

*Foundation  
Program...*

*...in Brief*



## *Welcome from the Director*

Dear future colleagues,

I would like to wish you a warm and hearty welcome to the Foundation Program at Dhofar University and to Salalah and Oman generally. You will find that our faculty and staff—as well as the Omanis—are extremely friendly, helpful, and positive people, who will do everything they can to ease your transition to your new home.

The information in this publication is mainly about adjusting to everyday life in Salalah but also contains certain information regarding your duties and some of our policies at the Foundation Program.

The Foundation Program includes more than 65 teachers from many linguistic and cultural backgrounds, some of whom wrote this document specifically to help newcomers learn about living in Salalah and teaching in the Foundation Program.

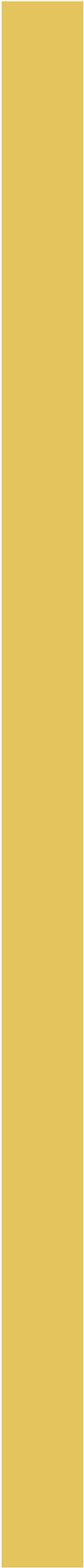
The names and contact information for selected personnel are listed so that you can call or email them about any concerns you might have before coming, after your arrival and throughout your tenure at Dhofar University. You are most welcome to get in touch with any of them to ask any questions you may have.

May you have a long, productive, and happy time here.

Best Wishes,

Faical Ben Khalifa

Director, DU-FP



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## About this Guide

This guide contains useful information, which we hope will answer some of your questions as you settle into Salalah and the Foundation Program (FP) at Dhofar University (DU).

We will be updating this guide frequently, so if you make a discovery, want to give a warning, or share a piece of information, let us know so that we can add it to the guide. Please note that any information about prices and phone numbers etc., is subject to change at any time.

## Getting Here

We know you are anxious to get here and meet the team, but please do not purchase your ticket until **after** you have received an email from Human Resources (HR) containing a copy of your work visa. It will look like this:

SULTANATE OF OMAN DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF PASSPORTS & RESIDENCE ENTRY VISA		سلطنة عُمان الإدارة العامة للجوازات والإقامة الأنشطة الدخول	
Name		الاسم	
Issue Date	التاريخ	Visa Number	2 YEARS
Number of Entries	MULTIPLE	Employment Type	EMPLOYMENT SINGLE
Nationality		Passport Number	
Number of Dependents	0	Issue Date of Passport	
Visa to be endorsed at		Muscat Muscat International Airport Arrivals	
Sponsor's Name & Address جامعة ظفار ش. م. ع. ع. ص. ب. ٩٠٥٢ صلالة، سلطنة عمان		<p><b>NOTE:</b> Entry will not be allowed with different passport details other than those mentioned on the visa.</p> <p>لا يمكن دخول السلطنة ببطاقة جواز سفر مختلفة عن البطاقة المذكورة في تصريح الجواز.</p>	
		<p>FOR OFFICIAL USE EXPIRY DATE FEE = O. R. O.</p>	

Please note that, though your visa may indicate Muscat as the point of entry, you can fly directly into Salalah International Airport rather than Muscat. Once you have received your visa from HR, you can go ahead and book your flight into Salalah. Please remember to forward your flight details to HR **before** you leave your country so we know when to meet you at the airport. Also, be sure to print out a copy of your visa to simplify the immigration process. There is no need for you to fill in a disembarkation card on the plane. Instead, simply proceed to the immigration office where the immigration officers will process your visa.

Once you receive the visa, proceed to the normal arrivals desk for your passport to be stamped and then go and collect your luggage. You will be met at the barrier by a hotel representative or a DU driver who will take you to the Haffa House hotel, which is a very short distance from the airport. You will be staying there for the first three days while recovering from your trip and sorting out your own accommodation and transportation.

