

Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology

كلية الدراسات الإسلامية
College of Islamic Studies

جامعة حمد بن خليفة
HAMAD BIN KHALIFA UNIVERSITY



Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology

The Master of Arts (MA) in Counseling Psychology is uniquely offered within an Islamically integrated framework. It aspires to fill an urgent need for more trained mental health practitioners who are cognizant and capable of effectively integrating the religious sensitivities of Muslim populations into mental health care treatment.

Students are trained within a curriculum structure that is consistent with international competency standards for mental health practitioners for potential licensure anywhere in the world. In addition, under the guidance of internationally recognized faculty in the field, students have unique training opportunities to build their clinical experience—both on-site at the psychology training clinic housed within CIS as well as off-site through the program’s external mental healthcare partners.

The holistic approach of the program aims to produce a generation of scholars and practitioners to enrich the nascent field of Islamic psychology both locally and globally.

Program Focus

The MA program in Counseling Psychology aims to utilize the rich Islamic academic atmosphere of CIS to advance clinical training and scholarship that is Islamically oriented and integrated. Students will have the opportunity to train under internationally distinguished faculty and develop a research focus that speaks to their interests and addresses the gaps in current practice.

Curriculum

A 55-credit degree program taught over 2.5 years* in English, that includes:

Fourteen core courses (42 credits)

- ▶ Advanced Techniques and Interventions
- ▶ Appraisal and Psychological Assessment Methods
- ▶ Career and School Counseling
- ▶ Cross-Cultural Psychotherapy
- ▶ Ethical, Professional, and Legal Issues in Psychology
- ▶ Foundations of Islamic Sciences
- ▶ Group Therapy
- ▶ Human Growth and Development
- ▶ Introduction to Psychotherapy and Counseling Theories
- ▶ Introduction to Psychology in the Islamic Tradition
- ▶ Marital and Family Therapy
- ▶ Psychopathology and Diagnosis
- ▶ Research and Program Evaluation
- ▶ Substance Abuse and Addictions

Practicum (1 credit)

Internship I and II (6 credits)

Thesis or Research Project (6 credits)

*Students have the opportunity to fast-track their studies by completing all requirements within two years, or extending their study to a maximum of three years.

Core Courses

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
PSYC 600	3 credits	Introduction to Psychology in the Islamic Tradition	This course explores the Islamic intellectual heritage in relation to psychology. It familiarizes students with classical Islamic scholarly literature, drawing from primary sources such as Tibb, Falsafa, Tasawwuf, Kalam, and Fiqh. The course combines lectures, reading original texts with commentary, classroom discussions, and critical thinking exercises. It emphasizes comparative analysis between classical Islamic texts and modern psychology, encouraging students to examine convergence and divergence, and explore potential theoretical developments and clinical applications through critical thinking and synthesis of disparate knowledge.
PSYC 601	3 credits	Foundations of Islamic Sciences	This course introduces the foundations of Islamic sciences, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of core disciplines. It covers the aims, scope, and methods of each discipline, including Quran, Hadith, Islamic law, Discursive theology (Kalam), and the science of Islamic spirituality (Tasawwuf). Auxiliary sciences like philosophy, logic, and medicine are also discussed. The course explores connections between these Islamic disciplines and the field of psychology, enabling students to grasp the interplay between them. It serves as a foundational knowledge base for understanding Islamic sciences and their relationship to psychology.
PSYC 602	3 credits	Psychopathology and Diagnosis	This course introduces participants to the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental disorders as defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition, DSM-5, (2013) classification system. In addition to differential diagnosis using the DSM-5, the course addresses the current understanding of etiology, prevention, and treatment issues related to psychopathology.
PSYC 603	3 credits	Appraisal and Psychological Assessment Methods	This course covers psychological and cognitive assessment techniques, including standardized and non-standardized methods like norm-referenced and criterion-referenced assessment, performance assessment, environmental assessment, tests, inventories, psychological testing, behavioral observations, and clinical interviewing. It aims to develop students’ skills in creating psychological/cognitive profiles for clients, integrating data from different assessment methods to address diagnostic and referral questions, and writing comprehensive reports suited to the referring source’s needs.
PSYC 604	3 credits	Introduction to Psychotherapy and Counseling Theories	This course provides an overview of counseling theories and practices, emphasizing their philosophical and theoretical foundations. It explores mainstream counseling theories and then delves into Islamically integrative orientations to psychotherapy, including Islamic epistemology and an ontological framework of the human psyche. Students learn how to conceptualize and treat psychological disorders using Islamically integrative models, targeting cognitive, behavioral, spiritual, and emotional aspects of the human psyche. Concrete skills and therapeutic goals related to Islamic cognitive restructuring, behavioral reformation, spiritual growth, and emotional regulation are demonstrated.

