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From Classroom to Courthouse: Advancing Laws Through the Prism of Islam

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Ayedh Al-Qahtani, a recent graduate of HBKU, has been using his studies to apply the principles of Islam in his role within Qatar's judiciary



Somewhere between the courthouse and the iconic hallways of the Minaretein Building, Ayedh has found a second home. Al-Qahtani was one of 126 students who received their Master of Arts in Islamic Studies degree at the HBKU graduation ceremony in May 2018, graduating at the top of his class with a 4.0 GPA. His steady

progress in academia has been mirrored by his vocational success when he was appointed as [Chief of Primary Court](#) at Qatar's [Supreme Judiciary Council \(SJC\)](#).

Understanding Shari'a (and the Laws that Govern Us)

[Shar'ia, or Islamic law](#), forms the main source of legislation in Qatar's judiciary system, as reinforced by Article 1 of [the Qatari constitution](#). At [the College of Islamic Studies](#) (CIS), the principles of Qatar's legal system are routinely examined within the scope of its five graduate degrees in various fields of Islamic study, including Islam and Global Affairs; Islamic Finance and Economy; Islamic Art, Architecture and Urbanism; and Islamic Studies.

Explaining how his own degree specialization in contemporary fiqh – the study of Islamic jurisprudence – complemented his professional life, Al-Qahtani said: “When we are faced with a question of morality or legality, we occasionally overlook the fact that many solutions are grounded within the careful examination of historical debate. Through my work at SJC, I became well-versed in the content and application of Shar'ia law; however, my studies at HBKU enhanced my historic background and underlying decision-making processes.”

Theory to Practice

Bridging the gap between theory in studies and practice in career [is often an area of continuous debate](#). With rising predictions on the need for graduate degrees to excel in a demanding world, the number of [top-tier graduate programs in Qatar](#) has also witnessed a steady increase in recent years.

For Al-Qahtani, his graduate degree was instrumental to his success: “My major in Islamic studies complemented my professional background in law through the critical examination of the various historical aspects of law and its relation to Islam. In effect, by the time we complete our academic programs, we are equipped to defend our legal rulings based on a full understanding of how they are derived and rooted in the Islamic tradition. At CIS, we contemplated the works of prominent Islamic scholars, which contributed to shaping legal understanding today, and ultimately provided a foundation for Qatar's current judicial system.

My degree at HBKU has allowed me to explore Qatari law through a multi-faceted approach, and enabled me to become a more effective jurist going forward,” he added.

While many of his fellow graduates are carrying on their journey in the professional field following the completion of their degree, Al-Qahtani has opted to continue his academic career with the pursuit of doctoral degrees in two specializations – fiqh and law.

[HBKU's graduates are joining a growing network of alumni who are shaping tomorrow](#). The University has celebrated the success of more than 600 graduates to-date, more than half of which are categorized as CIS alumni. HBKU is also home to the [College of Law and Public Policy](#), which offers the only Juris Doctor program of its kind in the entire region.

“Having reached this level, there was nowhere else for me to go but a PhD degree in law. When I was younger, I observed my father at the Ministry of Justice, and I knew this was what I wanted to do. Early on in my life, I've had a sense of justice imprinted on myself and I discovered that this value is what makes us human. If you understand law, you can distinguish between right and wrong, and from there you can shape and nurture the society you live in. This is the contribution I would like to make, and ultimately what drives me to keep studying.”

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