

SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

PROSPECTUS 2022



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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Welcome



Message from the Director of the IIS

The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) was established in 1977 with the aim of promoting scholarship and learning on Muslim societies and cultures, historical as well as contemporary, and a better understanding of its 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).

Launched in 2007, STEP is a pioneering programme for training teachers who will teach the interdisciplinary Secondary Curriculum (also developed by the IIS) to young Ismaili students globally. The programme is delivered in close collaboration with IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society and SOAS University of London, and

culminates in two awards: a Master's degree, awarded by SOAS, and a Postgraduate Diploma, awarded by UCL. This collaboration is designed to address the training of teachers within a framework that links their Muslim heritage to intellectual methods and best teaching practices available in current academic environments.

Students will thus have the opportunity to cultivate their knowledge skills in order to deliver the best classroom experience to their pupils, and to pursue a rewarding and varied career in the field of religious education. I am sure that your time with the programme will represent an exciting experience, and I look forward to welcoming you in London.

Dr Farhad Daftary
Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies



Message from the Director of IOE, UCL's Faculty of Education and Society



IOE is UCL's Faculty of Education and Society. Working across education, culture, psychology and social science, we create lasting and evolving change in a real-world context. We do this through world-leading education, research and enterprise, and have been ranked number one for education worldwide every year since 2014 in the QS World University Rankings.

Our collaboration with the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) has resulted in more than 20 years of successful joint provision of teacher development programmes. It builds on our previous work with other agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, particularly the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan Foundation. The relationship between us is extensive, longstanding and productive. Our institutions bring together complementary experience and expertise as well as a shared commitment to rigorous scholarship.

IOE is delighted to be able to continue this important collaboration on the IIS Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP). On this dual award programme, STEP students take the Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Teaching and

Reflective Practice at IOE. The PGDip provides a coherent teacher education programme with a teaching practice element. The aim is to support participants on their journey in becoming confident and highly effective classroom practitioners, and, just as importantly, to provide the skills and tools for participants to be able to take responsibility for their personal learning and ongoing professional development beyond the PGDip itself. I look forward to welcoming you to IOE and hope that you will have a great experience studying with us.

Professor Li Wei,
PhD, FBA, MAE, FAcSS, FRSA
Director & Dean, IOE,
UCL's Faculty of Education and Society



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 of and expertise in 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 long relationship with the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) has led to a formal validation partnership.

SOAS has similar aims. We both want to inspire our students to influence and shape the world in which we live. The STEP programme is of the highest standard and we are pleased to be able to award a SOAS degree to those who complete it successfully.

Professor Adam Habib
Director, SOAS University of London

Secondary Teacher Education Programme

Training and developing exceptional individuals to become teachers and mentors that inspire future generations wherever they are in the world.

STEP aims to produce professional secondary level teachers. It combines strong academic preparation with practice-based teacher training, in an intimate and welcoming learning environment. STEP is a fully funded scholarship programme, which covers the cost of tuition fees, accommodation and includes a living allowance.

Programme Structure and Key Outcomes

STEP caters directly for students wishing to embark upon a career in teaching within the wider Aga Khan network of institutions, with a particular focus on teaching at the Ismaili Religious Education Centres (RECs) at the secondary level worldwide.



Students are trained to teach humanities and religious studies with a particular emphasis on the IIS' Secondary Curriculum which explores the humanistic, civilisational and normative dimensions of religious education. STEP extends over two academic years and culminates in two postgraduate awards (Level 7):

- A **Master of Arts (MA) in Muslim Societies and Civilisations**, from SOAS University of London, and
- A **Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Teaching and Reflective Practice**, from UCL.

Tailor-made for STEP, the MA and the PGDip form a bespoke programme specifically designed with the needs of STEP students, the Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards (ITREBs) who employ them, and the communities they serve. The programme equips students with the tools and knowledge to take responsibility for their personal learning and continuous professional development beyond STEP. The PGDip provides an innovative teacher education programme including teaching practice. The MA is designed to provide in-depth study of Islam and Muslim societies and civilisations to enable STEP

graduates to teach the Institute's Secondary Curriculum with competence and confidence, and in a manner which uses pedagogical approaches appropriate to the contexts.

Through the Programme, students will develop:

- reflective and critical stances, and creativity and independence of thought in the application of knowledge;
- sound knowledge of subject matter relevant to the IIS' Secondary Curriculum;
- a holistic understanding of educational practice and effective classroom skills informed through field-based work and practice;
- a critical understanding of curriculum implementation, evaluation, and assessment, particularly in relation to the IIS' Secondary Curriculum.

As students develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of subject knowledge and classroom-based practice, they will be evaluated using a variety of assessment tools, including written and oral examinations, presentations and coursework.



Should you apply for STEP?

If you are new to teaching

STEP will build on teaching-related experiences of your academic and professional careers. STEP will offer you an in-depth knowledge of the subjects you will be required to teach, as well as with the necessary skills to teach them effectively. Working closely with experienced faculty members from the IIS and the IOE, and classmates who bring practical teaching experience from varied global contexts, can be highly stimulating and supportive.

If you are an experienced teacher

As an experienced teacher, STEP will provide you with a unique and exciting pathway to further your learning in the field of education. In addition to the practice-oriented approach of the PGDip, you will become familiar with principles of learning outside of the classroom. This will facilitate progression towards leadership-focused roles later in your career. You will have the opportunity to re-engage with issues that help improve your knowledge of student learning processes, whilst contributing to the overall development and revitalisation of religious education and school systems. The MA complements the PGDip focus by offering you opportunities to study and engage in discussions on the historical and contemporary aspects of Islam and the Ismaili tariqah (path), by participating in lectures and seminars on modules that draw upon the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences.

Employability and Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

STEP is aimed at practising and prospective teachers wishing to embark on a career in teaching within the wider Aga Khan network of institutions, with a particular focus on teaching the IIS' Secondary Curriculum at Ismaili Religious Education Centres. Following completion of the academic programme in London, students are contracted for a minimum of three years to serve as professional teachers with the Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards (ITREB), in the students' countries of origin, unless agreed otherwise. As all STEP students receive their employment contract before they start their studies at the IIS, they can focus on preparing themselves for a successful transition into a secure professional environment upon completion of the programme, without the need of worrying about their employment.

