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Our MA in Muslim Cultures is a unique postgraduate degree and I am delighted that you are considering joining us and being part of our community at the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (ISMC) in London, one of the world's most diverse cities.

Embarking on studying for the MA in Muslim Cultures and undertaking a journey which lasts for 18 months is a very significant commitment and a major step. Our academic team are experts in their respective fields, offering a high quality of education and ensuring that your time at ISMC is fruitful, effective and, of course, enjoyable. You will have the chance to develop your skills and knowledge, both personally and professionally.

At ISMC, we work to illuminate historical and contemporary aspects of Muslim societies and to create a platform for fresh thinking about their futures through research, publications, short courses and public events, and through our interdisciplinary master's degree. The MA in Muslim Cultures will allow you to explore new ideas and further develop the necessary intellectual, analytical and leadership skills to be able to make a meaningful and positive contribution to society.

We are also committed to creating a welcoming and productive environment for our students. We have brand new accommodation and dedicated study space, a library and a small and tight-knit student community in central London with excellent informal and formal facilities.

I look forward to welcoming you in person.

Leif Stenberg
Director, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

Welcome

Welcome



The Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations is unique. It's part of an ambitious network with a shared mission to positively impact the world and equip people with the tools they need to address complex challenges. The MA in Muslim Cultures is an integral part of that mission. The students on our programme have demonstrated a passion for using scholarship in ways that make the world a better place.

It is perhaps something of a truism to say that students are the lifeblood of a university, but at ISMC, this is embedded into the very fabric of the organisation. The student-faculty ratios at ISMC allow us to work closely with our students to meaningfully induct them into the world of scholarship. One of the rewards of teaching on our programme is the exciting opportunity to learn from our students as well. Our student population comes from around the world with a bewildering range of background experiences and we are able to harness this wealth of diversity into our programme for the benefit of all.

Whether you have ambitions to pursue further research studies in academic environments or apply your graduate skills to tackling the world's most pressing problems, AKU-ISMC offers a world-class environment for developing critical intellectual and practical skills. I join the Director in welcoming you to ISMC and look forward to meeting you in person.

Stephen Lyon

Head of Educational Programmes, Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

About the Aga Khan University

Established in 1983, the Aga Khan University (AKU) is a unique hybrid: an institution of academic excellence that is also an agent for social development. The University has campuses and programmes in South Asia, Europe and Africa.

The University operates on the core principles of quality, relevance, impact and access, and prepares its students to lead change in their societies and to thrive in the global economy. Through its rigorous admissions policy and our needs-sensitive financial aid programmes, the University offers the most promising leaders and thinkers of tomorrow the opportunity to serve, and the skills to help communities solve their most pressing challenges.

The Aga Khan University in London is a member of the Knowledge Quarter, which is a partnership of some 90 – and growing – academic, cultural, research, scientific and media organisations. These organisations are actively engaged in the advancement and dissemination of knowledge and are within a one-mile radius of King's Cross. They include the University of London, Google, The Crick Institute and *The Guardian*.

About ISMC

ISMC was founded in 2002, seeking to occupy a vacant space in the discourse on the Muslim world by promoting scholarship that opens new perspectives on Muslim societies. We consider key issues such as tradition and modernity, religion and the state, pluralism and unity, and the nature of community in an era of global connection and change.

Our mandate is to address fundamental challenges of the human condition as they are expressed across the diverse societies of the Muslim world and its diasporas.

London offers the ideal location for the Institute, with its international flavour; excellent cultural scene, both historic and contemporary; thriving arts and academic communities; and as a city in which freedom of thought and expression are encouraged.

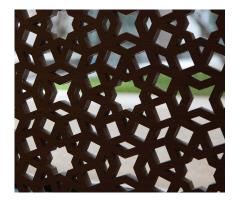
Our Goals

- To study systems of moral and ethical thought, structures of governance and public life, and artistic and creative expressions in all forms.
- To create opportunities for interaction among academics and other professionals so as to deepen understanding of pressing issues of public life affecting Muslim societies.



10 reasons to Choose ISMC

A unique three semester degree during which you will be given an opportunity to learn a language and gain a deep understanding of Muslim cultures.





Exclusive accommodation within a two-minute walk from campus and central London.

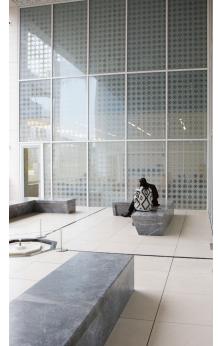


Explore architecture, literature, religion, history, art, politics, law and more in Muslim contexts with our specialist academics.

Study in the purposebuilt Aga Khan Centre incorporporating a collection of Islamic gardens, courtyards and terraces.



Spend time in one of the world's most diverse cities. See the sights and indulge in London's many cultural experiences and insights.







The Aga Khan Library is a dedicated space over two floors, opening out onto the Terrace of Learning.

The option to spend a month abroad on a language immersion course in an Arabic or Persian-speaking country. Enjoy a vibrant social life, with organised trips in the UK and local activities.