In addition to a room paid for by the university, you will be entitled to breakfast and an evening meal free-of-charge during your stay at Haffa House. The rooms are very comfortable and have air conditioning, WiFi, and international T.V. channels. Room service is available, and there is an in-house laundry service (both at your expense). There is a pharmacy available on the ground floor and also a gym and swimming pool in the hotel grounds. You will have one full day and night to recover from your trip before you are expected on campus.

Within a few days of your arrive, you will be taken to a medical center for the required physical examination. The HR staff will then assist you in obtaining your residence card. This process may take up to two weeks.

### *Housing and Accommodation*

You will have three days at Haffa House, after which you will need to move into your own house or apartment. You will be given assistance in finding suitable accommodation. You can also contact Mr. Abdulrahman Aqeel Baomar at [abdulrahman\\_baomar@du.edu.om](mailto:abdulrahman_baomar@du.edu.om) for more information. When looking for housing, bear in mind that Salalah is a holiday destination for tourists from all over the Middle East during the Khareef (monsoon) season, which includes all of July and August. Therefore, many landlords offer two rate schemes for their properties; you can rent for a lower rate if you agree to vacate the premises for July and August, or you can pay a higher rate for a twelve-month lease. You will have to decide for yourself whether you'd prefer to save money by moving out for two months during Khareef (during which time the landlord will rent your place to holiday makers), or pay a bit extra for the convenience and security of having a year-round residence. See the list of apartments on the next page.

## Some Examples of Local Apartments

Building name	Cost per month for a furnished, 2 bed, 2 bath apartment		Contact number
	10 Months Rent	12 Months Rent	
Al Safwa	NA	300 OMR	99281077 99675342
Al Salam	140 OMR	260 OMR	99071446
Ganaen Salalah	180 OMR	280 OMR	92888943
Al Ferdaws	180 OMR	280 OMR	92888943
Rotag	150 OMR	260 OMR	95642021
Al Salam Tower	140 OMR	260 OMR	92553546
Dar Al hayat	NA	300 OMR	93251299
Ganen Salalh	160 OMR	250 OMR	92888943
Rotaj	180 OMR	280 OMR	23227283
Dar Al Ganaem	200 OMR	300 OMR	94449004
Al Faras Al Dhahaby	170 OMR	NA	99490145

### *Foundation Program Contacts*

Director: Faisal, 2323-7140, [faical\\_khalifa@du.edu.om](mailto:faical_khalifa@du.edu.om)

