

HBKU's summer internships inspire students to develop professional research skills

Doha, June 12, 2016 – Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation (QF) for Education, Science and Community Development, recently launched this year's summer internship programs at its three research institutes: the Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI), the Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI), and the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI). The programs aim to help build national research capacity and attract students to the sciences, offering interns the opportunity to learn directly from industry specialists and work on innovative research projects. Internships run for eight weeks, concluding on June 30th, and are individually tailored to fit each student's area of interest.

QBRI's internship program provides exceptional undergraduate students interested in the field of biological and biomedical science with a research intensive training opportunity. Interns gain practical laboratory research experience under the supervision of distinguished scientists from the institute and are able to select projects to work on in the areas of diabetes, cancer, stem cell research, and neurological disorders.

"These are all prevalent issues in the region and being a part of the study towards such impactful causes was a huge motivation for me to apply for this internship," said Wajiha Yousuf, a current participant of QBRI's internship program and a student at Weill Cornell Medicine.

Nine interns, four of whom are Qatari nationals, were accepted into QBRI's program this year. In addition to gaining research experience, the interns have the opportunity to participate in a series of activities, seminars, and workshops organized by the HBKU institute on topics such as research ethics, career planning, and research poster presentations. In an effort to augment laboratory experience with exposure to the multitude of research resources available in Qatar, QBRI also partnered with Qatar National Library this year to organize a special one-day program for interns.

At Qatar Computing Research Institute, the 2016 summer internship program has been designed to give interns the opportunity to work on research and development projects in the areas of Arabic language technologies, data analytics, social computing, cyber security, distributed systems, and computational science and engineering.

Dr. Eman Fituri, QCRI's Director of Educational Initiatives, commented: "The program provides students the opportunity to work closely with our world-class scientists and software developers. It was designed to support the best computer scientists and engineers of tomorrow."

Launched in 2012 with six students, QCRI's internship program has expanded and gained popularity in recent years, with thirty-five students accepted into the program this year. Sara Al-Mohannadi, one of the interns and a recent graduate from Texas A&M University at Qatar, reflected on her experience, stating: "Interning with QCRI allows me to contribute to substantial, cutting edge research. As a recent graduate with limited professional experience, it gives me a platform to apply my skills and develop new ones, such as working on big data analysis."

"Despite algorithmic and coding challenges, my mentors were extremely supportive and I found the QCRI family a pleasure to work with."

Amer Ahmad, another participant in QCRI's internship program and a current student at Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, found out about the internship opportunity through the Education City Career Fair 2016. He commented: "When I read about the numerous research projects that we could be a part of, I realized the importance of computer research and its positive impact on people and society."

"My experience so far has been nothing short of exciting! From the weekly 'Lunch & Learn' sessions, to interactions with other interns from around the world, to working in a professional work environment and acquiring new skills, it has been a great experience so far and I'm looking forward to learning more in coming weeks."

This year, six students are participating in the summer internship program run by HBKU's Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute. Each student was matched with a research supervisor who helped them develop an individual internship plan in accordance with their background and specific research interests. Interns learn about QEERI's work on the country's energy and water security grand challenges, and have the opportunity to work on an array of projects.

Nasreeddine El Dehaibi, a fellow from the Qatar Research Leadership Program who is interning with QEERI, noted: "I joined the internship program to grow my skills as a researcher and have enjoyed working with QEERI's world-renowned scientists and learning from their expertise."

The summer internship programs at HBKU's research institutes continue to build talent for Qatar's developmental objectives as the country moves towards a knowledge-based economy. In line with HBKU's vision and mission, QBRI, QCRI, and QEERI's programs support Qatar National Vision 2030, empowering and training students to confront challenges facing Qatar and the region as they become future leaders in their fields.

To learn more about HBKU and its research institutes, please visit <http://www.hbku.edu.qa/>.

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About Hamad bin Khalifa University

Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging research university that is building its foundation upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located in Education City, HBKU delivers undergraduate and graduate programs through its College of Science and Engineering, Law School, College of Public Health, Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies, and its College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It also provides unparalleled opportunities for research and scholarship through its research institutes, and its Center of Executive Education delivers customized programs for the business community of Qatar and the region, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.