Student employability is supported by the Institute beyond the time students spend in London. A detailed multi-pronged approach to Continued Professional Development (CPD) informs the ongoing needs of STEP teachers, supporting them in their ongoing growth and development, and includes:

- Annual CPD workshops within country contexts
- Professional Learning Communities
- Access to online and physical resources
- Funding for research

- Conferences and related activities
- Mentorship training programmes
- Secondment to other countries
- Networking and professional activities in their own or other contexts.

As part of their ongoing professional development, STEP teachers are supported to:

- follow a career in education leadership
- specialise in specific education-related areas such as mentoring, counselling or education research
- work as teacher trainers
- work in the further development of the programme at the IIS or its sister organisations, such as the Aga Khan Academy or schools run by the Aga Khan Education Services
- conduct research in education or related fields.

Progression opportunities

For those interested in deepening their studies and contributing intellectually to the academic world in general, and to the academic advancement of the IIS and the Ismaili community in particular, the IIS offers a limited number of scholarships to pursue research at a doctoral level. Great attention is given to research areas that are traditionally considered part of Islamic Studies. Among these, the most relevant to the Institute's mandate are Education, Ismaili Studies, the wider Shi'i studies, Qur'anic Studies and Islamic Law. In addition, 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). STEP teachers are eligible to apply for the doctoral scholarship once they have completed their initial three-year employment contract with ITREB.



Reasons to Join STEP

Become a change-agent in the field of education

Engage yourself in the academic study of Muslim societies and civilisations, with a focus on Ismaili communities around the world

Learn with others, teach inspiring classes, become reflective in your work and make positive educational impact

Work with diverse cross-disciplinary faculty

Gain teaching experience in British schools and religious education centres





Study with peers
from all around
the world



Earn an MA and
Postgraduate Diploma
from the international
education leaders
SOAS and UCL



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

Guaranteed
employment with
ITREB upon successful
completion of the
programme

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

Key Features of the Programme – Dual Postgraduate Level Awards

STEP consists of two Masters level degrees, namely the Master of Arts (MA) in Muslim Societies and Civilisations and the Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Teaching and Reflective Practice.

The MA degree is designed and delivered by the IIS and validated by SOAS. It provides deep insights into Ismaili heritage within the broader dimensions of Muslim societies and civilisations. It prepares students to understand and respond analytically to relevant scholarship and research so they can in turn facilitate an understanding and engagement with the philosophical and pedagogical framework of the various secondary curriculum modules published by the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

The PGDip offers a coherent teacher education programme with an integrated and well-supported teaching placement. The PGDip supports participants to become skilled classroom practitioners. Additionally, the PGDip offers skills and tools for participants to be able to take responsibility for their personal learning and continuous professional development beyond the PGDip and well into their teaching career.





“Academic rigor, religious and mainstream teaching, diverse experiences, spiritual upliftment, and the London lifestyle- Each of these holistic components make STEP a transformative experience intellectually, socially, and spiritually. It is an absolute privilege to be a part of this program surrounded by renowned scholars, professors, teachers, and colleagues to help you become the best version of yourself. In places such as Victoria Hall Student Accommodation to the Institute at the Aga Khan Centre, you will be engaging with diverse individuals from around the world, learning about their culture and values. In this process, you will discover yourself and go back with a shift in perspective and tools to understand Muslim Societies through a thoughtful and critical lens. If teaching and learning about your faith is your passion, and you are open to being a life-long learner, then this is the program for you!”

Anusha Hudda (Cohort 13, USA)

MA in Muslim Societies and Civilisations

The MA in Muslim Societies and Civilisations offers students a systematic and critical interdisciplinary examination of Muslim histories, cultures and societies.

It helps develop:

- sound scholarly skills
- capacity for critical analysis
- methodological and research skills
- clear communications skills.

The MA is aimed at:

1. Developing and cultivating a systematic understanding and engagement with subject knowledge pertaining to the interdisciplinary field of Islamic Studies, with particular focus on societal, civilisational and humanistic-informed approaches. As an example of curricular material employing the aforementioned approaches, due attention will be paid to the IIS' Secondary Curriculum.
2. Fostering capacity to conduct an insightful and critical review of relevant literature in all pertinent subject areas, as well as creativity and independence of thought in the application of knowledge.
3. Fostering capacity to critically evaluate current issues and recent developments in the field and arrive at sound critical insights using research methodologies in the study of humanities and social sciences in Muslim contexts.

4. Develop a range of practical and intellectual skills that contribute to:

- a) the critical evaluation of scholarship, literature and research in Islamic studies, religious studies, and the humanities at the postgraduate level
- b) a systematic understanding of how established and emerging techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge
- c) independence of thought in the application of knowledge, and the creative and critical handling, presenting and analysis of data.

5. Acquiring a systematic grasp of established and evolving ways of communication and presentation for this field of study, while producing postgraduate-level coursework that shows criticality, clarity, focus and cogency in organisation and presentation of arguments and conclusions.

Upon successful completion of the MA, students acquire a series of subject-specific knowledge and intellectual skills, as well as subject-based practical and transferable skills.

The MA curriculum is comprised of the following modules:

History of the Islamic World I
30 credits

History of the Islamic World II
30 credits

Literature in Muslim Societies
15 credits

The Qur'an and its Interpretations
15 credits

Faith, Ethics and Practice
15 credits

Developments and Issues in the Contemporary Muslim World
15 credits

Dissertation (10,000 words)
60 credits

Total: 180

For more detail on each of the modules please visit our website:
iis.ac.uk/graduate-studies/step



Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Reflective Practice (PGDip)

The PGDip provides a comprehensive teacher education programme, fostering academic rigour as well as practical understanding and application of theories. The approach integrates academic theory with a well-supported teaching practice.

As a STEP student you will be provided with learning opportunities to develop high academic and professional standards and to apply critical reflection as a basis for personal continuous professional development beyond the course. We will encourage you to learn how to contextualise curricula and transfer theories and practical strategies from one context to another.

Successful graduates should:

1. Understand key aspects of the field of study and practice (e.g. understanding learning theories, teaching strategies and reflective practices, how to lead learners and learning in specific contexts and how to develop classroom materials).
2. Be able to explore, analyse, discuss and reflect critically, systematically and with academic rigour on teaching and learning and teachers' roles within communities of practice and as curriculum developers.
3. Be able to communicate their own learning and development in a range of outputs.