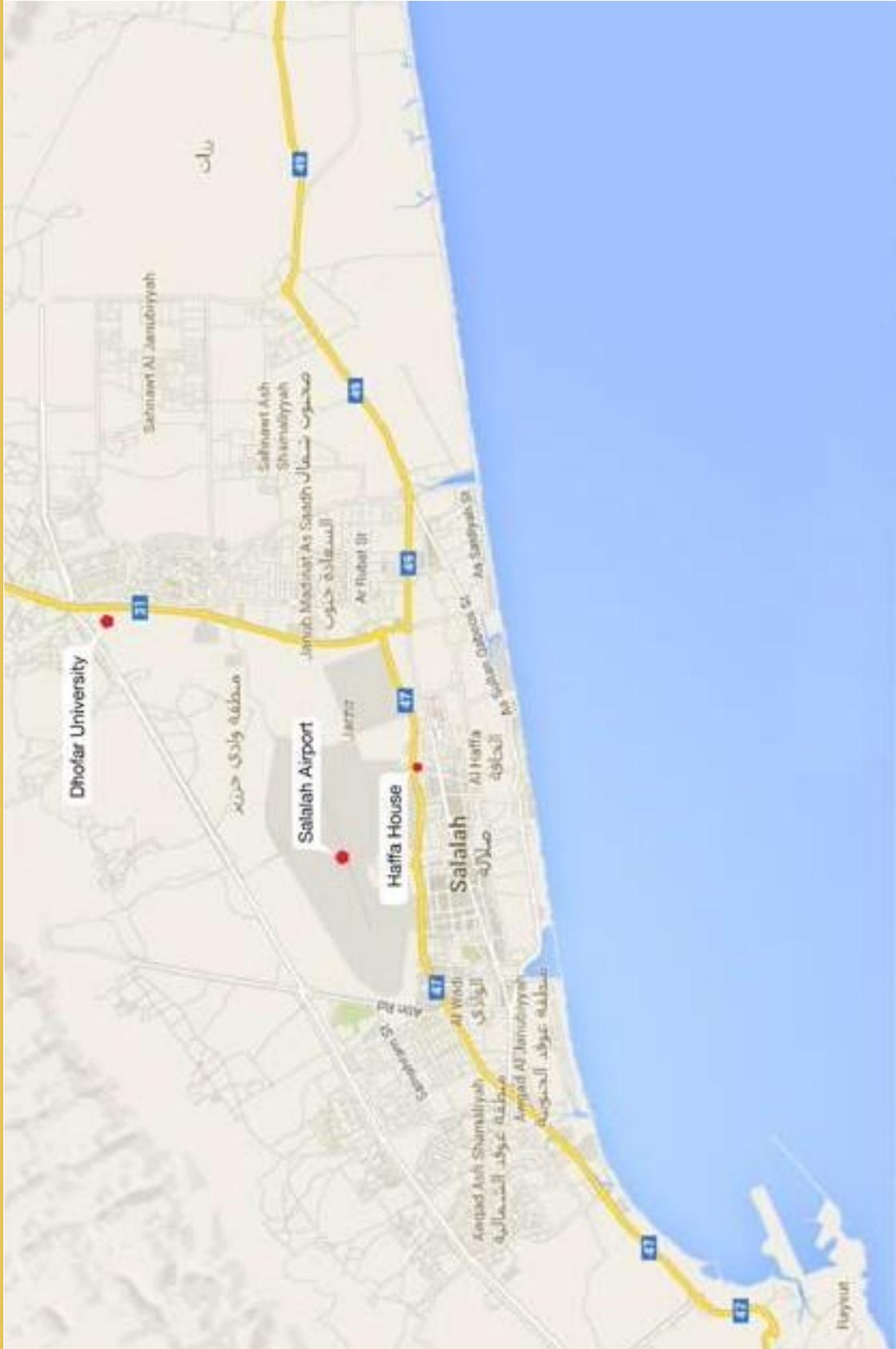
Deputy Director: Megan, 2323-7141, [mputney@du.edu.om](mailto:mputney@du.edu.om)

Secretaries: Fatima, 2323-7144, [fbarham@du.edu.om](mailto:fbarham@du.edu.om)

Nasser, 2323-7142, [nalshahri@du.edu.om](mailto:nalshahri@du.edu.om)

Ali, 2323-7143, [aalbaraami@du.edu.om](mailto:aalbaraami@du.edu.om)

## Map of Salalah



## *Banking*

Opening a bank account in Oman requires a copy of your passport, a resident card, and a letter from HR. There are several banks available to new employees in the Al-Saada area, and there is a Bank Dhofar branch located in the Student Affairs building on campus. Dhofar University deals with Bank Muscat. Employees' salaries are deposited directly into Bank Muscat on or around the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month. From there, they can be transferred to other banks, which may delay reception by two or three days. Note that you will be paid from the day of your arrival.

<b>Bank</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Phone</b>
<b>Bank Muscat</b> DU Direct Deposit	Al-Saada	23225853
<b>HSBC</b> Offers free overseas transfer	Al-Saada	23225685
<b>Oman Arab Bank</b>	Al-Saada	23225974 / 23225976
<b>Bank Dhofar</b>	Al-Saada and DU	23227177 / 23225463

Follow this link for other available banks and their locations:

<http://www.mapquest.com/maps?cat=Banks&city=Salalah&country=OM>

## *Shopping and Restaurants*

Restaurants and shopping facilities are very good in Salalah. There is a huge new supermarket /department store in Salalah, called the Lulu Hypermarket, which has a very wide range of goods. It is out on the main highway, heading

west out towards the port. There are also several other large grocery stores such as the Lulu Center (near the airport), KM, Al Isteqrar Supermarket and Al Mashoor Supermarket (both with branches close to DU) and other smaller stores. There are also a couple of modern shopping centers for clothes and accessories such as Centerpoint (near Hamilton Plaza Hotel) and Max (near the Lulu Center). There are plenty of local shopping areas for purchasing fresh fruit and vegetables and other basic needs—almost at every corner.

