



الجامعة الدولية المفتوحة

International Open University

Former: Islamic Online University

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International Open University

Doctoral Degree (Ph.D.) in Islamic Sciences

Program Description

Research degrees such as doctorates in various disciplines are the highest level of qualification awarded by universities around the world. Candidates of the Ph.D. program at IOU must complete an independent research project under supervision before submitting a final draft of a thesis that demonstrates an original contribution to the field. The doctorate may be concluded over a minimum period of three years of full-time study.

IOU has a dedicated team of highly-qualified and experienced professors that will provide a high level of supervision to candidates. Completion of specialized courses in Research Methodology, coupled with the writing and oral defense of a doctoral thesis, is required.

Candidates may pursue their Ph.D. in pure Islamic Studies, with a concentration in either Qur'anic Exegesis, Hadeeth, or Fiqh, or Interdisciplinary Studies that center around core issues/topics of Islamic Studies. Interdisciplinary Studies may include, but is not limited to exploring issues of:

- Pure science
- Applied sciences
- Humanities

- Social sciences from the perspectives of the Quran and Hadeeth (sources of Islamic jurisprudence).

In the case of an interdisciplinary study, co-supervision will be provided to the candidate.

A doctoral thesis must demonstrate genuine scholarship that contributes to the existing body of knowledge. The content has to reflect comprehensive understanding and control of the subject, and show proficiency in the ability to amass and consolidate evidence in order to come to logical conclusions.

Objective and Aims of the Program

The overarching objective of the program is to produce scholars and researchers who can serve the global Muslim community (ummah), especially in spreading Islamic knowledge, with the aim of addressing contemporary challenges faced by the Muslim world.

The program aims to:

1. Develop competence and proficiency in the area of research in each candidate.
2. Produce original contributions to the body of Islamic and contemporary research and literature.
3. Provide candidates with opportunities to explore contemporary challenges and research questions via the lens of Islamic Studies.

Program Learning Outcome

Upon completion of the program, the candidate should be able to:

1. Produce an accepted and approved doctoral thesis.
2. Conduct high-quality research in their profession.

Eligibility Criteria for Admission

1. Masters degree in Islamic Studies, completed in English or
2. Masters degree in other fields of study, such as Law, Religious Studies, or Theology.
3. Masters degree in any discipline of humanities, social sciences, pure or applied sciences. However, the holders of these degrees must have sound Islamic knowledge. The candidates who do not have strong Islamic backgrounds are required to send their transcripts to the university. Such applicants, however, might be required to study complementary subjects (to be determined by the Higher Degrees Committee on a case-by-case basis) as part of conditional acceptance. The period of complementary studies will not be included in the doctoral degree duration.

Language Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate proficiency in English (academic and scientific), in addition to intermediate comprehension of Arabic. In some special cases, the thesis may be allowed to be conducted in Arabic if it is approved by the respective authority of the university.

Program Structure & Requirements for the Award of the Degree

1. Duration

- Full-time registration:
 - Minimum period: Three years (6 semesters)
 - Maximum period: Six years (12 Semesters)

- Part-time registration:
 - Minimum period: Five Years (10 semesters)
 - Maximum period: Eight Year (16 semesters)

2. Programme Structure

Semester One

- Course Work (completion of course work)
- Allotment of a supervisor (and co-supervisor, if applicable)
- Finalization of the research topic and submission of a research proposal, approved by the supervisor(s).

Semester Two to Penultimate Semester

- At the beginning of semester two, the candidate's research topic and research proposal must be approved by the supervisor(s) and submitted to the Higher Degrees Committee for review and approval.
- The research proposal must also be approved by the Research and Ethics Committee, with ethical clearance granted, where applicable.
- After the research proposal has been approved and ethical clearance granted, the candidate would be allowed to work on the thesis under the guidance of the supervisor(s).
- The candidate is required to publish two research papers/articles relevant to their doctoral research project in peer-reviewed, academic

journals prior to submitting the final draft of the thesis. The research papers/articles must be accepted for publication prior to submission of the final thesis draft. Evidence of acceptance for publication of the research papers/articles must accompany the final thesis draft submission.

Final Semester

- The candidate must submit the final thesis draft for external examination.
- The thesis submission must be approved by the supervisor(s).
- The external examiners will provide reports to the Higher Degrees Committee.

3. Public Defense and Thesis Revision

- Based on satisfactory reports of external examiners, the candidate will be permitted to complete the public defense of his/her thesis.
- A successful thesis should demonstrate the candidate's mastery of the scholarly field of research and should make an original contribution to knowledge in its particular field.
- The Higher Degrees Committee may pass the thesis without changes, or may request minor changes.
- The thesis supervisor(s) will provide the final confirmation to the Higher Degrees Committee that the candidate has made the relevant changes, if and where applicable.

4. Final Thesis Approval

The Higher Degrees Committee will approve the final thesis, and grant permission for the Ph.D. to be awarded, and for the thesis to be published in the university's repository for published dissertations and theses.

