

Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities

Broaden Your Horizons Prospectus 2018



The Institute of Ismaili Studies



SOAS
University of London



Contents

Message from the Director of the IIS	3
Message from the Director of SOAS University of London	4
Ten reasons to join GPISH	6
Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities	8
Should you apply for GPISH?	12
Key features of the programme	14
Structure of the programme	15
MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities	18
The Field Research Project	22
Additional learning opportunities	23
Meet our faculty	24
Academic support	25
Student Services	26
The Aga Khan Library	28
Accommodation	30
The Aga Khan Centre	32
GPISH alumni career paths	34
Alumni	35
Studying in London	36
Overview of the UK higher education system	39
Application and admissions procedure	40



The Institute of Ismaili Studies



Message from the Director of the IIS

The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) was established in 1977 with the aims of promoting scholarship and learning on Muslim societies and cultures, historical as well as contemporary, and a better understanding of their relationship with other faith communities and cultures. These objectives are realised through a range of programmes and activities organised and implemented by the various departments of the Institute. For those wishing to study at the IIS, the Department of Graduate Studies currently offers two postgraduate level programmes, the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH) and the Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP).

The Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH) is a three-year interdisciplinary programme offered by The Institute of Ismaili Studies. Small cohorts of students mean that lecturers and tutors are well placed to engage students in the in-depth discussion and critical exploration of subjects. Subjects range from history from late antiquity to the early Islamic period and topics in religion, literature, arts and identity in a range of global contexts both historical and contemporary. GPISH students are supported by an inclusive team to help them work on engaging and innovative subjects and fulfil their academic and personal potential in a stimulating learning environment.

Dr Farhad Daftary
Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies



Message from the Director of SOAS University of London

SOAS University of London is the only higher education institution in Europe specialising in the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East. With our knowledge and expertise of our specialist regions, we are uniquely placed to inform and shape current thinking about the economic, political, cultural, security and religious challenges facing our world.

We are delighted that our relationship with the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) has now become a formal collaboration. SOAS has similar aims. We want to inspire our students to influence and shape the world in which we live.

The IIS programme is of the highest standard and we are pleased to offer this formal recognition.

Baroness Valerie Amos
Director, SOAS University of London



“

The diversity of students is a key benefit of GPISH, both in terms of making new friends from different backgrounds, and to actually understand the different modules with the help of the variety of experiences the international students come with.”

Shakeel Shah (GPISH 2020) Pakistan

Ten reasons to join GPISH

Study with peers from across the globe and a supportive programme team

Engage in critical study of Muslim societies and civilisations across time

Earn an MA from the international education leader SOAS

Immerse yourself in one of the world's most diverse and inspiring cities

Earn an additional Master's degree from a UK university





Small class sizes
and a diverse
cross-disciplinary faculty

Visit the world-famous
Alhambra in Spain as
part of an educational
field trip

Enrich your language
studies through a language
immersion programme

Design and lead your
own exploratory
field-research project
anywhere in the world

Highly active global
alumni network



Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities

GPISH trains students to use the intellectual tools of the humanities and social sciences and to explore perspectives which relate religious ideas to broader dimensions of society and culture.

Islam's civilisational achievements are studied at the same time as its theological and religious expressions across time. Taking an interdisciplinary approach to studying Islamic history and thought, special attention is paid to issues of modernity that arise as Muslims relate their heritage to contemporary circumstances, all of which contributes to an enriched academic curriculum.

In the context of Muslim societies, GPISH is informed by the full range and diversity of cultures in which Islam is practised today, from the Middle East, Southern and Central Asia, and Africa to the industrialised societies of the West, taking into consideration the variety of contexts which shape the beliefs, practices and ideals of the faith. Within the Islamic tradition, GPISH promotes research areas which have had relatively little attention devoted to them. These include the intellectual and literary expressions of Shi'ism in general and Ismailism in particular.

GPISH is a fully funded scholarship programme which covers the cost of tuition fees and includes a living allowance in line with the UK Visas and Immigration's stated cost of living. For further information, please see the UK Visas and Immigration website.



It is very difficult to find a graduate-level programme comparable to GPISH anywhere in the world. GPISH is avant-garde in its nature and approach, paying attention to those facets of Islam that traditional graduate programmes on Islam tend to ignore. It forces you to delve into complex and fascinating intellectual areas, and contributes very meaningfully to the growth of the student as an individual and academic. GPISH is truly interdisciplinary, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who is interested in finding out about their heritage."

Uzair Ibrahim (GPISH 2021) Pakistan

Statement of Philosophy

The principles outlined here inform all the intellectual programmes of the IIS, including the two graduate programmes of study, as well as research, seminars or conferences, and public lectures. GPISH, in particular, reflects a basic re-assessment of conventional academic programmes in this field. Essentially, it seeks to integrate areas and methodologies that have become separated in many existing programmes.

The philosophy of GPISH also reflects the premises guiding the IIS' intellectual activities as a whole. Among the levels on which integration as well as new perspectives are intended, the following are noteworthy.

Intellectual disciplines

GPISH seeks to avoid a division of pertinent disciplines – e.g. history, anthropology, political science, philosophical analysis, linguistic and literary criticism – in the study of Muslim societies. It aims to do more than merely encourage cross-references between them. Its objective is rather to promote an approach in which the disciplines are intertwined at their roots, to produce an integrated analysis of the subject, conceived as broadly as possible.

Integrated subject matter

Behind this approach to methods of study there lies a specific approach to the subject matter too. The premise here is that "Islam" can more fruitfully be treated as a civilisation rather than a religion only. This premise has implications for the treatment of the subject matter. Instead of conventional divisions such as theology, law and mysticism, representing distinct religious interpretations of Islam, the programme treats these and other issues in the common framework of a cultural history. This means, first, that religious developments will be seen as part of the development of thought and culture in Muslim societies. Second, those aspects of culture (like art, poetry and architecture), which are not always treated on a par with doctrine, law or religious practice, will be so regarded. Third, as culture cannot be studied in isolation from society, the programme will treat this inter-relationship of ideas and meanings to social and political forces as one of the keys to an integrated understanding of the subject matter.

Historical emergence of forms and definitions

If the inter-relationship of cultural factors to socio-political ones is of importance, it means that the diverse definitions and schools of thought which emerged in Islam must be understood historically. The division of Islam into its existing sects and schools was not always a neat or hard-and-fast phenomenon in all periods of history. The number and boundaries of the groups tended to fluctuate with time and place. GPISH will show the emergent character of these divisions, rather than assuming them as a given fact. Similarly, assumptions (even where these are implicit rather than explicit) like "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" have a strong influence on the way in which Islam is understood. Again, the historically based approach will seek to understand how and where these or similar concepts were arrived at, rather than taking them as given.



Poetic and imaginative discourse

An historical approach to Islam must be balanced by a due appreciation of the meaning religious ideas have for their followers, and the centrality of spiritual and ethical aspirations in their lives. GPISH therefore gives due attention to the role of poetic and imaginative discourse in the shaping of spiritual life in Muslim cultures.

