HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

AC-G-01.V2: GRADUATE ADMISSION POLICY

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1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the standards for admitting graduate applicants into programs and approving applicants for enrollment in graduate programs at HBKU.

2. POLICY DESCRIPTION

Admission to graduate programs at HBKU is based on a holistic review of the applicant's credentials to judge their fitness to successfully complete a program of study. The graduate admission policy determines the standards for admission to graduate programs and defines the minimum requirements for admission to a graduate program at HBKU.

2.1 DEFINITIONS

- **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD):** A research-oriented, terminal degree in a specific discipline, culminating in an original research dissertation.
- **Master's**: The first research-oriented graduate degree in a specific discipline, culminating in a research-oriented experience (typically in the form of a thesis). HBKU offers Master of Science (MS) and Master of Arts (MA) degrees. MS is offered for science and application-oriented education and MA for liberal arts-oriented education.
- **Professional Master's:** A practical-oriented first graduate degree that emphasizes professional knowledge beyond the baccalaureate degree.
- ***Juris Doctor* (JD):** A graduate legal education degree that emphasizes professional knowledge beyond a baccalaureate degree.
- **Accelerated Programs (dual-degree**): Qualified students may be admitted to complete two degrees: BS/MS or MS/PhD.
- **Recognized Institution**: An institution of higher education that is accredited by a government authority at the country where the institution resides, and is recognized by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education at the State of Qatar.
- **Bridging Courses:** Graduate or undergraduate courses in the discipline a student must take to meet background entry requirements for a graduate degree. These courses do not count towards the graduate degree.

2.2 POLICY STATEMENTS

1. To be considered for one of the graduate programs, applicants must submit an online application form supported by relevant documents. They must do so by the deadline established by the University.
2. Applicants to a graduate program at HBKU must have earned a bachelor's degree or a graduate degree from a recognized institution of higher education.
3. Students may simultaneously apply for more than one graduate program; however, they may be matriculated in only one graduate degree program at a time. Exceptions may apply to students seeking admission to an accelerated, dual-degree program. Students seeking to be admitted in different fields of study must submit a new application for each field.
4. Students admitted to a graduate degree program may request to defer their first semester of enrollment for a maximum of one semester. Students requesting this extension must submit (in writing) an official request to the Office of Enrollment stating the reason for their deferral.

Admission deferral requests require the approval of the Dean of the college. Applicants who wish to defer their studies for more than a semester will need to re-apply in the following year.

5. To be admitted to a PhD program, an applicant must satisfy the following:
- Have earned a master's degree or equivalent in a relevant field of study with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students with a bachelor's degree and exceptional records may be admitted to an accelerated dual-degree MS/PhD program;
- Submitted a standardized test score (e.g. GRE, GMAT). Standardized test scores are normally required for all PhD programs offered in English;
- Satisfy additional requirements that may be specific to the college or program.

6. To be admitted to a master's program, an applicant must satisfy the following:
- Have earned a bachelor's degree or higher in a relevant field of study with a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students with postgraduate degrees higher than a bachelor's and lower than a master's may be admitted to a master's program, however, GPA considerations are made based on their first University degree. Students with a master's degree in a different field of study who are considering another master's degree will have their bachelor's degree CGPA and master's degree CGPA evaluated by the respective program admission committee;
- Submitted standardized test scores (e.g. GRE, GMAT). Standardized test scores are encouraged for all masters programs offered in English. Professional master's programs are exempted from this requirement;
- Professional master's programs require demonstration of professional experience;
- Accelerated program students may be admitted to the master's degree program after having:
  - Completed 90 credit hours in their bachelor's program at HBKU or other recognized institution of higher education;
  - Attained a minimum GPA of 3.0;
  - Students will be fully matriculated in the master's program upon completion of the bachelor's degree requirement. Students from outside of HBKU will be initially admitted as non-degree students;
  - Students from outside of HBKU are responsible for any credit transfer outside of HBKU.
- Satisfy additional requirements that may be specific to the college or program.

7. To be admitted to a JD degree, an applicant must satisfy the following:
a. Earned a bachelor's degree in a relevant field of study with a minimum GPA of 3.0;
b. Submitted standardized test scores. The LSAT is recommended;
c. Satisfied additional requirements that may be specific to the college or program.

8. Graduate students seeking admission to programs offered in English must submit a program-approved TOEFL score of 79, or its equivalent, taken within the last two years. Applicants can be exempted from this requirement for:
a. Applicants who completed their studies in an institution in a country where English is the native language;
b. Applicants who provide an official document from a University where they obtained their degree attesting that English was the medium of instruction;
c. Applicants whose first language is English.

