Indicator 5.3.3: Women's Access Scheme

5 GENDER EQUALITY

Does your university as a body provide women's access schemes (e.g. mentoring, scholarships, or other provisions)?

1. Executive summary

In 2025, the University of Bahrain provided three types of women's access schemes, each designed to help women enter, stay in and progress through higher education, with particular emphasis on technology, engineering and other STEM fields:

- **Mentoring:** The Female Student Mentorship Program, open only to female students as mentees.
- **Scholarships and financial support:** scholarships, financial support and full fee exemptions, of which women were the largest recipients in 2025 (65% of partial financial support).
- **Other provisions:** the Equal Opportunities Committee, counselling and personal-development programs from the Department of Guidance and Counselling, professional development through the Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership (UTEL), and free digital upskilling through the UOB- Coursera partnership.

Each scheme is described below with its eligibility, how it works and its 2025 results. A summary table is provided at the end.

2. Mentoring: Female Student Mentorship Program

The Female Student Mentorship Program pairs female students with experienced academic and industry mentors. It is designed specifically for women, focusing on technology and STEM, where women remain underrepresented in advanced study, research, and the workforce.

Who can apply

- **Mentees:** any female student enrolled in any UOB program, at any stage of study. There is **no minimum GPA**, so access is based on motivation and commitment rather than grades. Applicants are interviewed to confirm their goals and commitment.
- **Academic mentors:** female faculty with expertise in IT or related fields; male faculty with a proven record of mentoring women in IT may also take part.
- **Industry mentors:** female professionals with at least five years of IT industry experience and a record in technology leadership or innovation; male allies experienced in mentoring women are also welcome.

How it works

- Mentors and mentees register online and are matched by career interests, support needs, experience and availability. **Female mentors are prioritized** so that mentees have same-gender role models.
- The program runs in three phases: (1) orientation and relationship building; (2) active mentoring with a personal development plan, skills building and networking; (3) evaluation and reflection.
- Pairs meet at least twice per academic year (30–60 minutes per session), in person or online. Mentees also receive information on women-in-tech communities, scholarships, workshops, career counselling and CV reviews.
- The program has written rules on confidentiality, professional boundaries and zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment, and is evaluated every semester through surveys, interviews or focus groups.
- Mentors and mentees who complete the program receive certificates and are recognized at an end-of-year event.

3. Scholarships and Financial Support for Women

High tuition fees and living costs can stop capable women from entering or completing a degree. UOB therefore provides several layers of financial support, and in 2025, women received most of it.

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In 2025, **24,485 students** received financial support: 15,915 (65%) were women, and 8,570 (35%) were men.