The PGDip curriculum is comprised of the following modules:



For more detail on each of the modules please visit our website: iis.ac.uk/graduate-studies/step

Teaching Practice

Teaching practice is central to the programme's approach to teacher development and provides students with an opportunity to develop their teaching and reflective skills within the classroom.

All students are provided with invaluable support from Professional Learning Community (PLC) facilitators and experienced mentors. A STEP student must complete all the Teaching Practice components before they are recognised as a STEP teacher.

The teaching practice consists of several components:

- Comprehensive, practical, field-based school/teaching experiences in mainstream schools in or near London and at Religious Education Centres (RECs) in the United Kingdom or Europe
- Teaching practice in the Ismaili Religious Education Centres in participants' own home contexts

- Lesson planning tutoring and field mentoring through the platform of PLCs

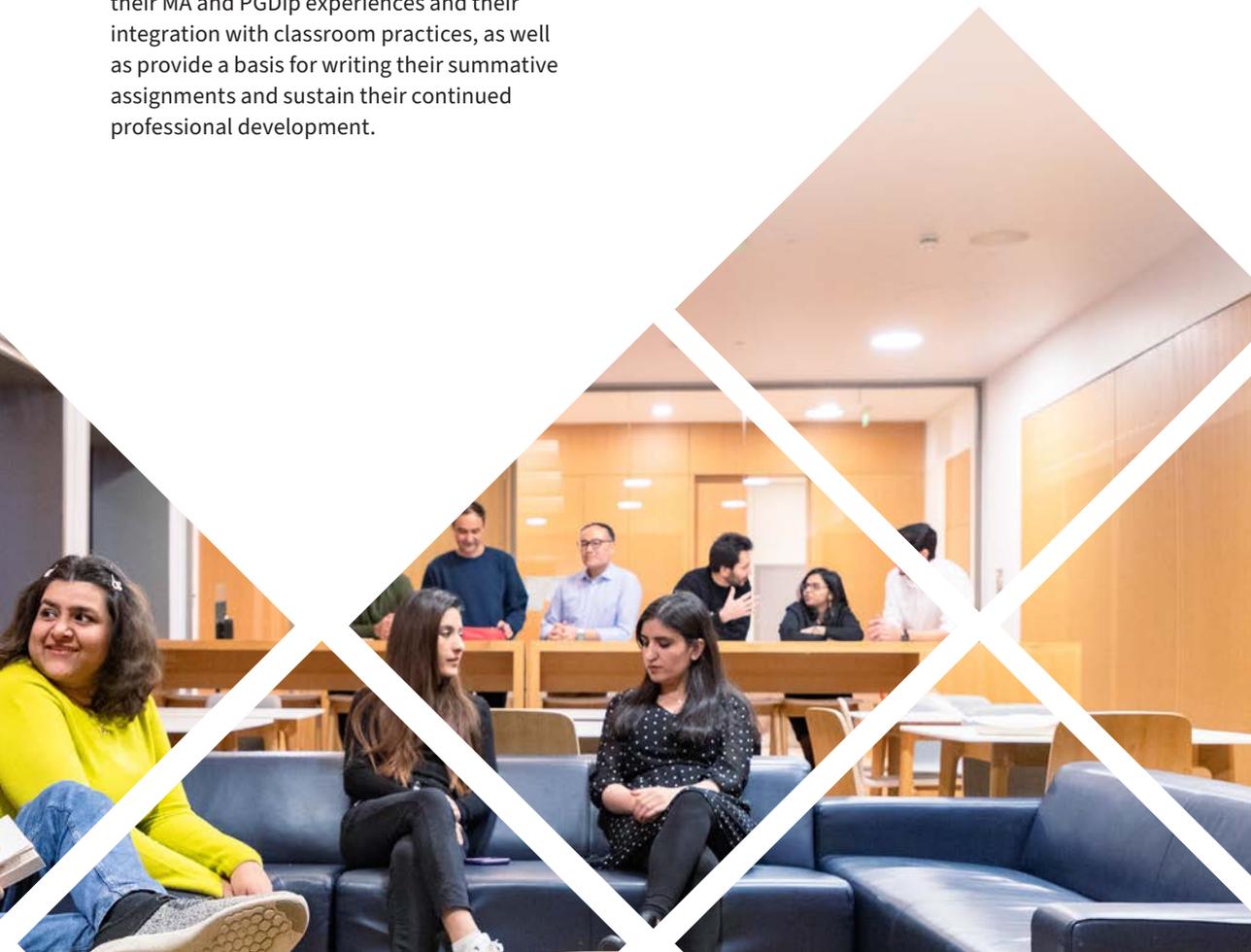
- Portfolio of Work.

Every student is allocated a mainstream school placement in London or the surrounding regions, where they have the opportunity to observe and deliver lessons in a number of mainly humanities-based subject areas. Mainstream school placements are one of the main ways students can gain insight into the reality of working with young people in a classroom setting. They will experience up to 80 days of teaching practice during their time at the IIS.



Students will have access to a school-based mentor who provides professional guidance and support in the development of their teaching practices. Throughout the teaching experience in mainstream schools and RECs, students are supported with formative observations and feedback on their teaching. During the programme, students compile a Portfolio of Work to demonstrate their progress as teachers and reflective practitioners. The Portfolio will be a professional record of their teaching experience at a mainstream school, an Ismaili REC in the UK or Europe, and in their home context.

The Portfolio will allow participants to consolidate their MA and PGDip experiences and their integration with classroom practices, as well as provide a basis for writing their summative assignments and sustain their continued professional development.



Enrichment Sessions at the IIS

There are further elements of STEP, designed and delivered by the IIS, which are not part of the accredited modules for the MA and PGDip. Nevertheless, these enrichments are an important and mandatory element of the programme in terms of preparing participants to return to their home countries and take up their posts as STEP teachers.

Teaching and Learning

A series of Teaching and Learning sessions delivered at the IIS complement and further enhance Teaching and Learning provision, gained through PGDip at UCL IOE, in order to teach in secondary classrooms of RECs.