Cultural diversity

While the approach to Islam as a civilisation is intended to integrate as well as enlarge both the subject matter and angles of study, this does not preclude an appreciation of the enormous diversity of Muslim societies. One of the objectives is to re-examine all explicit and implicit descriptions of Islam as a monolithic phenomenon. It will examine the dialectic of cultures whereby a variety of older, existing traditions were assimilated, transformed and synthesised, in most areas, into regional expressions of Islam. The diversity of these expressions must be noted without normative preconceptions about their validity. Students will study the diverse features of Islamic culture in such significant areas as the Middle East, South-east Asia, the Indian subcontinent

and Africa south of the Sahara, without assuming such distinctions as that between “peripheral” and “central” Islamic lands. Similarly, the programme will examine the important role of not only “classical” languages (Arabic and Persian) but also national, regional or local vernaculars in the evolution of Islamic sensibilities.

The one-sided emphasis, in many scholarly accounts, on “learned” or textual Islam to the relative neglect of “popular” and oral traditions, is balanced through considering the validity of these varying expressions in their respective contexts. Avoiding exclusive concentration on doctrinal and intellectual formulations by paying full attention to the practical manifestation of Islamic ideals in living societies is therefore significant.

Anthropology will therefore have a central place as a tool of analysis alongside the “classical” disciplines of philology, history and the like. However, the insights of anthropology will be marshalled widely in the study of the civilisation as a whole. This will enable anthropological analysis to range well beyond its traditional concentration on local rather than national and international societies and cultures.



GPISH encourages and enables you to broaden and sharpen your research interests. Much of this is owed to the interdisciplinary approach to the study of Islam taken, evident in the variety of academic expertise available for GPISH students to benefit from both inside and outside the classroom. I would highly recommend the programme to anyone wishing to study Islam in a global context.”

Irum (GPISH 2020) Pakistan

Bridging history and contemporary societies

Despite recent attempts to link the two, there is a persisting tendency for research into the past to proceed along separate lines from the study of contemporary Muslim societies. This is in part reinforced by academic departmentalisation, whereby those trained in economics, sociology and politics tend to focus on contemporary developments, to the relative neglect of religious and historical topics, and vice versa. The intellectual framework of this programme is designed to bridge this gap. It assumes that spiritual or existential issues are as relevant to contemporary Muslim societies as they were in history. The study of the vast changes introduced in these societies in the modern period will pay attention to the meaning and images of the past which are current in these societies. It will focus as much on the spiritual implications of social change as on the reverse relationship, both in history and contemporary life.

Re-examining the boundaries of civilisations

The polarity of "Islam" and the "West" assumed in much contemporary discourse about the subject needs to be subjected to critical analysis. GPISH, in addition to parallel research, public lectures and publications, will examine the origins, logic and political and cultural consequences of this categorisation. The overlap between some of the more fundamental issues of society and culture today across Western and non-Western lands, or across the developed and developing worlds, needs to be noted without the distortions inherent in too facile an opposition between the "West" and "non-West".



Should you apply for GPISH?

If you are new to the study of Islam and the humanities

GPISH welcomes high-achieving students from all academic backgrounds, and the study of Islam or the humanities is not a prerequisite for gaining admission. Working closely with experienced faculty members, you are supported during the IIS component of the programme to make the transition from previous study experiences to an analytical understanding of and ability to work competently with the new subject matter. It is essential to note, however, that as part of the admissions process applicants must demonstrate a genuine motivation for studying Islam and the humanities. This will involve being able to show understanding of key ideas in Islamic studies and the humanities, and the potential for Master's-level study of these subjects in the UK.

If you have studied Islam or the humanities before

If you have studied Islam or the humanities before it offers some advantage, as you are likely to have been introduced to ideas and subject matter covered by the first two years of the programme. The richness and unique synthesising approach of the IIS component of the programme, however, covers areas of research not studied elsewhere; as such, those students with a proven interest or academic record in studying Islam or the humanities will find themselves appropriately challenged and stimulated by the curriculum.

Please note that if you already have a Master's degree in Islamic studies when you apply, you should enquire with programme staff to discuss your application.



Employability and progression opportunities

GPISH aims to train graduates for pursuing leadership positions and runs enrichment activities including a Leadership Workshop and series of Careers Seminars. Interviews for internships following successful completion of all three years of the programme also form part of these, and appropriately qualified students will be offered short-term internship opportunities.

GPISH Extension Programme

Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards (ITREBs) may sponsor some students to undertake GPISH. Sponsored students will be offered the GPISH Extension Programme, which aims to help them acquire specific knowledge, analytical tools and skills to contribute more effectively to the needs of ITREB; they will select their topic of field research and third-year Master's degree in consultation with their sponsoring ITREBs.

Following the successful completion of GPISH, the Extension Programme will involve a three-month residential module which builds upon the GPISH curriculum, followed by a nine-month paid professional internship at sponsoring ITREBs, which will include a field assignment. They will return to the IIS for a two-week residential programme to consolidate their learning and field experience.

Following completion of the internship, sponsored graduates will be offered a range of continuing professional development opportunities by ITREB and the IIS to enable them to keep abreast of the emerging scholarship in their fields and to develop their competencies.

If you are a GPISH students who opted for ITREB sponsorship and the Extension Programme you will be committed to working with ITREBs for at least three years after the successful completion of the GPISH Extension Programme.

PhD Scholarships

For those of you interested in deepening your analysis and contributing intellectually to the academic world, as well as to the Institute and the Ismaili community, the IIS offers a limited number of scholarships to pursue studies at doctoral level.

There is a great need for research in Islamic studies. The most relevant to the Institute's research needs are education, Ismaili studies, wider Shi'i studies, Qur'anic studies and Islamic law.

Scholarships are also open to any area in which Islam can be analysed in one of its various manifestations (historical, theological, philosophical, legal, educational, political, ritual or cultural). Research can be conducted from any of the various perspectives and disciplines related to the humanities and social sciences.



GPISH has been an amazing experience. It has not only challenged me academically but also on a personal level. It has provided me with the historical background to engage with the current Islamic discourse. The professors are leading scholars in their fields and it was a privilege to be taught by them. The programme has encouraged me to follow my passion and find a career that best suits me."

Tahera Kassam (GPISH 2020) Canada

Key features of the programme

Successful graduates of GPISH emerge with two Master's degrees: an MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities and a Master's degree in a subject related to the aims and ethos of the programme.

The MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities is designed and delivered by the IIS and the degree is awarded by SOAS University of London. You will study at the IIS for this over the first two years of the programme. The third-year Master's is in a subject of your choice at a UK university. To graduate from GPISH, students must successfully complete the two-year IIS component and gain their degree from the third-year university.



Structure of the programme

Pre-sessionals

Based on language levels for English, some students attend pre-sessionals for academic English writing while others have a shorter in-house course before you start the first term. New students who are not native speakers of Arabic also have four weeks of Arabic-language classes before the start of the first term.

Years 1 and 2 – Studying for an MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities at the IIS

- 17 subject modules
- 9 in Year 1
- 8 in Year 2
- Year 1 lays the foundations with regard to knowledge and approach.
- Year 2 confronts broader thematic subjects and more demanding assessment criteria. Particular attention is devoted to cultivating research skills.