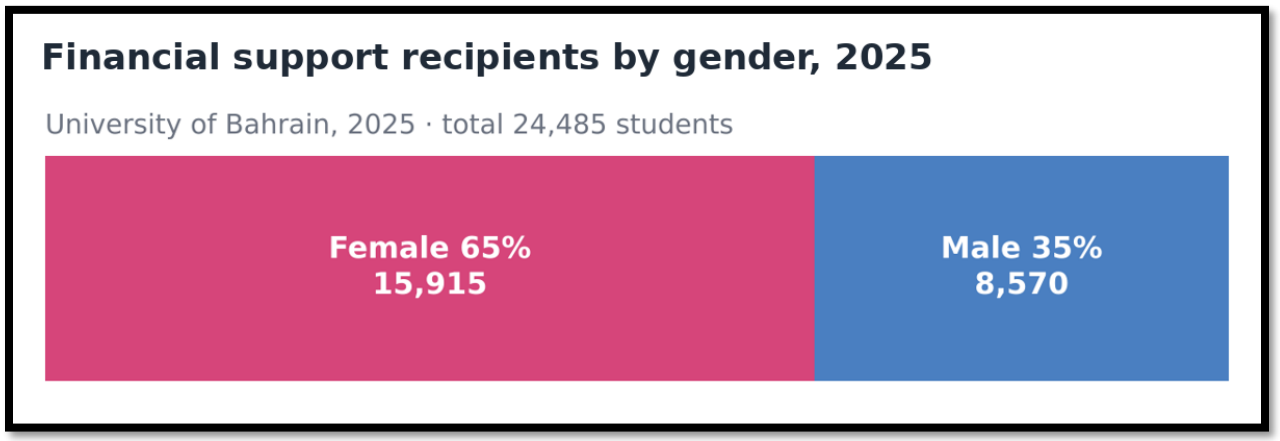
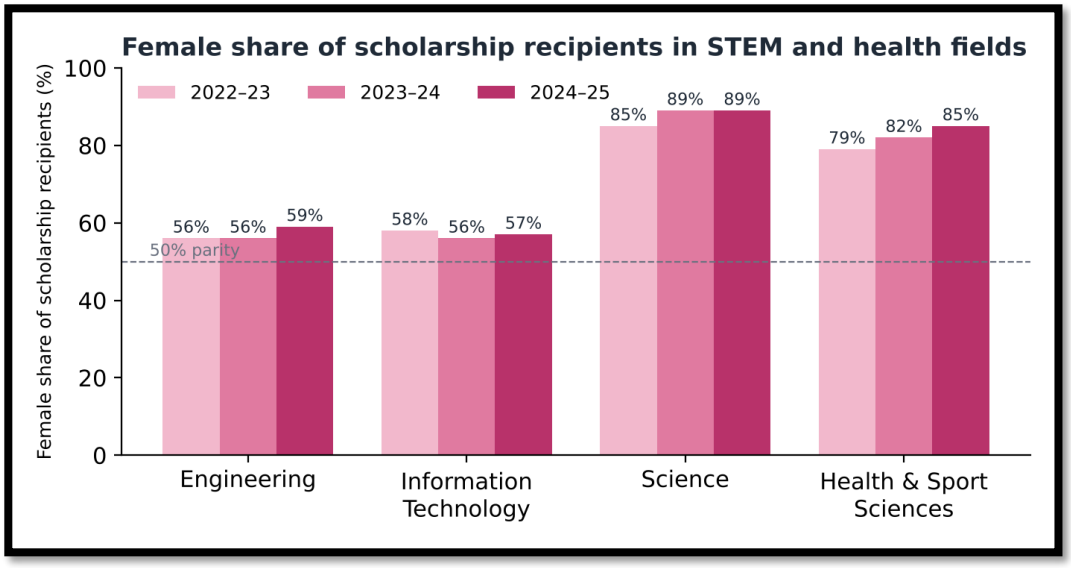


Figure 1. Recipients of partial financial support by gender, 2025.

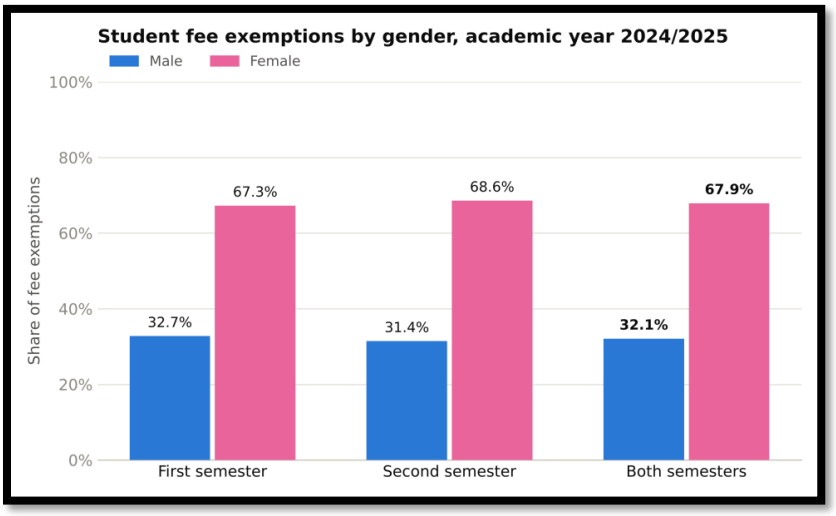
Scholarships in STEM and health fields: Women received the most scholarships in every STEM and health field in 2024/2025: Engineering 59%, Information Technology 57%, Science 89%, and Health and Sport Sciences 85%. The female share has stayed above 50% in all four fields for three consecutive years (2022/2023 to 2024/2025), showing that financial support reaches women in technical fields.

Figure 2.