Research Methods

Research study for the MA is desk-based (or, secondary research), which involves identifying and carrying out a systematic review, evaluation and analysis of existing secondary source material and data sets. It entails a systematic investigation by students of an approved topic of their choice, and is aimed at developing a student's expertise in a specific field as related to the broader aims of the IIS' Secondary Curriculum. Engagement with the design, application and evaluation of the research study will equip students with core proficiencies to support ongoing professional development. Students will be exposed to a range of sessions to help them develop key practical and analytical skills and approaches required for writing a professional-level research paper, including: selecting a topic and formulating a specific research question; identifying and carrying out a systematic review of secondary source material; analysing and synthesising data sets; and presenting results in a written form according to highest academic standards.

Induction into the Field

During the final term of the second year of study, all graduating students will receive sessions aimed to support their transition from full-time students to full-time STEP teachers. Using the experiences of experienced STEP teachers from the field, students will learn about the day-to-day realities of teaching as well as working within the context of an ITREB structure.

The sessions also discuss the wider mandate of ITREB and how that corresponds to the work of the IIS. In doing so, it articulates the mandate and philosophy of STEP and how it seeks to add value to the formation of the Jamat. Students will also be given an insight into the nature of the collaboration between the IIS and ITREB, and how they will continue to be supported by both institutions after their graduation.



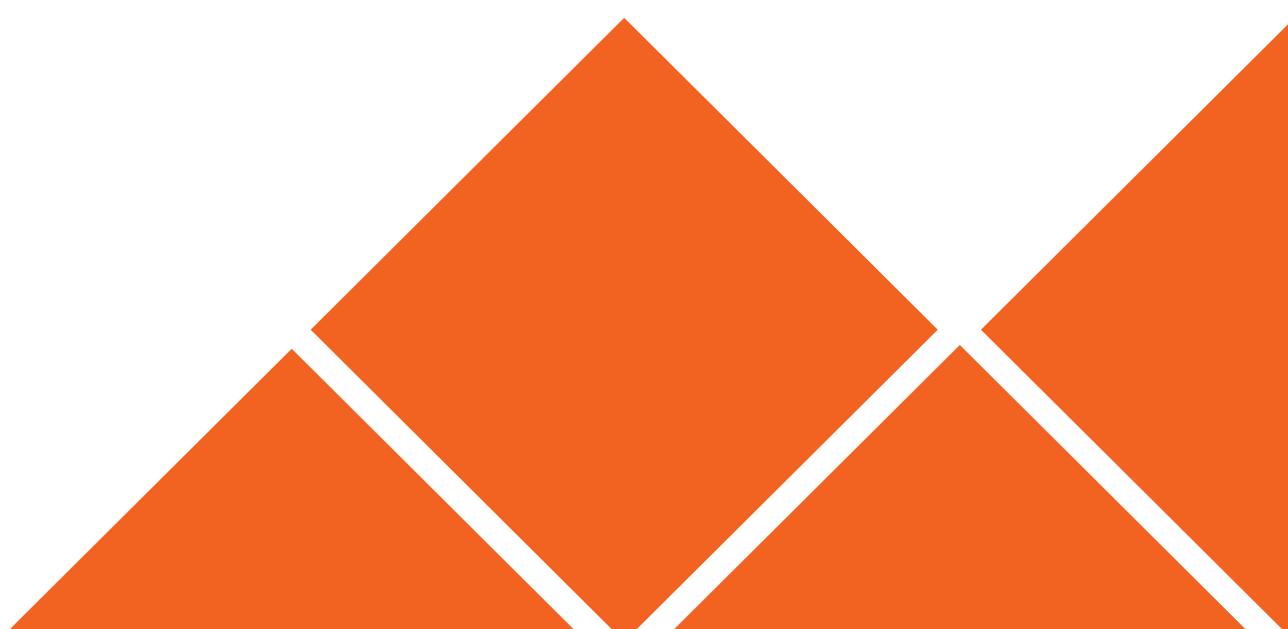
The IIS' Secondary Curriculum

The IIS' Secondary Curriculum adopts an approach to the study of Islam based on humanistic, civilisational and normative perspectives.

It seeks to acquaint secondary students with the diverse and dynamic interplay of Islamic expressions – religious, social, cultural and material – that have become manifest in Muslim societies of the past and present.

The curriculum uses an interdisciplinary study of Muslim societies and civilisations, drawing on a range of subjects including social sciences and the humanities. Religion is not approached as a detached and compartmentalised phenomenon in history and society, but rather in terms of its multifaceted connections with various forms of human experience. The curriculum encourages students to analyse contemporary situations and reflect on the social and ethical challenges of an increasingly plural world.

The curriculum applies pedagogical approaches in harmony with its philosophical framework. It calls for a profile of teachers with a broad set of proficiencies that reflects acquaintance with a range of contexts. These pedagogical approaches invite the active engagement of teachers and students with the content of the curriculum, engendering thought and enquiry on Islam generally and the Ismaili tradition specifically as they have developed historically and in contemporary times.





“STEP is a life-changing programme that helps one become a better version of yourself, personally and academically. The amalgamation of the two Master’s level degrees and the teaching practice in mainstream and BAI make STEP a unique programme. In my opinion, the two years’ experience in this programme transforms one from cocoon to butterfly with all the experiences and knowledge one gathers through teaching, learning and reflection.”

Gulbegim Sohibnazarova (Cohort 13, Tajikistan)

Supporting your Learning Journey

Unique to our programme, and as part of the MA, students will experience an exploratory field trip to Andalusia, Spain, in the first year of the programme.* This trip facilitates a deeper understanding of curricula content and the collection of relevant resources to teach it.

The trip provides a holistic understanding of some of the historical content students will eventually bring to life in the classrooms.

Visits during this trip usually include: the Great Mosque of Cordoba, which is the only surviving monument of the Caliphate of Cordoba; Madinat al Zahra Museum, which was awarded an Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 2010; and the magnificent palaces, fountains and gardens of Alhambra, which exemplify the blending of Moorish and traditional Andalusian architecture.

Through this trip, students witness the contemporary use of sites of historical relevance, as well as the possibility to learn about structures in terms of secular and religious form and function.

The experiences realised through the field trip will provide students with a unique perspective in their approach to the delivery of the IIS' Secondary Curriculum, in which the study of Muslim societies and civilisations is a crucial element.

