



Developing Humanities and Social Sciences at Qatar University: Advanced Research Grants Addressing Local Societal Challenges

Qatar University (QU) has announced the launch of advanced research grants for developing humanities and social sciences through research that addresses local societal challenges. QU's Humanities and Social Sciences Research Grants program aims to support research teams in vital areas of interest to Qatar, including important topics representing key pillars such as identity and family, under which many topics could be listed, such as financial literacy, women, heritage, education, and economic and environmental sustainability. The program also includes collaboration with experts from other fields such as science, engineering, and health.

QU funds these internal grants. The online application process began in January/February 2025, with the deadline for submitting research proposals and winning summer grants in March 2025, followed by the award announcement phase in April of the same year.

Promoting academic publishing in social sciences is one of the main pillars of this program since it aims to support knowledge and develop policies through the publication of academic papers and books that can be published by Qatar University Press. In addition, specialized workshops are organized to bring researchers together with local and international institutions, and open the door for them to exchange ideas and research methodologies. It is expected that these workshops will contribute to the production of a joint book on relevant subtopics.

The program is based on developing researchers' skills through training on research ethics and ethical review standards, as well as specialized workshops on data collection, such as questionnaire design and sampling

strategies. The program also provides training on analyzing data by using statistical tools and data science. Moreover, academic mentoring opportunities are offered through a network of experts to support new researchers and enhance their research capabilities.

The program also aims to build a strong community of researchers at Qatar University by organizing events that bring the academic staff and students together to share ideas and foster collaboration. These events include the annual QUHSS Forum, which will be a key platform for presenting collaborative research and exchanging insights among scholars and researchers. Discussion panels on research findings are also organized to share outcomes and enhance collaboration among researchers.

The program is available to the academic staff and researchers in humanities and social sciences, with the possibility of involving undergraduate and postgraduate students. Priority will be given to teams including Qatari academic staff or those collaborating with local institutions. The expected outcomes of this program include submitting proposals to the QUHSS forum to share research findings, participating in workshops to build researchers' skills, organizing community events to disseminate research findings, as well as publishing outcomes in prestigious scientific platforms and contributing to relevant awareness-raising campaigns.

The program also includes a range of incentives, such as research exchange trip opportunities to foster academic collaboration and expand research networks, and summer research grant support to develop researchers' skills and contribute to the writing and publication of research.

These trips and grants shall require letters of invitation from recognized academic institutions.

In this regard, Professor Aiman Erbad, Vice President of Research and Graduate Studies at Qatar University, highlighted that Qatar University seeks to develop humanities and social sciences due to their great importance in forming cultural and societal awareness and their role in developing the cognitive and creative capabilities of researchers and students. These grants aimed to support research related to families and Qatari identity as the main pillars, along with subtopics such as heritage, education, environmental sustainability, and other issues of interest to the Qatari society. This reflects the strong relationship between the University and society and the University's active contribution to meeting the needs and aspirations of the community. He also congratulated the winners, wishing them continued success.

Among the winning titles of this research grant in the field of family studies is: "Exploring the Context of Communication in Mental Health Field and Health-Seeking Behavior in Qatari Families: The Influence of Socio-Cultural and Socio-Demographic Factors," by Dr. Shaikha Al-Kuwari, Assistant Professor at the Department of Social Sciences. She expressed her pride in winning, saying: "My research team and I are thrilled to have been awarded the Social Sciences and Humanities Grant from Qatar University. This grant is an important opportunity to support research that aims to strengthen and develop social sciences and humanities. Our project focuses on studying family communication styles and patterns related to mental health and their impact on healthcare-seeking behaviors. This study will contribute to providing a cultural framework that can contribute to the design of effective culturally-based interventions, policies, and programs to reduce the stigma associated with mental health in the Qatari society. The research team is a multidisciplinary one as it includes experts from various disciplines, including social sciences, education, and medical and health sciences."

Dr. Turki Obaid Al-Marri, Assistant Professor at the Department of Fiqh and Usul Al-Fiqh at the College of Sharia and Islamic Studies, was also awarded this grant for his research titled: "Implications of Economic Transformations on the Qatari Family: A Socio-Legal Analysis in the Light of Islamic Sharia." On this occasion, he said: "Winning the Social Sciences and Humanities Grant is not only a scientific recognition, but also a boost of hope and a message of confidence in the importance of research to understand the transformations that are ravaging our societies. Our research project explores the effects of economic transformations on the stability of the Qatari family, attempting to identify the most significant legal and social challenges posed by these transformations, and seeking to address these challenges from the perspective of Islamic Sharia in light of its established provisions and considered objectives, to formulate a comprehensive vision that preserves the Qatari family's equilibrium and stability. I thank the grantor for this support, and I hope that this research will contribute to achieving a clear scientific vision and proposing effective solutions that contribute to achieving the stability of the Qatari family."

Concerning identity-related research, Dr. Hamad Al-Ghadeed, Assistant Professor at the Department of History, was among the winners of the research grant for his research titled: "Qatari Identity in the Time of Transformations: Towards a Sustainable Strategy to Preserve Values and Culture." He said about the project: "This project is an important opportunity to study and analyze the national identity in Qatar and the impact of globalization on it, contributing to developing a deeper understanding of these transformations and strengthening national belonging amid rapid cultural and social changes. I hope that the findings of the research will support decision makers and academic institutions to develop policies that preserve the balance between authenticity and modernity in the Qatari society."

The research support also included other studies in the field of identity, including the research of Dr. Amna Abdulla Sadiq, Assistant Professor at the Department of Gulf Studies, titled: "Social Determinants and Factors Shaping Qatari Identity from the Perspective of Qatari Youth." She stated: "I am delighted with the support provided by Qatar University for research in social sciences and humanities. The introduction of this grant represents an important turning point in supporting these efforts and providing more opportunities for interested researchers. The trust Qatar University places in young researchers is just a reflection of the long-term vision of this academic institution. The research grants offered are an opportunity for researchers to join multidisciplinary research groups. They also help master young researchers' skills in a nurturing academic environment."

She added: "As for the grant, I submitted an interdisciplinary research project that aims to study identity trends among Qatari youth, in an endeavor to understand the values that drive our youth today. Through this research project, we seek to enrich the scientific content on this topic in addition to providing a comprehensive and scientific picture to the executive and legislative institutions in the country that are interested in this field. The project supports the University's research priorities concerning social sciences and humanities and copes with Qatar National Vision 2030."

In the same context, another study by Dr. Esraa Ahmad Al-Muftah, Assistant Professor at the Department of Educational Sciences, was supported by the research grant. Her research is titled: "Ways to Promote Environmental Citizenship in Education: Towards the Sustainability of Environmental Knowledge across Generations." On this occasion, she stated: "I would like to thank Qatar University for supporting young researchers in social sciences and humanities. I am grateful that my project was selected during this session. It aims to document Qatar's rich oral heritage related to topography and nature, and use this documentation as a material to enrich educational programs, so that citizens can graduate with a strong, sustainable identity. The project relies on multidisciplinary research between the College of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences, promoting the integration of knowledge between the fields of social, natural, and educational sciences with the ultimate objective of providing new approaches to understanding the relationship between environment and identity in the Qatari context."