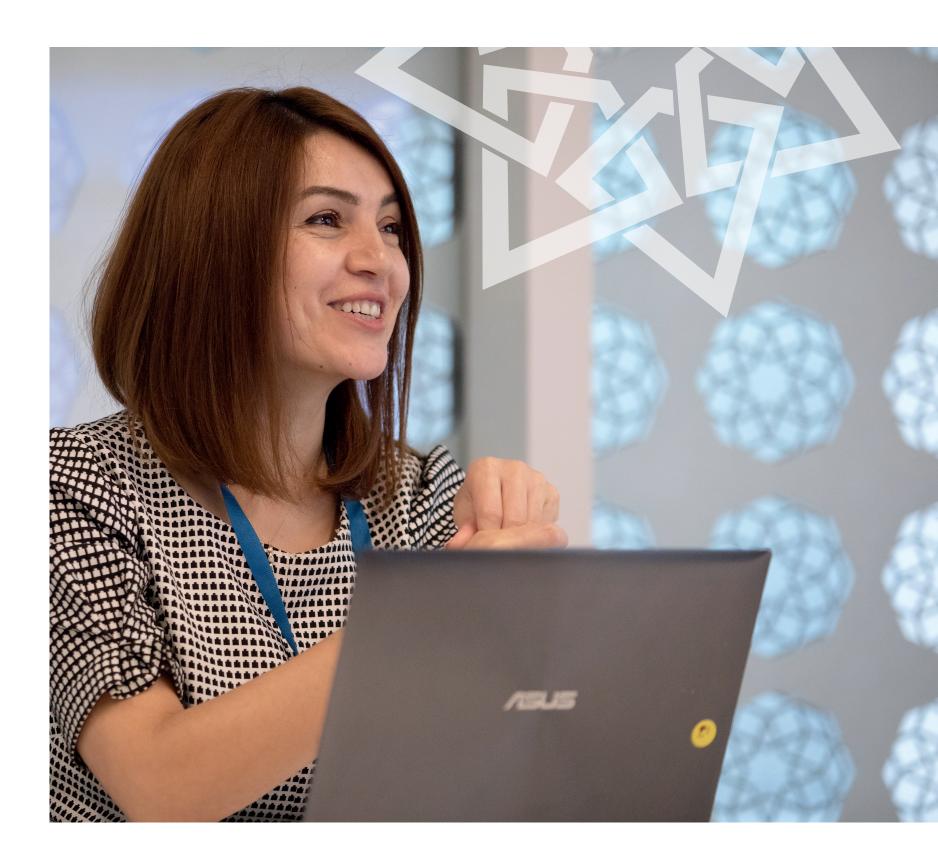


Attend the many events organised by ISMC as well as surrounding universities including SOAS, Birkbeck and UCL.



Follow in the footsteps of our alumni into PhD study or career opportunities around the world.





The three semester degree programme at ISMC provides you with expert insight and deep understanding of Muslim cultures and civilisations, both in the historical and contemporary worlds. Our programme gives you the skills to engage critically, in original and creative ways, with the challenges faced by Muslim societies.

To help ensure that you are fulfilling the objectives of this course, our teaching is student-centred and our academics, who are leaders in their fields, seek to enhance your learning through a multi-faceted approach that applies a framework of world cultures, humanities and social sciences to the study of Muslim contexts.

The MA programme offers a unique curriculum that allowed me to gain insights on fundamental complexities that Muslims faced then and now. J.

Muhammad, former student

Study

Teaching and Learning

At ISMC, you will cover an extensive curriculum ensuring that you leave us with an excellent knowledge of Muslim cultures and civilisations. Our faculty are engaged in world-leading research and you will have the opportunity to benefit from their extensive knowledge of their subjects. Within the disciplines of social sciences and humanities, you will be introduced to general theories and concepts. You will also study a number of subjects including development studies, economics, political science, art, architecture, history, literature, comparative religion and law within Muslim contexts.

Subjects covered include research methodology, development challenges in a Muslim context as well as law and governance. Our faculty take advantage of the enormous range of opportunities on offer in London to stretch and challenge our students, and you are strongly encouraged to attend lectures, discussions and performances which will enhance your learning and understanding.

ISMC also attracts speakers from around the world, including international academics, authors, journalists and other experts, and students are encouraged to attend evening and lunchtime lectures and seminars organised by the Institute.

Structure

The MA in Muslim Cultures is a three semester programme that offers a variety of elements: core and elective courses; as well as fieldwork opportunities that might take place in collaboration with our Aga Khan Development Network, which can contribute to your dissertation.

Our courses are grouped into five components:

1. Introduction to the Humanities and Social Sciences

These courses address historiography, epistemology, anthropology, sociology, cultural studies and philosophy of language. You will also use tools of the social sciences and humanities to study Muslim cultures, particularly on issues relevant to past and present Muslim cultures, in an independent, critical and creative manner.

