

Decision of the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee



17th Meeting on March 12, 2025

PROGRAMME ACCREDITATION

Project Number:	23/066
Higher Education Institution:	Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar
Location:	Doha, Qatar
Study programme:	Media Studies (Master of Social Sciences and Humanities – Media Studies) Sociology and Anthropology (Master of Social Sciences and Humanities – Sociology and Anthropology)
Type of accreditation:	re-accreditation

The FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee has taken the following decision:

According to § 7 (6) in conjunction with § 9 (1) of the FIBAA General Terms and Conditions within the framework of procedures for the award of the FIBAA Quality Seal for Programmes from April 30, 2021, the study programmes are re-accredited.

Period of Accreditation: 12.03.2025 – 11.03.2032

The FIBAA Quality Seal is awarded.

Assessment Report

Higher Education Institution:

Doha Institute for Graduate Studies, Qatar

Master programmes:

Media Studies

Sociology and Anthropology

Qualification awarded on completion:

Master of Social Sciences and Humanities – Media Studies

Master of Social Sciences and Humanities – Sociology and Anthropology

General information on the study programme

Brief description of the study programme:

Media Studies programme

The Media Studies (MDST) programme examines the global role of media by studying rapidly evolving communication venues, including traditional, new and social media. The students will acquire expertise in various areas (Arab and Middle Eastern media; media theory; sociology of news work; media systems and models; political economy of the media; global media and media representation; media effects and public opinion; and media and democratisation) They will be prepared for the challenges in an ever-changing global media environment and to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research underpinned by diverse theoretical perspectives. The MDST programme seeks to help students acquire the skills necessary for pursuing media studies research in the Arab world and beyond.

Sociology and Anthropology programme

The mission of the Sociology and Anthropology programme (SOC) is to equip graduate students with advanced up-to-date theoretical and methodological knowledge in sociology and anthropology. The programme seeks to achieve its mission through a focus on the critical traditions and schools that constitute the core of sociology and anthropology and their developments to the present day. The programme addresses the complexity of the interrelations between local Arab and global contexts, enabling students to conduct in-depth and critical research on contemporary social phenomena in Arab contexts and beyond. The programme aims to contribute to sociological and anthropological knowledge from a modern Arab perspective.

Type of study programme:

Master programmes

Projected study time and number of ECTS credits assigned to the study programme:

MDST: 2 years / 4 semesters; 100 ECTS credits

SOC: 2 years / 4 semesters; 100 ECTS credits

Part-time: up to 4 years (individual study plans)

Mode of study:

full-time and part-time

Didactic approach:

study programmes with obligatory class attendance

Double/Joint Degree programme:

no

Scope (planned number of parallel classes) and enrolment capacity:

15-20 students per academic year per programme

Programme cycle starts in:

fall semester

Initial start of the programmes:

September 2015

Type of accreditation:

re-accreditation

Last accreditation period:

June 5, 2020 until the end of Spring Semester 2025

Procedure

A contract for the re-accreditation of the Media Studies programme (Master) and the Sociology and Anthropology programme (Master) was made between FIBAA and Doha Institute for Graduate Studies on July 20, 2023. On August 6, 2024, the HEI submitted a self-evaluation report, which included a detailed description of the programme and further documents in order to prove that the criteria for programme accreditation are met.

At the same time, FIBAA appointed a review panel¹. The HEI has agreed with the chosen experts. The panel consisted of:

Prof. Dr. Sonja Drobnic

University of Bremen
Professor of Sociology

Tilia Veronika Främbs

Utrecht University
Student of Sociology and Social Research M.Sc.

Dr. Nabil Litayem

Joaan Bin Jassim Academy for Defence Studies
Director of Quality Assurance Office/ Assistant Professor for Cyber Security, Information Technologies, Computer Engineering

Christoph Sodemann

Constructify.media e.V.
Managing Director & Co-Founder

Prof. Dr. Birgit Stöber

BSP Business & Law School Berlin
Professor of Communication Management

FIBAA project manager:
Christiane Butler

The assessment is based on the self-evaluation report, amended by further documents, as requested by the panel, and an online conference. The online conference took place November 4 - 5, 2024 via the video conferencing tool *Zoom*. At the end of the online conference, the panel has given a short feedback on its first impressions to representatives of the HEI.

The assessment report based on this was delivered to the HEI for comment on January 30, 2025. The HEI submitted its statement to the report on February 13, 2025. It has been taken into account in the present report.

¹ The panel is presented in alphabetical order.

Summary

The Master of Social Sciences and Humanities in Media Studies programme and the Master of Social Sciences and Humanities in Sociology and Anthropology programme offered by the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies fulfil the FIBAA quality requirements for master programmes and can be re-accredited by the Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (FIBAA) for seven years starting on March 12, 2025 and finishing on March 11, 2032. The programmes are in accordance with the national and the European Qualification Frameworks and the European Standards and Guidelines in their applicable version valid as of the time of the opening of the procedure, and with the Bologna Declaration.

The panel members identified four areas where the programmes could be further developed:

- Substituting links provided in the Diploma Supplements with the information necessary according to the ECTS User's Guide 2015² (see chapter 3.2),
- Reviewing the DI credit/ECTS credit conversion rate based on experiences with European universities (see chapter 3.2),
- Updating the literature lists in the module descriptions of the **Media Studies** programme (see chapter 3.3).

The measures implemented by the HEI to address the panel's recommendations will be evaluated during the re-accreditation.

There are many criteria in which the programmes exceed the quality requirements:

- Objectives of the study programme (see chapter 1.1),
- International orientation of the study programme design (see chapter 1.2),
- Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept (see chapter 1.3),
- Admission requirements (see chapter 2),
- Counselling for prospective students (see chapter 2),
- Selection procedure (see chapter 2),
- Examination and final thesis (see chapter 3.1),
- Equality of opportunity (see chapter 3.2),
- Internationality of the student body (see chapter 3.4),
- Internationality of faculty (see chapter 3.4),
- Academic qualification of faculty (see chapter 4.1),
- Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty (see chapter 4.2),
- Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (see chapter 4.4),
- Access to literature (see chapter 4.4),
- Career counselling and placement service (see chapter 4.5),
- Programme description (see chapter 5), and
- Information on activities during the academic year (see chapter 5).

² [ECTS users' guide 2015 - Publications Office of the EU](#), last access January 9, 2025

Additionally, for the **Sociology and Anthropology** programme:

- Interdisciplinary thinking (see chapter 3.1).

Furthermore, there is one criterion rated as exceptional for both programmes:

- Student support by the faculty (see chapter 4.1).

For the overall assessment of the programme, please refer to the quality profile at the end of this report.

Information

Information on the Institution

Doha Institute Mission

The Doha Institute for Graduate Studies (DI) is an independent academic institution for postgraduate studies in the social sciences, humanities, public administration, development economics, business administration, clinical and social psychology, social work, conflict management and humanitarian action, critical security studies, and human rights. The Institute realises its academic objectives by integrating teaching and learning with scientific research in a manner that prepares its graduates to become academic researchers in the social sciences, humanities, public administration and development economics, and accomplished professionals in their fields of specialisation.

The Institute aims through its teaching and learning programmes and the research activities of its faculty to fulfil its mission of universal participation by preparing a new generation of academics and researchers who are independent thinkers and proficient in using international scientific standards and modern interdisciplinary research methodologies and tools, and leading professionals who can advance human knowledge and respond to the needs of the Arab region, resulting in social, cultural and intellectual development.

According to DI, there are currently 27 alumni that are studying at 25 different universities across Europe, including Germany and the UK. In the USA, ten alumni are pursuing PhDs, while seven are doing so in Canada at various universities. Additionally, 49 of DI alumni are enrolled in PhD programmes across 22 universities in Arab countries. Four alumni are studying in China, South Africa, and Malaysia.

The Institute adopts the Arabic Language as the main language for instruction and research, supported by other international languages.

DI Degree Programmes

The DI features two Schools – the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH) and the School of Economics, Administration and Public Policy (SEAPP). In total, the DI offers 20 master's degree programmes and eight PhD study programmes. The Media Studies programme (MDST) and the Sociology and Anthropology programme are a part of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH). DI and all its programmes are licensed by Qatar's Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The most recent ministerial re-licensing of DI in May 2021 has been successful. DI is listed on the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's website (Higher Education in Qatar).³

³ See [Higher Education in Qatar](#), last access on February 17, 2025

Further development of the programmes, implementation of recommendations from previous accreditation, statistical data and evaluation results

The programmes were accredited by FIBAA from June 5, 2020, until the end of Spring Semester 2025. While no formal recommendations were received from FIBAA from the last accreditation, the programmes remained diligent in their efforts to implement best practices and address any potential areas for enhancement. Development efforts focused on enhancing the programmes' content and structure, nurturing faculty talent and continuously supporting students, all aimed at fostering academic excellence.

Media Studies

First, in 2021, the Media Studies (MDST) programme, formerly called Media and Cultural Studies (MACS), changed its name following a formal institutional procedure to align the programme with the mainstream academy, the programme's focus, student pedagogical needs, and the expertise of programme faculty and applicant pools. However, the main substance of the programme has not changed.⁴

Second, MDST revised its study plan as part of the programme enhancement efforts. The primary changes and enhancements to the study plan since the last accreditation are:

- the removal of the non-credit English Language for Media course (MACS 001) (resulting in less workload in the first semester),
- the introduction of a Research Seminar (MDST610),
- the replacement of module MDST 626 "Media and Communication: From the Press to Web 2.0" by MDST 626 "Global Media Systems",
- an addition of an elective course MDST 634 "Issues in Media Studies: Sociology of News", and
- the elimination of the non-elective course in the final semester.

This has broadened the programme's focus to reflect the wide array of theoretical and methodological approaches in the mass communication field. In addition, the number of PLOs was reduced from eight to five to avoid redundancy and improve overall measurability.

The adjustments build on student feedback and internal programme discussions. The study plan grants students more time to complete their thesis project as there are no other courses to complete in the last semester. The thesis now counts for nine instead of six credits.

Third, in 2021, a PhD programme in Media Studies was developed. The Media Studies Master programme is part of the Institute's umbrella PhD programme, which emphasises the Arab world and related studies.

⁴ See chapter 3.1

The statistics for the MDST programme are as follows:⁵

		Cohort 2015	Cohort 2016	Cohort 2017	Cohort 2018	Cohort 2019	Cohort 2020	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023
# Study Places offered by MDST		15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
# Applicants	Σ	123	166	106	82	87	128	142	134	185
	f	48	73	49	38	40	71	74	68	100
	m	75	93	57	44	47	57	68	66	85
Application rate		820,00%	1106,67%	706,67%	546,67%	580,00%	853,33%	946,67%	893,33%	1233,33%
# First-Year Students (accepted applicants)	Σ	16	19	8	11	11	12	11	10	15
	f	9	14	4	5	10	8	4	7	10
	m	7	5	4	6	1	4	7	3	5
Rate of female students		56,25%	73,68%	50,00%	45,45%	90,91%	66,67%	36,36%	70,00%	66,67%
# Foreign Students	Σ	15	17	7	11	11	11	10	8	
	f	9	13	3	5	10	7	3	6	
	m	6	4	4	6	1	4	7	2	
Rate of foreign students		93,75%	89,47%	87,50%	100%	100,00%	92%	90,91%	80,00%	
Percentage of occupied study places		106,67%	126,67%	53,33%	73,33%	73,33%	80,00%	73,33%	66,67%	
# Graduates	Σ	14	16	7	9	11	8	9	8	
	f	8	12	4	4	10	6	3	6	
	m	6	4	3	5	1	2	6	2	
Success rate (students who finished their studies)		87,50%	84,21%	87,50%	81,82%	100,00%	66,67%	81,82%	80,00%	
Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies)		12,50%	15,79%	12,50%	18,18%	0,00%	33,33%	18,18%	20,00%	
Average duration of study		2 Years	2.187 Years	2 Years	2 Years	2.09 Years	2 Years	2 Years	2	
Average grade of final degree		3,45	3,61	3,67	3,43	3,33	3,45	3,38	3,44	

Sociology and Anthropology

For the academic years of 2022-2024, the study plan has undergone significant changes. These were fuelled by in-depth discussions at both the programme council and School Council tiers and students' feedback received via the student-faculty forum. Furthermore, the transformations have been influenced by insights garnered from the Annual Programme Assessment Reports and Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment reports spanning the last three years.

A prominent advancement lies in the further consolidation of the thesis cluster. A core course termed "Research Seminar 2" was introduced in the third semester, allocating three credit hours. The thesis is accredited with nine credit hours now instead of formerly six credit hours.

Another significant change was splitting the core course "Sociology and Anthropology of Arab Societies" (SOC615) into two distinct courses. One focuses on the sociology of Arab societies, while the latter delves profoundly into the anthropology of Arab societies. Students select one of these two courses. This separation allows each course to delve deeper into its respective discipline while also allowing students to have greater flexibility in tailoring their academic paths to their interests and career goals.

⁵ Note: longer durations of study can be attributed to students pausing their studies due to personal reasons or students changing to an individual part-time study plan.

The programme experienced a decline in application for the years 2021 and 2022, which can be partially attributed to the implementation of more stringent English language proficiency requirements at the Doha Institute as a whole. This decision was aimed at aligning the programme with international academic standards and enhancing the overall quality of education. Additionally, the global challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to this decline, affecting student mobility and decision-making processes. Despite some decline in the number of applications, it is important to highlight that the quality of applicants has significantly increased. The implementation of the English language requirement has set a higher benchmark for the programme, attracting a pool of candidates who are not only proficient in English but also demonstrate strong academic potential and motivation.

The statistics for the SOC programme are as follows:⁶

		Cohort 2015	Cohort 2016	Cohort 2017	Cohort 2018	Cohort 2019	Cohort 2020	Cohort 2021	Cohort 2022	Cohort 2023
# Study Places offered by SOC		15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
# Applicants	Σ	70	104	75	87	178	357	133	94	126
	f	29	37	23	33	69	153	49	43	45
	m	41	67	52	54	109	204	84	51	81
Application rate		466.67%	693.33%	500.00%	580.00%	1186.67%	2380.00%	886.67%	626.67%	840.00%
# First-Year Students (accepted applicants)	Σ	13	16	8	15	16	16	9	14	16
	f	11	9	2	10	8	11	3	10	8
	m	2	7	6	5	8	5	6	4	8
Rate of female students		84.62%	56.25%	25.00%	66.67%	50.00%	68.75%	33.33%	71.43%	50.00%
# Foreign Students	Σ	9	13	6	10	13	15	7	11	
	f	6	6	1	6	5	10	6	8	
	m	3	7	5	4	8	5	1	3	
Rate of foreign students		69.23%	81.25%	75.00%	66.67%	81.25%	93.75%	77.78%	78.57%	
Percentage of occupied study places		86.67%	106.67%	53.33%	100.00%	106.67%	106.67%	60.00%	93.33%	
# Graduates	Σ	12	13	7	15	14	14	6	8	
	f	9	6	2	10	12	10	3	6	
	m	3	7	5	5	2	4	3	2	
Success rate (students who finished their studies)		92.31%	81.25%	87.50%	100.00%	87.50%	87.50%	66.67%	57.14%	
Dropout rate (students who dropped their studies)		7.69%	18.75%	12.50%	0.00%	12.50%	12.50%	33.33%	35.71%*	
Average duration of study		2 Years	2.23 Years	2.14 Years	2.06 Years	2 Years	2 Years	2 Years	2 Years	
Average grade of final degree		3.485	3.637	3.48	3.41	3.52	3.4	3.59	3.57	

* there is one still active part-time student (as of February 2025)

Appraisal

Both programmes are highly competitive, offering a limited number of study places and maintaining rigorous academic requirements.⁷ However, they also provide a strong academic support system, including scholarships, personal coaching and flexible study options, making studying at Doha Institute a unique experience.⁸

⁶ Note: longer durations of study can be attributed to students pausing their studies due to personal reasons or students changing to an individual part-time study plan.

⁷ See chapter 2

⁸ See chapters 2, 3.2, 4.2

The number of study places offered remains stable, while application rates fluctuate. For the competitive programmes, only a few students are selected, and study places cannot always be filled.

Study places are more often filled with female candidates than male.

The proportion of foreign students is extremely high, even considering the regional context. During the assessment conference, DI explained that they distinguish between two categories of foreign students – those who are foreign by both citizenship and place of residence, and those who are foreign by citizenship, but are residents of Qatar prior to enrolling in the study programme.

Most students complete their studies on time. Slightly longer study durations are typically due to students taking leaves of absence or arranging individual part-time study plans with their advisors, allowing up to four years to complete the programme. According to DI, students choose these options because they are working besides studying or for other personal reasons.

The average grade of final degree is high. Most students receive scholarships and are required to maintain strong academic performance to retain them.

Programme Description and Appraisal in Detail

1. Objectives

1.1 Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)

Media Studies

Programme Mission

The Media Studies programme aims to re-think the role of media in the Arab region and enrich debates taking place on various levels in media and cultural studies. In accordance with the Doha Institute's mission of integrating teaching and research to prepare graduates to become competent scholars and professionals, this programme seeks to train the next generation of high calibre researchers in Arab media studies. Overall, this programme emphasises research training to enable students to conduct empirical and policy-driven research on Arab media production, cultures, and institutions. Programme courses address research methodology, media theory, media representation, Arab media cultures, visual culture, media audiences and users, the political economy of mass media, media ethics and law, and other areas. The programme's cross-disciplinary courses contribute to broad understanding of relevant study areas in the social sciences and humanities.

Programme Context

The MDST programme was created to address the Arab region's relative dearth of professional media apparatuses and cultures.⁹ The programme also operates in a region where media enjoys little to no independence, and there has been a significant decline in the public's perception of basic freedoms and trust in media and government institutions.¹⁰ The programme serves the region by preparing researchers capable of examining the evolving role of media in Arab societies and the world at large, as well as the representation of Arabs in other media systems. The programme aims to develop top-tier media researchers and analysts for the academy, think tanks, and NGOs and to prepare media professionals and executives for careers in media industries.

The main goals of the programme are to:

- Enable students to conduct theoretically driven, empirical research on Arab and global media content, cultures, and institutions.
- Emphasise the kinds of methodological, academic writing, oral communication, and critical interpretation skills necessary to carry out and deliver media research.
- Prepare students for PhD work in media studies, media research careers, and professional careers in media industries. The programme aims to achieve these goals

⁹ According to the self-evaluation report p. 11, the institution refers to Mellor, N. (2018). The state of Arab media since 2011. IeMED

¹⁰ According to the self-evaluation report p. 11, Jebiril, N. and Abunajela, M. (Eds.) (2023) Media and Democracy in the Middle East. London: Routledge

by offering cross-disciplinary courses that emphasise various scientific approaches to studying media phenomena

Programme Learning Outcomes

As per the MDST programme specification document, the MDST programme aims to deliver five Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs)/objectives – centred on knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical and transferrable/key skills - to its students. Since its inception, the MDST programme has consistently worked on refining its Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) to ensure they are measurable, aligned with the programme's mission and goals.

In 2020, the programme, along with other programmes at DI, engaged in the first-ever Doha Institute PLO Assessment. The Doha Institute PLO Assessment is a mechanism developed over the last years and is part of the Institute's Annual Programme Assessment process. Importantly, the Institute's Office of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) worked closely with all programmes on the PLO assessment. Overlaps and redundancies were identified in this process. The programme will continue to be periodically evaluated.¹¹

On successfully completing this programme, the MDST student will be able to:

Knowledge and understanding:

- PLO1: Demonstrate an understanding of relevant scholarship on media and culture, in the West, the Arab region and/or the wider Middle East

Intellectual skills:

- PLO2: Critically analyse approaches to de-westernizing media studies.
- PLO3: Demonstrate an understanding of key cultural approaches, arguments and debates relevant to the study of contemporary Arab media cultures.

Practical skills:

- PLO4: Apply relevant media studies theories to original media studies research.

Transferrable/key skills:

- PLO5: Develop original research using acquired knowledge of research methods and data gathering techniques.

The programme's learning outcomes include academic proficiency, employability, social commitment, and nurturing individual student personalities. The outcomes related to knowledge, understanding, and intellectual skills specifically contribute to academic proficiency. Outcomes concerning practical and transferable skills, particularly those focusing on original research in media and societal issues, advance goals related to employability and social commitment. Moreover, each of the four areas plays a crucial role in shaping the distinctive personality of every student, demanding that they exhibit creativity and innovation in both their thinking and practical application within these fields. Below is the Programme

¹¹ See chapter 5

Learning Outcomes matrix table extracted from the MDST programme specification document. It outlines how courses are aligned to programme learning outcomes and assessed.

Sociology and Anthropology

Programme Mission

The mission of the Master's Programme in Sociology and Anthropology is to cultivate a new generation of scholars and practitioners who thrive in various academic and professional environments, both within the Arab region and globally. Aligned with the Institute's vision, a comprehensive educational curriculum equips students with advanced theoretical knowledge, methodological expertise, and analytical capabilities, alongside practical skills. DI's commitment to promoting original research, fostering interdisciplinary and community collaboration, and embracing technological innovation prepares graduates for critical thinking and adherence to international scientific standards, with an emphasis on understanding the complex societal and cultural fabric of the Arab region.

Programme Goals

The curriculum emphasises the complex interplay between local and global dynamics, equipping students to generate academic discourse on contemporary social challenges within and beyond Arab societies. With a foundation in methodological expertise, theoretical analysis, and hands-on research, graduates are poised to embark on diverse professional trajectories. This incorporates both practical roles in the field, pursuing advanced academic endeavours, and enriching the knowledge base on both regional and global scales.

The specific goals of the programme are the following:

- Students will gain deep and analytical understanding of the core areas within sociology and anthropology.
- Students will possess the skills to independently plan and execute sociological and anthropological research.
- Students will be ready to enter leading PhD programmes worldwide.
- Students will be equipped to pursue careers in both domestic and international sectors, spanning public, nonprofit, and private domains.
- Students will develop the insight and understanding to identify key societal and cultural challenges, actively addressing them as involved citizens dedicated to societal welfare

The Master's Programme in Sociology and Anthropology is committed to carving out a distinguished position in the academic landscape of the Arab region. By prioritising an education that merges profound theoretical knowledge with effective research skills, it is aimed to produce researchers proficient in understanding the multifaceted nature of Arab societies. DI's approach marries global teaching standards with region-specific contexts, giving rise to an enriching pedagogical experience. The programme's specific goals translate into Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs). These outcomes are designed to ensure students have a comprehensive grasp of sociology and anthropology's key areas, are proficient at conducting independent research, are poised for acceptance into globally recognised PhD programmes, are equipped for diverse career paths both locally and internationally and are ready to engage constructively with pressing societal and cultural issues as dedicated,

informed citizens. The learning outcomes serve as a tangible manifestation of DI's mission and goals, bringing their vision to fruition.

Programme Learning Outcomes

The programme also followed the Institute's PLO Assessment in 2020. In the updated SOC Programme Specification document, the SOC programme now sets out to deliver 5 core programme learning outcomes (reduced from formerly 20). The reduced number of PLOs helped achieve a number of targets such as enhanced clarity and focus, improved measurability and assessment and reduction of redundancy and overlap. The 2020 revision emphasises enhancing students' academic capability and broadening their practical exposure.