Intensive language training in either Arabic or Persian* with language immersion in either Jordan or Iran**

Educational field trip to Spain**

Leadership Workshop and Careers Seminars

Field research project

* All students study Arabic over the two years of the programme, unless they are already proficient, in which case they study Persian.

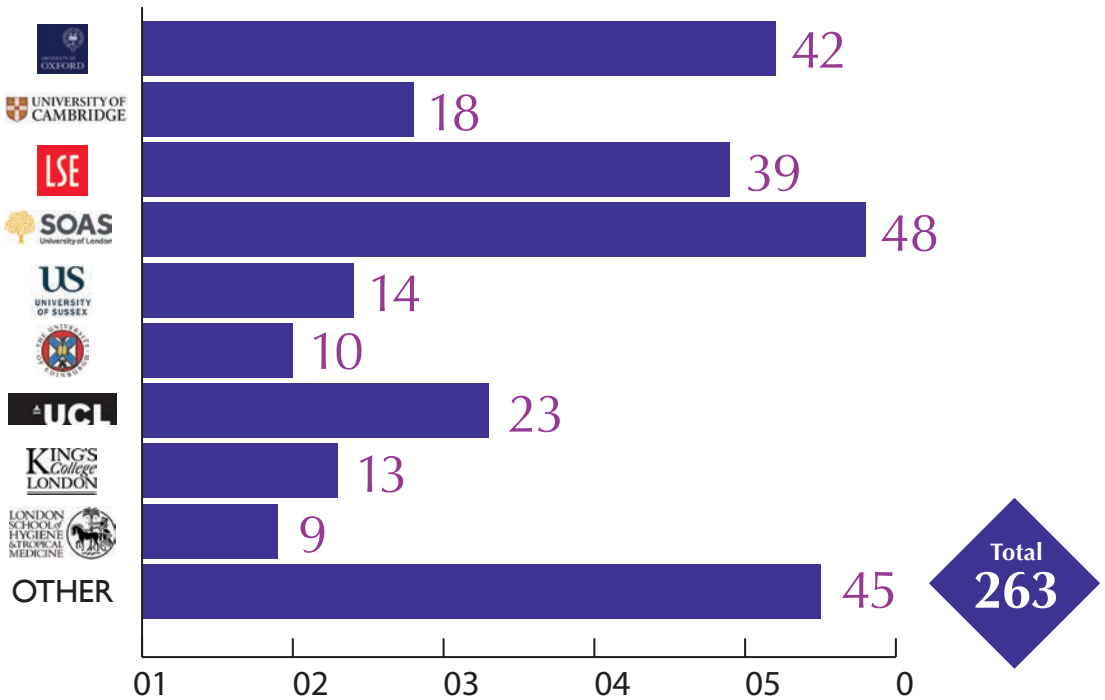
** All study abroad components are subject to travel advice by the UK Government and securing the necessary travel documentation. In the event a student cannot travel, alternative study arrangements will be put in place to ensure they are able to access the learning outcomes.

Year 3 – Studying for a Master's degree at an accredited UK university

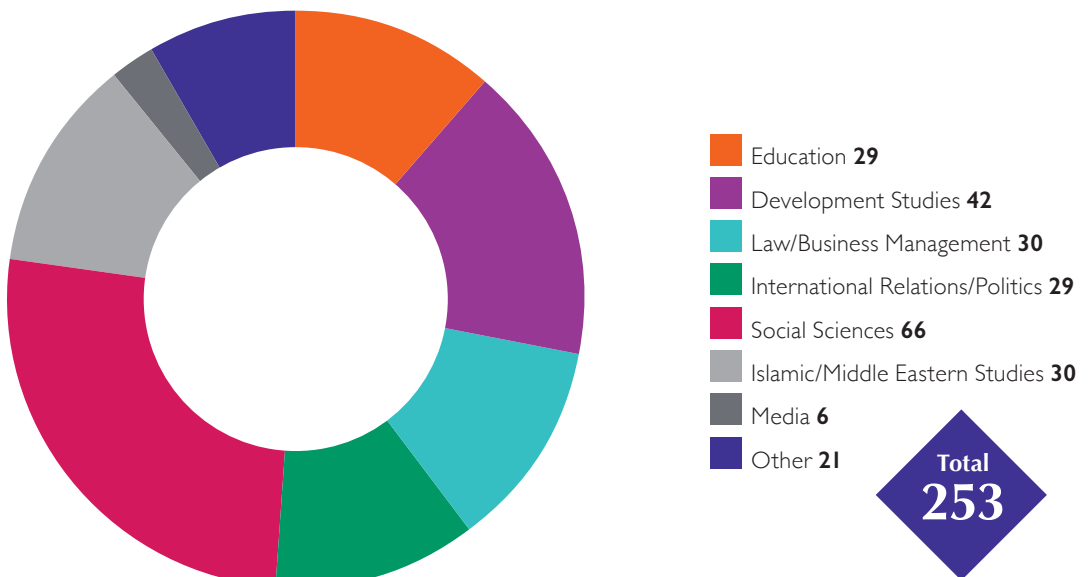
Students spend Year 3 studying for a Master's degree at a UK university in a subject area that resonates with the aims of GPISH. Guidance and support are provided to help students select their third-year programmes.*** Degrees from UK universities are recognised around the world.

*** Programme choices must be approved by the Department of Graduate Studies and students are responsible for their acceptance by the university.

Universities students have attended



Third-year disciplines students have pursued





“

My GPISH journey has been one of the best in my life so far. The integrated content, supporting faculty and the amazing fellow students, all create such a powerful ambience. GPISH gives you a lot of space to grow and nourish yourself and not just academically. I am really looking forward to what is yet to come.”

Nishat Taranum (GPISH 2021) Pakistan

MA in Islamic Studies and Humanities

Programme aims

1

To engender a critical yet sympathetic examination of many of the issues that contemporary Muslims face; from the debate amongst Muslim intellectuals regarding the re-examination of aspects of the Islamic heritage to the challenges contemporary Muslim societies face in their endeavour to modernise and develop.

2

To emphasise the analytical frameworks and critiques of the social sciences and humanities as they apply (or fail to apply) to the study of the phenomenon of religion in all its aspects.

3

To integrate pertinent disciplines – e.g. history, anthropology, political science, philosophical analysis, linguistic and literary criticism – in the study of Muslim societies in order to promote an approach in which the disciplines are intertwined at their roots, to produce an integrated analysis of the subject, conceived as broadly as possible.

There are four key areas in which you will develop:

Knowledge

- 1. A civilisational understanding of Islam.** Demonstrate a systematic advanced understanding and knowledge of Islam from a civilisational perspective.
- 2. Critical awareness of key debates and thinkers.** Demonstrate systematic knowledge and critical awareness of the key debates and thinkers (historical and contemporary) in the field of Islamic studies.
- 3. Critical awareness of challenges in context.** Demonstrate a critical awareness of challenges facing contemporary Muslim societies in their diverse historical, political and socio-economic contexts.
- 4. Understanding methods.** Demonstrate a systematic and comprehensive understanding of contemporary methodologies for the study of Islam in lived contexts.

