

Deanship of Postgraduate Studies



# Skills Programs for Postgraduate Students

Programs and Workshops  
Presented in English

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Sultan Qaboos University  
Deanship of  
Postgraduate Studies

## **Skills Programs** for Postgraduate Students

Skills Development  
Department

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## Introduction

This guide is the first publication about the non-academic training programs and workshops which the Skills Program Department at the Deanship of Postgraduate Studies offers to postgraduate students, faculty and researchers.

## Department View

The Department hopes to be a leading and excellent department that offers programs and workshops specialized in academic writing (research, theses and scientific papers).



## Registration process

1. Announcement for these programs begin each semester with tentative dates (timetables change in the first three weeks)
2. Registration in these workshops is through the system. It is possible to register in more than one.
3. Registration is electronic through the department's website <https://pas.squ.edu.om/spa/login.as/px>
4. Acceptance in the workshop is after sorting out the names.
5. When the required number of students is complete, the workshop is again offered to the remaining students in coordination with the lecturer.

## Vision

The main objective of the department is to develop the skills of postgraduate students and familiarize them about the new methods of writing research and scientific papers. The department also aims at benefiting as many students as possible through studying the actual needs of postgraduate students. Lately, The door is also open to faculty and researchers to benefit from these offered programs.



## 1. Writing your Research

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## Choosing Research Topic

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

This workshop is designed to consider personal and institutional reasons when choosing a research topic and take the audience through different steps of this process. In particular, it focuses on such points that might be worthwhile to think about when choosing a topic, as individual research interests, impact and results, standards, synergies and access to data sources. The exploration of the craft of choosing research topic will also involve the audience into interactive discussions on how to arrange various ideas or concepts to better organize thoughts when developing a topic.

### Outcomes:

Students will be able:

1. To understand the importance of considering personal and institutional reasons when choosing the research topic.
2. To understand and apply different steps in the process of choosing a research topic.
3. To arrange concepts and ideas to better organize thoughts when developing a topic

## Critical Inquiry and Research Design

**4 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

While the history of ‘critical thinking’ goes back to ancient Greek Philosopher’s era, yet it was from 1950s that such concept, was implemented as an effective means to improve learning and research. In recent decades, postgraduate education has emphasized critical thinking as a core and essential competency of students. As critical thinkers, this cohort of students as will be able to better generate new in-depth knowledge in a subject of academic interest, identify researchable issues and successfully carry out individual research projects. The workshop explores research process, critical inquiry and critical thinking skills. Latter concept is then applied to critical thinking questions’ writing, and research evaluation and interpretation. Intellectual standards and criteria used in research evaluation to comment upon its clarity, accuracy, precision, depth, breadth, logicalness, significance, and fairness or lack thereof, are discussed. The workshop features hands-on activities so participants can have first-hand experience of some of the ideas and strategies being used to infuse fair-minded critical thinking into individual research programs and study processes.

### Outcomes:

1. Students develop knowledge, skills, and disposition for critical inquiry and research

development, preparation, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

## How to Write the Research Plan and Abstract?

**4hr/ 2 Day**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

This workshop is intended to familiarize and explain to the participants the process of writing a good research plan that would match up to postgraduate program requirements. Participants will learn the components of a basic research plan, namely an abstract and the actual research plan, and the most efficient order of writing them. Participants will also be introduced to the range of approaches and techniques needed to produce a successful research plan and an abstract. Special emphasis is placed on constructing the research plan and the abstract and editing them. The workshop features hands-on activities so participants can have first-hand experience of some of the ideas and strategies being used in academic writing.

### Outcomes:

1. Learn the components of a basic research plan, their functions, and the most efficient order to write them.
2. Develop the knowledge, skills and disposition for writing an effective research plan, and academic and scientific abstract.



## Proposal Writing

**4 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

The proposal is, in effect, an intellectual scholastic (not legal) contract between you and your thesis committee. It specifies what you will do, how you will do it, and how you will interpret the results.