One prominent example of this shift can be observed in courses such as the Research Seminar, and Research Seminar 2, which equips students with hands-on experience and intensive training in sociological and anthropological research (qualitative and quantitative research skills). Another significant aspect of the revision emphasises the tangible impact of student research in real-world contexts, highlighting the programme's commitment to producing actionable knowledge and fostering civic engagement among its students.

Knowledge and understanding:

- PLO 1: Demonstrate an understanding of the historical, philosophical, and theoretical frameworks of sociology and anthropology from the early 19th century to the present day, along with the key questions, issues, trends, and advancements emerging within these two fields.

Intellectual skills:

- PLO 2: Analyse the conditions and influences affecting Arab societies, including, but not limited to, how language, ethnicity, religion, geopolitics, and technologies have shaped socio-cultural constructs within the Arab Region and its relations to other societies.
- PLO 3: Critically examining contemporary broad sociological and anthropological issues and topics, including, but not limited to, identity, gender, migration and citizenship, political transition, and social change.

Practical and transferable skills:

- PLO 4: Deconstruct social and cultural phenomena, applying a critical examination of its elements, to formulate original arguments.
- PLO 5: Design, conduct and present research of complex questions in sociology and anthropology based on in-depth and critical understanding of advanced qualitative and quantitative methods.

All masters' programmes at DI have been designed and developed to meet and be aligned with the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and its learning outcome descriptors for a higher education qualification at level 7.

Appraisal:

The qualification objectives of the programmes are explained and convincingly presented in relation to the target group, targeted professional field and societal context of each respective discipline. They encompass academic proficiency, comprehensive employability, as well as the development of the individual student's personality.

The subject-specific and extra-curricular qualification objectives and skills to be acquired correspond with the aspired level at graduation. They take into account the requirements of the national qualification framework.

In addition, the HEI systematically aligns the programme's qualification objectives with the specific requirements of an international target group. This includes fostering broad contextual knowledge and skills, global perspectives,¹² and multidisciplinary.¹³ The qualification objectives are documented in detail. They are regularly reviewed for their adequacy and up-to-datedness and are adapted accordingly.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.1*	Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)		X			

1.2 International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)

Media Studies

Curriculum and Teaching

The MDST programme is internationalised, both in terms of curricular content and student and faculty composition. In multiple courses, the curriculum deals explicitly with the globalisation phenomenon as well as international approaches to media studies. The MDST programme also addresses issues around media and democracy debates, media audiences, digital news consumption, and issues in media representation from a comparative perspective. Media ethics, the political economy of communication, and visual cultures are all treated from local, national, and international perspectives. Moreover, the curriculum calls for media systems in the Arab region, Europe, and North America to be discussed, analysed, and compared.

Peer-reviewed academic works involving case studies spanning much of the world are assigned as part of the course readings. Textbooks and other teaching materials are chosen from international authors and publishers.

Additionally, the programme is taught in both English and Arabic, and students are assigned readings and can submit assignments in either language. The programme's international focus positions students to pursue careers in media-related fields in either the Arab region or the West, or to engage in doctoral media studies at Arab or Western universities.

¹² See chapter 1.2, 3.1

¹³ See chapter 3.5

The MDST programme features a diverse student body. Most students are recruited from the Arab region. Since 2019, the number of graduates has stabilised, ranging from nine to ten graduates each year. The first seven graduating classes (2017–2023) included a total of 74 graduates. The diversity of the student body at the MDST programme is also reflected in the research topics that the students engage with and therefore is an integral part of the programme's aim to prepare researchers capable of examining the evolving role of media in diverse environments.

The programmes believe that student diversity will enrich the learning experience. Although both programmes have only existed for a few years and seek a small number of select students to maintain a low student-to-faculty ratio, students representing several countries have already enrolled and graduated. The student population includes or has included: Qataris, non-Qatari residents in Qatar, as well as citizens of Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Somalia, Sudan, Tunisia, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Canada, Chad, Russia, and the United Kingdom.

Faculty, Research and Guest Speakers

Collectively, MDST faculty were educated in multiple Arab-speaking countries, Europe, and the United States as highlighted in their CVs. All speak at least two languages and have previously worked in European or American Universities. The current Head of the Programme has previously led the cross-faculty MA Media and Communication programme at Bournemouth University in the UK, which encompasses one of the largest media faculties in the country. Additionally, the MDST faculty research programmes focus on the Arab region, Europe, and North America. MDST faculty research also often builds on a comparative approach, exploring production, content, and audiences in both the Arab region and in emerging and developed media markets. A complete list of publications was provided in their respective CVs.

The MDST programme uses an annual budget line item to bring in international guest speakers – from the Arab region, Europe, and the United States – to deliver lectures to students. Since its inception, the MDST programme has invited international guest speakers from around the world. In recent years, the programme has had the privilege of hosting a diverse range of international guest speakers.

International collaboration

In 2023, as part of the MDST programme's effort to internationalise its research agenda and collaboration with international researchers, the programme co-organised a conference titled “Digital Platforms and Democracy: Journalism and Political Communication in a World of Polycrisis”, which was held from November 3–5, 2023, in Piraeus, Greece. The conference is a collaborative effort with other academic partners, including the MA Communication and New Journalism programme at the Advanced Media Institute, the Open University of Cyprus, the School of Law at the University of Nicosia, and the Department of Digital Media and Communication at Ionian University. This collaboration signifies an advancement in the programme's commitment to tackling challenges to democracy that continue to arise, both in the Arab region and in other emerging media markets with shared characteristics, as digital and social media platforms continue to expand.

Sociology and Anthropology

Curriculum

The SOC programme at DI has been carefully designed to align with the benchmarks established by leading global higher education institutions specializing in post-graduate studies in sociology and anthropology. This alignment is evident in both the range of topics explored within the courses and the classical readings (for example featuring classical readings from seminal thinkers like Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Margaret Mead) incorporated into the curriculum.

Elective courses offer a deeper exploration into specialised areas such as cultural anthropology, social stratification, migration and citizenship in Europe and contemporary sociological issues, encouraging students to engage with diverse perspectives and contemporary research.

Additionally, the programme is taught in both English and Arabic, and students are assigned readings and can submit assignments in either language. Thus, students who graduate from the SOC programme are fluent in both Arabic and English.

Faculty

The faculty members of the SOC programme have an esteemed international presence, as evident from their CVs, with the majority of them fluent in three languages. Their diverse academic backgrounds and experiences position the programme solidly within a global academic landscape.¹⁴

Student Body

The SOC programme's student body has grown increasingly diverse since 2019, expanding beyond initial student demographic from countries such as Sudan, Palestine, Morocco, Syria, and Qatar. Recent cohorts included students from Iraq, Yemen, Jordan, Oman, and even non-Arab countries such as Turkey. This rich mosaic of backgrounds and experiences not only deepens the cultural and academic fabric of the institution but also significantly elevates the internationality of the programme. Drawing from American, British, and French academic traditions, among others, students bring a wealth of perspectives (and languages) that foster a vibrant, multicultural learning environment. This, in turn, enriches classroom discussions and research activities and opportunities, further emphasizing the programme's global orientation.

Alongside their main studies, students also undertake English courses (when that is deemed required), ensuring they can actively engage with international academic literature. Typically, a SOC course syllabus integrates 40% Arabic academic literature, 30% English academic literature, and 30% content translated from languages such as English, French, and German into Arabic.

Guest Speakers

¹⁴ See chapter 3.4

The SOC programme regularly hosts international conferences, academics, and researchers as guest speakers from around the world. For example, between February 18 to 20, 2024, faculty members from the programme were involved in organising the international conference (Water Ways: Epistemologies and Aesthetics). Moreover, in the past three years, the SOC programme has had the honour of hosting an array of international speakers. These scholars are based in various parts of the world, bringing a wealth of knowledge and diverse perspectives that enrich the academic community. In the recent span of 2021-2023, the SOC programme has embraced academics from Tunisia to Australia, Lebanon to the UK, Morocco to Kuwait, and beyond, each bringing unique perspectives that underscore the programme's international ethos, e.g., conversations on decoloniality and solidarity, maintaining the programme's position at the forefront of sociological and anthropological inquiry.

Each of these scholars has a deep commitment to their respective fields and brings to the SOC programme a fresh and global perspective on sociology and anthropology. Their involvement confirms the international reach and reputation of the programme, making it a focal point for groundbreaking discussions and ideas in the realm of sociology and anthropology. The diverse backgrounds of the speakers, spanning from Africa to the Middle East, Europe and even Australia, reflect the programme's commitment to internationalism. In conclusion, the SOC programme's continuous engagement with such renowned international figures consolidates its reputation as a global hub for scholarly exchange in the fields of sociology and anthropology. The diversity and calibre of these guest speakers demonstrates the programme's commitment to fostering a rich, multicultural academic environment.

Appraisal:

The programmes' design appropriately takes into account the required international aspects, also with regard to enhancing graduates' employability.

In addition, the programmes' strong emphasis on internationality in teaching and study (e.g. in terms of curricular contents, the composition of the student body and academic staff),¹⁵ ensures that graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to competently manage international tasks.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.2*	International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

¹⁵ See chapters 3.1, 3.4

1.3 Positioning of the study programme

Media Studies

Positioning of the Study Programme in the Educational Market

There are few media studies MA programmes in the Arab region and, outside of DI, none in Qatar. As of 2024, the MDST programme remains the only master's programme in Qatar in the field of media studies.¹⁶ There are also no similar programmes in the region that focus on media studies from a research-based perspective. This relative dearth of graduate programmes in the region makes it challenging for Arab media research institutes and universities to fill media research and teaching positions. Additionally, there is a notable scarcity of published research on Arab media systems, audiences, and phenomena, especially compared to the extensive research on media in North America, Europe, Asia, and Central and South America.

Specialised Arab media journals are also relatively new, with some journals publishing infrequently. Moreover, most research on Arab media to date has been conducted by either non-Arab scholars or Arab academics based in Western countries. Consequently, there is a pressing need for indigenous Arab media research, particularly in light of the region's challenges with authoritarianism, censorship, media propaganda, and lack of media professionalism. Against this backdrop, the MDST programme is strategically positioned to bridge these vital gaps in Arab media research, particularly in Qatar.

Since 2019, the MDST faculty published a total of five books, six book chapters, and 24 peer-reviewed journal articles. All books and chapters address issues about media and democracy in the Arab region and other emerging media markets and were published by UK-based publishing houses such as Routledge and Palgrave Macmillan. In addition, faculty members have produced a total of 18 peer-reviewed articles in international journals such as *Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research*, *Global Media and Communication*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*. Six of these journal articles have been co-authored in collaboration with MDST graduates based on their master's research. Research by MDST faculty and students addresses one of the central aims of the programme to advance Arab media scholarship and prepare students for PhD work and careers in media.

Sociology and Anthropology

Positioning of the Study Programme in the Educational Market

DI primarily serves students across the Arab region. The academic territories it addresses span both Arab and global dimensions. A major divide characterises the Arab higher education domain, distinguishing public from private institutions. In context with public institutions, the SOC programme builds on the experience of established national universities and moves towards new paradigms in knowledge production, utilising resources that are not available to the vast segment of established national universities within the Arab region. As a result, the SOC programme provides a competitive and unique opportunity for a Master's degree in Sociology and Anthropology.

¹⁶ See self-evaluation report p. 18

This is evident in the faculty quality, infrastructural advantages, student scholarships, favourable faculty-student dynamics and ratio, and advanced curriculum. The programme also stands as the sole graduate programme for sociology and anthropology in Qatar.¹⁷ Unlike national universities that are deeply rooted in their respective localities, the SOC programme provides a panoramic perspective of the Arab domain, integrated with global communities. The high tuition fees coupled with English as the medium of instruction in private universities operating in the Arab region (e.g. American University of Beirut or the American University of Cairo) pose genuine challenges to a significant portion of the Arab youth who are keen on advanced education. In contrast, DI offers comprehensive scholarships, financial support, and most importantly, the advantage of learning in Arabic, making it accessible to a broader Arab demographic. In the current educational landscape, emerging private institutions in the Arab region appear more profit-driven, emphasizing vocational courses such as business and engineering. Setting itself apart, the SOC programme, while part of a non-profit institution, champions a robust foundation in scientific knowledge whereas still paving the way for professional pursuits.

Internationally, the SOC programme's reputation is rapidly increasing,¹⁸ closing the gap with renowned academic institutions in regions like the UK, USA, and France, traditionally preferred by Arab students. This upward trajectory can be attributed to several factors: a curriculum deeply aligned with Arab students' aspirations and interests; the creation of a hub for distinguished Arab intellectuals and scholars, which magnetises the next generation of Arab researchers; comprehensive scholarships covering both tuition and living costs; and a dynamic schedule of events, including workshops and conferences with renowned scholars. This global recognition makes it highly attractive to potential students.

The trends over the past three years are indicative of an evolving educational paradigm. Since its inception in 2015, the SOC programme's unique positioning in the academic landscape has yielded remarkable results. The programme sees a rising tide of student applications and/or quality as well as heightened interest from potential faculty members. It is noteworthy that outstanding students, presented with alternative educational avenues both in their home countries and abroad, are increasingly opting for the DI, reinforcing their distinct advantage in the regional academic landscape. For instance, the application rate peaked impressively for those who applied in 2020,¹⁹ showcasing immense enthusiasm for the programme.

Media Studies

Positioning of the Study Programme on the Job Market for Graduates

The scarcity of consistent, high-quality media and journalism education in the Arab region is believed to contribute to the widespread lack of media professionalism and research in many Arab nations (Elmasry, 2009).²⁰ DI was founded as a specialised institute for graduate research and aims to recruit leading Arabic-speaking media scholars to instruct its students. Faculty of the MDST programme have received their degrees from prestigious universities, and the programme's curriculum has been designed by academics well-versed in media education

¹⁷ See self-evaluation report p. 22

¹⁸ See self-evaluation report p. 23

¹⁹ See statistical data in section "Information"

²⁰ See self-evaluation report p. 19

standards and trends. Given the rigor of the programme and curriculum and the enhanced quality of MDST faculty, students will be well positioned to produce high-quality master theses and compete for opportunities for PhD positions either in the Arab region or the West. The programme also encourages student-faculty collaboration and authorship. Several students' theses have been published as academic journal articles in collaboration with faculty members.

Students not wishing to complete doctoral studies will be well positioned for jobs as media researchers at think tanks and NGOs, and as media professionals in media industries, as well as government or non-government analysts and strategic communication specialists. The programme's academic advisors also play an important role in preparing students for the job market.²¹

Because the MDST programme's primary focus centres on research and scholarship, there is not a formal media training or internship component to the MDST curriculum. However, students are encouraged to seek out such opportunities, and the programme helps facilitate them by providing local media contacts and free transportation to and from formal media training activities. According to DI,²² MDST students have consistently taken advantage of these opportunities, and many of the graduates are currently employed in the media industry sector.

Surveys of recent alumni conducted since 2023 show that the majority of graduates who responded are employed, either on a full-time or part-time basis, within six months after graduation. Several are working in the media studies field which includes both the private and public sectors. The surveys also show that graduates unanimously agree that their studies have effectively prepared them to be highly skilled researchers. Moreover, a number of MDST graduates have embarked on careers in the research or academic fields. This includes two graduates currently pursuing their PhD degrees at universities in Morocco, a graduate serving as a researcher at the Arab Unity Studies Centre, and others holding positions as researchers at Hamad Bin Khalifa University and the Ibn Khaldoun Centre at Qatar University. Additionally, one graduate has founded an organisation dedicated to the documentation, digitisation, and research of intangible cultural heritage.

In the media sector, two of the graduates serve as producers at TRT Arabia and Al Arabi TV. Other roles filled by MDST graduates include a corporate communications consultant at Qatar Insurance Group, a digital marketing communications specialist at MNASATI.COM, a digital producer at Middle East Broadcast Networks, a communication officer at UNHCR, a social media coordinator at the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies at the Doha Institute, a social media coordinator at Al Jassra Corporate Services in Qatar, a PR and communication specialist at Rimads Technology Company, a corporate identity and brand support specialist at Zain Mobile Company in Sudan, and a communication officer at Qatar National Museum.

In addition, several MDST graduates have pursued careers in the journalism sector, where they hold a wide range of responsibilities. Their roles are diverse and include positions such as business and economy journalist at Al-Monitor, editor-in-chief at the Al Jazeera network, journalist at Doha News, broadcast journalist at a Moroccan News Agency, journalist at Al Sharq News in Qatar, editor at the Al Jazeera Media Institute, and producer at AJ+ (an online news channel operated by the Al Jazeera media network).

²¹ See chapter 4.1

²² See self-evaluation report p. 20

Sociology and Anthropology

Positioning of the Study Programme on the Job Market for Graduates

Upon completing their degree, programme graduates have two primary options: pursuing further academic advancement through doctoral studies or entering the professional job market. The programme's initial three goals prime students for doctoral pursuits. The first goal, encapsulated in PLO 1,²³ provides a robust postgraduate foundation suitable for a PhD programme. The second goal is "Students will possess the skills to independently plan and execute sociological and anthropological research," aligning with PLO 5. This meets a key requirement for doctoral studies: the capability to function as an independent researcher. The third goal, influenced by the collective outcome of all the PLOs, is "Students will be ready to gain entry into leading PhD programmes worldwide." This equips students with essential, pragmatic skills for seeking out a suitable PhD programme. Several of the graduates have enrolled in PhD programmes, either domestically or internationally such as in King's College London; University of Edinburgh; University of Montreal and City University of New York.

The decision to pursue a professional career is shaped by four of the programme's five goals. The first goal ensures students gain a deep understanding of modern societies, equipping them to address current issues. The second goal enhance their ability to design, execute, and assess research projects. The fourth goal prepares students to work in public, third sector, and private roles, both domestically and internationally. This is achieved by merging knowledge of sociopolitical realities with the skills to identify, analyse, and address challenges, all underpinned by a strong work ethic. Lastly, the fifth goal instils in graduates the critical skills to identify major societal issues and actively engage as responsible citizens committed to the greater good.

According to DI's alumni database thus far, the roles and activities of graduates can be classified into three major professional fields:

- Academic and Research Pursuits: like teachers at the university level, researchers, and senior researchers to the specialised fields of social and administrative research.
- Administrative and Management Roles: as coordinators of programmes, heading training, planning departments or human resources divisions, as Deputy Executive Director, and in advisory capacities, like consultants in social work, they are leveraging their expertise to shape best practices and provide strategic direction and vision.
- Specialised Roles: like Student Service Officers, emphasizing a blend of administrative skill and empathy. In the fields of media and publishing graduates ensure the quality of content as editors and contribute to the discourse as article writers. Some serve with pride in the military, showcasing dedication to duty and country. Others, as community volunteers, demonstrating a commitment to societal well-being, exemplifying the values of service and altruism.

²³ See chapter 1.1

Media Studies

Positioning of the Study Programme within the DI Overall Strategic Concept

DI was established as a small graduate teaching and research institute focusing on the social sciences, humanities, public administration, and development economics. As noted earlier, the institute aims through its teaching and learning programmes and the research activities of its faculty to prepare a new generation of academics and researchers who are independent thinkers and proficient in an array of research methodologies and tools. Moreover, DI aspires to prepare leading professionals who can advance human knowledge and respond to the needs of the Arab region, resulting in social, cultural, and intellectual development.

The Media Studies programme fits neatly within the larger DI vision because it emphasises research. The programme emphasises research quality and productivity, exposing students to advanced studies in the field (and related fields), and requiring them to complete several academic assignments – including a 12,000 – 18,000-word master's thesis – as part of their basic graduation requirements. Many of the MDST graduates have produced high-quality master theses on a wide range of topics that are critical for the Arab region, including systematic comparative studies on the framing of regional conflicts and political crises, the framing of COVID-19 in Arab news media, or on soft power and the framing of the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.

Since 2020, six of these student theses have been published as journal articles, in addition to one thesis that has been published as a book chapter. The programme faculty continue to collaborate with promising MDST graduates on developing their theses into peer-reviewed research publications. During the same time span, the small number of MDST programme faculty have produced numerous books, book chapters, and peer-reviewed studies in top-tier media and communication journals. Please consult the faculty CVs for a comprehensive list of publications.

Embracing interdisciplinarity is a key component of the Institute's strategic mission.²⁴

Sociology and Anthropology

Positioning of the Study Programme within the DI's Overall Strategic Concept

DI's primary objective is to equip its graduates with the tools and knowledge to excel as academic and independent researchers and professionals across various disciplines and fields, including the social sciences, humanities, public administration, and development economics. This mandate finds its application in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH), which houses multiple programmes, including the SOC programme.

The SOC programme, through its set of programme goals and PLOs, aligns with the overarching mission of DI. It aims to position its graduates for advanced studies in international doctoral programmes and to secure highly regarded positions within both domestic and international job markets, spanning public and private sectors.

In line with DI's mission, the SOC programme emphasises the production of Arab knowledge by developing a deep understanding of Arab societies and cultures while also promoting a comparative perspective by delving into international narratives. Faculty research touches on

²⁴ See chapter 3.1

a broad spectrum related to Arab societies and beyond, including immigration, social inequality, gender dynamics and more. Significantly, three core faculty members have been integral to the SOC programme since its foundation in 2015, ensuring continuity and preserving its institutional memory. Renowned both regionally and internationally, the programme's faculty members have contributed significantly to academia. Since the SOC programme's initiation, they have produced an array of world-class publications (books, articles, and chapters) in multiple languages and have been invited as keynote speakers at prestigious academic events worldwide.²⁵

True to DI's academic vision, research is at the heart of the SOC pedagogy. The SOC programme's commitment to intellectual freedom and rigor is evident in its research-driven approach. Collaborations with esteemed entities, such as the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies enable both students and faculty to tackle pivotal issues concerning the Arab world and beyond. DI's philosophy goes beyond merely conducting research; it places students at its core, exposing them to diverse academic perspectives.

Moreover, the SOC programme emphasises the harmony between teaching and research. With a tight-knit academic community, facilitated by low student-faculty ratios, students find themselves immersed in stimulating dialogues. This interplay is further enriched as students frequently take on roles as research assistants, working closely with faculty on scholarly projects. This mentorship has borne fruit, with many students, under faculty guidance, transforming their MA theses into articles for leading peer-reviewed journals.

Furthermore, several research-based assignments, conceived in the classroom, have found their way to prestigious journals, epitomizing the programme's ethos of melding research with learning.

Appraisal:

The rationale for the positioning in the educational market of the study programmes is well-founded and plausible.

The arguments in support of graduate employability on the basis of the stated qualification objectives are convincingly presented. The potential future fields of employment for graduates are plausibly set forth.

The study programmes' emphasis on international research and international academic influence constitutes the core of the HEI's strategy and are sustainably implemented (e.g., students collaborating with faculty on academic papers, international background and notable academic achievements of faculty and graduates).²⁶

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market			X		

²⁵ See self-evaluation report p. 25

²⁶ See also chapter 4.1

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)			X		
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept		X			

2. Admission

Both programmes

Admission Requirements

The MDST and SOC programmes seek to attract top Arab students from across the region. Applicants are expected to have a demonstrated track record of academic success – including an undergraduate degree with a minimum 3.0 Grade Point Average (or its national equivalent) – and possess good command of both Arabic and English.

