

# Guide to Student Life at Masdar Institute

2009

Learning to change the world

MASDAR INSTITUTE  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



معهد مصدر  
للعلوم والتكنولوجيا

In collaboration with  
MIT  
Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology



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# 1. WELCOME TO THE MASDAR INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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The student orientation guidebook is your first encounter with the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology. Hence, we take this opportunity to congratulate you on being accepted into the first graduate student class of Masdar Institute. We consider this a major achievement. We hope that the time you spend at the Masdar Institute as a graduate student will make a major contribution to your professional and personal development. You have been carefully selected from a quality pool of applicants with different backgrounds and expertise. The faculty and staff are very pleased that you accepted to join the Masdar Institute in working towards a solution to the challenge of promoting sustainable development by developing technologies for alternative sources of energy. This is a unique opportunity for all of us to join and expand global sustainability efforts. We hope that Masdar Institute will offer you a positive and rewarding life-changing experience.

As part of the 2009-2010 intake, your role at the Institute will be broad. You are expected to participate intensely in research projects that are currently being developed by the Masdar Institute. Moreover, we encourage you to take the initiative in proposing new areas of research that fit or possibly expand the vision and mission of the Institute. In addition, we expect you to assume a leadership role in shaping the Institute's activities in the academic and student life spheres.

Hence, we expect you to be closely involved in research projects and student life activities.

The financial package and services offered by the Masdar Institute are aimed at providing you with a comfortable student life experience, allowing you

to focus your energy on substantive educational and research activities.

It is possible that during your stay at Masdar Institute, you will be asked for your views and comments by a member of the press. We respectfully ask all students to direct such enquiries to the Marketing and Communications Department to ensure that they are handled appropriately. Please refer all enquiries and press contacts to Zarmineh Rab, Communications and Marketing Manager at [zrab@masdar.ae](mailto:zrab@masdar.ae)

Below we present a summary of the main activities proposed for the orientation week, the student life activities for the 2009-2010 academic year; information about housing and transport; health insurance, specifics about life in Abu Dhabi, and other useful information.

## 2. STUDENT ORIENTATION EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

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On arriving at the Masdar Institute, you will receive a comprehensive introduction to the expectations faculty have of you regarding student life throughout your degree program, as well as your expected roles related to the region and to the city of Abu Dhabi. Activities planned for the orientation period are designed to contribute to community-building with the student body, faculty and staff.

### 2.1 Housing orientation and visa documents

On arriving at the student housing compound, you will get a brief orientation from the residence clerk on the facilities and residents' rules. More details on housing are provided in section 5. The day after arriving, you will be welcomed at the Masdar Institute by staff and faculty, and the student visa documentation process will begin (see section 6 for more information about the exact procedure).

### 2.2 Welcoming students to the Masdar Institute

A welcome dinner for all students is planned for the first week. At the dinner you will be introduced to the Institute's goals and vision and what is expected of you during your time here. You will be briefed on the challenges ahead, student life, and the academic plan. In addition, you will be given a cultural introduction, provided with the orientation week schedule, and a brief overview of the faculty and staff. During this week, you are encouraged to interact with faculty extensively to identify research projects and areas that fit best your background and academic interests.

### 2.3 Faculty research presentations

During the orientation week, several days will be

reserved for faculty to introduce their projects to new students to help them familiarize themselves with different research activities at the Institute. Following the presentations, you are expected to contact individual faculty and discuss in greater depth common interests and potential fit with respective projects.

### 2.4 Presentation on Masdar City

A representative of the Property Development Unit at Masdar Initiative will speak about Masdar City's development plans and the university campus, and this will be followed by a Q&A session with the students.

### 2.5 Seminar on Sustainable Living

During orientation week, a short seminar will be delivered on sustainable living. As sustainability is at the core of graduate education and research at the Masdar Institute, you are encouraged to practice sustainable living in every aspect of your life at the campus and in the residences. To this end, faculty and other specialists will discuss different life and technology choices that contribute to energy efficiency, and waste and pollution reduction. The session will be followed by questions and answers, and will set the stage for ongoing conversations on the topic.

### 2.6 Life in Abu Dhabi

One day during orientation week will be reserved for becoming familiar with the city of Abu Dhabi. This will include a brief introduction to the main activities available to you in your free time, and to the main tourist landmarks. Bus trips to points of interest will be organized for all students.

### 3. STUDENT LIFE ACTIVITIES FOR THE 2009-2010 CLASS

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Your academic success will be influenced by the richness of your social life. It is very important that students build communities around common interests and hobbies. Masdar Institute prides itself on its international and multicultural student body and faculty, therefore creating spaces for students and faculty to gather informally is essential. One goal of the Student Affairs Committee is to tap into the extracurricular interests of students and to create opportunities to enjoy them. Moreover, it is important to offer students the chance to take the initiative in organizing their communities, to be proactive in seeking solutions to problems, and to be creative. In time, we aim to have student-directed activities supported by excellent facilities and capable staff to help students acquire new skills and participate actively in campus life. Below are some of the proposed student activities that we hope to expand as the size of the student body increases; however we expect students to take charge of organizing most of these activities.

#### 3.1 Masdar Institute Student Council

Modeled on the MIT Graduate Student Council (GSC), the Masdar Institute Student Council (MISC) is intended to be an elected body whose membership includes graduate student representatives from all programs, and which strives for gender and nationality equality. The organization of the Council is based on elected representatives, standing committees and officers.

The MISC is committed to promoting the general welfare of graduate students and providing a forum for their ideas and suggestions. MISC also aims to create new programs and initiatives to

provide opportunities for growth and interaction, and for communication with faculty and administration on behalf of graduate students. The group encourages social, cultural, and other extracurricular activities, fostering closer relations between graduate students and faculty, within and beyond the academic context.

Proposed committees forming part of MISC include:

- (1) **Academic, research, and careers:** develops and runs programs, including career fairs, mentorship programs - all aimed at improving the academic environment for students;
- (2) **Social activities:** plans, organizes and coordinates a number of social events on and off campus for graduate students;
- (3) **Funding board:** convenes to vote on funding graduate student activities on a semester-by-semester basis for events aimed at the entire student body;
- (4) **Housing and community affairs:** advocacy group for all student life issues, including housing; health services and insurance; transport; safety; sport; and other related matters;
- (5) **Orientation activities:** plans the Institute's Graduate Student Orientation at the beginning of the school term;
- (6) **Publications and publicity board:** disseminates information to graduate students using various means, including a monthly newsletter (i.e. Graduate Student News).

