



- [Home](#)
- [HBKU unveils pioneering multidisciplinary graduate programs that explore contemporary women's issues and the impact of living in an increasingly digitized world](#)

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Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) has announced the launch of two new postgraduate programs that will each add a new area of advanced studies in Qatar: a Master of Arts in Women, Society, and Development, and a Master of Arts in Digital Humanities and Societies.

Applications are now being accepted for prospective students wishing to join the inaugural classes, which will start this fall. A public information session featuring an academic panel for both programs will take place at the Liberal Arts and Science Building, Education City, on Wednesday, April 19th at 5:00 pm. An additional information sessions is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, May 10th.

The announcement of the new programs, which will be delivered by HBKU's College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS), demonstrates the university's commitment to developing innovative ways of serving the specific educational needs of Qatar and the region. Commenting on the establishment of the new programs, Dr. Ahmad Hasnah, President of HBKU, said: "At HBKU we are committed to building knowledge and capacity through the establishment of programs that offer ways to accelerate thinking in areas that have been identified as priorities in our region.

"Our new programs utilize a multidisciplinary and innovative approach to learning in order to shed fresh light on two fascinating fields of study. By harnessing the expertise of our exceptional faculty and through exchanges and joint activities with other institutions, both within Education City and across Qatar, we will provide our students with an outstanding opportunity for higher learning experience as well as developing leaders who will impact their communities."

Dr. Khaled B. Letaief, Provost of HBKU, said: "Both programs provide Qatar with the opportunity to take a regional lead in fields of scholarship that are gathering a great deal of global attention.

"Students will have the opportunity to shed fresh light on issues that impact society, whether focusing on how digital technologies increasingly intersect with traditional humanities disciplines, such as philosophy, history, literature and cultural studies or fostering a deeper understanding of women's issues as they relate to Qatar and the wider Arab world."

HBKU's Women, Society, and Development program is the first of its kind in the region and enrolled students can expect to gain a thorough understanding of major strands in gender theory, and learn about Arab women from a historical and contemporary context.

"The degree will be interdisciplinary, drawing upon a number of specializations such as social sciences, politics and international relations, law and media", notes the Founding Dean of CHSS, Dr. Amal Al Malki. "Through their studies, students will develop the skills necessary to go on and build effective mainstream public policies that

can help solve challenges encountered by women in all areas of society and will serve to enhance Qatar's global efforts to promote human development as it relates to women."

The other newly launched program explores another underrepresented field of study regionally. Over the last decade, cultures have been dramatically changed by the increasing influence of digital technologies and the MA in Digital Humanities and Societies program will focus on the role, impact, and consequences of digital influence on culture. "Ours is a unique program due to its cultural and regional focus, structure, and content. It is also the first program in the region to offer a multidisciplinary approach by exploring the links between arts, anthropology, sociology, media, communication, and urbanism, that all govern modern social interactions," explains Dr. Al Malki.

Specifically, the program's focus is to teach the relevant knowledge of digitization, presentation, and interpretation of both qualitative and quantitative data. This program prepares students for careers that intersect with academic research, journalism, private businesses, policy developers, communication, and data analysis and management.

HBKU continues to place emphasis on developing and delivering unique interdisciplinary programs that address contemporary societal concerns cutting across multiple areas of study. Both newly announced programs have been built in consultation with a cross section of experts in the field of humanities and government officials.

The new programs have been welcomed by a number of prominent members of the Qatari community with an interest in the development of the humanities and social sciences. "The two MA programs will contribute to building the capabilities of Qatari citizens academically and intellectually, thus enabling them to enhance their own careers and leadership skills," noted Sheikh Hamad bin Thamer Al-Thani, the Chairman of the Qatar Media Corporation. "These programs will also help meet society's current and future needs for such areas of expertise, thus enriching and strengthening the educational, social, intellectual and cultural dimensions in Qatar."

Speaking about the launch of the Women Society and Development program, His Excellency Dr. Hamad bin Abdulazeez Al-Kuwari, Adviser at Amiri Diwan and Qatar's candidate for the Director-General post at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) said: "The launch of an MA program focusing on Arab women studies marks another milestone in Qatar's track record, as it comes at a time when the entire world is calling for the development of education systems."

Executive Director of Doha International Family Institute, Noor Al-Malki Al Jehani said: "The time has come to prepare a generation of male and female specialists in Arab women studies so that they can contribute to challenging stereotypes and illusions associated with Arab women."

Online admission for both programs is open until May 1st for the first admissions cycle, and June 1st for the second admissions cycle. More information about all of HBKU's academic programs is available at hbku.edu.qa/en/chss.