Local restaurants are readily available. For more specialized North American/European foods, the Oasis is a good choice. There are also several Turkish, Indian, Chinese and Italian restaurants in Salalah.

### *Transportation*

#### **Taxis:**

Local taxis cost 200-500bz (OMR .2-.5) in the Salalah area, and around OMR 3 for a round trip from Haffa House to the university. Prices will vary with the driver and distance, so settle on the price first! Check with your colleagues for the names and numbers of reliable taxi drivers in the area.

#### **Car Rental:**

There are several car rental places in Salalah. They usually charge between OMR 10-15 per day. Long term rentals are much cheaper and cost approximately OMR 160 per month for a compact. Hitching a ride is frowned upon.

## **Omani Driver's License:**

To obtain an Omani driver's license, you will need the following items for the DU Government Formalities Office:

- Resident card (labour card)
- Passport
- Valid domestic driving license
- Blood group certificate
- Two recent photos on a blue background
- Telephone number
- 200 Baisa (Have the exact amount.)

Present the above items to Government Formalities (Mr Thabit Awadh or Said Khalid) on the 1st floor, Room 109-A in the Administration Building. They will process your application file for the police department.

For the police department you will need:

- The completed application file from DU
- Original domestic license
- Resident card
- Passport
- Visa debit/credit card (license fee OMR 20)

The police department is located off the Sa'ada traffic roundabout on Thumarat St. about 2.3 km south of DU.

The car park is located on the left outside the main entrance. Walk through the main gate. Directly opposite you is the main building (two flags overhead). Walk around to the

entrance on the right. This is the traffic section. When you enter the main hall, go to your right and present your file at window 7. You may be directed to one of the offices for an eye test. Bring your eyeglasses if you need them. Your form will be stamped after the eye test, and you will be told to go back to window 7. Have your visa debit/credit card and your resident card ready. When your paperwork is finished and your fee (OMR 20) has been paid, you will receive your Omani license from window 5 or 6. Your Omani license is valid for 10 years.

### **Car Purchase:**

If you decide to buy a second-hand car—**BEWARE!!** Do not buy from local used car dealers, no matter how good a discount they offer. In this area, things like regular servicing, etc. may not be a priority for many local drivers. Ask your colleagues if they know of an ex-pat selling a car, as normally they will have had their cars serviced regularly. There are also some major new car dealerships in Salalah.

Once you have your Resident Card and Omani driving license, you can go to any car dealership and choose a car and arrange a credit deal. Most of the main dealers are represented in Salalah. Each will quite willingly offer discounts for cash payment. If you do enter into a credit arrangement, then you will be asked to pay at least 10% deposit on signing the deal. It is possible that they will still be running a Ramadan deal a couple of months after the event.

All the major banks have a car loan plan. Also, car companies will offer you credit. Both sources will offer a set credit rate, usually between 4.5% - 5.5% annually. If you use

the bank to buy your car, they will debit the amount monthly from your account; however, if you opt to buy from a car dealer, the credit system differs from that in the West. Instead of arranging a monthly bank or credit card debit, you will be asked to provide signed cheques amounting to the period of credit; this could range from 1-4 years, depending on the size of your deposit.