### **3.2. Social Events**

Masdar Institute will host a weekly “Coffee Hour” with light snacks, coffee and tea for all students and faculty to help build a sense of community, and to share ideas in an informal setting. Students will gradually take responsibility for organizing this event.

### **3.3. Film Screenings**

Monthly screenings of films and/or documentaries on topics related to sustainability (e.g. climate change, sustainable transportation, social and economic sustainability, food security) will offer a venue to combine entertainment with academic and research challenges. The screenings will be followed by a brief discussion and analysis led by students and faculty.

### **3.4. Women’s Discussion Group**

This group, specifically formed for female students, aims to carve out a space where women students can gather to address interpersonal and academic issues. The group also aims to act as a forum, support group, and information center for female scientists and engineers. Ultimately, the Women’s Discussion Group at Masdar Institute shall play an activist role in stimulating enrolment by women in science and engineering graduate education programs across the region. The Institute will sponsor weekly (or monthly) gatherings (i.e. snacks, coffee and tea).

### **3.5. Trips outside the city**

Several group trips will be organized by Masdar Institute staff to destinations outside the city. Some of the proposed trips are: visits to Dubai and the Northern Emirates, Al Ain Hafeet Mountain, trips to the beach for swimming and BBQ, and desert safaris.

### **3.6. Local cultural events and exhibitions**

Students will have opportunities to enjoy and expand their cultural and artistic skills and interests once they arrive in Abu Dhabi. The UAE has a very rich cultural heritage and students will have the opportunity to experience local cultural events. The Institute will inform students of cultural events and exhibitions. When possible,

the Institute shall look for ways to help students secure discounts to events.

### **3.7. Community Service**

Volunteering in community service allows students to become more familiar with local culture, and helps them understand the social and economic challenges of the society in which they live. In addition, by participating in public service, students promote the principles of social, economic, and environmental sustainability.

### **3.8. Sporting facilities**

There are a number of options available to students to access sporting facilities in Abu Dhabi. Memberships can be purchased to various health clubs in Abu Dhabi and at different local hotels. Some clubs have long enrolment waiting lists

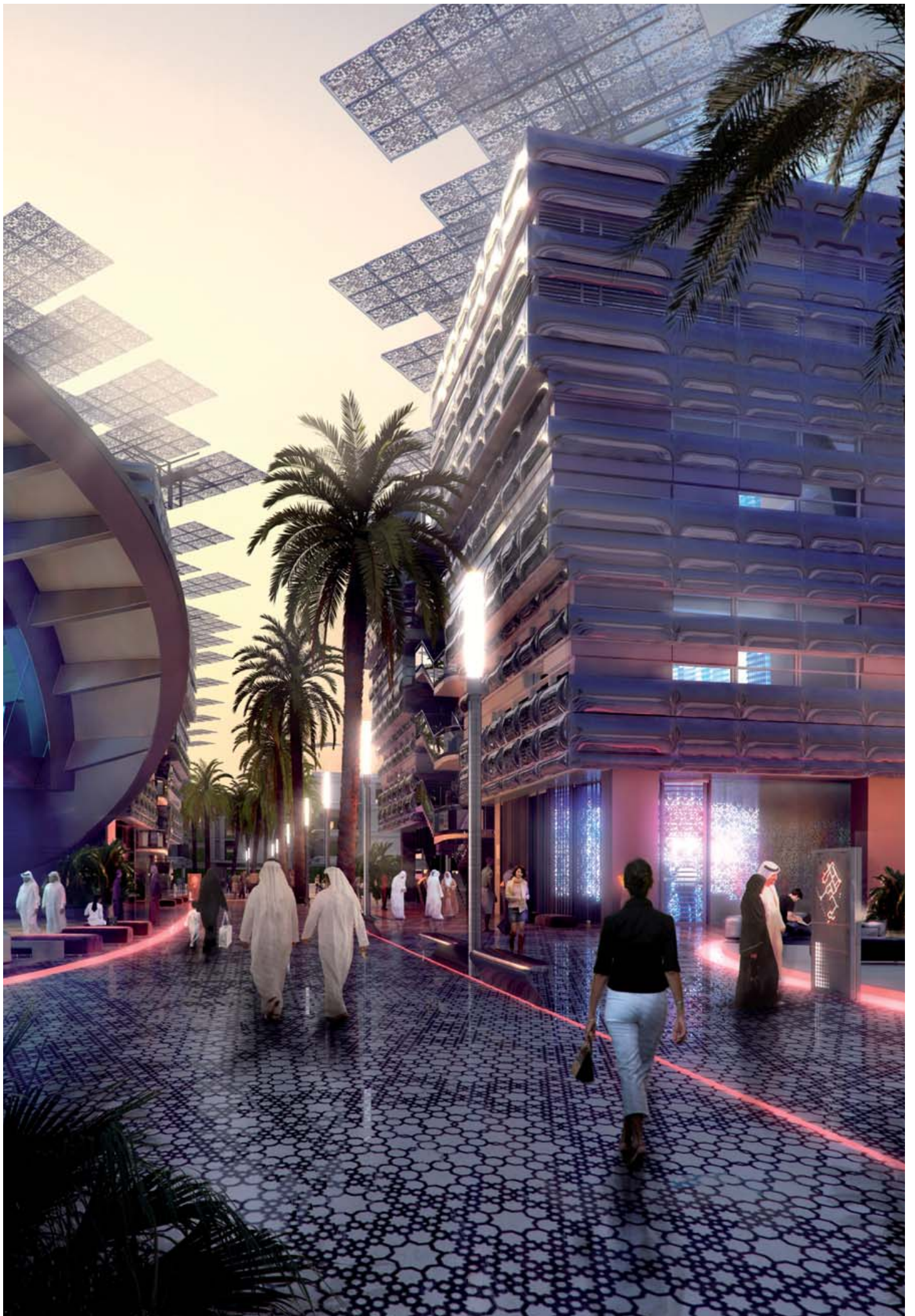
### **3.9. Student Support Lecture Series**

The committee will organize occasional lectures to help students deal with daily academic pressures. Topics include stress management, time management, health and wellness, and others. The topics for the lecture series will be based on the needs of the students.