Thinking skills

- 1. Making critical sense of materials.** Critically assess data and evidence from primary and secondary sources, and solve conflicts of facts and interpretations commensurably with the level expected of Master's graduates.
- 2. Understanding materials critically.** Employ critical and at times original approaches and question established knowledge on the basis of reasoned interpretations of sources and evidence.
- 3. Integrating materials.** Integrate findings from multiple sources in order to demonstrate and advance a critical understanding of topics under discussion.
- 4. Making and reflecting on conclusions.** Make reasonable and substantiated conclusions independently in the light of research undertaken and evidence reviewed, and reflect on the implications of those and potential future directions.

4

To adopt a civilisational approach to the study of Islam. This premise has implications for the treatment of the subject matter. Instead of conventional divisions such as theology, law and mysticism, representing distinct religious interpretations of Islam, the programme treats these and other issues in the common framework of a cultural history. This means, first, that religious developments will be seen as part of the development of thought and culture in Muslim societies. Secondly, those aspects of culture, like art, poetry and architecture, which are not always treated on a par with doctrine, law or religious practice, will be so regarded in this programme. Thirdly, as culture cannot be studied in isolation from society, the programme will treat this interrelationship (of ideas and meanings to social and political forces) as one of the keys to an integrated understanding of the subject.

Subject-based practical skills

- 1. Finding materials.** Locate relevant materials and gather research data and/or evidence responsibly and ethically for the purpose of exploring and understanding a topic and/or preparing for assessment.
- 2. Interpreting materials.** Summarise viewpoints and arguments from various sources of data and/or evidence, synthesising those where appropriate.
- 3. Integrating interpretive approaches.** Integrate skills and/or approaches from different disciplinary areas for the purpose of exploring and understanding a topic/subject area in comprehensive and, where possible, original ways.
- 4. Self-assessment and refining work produced.** Judging the merit of own work for the purpose of assessing its validity and appropriacy with regard to the subject matter, discipline and task at hand.

Transferable skills

- 1. Communication.** Communicate knowledgeably and critically in writing and speaking for the purpose of disseminating and contributing to the production of knowledge and to enable active participation in events such as seminars, conferences and symposia where current subject knowledge and approaches are being disseminated and debated.
- 2. Working independently.** Demonstrate skills of research (finding and working with materials) and managing one's own learning in the service of working independently and responsibly.
- 3. Working with others.** Work with others for the purpose of gathering and interpreting information, showing due regard for ethical considerations.

The MA curriculum comprises the following modules

The Qur'an,
Parts 1 and 2

30
credits

Muslims in
History 1:
Late Antiquity

15
credits

Ritual,
Worship and
Practice

15
credits

Muslims in
History 2:
Middle History

15
credits

Key
Moments in
Ismaili History

15
credits

Muslims in
History 3:
Modern and
Contemporary

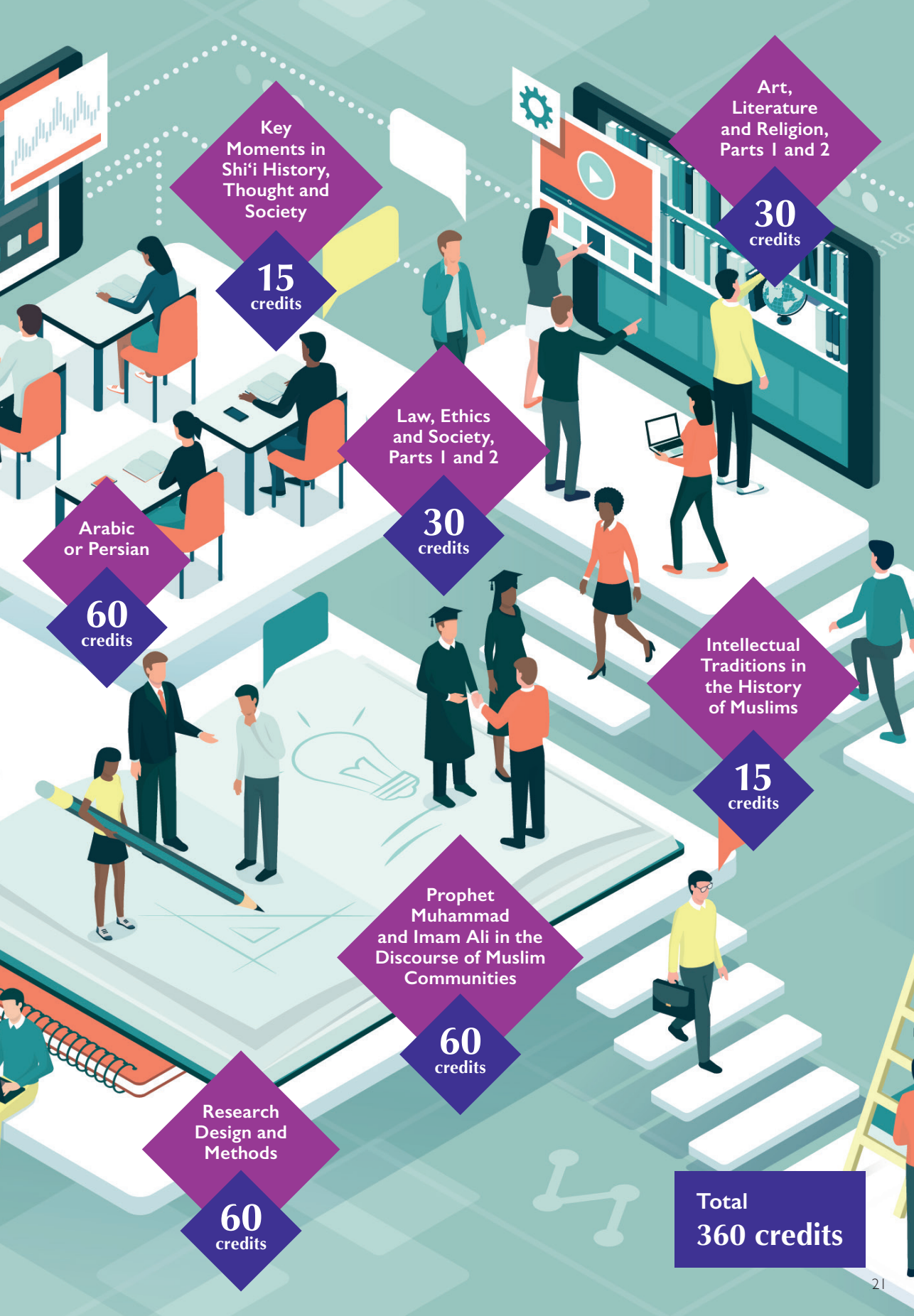
15
credits

Ismailis in
Modern Times

15
credits

Religion,
Literature and
Identity in South
Asian Muslim
Contexts

15
credits



Key Moments in Shi'i History, Thought and Society

15 credits

Art, Literature and Religion, Parts 1 and 2

30 credits

Law, Ethics and Society, Parts 1 and 2

30 credits

Arabic or Persian

60 credits

Intellectual Traditions in the History of Muslims

15 credits

Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali in the Discourse of Muslim Communities

60 credits

Research Design and Methods

60 credits

Total 360 credits

The Field Research Project

The Field Research Project is an integral part of the IIS component of the programme which can also serve as a basis for continued study or career development. You will conduct research during the summer of your second year and produce an original piece of research.