2. Muslim Heritages as Part of World Cultures

Muslim heritages are an integral part of world cultures and their histories. You will study selected aspects of world cultures that are intrinsically related to the formation of Muslim religious thought and practices, Muslim scholarship and Muslim political discourses and experiences.

3. Contemporary Muslim Contexts

The selection of courses aims to encourage students to explore the domains of social, cultural, political and economic studies.

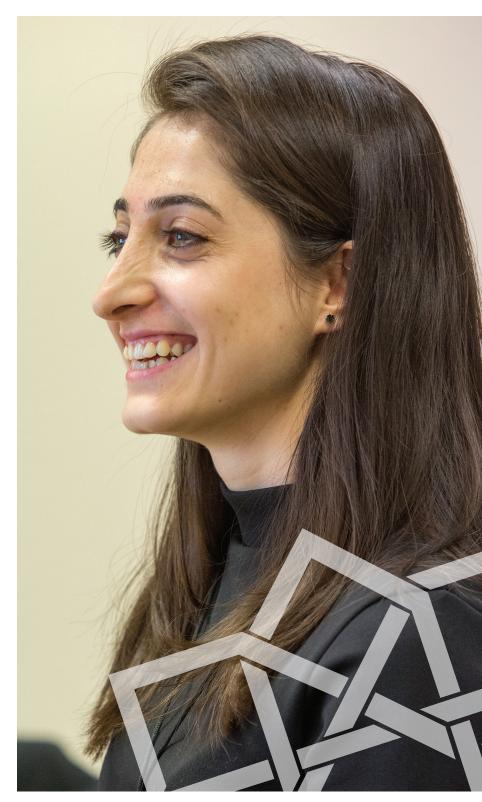
MA in Muslim Cultures

4. Methodologies

Methodology courses provide you with important research skills in order that you may understand and learn methods of analysing texts, written or otherwise (i.e. painting, jewellery, artefacts, architecture, music, etc.), producing and interpreting empirical data as well as evaluating and choosing between alternative academic approaches.

5. Languages

Learning a language will enable you to familiarise yourself with foundational sources such as the Qur'an, collections of hadith and works on exegesis, theology, law, philosophy and science.



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	Semester 1	Semester 2	Semester 3	
Core courses	 • Muslim Societies in a Changing World • Research Methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities I • Arabic or Persian 	 Research Methods in the Social Sciences and Humanities II Arabic or Persian 	• Thesis	

MA in Muelim Cultures

Electives

- Religion, Law and Society in Muslim Contexts
- Historiography of the Nation
- Traditions and Change in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Paths in Sufism Past and Present
- Muslims in Minority Contexts
- Sacred Across Cultures
- Religion, State and Politics in the Middle East
- Islam and Creativity
- · Art and Architecture in Muslim Cultures

Students take a total of 24 credits of coursework + 6 credits of thesis.

Semester 1: 9 credits core courses + 3 credits from the elective course list

Semester 2: 6 credits core courses + 6 credits from the elective course list

Coursework is composed of 15 core credits + 9 elective credits + 6 credits of thesis.

Language Programme

During the summer after completion of the first two semesters, you have the option to travel to a country relevant to your language studies to undertake a three to four-week intensive language course and complete a language-based assignment. This feature of our MA in Muslim Cultures exposes you to cultures, communities and ways of life different from those to which you are accustomed. This option provides the opportunity to experience language in its social and lived dimensions while furthering your understanding of diversity and pluralism.

Thesis and Fieldwork

In the third semester, you will prepare a 20,000 word thesis on a theme of your choice. The thesis is worth 6 credits and you must achieve a pass mark in order to graduate.

You may undertake optional field project in a location relevant to your subject matter.

Theses are marked by two internal markers and an external examiner.

You will be assigned a thesis supervisor. Faculty support and input is always available to develop ideas for the research you are conducting.

Assessment

In general, assessment is based on presentations, written assignments and examinations, which you undertake during the first two semesters. Passing the thesis is a prerequisite for graduation from the MA programme. You will also be provided with feedback on your progress by your faculty advisor.

IT Facilities

The Aga Khan Centre is equipped with excellent IT facilities. All teaching rooms have interactive whiteboards and a number of our classrooms have projectors and drop screens.



Meet the Faculty



Sevgi Adak Assistant Professor

Stephen Lyon

conflict; kinship.

Gianluca Parolin

Specialising in women and gender in modern Turkey; women's history and contemporary feminisms in the Middle East; Turkish politics; history of modern Turkey; politics of secularism in Turkey; state—society relations in the Middle East.



Walid Ghali
Assistant Professor/Head Librarian
Specialising in Islamic manuscripts tradition and codicology; teaching: Introduction to Sufism;
Pre-Islamic Poetry; Quran in the daily Muslim life.



Sarah Bowen Savant
Professor
Specialising in early Islam; the study of religion; historiography; late antique Iran and Iraq; prophetic biography.



Head of Educational Programmes and Professor Specialising in political anthropology; Pakistan and Pakistani Diaspora; computational methods;



Jonas Otterbeck
Professor
Specialising in Islamic Studies; Egypt; music; migration; youth culture.