### **3.10. Masdar Institute Career Fair**

Every year, starting with the 2010-2011 academic year, MISC, in collaboration with the Career Services Office and the Student Affairs Office, will organize a recruiting event for the graduating class. The Fair will host employers from Masdar Initiative, private companies, and Government agencies in the region in a bid to help students find employment. This event will also create opportunities for participants to advertise their companies while also giving them access to the Institute’s highly talented graduates.





## 4. CAMPUS SERVICES

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### 4.1. IT Services

The Information Technology (IT) department will provide students – once they have arrived - with email accounts, and on-campus printing and scanning services. Internet access will be provided at the residences, and all students will be provided with a laptop for use during their stay at the Institute.

### 4.2. Library Services

The Masdar Institute Library is open to students, faculty and staff. The institute's librarian and staff bring decades of experience from academia and the private sector to the classroom. The Library's mission is to support Masdar Institute students and faculty with relevant, world-class library and information resources, and high-quality instruction. The facility contains electronic books, print text books for various disciplines, and online journal databases.

## 5. HOUSING AND TRANSPORT

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### 5.1. Student Housing

The student residence compound is located in Khalifa A City which is 10 – 15 minutes by car from the Masdar Institute campus. The compound comprises 24 spacious furnished villas. The residences have 24-hour security to provide privacy and security for the students. In addition, there is a residence clerk at the compound at all times to respond to students' housing-related needs.

Below are the general rules associated with living in the residence compounds. These rules are intended to facilitate student life organization and to create a harmonious climate of confidence and cooperation.

#### General Rules:

- Living in the residence compound is based on trust and respect for social and moral values, lifestyle preferences and cultural diversity
- Each resident must be committed to living in a tolerant environment. They must avoid disseminating or supporting any form of propaganda (political, religious, or any other type) within the housing compound
- Any object likely to be considered a threat to the safety of the residents must not be brought into the residence compound
- Smoking and water pipes are not allowed in the residence compound
- Gambling and drug use are illegal under UAE law and the Masdar Institute rules
- Possession or consumption of alcohol is prohibited in the residence compound
- Animals are not allowed in the residence compound
- Residents of the compound must be Research Assistants, students, or Research Engineers at Masdar Institute

The following facilities and services are available to compound residents:

- Furniture and appliances
- Kitchen
- Wireless internet connection
- Swimming pool

Students must comply with the following daily life rules:

- Students are responsible for keeping the villas clean. Students must take the initiative to organize a cleaning schedule for the common spaces (kitchen, dining and living room)
- Any damage caused by the residents (by negligence or accident) will be repaired at his or her own expense
- There is a maintenance team to take care of all repairs
- In the event of loss or theft inside the residence, Masdar Institute will not be held responsible
- Accessing and viewing offensive, immoral and/ or illegal websites or TV in the residence compound is not permitted

## 5.2. Transport

The Institute will provide three buses for the commuting needs of the students to and from the campus, Abu Dhabi city, and shopping malls. The buses will run on a fixed schedule, which will be distributed to you.

### 5.2.1. Public Transport

Although the Institute provides you with a bus service from residences to the campus and the city, you may choose other options. Within the city limits, a public bus transportation system is available, staffed by a large fleet of buses.

### 5.2.2. Taxis

Taxis are another reliable mode of transportation to get around the city and from the city to the outskirts. Prices vary according to the type of taxi used – the white-and-gold vehicles are the cheapest, while more luxurious cabs owned by Al Ghazal, Tawasul and National (the colors tend to be silver, white or black) are slightly more costly. Taxi fares are reasonably competitive in terms of other major cities. You are not expected to tip but gratuity will be appreciated. If you want to take a taxi to the city they can use the phone numbers below to call a taxi, however many companies will charge the cost of their journey to the residence as well as the journey into the city. Returning from the city is easier and likely to be cheaper due to the availability of taxis that can be hailed on the streets. You need to be cautious as not all taxi drivers speak English and not all of them know the city very well. It helps to carry a city street map to assist taxi drivers with directions. You should also ensure the taxi meter is running before the vehicle departs, or that a fee is negotiated before using the taxi to protect yourself from any disputes.

#### Taxi Service Phone

Al Ghazal Express 02 444 5885

Al Ghazal Taxis 02 444 7787

National Transport Company (NTC)  
02 622 3300

Al Arabia Taxi 02 558 8099

Cars Taxi 02 551 6164

National Taxi 02 555 2212

### 5.2.3. Driving

If you intend to drive in the UAE, you need a driver's license issued by the same country that issued your passport. It is possible to apply for an Abu Dhabi driver's license once a residence visa has been issued. Any individual whose passport and driver's license are issued by different countries will be required to sit a theory driving examination and pass a practical driving test. The citizens of some countries are required to take the examinations regardless of whether their licences and passports match. Ahead of securing an Abu Dhabi license, students should ensure they have a current international driver's license to cover them for the interim period.

For more information on obtaining a driver's license, please go to the following address:  
<http://www.abudhabi.ae/Sites/Portal/Citizen/EN/Services/MotoringTravel/drivinglicense.html>

Driving in Abu Dhabi can be a little confusing at first for newcomers, however the city is built along a grid system (not unlike New York) which makes it easy to find your way around. At first however, it may take some getting used to, due to the fact that many of the main streets and roads are known by several names. You will find that you will become familiar with these names very quickly, but a quick summary of the main streets follows:

#### Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum Rd

Also known as:

- Street No. 2
- **Airport Road (popular name)**

#### E Road

Also known as:

- Street No. 4
- New Airport Road
- **Muroor Road (popular name)**

#### Al Khaleej Al Arabi Street

Also known as:

- Street No. 30
- **Musaffah Road (popular name)**

Sheikh Zayed the First  
(which becomes Sheikh Zayed the Second)

Also known as:

- Khalidiyah Street  
(but only in Khalidiyah suburb)
- Electra Street (but only from where  
it becomes Sheikh Zayed The Second)  
(popular name)

Al Falah Street

Also known as:

- Passport Road (popular name)

8th Street

Also known as:

- Al Salam Street (popular name)

Hazza Bin Zayed the First Street

Also known as:

- 11th Street
- Al Bateen Street (popular name)

## 6. STUDENT VISA

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After you arrive in the UAE, the Human Resources department of Masdar Institute will help you obtain a residence visa. In some instances this can take up to four weeks. The Human Resources department will prepare the necessary paperwork and file the application at the earliest opportunity after you arrive to expedite the process. You will be required to undergo the required medical tests (blood test and chest x-ray). Human Resources will arrange the medical tests.