### Outcomes:

1. A well-defined problem.
2. An important problem (supporting evidence).
3. You have a promising idea (supporting evidence).
4. You are a world-class team (supporting evidence).
5. A clear description of what you hope to achieve
6. A clear plan on how to achieve it.
7. A good presentation of your proposal.

## Critical Thinking Skills

**4 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

This workshop examines the meaning of the concept of critical thinking in the academic context, and the processes involved in critical text analysis. It gives an overview of the critical thinking skills involved with analyzing and describing the texts (clarifying arguments and claims, detecting assumptions, implications and points of view) and skills involved with critical response (evaluating texts according to rational criteria, recognizing common faults, formulating a rational response to a text). Participants will be engaged in work with sample materials (short academic texts) from a variety of sources.

### Outcomes:

1. Introduce the critical thinking concept.
2. Clarify skills involved in text analysis.
3. Better understand knowledge and skills needed in identifying and evaluating reasoning and explanation in research.



## Thesis writing

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

The workshop will help students to take all necessary preparations for a successful thesis defense. The workshop will include lectures on the art of making effective slides as well as on the guidelines for making a good oral technical presentation. As the thesis defense will include answering questions, the workshop will devote considerable time on fielding questions. The workshop will comprise of lectures, videos and practical demonstrations. Students will learn to make their own slides and will make a short oral presentation. They will also learn about writing skills.

### Outcomes:

1. To be able to successfully defend their thesis



## How to Avoid Plagiarism

3 hours

Students, Researchers

### Overview:

Academic honesty is one of the foundations of the academic mission of Sultan Qaboos University and academic dishonesty undermines the learning experience as it is a deceitful action and leads to mistrust not only among students, but also between students and faculty members. SQU policy sets forth the standards of honesty when it comes to academic research. Plagiarism is to be avoided at any rate. The problem here is that many students assume they know how to avoid plagiarism, but are not aware of how complicated plagiarism is. Plagiarism does not only mean quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing a published work of others without proper acknowledgment.

This workshop aims at familiarizing students with the different types of plagiarism and the necessary skills one must learn to avoid this type of academic dishonesty.

### Outcomes:

1. To be aware of the different types of plagiarism and be able to avoid unintentional plagiarism.



## 2. Research Methodologies

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## Questionnaire's Design

**3hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

This program is to understand the importance of the questionnaire design and how it affects the response rate and quality of the results. In addition, you will learn the different types of questions and the effect of their orders in the respondents.

### Outcomes:

The students will be able to understand the stages of Survey Design which include:

1. The importance of this topic
2. Question Types in the questionnaires
3. Question and Answer Choice Order
4. Main Principles of Questionnaire Construction

## PERFORMANCE

- EXCELLENT
- GOOD
- AVERAGE
- POOR

## Online Questionnaire

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

- An online questionnaire is a group of questions exploring a specific phenomenon hosted on a webpage that respondents visit to fill it online.
- The respondent does not need to use any special software or plugins
- Once the researcher writes the survey in an online survey writer, their questionnaire is given a URL (or, Web address)

### Outcomes:

Participants will have the following skills:

1. data collection efficiency and quality
2. questionnaire flexibility
3. Minimizing missing data
4. Variety of multimedia options
5. Gathering data on rare or deviant phenomena
6. Targeting a bigger number of participants
7. Cost-effective & green
8. Anonymity

## Introduction to IBM SPSS Statistics

**3hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

In this workshop, participants will be able to know the main features of the SPSS and how friendly it is in handling data. Participants will learn how to define variables correctly in the software and how to check the quality of the data entry. Moreover, they will learn how to perform the descriptive analysis and basic inferential analysis (testing hypothesis / Statistical Tests) in SPSS.

### Outcomes:

1. To be able to define new variables correctly in the SPSS or importing data from M. Excel
2. To learn the basic skills in software such as data checking, select cases, recoding variables, etc.
3. To be able to perform descriptive analysis i.e. calculations of measures of central tendency

(mean, median, mode, ...), dispersions (variance, standard deviation, range, ...), charts/graphs, tabulations.