Readings, orientation sessions and reflection will help students evaluate and structure their experiences in a pedagogically informed manner.

Through this trip students will gain a critical insight into the ways in which deep historical heritage relates to the formulation or construction of peoples' identities and practices.

*It is the students' responsibility to obtain a Visa for all excursions abroad. In the event of travel restrictions due to unforeseen circumstances including but not limited to a global pandemic such as COVID-19, alternative arrangements will be made to take place in the UK or in an online environment.





“STEP – has given me the opportunity to be exposed to a plethora of theoretical knowledge and practices in contemporary education and teaching. The teaching component of the programme in particular has been a great professional experience. Through teaching, I have been able to better internalise and reflect on the knowledge I have been gaining here. Indeed, it is an immense honour and privilege to be part of STEP family. I am forever grateful for this fun-filled and enriching experience!”

Nilufari Miraziz (Cohort 12, Tajikistan)

Meet our Faculty*

The faculty is comprised of lecturers who have made a significant contribution to scholarship and are engaged in innovative research projects in their respective fields.

The current lecturers include IIS, UCL Institute of Education and visiting scholars from leading international academic institutions. For the complete list of faculty contributing to teaching and learning on the programme, please visit the IIS website.

Dr Omar Ali-De-Unzaga (IIS)

Qur'an; Qur'anic Exegesis; Tafsir.

Dr Hasan Al-Khoee (IIS)

Arabic Public Oratory in the Early Muslim Period.

Dr Nuha Al-Shaar (IIS)

Classical Arabic Literature and Thought; Ethics in Muslim Traditions; Qur'anic Exegesis.

Mr Barry Arnold (UCL IOE)

Curriculum Development, Mentor Training, Education Policy and Inequality.

Dr Karen Bauer (IIS)

The Qur'an and its Interpretive Tradition (Tafsir); Gender in Islamic History and Thought; Emotions and Emotional Rhetoric in Islamic History.

Dr David Bennett (IIS)

Islamic Theology; Arabic Philosophy; Philosophy of Mind; History of Religions.

Ms Kate Boldry (UCL IOE)

Teachers as Authors; Social Justice; Allyship; Inclusion & Wellbeing.

Professor Jacek Brant (UCL IOE)

Curriculum and Pedagogy at Secondary School level; Economics Education.

Dr Stephen Burge (IIS)

Hadith Studies; Hermeneutics; Qur'anic Exegesis; Literary Theory.

Dr Maria De Cillis (IIS)

Islamic Philosophy; Shi'i Studies; Islamic Theology.

Dr Zamira Dildorbekova (IIS)

Islam in Central Asia; Ismaili Studies; Curriculum Development; Research Methods.

Dr Guy Durden (UCL IOE)

Teachers' Knowledge; Phenomenography/Variation Theory; Learning/Lesson Study; Economics Education.

Dr Christopher Edwards (UCL IOE)

The Production of History Education Curriculum Knowledge; Culture Wars; Critical Pedagogies and Constructivist Learning Theory.

Dr Fâràs Gillon (IIS)

Ismaili Thought; Fatimid Ismailism; Shi'i Islam; Islamic Philosophy; Qur'anic Exegesis; Heterodoxies in Islam.

Dr Mary Fargher (UCL IOE)

Education; Geography; Geographic Information Systems.

Ms Polly Glegg (UCL IOE)

Pre- and in-service teacher education; Pedagogies of teacher education; Coaching; Mentoring.

*These are individuals who currently teach on the programme and the list is subject to change.

Dr Laila Halani (IIS)

Anthropology; Gender; Ismailis in Modern Times; Contemporary Islamic Movements.

Dr Nazmin Halani (IIS)

Education; Religious Education; Curriculum Development.

Mr Faheem Hussain (IIS)

Sensory History; Influence of State Policies on History Textbooks; Adolescent Moral Development.

Dr Nadia Eboo Jamal

Islamic Studies; Persian History and Culture in the Period of Mongol Rule.

Dr Karim Javan (IIS)

Modern Muslim Intellectual Thoughts; Social and Political Developments; Muslim Literature and Literary Traditions, Poetic Expressions of Religion and Culture.

Dr Shainool Jiwa (IIS)

Ismaili History and Thought; Fatimids.

Ms Sophie Kerlake (UCL IOE)

Classroom Based Action Research; Developing Innovation in Education; Curriculum Development; Mentor Training.

Ms Farah Manji (IIS)

Muslim Societies & Civilisations; Curriculum Development; Teaching & Learning; Mentorship.

Dr Toby Mayer (IIS)

Muslim Philosophy; Esoteric Scriptural Exegesis; Mysticism; Qur'anic Hermeneutics.

Dr Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (IIS)

Shi'i Islam; Islamic Mysticism and Messianism.

Dr David Mitchell (UCL IOE)

Research in teacher-led curriculum innovation; developing education for sustainable development; mentor training.

Dr Wafi Momin (IIS)

Islam and Religious Traditions of South Asia; Ismaili History and Thought; Literary and Manuscript Cultures of South Asia; Muslim Civilisation.

Dr Gurdofarid Miskinzoda (IIS)

Shi'i Islam; Early Islam; Muslim Historical and Literary Tradition.

Dr Daryoush Mohammad Poor (IIS)

Shi'i Intellectual History; Ismaili Philosophy; Contemporary Political Theory.

Dr Maryam Rezaee (IIS)

Shi'i Studies; Women and Development; Cultural Studies; Gender; Social Policies; Research Methods.

Mr Riaz Rhemtulla (IIS)

Teacher Education; Religious Education; Curriculum Development and Implementation.

Dr Reza Shah Kazemi (IIS)

Mystical traditions; Qur'anic exegesis.

Dr Roy Wilson (IIS)

Applied Language Studies; International English Language Teaching; Academic Literacy.

Student Support

Throughout their time at the IIS, students are provided with support for their academic, personal and professional development and to help them get the best out of their experience.

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 academic English skills (PASHE) results at the time of admissions, some students attend a pre-sessional course at the IOE for development of their academic English skills. Some pre- and in-sessional academic skills classes will also be timetabled for all students in the first term at the IIS. This is to orient students to the academic conventions of postgraduate study 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.