## 7. HEALTH SERVICES

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All students of the Masdar Institute are covered under a comprehensive healthcare plan provided by Daman Insurance Company. The Daman booklet with information on the Regional Plus Plan will be provided to all students. The booklet contains information on the benefits and contact details. For emergencies, students can go to the emergency clinics at any of the main hospitals (e.g. Sheikh Khalifa Medical City, Al Noor Hospital, New Medical Center, and Gulf Diagnostic Center). Abu Dhabi has a number of medical facilities that compare very favorably with their international peer group. Please visit Daman's website for more details on how to choose a medical practitioner and whom to call in a medical emergency. Some pharmacies sell medication without a prescription, and you may be tempted to start treating yourself without visiting the doctor. Self-treatment may lead to complications and can do more harm than good. Good medical advice is available so please use it. In addition to the various Government hospitals and clinics in Abu Dhabi there are a number of private clinics that are highly recommended. Most of these clinics have very good facilities and a number of specialist doctors on their staff (GPs, dermatologists, eye specialists and pediatricians). There are many dentists practicing in Abu Dhabi and the rates are fairly reasonable for routine work. A list of network providers is available on the Daman network. More information can be found at the following website: <http://www.damanhealth.ae/>

## 8. BANKING

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In order to open a bank account in the UAE, students will need to provide their residency visas. Human Resources will help students set up bank accounts with First Gulf Bank initially; however, there are several international banks in Abu Dhabi that students may prefer to use. Below is a list of potential banks. Most banks have a number of branches in each city. Contact the bank or visit their websites for details of the most convenient branches. Islamic banking is also available.

### Abu Dhabi Commercial Bank

Tel: 02-672-0000  
[www.adcb.com](http://www.adcb.com)  
Al Salam Street

### Citibank

Tel: 02-674-2484  
[www.citibank.com/uae/](http://www.citibank.com/uae/)  
Al Salam Street

### Commercial Bank of Dubai

Tel: 02-626-8400  
[www.cbd.co.ae](http://www.cbd.co.ae)  
Corniche Road

### Commercial Bank International

Tel: 02-626-4400  
[www.cbiuae.com](http://www.cbiuae.com)  
Khalifa Street

### Emirates Bank

Tel: 02-645-5151  
[www.ebi.ae](http://www.ebi.ae)  
Electra Street

### First Gulf Bank

Tel: 02-644-4617  
[www.fgb.ae](http://www.fgb.ae)  
Al Salam Street

### HSBC

Tel: 02-633-2200  
[www.uae.hsbc.com](http://www.uae.hsbc.com)  
Airport Road

### Mashreq Bank

Tel: 02-612-7201  
[www.mashreqbank.com](http://www.mashreqbank.com)  
Khalifa Street

### National Bank of Abu Dhabi

Tel: 02-611-1111  
[www.nbad.com](http://www.nbad.com)  
Corner of Khalifa and  
Baniyas Streets

### National Bank of Dubai

Tel: 02-639-4555  
[www.nbd.com](http://www.nbd.com)  
Electra Street

### Standard Chartered Bank

Tel: 02-677-7400  
[www.standardchartered.com/ae](http://www.standardchartered.com/ae)  
Sheikh Hamdan Street

### Union National Bank

Tel: 02-641-2288  
[www.unb.com](http://www.unb.com)  
Hazza Bin Zayed Road

## 9. USEFUL INFORMATION ABOUT ABU DHABI

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### 9.1. United Arab Emirates

Forty years ago the southern coast of the lower Gulf was a barren, sparsely populated land comprising several autonomous nation states. Today, as the United Arab Emirates, this region has developed into a dynamic, modern society with the infrastructure of contemporary 21st century life. Geographically, the region making up the UAE stretches from the Indian Ocean in the east to the edge of the Empty Quarter, the Rub al Khali in the west, and from the mountains of the Sultanate of Oman in the south to the temperate waters of the Arabian Gulf in the north. In the 1960s, an oil boom kicked off change, and in 1971 the Federation of the United Arab Emirates was formed. The Federation replaced the Trucial States that were governed by British mandate. A new political structure was established to bring the seven Emirates of the UAE closer. Up to this point, they had followed separate paths under the leadership of their individual ruling Sheikhs. Great wealth derived from oil and gas production has given the UAE one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. Proven oil reserves for the UAE stand at over 98 billion barrels, and by far the largest portion is located in Abu Dhabi, where oil was first discovered offshore in 1958 and onshore in 1960.

Income from oil and gas has been invested over the past 40 years in construction and development. All the original settlements have become dynamic urban centers and Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, and Dubai have grown into large contemporary cities. A network of multi-lane highways links the main centers. The more remote regions are accessible

by all-terrain vehicles, and both the desert and the mountains are popular destinations for leisure and recreational activities.

### 9.2. Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi is the largest of the seven Emirates and the Federal capital of the UAE. Abu Dhabi's land surface measures 67,340 square kilometers, which is equivalent to about 80% of the UAE's total land area. Only 30% of the Emirate is inhabited, with the remaining expanse covered predominantly by desert and arid land. Land cultivation and irrigation for agriculture and forestation over the past decade have increased the size of "green" areas in the Emirate to about 5% of the total land area, and includes parks and roadside plantations. Abu Dhabi has dozens of islands, most of which are small and uninhabited, while others have been designated wildlife sanctuaries. Abu Dhabi has become the center of Government and business in the UAE. The headquarters of the Emirates' oil companies and numerous embassies are also based here. Abu Dhabi's oil wealth has been deployed to encourage healthy trade and commerce beyond its hydrocarbon industry. The promotion of tourism and various-tourism related projects will enhance the status and reputation of the Emirate, while large gardens and parks, green boulevards, sophisticated high-rise buildings, state-of-the-art communications and transport, international five-star hotels, luxurious shopping malls, cultural centers and a plethora of international events provide tourists a one-of-a-kind experience year-round.





