Haifa Grad Team
An Innovative Leadership Program for Outstanding Doctoral Students

Invest in Israel’s Future
The Haifa Grad Team is a new initiative of the Graduate Studies Authority, designed to cultivate a cohort of outstanding doctoral students who will become Israel’s next generation of academic leadership. The initiative is an exciting academic opportunity for young scholars who are making a significant contribution to scientific research in Israel.

By nurturing a talented cohort of students, the Haifa Grad Team will have a far-reaching impact on Israeli society, especially in the northern region. Today’s doctoral candidates – tomorrow’s faculty luminaries – will bolster the prestige and standing of the University.

“With 1,400 scholars pursuing doctoral degrees in a wide range of disciplines, the University of Haifa views fostering of academic leadership as its top priority. To further this goal, the University has established the Haifa Grad Team to identify and nurture the next generation of community engaged scholars.”

- Prof. Lily Orland-Barak, Dean of the Graduate Studies Authority
Partner with Us

The University of Haifa invites you to partner with us in support of the Haifa Grad Team, a unique program cultivating outstanding doctoral students in their scientific research.

This important program spurs the development of future academic leaders who demonstrate exceptional talents and aspire to transform Israeli society.

Key Goals

Promote research excellence among promising doctoral students with potential for key leadership positions, in academia and the private sector.

Showcase doctoral students’ groundbreaking research to help launch their academic careers.

Establish a dynamic “learning community” that serves as a role model for other graduate students at the University.

Position the University of Haifa as a leading research institute with a reputation for innovative thinking and scientific excellence.
Members of the Haifa Grad Team convene twice a month as a learning community, guided by academic mentors, to sharpen their leadership and research skills, and help them successfully navigate their doctoral studies.

- Participating in skill development seminars that focus on improving academic writing, developing presentation skills, assisting with applications for fellowship positions in Israel and abroad and providing guidance in submitting competitive research grants.

- Presenting research papers to team members and receiving constructive feedback in preparation for major academic conferences in Israel and across the globe.

- Networking with key leaders in academia, industry and government at the forefront of R&D in Israel and abroad.

Support Our Doctoral Students
Embracing Academic Excellence and Social Responsibility

Exceptional doctoral students who meet the criteria set by the Graduate Studies Authority are chosen based on merit and innovation. The Program will be offered to all students, regardless of gender, religion and ethnicity, in reflection of the University’s commitment to integrating academic excellence and social responsibility and providing equal opportunities to all segments of Israeli society.

Looking Forward

While completing a doctoral degree represents a significant milestone, many of our team members elect to pursue post-doctoral fellowship positions at prestigious universities in Israel and abroad or positions in the public and private sectors. The Haifa Grad Team Program provides its members with added value skills that will help them flourish as they continue in the career paths of their choice.

Request for Support

Student scholarships are a driving force behind the University of Haifa’s success. They represent a key investment in the academic future of Israel and in meeting the social, cultural and technological changes that lie ahead.

We invite you to partner with us in supporting the Haifa Grad Team initiative. An investment in the Haifa Grad Team is an investment in the future of the University of Haifa and the future of Israel.

- A gift of $80,000 will provide scholarship support for one doctoral student to complete a PhD degree.
- A gift of $400,000 will support five doctoral students.
- A very generous gift of $1.6 million will support a full cohort of up to twenty outstanding students, representing a range of disciplines.
Sawsam Kheir is a PhD candidate in Psychology, investigating the effects of modernization on faith, values and well-being of Druze and Muslim students in Israel. Born and raised in Peqi’in, a Druze village in the Western Galilee, Sawsam gained professional experience as an educational psychologist in the Haifa school system. After completing her BA and MA degrees at the University of Haifa, which she calls her ‘second home’, she decided to continue her academic career. She is currently a PhD candidate at University of Haifa’s Department of Psychology and the Faculty of Arts, Psychology, and Theology at Åbo Akademi University, Finland. Her academic supervisors are from three different academic institutions, Prof. Emeritus Yohanan Eshel from the University of Haifa, Prof. Peter Nynäs and Dr. Kika Lassander at Åbo Akademi, and Dr. Samer Halabi of The Academic College of Tel Aviv–Yafo.

Sawsam’s PhD research focuses on the effects of modernization on the values and role of faith in the lives of Druze and Muslim students in Israel. It is part of a global research project known as the Young Adults and Religion in a Global Perspective (YARG), headed by Prof. Peter Nynäs of the Åbo Akademi University. The project, conducted in 12 countries across five continents, investigates the changing religious subjectivities and values of university students globally.

“I hope to someday become a professor and contribute to the study of contemporary religious change, to better understand current transformations in religious life and practice in modern societies.”

“Meet the Team

Sawsam Kheir
Doctoral student
Department of Psychology
Herta and Paul Amir Faculty of Social Sciences

The Haifa Grad Team gives me a sense of community. It’s great to know that other students are having experiences very similar to mine.”
Ram Naaman is a doctoral student at the Edmond J. Safra Brain Research Center for the Study of Learning Disabilities, whose research is at intersection of mathematics and learning disabilities.

After completing his military service as a combat soldier and team leader in the Field Intelligence Corps, Ram initially pursued his undergraduate degree in Psychology. “I’ve always worked with children – in formal and informal settings. Enrolling in a graduate degree at University of Haifa’s Faculty of Education seemed like a natural progression for me.”

A recipient of the President’s Scholarship for Excellence, Ram is currently a third-year doctoral student. Together with his advisor, Dr. Liat Goldfarb, Ram is at the forefront of studying the neurocognitive mechanisms underlying attention in the field of mathematics education. This new line of research opens the possibility of non-invasive brain and emotional stimulation aimed to improve cognition and mathematics performance. Ram has already presented his research findings at international conferences in Germany and Belgium.

“I get tremendous satisfaction from working with learning disabled children and knowing that my research may eventually help students with arithmetic, which is crucial – not only during our school years but in almost every aspect of our daily life.”

“I really look forward to The Haifa Grad Team meetings. Learning from my peers and getting feedback from mentors is giving me confidence to succeed.”
About the University of Haifa

The University of Haifa is embarking upon a new era that will transform it into Israel’s first “Multiversity.” The Multiversity model encompasses multiple academic portals and provides access to an impressive range of interdisciplinary programs across Haifa, the Galilee region and as far as China. Our key priority is to serve as agents of change for our students, our city and the entire northern region.

Our campus is academic home to 17,000 students and 1,200 research and teaching staff, learning and teaching in seven faculties, 56 departments, eight schools and 69 research centers and institutes. Here Jews, Arabs, Druze, new immigrants, international students, IDF officers and security personnel come together to study, research, socialize, and prepare themselves for the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

The University is recognized internationally for research excellence in the fields, of marine sciences, cancer and brain research, educational technology and security studies, and is the proud academic host of the IDF National Security College. We are forging strategic partnerships with outstanding institutions within Israel, with industry and across the globe to enhance the quality of our research, provide our students with transformative experiences, and create a fertile breeding ground for knowledge and innovation.

Join us in launching the promising academic careers of top-tier Israeli scholars.

Together we can fulfill dreams.

Please contact the Office of the Vice President for External Affairs and Resource Development for more information: Vice-president@univ.haifa.ac.il