

# Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Studies

كلية الدراسات الإسلامية  
College of Islamic Studies

جامعة حمد بن خليفة  
HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY



# Doctor of Philosophy in Islamic Studies

The Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Islamic Studies (DIS) is an interdisciplinary program that cultivates a detailed understanding of Islamic studies and a mastery of a chosen disciplinary pathway. This expertise is acquired by undertaking dynamic and innovative research that facilitates the analysis and production of contemporary Islamic discourses, engages with diverse themes and topics, and supports the human development goals of the State of Qatar and broader global needs.

The DIS program is highly versatile to accommodate students wishing to apply interdisciplinary research on a variety of specialisms within the field of Islamic studies. Students develop essential contemporary epistemological and methodological skill sets for the analysis of Islamic discourses, while also synergizing with a solid foundation built on the rich and diverse teachings of the Islamic intellectual heritage.

## Program Focus

The DIS program draws on the expertise and skills of the college in an integrated manner, including diverse subjects such as Islamic art, architecture, and urbanism; global affairs; Islamic psychology; and applied Islamic ethics; as well as subjects that are more traditionally conceived under the broad umbrella of Islamic studies. Students develop a mastery of their chosen academic field and its applications to address current issues, advance knowledge, and facilitate positive social progress based on Islamic principles.

The program comprises a strong language component, in which the primary languages of Arabic and English are supplemented by one subsidiary research language associated with Muslim societies, including but not limited to Persian, Turkish, Bahasa Indonesia, and Hausa. The multilingual proficiency enriches the undertaking of dynamic and innovative research that can produce high-quality peer-reviewed publications to advance regional and global scholarship in the areas of Islamic studies and cross-cutting disciplines.



## Curriculum

**A 72-credit degree program taught over four years in English that includes:**

### Six core courses (18 credits)

- ▶ Research Methods in Islamic Studies
- ▶ Comparative Islamic Theology and Philosophy
- ▶ Comparative Theories in the Study of Religion
- ▶ Sources and Methodology of Islamic Law
- ▶ Comparative Quranic Exegesis
- ▶ Sources and Methodology of Hadith

### Six elective courses (18 credits) out of eleven options

- ▶ Comparative Applied Islamic Ethics
- ▶ Family and Society in Islam
- ▶ Globalization and Muslim Societies
- ▶ Graduate Seminar in Islamic Studies
- ▶ Islam and Modernity
- ▶ Islam, Environment and Sustainability
- ▶ Islamic Manuscript Studies
- ▶ Muslim Encounters with Other Societies
- ▶ Readings in Usul Al-Fiqh
- ▶ The Islamic City
- ▶ Translating Arabic-Islamic Texts

### Dissertation (36 credits)

This component includes dissertation proposal seminars, dissertation progress workshops, and dissertation defense seminars, in addition to a pre-dissertation comprehensive examination.

