



HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY

AC-G-01.V03: GRADUATE ADMISSION POLICY

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Date Endorsed by the Provost: 6 April 2017

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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 articulates the standards for graduate admission and states the minimum requirements for graduate admission 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 that demonstrates a mastery of 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.
- **Professional Master's:** A practical-oriented first graduate degree that demonstrates a mastery of a specific field of professional knowledge beyond the baccalaureate degree.
- **Juris Doctor (JD):** A graduate legal education degree that demonstrates mastery of a high order professional legal knowledge.
- **Accelerated Programs (dual-degree):** Qualified students may be admitted to complete two degrees: Bachelors/Masters or Masters/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 necessary to bridge a gap of knowledge in a discipline to meet background entry requirements in a specific discipline. Bridging courses do not count towards the graduate degree requirements.

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 University first degree (normally a bachelor's degree) or a graduate degree (normally a master's) from a recognized institution.
3. Students may simultaneously submit applications for more than one graduate program; however, HBKU does not allow students to be matriculated in more than one graduate degree program at a time. Exceptions may apply to students seeking admission to an accelerated (dual-degree program) or a certificate program. Students seeking to be admitted in different degree programs must submit a new application for each degree program.
4. Admitted students may request to defer their first semester of enrollment for a maximum of one semester. Admission deferral must be submitted (in writing) to the Office of Enrollment stating the reason for the deferral. Admission deferral requests require the endorsement of the Dean of the

college and approval of the Provost. Applicants who wish to defer their studies for more than a semester will need to re-apply in the following year.

5. Applicants to a PhD program 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;
 - Submitted a discipline acceptable standardized test score (e.g. GRE, GMAT). Standardized test scores are required for all PhD programs offered in English;
 - Satisfy additional requirements that may be specific to the college or program.
6. Applicants to a master's degree program 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, CGPA 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 a discipline specific standardized test score (e.g. GRE, GMAT). Standardized test scores are encouraged for all master's programs offered in English. Applicants to professional master's programs are exempted from this requirement;
 - Professional master's programs require demonstration of professional experience;
 - Accelerated (Bachelors-Master's) program students may be admitted to the master's degree program after having:
 - Completed a minimum of 90 credit hours in their bachelor's program at HBKU or other recognized institution;
 - Attained a minimum CGPA of 3.0 or higher;
 - 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. Applicants to the JD degree must satisfy the following:
 - a. Earned a bachelor's degree in a relevant field of study with a minimum CGPA of 3.0;
 - b. Submission of LSAT standardized test score is recommended;
 - c. Satisfied additional requirements that may be specific to the college or program.
8. A program-approved TOEFL score of 79, or its equivalent, taken within the last two years is required for all graduate students seeking admission to programs offered in English. Applicants can be exempted from this requirement if they meet one of the conditions below:
 - 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. Degree programs may require applicants to successfully complete bridging courses prior to full matriculation in the degree program.
11. Students may transfer up to nine credit hours according to the credit transfer policy.
12. HBKU allows non-degree admission for a limited number of applicants according to the non-degree student policy.
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 matriculated and in good academic standing in a compatible graduate program offered at a recognized institution. Visiting graduate students may seek regular admission if they meet the admission requirements for the intended program.
15. Documents submitted in support of admission application, including academic records sent from other institutions, become part of the official University file and can neither be duplicated nor returned 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 their 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 Enrollment 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"
6 May 2018	Article 5	Removed direct entry to PhD

5. ACCOMPANYING PROCEDURE

University Admission Processes

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 in April with a March deadline for international students. Applications received after the deadline will be taken into consideration based on the availability of places and will require completion of a form that needs the approval signature of the Dean and the Provost.
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. Applicants must include a copy of the university grading scale. While attestation of the transcripts is not a required part of the admission process, HBKU reserves the right to request this at any time, particularly for students who completed their University studies outside of Qatar. These students must have their University transcripts or mark sheets and certificates of completion certified by:

- a) A recognized authority for higher education in the country of the award-issuing institute.
- b) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in that country.
- c) The Qatari embassy in that 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.

- Applicants to PhD programs are required to submit a GRE score with the online application
 - 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 (word minimum and limit varies by college).
 - Applicants should submit a copy of their current resume or curriculum vitae as part of the online application.
 - Applicants should submit at least two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from an academic referee. Some colleges will allow applicants who graduated a long time ago to submit nonacademic referees. Letters that are not specifically written for the program they are applying to and incomplete letters will not be accepted. Some colleges may waive this requirement.
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. Applicants should not submit any additional application materials which are not on the list of required items. Any additional materials received will be automatically discarded. HBKU cannot return documents to the applicant once they are submitted. All documents submitted through the online application must be in PDF format. Any documents submitted in a different format will not be accepted.

5. 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 college specific procedures outline the academic background requirements (if any) per program.

6. 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. For admission to most programs, 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

7. HBKU reserves the right to request that an applicant take the IELTS, TOEFL or an institutional exam even if they are exempt from the requirement. This may happen in instances where the admissions committee would like to see further evidence of a student's proficiency in English.

