

FINCANTIERI AND KAUST LAUNCH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ADVANCE MARITIME SECURITY RESEARCH IN SAUDI ARABIA

December 4, 2025 - King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST), one of the most prestigious research institutions in the Middle East, **and Fincantieri**, one of the world's largest shipbuilding groups, **through its Foundation (Fondazione Fincantieri)**, jointly decided to **establish a dedicated scholarship** aimed at supporting young researchers in the fields of **maritime security, cyber-resilience, and emerging applied navigation technologies**.

The initiative follows the signing of an MoU last January and reflects the shared commitment of both organizations to promoting excellence in education and technology transfer, **in line with Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030**. The scholarship will enable young and talented researchers to develop innovative solutions to counter new threats to navigation, such as recent cases of AIS and GPS spoofing, which can alter vessel positions and compromise the safety of shipping routes.

The programme will focus on three strategic areas: the advanced authentication of AIS signals to prevent manipulation; the opportunistic detection of GPS spoofing through intelligent satellite data analysis, and star-based position verification enhanced by machine learning algorithms.

The goal is to develop an operational software platform that can be integrated into on-board digital systems, strengthening the collaboration between universities and industry and contributing to the growth of the Fincantieri Digital Ecosystem (FDE).

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Fincantieri is one of the world's largest shipbuilding groups, the only player active in all high complexity marine industry sectors. The Group is a leader in the construction of cruise ships, naval and offshore vessels, and stands out for its extensive experience in the development of underwater solutions, thanks to its integrated industrial structure capable of managing and coordinating all activities related to the commercial, defense, and dual -use sectors. It holds a strong presence in key markets also thanks to the internalization of high value-added, distinctive technologies; it is also a leader in sustainable innovation and in the digital transformation of the shipbuilding sector. The company is active in the field of mechatronics, electronics, and digital naval systems, as well as in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and marine interiors solutions. It also offers a wide range of after-sales services, including logistic support and fleet assistance. With over 230 years of history and more than 7, 000 ships built, Fincantieri is a global player with a production network of 18 shipyards worldwide and over 23,000 employees. It maintains its know-how, expertise and management centres in Italy, where it directly employs over 12,000 workers and creates around 90,000 indirect jobs.

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About King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST)

Located on the shores of the Red Sea, King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) is an international, graduate research university in Saudi Arabia dedicated to advancing science and technology through interdisciplinary

research, education, and innovation. Students, faculty, scientists, and engineers conduct fundamental and goal-oriented research to address the world's pressing challenges related to food, water, energy, and the environment. KAUST contributes to the Kingdom's transformation into a knowledge-based economy, promoting economic development and delivering public benefit.

www.kaust.edu.sa