A Research Supervisor is allocated to each student, to guide you in planning, preparing, conducting and writing up your field report. The Year 2 module Research Design and Methods provides students with the tools to plan and conduct an empirical study. Towards the completion of this module, you will submit a project proposal for your field research, and approved projects will receive modest funding to contribute to the cost of travel to and from the place of research and other project-related expenses.



Additional learning opportunities

Language Immersion

Supplementing language training at the IIS is a four-week language immersion programme in Jordan or Iran at the end of Year 1. This is an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the language and culture of an Arabic-/Persian-speaking country. The language immersion programme is subject to UK Government travel advice and securing the necessary travel documentation. In the event a student cannot travel, alternative study arrangements will be put in place to ensure you are able to access the learning outcomes.

Educational Field Trip to Spain

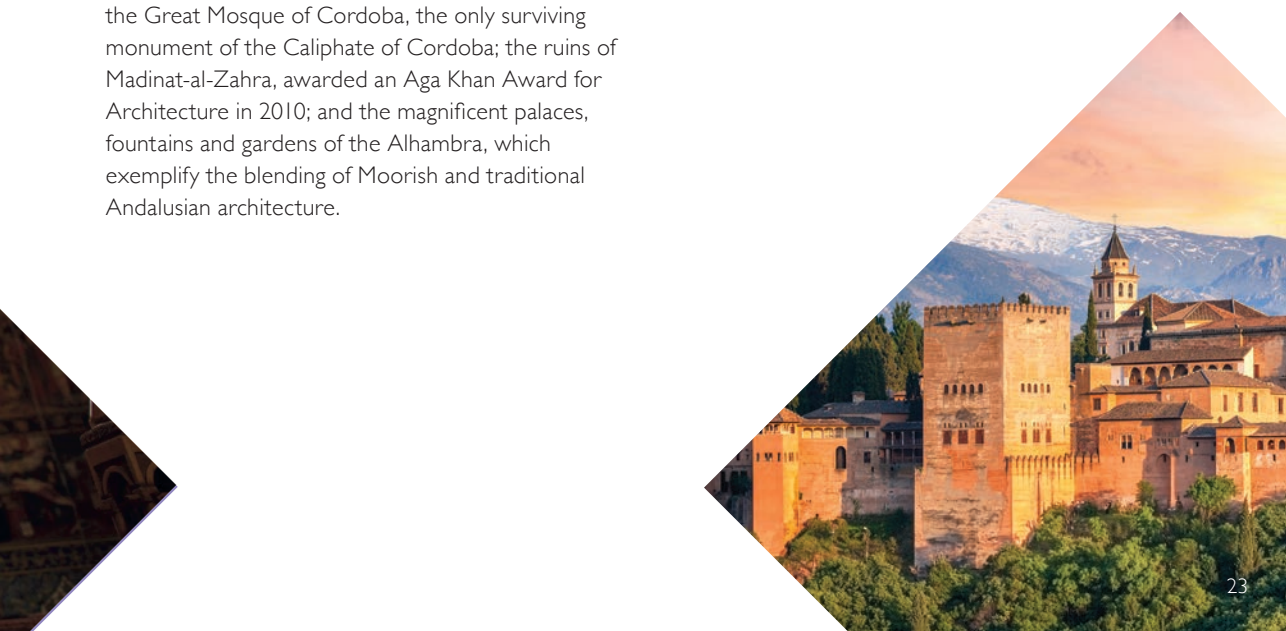
Whenever feasible, GPISH students are taken on a field trip to Spain in Year 2 (subject to the UK Government travel advisory guidelines and securing the necessary travel documentation.) The trip is focused on visits to Muslim architectural monuments of Andalusia. The field trip also allows you to witness the contemporary use of the architectural sites, developing your visual literacy and contributing to learning about the formation of political and religious identity, art and architecture. With the help of an academic lead, the field trip complements in-house academic modules, bringing to life in front of your eyes the places you have read about. Some of the primary sites you will visit during this trip are the Great Mosque of Cordoba, the only surviving monument of the Caliphate of Cordoba; the ruins of Madinat-al-Zahra, awarded an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2010; and the magnificent palaces, fountains and gardens of the Alhambra, which exemplify the blending of Moorish and traditional Andalusian architecture.

Leadership Skills Workshop

The objective of this workshop is to start integrating learning with the development of leadership skills congruent with today's globalised and highly mobile workplace. Practical leadership skills for communicating, influencing and motivating across cultures and deepening individual impact within society are linked with theoretical knowledge.

Topics in the Philosophy of Religion

This lecture series, delivered by Dr Aziz Esmail, is intended to develop analytical thinking relevant to the concepts found in religious discourse. The relation between religious and secular culture is explored and the terms themselves analysed. Students read major philosophers whose ideas have had an explicit or tacit relationship to issues of importance in religion. These range from Plato and Aristotle, through representatives of the medieval philosophical tradition common to the scriptural faiths, to philosophers who have been influential in the shaping of the modern world, from Hume and Kant to Heidegger and Wittgenstein.



Meet our Faculty*

Prof. Kamal Abu-Deeb Arabic Literature

Mr Rafiq Ajani (IIS) Islamic Law; Ethics, including bioethics; Philosophy

Dr Omar Alí-de-Unzaga (IIS) Qur'anic Studies

Dr Nuha Al-Shaar (IIS) Classical Arabic Literature and Thought

Dr Omar Anchassi (Exeter) Islamic Law and Legal Theory

Prof. Ali Asani (Harvard) Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures

Dr Karen Bauer (IIS) Islamic Social and Intellectual History; Qur'anic Studies

Dr Stephen Burge (IIS) Qur'anic Studies; Devotional Literature

Dr Alessandro Cancian (IIS) Cultural Anthropology of Muslim Societies

Dr Valentino Cattelan Islamic Law

Dr Farhad Daftary (IIS) Ismaili Studies

Dr Maria De Cillis (IIS) Islamic Philosophers and Shi'i Studies

Dr Aziz Esmail (IIS) Topics in the Philosophy of Religion

Dr Janis Esots (IIS) Shi'i Studies

Dr Elizabeth Fowden (Cambridge) Late Antiquity and Early Islam

Dr Laila Halani (IIS) Anthropology of Muslim Societies; Gender

Prof. Gerald Hawting (SOAS) Pre-modern Islamic and Middle Eastern History

Dr Shainool Jiwa (IIS) Fatimid History

Dr Christie Johnson (IIS) Arabic Verbal Arts; Theories of Literature and the Arts

Mr Zulfiqar Khimani (IIS) Critical social theory; Contemporary Muslim communities; Media studies; Philosophy

