



UK Science & Innovation Network Country Snapshot:

Qatar

Science and Innovation Landscape in Qatar

(Global Innovation Index rankings from GII 2021¹; University rankings QS2022²)

Qatar is a small country with population of 2.5M³ (Jul 2021) and nominal GDP of USD 146.1B⁴ (Apr 2021), one of the highest GDP per capita in the world. Qatar has a relatively young research ecosystem, however, over the last 15 years it has seen significant growth with new universities, freezones and the introduction of a national research fund. Under Qatar National Vision 2030, Qatar aims to raise research and development to 2.8%⁵ of GDP although there are no recent figures published on annual R&D spend.

Qatar position in Global
Innovation Index:

68

UK position in Global
Innovation Index:

4

Qatar National Research Fund ([QNRF](#)) was established in 2006; the first research fund of its kind in the Middle East. Their flagship funding call is the National Priorities Research Programme (NPRP) which supports **international research** engagement; standard call (max US \$630k/4yr with 20% of funds permitted to be spent outside Qatar) and interdisciplinary cluster (max US \$5M/5yr with 20% of funds permitted to be spent outside Qatar). Between Jan 2006 – July 2021, there has been a total of US \$28.9M QNRF in collaborative awards, supporting 192 projects to 97 UK institutions resulting in 495 outcomes.

In Nov 2018, the Qatar Research Development and Innovation Council ([QRDI Council](#)) was established to provide a holistic transformation of the RDI ecosystem. The Council brings together prominent figures across government, industry and academia. A new national RDI strategy [QRDI 2030](#) was launched in Q1 2020 and highlights five thematic areas of national importance; energy, health, resource sustainability, society and digital technology. QNRF report into the QRDI council.

Leading **research universities** include: Qatar University ([QU](#)) QS#224² founded in 1977 with more than 20,000 students, and Hamad Bin Khalifa University ([HBKU](#)) founded in 2010 with more than 800 students. There is also the Qatar Biomedical Research Institute - HBKU ([QBRI](#)), Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute - HBKU ([QEERI](#)), and Qatar Computing Research Institute ([QCRI](#)). In addition, Qatar Foundation has established international branch campuses in Education City including those from [Weill Cornell Medicine-Qatar](#), [Texas A&M University at Qatar](#) for engineering, [Carnegie](#)



Sources: Picture 1, Picture 2 [\[link\]](#), Picture 3 [\[link\]](#), Picture 4 [\[link\]](#)

[Mellon University in Qatar](#) for computer science, [Georgetown University in Qatar](#) for international affairs, and others.

For **sustainability & environment research**, aside from QU and QEERI there is also the Gulf Organisation for Research & Development ([GORD](#)), Qatar Green Building Council ([QGBC](#)), and relevant projects delivered within the Qatar Shell Research & Technology Centre ([QSRTC](#)), Exxon Mobil Research Qatar ([EMRQ](#)) & the Ministry of Municipality & Environment ([MME](#)).

Leading **health research** is also being performed within the national hospitals [Hamad Medical Corporation](#), primary health care centres [PHCC](#) and Qatar Foundation (QF) women and childrens hospital [Sidra Medicine](#). Additionally QF has a strong focus on the development of precision medicine research with [Qatar Biobank](#) having screened more than 27,000 participants⁶ and aims to sequence 100,000 Qatari Genomes by 2025.⁷ [Qatar Genome Programme](#) was set up under the biobank for research of genomics and precision medicine.

Qatar has shown leadership in developing **platforms for global innovation**. Examples include the World Innovation Summit for Health ([WISH](#)) and World Innovation Summit for Education ([WISE](#)). Innovation and accelerator programs are also delivered by Qatar Science & Technology Park ([QSTP](#)) and [Qatar SportsTech](#) (1 UK sports-tech startup participated in 2020 accelerator programme)⁸.

UK-Qatar Collaboration in Science and Innovation

Qatar students studying in UK:

2,965

British nationals living in Qatar:

20,000

British companies in Qatar:

600+

There are strong ties between Qatar and the UK. Currently around 20,000 British nationals live in Qatar⁹ and over 600 British companies are operating in Qatar¹⁰. Also around 2,965 Qatari students are studying in British universities¹¹. From these numbers you can see there is a naturally strong link in education, while it is very common to find British nationals working in schools, universities and hospitals in the country. There is also a growing number of Qatari - UK alumni, thus many new collaborations in science and innovation form intuitively as there is often an existing foundation.

In recent years the UK SIN network has delivered and supported a variety of events in collaboration with local partners to promote bilateral collaboration in Science and Innovation. Events include **health research forum** in April 2019, **financial services events** in April 2019 and Feb 2020 discussing **fintech & cyber security**, promoting **UK tech at QITCOM smart cities** exhibition in Oct 2019, **food/energy/water nexus** at QEERI conference in Dec 2019, **AI & big data** visit to UK on healthcare in Mar 2020, UK-Qatar **Covid-19** roundtable Dec 2020, and the formation of a DEFRA/MME working group in Oct 2020. Some success stories are shown below.



[DEFRA and MME agree to scientific cooperation](#) in **Agricultural Resources, Fisheries & Aquaculture, Terrestrial Livestock, Environment & Biodiversity, Waste Management**, exchange of research and advanced technologies. Since signing the MOU in March 2019, DEFRA agencies visited Qatar and had successful scientific exchange through workshops and visit programmes.

[Qatar Genome Programme and Genomics England](#), to collaborate in **genomics** research and **precision medicine**. Since signing the MOU in April 2019, Genomics England and geCIP leads have had several visits to Qatar, resulting in new research connections and the development of new research proposals.

King's College London and Qatar Central Bank signed a [donation agreement](#) marking the intention to create a [Qatar Centre for Global Banking & Finance](#) within King's Business School. The project has been made possible due to significant funding from Qatar Central Bank.

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The information in this document is believed to be correct at the time of distribution. However, HM Government accepts no liability for any loss or damage incurred as a result of any inaccuracies, howsoever caused.

Sources referenced in paper

- ¹ Global Innovation Index 2021 Rankings, https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2021/qa.pdf
- ² QS World University Rankings, <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2022>, 18/07/2021
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- ⁹ Foreign Travel Advice for Qatar <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/qatar> 18/07/2021
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- ¹¹ Number of students from Qatar studying in UK universities, latest HESA data https://hesadata.britishcouncil.org/report?_qa=2.56219435.1657530846.1622612249-1832096105.1580013794 18/07/2021