## Foundation Courses

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
DIS 800	3 credits	Research Methods in Islamic Studies	This course familiarizes students with the essential research methodologies in Islamic Studies needed to write effective seminar papers, dissertation proposals, and dissertations at the doctoral level. Students refine their analytical skills to design and deliver original and innovative research projects. The course focuses on the concepts, language, methods, and applications of research that can facilitate the formulation of clear thesis questions. More practically it familiarizes students with the conventions of transliteration, citation, bibliography, literature reviews, and textual analysis.
DIS 801	3 credits	Comparative Islamic Theology and Philosophy	This course engages with the central themes of classical Islamic philosophy and theology and assesses their effect on the culture of Muslim life from the seventh century to the present. Students learn the history, concepts, doctrines, and philosophers in the Islamic tradition, including modern contemporary trends in Islamic philosophy and theology. The course also addresses primary concepts promoted in Islamic philosophy and theology, such as Divine Nature and the Existence of God, Epistemology and Divine Discourse, and Ethics and their manifestations from various doctrinal standpoints.
DIS 802	3 credits	Comparative Theories in the Study of Religion	This course presents a variety of epistemological and methodological approaches to the study of religions in academic discourse, with a focus on how these perspectives relate to Islamic studies, and how they may be employed in graduate research. Such approaches include those of phenomenology, psychology, history, sociology, anthropology, postcolonial and decolonial studies, and women's studies. The course explores a range of pertinent themes, including but not limited to, religious experience; the sacred and the profane; pilgrimage and ritual; tolerance, co-existence, and the "other"; and myth and mysticism.
DIS 803	3 credits	Sources and Methodology of Islamic Law	This discusses the incremental evolution of Islamic legal theory to contextualize the juristic contributions of the foremost personalities who played a major role in its genesis. The course examines the sources of Islamic law (Al-Masadir), its evidence (Al-Adilla), its guiding principles (Al-Usul), its jurisprudential maxims (Al-Qawa'id), and its underlying objectives (Al-Maqasid), which underpin the structure of Islamic legal theory.
DIS 804	3 credits	Comparative Quranic Exegesis	This course provides the tools to analyze the Quranic text by familiarizing students with the most recent developments in Quranic Studies. It provides a critical examination of the collection, compilation, and standardization of the Quran, and its main features, structure, and themes. The course applies the methodologies in Quranic Studies to central themes, such as the nature of God, the relationship between the Divine and the human, the phenomena of prophethood and of other religions, as well as death and the afterlife. The course analyzes Quranic teachings regarding contemporary exigencies, such as jihad and warfare, social justice, and gender relations.
DIS 805	3 credits	Sources and Methodology of Hadith	This course is composed of three essential parts: the first examines the Prophetic Personality as it is represented in Islam's primary textual sources of the Quran and Hadith. Emphasis is laid upon the genesis of Hadith as a genre within Islamic learning and its position as one of the fundamental sciences of this tradition. The second part discusses the genre of biographical writing concerning the Prophetic Personality and, in particular, stresses the importance of Sirah literature. The final part of the course focuses on the methodology of Hadith literature.

## Elective Courses

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
CIS 705	3 credits	Islam and Modernity	This course introduces students to institutions, concepts, and processes centrally associated with modernity. Focusing on the fields of knowledge, government, and economy, the course investigates what is new and distinctive about modern societal contexts. It examines fields of conflict that have emerged in these contexts. Trajectories of modernity are investigated from a comparative perspective.
CIS 710	3 credits	Muslim Encounters with Other Societies	This course introduces students to the overarching principles that have generally governed Muslim interaction with various non-Muslim societies, and how diverse Muslim communities have traditionally interpreted these principles under similar and varying circumstances. The course highlights some of the best practices that Muslims were able to develop in their interaction with other societies which might be taken into consideration by non-Muslim communities in their encounters with others. Furthermore, contemporary models of successful interaction between religious communities are examined for the challenges they pose to Muslim communities and to what extent Muslims can benefit from such models.
DIS 806	3 credits	The Islamic City	The term "Madinah" essentially refers to the primordial Islamic city established by the Prophet Muhammad circa 622–632. Consequently, the linguistic term Madinah denotes legal, ethical, social, political, and religious knowledge, transforming and transcending the contributions of mere human experience. The Islamic city also embraces the idea of authority, submission, obedience, conformity, and consensus, which in turn determines the nature of the Islamic city. Since the Madinah also represents the cumulative experience of successive generations of urban dwellers, it offers a solid foundation to reflect critically and to rethink the relationship between the interdependent conditions of urban existence.
DIS 807	3 credits	Comparative Applied Islamic Ethics	This course is divided into three main parts. The first part covers key contributions, theoretical principles, and approaches within the emerging and interdisciplinary field of Islamic ethics. The second part examines the relevance and (possible) application of these theoretical underpinnings to contemporary issues including bioethical, sociopolitical, interreligious, and intercultural themes. The last part of the course is dedicated to training students in conducting research that does justice to both the interdisciplinarity of this field and its relevance to addressing the dilemmas born in the age of modernity.
DIS 808	3 credits	Globalization and Muslim Societies	This course presents an overview of the key social and political issues currently facing the Muslim world. It is divided into four parts. First, it examines the transformation of traditional communal Muslim societies into modern nation-states. Second, it analyzes the era of globalization and global governance and the variegated impact throughout the Muslim world. Third, it explores the different facets of humanitarianism, migration, and the refugee crisis in Muslim societies. Last, it analyzes the Muslim world in relation to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