The DI website²⁷ and application form outline admission requirements. Applicants submit the following during the online application process:

- a completed application form
- a copy of official identification (Passport for International students
- Qatari ID for citizens and residents of Qatar).
- a bachelor's degree certified by official authorities
- undergraduate transcripts certified by official authorities
- a minimum of two references from academics familiar with the applicant's work. An additional letter of recommendation may be submitted by a supervisor from previous employment.
- a personal statement
- an academic essay
- an updated curriculum vitae (CV)
- a proof of an IELTS score of 5.5 (International English Language Testing System) or equivalent TOFEL iBT exam score.

The graduation requirement from DI is an academic IELTS score of 6.5 or a TOEFL iBT score of 79. Students admitted with IELTS scores of 5.5 or 6 must meet the graduation requirement during their tenure at the Institute.

Students are exempt from the English language requirement if they obtained a bachelor's degree from one of the American, British, Canadian, or Australian universities or from their overseas branches, or from Qatari universities that adopt the English language as a teaching path.

Counselling for Prospective Students

Local (Qatar-based) applicants are encouraged to attend one of the multiple annual “Open Days” held on DI campus, online, or in their respective institutions in Qatar during the academic year. Local prospective students are also able to visit DI booths at university fairs in Doha or contact the Head of Programme for further clarification. The Head of Programme’s contact information is available on the DI website (Faculty Member Details (dohainstitute.edu.qa)).

²⁷ [Admissions Office Admission Conditions and Requirements](#), last access on 30 October 2024

International and regional applicants are encouraged to participate in one of multiple meetings held online via Webex video conference, social media platforms, and DI YouTube Student Channel. When applicable, prospective international students can meet DI representatives in recruitment activities abroad.

All prospective applicants can submit questions to: admissions@dohainstitute.edu.qa. They may also email the Head of Programme directly at their email address listed on the website or call with inquiries at a posted admission office phone number.²⁸ Questions, which come in regularly about application procedures and requirements, are answered in a timely fashion. Admissions updates the Head of Programme about admissions filings, including complete and incomplete files, and follows up with applicants who have started but not finished their application files. Specifically, follow-up emails are sent to ask if these applicants have additional questions or need assistance with the application process.

Selection Procedure

Once the formal prerequisites and grade requirements are satisfied, applications advance for academic evaluation by the programme selection committee, followed by interviews. The MDST and SOC respectively, Head of Programme form an annual, three-person applications committee — chaired by the respective Head of Programme and including two other programme faculty — to evaluate all applications received by each programme.

An initial evaluation is carried out based on submitted application files. Using the electronic Student Information System (SIS), committee members do individual close readings of transcripts, academic essays, and personal statements. Each programme admissions committee member uses SIS to score each prospective student on a scale of 1-10 for each of the three aforementioned items. All items carry the same weight. Applicants with average scores of 6.0 or higher (on the ten-point scale) pass on to the final stage of the application process, which consists of a face-to-face or video interview with the programme admissions committee. In addition to numerical scores, the committee also includes short comments on applicant quality in an open-ended item in the SIS evaluation page.

Video interviews are conducted via Webex. Interviewers pose questions in both Arabic and English and seek to assess applicants' academic aptitude, fit for the MDST programme, commitment to graduate study, and ability to comprehend and communicate in both Arabic and English. Committee members use SIS to give numerical scores for interview performance. Students with the highest composite scores are admitted. Additionally, qualitative comments on interview performance are also provided on the SIS evaluation page.

Ensuring Foreign Language Proficiency

The MDST and SOC programmes rely heavily on both Arabic and English, and proficiency in both languages is required. Given the location in the Arab region, and the fact that the target applicants are Arab students with degrees from universities that require Arabic-language proficiency, ensuring Arabic language proficiency has not been a concern. However, ensuring English language proficiency during the application process is of primary importance. IELTS

²⁸ [Admissions Office](#), last access on 30 October 2024

exam scores of 5.5 or higher are required. Admitted students with IELTS score of 5.5 or 6 are required to satisfy the graduation requirement during their study at the Institute.

Video conference interviews are used as a secondary measure of language proficiency. Questions are posed to interviewees in both English and Arabic, and responses are required in both languages. Moreover, during the interview, a short English-language academic text is presented to interviewees, who are asked to summarise and explain the text and answer questions about it.

Transparency and Documentation of Admission Procedure and Decision

All applicants are formally informed of their admissions status via emails sent by the Admissions office at the conclusion of the evaluation process. Accepted applicants fill out a confirmation of enrolment form and a scholarship application form and provide Admissions with the official required documents. Unsuccessful applicants are sent a rejection letter.

Throughout the admissions season, DI Admissions updates the Head of Programme on applications received. Once final filtering is complete, Admissions also provides the Head of Programme with information about the total number of applications passed through to programme review level, and information about why applications did not advance to programme review level (e.g. low IELTS scores, or low GPAs).

All programme evaluation results are communicated electronically and in real-time via SIS to Admissions and the Dean of the School of the Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH). Documentation includes both numerical scores and qualitative comments about all applicants. At the conclusion of programme review, the Head of Programme prepares a short report about the admissions process, including final number tallies.

Appraisal:

The admission requirements are clearly defined and comprehensible. The national requirements are appropriately considered. Additionally, the admission requirements are oriented towards the strategic goals of the study programmes (e.g., only students with strong academic achievements are admitted).

Applicants can directly turn to a student counselling service for clarification of specific questions, of personal aptitude, and career prospects. Personal interaction between applicants and the HEI is provided through defined office hours, as well as communication channels such as telephone, video conferencing, and e-mail.

Moreover, the HEI ensures a constant availability for prospective students and reacts quickly to incoming enquiries. The panel team highlights that the counselling options are thoughtfully designed to meet the specific needs of an international audience. In addition, the DI demonstrates a commitment to support potential students from lower-income backgrounds, e.g., by not charging fees for applications, unlike similar/competing institutions where fees are quite common and non-refundable. Moreover, the DI proactively follows up with applicants who have not completed their application documents to offer further assistance.

The selection procedure is transparent and ensures that qualified students are admitted. In addition, the selection procedure has been designed in alignment with the study programme's objectives. The review of annual key performance indicators (e.g. graduation data) confirms the effectiveness of the selection procedure.

The admission requirements, such as the required language proficiency level or specific results in a concrete language test, along with the availability of preparatory language courses, ensure that students are equipped to successfully complete the study programme (courses, additional literature, utilisation of counselling services and extracurricular activities).

The admission procedure is described, documented, and accessible for interested parties. The admission decision is based on transparent criteria and is communicated in writing.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
2.2	Counselling for prospective students		X			
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)		X			
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)					X
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3. Contents, structure and didactical concept of the programme

3.1 Contents

Logic and Conceptual Coherence

Media Studies

The MDST programme study plan has been designed to meet all five programme learning outcomes, addressing both its media studies focus and its Arab-centricity.

Collectively, the MDST core and elective courses within the curriculum aim to specific course learning outcomes grouped as: knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, and transferrable skills. Course learning outcomes are closely aligned with programme learning outcomes (PLOs).²⁹

For example, PLO1 (*Demonstrate an understanding of relevant scholarship on media and culture, in the West, the Arab region and/or the wider Middle East*), PLO4 (*Apply relevant media studies theories to original media studies research*), PLO5 (*Develop original research using acquired knowledge of research methods and data gathering techniques*)³⁰ are represented in several courses, including:

- MDST611: Communication Research Methods,
- MDST612: Mass Communication Theory,
- MDST634: Issues in Media Studies (Elective), and
- MDST699: MDST Master's Thesis,

while PLO2 (*Critically analyse approaches to de-westernizing media studies*) and PLO3 (*Demonstrate an understanding of key cultural approaches, arguments and debates relevant to the study of contemporary Arab media cultures*) are prominently highlighted in courses such as:

- MDST610: Research Seminar,
- MDST622: Critical Approaches in Media and Cultural Studies (Elective),
- MDST623: Global Visual Cultures: Art, Aesthetics and Criticism (Elective), and
- MDST613: Arab Media Cultures.

MDST611 will serve as an illustration to show how PLOs and CLOs are connected:

For MDST611, CLO 1, '*Students will develop critical awareness of the major methodological perspectives informing media and communications and of the arguments in support of quantitative and qualitative research and how they can complement each other*,' is linked with PLO 1. PLO 1 aims for students to 'demonstrate an understanding of relevant scholarship on media and culture in the West, the Arab region, and/or the wider Middle East. The course's second and third CLOs state that '*Students will develop the necessary skills to critically*

²⁹ See programme learning outcomes assessment matrix

³⁰ See chapter 1.1

examine mass communication phenomena systematically and methodically using the scientific method and *'Students will be able to utilise acquired skills to develop publishable mass communication research projects using both quantitative and qualitative research methods.'* These objectives are closely aligned with PLO4, which seeks to have students 'apply relevant media studies theories to original media studies research.'

MDST 611's fourth CLO states, *'Students will be able to apply newly acquired research skills and knowledge to areas outside of mass communication.'* This CLO is linked to PLO 5, which aims for students to go beyond the mass communication discipline and *'develop original research using acquired knowledge of research methods and data gathering techniques'*.

The revised study plan is structured in two main categories:

- programme requirements, and
- school requirements.

The **programme requirements** include four core courses (twelve credit hours):

- Communication Research Methods (MDST611),
- Mass Communication Theory (MDST612),
- Arab Media Cultures (MDST613) and
- Research Seminar (MDST610).

Communication Research Methods teaches students dominant quantitative and qualitative research methodologies applied in media studies, and **Mass Communication Theory** addresses dominant theoretical formations in media studies. These two courses provide a foundation for student research. **Arab Media Cultures** tackles Arab media cultures in an ever-changing media environment. This course provides necessary background on a variety of topical issues uniquely relevant to Arab media studies. The **Research Seminar**, the final course in the core sequence, guides students through the early and foundational phases of producing the master's thesis. It specifically aims to support thesis writing, as well as train students on scientific thinking and presentation. The research seminar course was added during the 2022-2023 academic year to improve the programme's study plan by offering students more support and guidance in successfully completing a detailed thesis proposal and writing their master's thesis. The research seminar course is offered in all faculty programmes, with each programme designing a unique syllabus tailored to meet its students' needs.

In addition to core courses, the expanded collection of nine programme elective courses – of which students are required to take five – aims to deliver more specific topics and knowledge areas. Specifically, the courses seek to provide students with expertise in a variety of bodies of media studies literature.

The elective courses address knowledge and understanding of:

- Media Users and Audiences (MDST628),
- Global Visual Cultures: Art, Aesthetics, and Criticism (MDST623),
- The Political Economy of Communication: Ownership, Management, and Regulation (MDST627),
- Media Democratisation in the Middle East and North Africa (MDST625),
- Ethics and Law in Contemporary Journalistic Practice (MDST633),

- Critical Approaches in Media Studies (MDST622),
- Global Media Systems (MDST626),
- Issues in Media Representation (MDST624), and
- Issues in Media Studies (MDST634).

In addition, students can also pick from two electives not taught by MDST programme faculty:

- Data Sciences and Digital Skills and Data Automation (DIGS620) and
- Analytical Methods (DIGS621).

MDST students must also choose one free elective course (three credit hours). The free elective course allows students to choose elective courses from any programme in any of the Schools at DI or from the MDST programme's list of offered elective courses. Interdisciplinary courses provide MDST students with needed expertise in areas beyond the MDST programme. This is particularly important given the DI's focus on interdisciplinarity, and also the MDST programme's interdisciplinary objectives

The **school requirements** include:

- one interdisciplinary course (SOSH601) (three credit hours) and
- a master's thesis (nine credit hours).

MDST students must attend and successfully complete one interdisciplinary course: (SOSH601) Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities. This core school requirement, offered at the School level, aims to cultivate students' interdisciplinary exposure by training them to draw on and synthesise knowledge from various academic disciplines.

MDST students are required to complete a nine-credit hour master's thesis, which originally was a six-credit hour thesis. The expansion of credit hours for the thesis is part of a DI enhancement plan, which aims to afford students additional time for the successful completion of their theses, as they are now allocated an entire semester dedicated to this major study project. The thesis is expected to be between 12,000 and 18,000 words in length and feature original, primary research.

The curriculum overview is as follows:

Example 1 st Semester (Student study 2 Core Courses and 1 School Core Compulsory Course)										
Serial number of the courses	Course code and title	Credit hours				contact hours in	study hours in credited	L :Lecture S: Seminar	List of all the assignments in	List of the relevant
Module No.	Title of Module / Course Unit	Credit Points per				Workload		Method of	Form and	weight of
		1.	2.	3.	4.	Hours in Class	Hours Self-Study	i.e. lecture course, seminar	Duration of Examinations	exam related to final
M1	Module 1	3				42	84			3/42
M 1.1	Communication Research Methods MDST611	3				42	84	L/S	Critical Article Review	30%
									Method Critical	30%
									Final Research Paper	40%
M2	Module 2	3				42	84			3/42
M 2.1	Mass Communication Theory MDST612	3				42	84	L/S	participation	10%
									reflection paper	20%
									Essay	20%
									Final Group Research Paper	40%
									Final Group Presentation	10%
M3	Module 3	3				42	84			3/42
M 3.1	Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities SOSH601	3				42	84	L/S	Group Research Proposal	25%
									Individual Critical Summary	25%
									Group Poster	20%
									Group poster evaluation	5%
									Attendance and individual tests	25%

Example 2 nd Semester (Student study 4 Program Elective Courses from the Program Elective Courses List)										
M4	Module 4		3			42	84			3/42
M 4.1	Issues in Media Representation MDST624		3			42	84	L/S	Participation	10%
									Reading Pop Quizzes	10%
									Discussion Facilitation	30%
									Final Group Research Paper	35%
									Final Group Presentation	15%
M5	Module 5		3			42	84			3/42
M 5.1	The Political Economy of Communication: Ownership, Management and Regulation MDST627	...	3			42	84	L/S	Assignment one	25%
									Running and moderating one seminar session	25%
									Participation	10%
									Final essay	40%
M6	Module 6		3			42	84			3/42
M 6.1	Media Audiences and Users MDST628		3			42	84	L/S	Presentation & Abstract	30%
									Critical Evaluation	40%
									Audience Research Project	30%
M7	Module 7		3			42	84			3/42
M 7.1	Ethics and Law in Contemporary Journalistic Practice MDST633		3			42	84	L/S	Reading Quizz 1	5%
									identification & An	15%
									Reading Quiz 2	5%
									Midterm Exam	30%
									Final Research Paper	35%
									Final Research Presentation	10%

3rd Semester (Student study 2 Core Courses, 1 Program Elective Course and 1 Free Elective Course)										
M8	Module 8			3		42	84			3/42
M 8.1	Arab Media Cultures MDST613			3		42	84	L/S	Attendance and informed participation	15%
									1 in-class critique	25%
									Presentation of research proposal	20%
									Final project	40%
M9	Module 9			3		42	84			3/42
M 9.1	Research Seminar MDST610			3		42	84	L/S	Critical Review 1	15%
									Critical Review 2	25%
									Peer Reviews	10%
									Oral Proposal	10%
										40%
M10	Module10			3		42	84			3/42
M 10.1	Program Elective			3		42	84	L/S	Depends on Course	Depends on Course
M11	Module11			3		42	84			3/42
M11.1	Free elective course			3		42	84	L/S	Depends on Course	Depends on Course
4th Semester										
M12	Module12			9		126	252			9/42
M12.1	MDST Master's Thesis MDST699			9		126	252	T/S	Thesis	100%
total										
L: Lecture		9	12	12	9	588	1176			
S: Seminar										

Sociology and Anthropology

The study plan is structured into distinct clusters of courses, with three clusters at the **programme level**:

- the core courses
- elective courses, and
- the thesis.

Another core course focusing on the study of Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities, is offered at the **School level**.

At its essence, the programme captures the central domains of sociological and anthropological knowledge and competencies, covering theory, methodology, and practical research skills. The thesis, envisioned as the pinnacle research activity, merges these spheres.

The theoretical foundation of the SOC programme is established through two principal courses:

- Sociological Theories (SOC611) and
- Anthropological Theories (SOC612).

These core courses ensure that students cultivate a rich understanding of the primary sub-fields of sociology and anthropology, aligned with the programme's learning outcomes.

For example, in Anthropological Theories SOC612, students achieve a deep and critical knowledge of various anthropological theoretical streams, as outlined in CLO1. This encompasses an understanding of the evolution of these theories globally and within the Arab

context, fostering a critical and precise comprehension of theoretical content and its development within broader social science paradigms. This directly supports PLO1³¹ by equipping students with the necessary theoretical perspectives to apply to diverse socio-cultural contexts.

CLO2 and CLO3 of SOC612 emphasise the acquisition of advanced skills in handling complex theoretical concepts and their practical application in research projects. This aligns with PLO3, as students develop the capability to analyse and understand complex socio-cultural dynamics. Moreover, the practical skills gained in identifying the origins and evolution of theoretical schools, as per CLO3, prepare students for independent sociological and anthropological research, reflecting PLO5.

The course also focuses on transferable skills as detailed in CLO4, like advanced critical reading, theoretical writing, and oral expression of theoretical concepts. These skills are crucial for effective communication and knowledge dissemination (PLO5), and they enhance students' civic and ethical awareness (PLO4).

In addition to SOC612, the programme also offers "Contemporary Sociological Theories" (SOC633) and "Contemporary Issues in Sociology" (SOC637). These courses delve into modern sociological and anthropological paradigms and contemporary issues like state formation and social marginalisation in the Arab world, in line with PLO2. Together, these courses ensure students have a comprehensive understanding spanning both classical and contemporary theoretical frameworks.

The SOC programme has refined specific topic courses ("Specializations"), responding proactively to feedback and the evolving academic landscape:

- the original course "Sociology of Arab Societies" has been bifurcated into two distinct courses: **Sociology of Arab Societies (SOC639)** and **Anthropology of Arab Societies (SOC640)**. Students have the flexibility to opt for one of these courses, based on their academic inclination. This decision was primarily motivated by the student community's aspiration for a more anthropology-centric curriculum.
- With the intent to ensure critical skill acquisition, a new course titled **Research Seminar 2** has been introduced.

The primary objective of the specific topic courses cluster is to immerse students in specialised topics, either delineated by region or theme. These courses often serve as foundational stepping stones, guiding students towards their thesis endeavours or crystallizing research avenues they might pursue in future academic or professional trajectories.

Programme Elective Courses

The programme's elective courses reflect the research expertise and interests of the faculty and simultaneously addresses the interests and motivations of students. These courses are integral components that embody the programme's dedication to enhancement. Electives offer students a dynamic and comprehensive educational experience while bridging theoretical knowledge with practical, real-world applications primarily informed by faculty own research.

³¹ See chapter 1.1

The programme electives are the following:

- Visual Anthropology (SOC628),
- Anthropology of Social Movements (SOC626),
- The Sociology of the Body (SOC635),
- Contemporary Issues in Sociology (SOC637),
- Sociology of Identity (SOC636),
- Gender in Arab Societies (SOC622),
- Anthropology of Maghreb Societies (SOC629),
- Political Leadership (SOC621),
- Young Adults and Normative Transformation in the Arab World (SOC638),
- Linguistic Anthropology (SOC641),
- Transformation of Rural Societies (SOC632),
- Data, Sciences and Digital Skills (DIGS620), and
- Data, Automation and Analytical Methods (DIGS621).

The curriculum overview for SOC is as follows:

1 st Semester (Student study 3 Core Courses and 1 School Core Compulsory Course)										
Serial number of the courses	Course code and title	Credit hours in the first semester				contact hours in credited	study hours in credited course (# Weeks x #	L: Lecture S: Seminar T: Tutorial	List of all the assignments in the course	List of the relevant weight of
Modul No.	Title of Module / Course Unit + Compulsory or elective?	Credit Points per Semester				Workload		Method of	Form and Duration of Examinations	weight of exam related to final grade
		1.	2.	3.	4.	Hours in Class	Hours Self-Study	i.e. lecture course, seminar		
M1	Module 1	3				42	84			3/42
M 1.1	SOC611 Social Theories	3				42	84	L/S	First Research Paper	30%
									Second Research Paper	30%
									Final Research Paper	40%
M2	Module 2	3				42	84			3/42
M2.1	SOC614 Qualitative Research Methods	3				42	84	L/S	First written assignment	30%
									Second written assignment	30%
									Final Research Paper	40%
	Module 3	3				42	84			3/42
M 3.1	SOC613 Quantitative Research Methods	3				42	84	L/S	First assignment	15%
									Second assignment	25%
									Third assignment	25%
									Fourth assignment	35%

M4	Module 4	3			42	84			3/42
M 4.1	SOSH601 Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities	3			42	84	L/S	Group Research Proposal Individual Critical Summary Group Poster Group poster evaluation Attendance and individual tests	25% 25% 20% 5% 25%
Example 2nd Semester (Student study 2 Core Courses, 1 Elective and 1 Free Elective Course)									
M5	Module 5	3			42	84			3/42
M 5.1	SOC612 Anthropological Theories	3			42	84	L/S	First paper Second paper Final Research	30% 30% 40%
M6	Module 6	3			42	84			3/42
M6.1	SOC616 A Research seminar 1	3			42	84	L/S	First written assignment Workshop II Final Research Paper Participation in class	30% 20% 40% 10%
M7	Module 7	3			42	84			3/42
M 7.1	SOC*** Program Elective course	3			42	84	L/S	Depends on Course	Depends on Course
M8	Module 8	3			42	84			3/42
M 8.1	***** Free Elective Course	3			42	84	L/S	Depends on Course	Depends on Course
3rd Semester (Student study 1 core course and chooses 1 of the Two Program Elective Courses: SOC639 or SOC640) and 1 program elective from the elective course list									
M9	Module 9	3			42	84			3/42
M 9.1	SOC616 B Research Seminar 2	3			42	84	L/S	Detailed thesis proposal presentation of the thesis proposal critical review of previous (literary) studies	40% 20% 40%
M10	Module 10	3			42	84			3/42
M 10.1	SOC639 Sociology of Arab Societies	3			42	84	L/S	First paper Second paper Final Paper	30% 30% 40%
	SOC640 Anthropology of Arab Societies	3			42	84	L/S	First paper Second paper Final Paper	30% 30% 40%
M11	Module 12	3			42	84			3/42
M 11.1	SOC*** Program Elective course	3			42	84	L/S	Depends on Course	Depends on Course
4th Semester (Student registers in the master dissertation)									
M12	Module 13			9	126	252			9/42
M 12.1	SOC699 Master's Dissertation			9	126	252	T/S	Thesis	100%
total		12	12	9	9	588	1176		
L:	Lecture								
S:	Seminar								

Rationale for the Degree and Programme Name

Media Studies

The Media Studies (MDST) programme, formerly referred to as Media and Cultural Studies (MACS), underwent a name change in 2021. This change was the result of internal programme discussions, and a formal institutional process aimed at bringing the programme in line with the mainstream academy, the programme's focus, student pedagogical needs, and the expertise of programme faculty and applicant pools.

The programme's former name, Cultural Studies represents a unique approach, and some scholars consider it a discipline in and of itself. And although the programme engages with some cultural studies aspects, its focus is on media studies more generally. Cultural studies thus represents but one approach within the broad field of media studies and within the programme. The programme also has significant social scientific, political economy, critical,

and audience approaches to the study of media. Names such as “Mass Communication” and “Media Studies” are comprehensive, umbrella terms that encompass all narrow approaches to the study of media in society. Looking at the current study plan, the programme can logically be placed in the Media Studies/Mass Communication category.