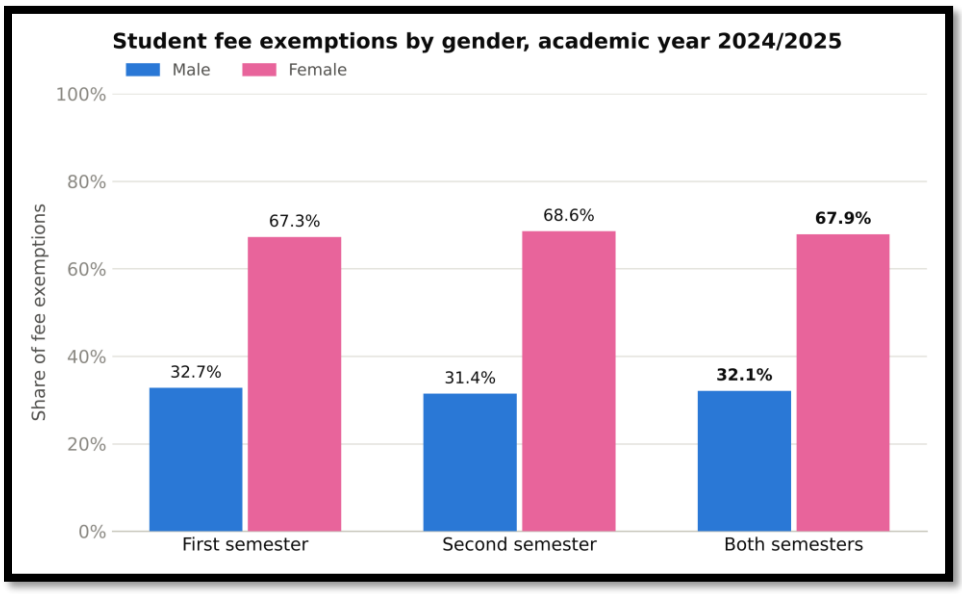


Female share of scholarship recipients by field, 2022/2023 to 2024/2025.

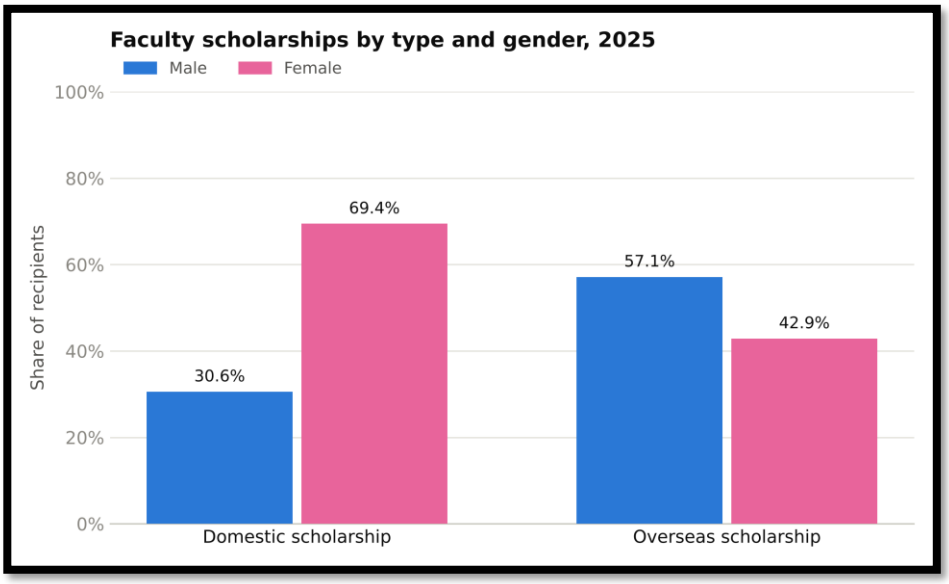
Full fee exemptions: The University's exemption arrangements include financial assistance for eligible students from low-income households and a 100% tuition fee exemption for eligible children of university employees, in accordance with the applicable regulations. The Exemptions and Part-Time Employment Division of the Deanship of Student Affairs reviews applications and confirms exemptions at the start of each semester.



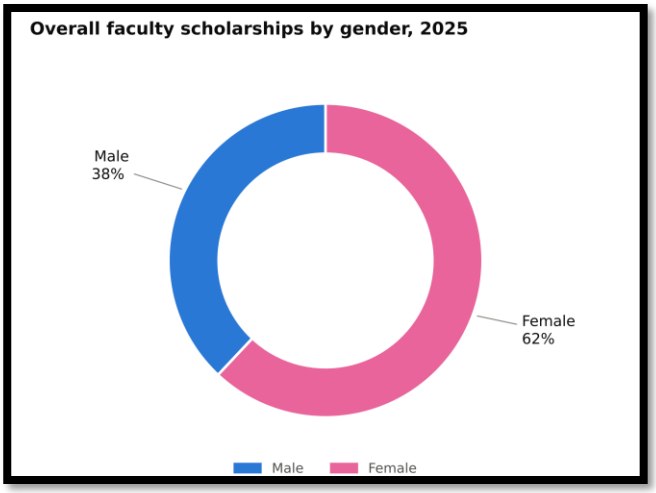
In 2025, **1125 students** received full fee exemptions, of whom **67.3% were female**. 5 external donors and sponsors supported the exemption fund.