Once purchase has been agreed upon, the dealer will arrange insurance. This is always on a comprehensive basis with new cars. The dealer will then go to the ROP (Royal Omani Police) and acquire a temporary number plate, which has green letters and numerals and is valid for one month. With the keys to the car in your hand, you can drive away knowing that the car dealers will arrange for your “Molkiya” to be issued. The “Molkiya” is a white card about the same size as your resident card that contains the details of your vehicle, date of acquisition and renewal, plus details of your insurance cover and company. Once the “Molkiya” is issued, the dealer will call you to collect it and will also put permanent plates on the car. After this, it is your responsibility to renew the card annually

To get insurance and registration, first you have to find an insurance company. Usually, it is easier to go with the one that your dealer used or you can shop around for a cheaper one. At the insurance office, you hand over the expiring “Molkiya” and the clerk will complete a brown form, attach the “Molkiya” and hand it back to you after payment. Most insurance companies only accept cash. Insure your car at an insurance company. Some dealerships will arrange it for you. Bank Muscat also offers auto insurance options. In most cases, you

will find the annual rates very reasonable, around OMR 100-125 for basic coverage. If you anticipate driving in the United Arab Emirates, make sure to pay the extra OMR 50 or so for the insurance to cover that.

Take the receipt from the insurance company to the Royal Oman Police station where you also get your license and register your car. This process has become streamlined in recent years and costs OMR 28. You must pay with a Visa credit card; cash is not accepted. Dealers used to be able to do this for you, but now you have to get to the ROP headquarters.

If you do not have a driving license or cannot locate yours, there are driving instructors available. Ask around for recommendations.

If you are involved in a traffic accident, you must contact the police immediately on 999. Leave the vehicle where it is until the police arrive to ensure that an accurate report is given, or they may fine you for moving it.

Your choice of car will limit you to the kind of activities that you can do. For instance, if you intend exploring the mountains and desert areas you will need a 4x4 without doubt. If, however, you want a vehicle to get you to work, do the shopping or just drive around generally, then a normal two wheel drive is sufficient.

The speed limit on all roads outside built-up areas is 120 kph. In built up areas, the limit is between 40 and 100, but you will find other temporary speed limits for road works, etc.

Internal town roads are usually free of cameras, but areas of Muscat, Salalah, etc., have speed cameras. If you are unfortunate enough to have driven over the limit and be caught by a camera, what happens next? In most other countries, once you have been caught speeding, you receive a fixed penalty fine through the post which you pay either by cash or on-line. In Oman the system is very different. If you are caught speeding by a camera (and remember they do not always flash), you will not know until you either try to renew your “Molkiya” and have to pay any accumulated fines or check on the ROP website, <http://www.rop.gov.om/english>. There is a menu there that deals with fines. Input your vehicle number and either driver’s license or residence permit details and you will be shown what, if any, fines are outstanding. Each fine for speed exceeding 15kph over the limit will cost OMR 10. This can be paid on-line via a credit card.

Whatever you do, when you are driving, be vigilant and drive assertively and defensively! For example, when approaching a junction look in both mirrors as drivers will try to “undertake” you and turn off in the same direction as you. Another general rule for animals grazing on the roadside is that as long as they have their heads down they are eating and are not likely to dash across the road in front of you, but be cautious anyway.

### *Mobile Phones*

There are two mobile phone service providers in Oman; Omantel and Nawras. For each, you must buy a SIM card, which costs about OMR 3 and may come with some credit.

You will need to provide your passport when you purchase a SIM card. Omantel's service is called Hayyak. You can buy pre-paid cards from service stations or shops around town.

### *Newspapers and Media*

There are now four daily (or near-daily) English-language newspapers in Oman. The Observer is fine for international news. The Times of Oman is more oriented toward the Indian ex-pat population and features the Thursday magazine, full of health and beauty tips. The Tribune was the first to feature more objective local and regional news. The Muscat Daily is not published on Thursdays or Fridays but is perhaps the most objective in coverage of ex-pat as well as Omani concerns.

The weekly tabloids are: The Week, published on Wednesdays by The Muscat Daily, with focus on serious local issues and international entertainment with photo pages of local gatherings, but it is not always reliable as an in-depth advance guide to local entertainment. H! Magazine is published on Fridays and features more of the same in a less slick format but with lots of in-depth international features, courtesy of Newsday/Newsweek.

Monthly magazines including Y, Oman 2Day, Black and White, and Time Out Muscat, are generally good at providing an overall picture of the local entertainment scene.