It is also noteworthy that this name change fits with the recent launch of the Media Studies PhD programme, as it is a more succinct and accurate summary of the programme. The new name would grant flexibility to add courses as necessary without feeling restricted to one narrow approach.

The current awarded degree name is termed as “Master of Social Sciences and Humanities – Media Studies” degree.

Sociology and Anthropology

The programme is formally recognised as “The Programme of Sociology and Anthropology” and the awarded degree is termed as “Master of Social Sciences and Humanities - Sociology and Anthropology” degree. This curriculum offers a comprehensive exploration of both sociology and anthropology at the master’s level, in alignment with global standards and benchmarks. Although there are intersections between sociology and anthropology, the programme ensures a harmonious blend of both disciplines.

Students are not only introduced to the foundational tenets of these fields but are also trained in varied approaches and methodologies associated with sociological and anthropological research and analysis. The curriculum not only aligns with national guidelines but also received commendation during its licensure process with the Qatar Ministry of Education and Higher Education. A driving force behind the inception of this course is the notable lack of any comparable graduate programme in sociology or anthropology within Qatar.

Integration of Theory and Practice

Media Studies

The MDST degree programme, designed to prepare students for PhD studies, emphasises academic and theoretical training. Practical skills such as research methodology, academic writing, public speaking, and debate are also emphasised.

This includes courses like:

- Research Seminar (MDST610),
- Issues in Media Representation (MDST624) (Elective),
- The Political Economy of Communication: Ownership, Management, and Regulation (MDST627) (Elective),
- Critical Approaches in Media Studies (MDST622) (Elective), and
- Media Audiences and Users (MDST628) (Elective).

These courses place significant emphasis on oral presentations and discussion facilitation, integrating these skills as key learning objectives and integral part of the assignments.

Research papers are a staple of MDST courses, and all courses require students to link theoretical knowledge with methodological skills. Grades are explicitly based on students' ability to use theory to drive research methodologies and results.

While all MDST courses emphasise writing academic reflective essays and research papers, courses such as

- Mass Communication Theory (MDST612),
- Communication Research Methods (MDST611),
- Issues in Media Studies: Sociology of News (MDST634) (Elective), and
- Issues in Media Representation (MDST624) (Elective)

entail collaborative group work and the presentation of comprehensive research projects, which must encompass primary data collection and analyses, enhancing the practical application of theoretical concepts.

Other examples of MDST course assignments offer different glimpses into the integration of theory and practice. For example, the programme's **Ethics and Law course (MDST 633)** (Elective) asks students to identify a recent real-world ethical dilemma related to Arab mass media and then use an ethical decision-making model to produce a solution. The applied decision-making model — the S.A.D. formula — asks students to apply an ethical theory to their decision-making process. Additionally, the **Arab Media Cultures course (MDST 613)** usually requires students to visit a local museum and examine artifacts using theories taught in assigned readings and lectures.

In all MDST courses, lectures and assignments are not oriented toward rote memorisation in these courses. Students are expected to critically evaluate the literature in order identify potential gaps, discrepancies, methodological shortcomings or important issues that have not been covered.

Given the MDST programme's primary emphasis on research and scholarship, it does not include a formal media training or internship component in its curriculum. However, students can pursue individual, independent training opportunities at local media outlets if they desire, and the programme supports them by providing access to local media contacts and recommendation letters if required. Furthermore, the programme dedicates an annual budget to cover transportation expenses for MDST students engaged in training with local media outlets during their academic studies.

Sociology and Anthropology

Sociology and anthropology thrive on real-world exploration, often exemplified through meticulous **case studies** and extensive **research initiatives**. Within the curriculum, two central courses are devoted to theoretical foundations. Meanwhile, the bulk of the coursework offers a thematic approach reinforced with **practical examples** and case studies.

The three methodology courses:

- Qualitative Research Methods (SOC614),
- Quantitative Research Methods (SOC613), and
- the Research Seminar 1 (SOC616 A)

provide students with a comprehensive framework for blending theoretical knowledge with hands-on practice. Additionally, the **Research Seminar 2 (SOC616 B)** course serves as a catalyst, deepening students' research and practical writing skills, preparing them for the intricate process of thesis composition. The thesis, the programme's pinnacle, epitomises this fusion of theory and practice, channelling all acquired insights into a comprehensive research endeavour.

Interdisciplinary Thinking

Media Studies

Media studies is a new field and was created gradually and organically during the 1920s and 1930s, mostly by scholars representing sociology, political science, and psychology, respectively. As such, the field has always maintained a high level of natural interdisciplinarity, with many of the field's most prominent theories drawn explicitly from other disciplines. For example, Social Cognitive Theory (or Social Learning Theory), the Spiral of Silence theory, and the Third-Person Effect theory.

Beyond the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the media studies field, the MDST study plan was designed with an even more explicitly interdisciplinary focus. This focus was influenced by DI's vision of interdisciplinarity, which is built into the Institute's mission. Courses in the MDST programme – and their accompanying reading lists – draw from media studies, sociology, political science, cultural studies, literature, history, and philosophy.

The reading materials are fundamentally interdisciplinary, drawing from diverse disciplines. The works of scholars representing various fields, including Lila Abu-Lughod and Arjun Appadurai (Anthropology); Naomi Sakr, Travis Dixon, *Rasmus Kleis Nielsen*, and Claes de Vreese (Media Studies); Louis Althusser (Philosophy); Max Horkheimer and Michel Foucault (Philosophy); and others from the fields of Sociology, Semiology, Cultural Studies, Political Science, Literature, and Psychology, among many others, are also assigned and engaged with.

A core aspect of the institute's mission is promoting interdisciplinarity. This is often achieved by offering students the opportunity to engage with courses from outside the programme. In their initial term of enrolment in the MDST programme, all students are required to successfully complete a core School course on **Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities (SOCH 601)**. Furthermore, during their second and third terms of study, students can select from two newly introduced School-led elective courses outside the programme: **Data, Sciences, and Digital Skills (DIGS620)** and **Data Automation and Analytical Methods (DIGS621)**. Both courses are designed to enhance students' data and digital skills as part of DI's strategic vision to prepare researchers who are proficient in an array of research methodologies and tools. Finally, during their third term of study, students can choose one elective course from any programme in any of the Schools at DI.

Sociology and Anthropology

Interdisciplinary thinking is deeply embedded in the programme, rooted in its exploration of multifaceted social and cultural phenomena. This multidimensional perspective is cultivated through specific courses designed to promote interdisciplinary approaches and through the overarching ethos that permeates all courses.

The cornerstone in this interdisciplinary education is the core course **Issues in the Study of Social Sciences and Humanities (SOSH601)**. This course, mandatory for all students in the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, provides a cross-disciplinary introduction to fields within the social sciences and humanities. It presents lectures on an array of topics, allowing students to gain insights from various academic disciplines and fostering a holistic understanding.

Furthermore, the programme's foundation on both sociology and anthropology disciplines ensures that students assimilate dual perspectives, enabling them to move fluidly between these related but distinct domains. Many courses, by their very nature, infuse interdisciplinary content and methodologies. Programme courses such as **Visual Anthropology (SOC628)** (Elective) employ diverse techniques from various academic spheres. Additionally, students can select from two offered faculty-led elective courses outside the programme: **Data, Sciences, and Digital Skills** and **Data Automation and Analytical Methods**. These are newly introduced courses in the SOSH School.

The Master's thesis also exemplifies this interdisciplinary spirit. Students are tasked with employing multiple theoretical and practical methods from different academic domains, ensuring a comprehensive and integrative approach to their research.

Ethical Aspects

Both programmes

On an institutional scale, DI's Research and Grants Department sets rigorous guidelines and conducts training through workshops and individual consultations on **research ethics**. This ensures that students are well-acquainted with, and adhere to, the ethical standards of academic research. Every research initiative is subject to an ethical review and must obtain approval before initiation. This adherence to ethical principles is institutionalised via the mandatory **Institutional Review Board (IRB)**, which sets the standards for research involving human participants.

Media Studies

The MDST study plan addresses the ethical dimensions of mass media and academic research on various levels. This is primarily achieved through ethics-focused courses such as **Ethics and Law in Contemporary Journalistic Practice (MDST 633)** (Elective). This course is devoted entirely to various components of media ethics. It approaches modern ethical problems in journalism and strategic communication from the perspective of both modern and premodern ethicists. It discusses and analyses the principal ethical and legal issues in the present-day practice of journalism and mass communication disciplines and focuses on the ethical dimensions involved in the practices of journalism and strategic communication, highlighting such issues and concepts as the rights and duties of journalists, freedom of the press, social responsibility, fairness, accuracy, privacy, libel, contempt, obscenity, and other ethical issues.

Ethical issues are also approached in different ways through other courses, like:

- Mass Communication Theory (MDST 612) deals with the ethics of media production and media effects,

- Communication Research Methods (MDST 611) considers the ethical dimensions of academic research, including human subject research,
- Media Audiences and Users (MDST 628) (Elective) engages with the morality of propaganda, hate speech, and dehumanising discourse,
- Media Democratisation in the Middle East and North Africa (MDST 625) (Elective) discusses the ethics of surveillance and censorship, and
- Issues in Media Representation (MDST 624) (Elective) engages with the ethics of Orientalism, representing the *Other*, and gendered discourses.

Sociology and Anthropology

The emphasis on the ethical dimensions of studying societies and cultures is deeply entrenched both institutionally (via the IRB and DI ethical guidelines) and within the curriculum of the programme.

Within the context of the programme, the importance of ethics is underscored from the very onset during the student orientation week. Ethical considerations are not just touched upon but integrated into the fabric of the curriculum. A prime example is the course **Quantitative Methods (SOC613)**. When delving into topics such as questionnaire design and administration, students are rigorously trained on the importance of ethical considerations.

These include the principles of

- Informed Consent,
- ensuring Anonymity and Confidentiality,
- the imperative to Avoid Harm,
- recognizing the Right to Withdraw,
- upholding Honesty and Transparency,
- ensuring Data Integrity, and
- practicing Cultural and Social Sensitivity.

Furthermore, the programme's faculty maintains an ongoing dialogue with students about their research progress, especially in relation to their theses. During these interactions, real-world research examples serve as a platform to discuss and reiterate the ethical imperatives of their work.

Methods and Scientific Practice

Media Studies

The MDST programme is research-intensive. Students are asked to produce numerous research papers – in most courses, one final primary research paper is required.

Media studies is characterised by significant paradigmatic, ontological, and epistemological diversity, with media scholars divided along qualitative and quantitative lines. The MDST programme attempts to expose students to a variety of approaches and requires students to gain aptitude in both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. This is anchored in the

learning outcomes of the programme (PLO5: *Develop original research using acquired knowledge of research methods and data gathering techniques.*)

The study plan dictates that students take **Communication Research Methods (MDST 611)** during their first semester in the programme. The course aims to help students understand the scientific approach to solving problems and acquire the knowledge and techniques to design a research project. It also aims to equip students with the skills they need to conduct and evaluate primary and secondary research. This course teaches both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In order to balance out what is offered in other programme courses, the quantitative component is featured most prominently. Students are introduced to the scientific method and the essential components of empirical research – concepts, constructs, variables, hypotheses, measurement, scales, reliability, and validity. Later in the course, students are taught specific quantitative media research methodologies: content analysis, experimental design, and surveys. The course also features an introduction to statistics and the SPSS computer statistical package, which many students tend to use on their final research projects. The course additionally includes in-depth lessons and discussions on qualitative media research methodology, including ethnography, in-depth interviews, focus groups, textual analysis, and discourse analyses.

The study plan includes the course **Research Seminar (MDST 610)** offered to students in their third semester. The course objective is to support thesis writing, as well as train students on scientific thinking and presentation. The course also familiarises students with research traditions related to their thesis topics, trains them to formulate a reasoned research problem, conduct a critical review of the relevant literature, select suitable research methods, and use source material and library databases.

In addition, in other MDST courses students produce primary research papers, all of which must employ formal media research methodologies. Most courses provide students with the option of choosing either qualitative or quantitative research techniques, or a combination of both. Students also have the opportunity to choose qualitative or quantitative research techniques on their final theses.

Sociology and Anthropology

The SOC programme fosters the development of methodological competences and scientific practice, ensuring students are thoroughly equipped for research-oriented work, both academically and vocationally. This commitment is manifested in the methodological foundation, which is centred around four core courses:

- Qualitative Research Methods (SOC614),
- Quantitative Research (Methods SOC613),
- Research Seminar 1 (SOC616 A, formerly known as Fieldwork Practicum), and
- the Research Seminar 2 (SOC616 B).

Each of these courses is carefully tailored to ensure that students gain a profound understanding and proficiency in the intricacies of both qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, in alignment with PLO5: *Design, conduct and present research of complex questions in sociology and anthropology based on in-depth and critical understanding of advanced qualitative and quantitative methods.*

Recognizing the dynamic landscape of research methodologies and the surge in technological integrations, the course **Qualitative Research Methods** has evolved to incorporate innovative techniques for qualitative data management and analysis, reflecting the latest technological and digital advancements. The students in **Quantitative Research Methods** are now engaged in practical exercises using modern open-source data analysis tools such as JASP and R in conjunction with benefiting from AI tools in research like ChatGPT. This not only equips students with state-of-the-art research skills but also amplifies their marketability in a competitive job landscape. Once students pass these two courses in the first semester, they are now ready to embark on engaging into real research while applying their theoretical knowledge to thoroughly study a sociological issue of their choice. This emphasis is further reinforced in the **Research Seminar 2** providing students with a structured environment to apply and integrate the methodological skills acquired throughout their coursework with relevance to their master's thesis projects.

As students go through the programme, they are systematically equipped with the tools and frameworks vital for conceiving, initiating, and executing research projects. This blend of methodological training, complemented by a strong theoretical underpinning, ensures students are poised for success in both further academic pursuits and in manoeuvring their professional avenues. They emerge with the ability to discern social and cultural complexities, translate them into coherent research projects, and execute them with precision and rigor.

Examination and Final Thesis

Both programmes

All assessments at DI are governed by the Grading, Assessment and Examination, and Master's Thesis policies.

All courses feature a combination of assessments employing knowledge and understanding, intellectual, practical, and transferable/key skills. Specific assessments are chosen appropriately based on desired outcomes. Instructors design assessments to align with course learning outcomes, which are aligned with programme learning outcomes.

To ensure assessments meet the required standards, DI regularly reviews and updates its policies and practices in line with international best practices. With the help of OTLA, training sessions are offered for faculty on effective assessment design and evaluation. The programmes engage in continuous dialogue with their students and faculty to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments (for example student-faculty forum and programme council).

Media Studies

Most courses are research and writing intensive, featuring at least one large research paper. Exams are excluded because courses are research and writing intensive and do not naturally lend themselves to examinations. Instead, MDST courses employ rigorous research and writing-related assessments. Both individual and group assignments are used across courses. Group assignments offer several advantages to students, including the development of teamwork skills, exposure to a wide range of opinions, and the encouragement of individual accountability. They also facilitate the development of crucial abilities such as effective communication, time management, and problem-solving, thus simulating real-world situations and enhancing creativity.

The Master's Thesis is a nine-credit, semester-long educational assessment tool. The thesis research project is expected to represent the culmination of two years of learning, and a practical application and integration of methodological, theoretical, and topical knowledge. Students are expected to produce original, primary data that contributes to at least one body of existing academic literature.

Theses are formally evaluated by an examination committee consisting of two Media Studies faculty members. Students must also orally defend their theses in front of the same panel of two faculty members. Students are provided detailed feedback by their evaluation committees. Additionally, thesis advisers provide many rounds of feedback/comments to help ensure student success when students are developing their theses.

Sociology and Anthropology

Assessment Formats:

- **Examinations:** Both written and oral exams are utilised to assess students' understanding of key concepts and their ability to apply theoretical and methodological knowledge. For example, written exams are often used in the course Quantitative Research Methods (SOC 613), and oral exams are systematically used in the thesis defence.
- **Research Papers and Essays:** These assignments enable students to demonstrate their research skills, critical thinking, and ability to engage with sociological and anthropological literature.
- **Projects and Presentations:** Group and individual projects, along with presentations, provide opportunities for students to showcase their practical skills and collaborative abilities. An example of a course where these methods are often implemented is the Research Seminar 1 course.

Measuring Intended Learning Outcomes:

- Aligning each assignment with specific learning outcomes, as detailed in the Programme Learning Outcome Assessment Matrix.
- Using a variety of assessment methods to cover all aspects of the learning outcomes, from theoretical knowledge to practical application.
- Regularly reviewing and updating assessment strategies based on feedback from students and faculty. The Annual Learning Outcomes Assessment report is a key element in the continuous effort in this domain.

Evaluation of the Thesis:

- **Thesis Supervisor and Reviewer:** Each student is assigned a thesis supervisor who provides guidance throughout the research process. Additionally, one independent thesis reviewer/reader evaluates the final work using an evaluation form. As a testament to the international standards the master's theses meet, many have been published in recognised peer-reviewed journals.
- **Using Rubrics:** Students are shown the rubrics for the assessment (the assessment criteria) of each assignment. The rubrics are cross-referenced to the intended learning outcomes and skills. Similar process is followed in the case of the thesis or/and any other assignments used for the Annual Learning Outcomes Assessment report.

- **Defence:** Students are required to defend their thesis in front of a panel, further ensuring the depth and validity of their research.

The culmination of the academic journey for students in the programme is represented by the thesis. It stands as a testament to the assimilation and application of the comprehensive training, skills, theoretical, and methodological knowledge they have acquired during their time at DI.

The emphasis on the thesis has been expanded, transitioning from a six-hour to a nine-hour credit course, allowing students to delve deeper into their chosen topics and ensuring a more comprehensive understanding, in line with PLO2 and PLO3.³² As students conduct their research, they not only enrich their understanding but also their capabilities to engage critically and reflectively with diverse social and cultural realities, resonating with PLO3.

Several of SOC graduates have taken portions of their theses and transformed them into academic articles, published in respected peer-reviewed journals. An example of this is: Bouzlou, F. Z. (2021). Soussi Family Entrepreneurship in Morocco: Leadership Style and Challenge of Continuity. *Omran For social sciences*, 9(35), 81-106. This not only amplifies their academic experience but also underscores the programme's objectives in fostering original research and contributions to the broader academic community.

Appraisal:

The curricula effectively reflect the qualification objectives of the respective study programme. The contents of the modules/courses are well-balanced, logically connected and oriented towards the intended learning outcomes. The areas of specialisation (compulsory electives) or optional electives enable students to acquire additional competences and skills.

The respective degrees and programme names correspond to the content and objectives of the programmes.

Theoretical questions are illustrated, where possible, through practical examples, enhancing their applicability and relevance.

There is evidence that the **Media Studies** programme qualifies for interdisciplinary thinking. The **Sociology and Anthropology** study programme puts an emphasis on preparing the students for an occupation requiring trans- or interdisciplinary knowledge by not only drawing from sociology and anthropology, but also by incorporating perspectives from other disciplines (e.g., Visual Anthropology, Data Automation).

Ethical implications (for example those related to economic or juridical ways of thinking and acting) are appropriately communicated.

Students gain methodological competencies and are adequately prepared to conduct scientific research at the required academic level. The panel commends the programme's delivery of qualitative methods, which – as evident in the final Master's theses – students are using competently in their empirical research. However, skills in quantitative methods and statistics appear to be less prominent. The panel appreciates the institution's current efforts to place greater emphasis also on quantitative and mixed-method approaches, which would further

³² See chapter 1.1

prepare graduates for doctoral studies. This strategy could also be considered in future hiring decisions.

All assessments are particularly well-suited to reach the defined learning outcomes. They also examine the students' ability to deeply reflect on scientific problems and to apply scientific methods (students write several research papers). Students are given feedback, which, if necessary, is linked to advice on the learning process. The final theses comply with the standards for international publications.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	norm
3.1 Contents					
3.1.1* Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2* Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3* Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.4 Interdisciplinary thinking		SOC	MDST		
3.1.5 Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6* Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7* Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)		X			

3.2 Structure

Both programmes

Projected study time	Two years for full-time students, and either three years or four years for part-time students
Number of Credit Points (CP)	42 credit hours
Workload per CP	3 hours
Number of modules/courses	12 (including the thesis)
Time required for processing the final thesis and awarded CP	one semester, 9 credit hours
Number of contact hours	1 weekly hour x 14 weeks = 14 contact hours per course

DI operates a calendar with two main semesters, Fall and Spring. Each semester consists of 14 study weeks, in addition to an examination week.

Regulations on credit hours³³

DI defines the credit hour as one hour of direct faculty instruction or supervised academic activities and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for typically 14 weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time.

The credit system at DI is adapted from the Carnegie credit system, which is used in North America, where a programme is comprised of a pre-determined number of total credits (typically 42 credits) required for successful completion and these credits are divided among the courses which are offered during each semester (normally four semesters in two years).

However, the credit hour in the Carnegie system is 50 minutes of class instruction, while at DI, the credit hour is defined as one weekly contact hour of 60 minutes. The minimum total number of contact hours for a one-credit hour at the Doha Institute in a semester shall be no less than 14 (weeks) x 1 hour (60 minutes) = 14 contact hours per credit in a semester.

Students are expected to spend two hours of study for each hour of contact time, making the total workload per credit three hours. This is a rough estimation of the student workload as students can spend more or less depending on the nature of the course.

US universities typically use conversion methods yielding that one conventional American credit hour is equal to two ECTS credits. Considering that the DI workload for one credit hour is equivalent to the workload of 1.2 American credit hours (because the Carnegie system is based on a 50-minute workload per CP, while at DI it is 60 minutes), then one credit hour at DI is equivalent to 1.2×2 ECTS credits = 2.4 ECTS credits, making the 42 credits equivalent to around 100 ECTS credits.

Most students are registered full-time and complete their degree programmes in two years. Full-time students may be granted time extensions on case-by-case bases. A part-time study

³³ See Regulations on credit hours:

https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/admin/AcademicPoliciesDocuments/DIAcademicPolicies_%D9%90CREDITHours_En.2024-01-24.pdf, last access November 8, 2024

option also exists, with some students offered part-time study plans that put them on track to complete their degree programmes in either three or four years. The maximum study time is four years.

Media Studies

Course Type	Number of Courses	Total Number of Credit Hours
Core Courses	5	15
Programme Elective Courses	5	15
Free Elective Courses (to be taken from the programme electives or other DI-offered courses)	1	3
Thesis	1	9

MDST students typically take three courses in Semester 1, four courses in Semesters 2 and 3, and work on their thesis in Semester 4. All programme courses are three credit hours, while the final thesis is equivalent to nine credit hours. In total, MDST students undertake eleven courses and conduct one thesis research project.

The specific sequence of courses allows for progressive expertise, the steady accumulation of knowledge and specialisation. Students take two required programme courses on research methodology and theory in their **first semester**, along with a required School of Social Sciences and Humanities interdisciplinary course. They focus on essential methodological and theoretical knowledge within the fields of media studies and social sciences.

The **second semester** is devoted to MDST programme electives, with students choosing four elective course options. They delve deeper into the field of media studies and are offering a choice of relevant and selective topics within this discipline.