Associate Professor Specialising in comparative law; regional governance and constitutional arrangements; citizenship in the Arab world, maslahah and maqasid al-shari'ah, fiqh al-aqalliyyat.



Stéphane PradinesProfessor

Specialising in Islamic art and archaeology; Swahili coast and archaeology in Sub-Saharan Africa; Egypt and urban archaeology in Cairo; Muslim fortifications.



Leif StenbergDirector and Professor

Specialising in Islam and modern science; various aspects of contemporary Sufism; Muslims in Europe; Islamic movements; questions concerning theory and method in the study of Islam.



Jeff Tan Associate Professor

Specialising in development studies; Malaysian political economy; privatisation, entrepreneurship and innovation; late industrialisation; developmental state theories; governance and corruption.



Farouk Topan Associate Professor

Specialising in Swahili literature; Islam in African literature; African poetry; identity in East Africa.



Philip Wood
Associate Professor

Specialising in Christian Orient; late antiquity; Syriac; hagiography and historiography; ethnogenesis and communalism; history of the caliphate; diaspora; migration; religious minorities in modern Syria and Iraq.

Language Teachers

Abdul Jalil Muhammad Luay Mohammed Wael Odeh Maryam Rezaee

Support

While studying with us you can access support and help if you need it. We know that moving into a new environment and being away from home can be a challenge and ISMC offers a wide range of support and guidance designed to help you settle in.

If you need more professional guidance, then you can speak to your assigned faculty advisor who will give you support and offer advice on your academic and research matters. ISMC students are also entitled to access to the Westminster Counselling Service.

Your Voice Matters

The Student Council

The Council meets every semester and is co-chaired by the Head of Educational Programmes and an elected student representative

We aim to give you the best experience when studying at ISMC and want you to acquire the skills needed to further your career or studies. ISMC students' voices and opinions matter to us. As an ISMC student you will have the chance to share your views through:

- Termly meetings with the director
- Electing two student representatives to attend monthly faculty meetings on your behalf or you might be the representative
- · Online surveys issued at the end of each course

These provide opportunities for you to feed into the future direction of the programme, tell us what works and what could be improved and help to achieve the best quality of education and academic excellence we want all our students to have.



Aga Khan Library London

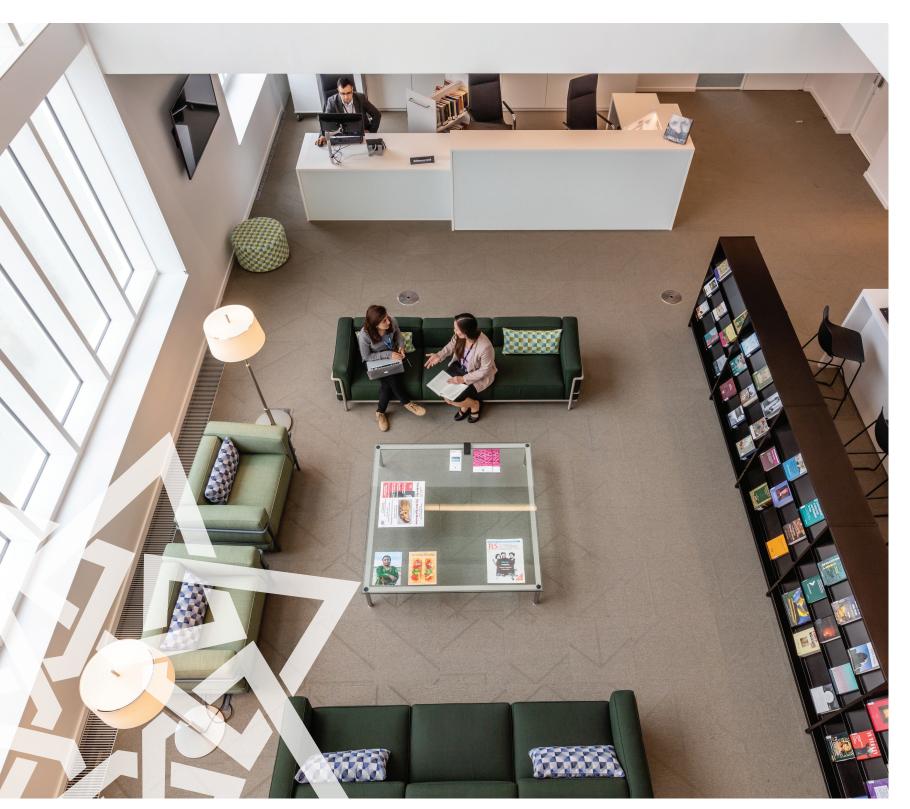
The Aga Khan Library occupies state-of-the-art facilities that offer a conducive research space supported by an extensive collection of modern works on a wide range of topics of interest to the Institute, in a remarkable variety of Eastern and European languages.