Core Courses (continued)

PSYC 605	3 credits	Cross-Cultural Psychotherapy	This course focuses on client diversity and challenges cultural biases in mental health services. It examines ethnographic, demographic, and status variables and explores multicultural psychotherapy models, cultural identity development, and the impact of culture on psychopathology, health, well-being, and service delivery. Students learn skills for cultural attunement, adapting interventions, and considering cultural factors in diagnosis and assessment. The course aims to promote awareness and sensitivity to diverse populations, ensuring culturally appropriate and effective mental health care.
PSYC 606	3 credits	Group Therapy	This course explores the fundamental principles of group dynamics and their application in group therapy. It examines the formation, sustainability, and dynamics of groups, as well as how change is facilitated by the group leader. The course covers the different phases of group development, including factors such as composition, structure, selection, preparation, and overall group process. While focusing on general group concepts, the course also explores various theoretical approaches to group therapy. An experiential component is included, allowing students to participate in a group process experience as members, enhancing their learning and understanding.
PSYC 607	3 credits	Ethical, Professional, and Legal Issues in Psychology	This course examines the ethical and legal aspects of psychology and counseling. It covers various domains, including ethical guidelines, mental health laws, ethical case studies, and best practices. Students learn about Islamic ethical guidelines and the conduct expected of mental health practitioners. The course explores ethical dilemmas that arise at the intersection of Islamic values and international professional codes of ethics, emphasizing strategies for reconciliation. Students reflect on and develop their professional identity as mental health care providers throughout the course.
PSYC 608	3 credits	Career and School Counseling	This course provides an introduction to career and school counseling, covering theories, assessment tools, and their application in various educational and vocational settings. It includes career development theories, vocational counseling, decision-making models, career planning, and sources of educational and occupational information. The course also explores mental health needs of students in different school settings, including etiology, symptomology, treatment approaches, and crisis intervention strategies. Additionally, it covers socio-emotional program development, curriculum consultation, and strategies for supporting students' well-being in early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school settings.
PSYC 609	3 credits	Substance Abuse and Addictions	This course is designed to provide a supportive, structured learning environment for acquiring substance use and addictive behavior counseling skills. The course provides students with an understanding of correlates of physiological and psychological effects of drugs and the significance of treatment planning in diverse settings. It helps student use the knowledge of individual, group, and family counseling strategies as they are applied to behavior change and relapse prevention. Students learn about the diagnostic criteria of substance use and addictive behavior, models of etiology, and approaches to treatment.
PSYC 700	3 credits	Marital and Family Therapy	This course provides an overview of the development and conceptualizations of marital and family therapy. It explores different theories used in the field, including various schools of family therapy, and addresses current trends and issues in marriage and family therapy with a specific focus on the Muslim family. The course examines the Islamic Family and marital therapy models, emphasizing the reinforcement of Islamic family values and the integration of Islamically oriented strategies and interventions to enhance marriages and strengthen the family unit.

Core Courses (continued)

PSYC 707	3 credits	Research and Program Evaluation	This course introduces students to quantitative and qualitative research methods in counseling psychology. It covers the language, tools, and principles of various research methods, statistics, and program evaluation. Topics include needs assessments, survey and interview data collection, statistical analysis, and Islamic epistemology for interpreting data in counseling psychology research. The course emphasizes the grading and evaluation of self-report data, with a focus on research tools validated in Muslim populations. Students gain skills in identifying, appraising, reconciling, and interpreting data to address research questions in counseling psychology.
PSYC 702	3 credits	Advanced Techniques and Interventions	This advanced course expands on the Introduction to Psychotherapy & Counseling Theories, focusing on Islamically integrated psychotherapy. Students explore the practical application of these principles in different therapeutic contexts and pathologies using case vignettes. They engage in discussions, present their own cases, and collaborate on treatment goals. The course emphasizes the development of integrative skills and techniques for addressing psychological disorders within an Islamic framework. Advanced interventions targeting cognition, behavior, spirit, and emotions are covered, including adaptations of mainstream and Islamic approaches. Complex case demonstrations and the nuances of providing psychological care within an Islamic context are explored, and hands-on components enhance the learning experience.
PSYC 703	3 credits	Human Growth and Development	This course covers the comprehensive development of individuals across the lifespan, encompassing physical, cognitive, social, emotional, spiritual, and moral aspects. The influence of significant contexts such as family, schools, cultures, and peer groups on development is explored. Students gain insights into major life transitions and an extensive understanding of development within each stage. The course incorporates major theoretical perspectives from developmental and Islamic psychology. It also focuses on culturally appropriate interventions and assessments supported by research to promote the growth and development of clients in psychotherapy. Practical applications in the helping professions are integrated into both readings and in-class content.