### 9.3. Language

The official national language is Arabic, although English, Hindi and Urdu are also widely spoken. English is the language of business and is widely spoken in shops, hotels, restaurants, and in other places inside the city. As a rule, less English is spoken and understood the further away from the business or city center you go.

Most Government forms and official contracts (e.g. tenancy, residence visa, driver's licenses, marriage certificates, university diplomas and so on) are in Arabic. Documents required by Government agencies or departments must be translated into Arabic.

### 9.4. Religion

Every community in Abu Dhabi has a mosque where Muslims, led by an imam, go to pray. Mosque minarets are fitted with loudspeakers that announce the call to prayer five times a day. However, given the ethnically diverse population in the country, Abu Dhabi is tolerant of other religions, as reflected by the presence of places of worship for other religious denominations, such as the Anglican Church (St. Andrew's Church), Roman Catholic Church (St. Joseph's Catholic Church), Greek Orthodox (St. Nicholas Church).

### 9.5. National Dress

The men of the Arabian Peninsula wear white, brown or grey ankle-length *dishdashas*. Local men wear the white or sometimes red-checked head cloth (*gutra*) and the twisted, black coil (*agal*), holding the gutra in place. Only rarely will a National appear in Western dress in the Emirates. Under the headdress is a skullcap called a *gafia*. Men of standing wear a flowing cloak (*bisht*) edged with gold braid. UAE women are very particular about their dress. They usually wear trousers (*sirwal*) embroidered at the ankles, and, like jodhpurs, these are baggy to the knee and tight between the knee and feet. Over the sirwal is the jillabeeya (or *kandora*), a floor-length dress often decorated in gold or silver embroidery. Emirati women are covered from head to foot with a black cloak, called the *abaya* or *aba*. Some UAE women (mostly the older women) wear a canvas mask called a *burqa*, which covers

eyebrows, nose and mouth. According to Islam, adult women should conceal all hair for the sake of modesty.

### 9.6. Climate

The climate in the UAE is hot and humid in the summer (May to October) and warm and pleasant in the winter months (November to April). The climate varies between the inland and coastal regions. In summer, midday temperatures generally reach 40-45°C (104-113°F) with humidity of 90%-plus. In winter, midday temperatures range from 20-35°C (68-95°F) with evenings being comfortably cool. Rainfall is sparse and in most regions, but more prevalent in the winter. Rain rarely exceeds five inches a year, with mountain areas experiencing more precipitation. Occasionally the Emirates experience a persistent wind, known as the *shamal*, which can reach gale force in the winter. It typically brings with it dust and sand, but it can provide relief from high temperatures in summer. A cooling north-westerly wind prevails between May and October, while coastal areas sometimes have thick early morning fog in winter. It is essential to remain cool, especially in summer. The body's natural response to heat is to perspire more freely, resulting in the loss of fluid and salt. Acclimatization takes at least two weeks for people who are generally fit and of average weight.

### 9.7. Attire

Cotton is by far the best material for clothing as it can absorb half its weight in water and is useful for managing perspiration. If clothes do not absorb perspiration, skin remains bathed in moisture and can develop a condition known as "prickly heat" (applying talc after showering can help prevent this condition). Loose-fitting clothes allow a layer of air to circulate between clothing and skin, which helps evaporation. Depending on the time of year, clothing generally should be lightweight, easy to clean and practical. In winter, warmer garments are frequently required. Professionals and businessmen are expected to wear trousers with a short or long-sleeved shirt (depending on the season) and a tie. Suits or jackets are worn for work in the business

community; lightweight suits and occasionally a dinner jacket may be required for social occasions. Ties are rarely worn in the summer months except during working hours. Women usually wear cotton dresses, tops, slacks and skirts. Leather shoes or sandals are more comfortable than those made from synthetic materials as the latter prevent feet from ‘breathing’. A light jacket or blazer for business meetings or evening receptions is advisable, particularly in view of the cooler air-conditioned surroundings in offices, hotels and commercial buildings. Eveningwear is standard for formal occasions. There is an unwritten dress code in the UAE for both men and women. It is important and respectful not to give offense by wearing clothing that is revealing. Men must always wear a shirt or top in public and a tie when attending an important meeting or social function. At the pool or beach, trunks, swimsuits, shorts and bikinis are acceptable. Casual clothing is common in most clubs and private parties. However, it is respectful for both men and women to cover shoulders and knees when out in public.

## 9.8. Ramadan

During the month of Ramadan, eating, drinking and smoking in public are forbidden until sunset and some restaurants are closed. All hotels operate as usual, but they do not serve alcohol between 7am and 7pm, and there are some restrictions on outdoor food service during daylight hours.

## 9.9. Public Holidays

Muslim festivals are timed according to local sightings of various phases of the moon; therefore the holiday dates listed are approximations. During the month of Ramadan that precedes Eid al-Fitr, Muslims fast during the day and feast at night. Hence, normal business hours may be interrupted. Many restaurants close during the day and there may be restrictions on smoking and drinking. Some disruption may continue into Eid al-Fitr itself. Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha may last anything from two to 10 days depending on the region.

## 2009

|              |                                     |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 21 September | Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)        |
| 28 November  | Eid al-Adha<br>(Feast of Sacrifice) |
| 2 December   | UAE National Day                    |
| 18 December  | Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year)         |

## 2010

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 1 January    | New Year’s Day  |
| 26 February  | Mouloud al-Nabi<br>(Birth of the Prophet)                 |
| 9 July       | Leilat al-Isra’s wal Meiraj<br>(Ascension of the Prophet) |
| 11 September | Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)                              |
| 17 November  | Eid al-Adha<br>(Feast of Sacrifice)                       |
| 2 December   | UAE National Day  |
| 2 December   | Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year)                               |

## 9.10. Communications

### 9.10.1. Communications

Delivery of mail to and from Europe takes about one week. Mail to and from USA and Canada usually takes a little longer. All the major courier companies have offices in Abu Dhabi. The charges to ship internationally using a courier are high. In the UAE, no mail is delivered to street addresses. Mail is delivered to a local P.O. Box for collection. Your mailing addresses will be that of Masdar Institute, where you can receive local and international mail. International mail should be addressed to students c/o Masdar Institute of Science and Technology. Family members living in the UAE may also receive their mail c/o Masdar Institute of Science and Technology.

