



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات  
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies

# **ACRPS Conference for Graduate Students in Western Universities**

March, 28-30, 2020

Background Paper



The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies will convene a conference for graduate students from the Arab region currently undertaking doctoral studies within the social sciences and humanities in Western universities. Recent PhD graduates who received their doctorates in 2018 / 19 are also invited to participate. Participants will present papers based on their PhD theses and will receive a critical review from a specialist within their topic in order to enrich their research. This second round will build on the success of the first ACRPS Conference for Graduate Students in Western Universities held in spring 2018, which established an unprecedented academic tradition in the Arab region. Out of 250 applicants, 83 students were invited to participate in the first round, presenting research based on their PhD theses, and benefitting from evaluative comments and suggestions from a pool of 40 specialists in various social science and humanities disciplines.

The meeting will allow early career researchers to enhance and develop their work through constructive engagement with both established academics and their fellow graduate students. By hosting the conference in an Arab country, participating scholars can become familiar with an Arab research agenda within their own disciplines. Participants whose research would normally have been authored in the languages of their host countries will also have the chance to publish their work in Arabic. This will help disseminate their research to Arab audiences, impacting Arab academic discourse and Arab societies more broadly. For participating doctoral students and postdoc researchers who opt to remain in their host countries, the conference is also an opportunity to build lasting collegial, professional networks with their counterparts in the region.

The upcoming conference will continue the ACRPS' tradition, dating back to its founding in 2011, of advancing research culture and academic standards within the social sciences and humanities in Arabic. This takes on added significance in light of the marginalization of the social sciences and humanities within the Arab region over the preceding three decades. The meeting shall also further the Center's commitment to interdisciplinary approaches to history, philosophy, sociology, political science and international relations. In furtherance of its aims, the Center has held over 100 academic conferences and symposia devoted to many of the pressing issues facing Arab scholars. The proceedings of these conferences have been published in book format and have formed an important part of the Center's publishing activities.

Overall, the Center has released over 300 scholarly titles covering a wide range of topics, thereby advancing Arabic academic publishing. The ACRPS additionally publishes six peer reviewed journals covering the fields of history; sociology and other social sciences; critical theory and philosophy; political science and international relations; and forecasting and future studies. The Center has worked to embrace aspiring Arab scholars through the Arab Prize for Social Sciences and Humanities. Intended to incentivize academic research across a range of disciplines, the Arab Prize has so far been awarded to 50 scholars who represent the diversity of the Arab academy. Through these activities, the ACRPS has contributed to the creation of an Arab research agenda, forming a collaborative, symbiotic community of scholars who are committed to academic integrity and openness.



The upcoming conference will uphold this commitment by providing an academic environment that allows for the free exchange of ideas between Arab doctoral students based in the West and established researchers based at universities in the Arab Region. The conference objectives thus include:

1. Providing a platform that brings together Arab doctoral students based in western institutions with their counterparts in the Arab region. First, this will foster the creation of joint research projects as well as personal-professional networks that tie early career researchers to the Arab academy. With participants coming from a wide range of professional backgrounds, this will further interdisciplinary cooperation.
2. Giving participants the opportunity to benefit from constructive engagement with both established academics and their fellow graduate students, allowing them to enhance and develop their own research.
3. Serving to better acquaint Arab doctoral students and recent doctoral graduates based in the West with the research agendas of the social sciences and humanities in the Arab region, allowing them to contribute to and shape that agenda.
4. Affording doctoral students the opportunity to disseminate their work through Arabic language channels. The Arab Center will provide participants with the option to publish Arabic language versions of the research presented at the conference either in book format or in one of the peer reviewed journals that it publishes, pursuant to the ACRPS' academic standards.
5. Introducing Arab PhD candidates and recent PhD graduates to Arab academic institutions, and the needs and orientation of the Arab academic employment market. This has the added benefit of enhancing their employability in Arab academic institutions.

## Conference Topics

Participants from across the social sciences and humanities are encouraged to apply (see details below on eligibility). The conference will be held alongside workshops, the timeslots of which will vary according to discipline. While applications are open from any of the disciplines in the social sciences and humanities, we would particularly encourage prospective participants from the following fields to apply:

### Political Science and International Relations

- History
- Anthropology
- Sociology



- Philosophy
- Economics
- Development Studies
- Media Studies and Cultural Studies
- Law and International Law
- Psychology

Interdisciplinary specializations and approaches which combine the above fields within the social sciences and humanities

## Conference Structure

Participants will be grouped into panels according to research topic. Each participant on a given panel will have the opportunity to present their work. In detail:

- The conference organizing committee will divide participating scholars into topic based panels.
- Each panel will be chaired by one or more academics noted for their extensive experience in the relevant field.
- Each panelist will be allowed between 20 and 30 minutes to present his or her research work.
- Each panelist will be followed by a designated discussant given between 10 to 15 minutes to provide commentary on the written version of the paper, offering any suggestions for its improvement, followed by an open discussion with both panel participants and the audience.
- The ACRPS will coordinate the review, editing, translation (where necessary) and publication of Arabic versions of the participants' papers through one of the Center's publication channels.

## Application Guidelines

- Prospective applicants must meet the following conditions before being accepted to the conference:
- Be a currently registered graduate student at, or a recent (2018/19) graduate from, a Western university (based in Europe, North America or Oceania) with a demonstrable connection to a member-state of the Arab League.
  1. All applications must be submitted by e-mail no later than 30 July 2019. Please ensure that the following is included:
  2. The application form, which can be downloaded here.



3. The research proposal (no more than 500 words in Arabic or English), including the main research topic, methodology, and data/fieldwork on which it is based. Once the proposal is approved, successful participants must prepare their research papers in accordance with the writing and publication standards of the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies.
4. An up to date CV.
5. A writing sample (a previous research paper or published articles).
6. Academic references: An attached form should be completed by at least one academic referee who will fill out the form and return it directly to the conference committee.

The conference committee will review the applications and the research proposals on a competitive basis.

All applicants will be notified about the status of their applications by email by September 10, 2019. Successful candidates' participation in the conference will be contingent upon the submission of final research papers before the deadline specified in the acceptance letter.

## Fees

Registration is free for PhD students.

The Center will provide meals and accommodation in Doha for all participants throughout the duration of the conference.

Applicants whose proposals are accepted for participation in the conference are welcome to apply for travel grants. Grants assisting in the cost of travel between a participant's country of residence and Qatar will be awarded on a competitive basis at a later date.

## Notes

**Conference dates:** from 28 - 30 March 2020

**Venue:** Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar

**Conference languages:** Arabic and English

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