4. To be able to perform statistical tests i.e. t-test, ANOVA, Chi-Square, ..) and interpreting results.

## Data Analysis Using SPSS at an Advanced Level

**8 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

Statistical tools play a key role in writing research papers in various academic disciplines. This workshop intends to familiarize participants with frequently used statistical tools such as T-Tests, ANOVA, correlation and regression with the help of some case studies. SPSS will be used to analyze data.

### Outcomes:

Participants will be able to decide an appropriate statistical tool for various academic purposes.



## ATLAS.ti for Qualitative Data Analysis

4 hours

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

ATLAS.ti is a powerful workbench for the qualitative analysis of large bodies of textual, graphical, audio, and video data. It offers a variety of tools for accomplishing the tasks associated with any systematic approach to unstructured data, i. e., data that cannot be meaningfully analyzed by formal, statistical approaches. ATLAS.ti helps to explore the complex phenomena hidden in the data for coping with the inherent complexity of the tasks and the data. It offers tools to manage, extract, compare, explore, and reassemble meaningful pieces from large amounts of data in creative, flexible, yet systematic ways.

### Outcomes:

By the end of this workshop/ program, students will be able to use ATLAS:

1. In coding a text document
2. In coding an image document;
3. In coding an audio or a video document;
4. In coding a PDF document;
5. In assigning existing codes;
6. In retrieving coded data;
7. In adding survey data to a project;
8. In exploring and querying the data;
9. In extracting, categorizing, and interlinking data segments;

## LaTeX program

3hrs/ 2 Days

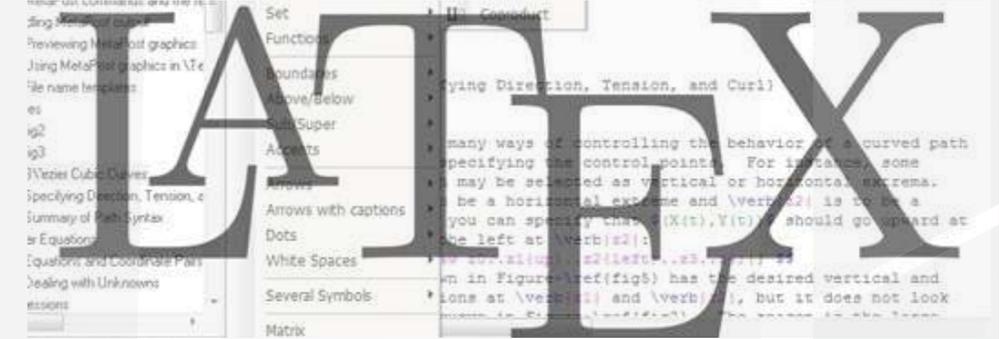
Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

LaTeX is a document preparation system. LaTeX is especially used for mathematical text. It is a formatter rather than a text processor. As a sophisticated program to produce high-quality typesetting. LaTeX is a free and open source software. It is a powerful tool for very long and complex technical documents. LaTeX is stable and does not crash much and has low machine memory requirements (memory and speed).

### Outcomes:

Learn how to use LaTeX as a document preparation system and scientific abstract.





## BIG DATA: BIG Opportunities and BIG Challenges

3 hours

Postgraduate Students, Faculty , Researchers

### Overview:

The generation of data has increased exponentially in recent years. The last two years have generated approximately ninety percent of the world's existing data and a significant proportion of these data are unstructured (IBM, 2012). Big data is a term that refers to the family of technologies designed for efficient storage and processing of large amounts of unstructured data in order to discover knowledge and create value. Big data projects are being undertaken by leading countries like US, China, Korea, UK, and organizations such as IBM, Google, Oracle and Microsoft and highly promising results are expected of these projects. It is imperative to familiarize Omani youths with latest technology.