Graduate Applications

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

	Process and finalize admission files, including verification of credentials	Initial review of application to determine whether or not the applicant meets the minimum university requirements	Second review of application to evaluate the applicants' admissibility to the program and Interviews	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 Islamic Studies	Office of Enrollment	Office of Enrollment	College	Office of Enrollment (ex-officio) and Program Coordinators
College of Humanities and Social Sciences	Office of Enrollment	Office of Enrollment	College	Program Coordinators

College Specific Admission Processes

In addition to the general University requirements listed above, some colleges have additional or more specific requirements as listed below:

College of Science and Engineering

GRE:

- Applicants to the PhD in Sustainable Energy/PhD Sustainable Environment 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 be recommended for admission if sufficient evidence implies that the applicant has the ability to complete rigorous graduate work.

- While the GRE is not required for admission for the master’s programs, applicants are strongly encouraged to take it.

CV:

The CV of applicants to the College of Science and Engineering graduate programs should include current and comprehensive information such as academic qualifications, professional experience, research projects, academic awards or honors, conference presentations and publications (if any).

Field of Study:

The table below lists which academic disciplines an applicant should have pursued in order to be considered for admission to the graduate programs in the College of Science and Engineering

Degree	Applicant field of study
ICT	Computer science, engineering, mathematics and related fields
Bioengineering	Computer science, engineering, biology, medicine and related fields
Sustainability	Engineering and science disciplines preferred. Students from architecture, urban planning, business, economics, policy, and social sciences demonstrating strong analytical skills will also be considered.
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	Science, coursework in biological or medical sciences
Executive Master in Energy and Resources	All fields. <i>Work experience in energy, utilities and related sectors is required</i>
PhD in Genomics and Precision Medicine Master of Science in Genomics and Precision Medicine	Science, coursework in biological or medical sciences

College of Islamic Studies

- Applicants to the Master of Arts 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 Master of Arts in Islamic studies who intend to pursue a concentration in contemporary *fiqh* or contemporary Quranic studies should submit their personal statement in Arabic.

The table below lists which academic disciplines an applicant should have pursued in order to be considered for admission to the graduate programs in the College of Islamic Studies:

Degree	Applicant field of study
Islamic Studies	All fields (<i>shari’ah</i> , Islamic studies, or a related area for students pursuing concentrations in contemporary <i>fiqh</i> or contemporary Quranic studies)
Islamic Finance	Economics, business, finance, accounting, <i>shari’ah</i> or related fields

College of Humanities and Social Sciences

- Applicants to the translation programs must also demonstrate proficiency in Arabic and may be invited to take a placement test.
- Applicants to the translation programs are required to take IELTS or TOEFL and are not eligible for exemption.

College of Law and Public Policy

- The LSAT is recommended for admission to the College of Law and Public Policy. GRE or GMAT results are also encouraged.

6. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Applicant Evaluation Form

Full name (First, Middle, Last)	Banner ID	
Program (Degree and Field)		
Nationality		
Country of Residence		
Most Recent University, Degree and Academic Average		
Most Recent Converted GPA		
Previous Study University, Degree & GPA		
Language Proficiency		
Standardized Tests (GRE, LSAT, GMAT)		
Does Applicant Meet Minimum University Requirements?	YES	NO

Evaluation	Below Expectation	Meets Expectations	Above Expectations	Exceeds Expectations	Weight	Score
	10	20	30	40		
Academic Transcript	GPA < 3.0	GPA between 3.0 to 3.3	GPA between 3.4 to 3.7	GPA between 3.8 to 4.0	/1	
English Proficiency	TOEFL < 79 IELTS < 6.5	TOEFL between 79 and 93 IELTS: 6.5	TOEFL: between 94 and 101 IELTS: 7.0	TOEFL: 102 or above IELTS: 7.5 or above	/2	
Standardized Tests	GRE Q below 144	GRE Q between 144 and 154	GRE Q between 156 and 164	GRE Q above 164	/4	
Research and/or work experience (CV)	No participation in internships, research or projects No evidence of progression in career No research	Some evidence of participation in internships, research, projects, etc. Limited or no progression in career Limited research experience	Strong evidence of participation in internships, research or projects Solid progression in career Solid evidence of research with at least one publication	Evidence of post-undergraduate full-time work experience with extraordinary progression in career Outstanding evidence of research with numerous publications	/4	
Fit with Program (Personal Statement)	Not a good fit. No explanation.	Fair fit with minimal explanation for why they are applying	Good fit with a reasonable explanation for why they are applying	Very strong fit for program and clear indication of why they are applying	/4	
Personal Qualities (Recommendation Letters)	Nothing distinguishes the applicant or raises visibility in the overall applicant group	Represent the broad middle of a highly-selective applicant pool	Personally qualified and compelling in a highly-selective pool	Personally accomplished. A very compelling candidate who clearly adds to the class and the program as a whole	/4	
Overall Rating & Comments						

Notes:

- Applicants who do not meet minimum university requirements cannot be admitted. If the College wishes to consider someone from this group for admission, they must seek approval from the Provost.
- Applicants for whom IELTS/TOEFL is waived will automatically receive "Meets Expectation." Applicants who demonstrate strong English language skills could receive a higher evaluation based on their personal statement or other elements of their application.
- Weight figures provided are suggestions and may vary by College and Degree