## Elective Courses (continued)

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
DIS 809	3 credits	Family and Society in Islam	This course familiarizes students with issues pertaining to gender and family in Islamic foundational texts and in Muslim societies past and present. Initial course readings highlight ways in which religious sources depict sex, sexuality, and family roles. The course highlights historical and sociological studies of gender and family in a variety of eras and locales from the inception of Islam to the contemporary period. The course engages critically with polarizing issues such as questions regarding gender and religious leadership, gender and financial matters, sexual expression, spousal relations, and laws of marriage and divorce.
DIS 810	3 credits	Islam, Environmentalism, and Sustainability	This course instructs students on how to address the critical issue of climate change and develop models for sustainability from within the Islamic tradition. The course addresses the state of the environmental crisis and analyzes its philosophical underpinnings, which are then juxtaposed with the manner in which the relationship between God, humanity, and the natural environment is presented in classical Islamic sources. The course analyzes the development of contemporary “ecotheologies” and the movements towards sustainability and environmental justice in the Muslim world.
DIS 811	3 credits	Translating Arabic-Islamic Texts	This course addresses the issues involved in the translation of Islam’s primary sacred texts and their associated fields of learning. It examines the translation of a range of Islamic texts in a number of disciplines such as Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh), scholastic theology (Kalam), Arab philosophy (Falsafa), and Islamic spirituality and mysticism (Tasawwuf). The course identifies the plethora of problems of various levels and layers of meaning in terms of equivalence and transfer of intended message in the translations and trains students in the process of translation assessment.
DIS 812	3 credits	Islamic Manuscript Studies	This course provides a broad view of the manuscript arts from the origins of Islam through the early modern period. The course focuses primarily on materials (binding and paper), layout, scripts, and decoration, and introduces students to assessing and reading pre-20th century handwritten texts in Arabic. The course provides training in describing the physical aspects of manuscripts (codicology), reading a variety of texts, and surveying major Arabic manuscript collections in both printed catalogs and online manuscript databases, as well as techniques for the physical preservation and digitization of manuscripts.
DIS 813	3 credits	Graduate Seminar in Islamic Studies	The seminar presents a theoretical or practical topic proposed by the faculty beyond what is offered in existing courses. The seminar is exploratory and relates to the ongoing research of the instructor. It requires active and critical participation from students with regard to discussions of the source material in light of relevant theoretical and methodological approaches.
DIS 814	3 credits	Readings in Usul Al-Fiqh	This course explores the development of the Arab-Islamic intellectual tradition and traces the genesis of jurisprudential learning by examining the influence of Islam’s primary sacred texts and how they shaped the religion’s legal history. The literary production of this evolution is then discussed by selectively examining a range of texts concerning the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (Usul Al-Fiqh).

## Dissertation

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
DIS 890	36 credits	Dissertation	This course gives students an opportunity to produce and defend a PhD dissertation under direct supervision and assist students in completing high-quality, innovative, and leading-edge dissertations in Islamic studies. The dissertation supervisor is allocated according to the student’s specialist interest and the expertise of the faculty member.

