

# NYAD PhD Pathway Program (2025-2026 )

## Student Handbook

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## Program Philosophy

A first of its kind in the UAE, NYU Abu Dhabi's PhD Pathways Program aims to address the challenge of underrepresentation of Emirati PhDs and professors in higher education, through enhanced and early access to mentorship, exploration of research careers, skill acquisition, research experience and graduate school preparation. This program is also critical to creating a pipeline of candidates for both the Global PhD Program and NYU Abu Dhabi's upcoming PhD programs.

This program is being piloted with Emirati students at NYU Abu Dhabi. If the program proves to be successful, it will be opened up to Emirati students at other universities in the UAE.

## Selection Criteria

In order to be selected for this program, students must:

- Have declared a major (summer of before junior year).
- Have an excellent academic record indicative of potential for advanced study (min GPA 3.5).
- Must be a UAE citizen and a holder of the UAE family book.
- Have completed an application including a personal statement that indicates interest in pursuing doctoral education and commitment to participate fully in the program.
- Submit a letter of recommendation from a faculty member familiar with the student.
- Complete the entry interview successfully.

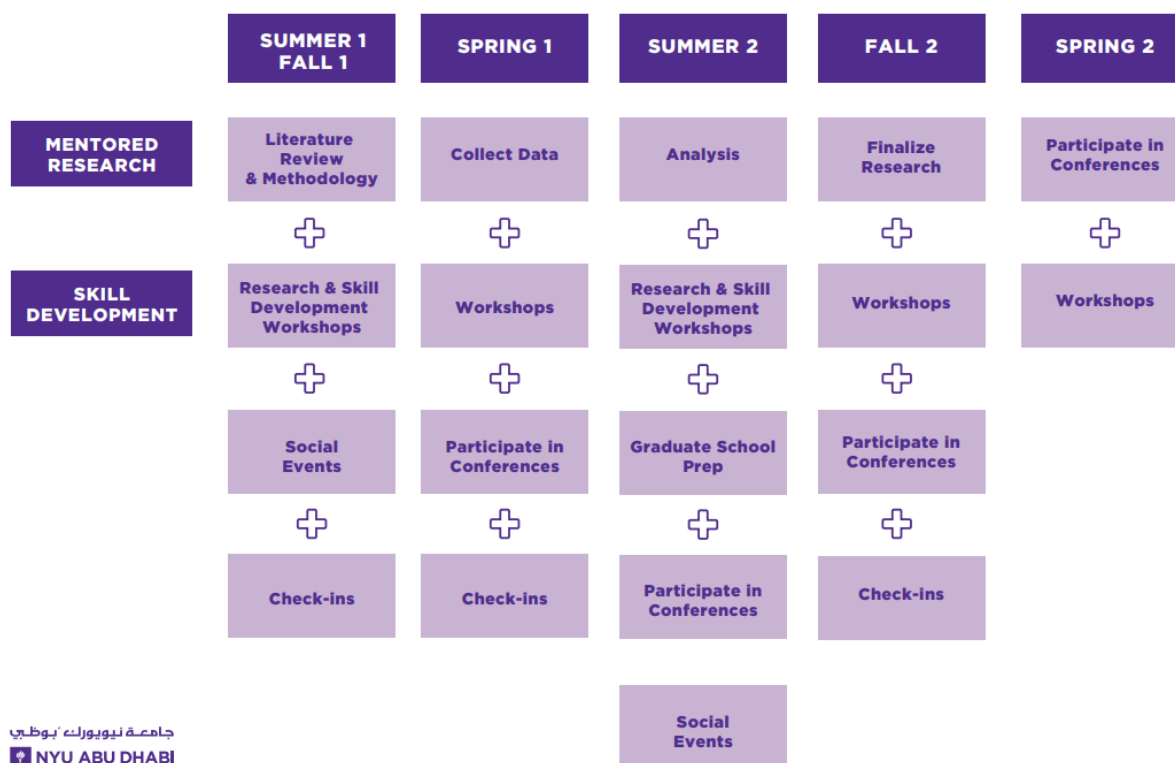
## Program Structure

As part of this program, selected fellows will:

- Conduct closely mentored research with a faculty member in an academic discipline of their choice
- Participate in workshops that develop a wide range of meta-professional skills that will help them in academia or in the professional world, such as public speaking and presentation skills, resume/CV writing, time management, leadership, financial literacy, and negotiation and self-advocacy
- Be advised on graduate school planning, including program selection, preparation for the GRE or other exams, support for application writing, education on funding opportunities, and negotiating an offer.