### Outcomes:

1. To know the potential of upcoming technology like BIG DATA technology.



## 3. When your Research Done

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## Scientific Paper Writing

**3hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

Scientific papers are for sharing your own original research work with other scientists or for reviewing the research conducted by others. As such, they are critical to the evolution of modern science, in which the work of one scientist builds upon that of others. To reach their goal, papers must aim to inform, not impress. They must be highly readable — that is, clear, accurate, and concise.

### Outcomes:

1. Introduce the problem
2. Outline the approach/methods
3. Give main results, including data
4. Give key conclusions



## How to Defend Your Thesis?

**Full Day**

Postgraduate Students

### Overview:

The workshop will help students to take all necessary preparations for a successful thesis defense. The workshop will include lectures on the art of making effective slides as well as on the guidelines for making a good oral technical presentation. As the thesis defense will include answering questions, the workshop will devote considerable time on fielding questions. The workshop will comprise of lectures, videos and practical demonstrations. Students will learn to make their own slides and will make a short oral presentation. They will also learn about writing skills.

### Outcomes:

1. To be able to successfully defend their theses.

## Publishing Scientific Paper

5 Days

Postgraduate Students that have drafted a paper and ready to send it for publication

### Overview:

Scientific papers are not historical records of what was done in a research project. They are rational reconstructions to persuade others of the validity of a claim. When writing your paper you should be able to:

1. Make a case for the relevance of your investigation and the validity of your results in the light of current knowledge.
2. Provide enough information for others to replicate your study.
3. Clearly present the data or results of your investigation.
4. Make sense of your data for your reader in a way that leads to a specific knowledge claim that is believable.
5. Identify and acknowledge where there may be other interpretations, but lead your reader from the data to the conclusion in a way that anticipates and erases doubts that may arise.

### Outcomes:

1. Clarify the problem space.
2. Make explicit existing knowledge and assumptions.
3. Connect your work to related research.
4. Fit your research question and design into the problem space.
5. Present and interpret your data.
6. Argue your claims and warrants.
7. State the significance of your findings for informing and improving theory or practice.

## 4. Research, Writing & Miscellaneous Skills

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## Basics of Academic Writing

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty , Researchers

### Overview:

Conceiving a basic outline for a research paper or a thesis is one of the most challenging requirements for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. Many, perhaps most, students have never received formal instruction about how to write a good preliminary outline for a serious research project. This seminar is meant to help students learn a systematic and time efficient way to approach the writing of an academic research project.

### Outcomes:

The workshop aims at teaching students the basics of successful research which is concisely written and well documented. The workshop will also aid students in their understanding about how to identify a problem or an issue which they will analyze, interpret, and draw conclusions from.



## Searching Skills in Using Electronic Information Resources

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

The purpose of this workshop is to develop skills in general searching and navigating through our own collection of electronic resources in particular. It is also to provide several tips and tricks on how to search and retrieve information efficiently, and to use it effectively, which is a major key to success in university courses. The workshop will take your library research skills up to the next quantum level, using threshold concepts. This will provide a contextual overview of traditional research databases, federated search engines to access the web, open access portals, going backward and forward through time using cited reference searching, and much more.

Learn how to use available tools through the library to collect, save and organize bibliographic references to journal articles, books, websites and other sources. Library databases offer several options for saving citations and for generating quick bibliographies in the citation style of your choice, including APA and MLA. This workshop will introduce strategies for organizing and saving citations using scholarly resources.

### Outcomes:

To gain knowledge about the information resources available and develop expert searching skills.

## Academic Writing: Practice in General Science Terminology

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

The linguistic landscape of academic studies and research features diversity that embraces the lexicon, which reflects the discipline specific character of the discourse, as well as the general language lexicon and general science terminology. This workshop will cover terminology that is relevant to academic studies and research across disciplines. Students will practice English general science terminology, enhance their knowledge of research lexicon, and develop disposition for personal development in academic writing and academic communication.

### Outcomes:

Students develop their knowledge of English general science terminology, and their disposition for personal growth in academic written and spoken discourse.