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 professional teachers. 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.

Conference Fund

To support the academic growth and development of students, they are actively encouraged to participate in conferences which the Department aims to facilitate through the dedicated Student Conference Fund.

IT Facilities and Support

Students are provided with facilities that support both Mac and PC equipment; free internet access, and high quality printing and photocopying facilities; receive an IIS email address and Office 365 that enables them to download MS Office to up to five devices free, as well as having the opportunity to take out a loan to purchase IT equipment.

IIS Student Services

The Student Services team are responsible for overseeing non-academic matters spanning the entire student journey; from the point of recruitment, right through to completion of the programme. The areas covered by Student Services include admissions, immigration, accommodation, student welfare, travel, and graduation. Student Services also organise arrival, orientation activities, field trips, and run a programme of exciting social events throughout the year.

The dedicated Student Services team operate an open-door policy and are on-hand to offer advice, guidance, and support to help you get the most out of your student life in London.

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 encouraged to discuss their needs with Student Services; all discussions are in complete confidence.

Student Services and UCL IOE Student Support and Wellbeing

As UCL students based at the IOE, STEP students also have access to a number of different resources and support, as well as support offered by UCL's Student Helpdesk team and the Academic Programme Office. For more information about Student Helpdesk, please visit our website www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/student-helpdesk/student-support-ioe-students

As STEP students study as part of the UCL IOE, they are able to access UCL's Student Support and Wellbeing Service. UCL's SSW service offers a range of support, including counselling, international student support, an interfaith service and support for disabled students. For more information about UCL's services, please visit their website www.ucl.ac.uk/students/support-and-wellbeing

Counselling Services

In addition to the counselling services provided by UCL IOE, the IIS also 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.

Libraries

Aga Khan Library, London

The Aga Khan Library holds over 52,000 volumes focusing on Islamic Studies in general and Ismaili, Shi'i, and Qur'anic Studies in particular. The Library actively collects materials on Muslim civilisations, past and present, and Muslim diasporas around the world, as well as on a broad range of research topics including religions and philosophy, history, social sciences, art and architecture, literature, and education.

As part of its commitment to become one of Europe's most relevant Islamic studies libraries, the collection includes books in English and several other European, Asian (Gujarati, Sindhi, Tajik, Urdu) and Middle Eastern (Arabic, Farsi, Ottoman Turkish, Turkish) languages. The Library has three dedicated subject librarians to provide expert guidance to help students and scholars with their research.

The Library is continuously growing its resources both in print and electronic format. Its digital collection now offers access to over 84,000 titles including journals, databases, encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other reference resources to support research and teaching.

The Aga Khan Library Digital Collections platform has been developed to make many of the titles in its rare and special collections freely available. These unique collections comprise manuscripts, artworks, out-of-print publications, photographs, and maps produced in different periods and areas of the Muslim world and are invaluable for the study of Muslim communities and the history, politics, customs, and beliefs that have shaped them.

Beyond written texts, the Library has built up a collection of documentary and feature films covering a wide range of themes and regions of the Muslim world, including Afghanistan, Central Asia, Egypt, Iran, Morocco and Tunisia, as well as Muslim diaspora communities in Europe and North America. It also has a unique collection of audio recordings of Qawwali music from the Indian subcontinent, Sufi music from Iran and Turkey, and Gnawa music from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa.



UCL IOE Library

The UCL IOE Library is the largest education library in Europe stocked with physical and online resources covering a variety of collections including Archives and Special Collections. Visit UCL Explore - our search tool for finding journals, books, full-text articles, archive material and much more.

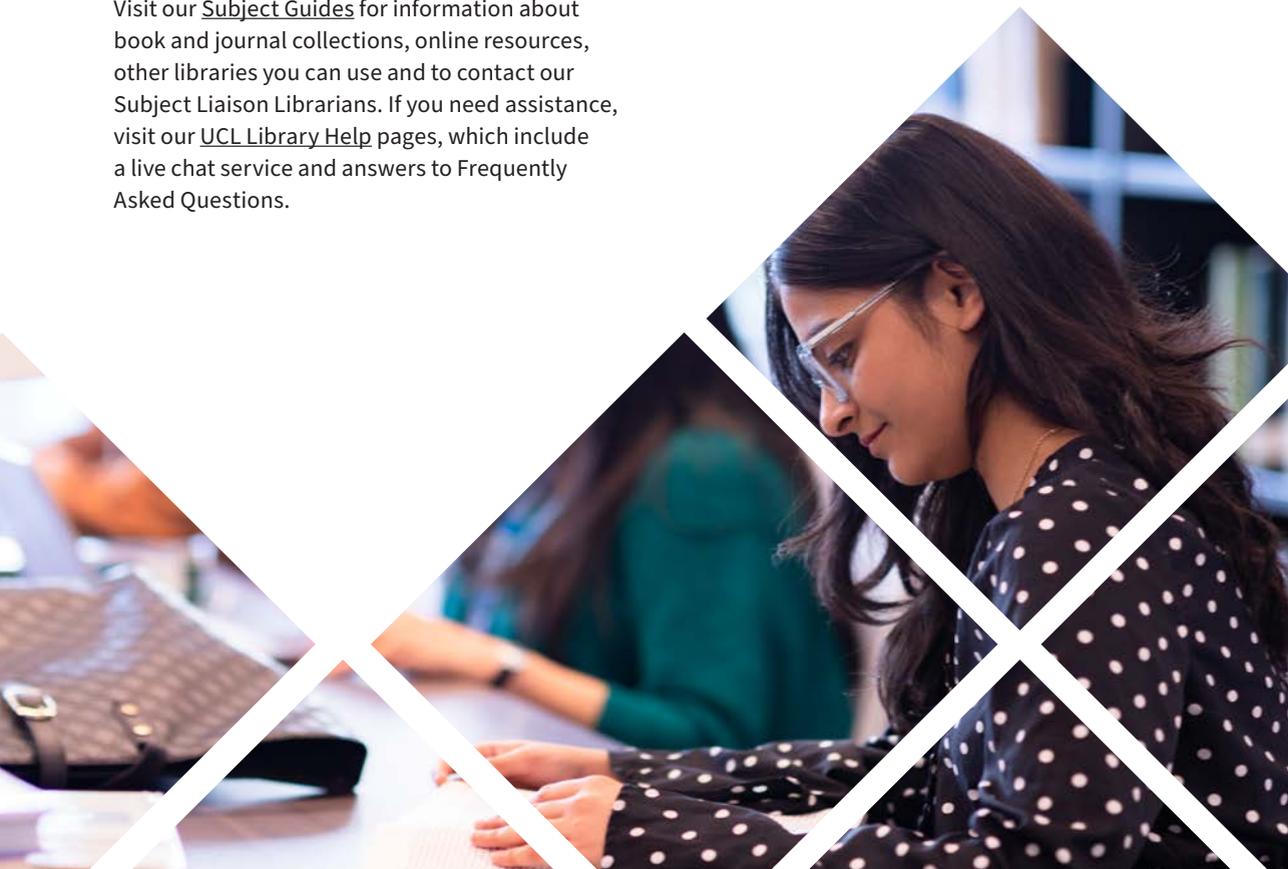
IOE students can also access 17 other UCL libraries, the UCL Student Centre, as well as selected libraries in the area that offer a wide range of resources across all subject disciplines.