A sample program structure is illustrated below. However, each student will follow their own individualized path, depending on their research interests, preferences, and academic needs:

# PROGRAM STRUCTURE



## Events and Activities

The NYUAD PhD Pathway Program will engage students, mentors, and members of the academic and professional communities in the following areas:

- **Mentored Research**
  - Each student will be assigned a mentor aligned with their research interests. Over each summer, the student must work for 35 hours per week over a six/seven-week period, to refine their research ideas and develop them into a substantial piece of work. In the first summer, students must come up with a research question that they will then explore over the course of the next year. By the second summer, students are expected to know their research topic and develop it into their Capstone project.
- **General Development Workshops:** These include workshops and seminars in the following areas -

- Grad School 101
- Leadership skills
- Public speaking
- Time management
- Project management
- Career exploration
- Library skills
- Academic writing
- Sustaining wellness
- Optimizing mentoring relationships
- Communication skills
- Working successfully on teams
- Utilizing design thinking to solve problems
- Research Development Workshops: These include workshops and seminars in the following areas -
  - Lab safety
  - Research ethics
  - How to develop research questions
  - How to conduct a literature review
  - Experimental design and analysis
  - How to prepare an effective oral or poster presentation
  - How to participate in a journal club
  - How to attend/present at conferences/national meetings
  - How to participate in lab meetings
  - Thinking entrepreneurially about research
- Graduate School Preparation: These include workshops and seminars in the following areas -
  - CV writing
  - Personal statement writing
  - Advice and assistance in applying to graduate school.
  - The graduate school application and admission process.
  - Navigating graduate school.
  - Assistance in completing application materials.
  - GRE and other standardized testing preparation
  - Advice and assistance in obtaining scholarship from one of the various scholarship agencies in the UAE
- Conference Attendance and Presentation
  - Students will be encouraged to find at least one conference of their choice, and submit and present their research in order to gain real-world experience pertinent to successful PhD career paths.
- Social Activities: Over the course of the program, the program staff will arrange social activities activities such as -
  - Information sessions
  - Individual and group orientation sessions

- Official program launch ceremony
- Kick-off lunches and coffees
- Periodic check-in meetings
- Periodic social gatherings
- Official program completion ceremony

## Student Expectations

In order to get the most benefit out of this program, students are expected to adhere to the following guidelines and responsibilities:

- Contact your mentor during the first summer and make a plan for how your summer research will work:
  - Work together on a timeline of milestones that you will need to reach during the summer (e.g., identify six articles to read, turn in the first draft for a final paper).
  - Work together on a communication plan (What is the best way for the student to contact the mentor with questions? What is the best way for the mentor to contact the student? Will there be regular check-in meetings? If so, how often? Who else should the student turn to for assistance on this project?)
- Engage in mentored research (35 hours per week) over the summer
  - Complete a one-credit Summer Directed Study Course. Please review the syllabus in detail and make sure you understand your responsibilities for meeting all attendance requirements and completing all required assignments on time. The Summer Course Coordinator will contact you with a more detailed overview of the timeline and the work you will be required to complete in order to pass the course.
  - Fill out weekly logs based on your progress with your mentor, individualized research, and graduate school preparation milestones
  - In Summer 1, students are expected to complete a **mock literature review + Methodology**. In Summer 2, students are expected to complete a **mock Capstone Project Proposal** from the options given. Be sure to detail the following:
    - The research problem, question(s), theme or issue to be addressed.
    - The significance, why the research is needed, and the broader implications of the proposed research.
- Attend all welcome week activities during the first summer.
- Schedule and attend bi-weekly meetings with the Pathways Program staff during each summer.
- Complete program evaluations at the end of each summer.
- Attend all designated program workshops and events throughout the year.
  - A detailed calendar of activities will be shared with you, and we will try to ensure flexibility in the format and timing of events and workshops.
- Be committed to the program.
- Participate in wrap-up and celebratory events.

In order to ensure a productive and successful experience for students, mentors, and the program staff, we expect students to be mindful of the following principles:

- Maintain good academic standing throughout your undergraduate degree at NYU Abu Dhabi.
- Proactively manage your own progress through the program.
- Communicate and work responsibly with your faculty mentors.
- Be committed to the philosophy of this program.
- Respond in a timely and responsible fashion to all communications sent regarding the program obligations, from any department, including The Office of Strategy and Planning, the Graduate and Postdoctoral Programs Office, housing, finance, your academic division, the student research office, the Career Development Center, the Pathways Program staff, or any other member of the NYUAD or external community involved in the administration of this program.
- Inform the Pathways Program staff at the earliest if your personal circumstances or academic goals and plans change.

### **Important Notice Regarding Communication and Program Status**

Ongoing communication is essential for your successful progress in the program. If you do not respond to emails or other communications, or if you do not engage with the program (e.g., attending required meetings, submitting assignments, etc.) for an extended period of time, we will assume that you have withdrawn from the program.

If you are facing any difficulties or circumstances that might prevent you from communicating with us, please notify the program office as soon as possible to discuss accommodations or possible solutions.

## **Mentoring**

The mentor's role will be instrumental in shaping the research experience and future trajectory of our NYUAD PhD Pathway students. Mentors are expected to develop a:

### **Communication Plan**

#### **1. Preferred Communication Channels:**

- Student-to-Mentor Contact: Establish the best communication method (email, messaging apps, or office hours) for the student to contact the mentor with questions. Response time expectations should be set, ideally within 24-48 hours, depending on the nature of the inquiry.
- Mentor-to-Student Contact: Specify the primary method for the mentor to reach the student (email, phone, or a university platform) for urgent matters or to provide feedback.