9. Programs may admit students on a conditional basis. The conditions must be clearly articulated in the admission letter. All conditional admission cases must receive pre-approval from the Provost. Students who fail to satisfy the conditions as stipulated in the acceptance letter will be academically dismissed.

10. Applicants admitted to a graduate program in a field that is different from that of their previously earned degree may be required to successfully complete bridging courses.

11. Students applying to a graduate program are eligible to transfer up to nine credit hours according to the credit transfer policy.

12. HBKU allows non-degree admission for a limited number of applicants if they satisfy all admission requirements that are stipulated for degree-seeking students.

13. Non-degree students may seek regular admission, provided they meet program requirements at the time they apply for regular admission. All relevant earned credits with a grade of "B" or higher will count towards satisfying program requirements.
14. Applicants may be eligible to be admitted under the visiting student category if they demonstrate that they are currently matriculated in a compatible graduate program offered at another University. Visiting graduate students may seek regular admission if they meet the admission requirements for the intended program.
15. All admission documents, including academic records sent from other institutions, become part of the official University file and can neither be returned nor duplicated for any reason. Students should maintain copies of official credentials for their personal use.
16. A written offer of admission, signed by the Provost or a designee, in the following order: Dean of the college followed by the Associate Provost or Admission Officer, specifying the effective date of admission and program will be communicated to admitted students. This offer is only valid for the semester in which the applicant applies. Students with a lapsed offer of admission must submit a new application to be reconsidered for admission at a later date, with prior approval.
17. To ensure that their enrollment is in effect, students admitted to HBKU must submit the enrollment form, pay a deposit or submit a letter of commitment from sponsoring organization and ensure that all of the following documents are submitted to the Office of Enrollment:
    - Official copies of all standardized test scores or language waiver (if applicable).
    - Original copies of University transcripts. Transcripts must contain the official institutional seal and confirm that the student has graduated.

3. RESPONSIBILITY/SOURCE/AUTHORITY

This policy and accompanying procedures were developed by the Office of the Provost, reviewed and endorsed by the University Academic Programs and Studies Committee and endorsed by the Provost and the University President and approved by the BOT.

This policy assigns the implementation of this process to the HBKU Office of Student Recruitment in collaboration with appropriate college committees and deans.

3. 1 COMMUNITY SHOULD KNOW THIS POLICY

President, Provost, Vice Presidents, Deans, Program Coordinators, Directors, Faculty, Students

4. Updates

SUMMARY OF CHANGES		
Date	**Section**	**Change**
Xx November 2016	ALL	Convert the paragraph policy statements in the Policy Handbook to new format.
1 June 2008	Language requirements	Requirement for transfer student changed from 3 credits of communications with a "C" to 6 credits with a "B"

5. ACCOMPANYING PROCEDURE

1. Applicants must complete the online application form within the established deadlines. Currently, HBKU accepts applications for admission to the Fall semester of each year. The regular deadline for admission is March 1 along with a late deadline in April or May. Applications received after the late deadline will be taken into consideration based on the availability of places. Applications received by the regular admission deadline (March) will be offered seats based on merit. Prospective students are strongly advised to apply before March of each year.
2. **Application requirements include:**
    - A completed online application form, which can be accessed at www.hbku.edu.qa at the "apply now" tab..
    - Electronic copies of official transcripts, which should be submitted as part of the online application. Final transcripts are required for all previous University studies. 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 transcripts or on incomplete transcripts will be required to provide original transcripts upon enrollment in order to register for courses.

- Official copies of standardized test results, when required, must be sent directly to HBKU using the following institutional codes: GRE: 7551 and TOEFL: 4981. For IELTS results, no code is required (students should ask the IELTS center where they tested to send the IELTS TRF to Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar) Applicants should also submit copies of their test scores as part of the online application form to expedite the admissions process.
- Electronic passport copy.
- Electronic copy of the student's Qatari ID (for nationals and residents of Qatar)
- A personal statement that explains why the student is applying for graduate studies in their chosen field and how their studies will contribute to their future goals (500-word limit).
- Applicants should submit a copy of their current résumé or curriculum vitae as part of the online application. This should include current and comprehensive information about the applicant such as academic qualifications, professional experience, research projects, academic awards or honors, conference presentations and publications (if any).
- Applicants should submit at least two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from an academic referee. Letters that are not specifically written for the program they are applying to and incomplete letters will not be accepted.

3. Interviews are an important part of the application process. Most applicants who are identified as very high potential will be invited to an interview. Applicants whose admission files are exceedingly strong and who are identified as being at the top of the applicant pool may be admitted without an interview.

