PhD 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 providing students with the philosophical and technical grounding to design and tailor their own interdisciplinary program and concentration.

The field of humanities and social sciences not only provides skills for critical thinking, writing, and complex reasoning but also provides analysis, theories, and structures that contribute to solving local and global problems. The program is flexible, accommodating students who wish to apply their interdisciplinary research in a variety of subjects in the fields of humanities and social sciences, while allowing for specializations through a concentration to a PhD in an established field at the time of graduation. It exposes them to identity making, policy-making, development strategies, institution building, leadership guidance, and sustainable development.

Students will draw from a common curriculum and gain skills in interdisciplinary research, yet graduate with a PhD in a field which will offer them strong 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.

Additionally, the innovative Master of Arts programs offered at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) and the Translation and Interpreting Institute (TII) — digital humanities, women, society and development, translation, interpreting, and accessibility studies — open doors to synergies, and cross-cutting training and research. Graduates will gain a competitive advantage in the job market as they can apply the skills and knowledge gained to any sector, depending on the concentration the student wishes to pursue.
Program Focus

The interdisciplinary character of the PhD in Humanities and Social Sciences, with defined specializations, will see it combine content, theories, methodologies, and perspectives within key fields which are aligned to existing graduate programs in the college. Depending on the specializations selected, students can graduate with either a concentration in Translation Studies, Digital Humanities, Women Studies, or Audiovisual Translation, whilst having been exposed to interdisciplinary studies in the curriculum.

The PhD in Humanities and Social Sciences seeks to promote a transformational epistemology - this means that the degree program is seeking to not only enhance and support impactful research measured against traditional metrics, but also enabling CHSS to deliver on its mission by producing research which has a tangible impact within society. The program prioritizes the achievement of cutting-edge research with a problem-based approach, to direct and focus the research for a greater societal or policy impact. Such an approach can facilitate Qatar’s development and break down the barriers to developing a knowledge-based economy. The program will also provide opportunities for unique collaborations with a range of local and international organizations and research-intensive universities.

Graduates of this program will be equipped to:

- Engage with themes and ideas that cut across disciplines
- Demonstrate expertise in disciplines within relevant fields
- Demonstrate expertise in theory
- Acquire knowledge for advancing research towards societal and scholarly impact
- Produce original interdisciplinary research

Curriculum

The 54-credit hour degree program taught full-time over four years in English, includes 18 credits of taught courses and 36 credits of supervised research. PhD students must complete all the PhD degree requirements within seven years of matriculation in the PhD program. Drawing on a pedagogical and research collective, students will partake in a common curriculum, gain competence in interdisciplinary research, yet graduate with a PhD in a concentration that will support their employment opportunities. The curriculum requires students to take the following courses:

- Explorations in Global Humanities
- Explorations in Interdisciplinarity
- Proseminar (in the specific concentration area)
- Dissertation

- Students will also take three open electives courses for disciplinary breadth. These can be taken from across HBKU.