an inspiring atmosphere for all attendees.

The event encouraged a culture of reading while simultaneously enhancing communication and presentation skills across the student community. The organizing committee extended their thanks and gratitude with a "Certificate of Appreciation" to all those who participated and contributed to making this celebration both meaningful and memorable.

### Dr. Neeraja Mote reviews Hector García and Francesc Miralles' *IKIGAI: The Japanese Secret to a Long, Happy Life*

Ever wondered what truly brings joy and purpose to life? Ikigai, a beautiful Japanese concept meaning "reason for being," may hold the answer. As explored in "Ikigai: The Japanese Secret to a Long and Happy Life," this philosophy blends passion, mission, profession, and vacation into one fulfilling life path.

4 Key Takeaways:

- **Self-Reflection** – Know what brings you joy.
- **Balance** – Align passion with livelihood and purpose.
- **Community** – Build strong, lasting relationships.
- **Activity** – Stay mentally and physically active.

Sum up: #stay active #don't retire #take it slowly #move more #surround yourself with friends #connect with nature #live the moment #enjoy little things #be optimistic #follow your Ikigai to live long and happily #love everyone #make a difference.

Let ikigai be your daily compass. It might just be the secret to a longer, more meaningful life.





## Educational Visit to Al Makaram Equestrian School

Asma Al Breki

On February 17, 2025, 30 students and three lecturers from the Preparatory Studies Centre-Muscat embarked on an educational visit to Al Makaram Equestrian School in Muscat.

The trip aimed to bridge the gap between classroom learning (themes covered in their studies) and real-world experiences. Students gained valuable insights into horse breeds, riding safety protocols, and equine care techniques through engaging presentations and demonstrations. Furthermore, they were introduced to the business aspects of the equestrian industry, broadening their understanding of potential career paths. They were also given the opportunity to ride horses around the arena, an activity enjoyed by all!

The visit was a success. Students expressed enthusiasm for the enlightening and enjoyable hands-on learning experience.

The outing was organized by Ms. Asma Al Breiki, Ms. Heidi Manus and Ms. Tahira Kahn. Students who participated were from the Level 3 PSC-Foundation Program.



*Thank you for reading!*

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[www.utas.edu.om/muscat](http://www.utas.edu.om/muscat)

+968 2447 3600

Al Khuwair, Muscat  
Sultanate of Oman

# MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM

"Thanks for reading this issue of our newsletter! We appreciate your continued engagement and contributions. If you have stories, reviews, poetry, art, jokes, fun facts, research, events, ideas, or feedback to share, please reach out—we'd love to hear from you. Until next time!"



Stephanie Bernard  
Editor-in-Chief  
Design and Layout



Hilda Sanguv  
Content Editor



Satya Lakshmi Kotaru  
Content Editor



Dr. Neeraja Mote  
Data Management &  
Newsletter Coordinator