Dr Tullio Lobetti (IIS) Philosophy of Religion

Dr David Lunn (SOAS) Hindi and Urdu Literature

Dr Sharmina Mawani (IIS) Religion and Identity; the Ginanic Tradition

Dr Toby Mayer (IIS) Qur'anic Studies

Dr Anna McSweeney (Sussex) Islamic Arts and Architecture

Dr Werner Menski Muslim Law; Laws of South Asia

Dr Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (IIS) Intellectual history of Shi'i Islam; Islamic mysticism and messianism

Dr Qudsia Mirza (Birkbeck) Islamic Law; Islamic Feminism

Dr Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (IIS) Shi'i Heritage

Mr Luay Mohammed (ISMC/IIS) Arabic Language

Dr Marodsilton Muborakshoeva (IIS) Education; Research Methods

Mr Abdul Jalil Muhammad (ISMC/IIS) Arabic Language

Dr Anjoom Mukadam (IIS) Muslims in Contemporary Societies

Prof. Jorgen Nielsen (Birmingham) Contemporary European Islam

Mr Wael Odeh (ISMC/IIS) Arabic Language

Dr Daryoush Mohammad Poor (IIS) Ismaili Philosophy

Dr Sham Qayyum (SOAS) Islamic Law

Dr Maryam Rezaee (IIS) Research Methods; Persian Language

Mr Riaz Rhemtulla (IIS) Dance Traditions of India

Dr Farouk Topan (ISMC) Swahili Literature; Islam in African Literature

Dr Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad (IIS) Media and Iranian Cinema

* Please note, not all faculty will teach every year.

Academic Support

Students receive academic support throughout their two-year study at the IIS in a variety of ways.

Pre-sessional and In-sessional Academic Skills Support

Each new cohort has students with varying levels of English language and academic skills proficiency.

Based on the entry tests we conduct with students and the UKVI IELTS results at the time of admissions, some students attend pre-sessional course at SOAS for development of their Academic English Skills. Some pre- and in-sessional Academic Skills classes will also be timetabled for all students at the start of the first term at the IIS. This is to orient students to the academic conventions of the IIS and enhance students' skills in this area prior to submission of the first assignments. Other sessions may be scheduled by the Academic Skills Support Team at the IIS according to need and upon request (see in house support for details).

In-house Support

In-house support includes one-to-one sessions with individual Academic Advisers, lecturers and the Academic Skills Support Team at the IIS. All students are allocated an Academic Adviser at the IIS, who is available to provide students with constructive academic and personal development guidance and support across the programme of study that will guide them in their journey to become professionals. Academic Advisers also review students' wider academic progress.

Students who need additional support will be able to meet regularly with the IIS' Academic Skills Support Team, who will work with students to determine the type of support they need. This support is available for academic skills needs and some language needs. Students may request academic skills classes or workshops, or one-to-one tutorials and consultations where a member of the team will offer them support and guidance on their academic skills and language (where applicable). Alternatively, students may email their assignments for feedback on their writing. This service will be available to all students throughout their period of study at the IIS, subject to availability.

Students are encouraged to learn from the comments of the lecturers and to discuss their progress with their teachers and Academic Advisers as well as the Academic Skills Support Team and the Programme Leader.



Student Services

Student Services are responsible for overseeing non-academic matters relating to admissions, immigration, accommodation, student welfare and graduation. The Student Services team can offer advice, guidance and support to help you get the most out your student life in London.

Counselling Services

The IIS has a service agreement with the University of Westminster Counselling Service.

Students have access to professional and experienced counsellors who are used to working with people from a range of different backgrounds and cultures. Students may discuss anything that is bothering them in confidence, from an inability to study, homesickness, anxiety, depression to relationship problems and bereavement.

Disability Support

Students with disabilities will be supported to achieve equality of opportunity to engage with their studies. We can provide advice and guidance for all students with disabilities. Students are invited to discuss their needs with the Student Services Unit; all discussions are in complete confidence.





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GPISH has had a tremendous impact on my life and my understanding of Islam through multiple disciplines. It has enhanced my critical thinking and enables me to approach any theme of interest for research. The multinational environment in the programme enables you to think objectively about yourself and your home country, tolerate and respect differences, and truly recognise and appreciate diversity.”

(Gulazor Gulmamadova GPISH 2020) Tajikistan

The Aga Khan Library, London

The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) and the Aga Khan University – Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (AKU–ISMC) run a joint library to meet the teaching and research activities of both institutes. The Aga Khan Library has developed and preserves a unique collection that serves a diverse range of students and academics in the field of Islamic studies including a substantial collection of Ismaili printed material. In its relatively short history, the library has evolved into a leading centre and repository for rare and significant resources illustrative of all facets of Ismaili history and thought.

The Library's general collection comprises nearly 42,000 items relating to Islamic Studies and Muslim civilisations consisting of a wide range of books, periodicals, and theses on various aspects of Islamic history, theology, philosophy, law and literature, with a focus on Shi'i works and esoteric traditions as well as on Qur'anic studies. The Library also has a specialist collection of Ismaili printed materials consisting of over 1,300 volumes of texts and monographs, theses and rare books and ancient manuscripts. The rare books collection includes a set of Post Tanzimat Ottoman publications as well as items from the personal collections of scholars, including the leading German scholar Anne Marie Schimmel (1922-2003), the late scholar of Persian literature Peter Avery (1923-2008), and the archive of the late Professor M. Arkoun (1928-2010).

The Library's collection of fifteen-hundred audio-visual materials covers a wide range of themes and regions, including Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt, Central Asia, Morocco and Tunisia as well Muslim diaspora communities in Europe and North America.

In addition to the printed and audio-visual materials, the Library also subscribes to a number of electronic resources focusing on Islamic studies and Humanities to support the student's studies. These include electronic journals and databases that provide full-text articles accessible for library users onsite as well as offsite.

To ensure students gain the maximum benefit from the resources, the Library provides practical sessions and one-to-one help. These include library induction, practical skill sessions on various resources as well as sessions on how to use the library's online catalogue and a regular programme that introduces all new services to students and faculty. It also hosts seminars and lectures to introduce students to new research projects in the surrounding academic environment. To support the academic needs of the Institute's academic community the library also provides inter-lending and Document Delivery Service for items that cannot be fulfilled by other means.