## *Healthcare*

DU provides health insurance for you. You are advised to attend local private hospitals. Ms. Naifa Shanfari ([n2alshanfri@du.edu.om](mailto:n2alshanfri@du.edu.om)) from the Administrative Services Department will contact you in due course.

## *Useful Links*

Google Map of Salalah:

<https://www.google.com/maps/search/Dhofar+University,+Salalah,+Oman/@17.089868,54.1440191,1053m/data=!3m1!1e3>

About Oman & Salalah:

[http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g298419-Salalah\\_Dhofar\\_Governorate-Vacations.html](http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Tourism-g298419-Salalah_Dhofar_Governorate-Vacations.html)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVcPs5ED\\_Aw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DVcPs5ED_Aw)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JaDowJXQrhA>

A Documentary about Dhofar University:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbZT6JBSg9Q>

## *About the Program*

The Foundation Program was started in 2009 as a pre-college preparatory program for the study of all university majors, with the main goal of improving English language proficiency, reinforcing knowledge of basic mathematics, and consolidating the knowledge of important information technology (IT) applications.

When the students enter DU, they take a placement test (PT) that confirms their level of English, Mathematics and IT. Students who reach the required level in English (equivalent of IELTS band 4.5) are exempted from FP English Program and can start their major courses.

Depending on the results of their English PT, students are placed in one of the following courses: FPE101 (beginner), FPE102 (lower intermediate), or FPE103 (intermediate). Each of these courses lasts one term, takes thirteen to fifteen weeks, and consists of ten classes per week. Each class is one-hundred minutes.

The focus of all the English courses is on academic English. In each of the courses, all the language skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) are studied. Lessons are planned to demonstrate principles and practices of communicative language teaching and task-based instruction. Teachers make use of projectors for PowerPoint presentations, images, films, and on-line media to enrich their classes.

Students can start their Mathematics and IT classes after they pass the FPE101 course. Again, students are placed according to their results in one of the following courses in Mathematics: FPM101 or FPM102. The FPM102 course has two separate streams: (i) Applied Mathematics and (ii) Pure Mathematics. Students are also placed in one of the following courses in IT: FPT101 or FPT102.

The main aim of the Mathematics and IT courses is to ensure that the students are equipped with the required mathematical and IT understanding and skills needed in a variety

of disciplines in the university.

The program courses are designed according to the Oman Academic Standards published by the Omani Authority for Academic Accreditation.

The academic year in FP starts on September 1st and ends in late June and consists of three terms (each of the levels in English lasts a term).

### **Assessment**

Students take a mid-term and a final exam and are also continuously assessed during the courses. All exams are double marked. Students pass the course if they get 50% out of the total marks.

### **Learning Recourses**

A Library.

An English language club

A learning Support Center (LSC)

### *About the Staff and Faculty*

Administration staff includes an acting director, level (1-3) coordinators, and a PT coordinator. A registration coordinator and three secretaries ensure that the FP runs smoothly.

More than seventy instructors teach courses in FP. The

institution provides support for faculty development and orientation through assigned coordinators for all the levels. The unit regularly evaluates the performance of its instructors to ensure the best teaching and learning outcomes.

New employees are under probation for the first three months to allow FP management to verify their teaching and interpersonal skills before they are considered permanently hired.

### *Your Office*

A fully equipped office is assigned to each instructor. Your office will have a computer with Internet access and all the necessary programs installed. Each instructor gets an email account @du.edu.om. Instructors are also provided with all the basic stationery they need for their teaching and administrative duties.

### *Around Campus*

A small kitchen near the offices serves coffee and tea free of charge. There is a cafeteria in the building where instructors and students can buy soft drinks, water, tea, coffee, sandwiches, and snacks. Other cafeterias are available with similar services around the campus.

An ATM and several booths that sell stationery, mobile accessories, and snacks can be found in the Student Affairs Building about 100m away from the Common Classroom (COMC) building.