The library offers a core collection in Islamic studies and Muslim civilisations comprising almost 52,000 volumes. In addition, the library provides access to some 39,000 individual titles in electronic format including monographs, academic journals, conference proceedings, reports and more.

The Library is also the proud custodian of several collections of unique materials, precious manuscripts, and rare books, many of them donated by acclaimed scholars in the field of Islamic Studies.

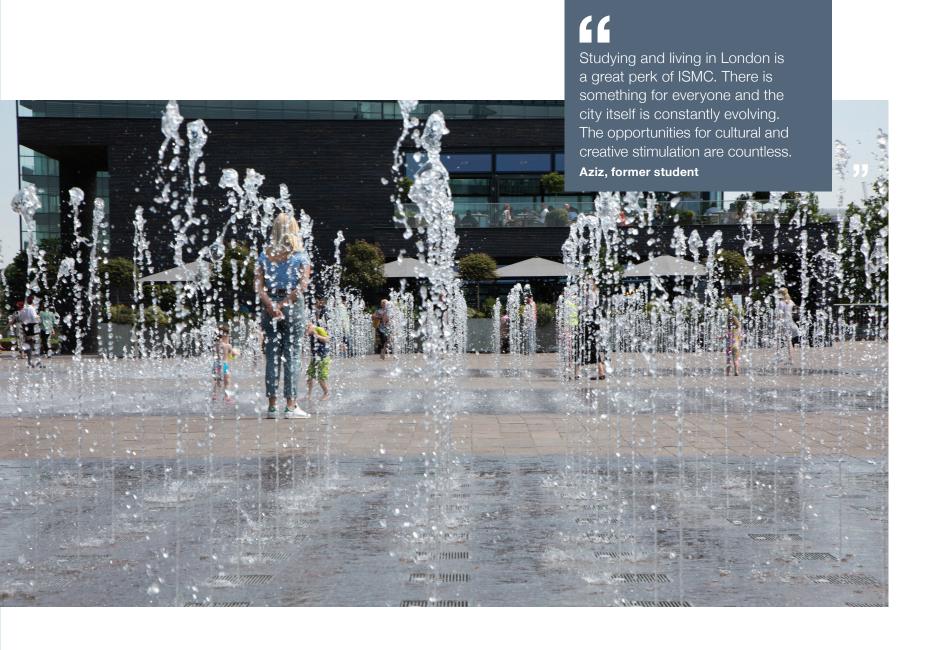
In its effort to facilitate the study of contemporary Muslim cultures, the Library has collected hundreds of film and music recordings that illustrate both the cultural traditions and innovations of Muslim societies around the world. This audio-visual collection covesr a wide range of geographical locations and genres and includes works by acclaimed creators as well as works by exciting newcomers.





At the start of your first academic year at ISMC, you will participate in an orientation programme that aims to help you adjust to living in London and provide you with all the information and guidance you need. During this week, you will become familiar with the Institute and meet faculty, staff and students. You will also find out more about academic matters and the experience of living in London. In addition, you will also be introduced to London's many academic resources and some of its numerous cultural attractions. The Institute also organises social activities and tours, including excursions to places of historical interest. Recent visits have included Stonehenge, Canterbury and Bath.