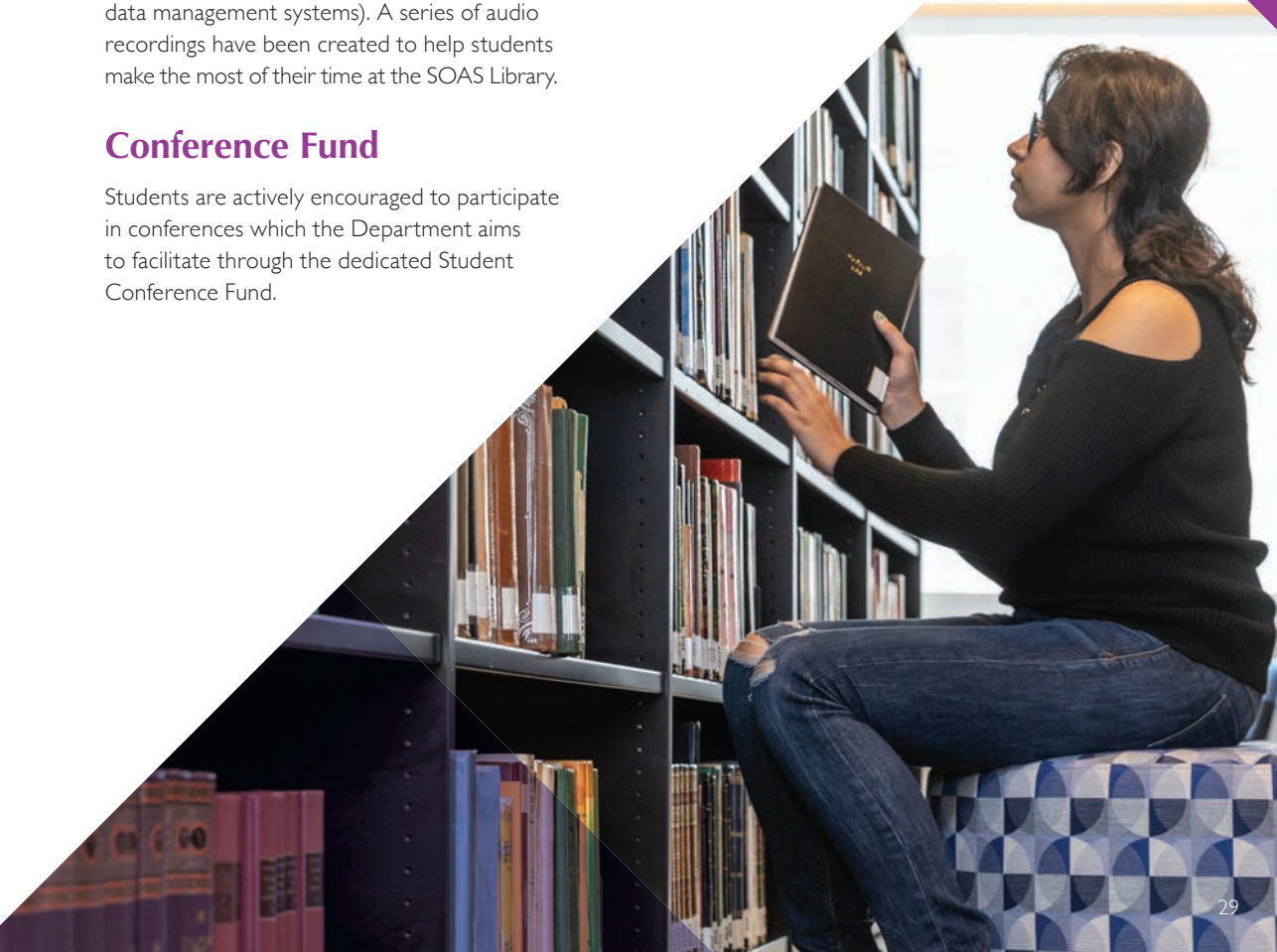
SOAS Library

The SOAS Library is one of the world's most important academic libraries for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The Library attracts scholars from all over the world to consult its holdings and further their research. The Library houses over 1.3 million volumes at the SOAS campus at Russell Square in central London, together with a major collection of archives, manuscripts, rare books and special collections, an expanding Digital Library and a growing network of electronic resources.

The SOAS Library is part of Library and Information Services, placing it at the heart of a comprehensive service which also supports Learning Resources, IT Support, ICT Infrastructure and the SOAS Information Systems suite (which includes an emerging cluster of innovative library- and research data management systems). A series of audio recordings have been created to help students make the most of their time at the SOAS Library.

Conference Fund

Students are actively encouraged to participate in conferences which the Department aims to facilitate through the dedicated Student Conference Fund.



Accommodation

Designed by the multiple-award winning architects Stanton Williams, Victoria Hall King's Cross is an extraordinary new building for students who are looking for a more enriching place to live and study.



Built to the highest standards from limestone, oak, brick and metalwork, the accommodation was conceived with ergonomics, nature and well-being at the forefront of our thinking. The ground and first floors are set aside for shared spaces. There is a large social lounge for relaxing, eating, watching TV and playing games, a breakout room for studying and meeting, a reading room, a courtyard garden and plenty of bicycle parking. Natural light is utilised throughout the building and as many rooms as possible face south. On the eighth floor there is a fitness room and a stunning garden terrace with views across London. In each room, large desks let students spread out to facilitate different study habits; there is a double bed and plenty of storage space, an upholstered desk chair, and a lounge chair. Every room also features an en-suite bathroom.

Wi-Fi is available throughout the building and each bedroom can access the high-speed broadband connection. The communal spaces are equally spacious with plenty of room in the shared dining area and kitchen areas to store groceries and for cooking.



The Aga Khan Centre

This signature building features the Islamic Gardens of London, which are inspired by the rich heritage of gardens in Muslim contexts. Each green space within our complex of buildings corresponds to the landscape of a given country or region of the Muslim world.

The collection of gardens is a unique and distinctive feature of the development. The relationship with the natural world will resonate harmoniously with the landscaped gardens, leafy parks, squares and pathways already welcoming the public across the King's Cross development. The Aga Khan Centre is a place to learn and study, housing a two level library and state of the art lecture and classrooms. Level one through to four of the building house the teaching and learning spaces for IIS students. With large and smaller seminar rooms where you will have lectures and seminars as well as a student lounge for you to relax, spend time with colleagues and eat during your breaks between classes. The upper floors house offices for faculty members as well as members of staff for the other departments within the IIS. The building is shared with Aga Khan Foundation and the Aga Khan University, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations.

The Aga Khan Centre is a short walk from your halls of residence, making it impossible to be delayed by traffic for your classes! Classes led by IIS faculty will be held at the Aga Khan Centre. The building has been designed by Pritzker prizewinning Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, who also designed the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat (Ottawa, 2008) and the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto, 2014).





GPISH Alumni career paths



Alumni

The Institute's alumni body now consists of several hundred individuals dispersed across the world who are supported through IIS' Alumni Relations Unit. GPISH graduates are also SOAS alumni.

Our Alumni Association offers our graduates a number of benefits, including:

- Opportunities to participate in academic seminars
- Access to research and conference participation grants of up to £500
- Networking opportunities at Annual Chapter Group meetings
- An annual Alumni Newsletter and regular bulletins advertising conferences and professional opportunities

- Access to the recently established online community portal which serves as a professional network
- Opportunities to share news and publish research via a dedicated domain on the IIS website.

Please see SOAS Alumni Network:

www.soasworld.org



“

GPIH has enhanced my career opportunities through its global alumni network. It has been incredibly helpful to make connections with a diverse group of individuals spanning industries, occupations, and geographies.”

Naveed Nanjee, GPIH 2014 ALUMNUS

Studying in London

To fully appreciate the wealth of opportunities offered by GPISH, you need to experience the city of London. This is a dynamic and diverse environment, where thinking globally comes naturally.