Postgraduate scholarships for female Teaching and Research Assistants: Under Civil Service Bureau Instruction 2019-05, UOB Teaching and Research Assistants can receive fully funded scholarships for Master's or Doctoral study. Selection uses clear, merit-based criteria that are equally open to women and men.



Women represented 69.4% of domestic scholarship recipients, while men represented 30.6%. For overseas scholarships, men formed the majority at 57.1%, compared with 42.9% women.



Women received 62% of faculty scholarships in 2025, compared with 38% for men, showing that women accounted for most recipients.

4. Other Provision

Equal Opportunities Committee: UOB's Equal Opportunities Committee oversees the University's work on gender equality, including women's access and progression. The committee aims to educate women working at the university about their constitutional and legal rights and duties, ensure women's needs are considered in all fields and promote opportunities for both genders.

In 2025, the Committee worked on the following initiatives:

1. Organizing the celebration of Bahraini Women's Day on the first of December, recognizing the academic and leadership achievements of women at UOB.
2. Organizing workshops and awareness lectures based on a field study of the needs of working women at the university.
3. Establishing research groups for women's research. This initiative aims to conduct research and studies related to women's issues and promote them as required by Bahraini society and Arab society in general.
4. Organizing Lahun (for them) Competition: a competition concerned with creating a special space for working women at the University.

According to the Equal Opportunity Committee's 2024/2025 statistics, UOB recorded 48 achievements by women, and 42 women received awards. In addition, approximately 162 publications featured women.

https://equalopportunity.uob.edu.bh/2023/10/16/contest-for-them/?lang=en

https://equalopportunity.uob.edu.bh/about-the-committee/?lang=en#vission

Unit for Teaching Excellence and Leadership (UTEL). UTEL offers a teaching and leadership development program accredited by Advanced HE (UK), open equally to women and men. Through workshops, seminars and tailored support, it helps women build the skills and recognition needed for academic promotion and leadership roles. In 2025, women made up 71% of UTEL participants.

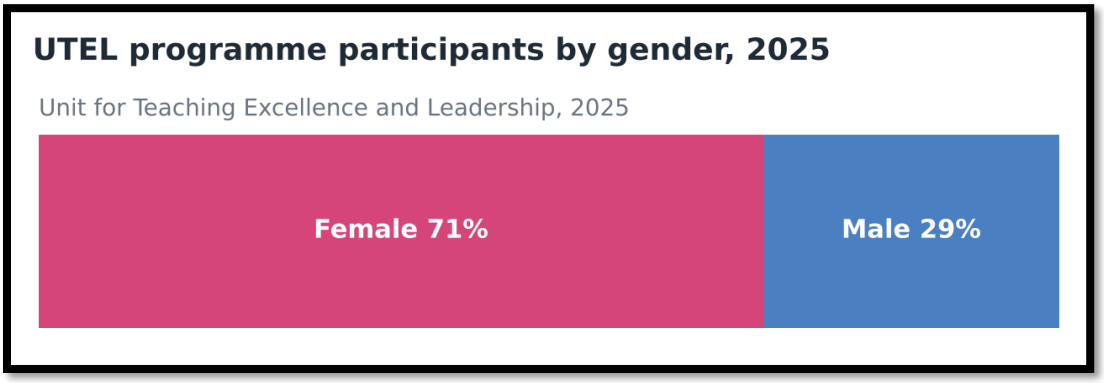


Figure 3. UTEL program participants by gender, 2025.

Department of Guidance and Counselling: The Department of Guidance and Counselling, part of the Deanship of Student Affairs, helps students adjust to university life and overcome social, psychological and academic difficulties that can affect their studies. Its specialists aim to prevent, manage and treat problems that get in the way of learning, and to help students manage stress, build study skills and prepare for exams. The Department works through two divisions:

Social Guidance Division: helps students adapt to university life and studies, addresses their social problems, runs activities that build personal and social skills, and provides support during exam periods to reduce pressure. Social counsellors are based in every college across the Sakhir and Isa Town campuses.