## Faculty

<b>Dr. Gavin N. Picken</b>	Program Director, Professor of Islamic Studies
<b>Dr. Akel Ismail Kahera</b>	Professor of Islamic Architecture and Urbanism
<b>Dr. Alexandre Caeiro</b>	Associate Professor of Islamic Studies
<b>Dr. Dheen Mohamed</b>	Professor of Comparative Religion
<b>Dr. Emad El-Din Shahin</b>	Professor of Islamic Studies
<b>Dr. Ibrahim Zain</b>	Professor of Islamic Studies and Comparative Religion
<b>Dr. Joseph Lumbard</b>	Associate Professor of Quranic Studies
<b>Dr. Louay Safi</b>	Professor of Political Science and Islamic Thought
<b>Dr. Mohammad Ghaly</b>	Professor of Islam and Biomedical Ethics
<b>Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail Elamin</b>	Professor of Islam and Global Affairs
<b>Dr. Mutaz Al-Khatib</b>	Associate Professor of Methodologies and Ethics
<b>Dr. Rajai (Ray) Jureidini</b>	Professor of Migration, Human Rights, and Ethics



## Admission requirements

Applicants seeking admission to the PhD program in Islamic Studies should have a master's degree in a relevant field of study with a strong academic record (minimum 3.0 GPA out of 4.0) from a recognized institution.

All applicants are required to submit a valid IELTS score of 6.5 or TOEFL score of 79 in order to demonstrate their proficiency in English. Applicants may be exempt from this requirement if they provide an official letter confirming that they obtained their degree from a university where the medium of instruction is English.

Applicants, both native or non-native speakers of Arabic, will be required to take an Arabic language proficiency test that will be administered by the College of Islamic Studies at the time of application. Applicants must pass the Arabic language proficiency test with a minimum value of "upper-intermediate" to be admitted to the program. Applicants who have completed university studies in Arabic and can provide a letter confirming so are exempt from this requirement.

Please refer to the following table for a summary of the admission criteria:

Program	Required Field of Study	Language Proficiency
PhD in Islamic Studies	All fields	IELTS: 6.5 or TOEFL: 79 Further details about the language proficiency requirement and the process to seek exemption (where this is an option) are available on the website: <a href="https://admissions.hbku.edu.qa">admissions.hbku.edu.qa</a>



## Application requirements

A completed online application form:  
[admissions.hbku.edu.qa](https://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 with 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 (where required) 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 HBKU

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

## Letters of recommendation

Applicant should submit two letters for recommendation, one of which must be from an academic referee. Please visit [admissions.hbku.edu.qa](https://admissions.hbku.edu.qa) for further information about the submission process.

## Personal statement of interest

Applicants should submit a personal statement as part of the online application. The statement should explain why the candidate is applying to the program, and how their studies will contribute to the achievement of their personal objectives, including information about the applicant's research interests and achievements (minimum of 300, maximum of 500 words).

## Resume/curriculum vitae

Applicants should submit a copy of their current resume or curriculum vitae as part of the online application. This should include the following information:

- ▶ Academic Qualifications
- ▶ Professional Experience
- ▶ Publications
- ▶ Research Projects
- ▶ Academic Awards or Honors
- ▶ Conference Presentations





## Research proposal

Applicants are required to submit a research proposal with the online application. The research proposal should be written in English and should not exceed five pages.

The research proposal should include the following requirements:

- ▶ A working title
- ▶ Abstract of 200-300 words
- ▶ Synopsis of the research project
- ▶ Aims and objectives of the research project
- ▶ Indicative bibliography

## Writing sample

Applicants are required to submit a writing sample with the online application. The writing sample should be 15-20 pages long and be written in English. The writing sample should be academic in nature, present a key argument, provide a holistic treatment of the subject, and conform to academic norms in terms of citation and referencing.

## Identification document

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

## Student funding

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


## Tuition fees


Program	PhD in Islamic Studies
Total Program Tuition Fees	QAR 162,000
Tuition Fees per Credit Hour	QAR 2,250
Total Program Credit Hours	72
Program Duration	4 years


## Contact Information


### Admission inquiries

[admissions.cis@hbku.edu.qa](mailto:admissions.cis@hbku.edu.qa)

 [hbku\\_cis](#)

 [hbku\\_cis](#)

 College of Islamic Studies - HBKU

 HBKU College of Islamic Studies

 College of Islamic Studies (CIS) at HBKU

[cis.hbku.edu.qa](http://cis.hbku.edu.qa)