## *Dress Code*

Clothing must be decent and professional, and any tattoos must be covered. Please adhere to the following rules and regulations regarding dress and appearance to avoid complaints and criticism from students.

### **For Men**

Non-Omani men do not have to wear a suit or a jacket but must wear a dress shirt and a tie. The shirt must be tucked into the trousers or pants and a belt must be worn. Short-sleeved shirts can be worn, but all shirts must be dress shirts, not T-shirts or polo shirts. Clothing must be loose-fitting, not tight. Non-Omani men must not wear sandals. No denim is allowed, i.e. no jeans of any color, nor denim shirts or jackets. No sportswear, e.g. track-suits or training shoes, no beachwear, e.g. shorts, Bermudas, espadrilles, thongs, flip-flops or Crocs are allowed. Wedding rings and watches are fine, but other jewelry, such as earrings, bracelets, chains and necklaces, is not allowed. Hair must be short, with no pony-tails, etc. allowed.

### **For Women**

Dress must be decent, i.e. not tight, not transparent and not revealing in any way. The female form must not be accentuated. Sleeves must not be too short, the back and the midriff must not be displayed. No denim is allowed: no jeans of any color, no denim skirts, blouses or dresses. Short skirts/dresses are not allowed: they should be at least mid-



calf though ankle-length or even longer is preferable. Women can wear trousers or pants, but they must wear a long top, shirt, blouse, or tunic. No low-necked blouses or dresses are allowed. Short-sleeved blouses or dresses are allowed, but sleeveless ones are not. No sportswear of any kind, i.e. training shoes, gym shoes, track-suits, beach-wear, e.g. shorts, Bermudas, espadrilles, flip-flops or Crocs are allowed. Leggings and pyjamas are strictly forbidden.

# Campus Map



## *About the Dhofar Region*

Dhofar occupies the southern part of the Sultanate of Oman. Bordered by Al Wusta region in the east, the Arabian Sea to the south, the Republic of Yemen in the south west and Saudi Arabia across the “Empty Quarter,” or Al Rub’ a Al Khali, in the north west. It covers an area of 100,000 sq. km out of the 212,380 sq km, which is almost one third of Oman. Salalah is also the administrative capital, with modern facilities.

Dhofar is climatically different from the rest of Oman due to the effects of the monsoon rains, which occur between June and September. Temperature is moderate, rarely exceeding 30 degrees Celsius. Dhofar falls into three areas: the coastal plain, the mountains and the desert.

Freshwater wells and natural springs originating in the mountains supply an abundance of water to the coastal plain enabling agriculture to thrive. Bananas, coconuts, sugar cane, papaya, cereal and animal fodder crops are cultivated. Three mountain ranges run the length of Dhofar. With the impact of the monsoon, the whole area turns into a verdant paradise.

The climate in Dhofar is perfect for the growth of the frankincense tree. History reflects that frankincense was an extremely precious commodity in ancient times. Transported by vast caravans across the Arabian peninsula to Iraq and Egypt, it was then taken to Europe. The Queen of Sheba traveled to the area to harvest and collect frankincense.

The Arabian Sea provides an abundance of seafood which is quite affordable. The vast coastline has many lagoons attracting wildlife, in particular migrant birds. The pristine beaches offer plenty of scope for water sports. The mountains expose dramatic scenery and the whole region is rich in archaeological sites.

## **Some “Must-See” Places**

### **Mughsayl Beach**

This spectacular beach is 40 kilometers west of Salalah. It is known for its blow holes, especially during the monsoon, as well as the stunning sea views and jagged cliffs and mountains. The Mughsayl Beach Tourist Restaurant, located by the beach, offers visitors an international menu and water sports.

### **Frankincense Trail**

Al Balid is an excavation site near downtown Salalah which is part of the Frankincense Trail. It is protected by UNESCO and marked as one of the World Heritage Sites. Khor Rouri, 37 kilometers from Salalah is known as the site of an ancient port connected with the trade in frankincense.

