Doctor of Philosophy in Humanities and Social Sciences

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The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Humanities and Social Sciences is the first degree of its kind in Qatar, and one of the few in the world. The program provides students with the philosophical and methodological grounding to design and tailor their interdisciplinary research project while specializing through a dissertation.

The program is flexible, accommodating students who wish to apply their interdisciplinary research to various subjects in the humanities and social sciences while allowing for specializations through a pathway to a PhD in an established field at the time of graduation. In addition, it exposes students to identity-making, policymaking, development strategies, institution building, leadership guidance, and sustainable development.

Students will draw from a standard curriculum and gain skills in interdisciplinary research, yet graduate with a PhD in a field that will offer them substantial employment opportunities. Aligned with the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030, the program equips its students with the personal and professional skills to ensure all graduates are prepared to work globally, with strong sustainability values and connections to the community.

Graduates of this program will be equipped to:
- engage with themes and ideas that span across different disciplines.
- demonstrate expertise in interdisciplinary research.
- demonstrate expertise in relevant theories.
- use knowledge for advancing research towards societal and scholarly impact.
- produce original interdisciplinary research.

Potential future jobs:
- Social development specialist
- Social communication specialist
- Postdoc researcher
- Academic (higher education lecturer & researcher)
- Independent researcher in your field
- Sustainable development specialist
- Translation specialist
- Applied linguist

Structure
The 60-credit hour degree program, taught full-time over a minimum of four years, includes 18 credits of courses and 42 credits of supervised research. For students who might need to, the program can be extended for up to seven years. Drawing on pedagogical and research collectives, students will partake in a common curriculum, gain competence in interdisciplinary research, and graduate with a PhD that will support their employment opportunities.

All courses are taught in English.

Curriculum
The curriculum requires students to take six courses (three core and three elective courses), complete two exams (qualifying exam and candidacy exam), and complete and defend a dissertation.

Total of 60 credit hours:
Three core courses (9 credits)
- HSS 700 Explorations in Global Humanities
- HSS 706 Doctoral Independent Study
- HSS 720 Explorations in Interdisciplinarity

Three elective courses (9 credits)
- In consultation with their supervisors
- Can be from any college at HBKU

Dissertation (42 credits completed over semesters 5-8)
- HSS 890 Dissertation Hours

Non-Course Requirements
- 899 Dissertation Defense
- 790 Doctoral Qualifying Exam (in semester 3)
- 799 Candidacy Exam (in semester 4)

Admission and Application Requirements
Applicants seeking admission to the PhD in Humanities and Social Sciences program should have a master's degree in a relevant field with a strong academic record (minimum 3.0 GPA out of 4) from a recognized university.

Applicants are required to submit an IELTS score of 6.5 or a TOEFL score of 79 in order to demonstrate their proficiency in English. Applicants can be exempt from this requirement if they meet one of the conditions listed below:
- The applicant completed their studies at an institution in a country where English is the official language.
- The applicant provides an official letter from the university where they completed their studies confirming that they obtained their degree from an institution where the medium of instruction is English (if not otherwise exempt).
- The applicant's first language is English.

Application requirements

A completed online application form:
admissions.hbku.edu.qa

Academic transcripts

Official electronic copies of transcripts should be submitted as part of the online application. Final transcripts and graduation statements are required for all previous university studies. All transcripts submitted should include an explanation of the grading system. For those who have not completed their current studies, transcripts must include results from the last completed semester of coursework. Transcripts in languages other than English or Arabic must be accompanied by an official translation. Applicants who are admitted to the program based on copies of or incomplete transcripts will be required to provide original transcripts upon enrollment in order to register for courses.

Standardized test results

Official copies of standardized test results must be sent directly to HBKU. Please refer to the institutional codes below:
▸ TOEFL: 4981
▸ IELTS: No code required. Students should ask the IELTS center where they tested to send the IELTS TRF to Hamad Bin Khalifa University.

Applicants should also submit copies of their test scores with the online application.

Letter of recommendation

Applicants to the PhD program should submit two letters of recommendation, preferably from academic referees. Please visit admissions.hbku.edu.qa for further information about the submission process.

Personal statement of interest

Applicants are required to submit a personal statement. The requirements vary by program. Please visit the website for further information.

PhD research proposal

Applicants should submit a research proposal. Full details are available on our website.

Resume/curriculum vitae

Applicants should submit a copy of their current resume or curriculum vitae as part of the online application.

Identification document

All applicants should submit an electronic copy of their passport as part of the online application. Nationals and residents of Qatar should also submit their valid Qatari ID.

Student funding

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences provides opportunities for funding on a competitive basis. Further information will be provided to applicants who are admitted to the program.

Admission inquiries

admissions.chss@hbku.edu.qa