



The Association
of Commonwealth
Universities



Lifting lives through
higher education

MEMBER BENEFITS 2020-2021
THE ACU

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THE ACU

ACU member universities join a vibrant global community with a shared commitment to build a better world through higher education. With more than 500 member universities across 50 countries, your institution will be part of a network that reflects the breadth and diversity of the Commonwealth itself.

The ACU is the only accredited Commonwealth organisation to represent higher education. Membership provides you with unique opportunities to work with us and advocate on issues at the highest level. We represent members (and when we can, directly involve you) at high level forums that include Commonwealth ministerial meetings and the United Nations.

We believe that international collaboration is the key to tackling global challenges - and that, in these extraordinary times, it matters more than ever. As an ACU member you can be part of international collaborations that address:

- Global challenges
- Access and inclusion
- Supporting research
- Strengthening universities

Our focus for 2020-2021 includes topics such as:

- Addressing the digital divide through inclusive practices
- Enhancing student experience of international mobility in times of COVID-19
- Historical injustice and building the future campus - inclusion and equity
- Designing new international partnerships for enhancing blended and online learning
- Strengthening investment in research and partnerships for the SDGs
- Supporting universities' contribution to sustainable societies and tackling climate change

Whether you are a student, vice-chancellor, academic or professional at an ACU member university, you can access opportunities to connect, learn and influence.

Through Digital Now we are ensuring that our vibrant global network continues to thrive not just in the short-term, while COVID-19 restricts global mobility and ways of working, but longer term too.



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500+
Members



50
Countries



10,000,000
Students



1,000,000
Academics &
Professional staff



66%
of members in
LOW to MIDDLE
income countries



5%
in small states



650,000
Annual awards in grants
and scholarships

Connect

As part of an ACU member university, you will be able to connect with others through our networks, communities and events.

- Commonwealth Climate Resilience Network
- Commonwealth Peace and Reconciliation Network
- Higher Education and the SDGs Network
- HR in HE Community
- Supporting Research Community
- Executive heads forums and regional committees
- ACU Champions summits

Learn

Alongside opportunities to apply for funding, ACU membership gives you the chance to learn from experts from across the Commonwealth and beyond.

- Funding opportunities
- Summer School
- ACU Digital Now Events
- Training

Influence

ACU member universities join a community dedicated to championing higher education's contribution to sustainable development within the sector and with governments and donors.

Our accredited status and strategic partnerships provide a platform for ACU members to influence policy agendas at the highest levels, including at Commonwealth ministerial meetings and the United Nations.

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Learn

Atiqah Aziz, ACU Fellow

Many patients with chronic illnesses combine prescribed medicines with herbal treatments to improve their quality of life, to counter side effects, and to achieve a sense of control. However, some alternative medicine is dangerous which is why I believe that research into the effect of herbal compounds on cancer cells is vital.

Through the ACU Fellowship, I took part in collaborative research focused on a compound derived from traditional Malaysian plants, and the potential interactions of this with prescribed medicines. The main objective was to determine the toxicity of this compound by investigating the presence or absence of DNA damage at the chromosome level. The research was a beneficial discovery on the mechanistic reaction and the effect of the compound on cancer cells. I also received mentoring, enhanced training, and made connections which often led to further opportunities.

Atiqah Aziz, ACU Fellow
From University of Malaya, Malaysia
Hosted by Swansea University, Wales



Dr Deep Saini
President and Vice-Chancellor
Dalhousie University, Canada

Influence

Dr Deep Saini

As a Canadian citizen of Indian origin, educated and having spent my career in India, Australia and Canada, and with ancestral linkages to east Africa, New Zealand, Pakistan and India, I have the Commonwealth coded into every cell in my body. Add this to my lived experiences with the transformative power of education, and you would understand why I jumped on the opportunity to be part of the ACU delegation to the 2018 Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers in Fiji. Aside from my formal roles as a presenter and panellist, CCEM served to deepen my understanding of the central place education occupies in the aspirations and preoccupations of the 54 diverse Commonwealth nations. Against this backdrop, my personal high point at the conference was seeing the Commonwealth and ACU members commit to ensuring equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Connect

The ACU is building a better world through higher education.

We welcome applications from eligible nationally-accredited higher education institutions in any of the Commonwealth's member states. Membership criteria are set to ensure that universities within ACU membership are committed to the mission, vision and values of the ACU, as well as a steadfast belief in education, social responsibility, international development, and collaboration with other like-minded institutions.

Full members

- Must be legally incorporated and situated in the Commonwealth
- Must be approved by the appropriate government authority to provide higher education
- Must be approved by the appropriate government authority to award their own degrees
- Must have at least 250 full-time equivalent students (50% of whom must be studying at first or higher degree level)
- Must have graduated at least one cohort of students

Associate members

(not eligible to vote at General Meetings or participate in elections for the ACU Council or its officers)

- Must be legally incorporated and situated in the Commonwealth
- Will normally be university colleges, colleges of universities, or other higher education institutions whose students may be awarded the degrees of another institution under a franchise, licence or other collaborative agreement. The degree-awarding institution itself must be located in the Commonwealth and eligible for full membership of the ACU
- Must be approved by the appropriate government authority to provide higher education
- Must have at least 250 full-time equivalent students (50% of whom must be studying at first or higher degree level)
- Must have graduated at least one cohort of students

ACU Champions

If your institution is already a member, you can sign up to be an ACU Champion to help facilitate stronger communication between the ACU and your university. Champions should have an international remit (for example, international office, partnerships) and be someone other than the executive head. For more information and to sign up as an ACU Champion, visit our website.

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