### **The Mountains**

The mountains of Jebel Dhofar, which rise to 1,000m, encircle the Salalah plain and stretch westwards into Yemen. Sailors have made landfall on this coast for thousands of years en route from Africa, the Red Sea, India and beyond. There are many roads leading up into the mountains, and visitors

enjoy exploring the peaks and valleys, caves and villages, while encountering endless numbers of cows, goats and camels grazing on either sides of the road. Many DU faculty members enjoy going for long hikes and climbs in the mountains, and it's a good way to become acquainted with the people who live there.

### **Samharam**

The ruins of a port, Samharam, known to have been in its heyday over 2,000 years ago lie on a promontory between two khawrs, or sea creeks, some 30 km east of Salalah. Locally and popularly known as the Queen of Sheba's Palace, Samharam was important for the trade in frankincense. The well-fortified ancient city of Samharam is thought to date back to 3,000 BC. It was the principal port from which frankincense was shipped in ancient times, the first leg of its journey being a 650-Km voyage to Qana in present-day Yemen. The ruins, built to withstand attack by sea or land, still bear witness to the preciousness of frankincense and its economic importance. Exported frankincense from Samharam found its way to ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. A drawing of a Pharaonic ship docked at Samharam is still displayed in one of the temples in the Valley of the Kings in Luxor. The Queen of Sheba also dispatched a boatload of frankincense from this port as a gift to the Prophet Solomon.

### **Port of Salalah**

Located south of Salalah, just 150 km from major East-West shipping lanes, Salalah Port has been established as a leading container transshipment center on the Indian Ocean

Rim since it opened in November 1998. Since its opening, it has witnessed steady growth in shipping traffic and has the potential to generate rapid industrial development in southern Oman. The government's plans to establish a free-trade zone at Salalah adjacent to the port have the potential to make Salalah a major air-sea cargo hub. This free trade zone is expected to attract storage and warehousing facilities as well as value-added light industries.

### **Water Springs**

As a result of the non-stop rain during the monsoon, or 'Khareef' season, many springs gush forth. There are numerous springs in the Salalah area, such as Jarziz, Sahalnoot, Razat, Athoom, and Humran. Most of them have pleasant gardens and shady trees around them, which make them an ideal place for a picnic.

### **Al Balid**

The civilization of Manjawi dwelt in the district of Balid between the 12th and 16th centuries. At this time, the area was renowned for its thriving import and export activities, the main exports being Arabian horses and frankincense. The area has three archaeological sites with traces of ancient walls, tombs and mosques.

It is thought that Ahmed bin Mohammed al Haboudhi rebuilt the city and renamed it Al-Mansourah (The Victorious) and this status was reaffirmed in the writings of explorers Marco Polo and Ibn Batuta. There is a new museum which opened in mid 2007 as well as a souvenir shop. One can also

take a tour around the site on a motorized vehicle. It is worth a visit for anyone who is interested in the history of the region.

### **Hafa Souq**

The old souq, or market place, down near the Sultan's Husn Palace on the ocean is always a 'must' for people visiting Salalah. Many small shops line the narrow streets, and it is pleasant to stroll through the area, particularly in the evening, smelling the frankincense wafting through the air and browsing through the shops, which sell everything from local crafts to perfume, incense, turbans, embroidered caps, brightly colored cloth and dishdashas, (the long robes worn by Omani men) as well as gold, silver, daggers and old guns. There are several shops which specifically cater to tourists, where one can buy fairly good quality souvenirs.

### **Dhariz Beach**

Dhariz Beach is particularly worth visiting in the late afternoon, at sunset, or during the evening. There are many local restaurants that have set up tables right on the sidewalk, and one can order sweet tea or fresh fruit juice, and sit and watch the local populace stroll by. If one wants to encounter the true personality of Salalah, Dhariz Beach is the place to experience the laid back air of relaxation, punctuated by the roar of the crashing waves during the monsoon, or by the shouts of the children or young men playing football on the sand, as the locals sit out on their front steps, chatting, playing chess, or even mending fishing nets. This is Salalah at its best!