At the IOE Library, librarians and archivists offer support in person, in library skills sessions, and in one-to-ones. Online library skills support is also available via library-guides.ucl.ac.uk/skills.

Visit our [Subject Guides](#) for information about book and journal collections, online resources, other libraries you can use and to contact our Subject Liaison Librarians. If you need assistance, visit our [UCL Library Help](#) pages, which include a live chat service and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

SOAS Library

The SOAS Library is one of the world's most important libraries for the study of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and one of only five National Research Libraries in the UK. 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.



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 small 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 King's Cross, 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 resonates 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 houses the teaching and learning spaces for IIS students, with large and smaller seminar rooms where students 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 (AKU-ISMC).

The (AKC) is a short walk from the halls of residence, making it impossible to be delayed by traffic for your classes! Classes led by IIS faculty are 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).





Alumni

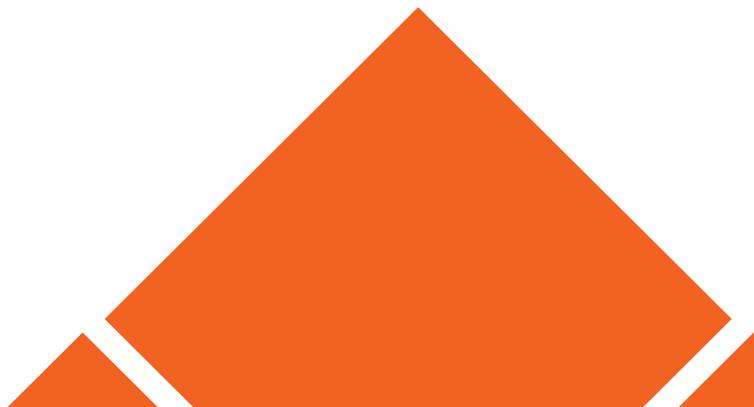
The Institute's global alumni body now consists of more than 700 graduates who are dispersed across the world.

They are supported in their continuing professional and career development through the IIS' Alumni Relations Unit. STEP graduates will also be UCL IOE and SOAS alumni. The IIS Alumni Association offers our graduates a number of services and benefits, including:

- Professional development and networking opportunities at Annual Chapter Group meetings of the IIS Alumni Association, Alumni Lecture, and Local Meet & Greet events;
- Access to funding of up to £1000 for research, publishing monographs and articles, presenting research papers at conferences, and attending courses supporting their research activities;
- Access to customised Career Support Programme;
- Leadership opportunities to become a regional President or Secretary for the Alumni Chapter Groups in Asia, Europe or North America;
- Access to facilities at the Aga Khan Centre, including the Aga Khan Library, London;
- Access to global job opportunities, conferences and events, as well as the international alumni directory via the IIS Alumni Online Community Portal;

- Opportunities to publish articles in the annual Alumni Newsletter which features academic and professional contributions of IIS alumni and much more;
- The opportunity to become an alumni mentor to current IIS students and new graduates through the IIS Alumni Mentorship Programme;

A range of Continuing Professional Development initiatives are in place for the STEP graduates, enabling them to enhance their skills and capabilities. As the STEP initiative takes root in different countries across the world, many opportunities for teacher exchange are emerging, offering international experience as well as facilitating knowledge-transfer across cultures. Further, with the growing network of Aga Khan Academies and partnerships with schools operated by the Aga Khan Education Services, graduates of STEP have opportunities to teach beyond the religious education system, contributing to the education of secondary students in the wider community.





“STEP means life to me. It has allowed me to get exposure to the tremendous educational system of London at IIS along with enhancing social interaction with amazing teachers, students, and other faculty from around the world and build connections with them. STEP has transformed my life by inbuilding in me, not just the knowledge related to my field, but also by allowing me to build life skills such as leadership skills.”

Zara Syed (Cohort 12, Pakistan)

Studying in London

To fully appreciate the wealth of opportunities offered by STEP, 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 is 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





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; Certificate of Education, PGCE; Diploma, PGDip; 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 2020/21, more than 2.7 million students were enrolled on undergraduate courses, while more than half a million were studying for postgraduate qualifications.

www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/students/whos-in-he



Application and Admissions Procedure

Entry Requirements

- A UK 1st or 2nd Class Honours Degree or recognised equivalent
- To meet the English language requirement, it is preferable that applicants take a Secure English Language Test (SELT) such as the UKVI version of IELTS Academic where possible, as UCL require a SELT for PASHE entry. Those who do not have a UKVI IELTS and are required to do PASHE would need to retake the UKVI version of IELTS (or another accepted SELT) as a condition of entry. Note that there may be other SELTs that UCL accepts and this list will be released by UCL at a later date

The minimum requirements for English language proficiency are as follows: An overall band score of 7.0, or UCL equivalent, with a minimum score of 6.5 in each component in an IELTS Academic test certificate. Applicants with the overall score of 6.5 (with a minimum 6.0 in each component), or the standard equivalent in the alternative English language tests listed, will be considered and, if selected, will be eligible to receive a conditional offer.