#### Official Mailing Address:

Masdar Institute of Science and Technology  
PO Box 54224  
Abu Dhabi, UAE

If you come from the US or UK there is a regional carrier (Aramex) that provides a mailbox at its locations in the US or UK, where students can receive mail and have it shipped air freight to Abu Dhabi. The service is called **Shop and Ship** and can be found at

<http://www.aramex.com/shopandship/Default.aspx>

Students can also opt for post office boxes. Contact Empost to determine the requirements for setting up a personal post office box, at <http://www.empostuae.com/Empost>

### 9.10.2. Telephone

Telephony services are very good. Calls made between landlines in Abu Dhabi are free of charge. Direct dialing is available to most countries. Mobile phones are widely used, but landlines are also used frequently. For long-distance calls, special rates are available with different providers, and/or by using a long distance telephone card. Finding an Internet provider and connecting to the USB port is also a good cost saving option. Most companies require subscribers to purchase time and to apply it to an account once activated. Quality of reception varies, so it is best to experiment or to get opinions from colleagues. There are two telephone providers in the UAE: Etisalat and Du. To buy a SIM card (a phone number), you need to present a copy of your passport showing your entry stamp. The telecommunication network used in the UAE is GSM. A phone bought in the UAE is generally unlocked, which means it can be used with other telecommunications providers internationally as long as the phone supports their GSM frequency. For more information please check the following websites:

<http://www.etisalat.ae/> or <http://www.du.ae>

In order to set up a monthly billing mobile line, subscribers need a residency visa and the necessary documents to send to the telecommunications provider.

### 9.10.3. Television/Radio

There is a reasonable variety of programs screened in English, with recent American serials broadcast in the evening on Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar and Bahrain stations. BBC World Service TV, CNN and STAR TV are available in buildings with satellite dishes. Annual subscriptions for satellite or cable TV can be purchased for a nominal price for Showtime/Orbit and Star.

### 9.10.4. Newspapers

Gulf News and Khaleej Times, and more recently, The National, are the most popular local newspapers. International newspapers arrive the day after publication but they tend to be expensive.

### 9.11. Taxation

There is no tax on personal income in the UAE but new residents should always check their own country's policy on taxation, as some may still have to pay taxes in their country of origin.

### 9.12. Shopping

#### 9.12.1. Shopping Malls

Abu Dhabi has a number of shopping malls with a wide variety of shops and Dubai has many more, just a short drive away. Below is a list of malls in Abu Dhabi. Several others are under construction. All malls are open from 10am to 10pm, Saturday to Thursday. Some grocery stores open earlier, at 8am. In addition, many shops are open on Friday, but opening times vary, with some opening at 8am, others at 10am and others only at 4.30pm. Many shops close over lunch, re-opening at 4pm or 5pm. It is best to check on the operating times before making the journey from the residences into town to avoid disappointment or delays. There are a number of grocery stores in Abu Dhabi and many branches across the city. Abu Dhabi Cooperative Society, Lulu and Carrefour offer an international range of products and a wide range of items at moderate cost. Spinneys and Abela Super Store are more on the expensive side.

#### Shopping Mall Location

- Abu Dhabi Mall (Tourist Club area)
- Marina Mall (on the Corniche)
- Al Raha Mall (Al Raha Beach area)
- Khalidiyah Mall (Khalidiyah area)
- Al Wadha Mall (Sheikh Hazza bin Zayed St near the main taxi stand)
- Madinat Zayed 4th St. (near the main post office)
- Mina Mall (Mina Zayed area)

### 9.12.2. Small shops and fresh produce markets

Aside from shopping malls, shopping can also be done at the many small shops in the city or at the fresh produce markets. Some of the options are:

#### Shop name Produce Location

“Pink” shops: fruit and vegetables; hardware stores; dry cleaning, etc. (Khalifa City)

**Fish market:** fresh seafood (Mina Road, Port Zayed)

**Vegetable and fruit market:** fresh vegetables and fruits (Mina Road, Port Zayed)

**Meat market:** fresh and imported meat (Mina Road, Port Zayed)

**Dates market:** fresh dates (Mina Road, Port Zayed)

### 9.13. Alcohol

Alcohol is prohibited for Muslims; however the UAE is lenient towards foreigners in this regard. Alcoholic drinks are available in private clubs, hotels and restaurants in hotels. Non-Muslim expatriates can get liquor permits for the purchase and consumption of alcohol in their homes from designated outlets. However, as permit holders, they may not themselves sell, serve or give liquor to Muslims. Consumption of alcohol or being under the influence in public is an offense.

### 9.14. Culture and Art

There are a number of ways to find information about cultural events in Abu Dhabi. The most frequently used websites are:

- <http://www.middleeasthub.com/abu-dhabi/events-exhibitions/>
- <http://www.timeoutabudhabi.com>
- <http://boxofficeme.com>

In addition, the Cultural Foundation is one of the main landmarks and attractions in Abu Dhabi. It is located beside Qasr Al Hosn, on Sheikh Zayed the First Street. The Foundation has a library, theatre, cinema, lecture rooms, meeting rooms, an exhibition centre and a coffee shop. A library card can be obtained by presenting a passport copy, one passport photo, and AED 400. The Cultural Foundation hosts numerous cultural events, including events, concerts with acclaimed international and local artists, film festivals, art

exhibitions and workshops throughout the year. Many performances are free to the public.

Hours: Sat - Wed 7:00am to 10:30pm  
Thurs - Fri 8:30am to 12:30pm, 4:00pm to 8:00pm

Website: [info@cultural.org.ae](mailto:info@cultural.org.ae)

Phone: 02 621 5300

Construction on a major cultural district on Abu Dhabi's Saadiyat Island has started. On completion it will be home to a Guggenheim Museum dedicated to modern and contemporary art, and a branch of the Louvre. The island will also include museums for classical art and a major performing arts center. The Guggenheim Museum is due for completion in 2011 and the Louvre museum in 2012.