In the **third semester**, students take two programme core courses, an additional MDST elective course, and one free elective course. Semester three provides students with advanced theoretical knowledge in the media field and prepares them for their master's theses by further developing and enhancing their research proposal design skills. It also offers students additional opportunities to deepen their subject and interdisciplinary knowledge through a combination of programme-specific and free electives.

In the **fourth semester**, the final semester, students complete their theses, representing the culmination of students' independent and in-depth study of a selected topic related to the media studies field.

Sociology and Anthropology

Course Type	Number of Courses	Total Number of Credit Hours Per Course
Core Courses	7	21
Programme Elective Courses	3	9
Free Elective Courses (to be taken from the programme electives or other DI-offered courses)	1	3
Thesis	1	9

SOC students typically take:

- 1. Semester: four core courses,
- 2. Semesters: two core courses, one elective, and one free elective course,
- 3. Semester: one core course, then students select one of the two “specialisations”: Sociology of Arab Societies (SOC639) or Anthropology of Arab Societies (SOC640), and one elective course, and
- 4. Semester: final thesis.

All programme courses are three credit hours, while the final thesis is equivalent to nine credit hours. In total, SOC students undertake eleven courses and conduct one thesis research project.

Study and Exam Regulations

Both programmes

There are policies for assessment and examination, grading, academic standing, credit transfer, and the final thesis. All of these policies are published in full on the DI website³⁴ and are referred to in course syllabi where applicable.

The **Assessment Policy** outlines the basic philosophy behind assessment, rules for syllabi, assessment criteria, and assessment rules and regulations for both courses and individual assignments. For instance, instructors are required to provide detailed feedback on student assignments and no single course assessment can constitute more than 40% of an overall course grade. Furthermore, the **Transfer Policy** specifies policies on credit transfer. DI handed in two learning agreements proving transferability of credits.

A **syllabus** template is used by all DI instructors. The template seeks to ensure that all instructors appropriately develop their syllabi and include all necessary information. All syllabi must include the course title, credit hours, course description, information about the instructor,

³⁴ See <https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/en/Academics/Pages/Academic-Policies.aspx>, last access on November 4, 2024

assessment description, semester schedule/plan, learning outcomes, and relevant academic policies.

The **Grading System Policy** outlines each of DI's grading categories – from A to F – and includes a description of what characterises each grade level.

The **Thesis Policy** governs the completion of master's theses and outlines all thesis requirements for both students and examiners. The Thesis Policy is a key document and outlines the initiation of the thesis process at DI with the guidelines and process formalized in the policy. The policy includes general thesis requirements; details on the thesis proposal including timeline; the responsibilities of the thesis supervisor and the student; submission and assessment of the thesis and other information. Additionally, the DI sends out throughout the semesters relevant guidelines to all students regarding thesis submission, which include emails with submission deadlines, thesis templates, progress templates, and other essential information.

Moreover, DI issues a student ranking within their class/cohort upon the students' request. In other words, any graduating/graduate student has the right to request a graduation certificate in both Arabic and English with their rank and their relative grade. The reason behind optionally providing the inclusion of student ranks on the graduation certificate is due to the limited numbers of students in the programmes. DI, as a highly selective graduate institute, admits 6 to 20 students in each cohort per programme. Consequently, a student can be the last in his/her cohort while maintaining a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of 3.50 which is considered "very good" in DI's grading system. This could potentially bias employers and academic admissions committees against candidates from DI who are strong students, but have a low class rank due to the selective nature of the admissions process.

Feasibility of Study Workload

Both programmes

The modular structure of the programmes is designed to accommodate the varied needs of the student body. Full-time students are expected to complete their degrees within two years, with the provision for extensions being considered on an individual basis. Moreover, the programmes offer flexibility through part-time study plans, accommodating students whose personal circumstances necessitate an extended duration of study, up to four years. This structure is carefully calibrated to maintain a balance between academic rigor and workload manageability, ensuring that the programme remains within the realms of feasibility for both full-time and part-time scholars.

Students are also supported in various ways. Each faculty member is required to hold at least two office hours per week and in addition, be flexibly available for students. Students also meet with their academic advisors every semester. Advisor meetings go beyond discussions of course registration to address general programme progress and students' concerns. Also, the small size of the programmes has produced an environment where students are comfortable reaching out to their instructors and other faculty members.

The end-of-year student satisfaction survey and the course evaluations include a question on workload feasibility.

Media Studies

In the past, some students have expressed concerns about the workload. The revisions to the study plan have resulted in a more streamlined and focused workload for students. For instance, students are no longer required to attend a class in their final semester while completing their thesis, which provides them with additional time for the successful completion of their theses. They also experience a lighter workload during their first semester. Additionally, instructors and Heads of Programmes are required to both comment on student evaluation surveys and make adjustments when necessary.

The majority of students have progressed on their degree programmes in the foreseen timeframe, and only few students have been placed on academic probation during each academic year. Since the programme's inception, 84% of students who enrolled in the programme since 2015-2023 were able to successfully complete the degree requirements and graduate. Students are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher to graduate. The average GPA for MDST students over the past four years is 3.5 on a 4.0 scale.

The programme occasionally encounters students who were either placed on probation or had to leave the programme due to low grades. These cases typically involve students who are not fully committed to graduate studies and/or who struggle to balance their studies with their highly demanding full-time jobs. The programme actively addresses these concerns and provides students with the option to switch to part-time or to temporarily suspend their studies for one academic year if they experience difficulties in maintaining a work-study balance.

Monthly programme meetings among faculty feature a constant "student/teaching check-in" agenda item. These discussions offer a chance to share best practices, information about students, and help identify those who are struggling and need additional assistance. In addition to academic advising, Student-Faculty Forums provide a venue for students to raise concerns. Each semester, two MDST student representatives (one student representative per cohort) bring feedback from students and then facilitate a large programme-wide discussion session (among faculty and students in both cohorts).

Sociology and Anthropology

The graduation rates have been consistently high, with the majority of cohorts completing their studies within the expected two-year timeframe (100% for the 2018-2019 cohort, and no less than 81.25% for the 2016-2017 cohort). Additionally, the grade distribution for the year 2022-2023 reflects a rigorous academic standard, with 52.8% of grades in the 'A' to 'A-' range. Students at DI are expected to maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher to graduate and the average GPA of graduates of the programme is 3.5.

Equality of Opportunity

Both programmes

The DI has formulated a Diversity Policy,³⁵ a Policy on sexual harassment³⁶ and a Policy on Credit Transfer³⁷ for students who are transferring from other academic institution and want to apply for credit transfer at DI.

DI considers student applications without regard to race, gender, nationality, religion and other demographic characteristics. The Institute supports lower-income students. DI does, however, require proficiency in both the Arabic and English languages. The Arabic language requirement stems from both DI's basic objective of serving Arabic speaking communities and philosophy of encouraging knowledge production in the Arabic language. The English requirement is necessary since much of the academic literature in social science, humanities and public policy disciplines has been produced in English. The DI Language Centre provides support to students who need assistance to meet the English requirement.

The average number of female students across all **MDST** cohorts is above 60%. The **SOC** while encountering twice a percentage below 50% in the past nine years, otherwise has an equal or high female-to-male ratio.

Lower-income students are aided by DI's free tuition programme. All non-local/international students benefit from scholarship packages that cover tuition, on-campus housing, a monthly stipend, and medical insurance. The instructional staff is also diverse, with faculty representing numerous countries in the Arab region, the United Kingdom, and North America.

Students with special needs are provided accommodation and are provided with necessary support from Student Affairs. All syllabi include a note about special needs students. Moreover, DI facilities and buildings are designed to accommodate accessibility requirements for people with special needs. DI facilities also provide dedicated parking slots, alarms in the private bathrooms in case of emergency, and readable signage and road signs for visually impaired persons.

Appraisal:

The programme structure in both programmes supports the smooth implementation of the curricula and helps students to reach the defined learning outcomes. The programmes consist of modules and Credit-Points (CP) are allocated per module on the basis of the required student workload. A credit transfer policy is in place. However, the current basis for credit conversion from DI credit hours to ECTS credits is inconvenient because DI bases its conversion to ECTS on the Carnegie system from the United States as intermediary, first converting DI credits to Carnegie credits and then to ECTS credits. It would be more convenient to establish a direct conversion rate from DI credits to ECTS credits, based on the actual students' workload incurred (including self-study and examination times).

Moreover, DI provided two examples from Erasmus credit transfers that suggest the current conversion rate should be reassessed. Specifically, the two European universities in these examples used a lower credit conversion rate for transferring ECTS credits than DI's calculation of 2.4 ECTS credits per one DI credit hour. Ca'Foscari University (Italy) converted

³⁵ See [DI Academic Policies Diversity Policy En.2021-11-11.pdf](#), last access 4. November 2024

³⁶ See [DI Global Policies Sexual Harassment AR 2018_05_20.pdf](#) (in Arabic), last access 4. November 2024

³⁷ See [DI Academic Policies Credit Transfer AR 2020-12-28 EN.pdf](#), last access 4. November 2024

one DI credit hour into two ECTS credits, while Sciences-Po (France) converted one DI credit hour into 1.7 ECTS credits. The panel team strongly **recommends** that DI reviews its credit/ECTS credit conversion rate based on practical experiences with European universities to ensure accuracy and alignment with international standards.

Practical components, such as an internship, are not officially part of the curriculum, and based on interviews conducted during the assessment conference, students cannot earn credit points (CPs) if they voluntarily choose to integrate practical components into their studies. The panel suggests that the programmes consider the possibility of allowing students who voluntarily complete an internship related to their field of study to earn CPs, for example, by partially substituting elective courses.

The module/course descriptions provide detailed descriptions of intended learning outcomes, and the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide. DI's Thesis Policy, which is provided to students, completely fulfils the information requirement of a module/course description and ensures transparency about the Master's thesis. An additional module/course description is not suitable for the thesis, nor would it add value for students.

There are legally binding study and exam regulations which contain all necessary rules and procedures and take into account, where applicable, national requirements. The final grade is supplied with a relative grade upon the student's request. However, the panel suggests including an ECTS grading table instead of a relative grade. Since most students are on scholarship which is maintained based on academic performance, a relative grade system could disadvantage students whose GPAs, though still "very good" according to the DI's grading system (e.g. 3.23), might correspond to a "B" or "C" in relative terms, which is not very favourable for the student and could harm their prospects. An ECTS grading table would provide a more transparent and equitable representation of student performance.

Furthermore, for the Diploma Supplement it is not advisable to include links to information that is required by European Standards (e.g., admission requirements, information on the national education system) (see ECTS User's Guide 2015³⁸). Web contents may be moved or changed/adapted over time, so that the links and/or the information become invalid. This concern is particularly relevant given that the Ministry of Education in Qatar is currently working on amending the National Higher Education System Framework (information received from DI after the conference). It is therefore important to include a concise summary of the higher education environment that was in place at the time a student was enrolled in the programme. Providing brief and clear information about the study programmes directly in the Diploma Supplement also ensures an easy access to the most important information for external parties. Hence, the panel strongly **recommends** substituting links provided in the Diploma Supplements with necessary information as stipulated in the ECTS User's Guide 2015.

The feasibility of the study programmes' workload is ensured through a well-designed curriculum, by a plausible calculation of workload, by an adequate number and frequency of examinations, by appropriate support services as well as academic and general student counselling. When reviewing the workload, the HEI also takes into account evaluation findings, including student feedback and the programmes' success rate.

³⁸ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/da7467e6-8450-11e5-b8b7-01aa75ed71a1>, last access January 9, 2025

The HEI ensures gender equality and non-discrimination. Affirmative actions are in place to accommodate students with disabilities, including adjustments to time allowances and formal standards/requirements throughout the programme and examinations. Additional support is provided for students in special circumstances, such as foreign students, students with a migration background and/or from so-called non-academic backgrounds, and students from war-affected regions.³⁹ Additionally, the measures taken are periodically reviewed and adapted in accordance with the obtained results.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	norm
3.2	Structure					
3.2.1*	Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.2*	Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3*	Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4	Equality of opportunity		X			

3.3 Didactical concept

Logic and Plausibility of the Didactical Concept

Media Studies

Courses are designed around course learning outcomes (CLOs) that relate to the broader programme learning outcomes (PLOs). CLOs are explicitly provided to clarify the goals of the course and how they fit into the broader aims of the programme.

Courses feature a combination of seminar-style discussions, students' presentations, and traditional lectures. Students also watch videos in some courses, and guest speakers are featured in a number of courses. Some courses are taught using a combination of online posted material, class sessions and small group/individual tutorials. A tutorial in this context refers to small group or individual sessions where students discuss their in-progress research papers or projects with the instructor. For example, in group assignments where students need to design and implement a research project, several tutorials are held throughout the semester to answer students' queries and provide them with verbal feedback throughout the process. These sessions are also sometimes held for individual assignments to guide students through the process of conducting critical reviews.

Typically, lecture-style input is combined with seminar-style discussions/workshops. Students are asked to complete short assignments in advance of the weekly class sessions and expected to review the posted material during the first part of the scheduled class time.

The teaching methods used are intended to promote critical engagement, independent thinking, and scholarly development. Traditional lectures ensure a structured delivery and coherence, ensuring that students have a thorough understanding of core theoretical and

³⁹ see chapter 4.1 and 4.2 for psychological support counselling on campus

methodological concepts before engaging in critical discussions, whereas seminar-style discussions encourage active student engagement, collaborative learning, and the development of critical thinking abilities. Student presentations further enhance in-class discussions by enabling students to articulate their analyses, defend their arguments, and receive constructive feedback from peers and instructors while also developing their public speaking skills.

Additionally, the use of online materials and small group or individual tutorials allows for more flexible and personalised learning experiences. Given the audiovisual nature of media content, students' interaction with audiovisual content further promotes important discussions around critical media theories on representation and ideology. The combination of these teaching methods should ensure a flexible and intellectually stimulating learning environment, equipping students with both theoretical knowledge and practical skills necessary for careers in academia and media-related fields.

Class sessions should stimulate interaction, and students should be prepared to initiate discussion points, and answer and ask questions about the weekly readings. Class attendance is obligatory.

The MDST programme focuses mostly on theoretical academic research into media phenomena. However, the programme is practical insofar as it emphasises primary, original research, and allows students to develop topics of their choosing. Students are also encouraged to pursue practical training programmes, and the programme aids them in these pursuits.

The Head of Programme reviews all syllabi to ensure they are consistent with programme objectives and consults with faculty on design and implementation. Syllabi are discussed regularly in programme meetings. Courses are frequently adjusted based on student feedback.

Sociology and Anthropology

The programme adopts a didactical strategy that champions the convergence of diverse pedagogical techniques with the active, reflective engagement of students. This strategy ensures that each student's encounter with the material is not merely informational but transformational, fostering critical thinking and scholarly independence.

The curriculum is structured around a range of didactic tools, thoughtfully integrated within each course to facilitate a deep and meaningful understanding of the subject matter. Foundational theories are delivered through frontal lectures, small group discussions promote the critical exchange of ideas, tutorials provide individualised academic mentorship, and student-led research projects encourage autonomous intellectual inquiry. The tutorials in the SOC programme, offer personalized academic mentorship, particularly in courses like Research Seminar 1 and 2. In these seminars, students – whether working individually or in teams – develop and execute their own research projects. Throughout this process, they receive dedicated guidance and supervision from their course professor through one-on-one meetings, ensuring tailored support and academic growth.

Supplementing these core methods, the programme employs a diverse array of educational resources: audio-visual aids to crystallise complex theories, student presentations to enhance communicative skills, and guest lectures to connect academic discourse with current societal

challenges. These methods are reflective of the learning outcomes and chosen to engage students in a manner that is most beneficial for their academic growth.

A key component of the pedagogical framework is the Research Seminar, which promotes collaborative research projects. Here, students engage in collective projects, simulating professional research settings and emphasising the importance of teamwork and peer learning. This collaborative model not only aligns with the programme's objectives of producing adept researchers but also reinforces the intended learning outcomes by requiring students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical, real-world scenarios.

Another key component of the pedagogical framework is the Research Seminar 2 course, where the ethos of active learning is brought to the forefront through a structured peer-review process. Having composed initial drafts of their master's proposals, students engage in a mutual critique, closely examining and constructively evaluating each other's work. This process not only improves their critical analysis skills but also simulates real-world research settings, preparing them for the collaborative and iterative nature of academic scholarship. The peer-review exercises are a testament to the programme's commitment to an educational paradigm where students are not just learners but contributors to the collective knowledge base.

This rigorous engagement with peer feedback is designed to elevate the quality of research proposals, ensuring that when students embark on their thesis journey, they do so with a solid foundation of peer-validated scholarship. It is an essential part of the learning process, affirming the programme's dedication to fostering an academic community that is collaborative, supportive, and critically engaged.

Faculty continuously review and adapt the syllabi to this evolving didactic landscape, with the Head of the Programme ensuring that such adaptations align with the defined learning outcomes and maintain academic integrity. These iterative discussions within the academic community serve to reinforce the programme's commitment to a learning experience that is both intellectually rigorous and responsively tailored to student development.

Course Materials

Both programmes

Courses use diverse teaching materials. Electronic teaching materials, including the PowerPoint slides of lectures, readings, audio-visual materials, and handouts, are uploaded electronically to the course management system (Moodle) and/or sent via emails. Each course has a Moodle site that is accessible to students. This facilitates interaction between course instructors and students. Programme course syllabi include reading lists which suggests additional readings for students wishing to gain more in-depth knowledge of subject material.

Guest Lecturers

Media Studies

The MDST programme allocates an annual budget to host guest speakers from various regions, including the Arab region, Europe, and the United States, who deliver lectures to students. Since its inception, the MDST programme has extended invitations to guest speakers from across the globe. MDST students are also encouraged to attend other talks held by the Journalism, Sociology and Anthropology, Political Science and International Affairs, Human

Rights, Conflict and Humanitarian Action, Comparative Literature, Philosophy, Linguistics, History, and other DI programmes. Additionally, guest lecturers from inside and outside DI, either from professional practice or scholarly work, are invited whenever their insights are pertinent to the curriculum.

Here is an overview of guest speakers invited to the programme in recent years:

- A guest speaker from London School of Economics discussed the representation of Al-Andalus on social media,
- An academic and journalist speaker shared insights on social media, elites, and the applicability of the Scandinavian media model in the Arab region,
- a professor from Hunter College and the City University of New York delivered two lectures on media and feminist knowledge in Middle Eastern societies,
- a journalist and author delivered two talks on his book, 'Cracks in the Wall: Beyond Apartheid in Israel/Palestine.',
- a speaker from University of Edinburgh presented their book, 'Muslim Identity Politics: Islam, Activism, and Equality in Britain.',
- a professor from Columbia University offered valuable perspectives on media coverage of the Giulio Regenia murder through two separate lectures,
- a professor from University of Maryland delved into Arab Spring feminist media activism in two separate talks, and
- a professor from University of Copenhagen shared his research on Islamic media.

DI shares a campus with the Arab Centre for Policy Studies. Together, these two entities ensure the campus remains intellectually vibrant. Each year, several major conferences are held on campus, organised either by DI or the Arab Centre. Some of these conferences are explicitly media centric. For instance, one of the main conferences held by the Centre is the Social Sciences and Humanities Conference. Held biennially since 2017, the meeting is one of the highlights of the Arab academic scene, bringing together scholars from across the expanse of the social sciences and humanities. The tenth round of this conference, which was held between April 12 and 14, 2023, was entirely dedicated to the topic of 'social media platforms, the flow of information, and freedom of expression'.

Moreover, the Arab centre's fifth international winter school, titled 'Social Media, Surveillance, and Societies of Control,' took place from January 6–11, 2024, in Doha. This annual forum seeks to provide an opportunity for early-career researchers to network with international scholars, gain substantive knowledge and insight, and receive feedback from respected scholars and experts in their field. The MDST programme faculty actively participated in panel discussions and moderation during this Winter School, and one MDST student had been involved in the organisation aspect of this international event. Additionally, the MDST programme faculty engaged in paper reviews for other international events hosted by the Arab Centre, such as the Arab Graduate Students in Western Universities Conference, which took place from April 2 to 4, 2024. The MDST programme regularly disseminates information about public events to its students during and following the induction and sends timely reminders as the events dates approach.

Sociology and Anthropology

The programme is committed to fostering global scholarly exchange by inviting a selected series of guest lectures each semester. Guest lectures reflect the programme's dynamic engagement with diverse sociological and anthropological discourses.

Guest lecturers share their latest findings and experiential insights, thus bridging theory with practice. In a collaborative spirit, the SOC programme benefits from the wider academic activities within DI, where guest lectures and talks by various programmes are accessible to all, fostering an environment of shared learning and discourse. The programme also organises tri-weekly seminars featuring external guest lecturers. These seminars have continued to be a platform for intellectual diversity, bringing together thinkers and scholars from far-reaching academic spheres.

The Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, the programme's sister institution, continues to be a beacon for scholarly dialogue. It regularly hosts significant events, including its biennial major conferences: the Social Science Conference and the Arab Graduate Student Conference. These conferences provide opportunities for students to engage with scholars and doctoral candidates from across the Arab world and beyond, fostering an environment of intellectual exchange that is pivotal to the academic calendar. SOC faculty and students actively participate in these events, contributing to and benefiting from the vibrant discourse that these gatherings offer.

A list of recent guest lecturers is provided:

- Tunisia: an assistant professor from the University of Gaffs, a sociology specialist from the University of Tunis
- Lebanon: a senior gender consultant from the American University in Beirut, a professor of sociology from the American University in Beirut, and former President of the International Sociological Association
- France: a distinguished honorary professor from Lyon 2 University,
- Morocco: the Deputy Director-General of the King Abdulaziz Al Saud Foundation for Islamic Studies and Humanities in Casablanca, a professor from Moulay Ismail University in Meknes, a sociology professor at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities in Meknes from Moulay Ismail University, a researcher at the University Institute for African, Euro-Mediterranean, and Ibero-American Studies at Mohammed V University in Rabat,
- Palestine: an associate lecturer in the Department of Social Services at the Academic College Safed, an assistant professor from Bethlehem University and Vice President of the Middle East and North Africa region for the International Sociological Association's Research Committee 34 on the Sociology of Youth,
- Australia: a research fellow at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalization, Deakin University,
- UK: an interdisciplinary quantitative social scientist at University of Bristol,
- Kuwait: a professor of sociology and anthropology at Kuwait University,
- Iraq: a professor in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology at the College of Arts, Al-Mustansir Iya University,
- Libya: a professor of political science at Benghazi University, and a visiting professor at Bayreuth University in Germany,

- Ethiopia: an assistant professor at the Research Education Institute at Addis Ababa University.

The SOC programme also sustains its tradition of hosting a visiting professorship, a practice that has previously welcomed a professor with expertise on the sociology of Arab societies. This initiative continues to bring distinguished scholars to deliver specialised courses. In the Spring semester 2024, there was a Visiting Professor in Anthropology teaching two courses: Anthropology of Social Movements and Anthropology of the Maghreb Societies.

Appraisal:

The didactical concept of each study programme is well-described, plausible, and oriented towards the programme objectives. It allows for the application of different teaching and learning methods, such as case studies or practical projects. Students are encouraged to take an active role in shaping the learning process.

