

PhD IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Campus Where the Program Is Offered: CSH

OBJECTIVES

The PhD program at the Faculty of Religious Studies (FSR) prepares candidates for the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) across five specializations: Biblical and Systematic Theology, Eastern Christian Heritage, Christian Arabic Manuscript Literature, Islamic-Christian Studies, and the Study of Religious Phenomena.

The program is distinguished by:

- The development of original research competencies and methods, culminating in the defense of a doctoral dissertation.
- Qualification for university teaching and academic research.
- A degree that meets the academic standards of Saint Joseph University of Beirut and is recognized by the Lebanese State.
- A commitment to interdisciplinarity across the curriculum.
- Personalized and rigorous academic mentoring.
- Affiliation with one of the five research units at CRSR.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Language and Academic Requirements

- Proficiency in a second language (when the research requires references in a foreign language), or an excellent command of the language in which the dissertation will be written.
- A minimum grade of 16/20 on the master's thesis

Depending on the Applicant's Profile

USJ Applicant

- Prior approval granted during master's studies.
- Interview with the Doctoral School director and the FRS doctoral program coordinator.

External Applicant

- Copy of the thesis reviewed by two faculty members.
- Interview + written examination based on the thesis research problem.
- If the master's degree was obtained in a discipline other than religious studies, a file review will determine the conditions for admission and any prerequisite requirements.

Candidates are selected following the review of their application, which should include:

- Lebanese Baccalaureate or an equivalent certification
 - Officially recognized Bachelor's degree
 - Transcript of Bachelor's degree grades
 - Equivalence of any Bachelor's degree issued by private Lebanese universities or non-Lebanese universities
 - Master's degree or equivalent certification
 - Transcript of Master's degree grades
 - Equivalence of any Master's degree or equivalent certification issued by private Lebanese universities or non-Lebanese universities
 - Preliminary dissertation proposal including: title, definition of the subject, problem statement and working hypotheses, brief bibliography, methodology and research techniques, provisional dissertation outline, and work schedule. The proposal must adhere to scientific research methodology and be submitted to the FRS Scientific Board for evaluation
 - PhD dissertation with a minimum grade of 16/20
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PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Duration and Credits

Preparation for the PhD at FSR spans **3 years**, extendable to a fourth (grace) year.

The PhD program comprises a total of **180 ECTS credits**, to be completed over a minimum of 6 semesters and a maximum of 12 semesters, organized as follows:

Out of the 180 ECTS program credits:

174 ECTS credits are validated by FSR according to the following breakdown:

- 6 ECTS credits are allocated to seminars.
- 54 ECTS credits are allocated to the preparation and defense of the dissertation proposal.
- 114 ECTS credits are allocated to colloquia and seminars, and to the preparation and defense of the dissertation.

6 ECTS credits allocated to various interdisciplinary activities are validated by EDSHS.

The procedure is as follows: once the candidate has received administrative approval to submit their application, they must choose a research project topic that corresponds to one of FSR's five core fields:

Stage 1 — Project Approval (before the 1st semester)

The candidate will present their preliminary proposal to the Scientific Committee for approval. Upon review of the file and acceptance of the topic, the Scientific Committee may require a preparatory year, during which the candidate will fulfill the necessary methodological and disciplinary prerequisites, enabling them to draft the provisional research project.

Stage 2 — Enrollment in the Doctoral Program (1st–2nd semester)

The candidate will be enrolled in the doctoral cycle after receiving the approval of the Scientific Committee and the agreement of a dissertation supervisor (professor) who will guide their doctoral studies.

They will be enrolled in seminars and methodology workshops relevant to their research field (including the 6 mandatory credits).

Stage 3 — Defense of the Dissertation Proposal (end of 2nd semester)

The candidate will be enrolled in the doctoral cycle (3rd semester) on the sole condition that they receive a favorable evaluation from the proposal defense committee, with a grade of at least 15/20. In case of failure, they will be granted a single additional semester to revise and defend their provisional project a second time.

Stage 4 — Continuation of Doctoral Studies (from the 3rd semester onward)

The doctoral candidate will be registered to participate in doctoral days (3 credits) and in seminars or conferences offered by EDSHS (another 3-credit activity), while preparing and writing the dissertation through to the final defense.