- Response Time and Availability: Clarify mentor's availability for communication outside of formal meetings, including expected turnaround times for feedback on drafts and assignments.
- 2. **Regular Check-ins:**
  - Frequency: Schedule monthly or bi-weekly check-ins throughout the academic year and **weekly meetings during intensive periods (such as the seven-week summer program)** to ensure consistent progress.
  - Format: Meetings should include in-person (if possible), virtual options, or a combination. During each meeting, set clear objectives and action points to track the student's progress.
- 3. **Additional Support:**
  - Resources: Identify other faculty, experts, or graduate students who can provide guidance in specialized areas related to the student's research (e.g., subject matter experts in the student's field of interest like Middle Eastern studies, queer theory, etc.).
  - Peer Support: Encourage the student to collaborate with peers in study groups or research teams, where appropriate, to foster knowledge exchange and feedback.

## Mentorship Phases

1. **Summer 1 (Research Design and Preparation):**
  - Refining Research Interests: Work closely with the student to help transform broad research interests into a well-defined, researchable question or topic. Provide/assist students with identifying resources (journal articles, case studies) to support this process.
  - Mock Literature Review: Assist the student in identifying relevant academic literature, databases, and tools. Provide feedback on search strategies and how to synthesize information into a cohesive mock literature review.
2. **Summer Phase 2 (Mock Capstone):**
  - Mock Capstone Project: Help the student apply their research to a mock capstone project, teaching them how to present research findings and articulate their significance. Provide feedback at each stage of project development to ensure rigorous analysis and presentation.
3. **Fall & Spring Phases (Advanced Research and Capstone Development):**
  - Research Methodology: Guide the student in selecting appropriate research methods (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) based on their topic and interests. Offer support in formulating hypotheses and structuring their research process.
  - Developing a Substantial Paper or Capstone: Mentor the student through the process of expanding their research into a formal academic paper, project, or their final capstone. Guide them on structuring their argument, presenting data, and critically analyzing sources.
  - Academic Writing Skills: Provide ongoing feedback on the student's writing and advice on improving drafts and integrating feedback from peer reviews or faculty.



## Additional Support for Professional Development

### 1. Conference Presentations:

- Oral and Poster Presentations: Assist the student in identifying relevant academic conferences and symposia in their field. Offer guidance on how to create engaging oral or poster presentations, develop abstracts, and prepare for Q&A sessions.
- Networking: Encourage the student to network with other academics and professionals at these events, and provide tips on how to effectively promote their research.

### 2. Graduate Program Selection:

- Program Fit: Help the student identify graduate programs aligned with their academic interests and career goals. Offer guidance on evaluating the quality of faculty, research opportunities, and funding options.
- Application Process: Support the student through the graduate application process, securing recommendation letters, and preparing for interviews.

## Evaluation and Feedback

### 1. Ongoing Evaluation:

- Regular Assessment: Evaluate the student's research progress at every stage, providing constructive feedback on areas such as methodology, analysis, and academic writing.
- Skill Development: Track the development of critical skills such as independent research, academic writing, time management, and problem-solving.
- Final Feedback: At the end of each phase (Summer 1, Summer 2, Fall, and Spring), provide a detailed evaluation of the student's performance, with suggestions for continued growth.

### 2. Program Evaluation:

- End-of-Term Feedback: Mentors are required to complete a program evaluation at the end of each summer term. This evaluation will gather insights on the effectiveness of the mentoring structure, areas for improvement, and the overall experience for both the mentor and student.
- Improvement of Program: These evaluations will help improve the structure of the program for future cohorts, ensuring a better experience for both mentors and students and allowing for adjustments based on constructive feedback.

## Funding Support

Students selected to be a part of the NYUAD PhD Pathways Program will receive funding support in the following formats:

- Summer stipend or research expenses
  - **Note: If you are enrolled in another summer research program, you will not be eligible for payment for both programs**
- Stipend to cover dining expenses
- GRE preparation and application fees
- Independent research activity in the post-junior year summer with opportunity for funding for international travel, if needed for research
- Research expenses, if needed and justified
- Funding to produce posters or other materials for final presentations
- Funding to present in international conferences.

In addition, students will receive summer housing on campus, as long as they are expected to conduct research on campus or prefer to live on campus during the summer rather than at home.

## Program Team and Contact Information

If you have any questions or notes about the program please reach us out at:

### **Fatma Abdulla**

Senior Associate Vice Chancellor & Senior

Vice Provost

[fa54@nyu.edu](mailto:fa54@nyu.edu)

### **Asma Alblooshi**

Assistant Director

NYUAD PhD Pathways Program

[aaa10386@nyu.edu](mailto:aaa10386@nyu.edu)