The accompanying course materials are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They are user-friendly and encourage students to engage in further independent studies. They are in general up-to-date and digitally accessible for the students. However, for some of the module descriptions in the **Media Studies** programme, the literature references should be updated:

- Issues in Media Representation (MDST624): Out of 33 recommended books the three most recent were published in 2017, 2013, and 2010. The majority is from the 1990s, predating the widespread use of the internet.
- Arab Media Culture (MDST613): Among 22 recommended books, the three newest are from 2015, 2014, 2008.
- Global Visual Cultures (MDST623): Out of 25 recommended books, the three newest are from 2011 and 2010. The majority is from the 1990s.
- Critical Approaches in Media and Culture Studies (MDST622): Of more than 50 recommended books, the newest is from 2016. Only a few books are from the early 2000s. Even considering the importance of emphasizing classical author's theories, these have developed in the meantime.

The panel **recommends** updating the literature lists in the module descriptions of the **Media Studies** programme.

Guest lecturers are invited and contribute to the students' qualification process with their special experience, either from professional practice or academic research, but also, for example, from culture and politics.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	norm
3.3 Didactical concept					
3.3.1* Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	norm
3.3.2* Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3 Guest lecturers			X		
3.3.4 Lecturing tutors					X

3.4 Internationality

International Contents and Intercultural Aspects

Media Studies

MDST programme content is explicitly international, in part due to the location of DI and in part due to the international scope of the media studies field. The programme aims to equip students with the ability to continue work or studies in either the Arab region or beyond it.

Courses address the thought of Arab, Western, African, Asian, and other media and cultural studies scholars, and a variety of theories representing diverse schools of international thought are engaged with. For example, the **Mass Communication Theory (MDST 612)** course reflects the thought of British Cultural Studies, the Chicago School, the Toronto School, the Frankfurt School, and other areas of international theory. Theories of globalisation are addressed explicitly in multiple courses, and media of numerous countries – both inside and outside the Arab world – are studied and discussed. In addition to theorising global visual media and culture, the **Global Visual Cultures: Art, Aesthetics and Criticism (MDST 623)** (Elective) course, for example, theorises global modernity, global cultural economy, and international cinema, among other areas of international scope. The course **Media Ethics & Law in Contemporary Journalistic Practice (MDST 633)** (Elective) compares diverse ethical philosophies and examines multiple legal traditions in the Arab and Western worlds.

Most other programme courses incorporate international themes, with syllabi and suggested readings systematically exploring media studies from global comparative perspectives, encompassing aspects related to production, content, and effects.

For example, elective courses like:

- Global Media Systems (MDST626),
- Issues in Media Studies: Sociology of News (MDST634), and
- The Political Economy of Communication: Ownership, Management, and Regulation (MDST627)

provide a comparative view of news production processes and contexts in both Arab and Western societies.

Programme elective courses such as:

- Issues in Media Studies (MDST634),
- Global Visual Cultures: Art, Aesthetics, and Criticism (MDST623), and
- Critical Approaches in Media Studies (MDST622)

feature diverse comparative case studies related to media content.

Furthermore, courses like **Media Users and Audiences (MDST628)** analyse media effects studies and surveys on media use and news consumption trends from various media and political systems in the Arab region, Europe, and the U.S. These international and comparative themes are reflected in MDST students' theses, which frequently address a broad spectrum of regional and international topics, often approached from a comparative perspective.

Sociology and Anthropology

The SOC programme integrates global knowledge and intercultural skills as foundational components of its educational objectives. This commitment to internationalism is woven into every facet of the programme.

The curriculum is informed by the diverse academic traditions of the faculty, with courses like **Transformation of Rural Societies** (Elective), which delves into the nuances of the Maghreb region. This strategic integration of faculty expertise into the curriculum ensures that students gain in-depth knowledge of varied societal structures and dynamics.

Empirical rigor is a key feature of the programme, as demonstrated in the **Quantitative Research Methods** course, which incorporates datasets such as the European Social Survey and the UK-based Longitudinal Study of Young People in Education. This enables students to engage with and analyse data reflecting international societal trends, thereby sharpening their analytical skills in a global context. The lecturer's contributions deepen this empirical emphasis with research on language and art in Palestine, exploring the interplay between cultural expression and social dynamics within a region marked by complex historical and political dynamics. The lecturer's work adds an essential layer of understanding to the programme, inviting students to consider the profound impact of linguistic and artistic narratives in shaping societal structures.

The programme's methodological approach is characterised by a comparative perspective, drawing on international case studies and theoretical frameworks from across continents. According to DI, this comparative approach reflects the programme's dedication to fostering a study environment rich in global discourse and perspectives, thus preparing students for international scholarly and professional environments.⁴⁰

Faculty research further enhances the programme's intercultural dimension. A lecturer's research on gender and family in displacement, Muslim minorities, and decolonial theories provides students with critical insights into complex global issues. The lecturer's involvement in projects like "Advancing Shelter and Supports for Homeless Muslim Women & Children in Canada" and the "Refugee Research Network" exemplifies the programme's commitment to addressing pressing international challenges. Similarly, lecturer's research into labour market inequalities and the intersection of religion and culture across various societies enriches the learning experience with contemporary global relevance.

The SOC programme aligns teaching content, research projects, and faculty expertise to strategically support DI's mission to cultivate a globally informed and influential educational platform that fosters intercultural understanding and global awareness among its graduates.

Internationality of the Student Body

Both programmes

Students in the programmes benefit from the broad diversity and internationality of DI in general. Both programmes specifically, contribute to this diversity with a ratio of foreign students of above 80% (**MDST**) and above 60% (**SOC**), respectively. DI's other programmes

⁴⁰ Self-evaluation report p. 49

are also fairly diverse, and MDST and SOC students frequently interact with students from other programmes inside and outside of the classroom.

In addition, the Language Centre provides opportunities to students from across the globe to study Arabic intensively. Many of these students have come from Europe, China and elsewhere, further diversifying the academic landscape of DI. The Language Centre offers an international fellowship, which brings in several students annually from outside of the Arab world to further their knowledge of the Arabic language, and thus students have an opportunity to interact with the Language Centre's exchange students.

Media Studies

The current MDST cohorts include students from Morocco, Palestine, Algeria, Egypt, Russia and the United Kingdom. All admitted students to the programme can speak both Arabic and English.

Country	MDST Graduates (Year of Graduation)							Current MDST Students (2023-2024) ⁴
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Algeria	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	1
Canada	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Chad	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Egypt	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Jordan	2	1	1	0	1	0	1	0
Lebanon	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Libya	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Morocco	4	8	1	4	2	5	3	9
Palestine	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	4
Qatar	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Russia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Somalia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sudan	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	0
Syria	0	1	0	3	2	1	1	0
Tunisia	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
United Kingdom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Yemen	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Total	11	16	9	10	10	9	9	19

Figure 1: Media Studies graduates and current students by country

Sociology and Anthropology

The current SOC cohorts include students from Jordan, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Iraq, Palestine, Yemen, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, and Turkey. All admitted students to the programme can speak both Arabic and English.

Country	SOC Graduates							Current SOC Students (2023-2024)
	(Year of Graduation)							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	
Algeria	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	1
Canada	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Egypt	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Eritrea	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Iran	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Iraq	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Jordan	0	0	0	0	1	6	3	4
Morocco	1	3	1	3	2	1	0	0
Oman	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Palestine	2	2	1	1	0	2	1	2
Qatar	3	1	2	5	2	0	0	4
Saudi Arabia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Senegal	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Somalia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sudan	0	3	4	3	4	2	1	3
Syria	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	3
Tunisia	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Yemen	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Total	10	13	9	15	14	14	6	27

Figure 2: Sociology and Anthropology Graduates and current students by country

Internationality of the Faculty

Media Studies

All four faculty members are of Arab descent and have American or British citizenship – two are of Egyptian origin, one is of Palestinian origin, and one is of Tunisian origin.

All faculty members are fluent in both Arabic and English. All four faculty have worked internationally – in the West and the Arab region – and present and publish regularly in international venues.

Sociology and Anthropology

The faculty of the programme maintain an international profile by their extensive international experiences and multilingual capabilities. Three examples of the faculty's international experience are:

- One faculty member has academic expertise across a variety of cultures, from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem to leading universities in the United Kingdom, such as Manchester University and the University of Bristol, and at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem. Their scholarly work is recognised globally, with publications in leading international journals that have garnered widespread citations, reflecting a substantial impact in the academic community and beyond.⁴¹
- One faculty member is a Palestinian anthropologist, who studied at the Hebrew University and The University of Texas at Austin and received a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation. They have had guest lectures at the Free University of Berlin, McGill University, and Harvard University. They review for top academic publishers, serve on editorial boards of academic journals, and are fluent in Arabic, Hebrew, and English with knowledge of Greek, Turkish, and German.
- One faculty member is a graduate of Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris occupied Visiting Professorships in Italy and France, and editorships that have shaped the academic discourse in the social sciences. They have tenure as Editor-in-Chief of OMRAN Review and contribute to the Editorial Committees of “Les Cahiers de Tunisie” and “Revue Tunisienne de Sciences Politiques”. Since 2019, they have collaborated with a research laboratory at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Tunis.

A visiting professor in Spring 2024 is a professor of sociology at Moulay Ismail University in Meknes, Morocco. They received their PhD from Mohammed V University in Rabat in 2013 and have since made significant contributions to the field of Sociology of Religion. A trilingual scholar, effectively disseminates research in Arabic, English, and French, enhancing international presence.

These distinguished faculty members bring their expertise into the courses, e.g. “Transformation of Rural Societies” and “Migration and Citizenship”, which offer students insights into regional dynamics and European societal structures.

The programme's dedication to empirical excellence is evident in the Quantitative Research Methods course, where data from the European Social Survey and the UK-based Longitudinal Study of Young People in Education is utilised, equipping students with the skills to analyse international societal trends.

Foreign Language Contents

Both programmes

DI operates a Language Centre to support the students' linguistic proficiency. This commitment to English language mastery is demonstrated by the graduation requirement of achieving a minimum IELTS score of 6.5 or equivalent. The Language Centre's structured curriculum is divided into four progressive levels, tailored to guide students from foundational knowledge to advanced proficiency. Students must enrol at the level that corresponds to their initial proficiency and are encouraged to advance through the levels to meet the graduation language requirements.

⁴¹ See CVs of faculty

In addition to regular courses, the Language Centre conducts specialised workshops throughout the academic year. These workshops focus on developing skills crucial for academic success, such as reading and writing in English. These sessions are instrumental in equipping students with the competencies required to navigate and produce academic texts proficiently.

Media Studies

The official language of DI is Arabic, but, given its current status in the social sciences and humanities, DI also prioritises the English language. As might be expected given these basic realities, the MDST programme relies heavily on both Arabic and English.

All MDST programme faculty and students are expected to possess relatively high levels of fluency in both languages. Prior to gaining programme admission, students are required to demonstrate high levels of competency in both Arabic and English. At a bare minimum, students are expected to demonstrate fluency in reading academic texts in the English language. English language skills are demonstrated through the IELTS exam, and the admissions interview, which includes a section devoted to reading, interpreting, and critically analysing an English language academic text.

Since most MDST students have learned English as a second or third language, English language support is provided by DI's Language Centre. The Centre offers a series of English courses for students who need continued assistance with their English language development.

Programme lectures are delivered primarily in Arabic, but English is also employed occasionally by individual professors. Additionally, guest speakers often deliver their lectures in English. Course readings are primarily in English, but Arabic readings are also assigned. Students have the option of producing their papers and master's theses in either Arabic or English.

Sociology and Anthropology

The programme integrates a multilingual approach in its curriculum, reflecting the international scope of its academic ethos. Arabic remains the primary language for instruction, engagement, and assessment, embodying the institution's dedication to regional scholarship and linguistic heritage. English is employed as a complementary language, enriching the programme's academic diversity and broadening the students' scholarly perspectives.

On average, the distribution of course materials and literature is composed of 70% Arabic and 30% English. Notably, half of the Arabic materials are translated from English, French, and German sources, ensuring a comprehensive academic repertoire that spans multiple linguistic and cultural domains. This multilingual mix is most pronounced in courses like **Quantitative Research Methods** and **Research Seminar 2**, where the majority of materials are presented in English to facilitate in-depth analysis and discourse.

Reflecting a shift in language preference among the student body, approximately 30% of students, particularly from the most recent cohorts, employ English in their academic work. This trend shows a growing inclination towards internationalisation within the student community and aligns with the programme's strategic objective to foster a globally sensitive academic environment.

Appraisal:

International contents are an integral part of the curricula. Students are thus prepared for the challenges in an international working environment. Through practical examples, students are enabled to act in an intercultural environment.

A significant proportion of the students at DI come from various language areas and cultural backgrounds. Thus, discussions in the classroom and group work frequently reflect international aspects. The measures taken to ensure an international composition of the student body have proven to be effective and sustainable.

The international composition of the faculty (educators from different countries and those with international academic and professional experience) is a fundamental element shaping the profile of the study programmes, and is promoted by DI.

The proportion of foreign-language courses and the use of foreign-language materials are aligned with the qualification objectives of the study programmes.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.4 Internationality					
3.4.1* International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2 Internationality of the student body		X			
3.4.3 Internationality of faculty		X			
3.4.4 Foreign language contents			X		

3.5 Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)

Media Studies

The programme is predicated on providing students with broad contextual knowledge and practical, transferable skills. The programme possesses interdisciplinary foundations, and course readings and assessment measures require students to acquire and demonstrate a broad knowledge base. MDST courses – as well as multidisciplinary elective courses – focus fundamentally on interdisciplinarity and on far-reaching knowledge of political science, philosophy, sociology, history, anthropology, data sciences and other disciplines.

Multidisciplinary is anchored in all of the programme's learning outcomes as multidisciplinary plays a pivotal role in fulfilling the Institute's strategic mission. Apart from the core and elective programme offerings, MDST students can enrol in multiple multidisciplinary courses offered by faculty members who are not part of the MDST programme, e.g., **Data, Sciences, and Digital Skills** (DIGS 620) and the **Data, Automation and Analytical Methods** (DIGS 621) courses. The **Data, Automation and Analytical Methods** course introduces automation as an agent of knowledge, reviews data driven methodologies to analyse and synthesise knowledge and covers topics related to Large Linguistic Models such as Generative Pre-Trained (GPT) models, social media content analytics, cross document knowledge transfer, publication and citation impacts, and automated systematic reviews.

The programme is also attentive to the need to provide students with practical, transferable skills. The programme's fourth and fifth learning outcomes are focused on allowing students to 'Apply relevant media studies theories to original media studies research' and 'Develop original research using acquired knowledge of research methods and data gathering techniques. To fulfil these outcomes, many MDST courses including **Communication Research Methods**, **Mass Communication Theory**, **Research Seminar**, **Critical Approaches in Media studies** (Elective), **Arab Media Cultures**, **Issues in Media Studies** (Elective), and **Media Audiences and Users** (Elective) require significant academic writing, proposal development, and in some cases data collection and analyses. Most MDST courses have also been set up as seminars, with discussion and debate heavily featured. Discussions are intended to solidify knowledge bases, but also to allow students to hone oral communication, argumentation, and debate skills. Moreover, most programme classes require at least one oral presentation. Leadership and teamwork skills are also emphasised through a series of group assignments in multiple programme courses.

The programme further aims to provide students with conflict resolution and handling skills. **Media Ethics and Law in Contemporary Journalistic Practice** (Elective), for example, requires students to engage with a multitude of ethical philosophies and master multiple ethical decision-making models. As noted earlier in this report, one of the course's assignments asks students to identify a media-related ethical dilemma and propose a detailed solution using an ethical decision-making model. The MDST programme – and the DI as a whole – additionally focuses on democratic ideals, public engagement, and social commitment. On-campus conferences and lectures have focused on current refugee crises, as well as conflicts in Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and the Arab Gulf, among other sites.

Moreover, programme courses such as **Media and Democratisation in the Middle East and North Africa** (Elective) critically investigate the role of media in social and political activism and looks at the ways in which individuals and civil society groups have appropriated different media platforms to configure new and innovative ways of public engagement.

MDST students are additionally encouraged to attend annual conferences held by the Arab Centre for Policy Studies in support of broad human rights or specific causes. For example, the annual Palestine Forum, which recently took place from February 10 -12, 2024 provides a space for Palestinian and non-Palestinian researchers from all over the world to present papers related to Palestine. The campus also commemorates UNESCO Arabic Language Day annually.

Sociology and Anthropology

The Master's Programme in Sociology and Anthropology methodically integrates the acquisition of communication, public speaking, cooperation, and conflict handling skills into its curriculum, transcending the quality requirements and aligning with the programme's ethos of fostering multidisciplinary competencies.

For example, communication and public-speaking skills are utilised through the programme's diverse academic activities. The pedagogical approach is designed to ensure that students are proficient communicators, capable of articulating complex ideas with clarity and confidence. Courses like **Issues in Social Sciences and Humanities** encourage students to engage in oral presentations that span across disciplines, necessitating the articulation of their research and critical analyses to an academic audience. This is further cultivated through the **Research**

Seminars courses, where students regularly present their work and engage in scholarly discourse, receiving structured feedback from peers and faculty.

The programme's didactical strategy, which emphasises reflective engagement and scholarly independence, inherently develops students' public speaking abilities. By simulating professional research settings and encouraging active participation in guest lectures and workshops, students encounter a plethora of public speaking models, thus enriching their communicative repertoire.

Moreover, cooperation and conflict resolution skills are instilled in the fabric of the programme's learning outcomes. Group assignments and collaborative projects, which are a staple of courses like the **Research Seminar**, and **Quantitative Research Methods**, provide a forum for students to learn the nuances of teamwork and dispute resolution in a controlled academic setting. This practical learning is complemented by the student-faculty forums, a seminal feature of the programme where the dynamics of group discussion and conflict resolution are not merely discussed but practiced and refined.

Furthermore, leadership skills and broad contextual knowledge are core components of the programme's multidisciplinary experiences. The curriculum is structured to empower students to take on leadership roles. The programme's emphasis on a critical examination of social and cultural phenomena within the Arab region and beyond ensures that students acquire an expansive understanding of diverse contexts, preparing them to be leaders who can navigate complex global and local dynamics.

Appraisal:

Students acquire communication and public-speaking skills, as well as cooperation and conflict handling skills in accordance with the module/course descriptions. This is effectively supported through suitable didactical and methodological measures.

The programmes ensure the acquisition of further multidisciplinary competences, such as leadership skills and broad contextual knowledge.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.5*	Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

3.6 Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)

Both programmes

DI offers career services, where activities such as career events, advice to students on job preparation, and information on job opportunities are held. Career services inform students continually about suitable job offers, internships, research opportunities and scholarships through the online career portal.⁴² Each academic year, a career fair is conducted for students

⁴² See [Student Affairs Career Advising Services](#), last access on February 17, 2025

at DI to help them make career decisions and facilitate their employment. An email “student career services” is used to advertise for the career fair, various career, and skills development workshops.

Media Studies

All DI programme learning outcomes and course learning outcomes adhere to a “transferable skills” learning area, something which supports student efforts to transition into doctoral work and beyond. The MDST programme’s emphasis on broad media, and other social science and humanities knowledge, combined with its focus on practical writing, public speaking, debate, teamwork, leadership, and conflict resolution skills, offer students knowledge and skills for employment.

According to DI,⁴³ the majority of graduates are employed, either full-time or part-time, in media-academic professions, the media industry, or the journalism sector. The Alumni surveys also indicate that graduates unanimously agree that their studies have effectively prepared them to become highly skilled researchers.

DI has a partnership with *Fadaat Media Group*, one of the Arab world's largest media networks. This partnership has been established with the dual intention of providing DI students with training and work opportunities during their study programme and creating networking prospects. Additionally, the MDST programme has informal ties with other media entities like *The New Arab* and *Al Jazeera Media Institute*. Based on the Fall 2023 Student Forum, the programme hosted an annual field trip to Al Araby TV on February 1, 2024, to foster student connections with media experts. The programme plans to include at least one annual field trip to a mainstream news media outlet for its students. Additionally, it plans to extend invitations to local professionals to offer insights from the media industry to MDST students. For example, on February 6th, 2024, the programme hosted a lead presenter for various programmes at Al Jazeera Channel who is also a certified trainer at Al Jazeera Media Institute.

Sociology and Anthropology

At the programme level, students are supported in securing employment by utilising extensive professional networks. The programme facilitates connections between students and potential employers, and faculty members provide personalised reference letters that underscore the students' academic achievements and professional readiness. According to the DI, these letters serve as a powerful endorsement, often opening doors to career opportunities and aiding in the successful placement of graduates in their respective fields.⁴⁴

Appraisal:

Having considered the recommendation in chapter 3.1 about the acquisition of CP for voluntary practical components, the promotion of employability – for instance through the integration of

⁴³ See self-evaluation report p. 47

⁴⁴ See self-evaluation report p. 53

theory and practice and through the promotion of multidisciplinary competences and skills – runs as a common thread of the study programmes through all its modules/courses.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.6*	Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

4. Academic environment and framework conditions

4.1 Faculty

Structure and Quantity of Faculty in Relation to Curricular Requirements

Media Studies

The MDST programme employs four full-time faculty members, including the Head of Programme. A documentary filmmaker with a PhD in Media and Communication from the UK, is expected to join the programme as an adjunct during the next academic year to contribute to various aspects of the programme.

The MDST faculty-to-student ratio ranges from about 1:4 to 1:5. Each regular member of the programme typically teaches four academic courses per academic year (i.e., two courses per semester). Faculty members with major administrative responsibilities at DI (this refers to two of the faculty members above) have a reduced teaching workload, for example the Head of Programme teaches two courses per year (i.e., one course per semester).

Individual faculty members typically participate in three or four committees annually at the programme, School, and institute levels. For instance, in addition to their membership roles in the MDST Master's and PhD student admission committees, programme faculty have chaired various institute-level committees and boards, including the Board of Doctoral Studies, the Research Committee, the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee, and the Student Academic Appeal Committee. Additionally, they have served as members of numerous committees and work groups at both the Institute and School levels, such as the SOSH Research Committee, the DI Institutional Effectiveness Committee, the DI Promotions Committee, the DI Plagiarism Committee, the DI Academic Policies Committee, the DI Strategic Plan Committee, and the DI Artificial Intelligence Work Group.

Faculty members also supervise an average of three master's students per year and are expected to annually produce at least one peer-reviewed journal article. The MDST faculty aims to achieve research outcomes beyond these average expectations. As a collective, MDST faculty members have taught dozens of different courses at several different universities in Western and Arab universities and are each qualified to teach several courses in the MDST study plan. MDST faculty versatility allows instructors to switch off teaching courses. According to DI, the student evaluations of MDST courses have been favourable.⁴⁵

Sociology and Anthropology

According to DI,⁴⁶ since the initial accreditation in 2020, the Sociology and Anthropology programme has seen a dynamic evolution in its faculty structure, aligning effectively with the evolving curricular demands and maintaining a robust educational quality.

During the 2023-2024 academic year, the programme was supported by five full-time faculty members and one visiting professor, each bringing their specialised expertise to the curriculum. The academic year (2023-2024) marks a significant milestone with the addition of a new full-time core faculty member, alongside a visiting professor specializing in

⁴⁵ See self-evaluation report p. 49

⁴⁶ See self-evaluation report p. 54

Anthropology. This expansion enhances the programme's academic robustness and diversifies its pedagogical offerings.

