



Students of Determination at ADU

Empowering Ability Through Inclusive Innovation, Holistic Framework for Students of Determination

Abu Dhabi University (ADU) has established a transformative, scalable framework to empower Students of Determination (SOD), aligning with the UAE Vision 2030. Launched in 2024, our strategy integrates institutional collaboration, technology, and student-centered support to dismantle barriers and foster academic, social, and leadership success.

Strategic Framework & Delivery

The Student Affairs, through Student Counselors, lead personalized assessments using medical, psychological, and educational reports to design bespoke accommodations in assessment, learning and environmental areas. These plans involve faculty each semester via **the SOD Teaching Guide** which is a faculty resource developed by ADU's Center for Faculty and Learning Innovation. The **SOD Teaching Guide** equips educators with evidence-based strategies for autism, ADHD, and all other learning challenges. To streamline services, ADU launched an automated platform in 2024, enabling SOD to submit accommodation requests and track approvals in real time. Streamlined services for this group of students are integrated with our Student Information System.

Student Engagement: Inclusive Leadership & Representation

ADU ensures SOD thrive beyond academics through equity in leadership and other opportunities such as:

- **Leadership & Clubs:** SODs serving as executive board members of university clubs in 2024–2025, leading initiatives like inclusive hackathons and awareness campaigns.
- **National Representation:** SODs delivering speeches, poetry, and cultural performances at UAE National Day, Flag Day, and International Day events, promoting their voices and enhancing campus-wide awareness.
- **Policy Advocacy:** SODs participating in national programs like “Advocate of Tomorrow”, shaping UAE disability policy dialogues.

Long-Term Commitment

Since 2021, the Student Affairs Department has embedded accessibility into all campus initiatives, where SODs are at the heart of the University, they serve as volunteers and student leaders. Furthermore, ADU involves SODs in inclusive event design and peer engagement.

Impact & Evidence of Excellence

- **Metrics:** 40% SOD enrollment growth (2024–2025) and more than 50% in 2025-2026, 100% faculty adherence with accommodation plans through regular professional development.
- **Leadership Milestones:** SODs proudly presented the National Oath on Flag Day, featured on ADU’s social media. They also contribute to the *Advocate of Tomorrow* program, advocating for inclusive education nationally.
- **Testimonial:** Student Saeed Al Ketbi, featured on ADU’s social media (December 2024), shared, “ADU’s support helped me turn my learning challenges into strengths, I now mentor peers with disabilities.”

Innovation & Scalability

ADU’s model, combining the **SOD Teaching Guide**, automated workflows, and leadership pathways has inspired other universities who have benchmarked with ADU trying to identify best practices and services provided to students of determination by ADU.

Supporting Evidence:



student Saeed Al
Ketbi.mp4



SOD delivering the
National oath.mp4



Screenshots from the
SOD system.pdf



SOD Faculty Teaching
Guide (1).pdf