- Alternatively, applicants can submit scores from the following English language tests: TOEFL iBT with an overall score of 100 (*92) and a minimum of 24/30 (*24/30) for Reading & Writing, and 20/30 (*20/30) for Speaking & Listening, PTE Academic with an overall score of 69 (*62) and a minimum of (*59) in Communicative Skills Papers, Cambridge English CAE/CPE with an overall score of 185 (*176) and a minimum of 176 (*169) in each sub-test and Trinity ISE III with a Merit (Standard) in all sub-tests.

Find out more about UCL's English language requirements: www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/applying-international-student

- Conditional offer holders will be expected to retake IELTS Academic** in April 2023 (support provided by the Academic Skills Support Team at the IIS) to upgrade their offers to direct entry (unconditional) by obtaining an overall band 7 with no less than 6.5 in all subscores. Those who do not achieve this at the retest will be required to attend and successfully complete the Preparation for Academic Studies in Higher Education (PASHE) programme at UCL IOE before they are formally enrolled onto the STEP programme
- Minimum of one year's experience teaching in a Religious Education Centre that falls under the ITREB jurisdiction of any one of the following countries: Afghanistan, Australia and New Zealand, Bangladesh, Canada, Democratic Republic of Congo, Far East, France, India, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Mozambique, Pakistan, Portugal, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom or the United States of America
- To enter a contract-bound commitment of a minimum of 3 years to work as a teacher within the ITREB network, with opportunities for career progression within the wider Aga Khan network of institutions
- The Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP) has been developed to support and promote the need for professionally trained secondary level teachers who can teach the IIS Secondary Curriculum within the Ismaili religious education system; therefore, candidates are recruited from the Ismaili community only.

* Scores in italics indicate the 'standard level' score with which candidates will be considered and, if selected, will be eligible to receive a conditional offer. **The IIS will reimburse candidates to do this twice.

Shortlisted applicants will be required to undertake a six-week teaching placement at their local religious education centre (REC), which will be facilitated by the local ITREB. Applicants will also be required to undertake a timed essay, as well as participate in an interview which will be conducted by the IIS and ITREB.

Student Route Visa Requirements

In accordance with UK visa rules, the IIS exempts candidates from the English language requirements if they are nationals of, or have completed undergraduate studies taught in, the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada (only if you are a national), Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, 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.

Please note if you are exempt from taking IELTS Academic due to the fact you have completed an undergraduate or postgraduate degree taught in an English majority*speaking country but are not a national of that that country, you also will need to meet the UCL requirement below.

UCL rules state in order to be exempt from the IELTS Academic test or other Academic English Skills test, you must have completed your undergraduate or postgraduate studies no later than the summer two years prior to the proposed date of enrolment (i.e. Summer 2021 for a 2023 enrolment) otherwise you will be required to take an Academic English Skills test. For further guidance please refer to the UCL website:

www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/learning-and-living-ucl/international-students/english-language-requirements.

Postgraduate Study Cap

The recent change from Tier IV visas to the Student Route means that there is no longer a cap on the amount of time a student spends studying at post-graduate level in the UK.

It is the applicants' responsibility to provide authentic and verifiable evidence of qualifications. If you are found to have submitted fraudulent documents, your application will be automatically rejected.

Fees

STEP is a fully funded scholarship programme. Successful applicants receive housing in London, 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.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

It is a statutory requirement of the Home Office, that any individual who will be teaching in a UK school or works with children or young people must be in receipt of a satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS checks will be arranged by UCL Graduate Admissions team in line with the UK regulations.

Teaching practice places students in a 'position of trust', as set out in the Exceptions Order to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (ROA) 1974. Students will need to supply a criminal record check (Police Report) from the relevant authorities in their home country, and from every other country in which they have previously spent 6 months or more in the past 5 years. This document should contain details of any cautions, convictions, reprimands, warnings or bind overs recorded against the student's name, or confirm

* Online and long distance courses do not qualify

that there are none. If this information is not in English, students will also need to supply an official certified translation of the document. This will need to be supplied to the UCL Graduate admissions team.

Failure to submit a satisfactory criminal record check will jeopardise a student's teaching practice, if their clearance remains outstanding at the time of enrolment.

For further information please see www.ucl.ac.uk/students/policies/conduct/disclosure-and-barring-service-dbs-applications

Please see information about criminal convictions: www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/sites/academic_manual/files/annex_1.3_ex-offenders_policy_for_prospective_and_current_students_2022-23.pdf

www.ucl.ac.uk/academic-manual/sites/academic_manual/files/annex_1.4_criminal_convictions_declaration_policy_and_procedure_2022-23.pdf

Equal Opportunities

The IIS and its partners are firmly committed to equal opportunities for all students, regardless of sex, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, ethnic origin, race, colour, nationality, political beliefs, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, disability and age. 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 during the course of your application, please contact Student Services at admissions@iis.ac.uk.

Please see UCL's Equality and Diversity Policy: www.ucl.ac.uk/human-resources/sites/human_resources/files/equal_opportunity_policy_statement.pdf

Please see SOAS' Equality and Diversity Policy: www.soas.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/file155534.pdf



How to apply

Please complete the online application form via our website.

You will need the following to complete your application:

1. Your **personal statement**
2. **Official transcripts** from all undergraduate and postgraduate study
3. A copy of your **degree certificate(s)**
4. **Academic English Skills certificate** (if applicable)
5. **Reference Letters:** two academic, one character and one ITREB reference
6. A copy of your **passport**

Deadline

Completed applications, with all relevant documents, must be submitted online or postmarked (if sent by post) by **12 noon on 24 October 2022**.

If you would like to make a postal application please contact admissions@iis.ac.uk to request an application pack.

Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions of the STEP 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:

www.iis.ac.uk/about-us/our-institution/governance/policies-and-documents/

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 STEP programme that the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) in collaboration with SOAS University of London and UCL 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.





“Choosing the STEP program is one of my proudest accomplishments and one of the best decisions I have ever made. STEP not only changed my approach to teaching and learning but has also changed the way I view my day-to-day life. It’s not just a teaching and learning program but it’s a journey within. Being able to meet people from diverse backgrounds, listening to their experiences also through the enriching and growth-filled experiences that STEP provides I learned so much about myself and it helped me to shape who I am.”

Nausheen Ahmad (Cohort 14, Pakistan)