Each faculty member is typically delivering two courses per semester. The ratio of faculty to students is around 3 students for every 1 faculty member, which ensures a high degree of personalised attention, tailored academic guidance and mentorship.

Academic Qualification of Faculty

Both programmes

When hiring faculty, DI, in general, and the programmes in particular look for individuals who possess PhD degrees from reputable schools and programmes, with a track record of peer-reviewed publications, and evidence of university teaching success. Hiring committees interview all candidates. Application files should include a cover letter, CV, writing/research sample, teaching statement, and three references.

The policies of DI ensure that faculty members are rigorously evaluated prior to being hired. The typical process begins with members of the programme collectively agreeing on the need for an additional faculty member. After, a request to hire an additional faculty member is sent to the Dean of SOSH and the President of DI, both of whom must approve the request. Once the request is approved, a hiring committee is formed to evaluate the hire, and an advertisement is sent out by the Human Resources Department. The Head of Programme chairs the hiring committee, which typically includes three members from within the programme, as well as the Associate Dean and an external member possessing relevant expertise drawn from another programme. The Committee subsequently meets to evaluate the files and create a list of candidates to interview.

Typically, interviews for international candidates are conducted virtually and last around an hour. After the interviews conclude, the committee members discuss and assess the suitability of the interviewed candidates and then shortlist two or three candidates to be invited to campus to deliver talks to students and programme faculty. Following this process, the hiring committee selects a candidate, and the head of the committee drafts a report reflecting the final decision of the committee, along with the expressed preferences and opinions voiced during the committee meeting. The final hiring decision must then be approved by both the Dean of SOSH and the Provost/President of DI.

Media Studies

All current four MDST faculty members hold PhDs from internationally recognised programmes in media studies, journalism, mass communication, or cultural studies. Moreover, all four are established researchers and have considerable publication experience. Collectively, they have taught dozens of different course topics, published 13 books, 70 peer-reviewed journal articles, and 22 book chapters, in addition to academic reviews, reports, and working papers. They have also delivered dozens of presentations at global academic conferences and have accrued multiple international academic awards and honours. For example, the 2016 Harvard

Goldsmith Book Prize, awarded annually by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government,⁴⁷ and in 2018, the International Journal of Press/Politics Best Book Award.⁴⁸ Additionally, a documentary film, 'Hollywood's Bad Ethnicities,' won the Best Shorts Competition at the IndieX Film Festival in Los Angeles in September 2023.

MDST programme faculty also have substantive administrative experience – three of the four MDST programme faculty members have served as Heads of Programmes. Most MDST faculty also have extensive experience serving academic journals in various capacities (e.g., founding editors, editorial board members, peer-reviewers) or engaging with consultancy work.

MDST programme faculty have extensive experience in university administration, teaching, and research, and have served the academic community. They attend regular workshops and participate in academic conferences to stay abreast of developments in their field(s). For example, during the past academic year in 2022-2023, faculty members presented their papers at international conferences such as: the International Studies Association Annual Convention in Montreal, Canada (March 15-18, 2023); the International Studies Association International Conference in Ifrane, Morocco (June 21-23, 2023); and the Arab-U.S. Association for Communication Educators conferences in Kuwait (Oct 27-31, 2023) and Orebro, Sweden (Oct 12-14, 2022).

Sociology and Anthropology

The SOC programme's five full-time members hold PhDs in sociology or anthropology. Their collective research activity and publications in various outlets, including books by reputable publishers (13 in total since the launch of the programme in 2015) like Edinburgh University Press; articles in mainstream, prestigious journals (55 in total since 2015) and book chapters (8 in total since 2015), place the programme amongst the most published at the Institute.

Moreover, faculty members regularly attend workshops and participate in academic conferences, ensuring they stay abreast of the latest developments in their fields. This ensures they bring the most current and relevant knowledge and experience to their classes.

Pedagogical / Didactical Qualification of Faculty

Media Studies

Prospective faculty must demonstrate high teaching aptitude, speaking to their specific teaching philosophies and unique teaching experiences. All four MDST faculty had established track records of teaching excellence prior to joining DI. Collectively, MDST faculty have taught more than forty different course topics and have designed many courses themselves.

Moreover, the faculty members have extensive experience in thesis advising, teaching and assessment approaches, and university administration. For example, the Head of the Programme completed a one-year teaching fellowship programme at the Oxford Learning

⁴⁷ The prize honours the best academic book published in the United States in the last 24 months that fulfils the objective of improving democratic governance through an examination of the intersection between the media, politics, and public policy.

⁴⁸ The award recognises internationally oriented books that advance theoretical and empirical understanding of the linkages between news media and politics in a globalized world in a significant way.

Institute at Oxford University and has been a Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy since 2015. The fellowship is awarded to professionals who can demonstrate that they meet the criteria of Descriptor 2 (D2) of the UK Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF) for teaching and supporting learning in higher education. Another lecturer holds a Higher Education Teaching Certificate from the Derek Bok Centre for Teaching and Learning at Harvard University since 2021.

Programme faculty also participate in regular teaching and assessment workshops provided by the OTLA, focusing on topics related to online learning tools, PLO assessment, and artificial intelligence.

Sociology and Anthropology

The three senior members of faculty have over 20 years of experience each in higher education, have gained their teaching skills and experience at various international universities in Europe and the region, catering to a diverse range of students.

All faculty members can expand their pedagogical expertise by participating in various workshops and training courses offered by the OTLA. This office, working in tandem with the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee, plays a central role in fostering excellent pedagogical and didactic training for the faculty. Its mission is to nurture a culture of evidence-based, student-centred, and outcomes-guided teaching and learning, effectively preparing graduates for academic and professional success in local, regional, and global contexts.

In addition to the individual development of faculty members, the programme places a strong emphasis on continuous improvement and feedback mechanisms. Student and faculty evaluations are thoroughly discussed at the end of each semester, leading to the drafting and implementation of action plans. Most faculty members across various courses have achieved evaluation scores above 4 on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being a high satisfaction rate), reflecting their teaching abilities and the positive impact they have on student learning.

Since 2021, the annual programme assessment report and Programme Learning Outcomes Assessment have been instrumental in providing critical feedback. These tools not only offer insights for enhancing educational delivery but also present opportunities for the programme to continuously adapt its pedagogical strategies in line with emerging educational trends and requirements.

According to DI,⁴⁹ the SOC programme's ongoing commitment to pedagogical excellence and didactic innovation is integral to their engagement with the evolving role of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education. The faculty recognise the benefits AI brings in personalizing learning and enhancing engagement, yet they are equally aware of its limitations and ethical considerations. The continuous development of the faculty's pedagogical and didactical qualifications is extremely important to keep up with these technological advancements. By staying informed and adaptable, the faculty is not only equipped to integrate AI tools effectively into their teaching but also to critically assess their impact. This approach ensures that students are not just passive recipients of technology-driven education but are trained to be future researchers who can navigate and contribute to a digital world with critical awareness.

⁴⁹ See self-evaluation report p. 57

Practical Business Experience of Faculty

Media Studies

Faculty members have worked as research fellows, for media outlets, and in other industries, as described in their CVs. Faculty members draw upon these diverse experiences in their teaching activities.

MDST faculty members also regularly contribute interviews to local and international news media outlets, including TRT World, Al-Jazeera English, BBC World News, Al-Jazeera Mubasher, and Al Araby TV.

Sociology and Anthropology

The programme's faculty members bring a wealth of practical experience to their teaching, bridging the gap between academic theory and real-world application. This experience is not reduced to traditional academic settings but extends to active engagement with various stakeholders in society and the market including:

- collaborations with non-governmental organisations promoting democracy in the Middle East,
- working with workers' unions to advocate for rights through sociological research, and
- applying sociological expertise in art to collaborate with galleries and museums.

Furthermore, the faculty is shaping the discourse within the field of sociology, serving on editorial boards of renowned sociology journals or as chief editors. They provide students with insights into the publishing process and the critical role of academic scholarship in societal development. A recent addition to the faculty previously worked at The Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. At CCBR, their work was dedicated to social justice and building supportive, responsive communities, particularly for those with limited access to power and opportunity. This role involved participatory, community-driven research that combined education and community involvement, and focused on creating awareness, policies, and practices for equitable participation and inclusion.

Internal Cooperation

Both programmes

Each programme holds monthly meetings during the academic year. Meetings provide a forum for discussion of teaching and supervision progress and challenges. Faculty members regularly provide assistance to one another, often by sharing course materials for previously taught courses, providing previously used syllabi as starting points for instructors teaching a course for the first time, and delivering guest lectures.

Cooperation is also exhibited at the master's thesis advising stage, where faculty work closely with one another to provide joint feedback – in the form of a jointly written report – to all students completing their theses.

The **MDST programme** meetings for faculty help further develop the programme as a whole. Study plan changes have been conceptualised and developed during programme meetings. Additionally, the programme's specification document was initially developed and subsequently revised through faculty coordination in meetings.

Occasionally, some **MDST** courses have been successfully co-taught by MDST faculty members in the past, such as “Ethics and Law in Contemporary Journalistic Practice” (MDST633). **SOC** faculty cooperation is also exhibited in co-taught courses by two faculty members (such as in “Research Seminar 2” course).

The **MDST programme** also encourages co-authored research projects among programme faculty and between faculty and students. For instance, two of the four members of the faculty have published numerous co-authored works together.

Student Support by the Faculty

Both programmes

The faculty-to-student ratio of the programme allows students to frequently and meaningfully interact with faculty members in the respective programme. Moreover, students who face difficulties that require the help of a qualified mental health professional are provided access to an in-house psychologist and counsellor. The counsellor provides students in need with individual counselling sessions and group support sessions. Additionally, the counsellor also holds workshops, on topics of interest to students, and mental health activities and events, to spread mental health awareness and empower students to seek the help they need.

In addition to two required weekly office hours per instructor, students are offered opportunities to meet with professors by appointment and emails are answered quickly. Additionally, academic advisers are required to meet with academic advisees regularly per semester to provide guidance on course registration and other academic matters. Thesis advisers are also required to meet regularly with thesis advisees/students.

The programmes also hold one 'Student-Faculty Forum' per term, which is attended by students and all faculty members. Students dictate the agenda for both forums. The forums represent an opportunity for students to discuss any concerns or challenges they might have related to their course of study.

Faculty also assist students informally with job placement opportunities, writing recommendation letters and using their contacts in Doha to help students find training opportunities.

Appraisal:

The structure and number of faculty members, even when their teaching assignments in other study programmes and locations are considered, correspond to the programme requirements and ensure that students reach the intended qualification objectives. The faculty's composition, consisting of full-time and part-time (visiting) lecturers, guarantees that both the academic standards and the requirements of professional practice are fully satisfied.

The academic qualification of the faculty corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programme. Moreover, the faculty's outstanding academic qualification is underlined by (international) scientific publications.

The HEI verifies the qualifications of the faculty members by means of an established procedure. Specific measures for the further qualification of the faculty members are implemented.

The pedagogical and didactical qualification of the faculty correspond to the requirements and objectives of the study programme. The HEI verifies the qualifications of the faculty members by means of an established procedure. The HEI ensures that faculty members are familiar with current testing and examination methods and provides support for developing and enhancing their skills in this field. Specific measures for the further qualification of the faculty members are implemented.

For the **Media Studies** programme, the practical business experience of the faculty corresponds to the requirement of the programme to integrate theory and practice.

For the **Sociology and Anthropology** programme, the practical experience of the faculty is demonstrated in their research and publications in the field, thus contributing to the academic/theoretical advancement of the field. The panel thus acknowledges that for this programme, practice is equated with theoretical contributions, making the assessment of practical experience as a separate criterion not relevant.

The faculty members cooperate with each other for the purpose of tuning the modules/courses towards the overall qualification objectives. Meetings of all who teach in the programmes take place regularly.

The panel team highlights that the faculty offers exceptional, student-centered services tailored to an international and diverse target group. It is not only offered on a regular basis and serves to help students study successfully. Moreover, the faculty members are available for the students outside the specified office hours as well. The DI proactively takes care of students' physical and mental health. During the interviews, the panel had the feeling that all students – international and local – feel included and valued. Students expressed high levels of satisfaction with the supervision, advising, and overall support they receive, describing their experience as “fully content.”

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.1 Faculty					
4.1.1* Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2* Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.1.3* Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4 Practical business experience of faculty			MDST		SOC
4.1.5* Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6* Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)	X				
4.1.7(*) Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended-learning/distance learning programmes)					X

4.2 Programme management

Both study programmes

The Head of Programme leads all areas of programme administration. Specifically, duties include the day-to-day business of programme reporting; course scheduling; registration; thesis and academic adviser assignments; event planning; budgeting; representing the programme in the School Executive Council; serving as point-of-contact for programme students and faculty; and faculty recruitment, hiring and evaluation. Additionally, the Head of Programme oversees study plan changes, quality assurance initiatives, and collaborative opportunities with other institutions; helps lead student recruitment and admissions efforts; and coordinates efforts to add website content and build library media resources. The Head of Programme chairs programme meetings, which are held once per month.

The Head of Programme also coordinates and facilitates regularly scheduled Student-Faculty forums. Moreover, they work closely with Student Affairs and programme faculty on all individual student affairs issues and concerns. Programme faculty provide formal assistance to the Head of Programme. In particular, programme faculty play important roles in student affairs, academic and thesis advising, and event planning.

The Head of Programme is also aided by both a programme-specific administrative assistant/coordinator, a School administrative assistant, and colleagues in Registration, Student Affairs, OIEQA, and other DI administrative units.

Process Organisation and Administrative Support for Students and Faculty

The primary programme administrative assistant works closely with the Head of Programme and other members of the faculty. Specific duties include ensuring syllabi follow DI requirements; meeting and event scheduling; taking programme meeting minutes; English-to-Arabic and Arabic-to-English translation; preparing reports and data as needed; facilitating and organizing events and guest speaking engagements; sending out announcements; and liaising with Registration, Library, Student Affairs, and Communications and External Relations department where needed.

The administrative assistant also serves as a key point-of-contact for students, particularly in the areas of rules and regulations, form processing, course registration, requests for withdrawal, appeals, enrolment, and master's thesis submissions. Additionally, the administrative assistant sends out announcements to faculty and students regarding important events, including regularly scheduled Student-Faculty forums. The administrative assistant is periodically evaluated by both the Head of the Programme and the School Dean and is provided with opportunities for professional advancement within DI by the SOCH School.

Most full-time DI students are required to work on campus as part of their assistantships, and **MDST programme** faculty members frequently hire MDST students as assistants (on research, teaching, and administrative/service work). A School administrative assistant also provides more general support, particularly on school and DI-wide initiatives.

Other administrative units within DI – Student Affairs, Registration, Information Technology, Facilities, the Library, Research and Grants Department, and the OIEQA – help students and faculty with registration, course materials (including the online course management programme), information technology, library resources, Institutional Review Board approval, course evaluations, among other things.

Appraisal:

The programme directors coordinate the activities of everyone involved in the programmes and ensure that the programmes run smoothly.

Faculty members and students are supported by the administration in the organisation of the study programmes. The administrative staff acts as a service provider, meeting the needs of both students and faculty.

Sufficient administrative staff is available. Decision-making processes, authority, and responsibilities are clearly defined. Teachers and students are included in the decision-making processes where their areas of work are affected.

Electronic service-support is efficiently utilized, complementing personal one-on-one counselling. The HEI provides the administrative staff with opportunities for continuous professional development.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.2 Programme management					
4.2.1* Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.2.2 Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty		X			

4.3 Cooperation and partnerships

Cooperation with HEIs and Other Academic Institutions or Networks

As a whole, DI has been active in pursuing cooperations and partnerships with other institutions of higher learning. To date, scores of partnerships and cooperations have been established, nationally and internationally. These partnerships benefit all DI students because they both ensure higher education standards and create natural opportunities for educational collaboration.

Media Studies

DI has established partnerships with numerous other organisations and networks, including government ministries. MDST students and alumni have undergone training or are currently working at the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies and the Centre for Conflict and Humanitarian Studies.

The MDST programme has relationships with Qatar University and Northwestern University-Qatar, both of which provide media education at the undergraduate level. The cooperation with Qatar University has enriched the MDST programme by providing speakers and conference participants from Qatar University, as well as adjunct instructors who have taught MDST courses on some occasions. For example, a lecturer from Qatar University, taught a core programme course titled 'Arab Media Cultures' during the first semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, while one of the faculty members was on sabbatical leave.

The cooperation with Northwestern University-Qatar also facilitates valuable academic exchanges. For instance, during the 2023-2024 academic year, the Head of the Programme delivered a guest lecture on media and social transformation at the University's Journalism Programme. The Head of the Programme also is a Visiting Fellow at the Faculty of Media and Communication at Bournemouth University in the UK and is also a scientific board member at the Advanced Media Institute in Cyprus.

The relationships with Bournemouth University and the Advanced Media Institute have resulted in several research collaborations, peer-reviewed journal articles, and edited books. Examples of academic books published in collaboration with these institutions include 'Political Discourse and Media in Times of Crisis' (Anthem Press, 2023), 'Journalism and Digital Content in Emerging Media Markets' (Palgrave, 2022), and 'Journalism, Society, and Politics in the Digital Media Era' (Intellect, 2020).

As part of the MDST programme's effort to internationalise its research agenda and collaboration with higher education institutions and other academic institutions, the MDST programme co-hosted a conference entitled "Digital Platforms and Democracy: Journalism and Political Communication in a World of Polycrisis," which took place from November 3 to 5, 2023, in Piraeus, Greece. One of its objectives was to build bridges between academics, policymakers, journalists, and communication specialists to provide a platform for advancing ideas on how public discourse and journalism are evolving in various digital media environments. The conference was jointly organised with the Advanced Media Institute in Cyprus, the Communication and New Journalism MA programme at the Open University of Cyprus, the School of Law at the University of Nicosia, the Department of Digital Media and Communication at Ionian University, and the Faculty of Communication and Media Studies at Cyprus University of Technology. The MDST programme plans to sustain this partnership and regularly collaborate on the biannual hosting this international convention.

Cooperation with Business Enterprises and Other Organisations

Media Studies

DI maintains a formal partnership with Fadaat Media Group, which encompasses Al Araby TV. Some MDST students and alumni have either received training at Al Araby TV or are presently employed at this media outlet.

MDST students are encouraged to seek out training programmes if they have an interest. The MDST helps facilitate these training programmes for interested students, usually by connecting students with local organisations or media outlets, including the Al-Jazeera Media Network. Additionally, DI covers all transportation costs for any MDST students working or training with local media outlets. MDST students take advantage of these opportunities each year. For example, some MDST students have worked in the past at Al-Jazeera News Network, Al Araby TV, the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, and the Ministry of Culture and Sports in Qatar.

The MDST programme currently maintains informal ties with The New Arab, the Doha Film Institute (DFI), and Al Jazeera Media Institute. MDST students benefit from these partnerships, as they are often provided with opportunities to attend free film screenings and volunteer at a large annual film festival. One of the MDST alumni is also currently employed at Al Jazeera Media Institute. Moreover, in the academic year 2023–2024, the Head of Programme took part in the 'Forum of Journalism Colleges in the Arab World,' which is organised by the Al Jazeera

Media Institute in collaboration with UNESCO and Qatar University. The MDST programme intends to strengthen relationships with the Al Jazeera Media Institute, particularly in relation to their e-learning and fellowship initiatives. Moreover, based on the Fall 2023 Student-Faculty Forum, the programme plans to host an annual field trip to a media institution to foster student connections with media experts. Additionally, it will continue to extend invitations to local professionals to offer practical insights from the media field.

Sociology and Anthropology

The faculty engage in diverse projects alongside various local organisations. These collaborations span a range of sectors, from cultural institutions like museums to labour unions and NGOs, including community-based institutions dedicated to nurturing participatory initiatives at the grassroots level. Typically, these partnerships involve providing expert advice and applying scholarly insights to support these entities in realizing their project goals. A good example of such collaboration is the above-mentioned international conference, “Water Ways: Epistemologies and Aesthetics,” jointly organised with Qatar Museums.

Such collaborations can have a substantial positive impact on both the programme and its students. They can elevate the profile of the academic programme, and students benefit from direct exposure to the integration of academic theory and practice.

Recently, the programme has shifted its focus to incorporate more interdisciplinary and globally relevant topics, as demonstrated by the conference jointly held with Qatar Museums and titled “Rubaiyat Qatar”. This major international exhibition of contemporary art and culture is scheduled to open in October 2026. Organised under the auspices of Qatar Museums, the exhibition will be a recurring event that sets Qatar and the Gulf region at the forefront of international artistic dialogue. The inaugural edition, curated by artistic directors Tom Eccles and Mark Rappolt, was announced in February 2024, with a focus on global ecology and its ties to historical and colonial narratives. This interdisciplinary venture weaves together contributions from political geography, archaeology, and anthropology, aiming to redefine the boundaries of art and its influence on the world stage.

The conference provided insights into the foundational themes of Rubaiyat Qatar, which contemplates globalism as a construct shaped as much by natural forces as by trade. It explored critical issues of language, local identity, and cultural formation that the exhibition is currently addressing. Rubaiyat Qatar's philosophy is to function as an accessible platform, inviting scholars and students to join these pivotal conversations and contribute to the project's development.

Appraisal:

There are no formal agreements or cooperations that have an immediate impact on the study programmes. Hence, the panel rates this criterion as not relevant. However, the panel acknowledges and commends DI's activities and efforts to establish partnerships, such as organizing events and fostering academic exchange with other institutions.

The scope and nature of cooperation with business enterprises and other institutions relevant to the programmes are plausibly presented. The agreements forming the basis of the cooperation are documented. The cooperation is actively pursued and has a clear impact on

the conception and implementation of the study programme. All such activities contribute to the development of the students' qualification and skills.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.3 Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*) Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks (Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)					X
4.3.2(*) Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes)			X		

4.4 Facilities and equipment

Quantity, Quality, Media and IT Equipment of Teaching and Group Rooms

DI has a relatively new campus. Construction on the campus was completed in 2016. According to DI, all classrooms and facilities are modern and state-of-the-art.⁵⁰ DI has facilities designed to fully support the educational process and provide spaces for hosting conferences and talks and facilitating day-to-day interactions. DI's campus spreads over an area of 112,000 m², encompassing 23 different buildings. The campus buildings are used for living, educational activities, and leisure activities.

Learning and teaching spaces are spread out around the campus, consisting mainly of classrooms, labs, and auditoriums in addition to a library building, university life buildings and faculty and student accommodations. Additionally, there are also computer labs, virtual labs, a journalism studio, an e-Library, an e-learning system (Moodle) and other learning resources. The total number of classrooms is 15. There are also three auditoriums, five conference rooms and two computer labs. Group meeting rooms are available in the library.

DI has also established a Student Information System (SIS) that allows students to benefit from several services through the self-service portal, and enables them to view their academic status, grades, and their registration status at the Institute. The SIS provides DI with the capability of registering students in courses; documenting grades, transcripts and dropout rates; tracking attendance; developing student schedules and managing other data needed for the Institute effectively. Student Services also maintains an Intranet site that provides direct access to all student related administrative procedures, forms, and SIS system guides and resources.

All students, faculty, and administrative staff are provided free internet access throughout campus – in classrooms, the library, residences, cafeterias, gym, and all other campus locations. The IT Department manages the Student Information System (SIS), Learning Management System (LMS), Library Management System, Microsoft's suite for email and

⁵⁰ See self-evaluation report p. 57

office applications, video-conferencing tools, and Intranet services. The IT Department provides technical support from 8 am until 7 pm.