### 9.15. The Ruling Family

His Highness the Late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, Founding Father of the UAE and First President of the UAE

His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the UAE.

His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Prime Minister and Vice President of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai.

### 9.16. Useful local websites

#### United Arab Emirates

[www.emirates.org](http://www.emirates.org)

[www.uae.org.ae](http://www.uae.org.ae)

[www.uae-pages.com](http://www.uae-pages.com)

UAE Images

[www.emirates.org/gallery/](http://www.emirates.org/gallery/)

[www.ecssr.ac.ae/10uae.gallery.html](http://www.ecssr.ac.ae/10uae.gallery.html)

Emirates Center for Strategic Studies & Research  
[www.ecssr.ac.ae/](http://www.ecssr.ac.ae/)

Etisalat Yellow Pages

[www.yellowpages.net.ae](http://www.yellowpages.net.ae)

UAE Interact

[www.uaeinteract.com](http://www.uaeinteract.com)

Women in the UAE  
[www.arab.net/uae/ue\\_womenrole.htm](http://www.arab.net/uae/ue_womenrole.htm)

Arab Net  
[www.arab.net/uae/](http://www.arab.net/uae/)

UAE Hotels  
[www.emirates.net.ae/ma\\_uaesites/hotels.html](http://www.emirates.net.ae/ma_uaesites/hotels.html)

Lonely Planet Guide to UAE  
[www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/middle\\_east/united\\_arab\\_emirates/index.htm](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/middle_east/united_arab_emirates/index.htm)

## **Culture**

Abu Dhabi Cultural Foundation  
[www.cultural.org.ae](http://www.cultural.org.ae)

Dubai Museums  
[www.dubaitourism.ae/  
www/business/tour/index.html](http://www.dubaitourism.ae/www/business/tour/index.html)

Sharjah Museums  
[www.shjmuseum.gov.ae](http://www.shjmuseum.gov.ae)

## **Libraries and Bookstores**

Cultural Foundation National  
Library  
Cultural Foundation  
Zayed 1st Street, Abu Dhabi  
Tel: 02 621 5300

All Prints Bookshop  
Corner of Al Nasr & Tariq Ibn Ziyad Streets,  
Al-Markaziya West,  
Abu Dhabi  
Tel: 02 633 8572

The University Bookshop  
Al Muroor Street opposite Al Falah Plaza, Abu  
Dhabi  
Tel: 02 642 2530

## **Communications and Media**

Gulf News  
[www.gulfnews.com](http://www.gulfnews.com)

Gulf Business  
[www.gulfbusiness.com](http://www.gulfbusiness.com)

Khaleej Times  
[www.khaleejtimes.com](http://www.khaleejtimes.com)

The National  
[www.thenational.ae](http://www.thenational.ae)

## 10. DIRECTORY OF FACULTY AND STAFF

| NAME                   | TITLE   | EXT. | EMAIL                   |
|------------------------|---|------|-------------------------|
| Abdulla Bazarah        | IT Support  | 8383 | abazarah@masdar.ae      |
| Ahmed Abbas Lari       | Senior Financial Analyst                                |      |                         |
| Ali Hael Diabat        | Assistant Professor                                     | 8126 | adiabat@mist.ac.ae      |
| Ali Tabaei             | Assistant Professor                                     | 8061 | atabaei@mist.ac.ae      |
| Alwaleed Mohammed      | Business Operations Officer                             | 8152 | amohammed@mist.ac.ae    |
| Amanda Vermeulen       | Information Officer, Marketing & Corp Communications    | 8023 | avermeulen@masdar.ac.ae |
| Ana Paola Rodrigues    | Space Planning Officer                                  | 8371 | arodrigues@mist.ac.ae   |
| Asim Mirza             | Library Assistant                                       | 8329 | amirza@mist.ac.ae       |
| Ayesha Al Suwaidi      | Receptionist  |      |                         |
| Clara Dimas            | Assistant Professor                                     |      |                         |
| David Dickinson        | Health & Safety Specialist                              | 8124 | ddickenson@mist.ac.ae   |
| Davor Svetinovic       | Assistant Professor                                     |      | dsvetinovic@mist.ac.ae  |
| Duaa Al Attar          | Business Operation Officer                              | 8153 | dalattar@mist.ac.ae     |
| Fabricio Miranda       | Facilities Officer                                      | 8159 | fmiranda@mist.ac.ae     |
| Farrukh Ahmad          | Assistant Professor                                     |      | fahmed@mist.ac.ae       |
| Georgetta Vidican      | Assistant Professor                                     | 8164 | gvidican@mist.ac.ae     |
| Haideh Nikpour         | Director of Library Services                            | 8303 | hnikpour@mist.ac.ae     |
| Hamza Kazim            | Acting VP for Operations and Finance                    | 8035 | hkazim@mist.ac.ae       |
| Hatem Zein Al-din      | Assistant Professor                                     | 8185 | hzeineldin@mist.ac.ae   |
| Huden Kunz             | Executive assistant                                     | 8363 | hkunz@mist.ac.ae        |
| Ibrahim Dakkouche      | Public Relations Officer                                | 8047 | idakkouche@masdar.ae    |
| Ijlal Abdul Rahim      | E-Initiatives Manager                                   | 8335 | irahim@mist.ac.ae       |
| Iman El Ashry          | Payroll and Special Projects Officer                    |      |                         |
| Ismail Al Blooshi      | Public Relations Officer                                |      |                         |
| Isam Janajreh          | Assistant Professor                                     | 8170 | ijanajreh@mist.ac.ae    |
| I-Tsung Tsai           | Assistant Professor                                     | 8135 | itsai@mist.ac.ae        |
| Jacob William Crandall | Assistant Professor                                     |      | jcrandall@mist.ac.ae    |
| James Binding          | Recruitment Officer                                     | 8199 | jbinding@mista.ac.ae    |
| Jane Stevens           | Head of General Services                                |      |                         |
| John Perkins           | Provost   | 8388 | jperkins@mist.ac.ae     |
| Khaled Al Hosani       | Employee Relations and Housing Officer                  | 8127 | khosani@mist.ac.ae      |
| Lamia Fawwaz           | Assistant Provost for Regional Affairs                  | 8379 | lfawwaz@mist.ac.ae      |
| Laurence De Baets      | Department Coordinator, Marketing & Corp Communications | 8019 | ldebaets@masdar.ac.ae   |
| Mahieddine Emziane     | Assistant Professor                                     | 8016 | memziane@mist.ac.ae     |
| Manar Abdel Jaber      | Administrative Assistant                                | 8146 | mjaber@mist.ac.ae       |
| Martyn Potter          | Operations & Facilities Manager                         | 8148 | mpotter@mist.ac.ae      |
| Marwan Kharaisheh      | Dean of Engineering                                     | 8169 | mkhraisheh@mist.ac.ae   |
| Metteo Chiesa          | Assistant Professor                                     | 8167 | mchiesa@mist.ac.ae      |
| Mohammed Basheer       | Student Bus Driver                                      |      |                         |