First Semester Course Work

The following modules must be completed within the first semester of the program:

1. Research Methodology - I: Data collection, analysis and presentation
2. Research Methodology - II: Academic research and writing

Responsibilities of Research Degree Candidates

As a research degree candidate, the student is fully responsible for managing his/her work. In this process, generally, the candidate will need to:

- Ensure that he/she is familiar with IOU's policies and requirements.
- Advance his/her understanding of and familiarity with various methodological approaches to research.
- Maintain regular contact with his/her supervisor(s) and keep them informed of the progress.
- Meet all the deadlines and act upon IOU's regulations regarding the research programs.

Additionally, other specific responsibilities of research degree candidates include the following:

- It is your responsibility to contact your supervisor(s) on a regular basis and set the agenda for supervisory sessions. Give advance notice of any specific questions or issues you wish to discuss. Supervision is generally more productive and effective if you and your supervisor(s) are adequately prepared for the consultation.
- Provide your supervisor(s) with any readings which may form the background to the supervisory session (e.g., giving references to relevant published writing or providing copies of your own or others' writing).
- Try to submit draft material that is at an advanced and relatively 'polished' stage of development.
- It is also your responsibility to produce correct text, free of all types of errors - your supervisor(s) is not responsible to correct your linguistic and typing errors.

- All research degree candidates have a responsibility to demonstrate academic honesty in their work and conduct.
- Provide your supervisor(s) the earlier draft(s)/final draft of the research proposal/thesis by mutually acceptable dates, prior to the final, stipulated submission date.
- You need to adequately respond to feedback and guidance provided by the supervisor(s) with regard to the earlier and final drafts of your research proposal/thesis.
- You need to prepare for the viva voce examination adequately, and attend the examination as required by the IOU.

Role and Responsibilities of Research Supervisors & Co-Supervisors

The supervisor(s) is directly responsible for the supervision and mentoring of the candidate. Supervisors will provide guidance and assistance to candidates so that they may carry out their research and produce an acceptable doctoral thesis. In their capacity, the supervisor(s) will guide and assist candidates in:

- Developing and finalizing their research topic.
- Preparing the research proposal.
- Choosing and applying an appropriate theory to their research methodology.
- Planning an overall program of research.
- Understanding the research program's requirements and relevant regulations.
- Counselling on all aspects of the research proposal/thesis and continuing professional development.
- Continuously monitoring progress of the candidate's research.
- Encouraging and facilitating online meetings on a regular basis.
- Completing the research project within the stipulated time-frame.

Progress Reports

By the end of each semester, the supervisor(s) will submit a progress report of the candidate's work to the Higher Degrees Committee.

Mock-viva by an Internal Examiner

Before being sent to external examiners, the candidate's thesis will first be assessed by an internal examiner. A meeting will be held to question the candidate about the readiness of his/her thesis. Amendments recommended in this meeting should be fulfilled by the candidate under the guidance of their supervisor(s).

External Examination

In the penultimate semester of the program, the candidate is required to notify the Higher Degrees Committee of their intention to submit the final thesis.

The supervisor(s) will nominate potential examiners to the Faculty Management Committee of IOU. The Faculty Management Committee will appoint two suitably-qualified external examiners (actively based at other universities) for each dissertation. The Faculty Management Committee will notify the Higher Degrees Committee of the appointed supervisors.

The external examiners will review the doctoral thesis independently. Each examiner will submit a report to the Higher Degrees Committee. The Higher Degrees Committee will consolidate the reports of the external examiners.

Should the candidate be asked to make amendments and/or re-submit the thesis; the supervisor(s) will provide required support and guidance to the candidate to complete it.

Word limits and Number of References

A doctoral thesis in Islamic Sciences must meet the following criteria:

- A word count of between 60,000 (minimum) and 100,000 (maximum).
- A bibliography consisting of at least 100 references.

Format Requirements

The thesis should be submitted in electronic format, typed on a white background with A4-size page layout.

Margins

Margins should be 4 cm (1½ inches) wide on the left-hand side, and at least 2 cm (¾ inch) on the right-hand side, top and bottom.

Line Spacing

One-and-a-half line spacing should be used in the main text. However, single spacing should be used in any indented quotations and footnotes.

Page Numbering

Pages in the thesis should be numbered sequentially.

Passing Grade

The candidate must obtain a minimum average of 80% (from the external examination) to obtain the doctorate.

Structure of Research Proposal

The research proposal may be structured in accordance with the guide below:

- Title/Topic of research
- Full name of the candidate (as registered with IOU)

Title(s) and Full Name(s) of the supervisor(s)

Introduction

- Background/significance of the study
- Statement of the problem
- Aims and objectives
- Research questions
- Hypothesis (if required)

Review of Literature

Methodology

Originality and Significance

Bibliography

20 to 30 references mainly discussed in the review of literature and elsewhere in the proposal.