Upon their arrival at DI, students participate in orientation days to become familiar with the IT systems available and are provided with detailed written instructions on how to use it inside and outside campus.

The computer lab and a virtual lab on the cloud host the licenses and software required for learning, teaching, and research. Students can use the computer lab to print and scan papers and documents free of charge. In addition to the computer lab and the virtual lab, the campus also has a journalism computer lab/newsroom and a journalism studio. All students may use the journalism equipment – cameras, microphones, and editing suite and software – upon request and as needed.

According to DI,⁵¹ the entire campus, including parking areas, entrances, and classrooms, is accessible for disabled persons. There is also a nurse-operated health clinic, which is free for DI community and operates during normal university hours.

Access to Literature

All DI students have direct access to DI's growing research library, as well as the Qatar National Library (QNL), including all its databases.

The library builds its collections of different materials and resources, in print and electronic formats, based on the established collection development policy and procedures that are responsive to the needs of DI community. DI library features a total of 94,391 book titles, including approximately 1904 items in **MDST programme**, 1363 in Journalism and 9859 items in the **SOC programme**. MDST and SOC programme faculty members and the DI librarian update the library collection with relevant books, textbooks and other sources. The allocated budget, according to DI,⁵² is sufficient to update the collections regularly. All literature assigned in course syllabi is available either in DI library or is uploaded directly to and available on individual course Moodle sites. MDST programme faculty members and students (with faculty member approval) may request that the library obtain a book or journal issue.

The library is open from 8:00 am to 10:00 pm during the work week (Sunday to Thursday) and from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm on Saturdays, and it is open on Fridays and extended hours during exams. The library staff holds regular library orientations, database training sessions, and other workshops for students and faculty. The library features study rooms, quiet spaces, and public computers.

In addition to DI's print and electronic collection, DI community has also access to the resources available through QNL (more than one million books in its collections, along with more than 500,000 eBooks, periodicals and newspapers, and special collections). Combined, DI and the QNL subscribe to more than 23 databases in Arabic and English. However, DI library users have also access to the 263 databases that QNL subscribe to. For example, ProQuest's E-book Central, E-Marefa's Social Sciences, JSTOR, Taylor & Francis Online database, Wiley Online Books database, Wiley Online Journals database, and hundreds of other full-text databases in subjects such as Psychology, Philosophy, History, Media & Cultural

⁵¹ See self-evaluation report p. 58

⁵² See self-evaluation report p. 58

Studies and other disciplines. The DI has also collaborates with various libraries across the state of Qatar, notably establishing the strong partnership with QNL. Additionally, the DI is actively engaged in establishing connections with prestigious universities in Qatar such as Georgetown University and Qatar University.

At initial student registration, students receive their unique DI barcode login credentials. Students are then able to access online resources from anywhere in the world via the internet for the duration of their DI study period.

Appraisal:

The quantity of media and IT equipment, as well as the equipment of teaching rooms is sufficient for the programmes, even when including the needs of other study programmes sharing these resources. The teaching rooms and labs are equipped with state-of-the-art technology. The rooms are also properly equipped for disabled students and give them barrier-free access. Access to the internet through laptops via wireless LAN is provided free of charge. A sufficient number of group rooms is available.

Through a cooperation agreement with the national library, access to the literature and journals as well as to digital media (e.g. electronic media, databases) is ensured. The literature expressly required for the study programme is available in the library and maintained up-to-date. Books are acquired whenever requested by students or faculty.

The library is accessible during most of the day. Access to relevant digital media is available remotely, e.g. from the students' home. Qualified library staff are available to advise and assist students.

	Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.4 Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1* Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.4.2* Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)		X			

4.4 Additional services

Career Counselling and Placement Service

DI offers career services as part of the student services. This includes career guidance and skills development services that are key to successful professional and business life.

DI recruited a Career Advising and Skills Development Specialist who holds a Master's degree in International Business and has more than twelve years' experience in various industries including five years' experience in delivering and creating programmes to develop the skills of the youth in Qatar.

The Career Advising and Skills Development Specialist is assigned to establish the career services as part of the student' services. Career services provide workshops for students on CV writing, preparation for job interviews and internships, and employability skills. Registration for workshops or individual consultation sessions can be done through DI intranet. Students

submit their feedback after each workshop to improve the services and provide workshops in areas that they may ask for. Moreover, the Career Advising and Skills Development Specialist invites companies to deliver information and recruitment sessions about their companies.

Career services inform students and alumni about suitable job offers, internships, research opportunities and scholarships through the online career portal. Each academic year, a career fair is conducted for students and alumni at DI to help them make career decisions and facilitate their employment.

In addition to these services performed by the Career Advising and Skills Development Specialist, DI's Language Centre also carries out a number of services for students. For example, the Language Centre has delivered workshops on CV and Cover Letter writing, Arabic Oral Presentation Skills, English Oral Presentation Skills, Professional Writing, and Personal Statements, IELTS General Preparation, IELTS Reading & Writing, IELTS Listening & Speaking.

Alumni Activities

The alumni unit under the Student Affairs Deanship maintains the relationship with DI's alumni body. The role of the alumni unit is to enhance DI's relationship with its alumni through:

- Constant communication with DI graduates.
- Strengthening the relationship between the graduates and DI.
- Providing projects and services that encourage communication between graduates and DI.
- Building relationships between graduates by organizing meetings for graduates of different cohorts.

Seven cohorts (more than 1200 alumni) have graduated from DI since its establishment in 2015, and they come from more than 40 countries. Some of the work conducted so far by the alumni unit include but are not limited to engaging alumni in different DI events and activities that take place throughout the academic year; inviting alumni to workshops, conferences and seminars held by DI and the Arab Centre for Research and Policy Studies, offering programme discounts to alumni, promoting alumni achievements, and supporting alumni's professional journey.

The alumni unit announced in 2023 to establish the first Board of Directors of the Alumni Association at DI. The board already began its communications with DI graduates through different channels to enhance the interaction between the alumni and DI. The first DI Alumni event was held in March 2024 where faculty and staff were also invited, marking a significant initiative in fostering connections and collaboration among graduates of DI programmes and DI community.

Media Studies

The MDST programme is also independently exploring new avenues for connecting with alumni in order to provide continued support and guidance. Moreover, the programme's faculty remains actively engaged in collaborating with and assisting promising MDST graduates in developing their theses into peer-reviewed research publications. Since 2020, six MDST

graduates' theses have been developed into international peer-reviewed journal articles, and one thesis has been transformed into a book chapter.

Sociology and Anthropology

The SOC programme is actively pursuing independent initiatives to maintain connections with its alumni, aiming to offer ongoing support and guidance. As part of these efforts, the programme regularly extends invitations to its alumni to participate in seminars and other academic events, fostering a continuous and engaging relationship with graduates. Also, the programme has successfully published research with its alumni.

Appraisal:

Career counselling and placement services are offered to the students and graduates to promote their employability. The HEI allocates sufficient resources to these services.

In addition, career counselling and placement services are offered to the students and graduates on an individual basis. Such activities are planned on a long-time basis, performed regularly, and are actively marketed. Sufficient staff is available for this purpose. Students benefit from access to the HEI-wide corporate network. The HEI brings its graduates in contact with representatives from business enterprises at regular events.

An alumni organisation has been set up with the aim of developing an alumni network.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service		X			
4.5.2	Alumni Activities			X		

4.6 Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)

DI is financed through a Qatari state grant, providing by far the most significant portion of funding.

DI offers applicants full and partial scholarships to complete their master level education. DI provides two types of scholarships. The Tamim scholarship is of a competitive nature and is offered to selected applicants who are considered high achievers. The second type of scholarship offered is the Sanad scholarship, which is offered based on the financial needs of the applicant.

The scholarship committee decides based on the applicant's financial status the amount and the details of the scholarship provided. However, to encourage the diverse representation within the student body, DI offers international applicants full Sanad scholarships. Scholarship packages for international students cover tuition, on-campus housing, a monthly stipend, and

medical insurance. Depending on their rank during the admissions process, local students may either secure a 100% tuition scholarship or be asked to pay a portion of their fees.

Furthermore, DI has established cooperation agreements with local entities in Qatar where those entities may offer to sponsor applicants.

Appraisal:

The study programmes are funded for the entire accreditation period, ensuring that students will definitely be able to complete their studies.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

5. Quality assurance and documentation

Quality Assurance and Quality Development with Respect to Contents, Processes and Outcomes

DI's Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance (OIEQA) provides a framework and guidance for assuring quality of academic programmes at DI. The Programme Monitoring, Assessment and Review Policy, specifically, outlines the different processes to ensure how academic programmes are assured of their quality. The MDST and SOC programmes work within this policy to assure quality and set development procedures to maximise the achievement of its goals.

Both programmes, with assistance from the OIEQA, developed initially its programme specification document and PLOs and have since consistently worked with OTLA to refine their learning outcomes (for alignment with the programme's mission and goals).⁵³ The DI PLO Assessment is an integral component of the Institute's yearly programme monitoring process.

In 2018/2019, the DI's Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Committee, with input from the OIEQA, developed an Annual Programme Assessment Report template. Since then, this annual programme assessment report documents and records the process of annual programme review and aims to provide an opportunity for the Programme Head, in consultation with programme faculty members, to document and discuss data relevant to programme quality and provide plans for programme enhancement. The report is prepared by the Programme Head after discussions with programme faculty members and is submitted to the School Dean, with copies to the OIEQA and OTLA.

All faculty members participate in a monthly meeting that the programme holds. The meeting serves to discuss various topics such as course content, assessments, syllabus development, student affairs, programme initiatives and research. Faculty members have the opportunity to propose agenda items for these meetings by contacting either the administrative assistant or the Head of Programme.

Besides these broader quality improvement steps, individual faculty members are required to maintain high standards of quality. DI has an annual faculty review process. Faculty self-evaluate performances in teaching, research, and community service. The main purpose of Faculty Performance Annual Evaluations is to provide the Institute with the feedback necessary to make informed decisions about faculty development, programme appraisal, contract renewal, promotions, awards, merit increases, and other matters to which faculty performance is deemed to be relevant. It also aims at identifying needs, challenges, and opportunities which faculty members have at this point in their academic careers, with a view to further development and achievement. Based on this report, the Head of Programme carries out primary evaluations of individual faculty members, discusses evaluations with faculty members, and highlights areas of potential enhancement.

The programmes' emphasis on student-centeredness places significant importance on student feedback as a fundamental aspect of quality assurance. Student-Faculty forum discussions and the outcomes of student course evaluation surveys lead to course adjustments and programme initiatives if necessary. For example, based on the feedback from the Fall 2023 Student Forum, the **MDST programme** hosted a field trip to Al Araby TV in February 2024

⁵³ See chapter 1.1

with the aim of fostering student connections with media industry experts. Additionally, in the same month, the programme invited a lead presenter for various programmes at Al Jazeera Channel to provide a seminar. The **MDST programme** plans to continue inviting local professionals to offer practical insights from the media field. Furthermore, in response to students' requests, the **MDST programme** organised and conducted a seminar in January 2024 to discuss the prerequisites and diverse approaches to pursuing PhD studies in Qatar, the US, and the UK.

Following student feedback, the **SOC programme**, for example, introduced more anthropology-oriented courses (two elective anthropology courses have been offered the year 2023-2024).

Students are also involved in the improvement of a programme through providing feedback in the Student Satisfaction and Alumni surveys. Both sets of survey results are reviewed by the programme and are considered part of a programme's improvement plan. Additionally, to ensure the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the DI quality assurance process, students, faculty and relevant administrative staff are represented in the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment and Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Assurance committees.

Instruments of Quality Assurance

Evaluation by Students

DI incorporates various forms of student feedback through different surveys. The process of evaluating student courses involves three key steps. Initially, at the end of each semester, students are requested to complete anonymous individual course evaluations. The OIEQA compiles this data and distributes it to course instructors and Heads of Programme. The final results encompass both quantitative and qualitative data.

Secondly, at the conclusion of each semester, all DI instructors utilise a specially designed form to provide comments on the results of the student evaluation surveys for their respective courses. Both the collated student evaluation results and the instructor feedback form are components of the end-of-semester "course file" submitted by each instructor to the OIEQA.

Finally, Heads of Programmes employ the Instructor Course Feedback Form to report regarding all courses taught, specifically referencing both student course evaluation results and instructor feedback on student course evaluations. Programmes are responsible for addressing any significant weaknesses in course design or delivery with faculty members. Ongoing measures for enhancing teaching quality are consistently implemented.

Moreover, DI students and alumni participate in the Student Satisfaction and Alumni surveys respectively to assess the programme and offer feedback. The findings from these surveys are shared with the programme together with the Annual Programme Assessment Report, leading to the formulation of programme enhancement strategies. Noteworthy improvements are communicated to students through email correspondence, student meetings, and/or meetings with the DI Student Council. The results of all surveys conducted are analysed and reported in summative OIEQA reports that are submitted to the Schools, DI Council and administrative units (where appropriate) for review.

The MDST and SOC programmes also hold one **Student-Faculty Forum** per semester. Briefly, these forums provide an opportunity for students to address concerns and propose initiatives directly with each faculty. Elected students' representatives determine the agenda after consultation with their cohorts. The programmes make every effort to address legitimate

student concerns or respond to proposals or initiatives expressed at forums. Items that require further discussion and consideration are added to the monthly programme faculty meeting agendas.

Moreover, students meet with their advisers every semester to discuss their progress. These meetings allow for dynamic interactions between the student and their adviser regarding the programme and individual courses.

Evaluation by Faculty

Faculty members are offered various avenues for monitoring the performance of their courses and the programme. They are required to critically reflect on course evaluations in order to think through how they might improve their courses in the future. Via the **Instructor Course Feedback Form** faculty can give feedback to the programme head/director.

More formally, the programme conducts a self-evaluation through the **Programme Annual Assessment Report**. The Programme Annual Assessment Report template captures diverse data, including but not limited to student admissions; year-over-year graduation rate; student grades; major programme changes; resource sufficiency; teaching and learning strategies; stakeholder involvement; and future goals and improvement plans. This also includes the programme learning outcome assessment. It is filled out by the Programme Head.

Furthermore, DI provides various avenues for programme evaluation and improvement. The workshops provided by the OTLA to faculty are not generally theoretical exercises, but structured environments for faculty members to improve their courses and programmes. These workshops provide guidance but also allow faculty members the flexibility to synthesise their own knowledge of their respective disciplines with the tools being taught to them in the workshops.

External Evaluation by Alumni, Employers and Third Parties

Although the DI remains a young institution for higher learning, formal external evaluation mechanisms exist. The alumni unit within the Student Affairs Deanship at DI is tasked with strengthening the connection with DI's alumni community. Their core mission involves maintaining meaningful communication with alumni, strengthening alumni's bonds with the institution, providing initiatives to foster ongoing alumni engagement, and organising gatherings for alumni from different graduation years. Overall, the alumni unit plays a crucial role in ensuring a strong and lasting relationship between DI and its alumni.

Alumni surveys are collected regularly, providing important data regarding graduates' work and reflections on their experience in the programme. Alumni survey results are intended for use by individual programmes to make programme improvements. Survey results are discussed by faculty during programme meetings. The programme faculty also comment on these results where relevant in the Programme Annual Assessment Report.

Moreover, career services have administered a short employer survey in 2023 to assess the skills of DI alumni hired by these employers and the alumni's ability to adapt in the workplace. In June 2023, the survey was launched, and data was collected via zoom and phone interviews. Several companies from various sectors in Qatar were interviewed, which ranged from museums to consultancy and education and media institutions. The skills of more than

32 alumni who worked in those companies were assessed. Career services plan to continue this work and target more employers.

Furthermore, DI is regularly evaluated by Qatar's Ministry of Education and Higher Education and is subject to its regulations. Accreditation by FIBAA will allow for regular external evaluation of the programmes which the programme welcomes and views as a part of a multi-pronged strategy of ensuring continued excellence in instruction.

Programme Documentation

Programme Description

The programmes are documented on the respective programme page of the DI official website.⁵⁴ The programme webpages outline each programme's mission and provide descriptions of the entry requirements and programme structure, including course descriptions. Additionally, the website provides profiles of the respective programme's faculty members, a description of possible career destinations, and instructions on how to apply for admission.

All DI academic policies including Assessment and Grading policies are also accessible and found on the DI's website and referred to in the Student Handbook. The programmes are also documented in a programme brochure. The brochure describes the programme's objectives and structure, as well as possible career destinations. It also includes a scannable code that directs to the programme's website for more details. The programme's brochure is distributed at 'Open Day' events, as well as other recruiting activities, both on and off-campus, at academic conferences, and to guests.

Internal documentation also includes the previously mentioned programme specification document and the official study plan document from the Office of the Registrar. Additionally, all course syllabi are archived with the programme and the School. The Head of Programme and programme coordinator are responsible for collecting documents related to the programme organisation. Faculty members are required to retain all feedback provided to students, teaching and learning materials, readings and assignment instructions, and upload them to the intranet in their "Course Files."

Information on Activities During the Academic Year

The Head of Programme and programme coordinator regularly keep faculty members and students aware of relevant updates and deadlines. In addition, activities that are administratively under the jurisdiction of SOSH are communicated to students and staff in a timely manner through the Dean's Office. DI's Office of the President also regularly updates all concerned members of changes, obligation deadlines and other matters that may be of interest to them.

In general, the Communications and External Relations Department is responsible for publishing all DI news and events. The department regularly features updates about the DI,

⁵⁴ For MDST see: <https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/en/Academics/SOSH/Pages/Programmes.aspx> and for SOC see: <https://www.dohainstitute.edu.qa/en/Academics/SOSH/Pages/Programmes.aspx?ProgramId=8>, last access 30 October 2024

which includes the MDST programme, its faculty, and its students, in Zajel, a monthly e-bulletin. Zajel publishes details about recent DI advancements, publications, accolades, conferences, and upcoming events. The Communications and External Relations Department also creates flyers and regularly sends out email announcements for various events, including those hosted by the MDST programme. Moreover, DI website showcases activities throughout the academic year, and the student YouTube channel prominently includes content produced by MDST students.⁵⁵

Furthermore, DI utilises its Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube pages to disseminate news regarding the Institute, including information about the MDST and SOC programme and its faculty. The programmes also promote their events through the Communications and External Relations department. The Research and Grants Department at DI, which serves as the chief administrative unit for facilitating research at the Institute, also collects, organises, and communicates DI research outcomes internally and externally to enhance the impact of research activities. The faculty regularly update the Research and Grants Department about recent publications and research activities.

Appraisal:

A quality assurance and development procedure, which systematically and continuously monitors and develops the quality of the programmes with respect to their contents, processes, and outcomes, has been set up. It takes into account the evaluation results and the analysis on student workload (as part of the course evaluations),⁵⁶ success rates, and graduate employment as well as the profile of the student population. Faculty members and students participate in the respective committees to plan and assess the quality assurance and development procedures. Responsibilities are clearly defined.

Evaluation by the students is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated to the students and provide input for the quality development process.

Quality control by the faculty is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated and provide input for the quality development process.

An external evaluation is carried out on a regular basis and in accordance with a prescribed procedure; the outcomes are communicated and provide input for the quality development process.

The study programmes' contents, curricula and examination schemes are described in detail and have been suitably documented and published (e.g. course plan and exam regulations).

This documentation is constantly updated and easily accessible for interested parties, which ensures a high level of transparency.

The HEI regularly publishes current news and information – both quantitative and qualitative – about the study programme. Press relations and network communication are actively

⁵⁵ See <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3LI1VoU3BWz3oCzPNmpbzw>, last access on 30 October 2024

⁵⁶ See chapter 3.1

maintained. In its annual report the HEI presents a summary of the activities of the academic year.

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties			X		
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year		X			

Quality profile

HEI: Doha Institute for Graduate Studies

Bachelor / Master programme: Media Studies (MDST)
Sociology and Anthropology (SOC)

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
1	Objectives					
1.1*	Objectives of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
1.2*	International orientation of the study programme design (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
1.3	Positioning of the study programme					
1.3.1	Positioning of the study programme in the educational market			X		
1.3.2	Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates („Employability“)			X		
1.3.3	Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept		X			
2	Admission					
2.1*	Admission requirements (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
2.2	Counselling for prospective students		X			
2.3*	Selection procedure (if relevant)		X			
2.4(*)	Professional experience (if relevant; Asterisk Criterion for master programmes that require professional experience)					X
2.5*	Ensuring foreign language proficiency (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
2.6*	Transparency and documentation of admission procedure and decision (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3	Contents, structure and didactical concept					
3.1	Contents					
3.1.1*	Logic and conceptual coherence (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.2*	Rationale for degree and programme name (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.3*	Integration of theory and practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.4	Interdisciplinary thinking		SOC	MDST		
3.1.5	Ethical aspects			X		
3.1.6*	Methods and scientific practice (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.1.7*	Examination and final thesis (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
3.2	Structure					
3.2.1*	Modular structure of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
3.2.2*	Study and exam regulations (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.3*	Feasibility of study workload (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.2.4	Equality of opportunity		X			
3.3	Didactical concept					
3.3.1*	Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.2*	Course materials (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.3.3	Guest lecturers			X		
3.3.4	Lecturing tutors					X
3.4	Internationality					
3.4.1*	International contents and intercultural aspects (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.4.2	Internationality of the student body		X			
3.4.3	Internationality of faculty		X			
3.4.4	Foreign language contents			X		
3.5*	Multidisciplinary competences and skills (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
3.6*	Skills for employment / Employability (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.	Academic environment and framework conditions					
4.1	Faculty					
4.1.1*	Structure and quantity of faculty in relation to curricular requirements (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.2*	Academic qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.1.3*	Pedagogical / didactical qualification of faculty (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.4	Practical business experience of faculty			MDST		SOC
4.1.5*	Internal cooperation (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.1.6*	Student support by the faculty (Asterisk Criterion)	X				
4.1.7(*)	Student support in distance learning (only relevant and an Asterisk Criterion for blended-learning/distance learning programmes)					X
4.2	Programme management					
4.2.1*	Programme Director (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
4.2.2	Process organisation and administrative support for students and faculty		X			
4.3	Cooperation and partnerships					
4.3.1(*)	Cooperation with HEIs and other academic institutions or networks					X

		Exceptional	Exceeds quality requirements	Meets quality requirements	Does not meet quality requirements	n.r.
	(Asterisk Criterion for cooperation programmes)					
4.3.2(*)	Cooperation with business enterprises and other organisations (Asterisk Criterion for educational and vocational programmes, franchise programmes)			X		
4.4	Facilities and equipment					
4.4.1*	Quantity, quality, media and IT equipment of teaching and group rooms (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.4.2*	Access to literature (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
4.5	Additional services					
4.5.1	Career counselling and placement service		X			
4.5.2	Alumni Activities			X		
4.6*	Financing of the study programme (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5	Quality assurance and documentation					
5.1*	Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes (Asterisk Criterion)			X		
5.2	Instruments of quality assurance					
5.2.1	Evaluation by students			X		
5.2.2	Evaluation by faculty			X		
5.2.3	External evaluation by alumni, employers and third parties			X		
5.3	Programme documentation					
5.3.1*	Programme description (Asterisk Criterion)		X			
5.3.2	Information on activities during the academic year		X			