London is home to more than 400,000 university students. Of these, over 100,000 international students are from over 200 different countries – that’s more international students studying in London than in any other city in the world. Studying in a global city has many advantages, including access to cosmopolitan cultural events and an international network of friends.

Exploring London

London is a city of opportunity, where you can enjoy yourself and continue to learn from the experiences only a vibrant, cosmopolitan city like London can offer. The central location of the IIS in London makes planning a short getaway easy. You can hop on a train to Oxford, Stonehenge or Stratford! There is also plenty on offer for the sports fanatic – premier league football, international rugby, tennis and cricket.



London at a glance

Over 120 public libraries

100s of bookshops

4 UNESCO World Heritage sites

Over 1000s of museums & galleries

1.34 billion tube passengers annually

Over 150 million items in the British Library

47% green space in London

Over 12,000 restaurants and eateries

Over 300 Languages spoken in London

8 Royal Parks

150 theatres





“

The opportunity to live in a cosmopolitan city like London is a dream for any student. While here, I have had access to a number of conferences, lectures, exhibits, concerts, and experiences which I know I would have never found elsewhere. Whether I'm taking a quick weekend trip to a nearby country or roaming around inside of the United Kingdom, I feel like I am constantly growing and taking advantage of a once-in-a-lifetime experience. London is a city that has grown dear to my heart and I know even after I'm gone, I will continue to see London as the starting point for the even greater things to come in my career.”

Noureen Shallwani (GPISH 2020) USA

Overview of the UK Higher Education System

Higher Education in the UK involves the final and highest phase of education.

Higher education providers are most frequently known as universities, but may also include private education providers and colleges, as well as other types of publicly and privately funded institutes. Courses and degrees are usually aligned to two levels:

- Undergraduate (Bachelor Awards, BA, BSc – pitched at Level 6 of the National Qualifications Framework for England, Wales and Northern Ireland)
- Postgraduate (e.g. Master of Art, MA; Master of Science, MSc; Master of Education, MEd; Master of Philosophy, MPhil – all pitched at Level 7).

The highest available award is the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), which is a research-based degree pitched at Level 8.

Most students start Higher Education at the age of 18, studying for an undergraduate degree. The average Bachelor's award usually takes three years to complete, although some incorporate or have an option for a fourth year. Tuition fees are currently capped at £9,250 per year for British and EU students, whereas fees for international students are likely to be significantly higher, sometimes reaching £30,000 per year or more.

Undergraduate courses are focused on the acquisition of knowledge, the development of critical thinking skills, and – particularly for technically-oriented programmes – work related skills. On graduation from their first degree, many students

continue their studies enrolling in a postgraduate programme. The average postgraduate programme usually lasts one year, although longer courses are also on offer.

Such programmes emphasise research and critical thinking: the student is considered an advanced learner, capable of pursuing their study and research interests independently and creatively. Postgraduate tuition fees for British and EU students are usually in the region of £6,000 per year, but they may also be significantly higher. Fees for international students usually exceed £10,000. In 2016/17, more than 1.7 million students were enrolled on undergraduate courses, while more than half a million were studying for postgraduate qualifications (www.hesa.ac.uk/stats).

Application and Admissions Procedure

Entry Requirements

- A completed first degree of good standing from an accredited university, equivalent to a British Bachelor's degree.
- Please note that if you already have a Master's degree in Islamic studies when you apply, you should enquire with programme staff to discuss your application.
- An acceptable level of English language proficiency. The minimum requirement is an overall band score of 6.5 in the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) qualification, and a minimum of 6.0 in each sub-score. Please note the **IELTS for UKVI (Academic)** is the **only** test we can accept. We will not accept IELTS Academic as this is a different test. Please see the Tier 4 requirement below for exemptions.

Admission to GPISH does not guarantee admission to a degree-granting university for the third year of study. While staff are on hand to advise, students are fully responsible for gaining their third-year admission.

Selection

- Exposure to the academic study of Islam, the social sciences or the humanities is desirable.
- Shortlisted applicants will be interviewed and will be required to sit a written examination. Interviews are intended to ascertain intellectual breadth, analytical skills, and an interest in issues relating to the study of Muslim societies.

Tier 4 Student Visa Requirement

- You will be required to take an English language test **unless** you are a national of an English majority speaking country (as defined by UKVI **www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english**), or have completed an undergraduate and postgraduate degree taught in the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Barbados, the Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Republic of Ireland, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. If you are a national of Canada you are also exempt from taking the test. If you have completed an undergraduate and postgraduate degree in Canada and are not a Canadian national you will be required to take the test.
- Please note that UKVI limits how long a student may spend in the UK studying at degree level (and above) to a total of 5 years. This may affect your application if you have already studied in the UK. Please promptly notify Student Services if you have any queries in this regard. For further information please visit the UKVI website.
- **Certificate of Comparability** For students who are not nationals of the above exempt countries but hold a Bachelor or Master's degree from one of these countries, you will be required to provide a certificate of comparability from UK NARIC. Please check **www.naric.org.uk** for further information.

Fees

GPISH is a fully funded scholarship programme. Successful applicants receive housing, as well as a living allowance. Programme-related fees and travel costs are also covered.

Students who wish to contribute towards their fees may make an unconditional donation to the IIS via the Aga Khan Foundation offices in their country of residence.

How to Apply

Please ask for an application pack using the online pre-application form on our website. Please make sure the name on your application is the same as the name on your passport. Read the guidance notes before filling in the application form, and include the following:

Your **personal statement**

- A **sample of academic written work**
- **Official transcripts** from all undergraduate and postgraduate study
- A copy of your **degree certificate(s)**
- **IELTS for UKVI (Academic) certificate** (if applicable)
- **Reference letters:** three academic and one character reference.

Deadline: Completed applications, with all relevant documents, must be submitted and received online **by 12 noon (GMT) on Monday 14 January, 2019** or postmarked by this deadline if the application is being sent via post.

Equal Opportunities

The IIS and its partners are firmly committed to equal opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, ethnicity, colour, disability, family responsibility, age, occupation, marital status, or trade union affiliation.

If you have a disability that might have an impact on your studies, please do let us know so we can ensure reasonable adjustments, if needed, can be made. If you have not already disclosed your disability on the application form, please contact Student Services at admissions@iis.ac.uk.

Please see SOAS' Equality and Diversity Policy:

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/admin/overnance/policies/file37349.pdf>.

Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions of the GPISH scholarship can be found on the IIS website.

Complaints

For complaints about the admissions process, please refer to the Complaints policy on the IIS website.

Additional information

For further information on studying and on international student recruitment in the UK, please refer to the following sources:

British Council: www.britishcouncil.org

UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA): www.ukcisa.org.uk

UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI): www.gov.uk

Disclaimer

This prospectus contains information about the GPISH programme that the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) in collaboration with SOAS University of London intend to run for students. The Institute has made reasonable efforts to ensure that the information provided is both helpful and accurate.

In order to ensure quality, the Institute regularly reviews the modules offered and when deemed necessary, may change or withdraw a module or add a new programme.







The Institute of Ismaili Studies