## Understanding and Using Latin in English Academic Discourse

**4 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

Academic discourse refers to the ways of thinking and using language which exists in academia (Hyland, 2009:1). It attracts the attention of both scholars and students due to a number of reasons because of the need to gain fluency in the conventions of academic discourse and academic communications, which are crucial to the work of academic communities both from the perspective of scientific progress and the individual academic goals and aspirations.

Academic discourse is a reservoir of meanings that give identity to a culture (Hyland, 2009:46). For example, during the Middle Ages scholars shifted from using only Latin in academic writing to incorporating the vernacular, English (Kirtley, 2007). Since then Latin has helped shape English academic writing and English has shaped Latin and has created a new academic discourse which is informed by both languages (Zilokowski, 1991).

This workshop is aimed at exploring the role of Latin as academic and cultural powerhouse (Evans, 1999:366), learned language “completely controlled by writing” (Ong, 1982:113). In the past, its use in the modern English academic discourse as well as the lessons that we, as contemporary scholars, can learn from both past and present about understanding and using Latin in English academic discourse.

### Outcomes:

1. Clarify the role of Latin in modern academic discourse
2. Identify common meanings in words with a

Latin background

3. Better understand how Latin borrowings in the English academic discourse help to illustrate the investigated objects and their different aspects.

## Interpersonal Communication and Issues of Personal Development

**3hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

The workshop aims to investigate and foster understanding of the most important concepts, models, and components of interpersonal communication, identify the groups of barriers for successful communication and effective ways to overcome them. The workshop does not focus on language as the only form of communication, rather looks at communication as a much broader set of skills that involves both verbal and non-verbal cues. It aims to provide postgraduate students with practical skills that will help them to become successful communicators in their study and work place thus enhancing their professional development.

### Outcomes:

Students will be able:

1. To explain the models of interpersonal communication,
2. To identify the communication barriers in their communication at the study and work place,
3. To acquire skills to overcome the communication barriers,
4. To demonstrate the importance of body language and listening skills for interpersonal communication,
5. To explain the three basic behavioural styles in conflict situations,
6. To develop a range of skills to be effective in conflict situations,
7. To develop an action plan to improve interpersonal communication skills.

## Basic Communication Skills Workshop

**8 Weeks**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

This course is intended as an introduction to the spoken Arabic dialect with some exposure to basic writing. It is intended for those with no previous or little knowledge of Arabic and who wish to acquire basic skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing in Arabic. The course equips participants with the key language skills to enable them to communicate in Arabic at a basic level and provide grammatical grounding which will give the foundation for more an in-depth study later on. This course includes practice in the four language skills.

### Outcomes:

At the end of the course, you will be able to:

1. Communicate simply but effectively in Arabic at an elementary level.
2. Acquire and use basic/survival vocabulary, grammatical structures and expressions.
3. Understand basic cultural and social aspects of the language.
4. Talk about one's self and understand when others tell you about themselves and their circumstances, including jobs.
5. Feel confident about pronouncing Arabic correctly, understanding and making yourself understood by a native speaker at an elementary level.
6. Understand basic written instructions, signs and short communications.
7. Understand simple information received in oral form.

## Communication Skills Training Program

**5 weeks**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

This is a comprehensive program of workshops, events and support that will cover communication skills relevant to academic environment and postgraduate research. It will give you the tools to communicate effectively and improve your academic, interpersonal, intercultural and organizational communication skills. Academic coaching is offered for the participants to drop in and discuss issues and receive one-to-one help and guidance.

### Outcomes:

1. Develop the conceptual understanding of diverse communication's processes, patterns and paradigms.
2. Identify communication skills and qualities necessary for effective academic practices with an emphasis on written, spoken, interpersonal, intercultural and organizational communication.
3. Consolidate conceptual and practical knowledge of communication skills and practice them.
4. Create a Personal Learning Plan to increase competency in communication's practices using outcomes of self-assessment and methods for change.