Practicum

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
PSYC 697	1 credit	Practicum	This initial practicum is an introductory experience field placement designed to provide counseling psychology students opportunities to begin to use and apply the knowledge, concepts and skills acquired in their graduate program. Interns take on the role(s) of a psychotherapist at their placement site(s). They engage in an initial range of activities, including intake, assessment, and diagnosis; and begin some therapy sessions. One hundred (100) on-site clock hours are required, and weekly faculty supervision is provided on an individual and group basis, as well as on-site supervision by a licensed practitioner. Students receive a Pass/Fail grade for the course.

Internship I and II

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
PSYC 691	6 credits	Internship I and II	This internship is a capstone experience designed to provide mental health counseling students opportunities to use and apply the knowledge, concepts and skills acquired in their graduate program. Interns take on the role(s) of a counselor at their placement site(s). They will engage in a full range of activities, including intake, assessment, diagnosis, and individual and group counseling. Six hundred on-site clock hours are required, and weekly faculty supervision is provided on an individual and group basis, as well as on-site supervision by a licensed practitioner. Students receive a Pass/Fail grade for course.

Thesis or Research Project

Code	Credits	Course Title	Description
PSYC 690	6 credits	Research Project	The research project includes the development and creation of a capstone project that aims to enhance the student's understanding and application of a particular issue within the field. These projects may include the implementation of a community program (e.g., stigma reduction, mental health awareness campaign), creation and delivery of community education (e.g., seminars/workshops), program development (e.g., character education in schools, youth programming), and/or evaluation of existing programs, a community-based participatory research study (CBPR) e.g., focus groups on a particular mental health issue), or conducting a needs assessment or survey of a particular domain within the field.
PSYC 695	6 credits	Thesis	Students are expected to conduct a thesis. They develop a research question, identify aims, and select appropriate methods informed by the research methods class in order to answer their research questions.

Faculty

Dr. Hooman Keshavarzi	Program Director, Assistant Professor of Islamic Psychology
Dr. Fahad Habib Khan	Assistant Professor of Islamic Psychology
Dr. Omar Mendoza Mahmood	Clinical Director, Assistant Professor of Clinical and Counseling Psychology
Dr. Vahdet Görmez	Professor of Cognitive and Developmental Psychology
Muhammed Yakup Inan	Academic Affairs Specialist

Admission requirements

Applicants seeking admission to the MA in Counseling Psychology should have a bachelor's degree in psychology, counseling, social work, or a related field with a minimum 3.0 GPA out of 4.0 from a recognized institution. Applicants with a background in Islamic Studies are preferred (e.g., diplomas, certificates, post-baccalaureate programs). Applicants who do not have a bachelor's degree in mental health-related fields must demonstrate that they have completed coursework in psychology.

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

Program	Master of Arts in Counseling Psychology
Required Field of Study	Psychology, counseling, social work, or a related field.
Language Proficiency	IELTS: 6.5 or TOEFL: 79 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.

Application requirements

A completed online application form: 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 by 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:

- ▶ GRE: 7551
- ▶ GMAT: H6S
- ▶ 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

Applicants should submit two letters of recommendation, one of which must be from an academic referee.

Applicants should include their referees' names and email addresses in the online application. Referees will receive an email requesting them to complete their references.

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

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 or scholarships and funding on a competitive basis. Further information will be provided to applicants who are admitted to the program.

Tuition fees

Program	MA in Counseling Psychology
Total Program Tuition Fees	QAR 137,500
Tuition Fees per Credit Hour	QAR 2,500
Total Program Credit Hours	55
Program Duration	2.5 years

International Accreditation

The MA in Counseling Psychology program has been awarded an international accreditation by the International Registry of Counsellor Education Programs (IRCEP). IRCEP is an international affiliate of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) in the United States.

With the international accreditation, graduates of the program will be recognized as qualified professionals, both regionally and globally, and further enhances the credibility, mobility, and impact of the program in the mental health field.

Contact Information

Admission inquiries

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