

Liberal Arts Model

The American experience in higher education has been profoundly shaped by two critical features that distinguish the American model and explain its continuing global impact on higher education: first, the emphasis on the liberal arts, especially at the undergraduate level. This emphasis on a broad liberal arts and sciences education at the undergraduate level, as opposed to a narrower technical or pre-professional approach, is widely credited for the cultivation of ingenuity and unconventional original thinking among its graduates. Second, the long history and role of private philanthropic support for higher education in the American experience is remarkable. Being the world leader, the American liberal arts model has also spread globally through the establishment of numerous respected universities committed to this highly effective model of undergraduate education.

As Pakistan's only exclusively undergraduate focused liberal arts and sciences university, Habib University leverages this American style of undergraduate education, and has developed a distinctive world-class liberal arts curriculum that is contextually relevant and grounded to our South Asian context and heritage.

What is a Liberal Arts Education?

The English term "liberal arts" comes from the Latin *artes liberalis*, which literally means the "skilled practice" of "free" people. The concept itself dates back to classical Greece and Rome and defines an education needed by free people, who require more than purely technical or vocational knowledge – they need the **ability to think critically**. A liberal arts education combines breadth of study across several broad fields of knowledge with depth of understanding in a major field of study. This combination of breadth and depth produces graduates who **possess impressive analytical capacity** and have the **ability to think in unconventional and remarkably creative ways**. Although the specific content of a liberal arts education has evolved over time, the emphasis on training critical minds through a combination of breadth and depth in learning has not. In the modern period the liberal arts are usually divided into four broad areas: the natural sciences, the social sciences, the humanities and the arts.