## Communication Skills at the Workplace

**3 hours**

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

Communication skills are an important part of any organization. This workshop raises students' awareness about the role of communication at the workplace. It introduces the students to some of the most important skills needed for effective communication and high productivity at their profession. The presenter will first explore the complexities of communication. He will then explain some of the key communication skills that can impact success in any organization. The students will be involved in self-reflection and interactive activities that will help deepen their understanding of the concepts and skills that are presented in the workshop.

### Outcomes:

1. Increase students' awareness about the importance of effective communication.
2. Teach students some of the key communication skills at the workplace.
3. Aid students in their understanding about how to identify a problem or an issue which they will analyze, interpret, and draw conclusions from.



## Working in Teams in Collaborative Projects

8 hours

Postgraduate Students, Faculty, Researchers

### Overview:

The workshop aims to develop critical understanding of the key concepts of Intercultural Communication, analyse cultural differences in multicultural work and study contexts. It also examines what culture is, its models and how difference is defined through communication. It aims to equip students with a range of skills that will enable them to communicate more effectively across cultural boundaries. It will investigate how subtle cultural practices can have a significant impact on personal and professional relations. All this will help the students to work effectively in international collaborative projects at the work and study place.

### Outcomes:

Students will be able:

1. To explain 3 models of intercultural communication,
2. To describe Hall's and Hofstede cultural dimensions and their influence on communication,
3. To demonstrate how different stumbling blocks hinder communication,
4. To explain the importance of body language difference awareness during listening,
5. To develop a range of the most important intercultural communication skills,
6. To develop an action plan to improve intercultural communication skills.

## Setting Curriculum Vitae via Electronic Website

3hrs/ 2 Days

Postgraduate Students

### Overview:

Students in all institutions of higher education around the world are challenged today with creating an Internet presence that showcases their professional skills, academic training and specialized backgrounds. Graduate students need to project themselves, not only on paper, but also electronically. If these students pursue a professional career in the Arabic Gulf Region, and beyond, they will need training that enables them to succeed in highly competitive environments based on High Tech skills. This course will prepare students to present themselves to potential employers, administrators and coworkers.

### Outcomes:

The primary goal is to provide accelerated training with high-tech software for postgraduate students who are currently enrolled in various academic postgraduate programs and are preparing to conduct a job search. Upon successful completion of the course, they will be able to:

1. Construct their own website with Weebly.
2. Collect and optimize images for use in this website
3. Insert relevant text, including Curriculum Vitae, that highlights their skills and experience
4. Present all documentation in fluent English
5. Learn to use applicable features of the Weebly software, including updating the content

com. (A minimal amount of time will focus on understanding html code.)

## 4. Supervision

Effective Supervision of Postgraduate Students..... 41

In English

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### Effective Supervision of Postgraduate Students

2 Days

Faculty

#### Overview:

During this 2 days workshop, participants will review Sultan Qaboos University regulations and expectations for the supervision of postgraduate students and the oversight of their research. The University also has high expectations for the graduate students themselves. The achievement of these expectations requires the management of time, along with the management of faculty and student research planning, writing and publication. The management of relationships, built on trust, clear communication, ethical standards, and consistency, is another critical element of the process. While supervisors focus on these management tasks, they remain above all the teachers of advanced, creative and independent researchers. Participants will analyse and plan adjustments for their best personal supervision profile.

#### Outcomes:

Each participant will:

1. Analyse the characteristics of excellent supervision and excellent student behaviour.
2. Analyse the obstacles of effective supervision such as time management, communication, ethics, writing, research planning and relationship structure.
3. Review the University regulations, expectations and processes for graduate student supervision along with expectations for the students themselves.
4. Investigate alternative models of supervision, teaching and learning at the graduate level.
5. Create a cross-campus researcher/supervisor network that can analyse and provide feedback, to the Deanship of Postgraduate Studies, concerning the supervision of graduate students at SQU.
6. Use the above knowledge and analyses to create a personal supervision plan that supports the development of both the faculty member and the students' academic and career development.



# Programs and Workshops (Arabic Language)