Psychological Counselling Division: provides confidential individual and group counselling on personal, family, social and academic matters, developmental workshops and forums, and follow-up support for students with low GPAs in coordination with the Deanship of Admission and Registration.

Students can book an appointment in person, by phone or online through the "Consult Your Advisor" e-service. The Department's regular programs include the **Counselling Awareness Program**, the **Success Steps Program** (motivation and learning skills) and **Be Ready for the Exams** (exam stress, revision and nutrition advice).

In the academic year 2024/2025, the Department ran **13 programs and workshops** under its Social Skills Development, Psychological Skills Development, Group Psychological Support and Student Support programs. Topics included inspiring leadership in volunteer and cultural work; self-assertiveness and self-confidence ("Proud of Myself" and "Developing Self-Assertiveness and Self-Confidence"); overcoming anxiety and panic attacks; time and success management; "Keys to Happiness"; and "Hand in Hand Towards Safe Mental Health", held for World Mental Health Day.

Female students made up 81% of participants across these programs. Participation was especially high in sessions on confidence, leadership and mental wellbeing: one session on overcoming anxiety and panic attacks was attended only by women, and women made up 92% of participants in the World Mental Health Day program and 83% in the leadership program. This shows that the Department's services are reaching female students and supporting their wellbeing, confidence and leadership skills, which help women stay in and succeed at university.



Coursera partnership: Through its partnership with Coursera, UOB gives students, graduates, staff and members of the public free access to online courses and professional certificates. This flexible, online format is especially useful for women balancing study with work or family responsibilities. In 2025, women made up **54% of learners**, completing **2,430** courses.

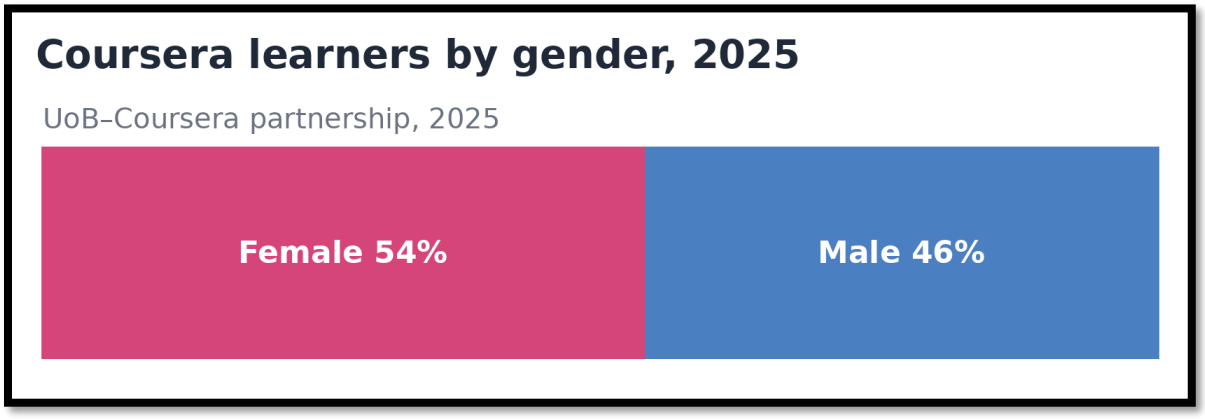


Figure 4. Coursera learners by gender, 2025.

Summary of Women's Access Schemes, 2025

Scheme	Type	Who it serves	2025 result
Female Student Mentorship Program	Mentoring	Female students, all programs; no GPA threshold	2154 mentees
Financial support and scholarships	Scholarship	Students in financial need or with high merit	15,915 women (65% of 24,485 recipients)
Scholarships in STEM and health fields	Scholarship	Students in Engineering, IT, Science, Health	Women: 57–89% of recipients in every field
Full fee exemptions	Scholarship	Students from low-income households	**1125** students; **67.3%** women
Postgraduate scholarships (CSB 2019-05)	Scholarship	Teaching and Research Assistants	**62%** women
Guidance and Counselling programs	Other	All students	81% female participants
Equal Opportunities Committee	Other	Female students and staff	4 initiatives
UTEL professional development	Other	Faculty and staff	71% female participants
Coursera partnership	Other	Students, graduates, staff, public	**54%** female learners

Together, these schemes give women at the University of Bahrain direct mentoring, financial support to enter and complete their studies, and further routes into leadership and professional growth.