Student Life



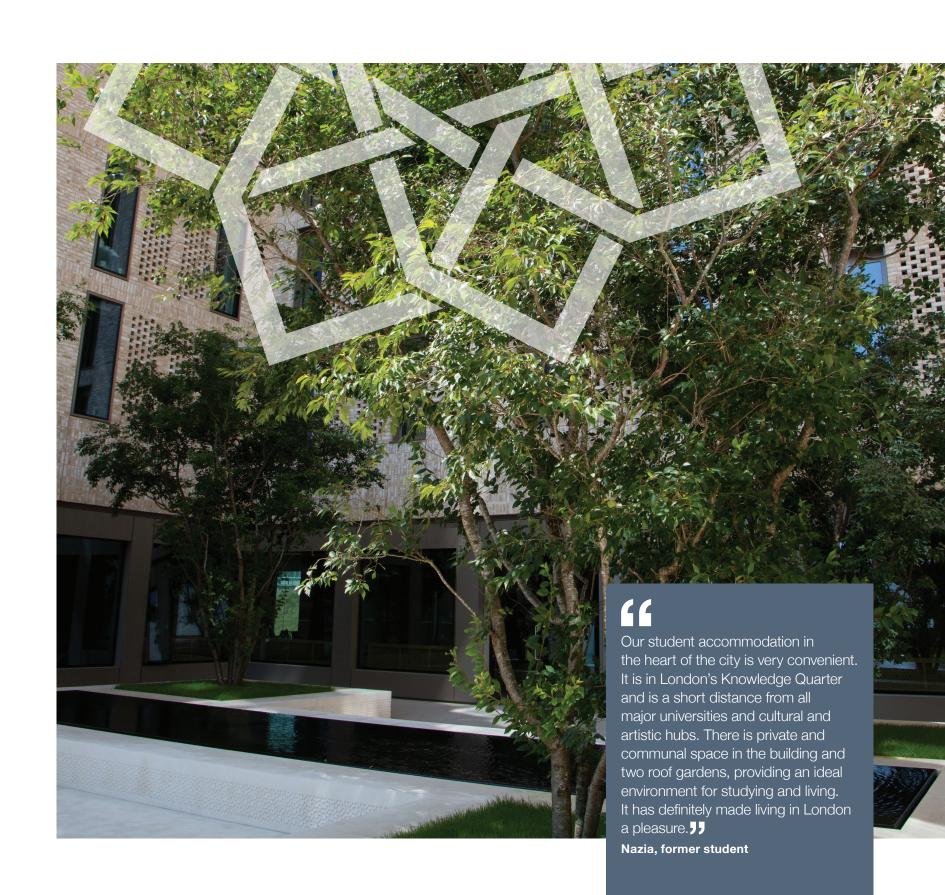
London

ISMC is located in the heart of London. This means that you are able to enjoy and experience the various cultural attractions this big city offers. Our campus is surrounded by libraries, universities, theatres, museums, restaurants, shops, parks and much more. It is also a few minutes away from the British Library and the British Museum. Your accommodation is in walking distance of the University and many educational opportunities and entertainments, minimising your travel costs.

Our Events Programme

ISMC hosts a number of events throughout the year that are open to the public, academics, professionals and our students and alumni. Most events are streamed using online platforms so that people can watch from around the world, if they can't make it to London.

Recent events have included a three-day conference on Muslim Cultures in the Indian Ocean, a series on Contemporary Architecture in the Muslim World and lectures and seminars on subjects including The Politics of the Judiciary and the Legal System in Contemporary Iran and Erratic Governance and its Consequences for the Citizen-State Relationship led by Rami Khouri.



Accommodation

Our student residence in the heart of King's Cross is an 11-storey building designed by award-winning London-based Stanton Williams architects. Within the building you will find stylish communal spaces, which include a gym, reading room, meeting and A/V room and a lounge area. These spaces allow for regular art classes, film nights and other activities put on for residents to give them the opportunity to meet other students and relax.

In addition, a courtyard and roof terrace, inspired by the gardens of the Maghreb (Morocco) and Andalucía (Spain) add to the design of the building and the space available to residents. The courtyard and terrace were designed by Vladimir Djurovic Landscape Architects, who are renowned for creating timeless poetic landscapes that put nature centre stage.

The accommodation's gardens are symbolic. They are a reflection of the richness and diversity of students who come from around the world, speak multiple languages and have different cultures, and of the cosmopolitan city of London; a place that allows you to experience a world-class culture, where both tradition and modernity meet.

Our apartments have light and spacious rooms, equipped with a double bed, large desk, upholstered desk chair and lounge chair. Each comes with an en-suite shower room and plenty of storage space.

Every flat consists of six or seven bedrooms and a shared kitchen, dining and living space. Many flats also have a balcony off the shared space. Wi-Fi and satellite TV are also available.





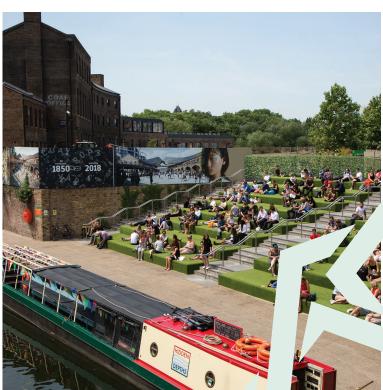


Around ISMC

Surrounding your accommodation and the academic building are the green spaces, shops, restaurants and bars of King's Cross, offering café society, cinemas, fitness facilities and events for you to enjoy.

In addition to access to our library, which is rich in rare and important resources, you are eligible to apply for membership of the British Library. Access to online materials and books is another advantage to enhance your studies and enrich your knowledge.

ISMC offers a range of further activities and socials including a cultural trip in the second year, days out to explore parts of the UK beyond London, and more local events. Our students often get to know each other well and remain friends long after completing their degree.





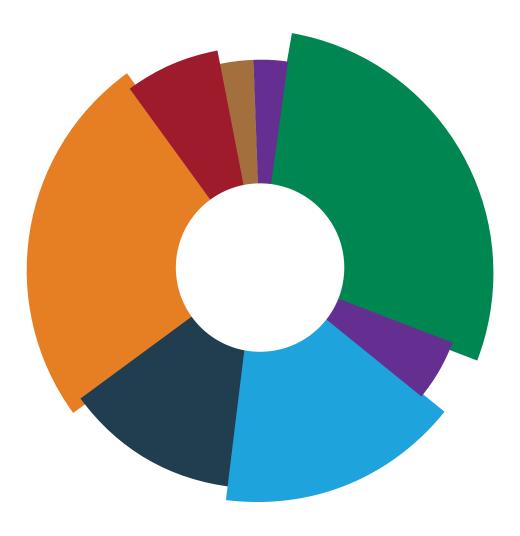
Our graduates are a diverse group and are now following careers in journalism, teaching and business consultancy, working for organisations including the Red Cross, the BBC, Muslim Aid and the World Bank. In addition, a number of ISMC alumni now work for the Aga Khan Development Network, contributing to its development aims in projects around the world.

Some graduates choose to pursue further studies and have entered establishments such as the University of Oxford, the University of Victoria and Princeton University. Many go on to pursue an academic career, teaching in universities and continuing their own research into specific areas of expertise.

ISMC's MA programme is a truly global qualification, which opens doors to many different career paths. Our alumni work and study around the world, including Tunisia, Kuwait, Canada, Pakistan and the UK. ISMC's MA programme opens many doors to different professions and countries, it is a truly global degree.

After ISMC

ISMC Alumni Career Pathways



28% PhD/Further Studies
25% Private Organisations
16% Aga Khan Development Network
13% Government
7% Entrepreneur/Self-Employed
5% NGO
3% No Data
3% Other

"

As an architect, ISMC was an adventure that exposed me to an ocean of academic knowledge. My current work at AKF Syria would not have been possible without the knowledge and skills I have acquired while studying at ISMC. Living and working in Syria during the current crisis have enabled me to invest the multi-disciplinary study provided at ISMC to explore new paths and possibilities in a time of change, challenge and opportunity.

Shirin, former student

In order to be considered for admission to our MA programme, you are required to have the following:

- 1 An undergraduate degree (equivalent to a UK bachelor's degree), with an award equivalent to an upper second class honours from a university accredited or recognised by UK NARIC, preferably in the humanities or social sciences.
- 2 Evidence of English language proficiency.

A valid IELTS (Academic) result – overall band score: 6.5 (with a minimum of 5.5 in all four components). Both overall and individual component requirements must be met. Please note that we ONLY accept IELTS results from test centres approved by UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI). For more information, please visit the UKVI website. Please note that without a valid and approved IELTS test result, we will not be able to consider your application. IELTS for UKVI tests can be booked by going to https://ieltsukvisas.britishcouncil.org.

If you are not sure about the equivalency of your qualifications, you are encouraged to contact the Assistant Registrar: ismc.registraroffice@aku.edu ISMC before making an application.

Applying to ISMC

Admission Procedures

1. Application

Applications for admission are welcome throughout the year. However, the admission decision process is as follows:

• Applications received by the 28 February 2019 deadline will receive a decision in May 2019.

To apply for the MA in Muslim Cultures, you must complete the application form online by clicking on the following link **www.aku.edu/apply-online** and providing the following via courier:

- 1. A completed and signed application form.
- 2. An official copy of your undergraduate degree and attested copies of academic transcripts. (If a document is not in English a fully certified translation must be provided. The translation must include details of the translator and confirm that it is an accurate translation of the original. It must be dated and include the original signature of the translator).
- 3. Valid proof of English proficiency:
 - 1. The UK NARIC Statement of Comparability, if your last qualification was awarded in a majority English-speaking country, which can be obtained by going to the UK NARIC website (www.naric.org.uk).

or

 Applicants whose last qualification was not awarded in a majority English-speaking country will be required to give a UKVI Approved IELTS exam. IELTS for UKVI (Academic) tests can be booked by going to https://ieltsukvisas.britishcouncil.org.

NOTE: The test *MUST* be the UKVI-approved IELTS exam. You MUST submit the IELTS results to the Registrar's Office by 30 June 2019.

4. Two references, submitted either directly to the Registrar's Office (via email or courier) or along with the application in a sealed envelope(s) with the referee's signature across the seal. Referees must be familiar with your academic and/or professional work to date. At least one referee should be familiar with your academic work. If your referees would like to submit the reference letter via email, please download the reference form from our website, fill in your details and request your referees to send it directly to Registrar's Office at ismc.registraroffice@aku.edu

Note: you can send the above documents via email as soon as you have completed your online application but all documents must be received as hard copies and postmarked by 28 February 2019.

2. Selection

Admission to ISMC is based on merit and scholarly aptitude. ISMC seeks to admit students of the highest potential. Students are selected for admission without regard to their age, marital status, race, gender, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, social background or any other distinction. All shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview (candidates living outside the UK will be interviewed via Skype or video conference) and will be asked to undertake a short reading task.

During the interview you will be asked to demonstrate:

- Informed views about contemporary issues in Muslim societies.
- A strong interest in the humanities and social sciences and in the study of Muslim cultures and societies.
- An ability to articulate clearly and analyse complex intellectual concepts.

You are also assessed through several other criteria including scholastic achievement, work experience (if applicable), academic interests, referees and extra-curricular activities.

The decision of the University is final.

3. Further Information

For further information regarding the MA in Muslim Cultures please contact the Registrar's Office: **ismc.registraroffice@aku.edu**. The Registrar's Office deals with all matters related to admissions, enrolment, student records, advisory services, visas, counselling, extra-curricular activities, health, and special needs (depending on our resources, we do our utmost to accommodate).

Tuition Fees

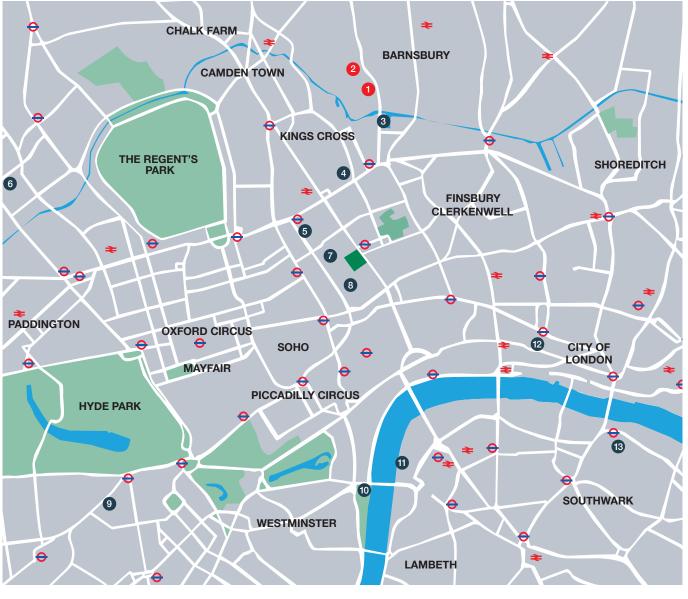
The annual tuition fee for the academic year 2019-2020 is £11,710. Students may pay their fees in four instalments. In cases where a student withdraws from the MA Programme, tuition for the entire semester will be charged.

Financial Assistance

Through our Financial Assistance Programme, the University ensures that no individual is denied entry because of inability to pay tuition, living expenses and other costs.

Assistance will be provided through loans or scholarships to supplement personal resources. This is based upon the evaluation of a student's need from financial data provided. Unless otherwise stated, every student is expected to make some contribution towards fees, accommodation and subsistence.

Fees and Financial Assistance



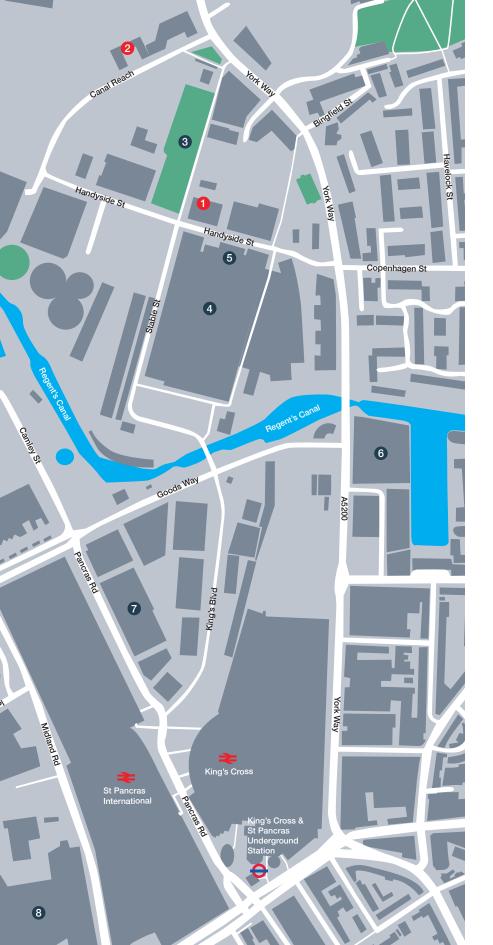
Overview map:

- 1 The Aga Khan University
- 2 Victoria Hall
- 3 The Guardian Media Group
- 4 The British Library
- 5 UC
- 6 Lord's Cricket Ground
- 7 SOAS
- 8 The British Museum
- 9 Harrods
- 10 Big Ben, Westminster
- 11 The London Eye
- 12 St Paul's Cathedral
- 13 The Shard

Local map:

- The Aga Khan University
- 2 Victoria Hall
- 3 Cubitt Park
- 4 Central St Martins
- 5 Platform Theatre
- The Guardian Media Group
- 7 Google UK
- 8 The British Library

Where to find us



Address

10 Handyside Street, London, N1C 4DN United Kingdom

Contact us

Tel: +44 (0)20 7380 3800 Fax: +44 (0)20 7380 3830 Email: ismc@aku.edu

You can find us online:

Website: www.aku.edu/ismc

Aga Khan University Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations:

www.facebook.com/akuismclondon

@AKU_ISMC

If you are interested in receiving emails about Virtual Fairs, key dates in the application process and invitations to events – both virtual and on campus – then sign up to our email list at:

www.aku.edu/ismc/MA

Virtual Fairs

Virtual fairs are an opportunity for you to speak with faculty members, admissions officers, current students and alumni.

We will be holding virtual fairs throughout the year. Details will be listed at **www.aku.edu/ismc/MA** as dates are confirmed and if you sign up to our email list, we will contact you to invite you to register.



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

(International) in the United Kingdom

Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations

www.aku.edu/ismc