



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Admissions Policy

1 Introduction and scope

- 1.1 The present policy sets out the criteria and principles governing the admission of students to the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) on all validated postgraduate programmes.
- 1.2 The Academic Council has the power to admit as a student anyone satisfying the entry criteria specified for each programme. The Academic Council can delegate the power to admit students to Heads of Departments or other bodies as may be considered fit and in the best interest of transparent and fair selection. Programme-specific processes for the admission of students are to be developed and maintained at the departmental level, in compliance with the terms of this policy.

2 Principles

- 2.1 The Institute's admission processes are designed to be fair, transparent and consistent. The admissions policy and related procedures has been developed in accordance with relevant legislation and to meet the expectations of the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access), as well as consumer protection regulation. Transparent, consistent and reliable information on the Institute's programmes and admission practices must be made available to prospective applicants at the time of application on the IIS website or Admissions Portal. This information should include:
 - Programme specifications and outline
 - Module descriptions
 - Entry and selection criteria
 - Terms and conditions
 - Relevant policies

- Expected timescales, key milestones and application deadlines.
- 2.2 The IIS is firmly committed to promoting equal opportunity. The recruitment and selection of students should only ascertain whether the individual meets, or is likely to meet, the requirements of the programme or course as per the approved selection criteria. Staff participating in the selection process should be made aware of this principle and the selection criteria via the relevant department.
- 2.3 **Applications** from students with disabilities are examined on the same academic grounds as all other applicants. Applicants are invited to disclose their disability at the point of application or as soon as possible at any point through the process, to ensure that any special arrangements can be put in place. Applicants can request information and advice around the suitability of the building and the programme delivery mode, and on the potential adjustments that could be made available. Information regarding disability will be kept confidential, subject to the Data Protection Act 2018. Disability-related admissions information will only be shared with relevant staff on a strict need-to-know basis. Applicants can also contact the relevant admission officer to speak about their needs in confidence.
- 2.4 Some postgraduate programmes may have been developed to meet specific needs of the Ismaili community; therefore, in these cases, candidates are recruited from the Ismaili community only. Irrespective, this policy fully applies to the admission processes of such programmes.

3 General requirements

- 3.1 Applicants for postgraduate degrees should normally possess an undergraduate qualification at least equivalent to a Second Class (2:2) honours bachelor award from a UK university. Comparisons with non-UK degrees will normally be made via the UK-ENIC database.
- 3.2 All applicants whose first language is not English must meet the Institute's English language requirements, as detailed in each programme prospectus.
- 3.3 All international students are required to obtain a Student Route Visa before they can study at the IIS. International applicants who are offered a place on a programme will be given a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS). A CAS is a unique reference number which is assigned and used by the UKVI. The CAS number will link to information about the applicant and their course of study. Every student will have a unique CAS number which is linked directly to their information.
- 3.4 Individual programmes may have further entry criteria in addition to the above. Satisfying base entry criteria and requirements does not guarantee the offer of a place of study.

4 Applications

- 4.1 All applications for programmes are made directly to the IIS following the procedures of the relevant department. Applicants should contact the relevant admissions officer in case extenuating circumstances prevent them from using the system: alternative arrangements will be considered only when it is impossible for the applicant to use the online system.
- 4.2 All information provided by applicants is expected to be accurate and complete. The IIS reserves the right to refuse admission or, if already registered, terminate registration if the information provided by an applicant is inaccurate or incomplete. This principle can also be applied retroactively at any point during the programme.
- 4.3 Where there is evidence that an applicant, or an enrolled student, may have provided false, misleading or plagiarised application information, the relevant department will initiate a suitable investigation. The applicant/student will be informed in writing of the alleged breach and asked to provide a statement in explanation or mitigation, corroborated by adequate evidence. Failure to provide a statement will result in the automatic withdrawal of an admission offer or expulsion from the programme. The final decision on withdrawal or expulsion will be made by the Academic Council. Applicants/students can appeal against this decision to the institution validating the programme, following their processes.
- 4.4 The IIS reserves the right not to consider an application if the candidate has previously been withdrawn from the Institute on academic or disciplinary grounds.
- 4.5 Clear evaluation criteria must be employed for the evaluation of applications for each programme of study. The criteria should be developed and approved in advance by the relevant department and will then be used by all assessors to evaluate the qualifications, statement, references, tests, writing samples and any other required materials submitted by applicants. Departments must be able to demonstrate that said criteria are applied in a consistent and fair manner.
- 4.6 Application timescales deadlines are determined by the relevant departments, and published in the relevant programme prospectus.
- 4.7 Applicants for deferred entry:
- The Institute does not normally consider applications for deferred entry (i.e. applications for starting a programme at a later date).
 - Entry following a successful application may be deferred only in exceptional circumstances. The applicants will need to demonstrate and document why it has become impossible for them to start the intended year.
- 4.8 Applicants transferring from other Higher Education Institutions:

- As per the Student Transfer Policy, the IIS does not normally permit mid-stream transfer including the direct entry of students for admission partway through its programmes from external students or accept direct entrants from one of its own programmes to another IIS programme. Please see the IIS' Student Transfer Policy for further details.
- The IIS may, at its sole discretion, permit students to enter a programme at an advanced stage on the basis of prior learning where a student has already completed certified learning elsewhere. Please see the IIS' Recognition of Prior Learning Policy for details.

5 Interviews

- 5.1 In case interviews are part of the application process this must clearly be specified in the pre-application materials accessible to all applicants (typically the programme prospectus). In this case all applicants must be interviewed, and no exceptions or alternatives are admissible.
- 5.2 An interview is defined as a meeting with an individual applicant, where the assessors can further explore the suitability of a candidate for the chosen programme of study, and can also be used to allow the applicant the opportunity to further elaborate on their application submission materials
- 5.3 Interviews should be conducted staff who have undergone appropriate training in interviewing and equal opportunity awareness.
- 5.4 Like written application materials, interviews must also be assessed following agreed criteria, and consistently and evenly applied to all applicants. Interviewers should take legible notes during the process, to be recorded according to pertinent departmental procedures. Under the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), interview notes must be made available to applicants who request them.

6 Application Decision

- 6.1 The IIS will endeavour to make sure that all applicants receive a decision by the stated deadline. Successful applicants will receive a formal offer letter, while unsuccessful applicants will receive a rejection notice. Detailed feedback will normally not be provided for unsuccessful applications.
- 6.2 By accepting an offer of admission, the applicant agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the IIS.
- 6.3 An offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn in light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection the Institute also

reserves the right to correct errors that may have been made in the communication of decisions and offers.

- 6.4 The IIS reserves the right to withdraw a candidate, at any point during or after the application process, who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place according to individual circumstances. This will also apply to applicants who are found to have been aggressive or abusive to the IIS' staff or other stakeholders, including partners or fellow students during the application process.

7 Appeals

- 7.1 Decisions on applications are final, and there is no right of appeal against them.
- 7.2 A complaint against any decision will be considered only if there is substantive evidence of an irregularity or clerical errors in processing the application in question. In such cases, the IIS will ensure that all complaints are dealt with fairly, promptly and consistently. If a complaint is upheld, the IIS will take appropriate action. If a complaint is not upheld, the reasons for the decision will be communicated clearly to the applicant. Please refer to the full Student Complaints Policy on the IIS website.

8 Admissions records

- 8.1 The IIS will keep admissions documentation for all students who enroll/register at the Institute for the duration of their studies and for six years after that.
- 8.2 Applicants are requested not to send original documents in advance of their arrival at the Institute as we cannot guarantee the safe receipt via the postal system. It must be however noted that international students will require the original documentation for the visa application process.
- 8.3 As part of the Institute's Student Route Visa, the Institute of Ismaili Studies is required to view and maintain copies of all international students' current passport and visa details (valid for study at the IIS) along with original qualification documents (including certified translations if these are not in English) on the basis of which admission was granted to the Institute (these will be listed on each CAS). The IIS undertakes these checks as part of the registration process upon arrival and all documentation must be provided even when it has been sent to the IIS previously. The IIS will not permit an international student to enroll/register at the Institute without undertaking this process. In addition to the documentation required as part of our UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor License responsibilities, we will also file any other documentation sent to us in support of an application.
- 8.4 As part of the Admissions process, if an applicant is not successful in gaining a place at the Institute, we will keep their documentation for a minimum of six months. Within

six-to-twelve months of receiving an unsuccessful decision all documentation in relation to unsuccessful applications will be confidentially destroyed/deleted.

- 8.5 If an applicant is offered a place at the Institute and declines, withdraws or fails to enroll, all documentation will be held for a minimum of six months. All documentation will be confidentially destroyed/deleted within twelve months of the applicant declining, withdrawing in the event of non-enrolment. Please see Retention Policy on the IIS website.

9 Document Control

Version	Role / Activity	Person(s) responsible	Date
Version 1	Document Owner	QA&E unit	Aug 2020
	Author	Head of QA&E	Aug 2020
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