| NAME  | TITLE  | EXT. | EMAIL                  |
|---|--|------|------------------------|
| Mohammed Khalil   | Procurement Officer  | 8367 | mkhalil@mist.ac.ae     |
| Moza Al Naqbi   | Student Affairs Officer  | 8027 | malnaqbi@mist.ac.ae    |
| Mudather Ogab   | Storekeeper  |      |                        |
| Mussa Abdel Gabar   | Student Bus Driver   |      |                        |
| Najem Al Tenaiji  | Employee Relations Officer   |      |                        |
| Nader Alrawahi  | Senior Software Engineer   | 8382 | nalrawahi@mist.ac.ae   |
| Nadia Abdulla   | Recruitment Coordinator  |      |                        |
| Nahed Al Marzouqi   | Administrative Assistant   | 8122 | nalmarzouqi@mist.ac.ae |
| Navid Atoofi  | Director of IT Services & Technology                                     | 8195 | natoofi@mist.ac.ae     |
| Noora Al Hosani   | Web Designer   | 8338 | nalhosani@mist.ac.ae   |
| Orlando Lobo  | Financial Controller   | 8385 | olobo@mist.ac.ae       |
| Patricia Jandali  | Program Assistant  |      |                        |
| Peter Armstrong   | Associate Professor  | 8160 | parmstrong@mist.ac.ae  |
| Qutaiba Al Hammadi  | Network Engineer   | 8381 | qalhammadi@mist.ac.ae  |
| Raed Irsan Hashaikeh  | Assistant Professor  |      | rhashaikeh@mist.ac.ae  |
| Reem Ghannoum   | Sr. Personal Assistant   | 8025 | rghannoum@mist.ac.ae   |
| Reem Al Orfali  | Student Affairs Supervisor   | 8133 | rorfali@mist.ac.ae     |
| Rishi Tiwari  | Accountant   | 8372 | rtiwari@mist.ac.ae     |
| Sara El Hage  | Faculty Assistant  |      |                        |
| Sara Mneimne  | Student Affairs Officer  |      |                        |
| Saleem Rayyan   | Procurement Manager  | 8373 | sreyan@mist.ac.ae      |
| Sami El Sadek   | HR Director  | 8387 | selsadek@mist.ac.ae    |
| Scott Kennedy   | Associate Professor  | 8030 | skennedy@mist.ac.ae    |
| Sean Williams   | System Administrator   | 8374 | swilliams@mist.ac.ae   |
| Sgouris Sgouridis   | Assistant Professor  | 8165 | ssgouridis@mist.ac.ae  |
| Shanavas Moideen  | Student Residence Clerk  |      | smoiden@mist.ac.ae     |
| Sondra de Kock  | Project Manager Officer  | 8375 | sdekock@mist.ac.ae     |
| Stephen Lee   | Assistant Provost  | 8018 | slee@mist.ac.ae        |
| Susan Mustafa   | Software Engineer  | 8377 | smostafa@mist.ac.ae    |
| Subair Thayyullathil  | Student Bus Driver   |      |                        |
| Tariq Ali   | VP - Research and Industry Relations                                     | 8366 | tali@mist.ac.ae        |
| Toufic Mezher   | Associate Dean of Student Affairs and the Head of Student Affairs Office | 8173 | tmezher@mist.ac.ae     |
| Vadakkayil Siddeek Mohd   | Student Bus Driver   |      |                        |
| Wafa Ahlat  | Executive Assistant  | 8362 | wahlat@mist.ac.ae      |
| Waheed Khan   | Student Bus Driver   |      |                        |
| Waheed Khatar   | Student Residence Clerk  |      | wkhatar@mist.ac.ae     |
| Wei Lee Woon  | Assistant Professor  | 8147 | wwoon@mist.ac.ae       |
| Youssef Shatilla  | Associate Dean for Academic Affairs                                      | 8172 | yshatilla@mist.ac.ae   |
| Yousuf Al Khaja   | Senior Accountant  | 8386 | yalkhaja@mist.ac.ae    |
| Zainab Al Hashimi   | Help Desk Assistant  | 8137 | zhashimi@mist.ac.ae    |
| Zarmineh Rab  | Marketing & Communications Manager                                       | 8390 | zrab@masdar.ae         |
| Kitchen: 02 698 8140  |  |      |                        |
| Reception: 02 698 8122  |  |      |                        |
| Main Conference Room: 02 698 8125                                       |  |      |                        |
| Conference Room in Provost office: 02 698 8045                          |  |      |                        |
| Research Assistants : 1st floor 02 698 8142 – Ground Floor: 02 698 8139 |  |      |                        |
| Petroleum Institute Clinic: 02 602 2022                                 |  |      |                        |

Note: Dial the last 4 digits for internal calls on the campus. Dial 9 to get an outside line.

## 11. IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

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The UAE's country code is: 971. All local telephone numbers are 7 digits long. Specific numbers must preface calls within and outside of cities in the UAE.

| SERVICE                      | PHONE NUMBER  |
|------------------------------|---|
| Police department            | 999   |
| Fire department              | 997   |
| Ambulance                    | 998 or 999  |
| Etisalat (telephone company) | 181 (directory inquiry)<br>171 (fault reporting)<br>101 (general information) |