4. Admission and Selection

- Admission to HBKU is highly selective. Applicants will be considered based on their academic, professional and research accomplishments. Applicants are expected to demonstrate strong analytical and quantitative skills (where relevant), along with fluency or very high proficiency in English. Applicants who are successful in gaining admission will be expected to demonstrate that they have a very strong undergraduate and graduate academic background (if relevant) with evidence of challenging coursework undertaken, research experience and/or demonstrated interest in pursuing research as well as relevant and meaningful work or internship experiences. Finally, their personal statement, recommendation letters and CV should demonstrate their interest in, potential for and commitment to rigorous and highly demanding graduate studies. The admission selection process varies by college and program.
- All graduate programs at HBKU require applicants to have a minimum of a bachelor's degree from an institution that is accredited in Qatar or by relevant authorities in the country where the applicant studied. Some graduate programs are open to applicants from any academic background, while others are not. The table below outlines the specific academic background requirements per program:

Degree	**Applicant field of study**
ICT	Computer science, engineering, mathematics and related fields
Bioengineering	Computer science, engineering, biology, medicine and related fields
Sustainability	Science, engineering, economics, business, policy and social sciences
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	Science, coursework in biological or medical sciences
Executive Master in Energy and Resources	All fields. *Work experience in energy, utilities and related sectors is required*
Law	All fields
Translation	All fields
Islamic Studies	All fields (*shari'ah*, Islamic studies, or a related area for students pursuing concentrations in contemporary *fiqh* or contemporary Quranic studies)

Islamic Finance	Economics, business, finance, accounting, *shari'ah* or related fields

5. Language Requirements

All courses/programs at HBKU are taught mostly in English (there are two MA in Islamic studies specializations taught in Arabic). To be considered for admission, all applicants must have scored at least a 6.5 on the IELTS or a 79 on the TOEFL exam. Applicants are required to take the IELTS or TOEFL exam 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 native language
- The applicant provides an official letter from the university confirming that they obtained their degree from an institution where the medium of instruction is English (if not otherwise exempt)
- The applicants' first language is English
- Applicants to the Master of Arts program in Islamic studies who intend to pursue a concentration in contemporary *fiqh* or contemporary Quranic studies are exempt from English language requirements. However, they must demonstrate proficiency in Arabic through previous studies (e.g. completing an undergraduate degree in which the language of instruction was Arabic or by completing an Arabic proficiency examination offered by HBKU).
- Applicants to the translation programs must also demonstrate proficiency in Arabic and may be invited to take a placement test.

6. Graduate Admission Exams

- The GRE exam is required by HBKU for admission to PhD programs in sustainable energy and sustainable environment. Applicants with a GRE quantitative score of 160 or higher are considered favorably for admission if all other factors in their application demonstrate that they have the potential to succeed in a rigorous graduate research program. Applicants with a score less than this may, upon recommendation of the admissions committee, be admitted if sufficient evidence is presented to suggest the applicant has the ability to pursue rigorous graduate work.
- While the GRE is not required for admission for the master's programs, applicants are strongly encouraged to take it.
- The LSAT is recommended for admission to the College of Law and Public Policy.

7. Graduate Applications

Review of admission files varies by college. The table below outlines the roles and responsibilities between the Office of Enrollment and the colleges. All applicants are evaluated using a University-wide evaluation system with program and college-specific criteria. See the next section for the evaluation forms.

	Process and finalize admission files, including verification of credentials	**Initial review of application**	**Second review of application**	**Admissions committee**
College of Science and Engineering	Office of Enrollment	Office of Enrollment	College	Faculty, Program Coordinators, Office of Enrollment (ex-officio)
College of Law and Public Policy	Office of Enrollment	Office of Enrollment	College	Dean, Faculty, Office of Student Enrollment (ex-officio)
Executive Education Center	Office of Enrollment	Office of Enrollment	College	Office of Enrollment (ex-officio) and Program Director
College of	Office of Enrollment	Office of	College	Office of Enrollment

Islamic Studies		Enrollment		(ex-officio) and Program Coordinators
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	Office of Enrollment	Office of Enrollment	College	Program Coordinators

8. Attestation of Documents for Graduate Students

1) Students who completed University studies in Qatar

University transcripts and/or certificates must be attested by the Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

2) Students who completed University studies outside of Qatar

Students who completed their studies outside of Qatar may apply for admission to HBKU and can be provisionally admitted to the University. These students must have their University transcripts or mark sheets and certificates of completion certified by:

a) The issuing board of education, or a recognized authority for higher education in the host country in which the student completed their education.

b) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in that host country.

c) The Qatari embassy in that host country.

In special cases where complying with conditions (b) and (c) is not feasible, the certificates may be verified against originals by embassies in Qatar and the Qatar Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

6. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS