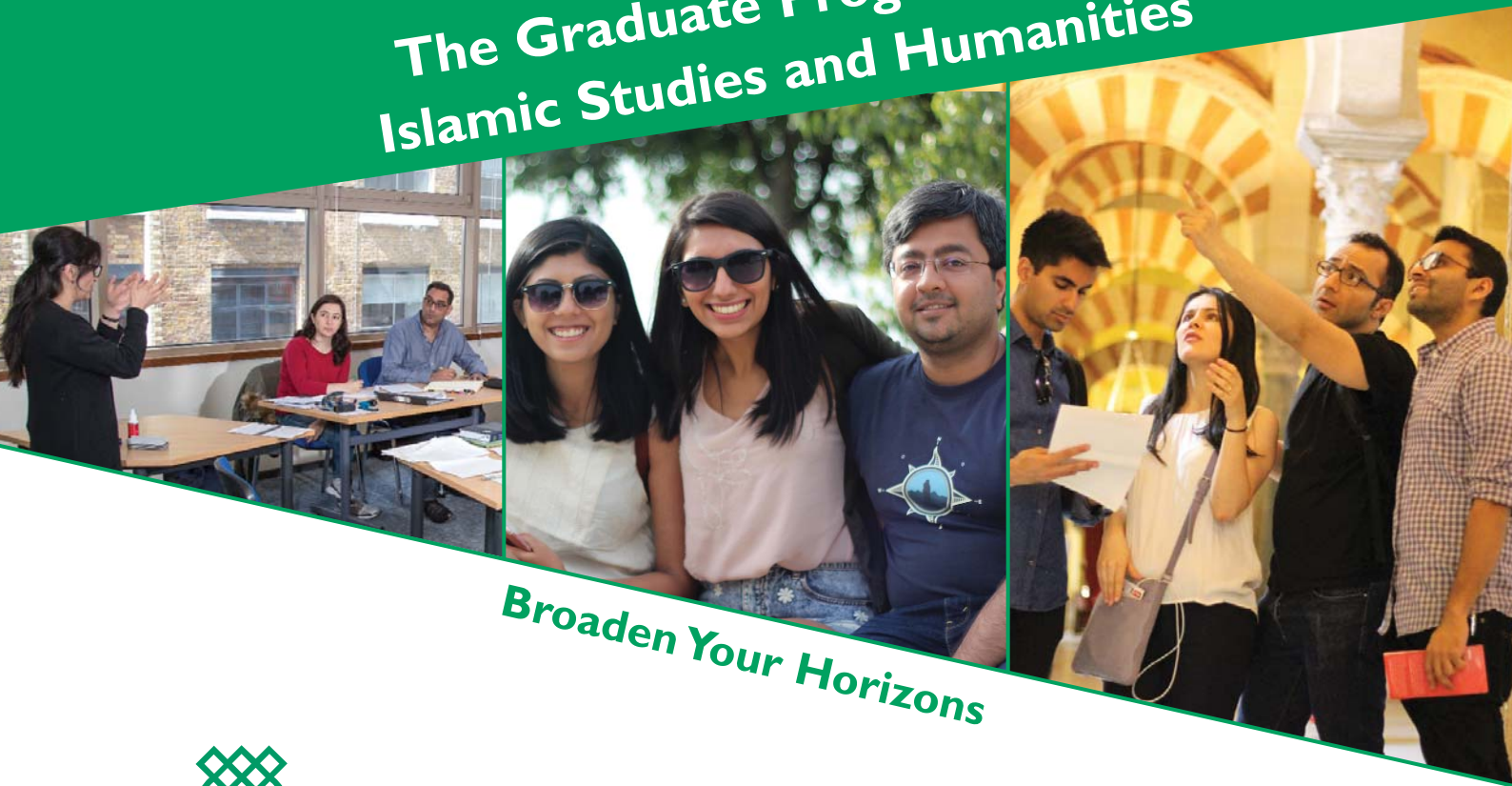# GPISH

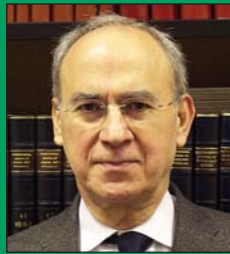## The Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities

Broaden Your Horizons

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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).

GPISH is an innovative, interdisciplinary three-year programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, the first two years of which are spent at the IIS. All GPISH students attend a British university in their third year. The majority of students attend universities which are either members of the Russell Group or of the former 1994 Group, including Oxford, Cambridge, the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) and SOAS, University of London.

Dr Farhad Daftary
Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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Introduction

The Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities (GPISH) trains students to use the intellectual tools of the humanities and social sciences, and encourages perspectives exploring the relationship of religious ideas to broader dimensions of society and culture. This way it goes beyond the theological and religious heritage of Islam while simultaneously examining this as a core object of investigation and analysis. An interdisciplinary approach related to the study of the materials of Islamic history and thought, and particular attention to issues of modernity that arise as Muslims seek to relate their heritage to contemporary circumstances, contribute to an enriched academic curriculum.

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

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

"GPISH is a world-class programme to understand Islam from different perspectives and to realise your own talents and abilities. It is an exciting and challenging journey that opens the doors of intellectual life. So be one of us, and explore all this."

Rayhon Jonbekova, Tajikistan
GPISH 2019

Introduction

Key Features

- First two years spent at The Institute of Ismaili Studies pursuing Islamic studies and humanities
- Third year spent at an accredited UK university* studying for a Master's degree
- Intensive language training with language immersion in either an Arabic-speaking country or Iran**
- Educational field trip to Spain
- Experience of carrying out a field-based research project in locations around the world**
- Opportunity to pursue rewarding careers in a variety of fields

* subject to acceptance by the university
** subject to travel advice by the UK Government

Entry Requirements

- A completed first degree of good standing from an accredited university, equivalent to a UK Bachelor's degree
- An acceptable level of English proficiency (at least 6.5 UKVI IELTS score)
- Exposure to the academic study of Islam, the social sciences or the humanities is desirable

Current GPISH Students by Nationality

- Pakistani
- Canadian
- American
- Indian
- British
- Syrian
- Tajik
- Norwegian
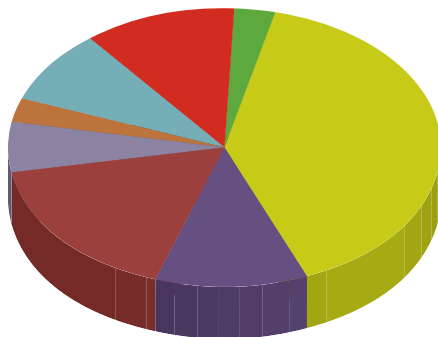
*Experience matters.
The classroom is only one part of the active learning that takes place here.*

Introduction

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 Arts, MA; Master of Science, MSc; Master of Education, MEd; Master of Philosophy, MPhil – all pitched at Level 7).

The highest available award is the doctorate, which is pitched at Level 8.

The IIS operates within this system as a private education provider and GPISH is pitched, both in terms of content and approach, at Level 7.

Most students in the UK 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 capped at £9,000 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 by enrolling on 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 2015/16, more than 1.7 million students were enrolled on undergraduate courses, while more than half a million were studying for postgraduate qualifications (www.hesa.ac.uk/stats)

Introduction

Statement of Philosophy

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

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

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

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

Historical Emergence of Forms and Definitions

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

Poetic and Imaginative Discourse

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

Cultural Diversity

While the approach to Islam as a civilisation is intended to integrate as well as enlarge both the subject matter and angles of study, this does not preclude an appreciation of the enormous diversity of Muslim societies. One of the objectives is to re-examine all explicit and implicit descriptions of Islam as a monolithic phenomenon. It will examine the dialectic of cultures whereby a variety of older, existing traditions were assimilated, transformed and synthesised, in most areas, into regional expressions of Islam. The diversity of these expressions must be noted without normative preconceptions about their validity. Students will study the diverse features of Islamic culture in such significant areas as the Middle East, South-east Asia, the Indian subcontinent and Africa south of the Sahara, without assuming such distinctions as that between "peripheral" and "central" Islamic lands. Similarly, the programme will examine the important role of not only "classical" languages (Arabic and Persian) but also national, regional or local vernaculars in the evolution of Islamic sensibilities.

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

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

Bridging History and Contemporary Societies

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

Re-examining the Boundaries of Civilisations

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

"The content of GPISH has caused me to re-evaluate what I had stowed away as fundamentally unshakable truths. Overall, it has taught me that the opportunity to turn my passion into a career exists; in fact, it is encouraged. GPISH teaches skills which allow us to recognise the human in 'humanities' and how we must share and preserve it."

Aisha Ali, USA
GPISH 2019

Programme Structure

Pre-sessionals
Each new cohort of students usually has a mixture of students for whom English is their first language, and those for whom it is not. Based on the tests we conduct with students and the UKVI IELTS results at the time of admissions, some students attend pre-sessionals for academic English writing while others have a shorter in-house course before they start the first GPISH term. New students who are not native speakers of Arabic also have four weeks of Arabic-language classes before the start of the first term of Year One.

Year One (9 one-term modules or equivalent, taught at the IIS)
The first year lays the foundations, both with regard to knowledge and approach. The study of Arabic (or Persian for those proficient in Arabic) also continues throughout the year, and at the end of the year students attend a language immersion programme in an Arabic-speaking country (or in Iran for those studying Persian).*

Year Two (8 one-term modules or equivalent, taught at the IIS)
The second year of the programme confronts broader thematic subjects, while the students' academic progress is tested through more demanding assessment criteria. Particular attention is dedicated to the development of research skills, which culminates in the students' individual research project at the end of the year. The study of Arabic or Persian continues throughout the year. Students also visit Spain for an educational field trip.

Year Three
The third year of the programme is spent studying for a Master's degree at a British university.

* subject to UK Government travel advice

Statement of Philosophy

Modules

Muslims in History: I, II and III

Combining a broadly chronological approach with thematic explorations and case-studies, these three modules aim to help students develop a sound scholarly narrative of the histories of Muslim cultures from their emergence in the seventh century to contemporary times. Starting with an exploration of historiography and philosophy of history, the first module will focus on understanding history as a form of knowledge, recognising the meaning and role of interpretation in any historical writing and reading. The modules situate the early history of Muslims in the socio-historical context of Late Antiquity, examining salient political, cultural and religious developments of the Near East in the first millennium. Modules two and three analyse key developments in Muslim history, including the exploration of how certain events were constructed and interpreted as key moments. The modules will approach Muslim history as part of broader world history and thus in a historical and comparative context. A key feature of the modules will be to bring out issues such as the diversity and historicity of norms, institutions and conceptions; the dialectic of thought and material forces; and the contested nature of authority, identity, symbols and legitimacy. The third module in particular will focus on the nature of modern philosophical, cultural and sociological developments in Muslim contexts through investigating case studies of selected movements and figures and the uses of history in religious, political and social discourses.

The Qur'an I and II

These modules aim to acquaint students with the necessary conceptual tools to deal with the complexities related to the study of the Qur'an and its reception in Muslim intellectual history. They will be based on constant reflection on epistemological, methodological and historiographical issues. Students will be invited to analyse the concept of revelation, prophethood and scripture, and will need to examine the intellectual, religious and socio-political context in which the Qur'an came about. Attention will be paid to the interaction between Prophet Muhammad's life, including his relations with his contemporaries, and the unfolding of the revelations. Focus will thus be given to the difficulties of contextualising the Qur'an. In addition, the module will cover the main concerns and issues found in the revelations and will devote some attention to the type of language and style deployed in Qur'anic suras and ayas. Later interpretive traditions will be explored; students will thus have the chance to delve into the various debates and controversies that theologians, philosophers and other thinkers generated around the Qur'an, its nature and its language. Finally, students will consider the discussions around the Qur'an in contemporary scholarship.

Programme
Structure

Programme Structure
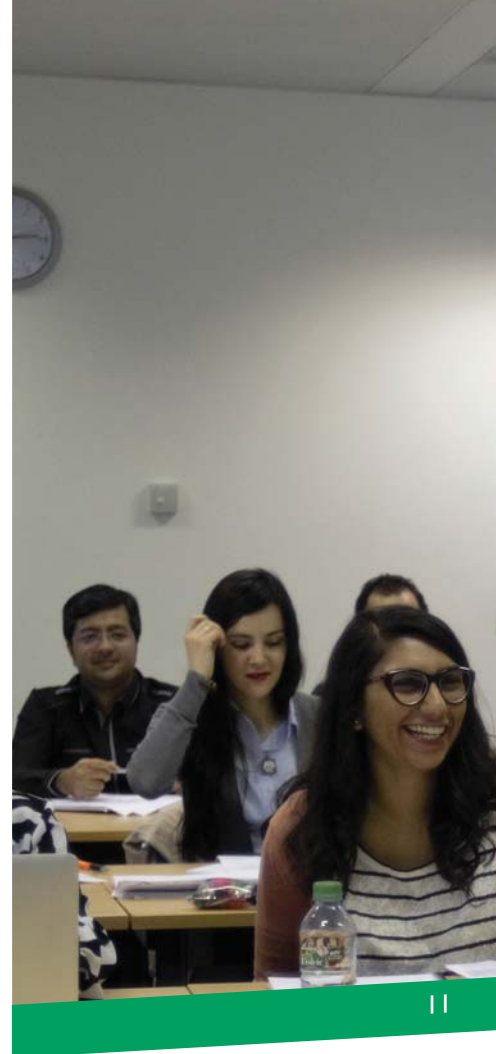
Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali in the Discourse of Muslim Communities

The module aims first of all to position the Islamic notions of prophecy in the wider context of the modes of divinations found across many cultures and particularly in the ancient Near East. It shall then examine our knowledge of Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali as historical personalities. In this regard, various historical interpretations by modern scholars, including debates about Muslim sources and revisionist versions of the history of the early Muslim period, will be explored. A study of the changing image of Prophet Muhammad in mainstream Muslim sources, and with it the changing theological doctrines will also be undertaken. The module will analyse the diverse ways in which the image of Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali have become integral to Muslim and Shi'i Muslim identity respectively. The module explores various ways in which their memory is celebrated, invoked and appropriated in rituals, poetry, everyday language and political symbolism, in addition to looking at the role of the Prophet and Imam Ali as an intercessor, their depiction in the hagiographic imagination, poetry and painting, and as a mystical paradigm. The module will then examine the ways in which the figure of the Prophet has come to be a central and sensitive element of Muslim identity in contemporary times, while exploring current psychological research on the notion of prophecy. At the end of the module, students should be able to revisit the current widespread understanding of prophethood and approach it in its shifting and contested historical context.

Key Moments in Shi'i History, Thought and Society

The aim of the module is to provide students with a basic grounding in the key moments and turning points in the history of Shi'i Islam, with special reference to Twelver Shi'i Islam. The module will start with an overview of the formative period of Shi'i Islam until the death of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq and then cover aspects of the subsequent history of the Twelver Shi'a, with some attention to Zaydi Shi'ism. Shi'i communities will be studied in the broader context of Islamic history, with due attention to the socio-economic factors that contributed to the articulation of Shi'i identity and sentiments in different regions and in different periods of Islamic history.

Key Moments in Ismaili History

This module provides a survey of key moments and developments in Ismaili history, from the earliest times to early modern times. The module aims to integrate the perspectives of history, theology and social sciences to illuminate critical junctures and intellectual developments, also covering Ismaili contributions to Islamic thought and culture, and contextualising Ismailis within the broader framework of Islamic history. Following an introduction to Ismaili historiography and the general nature of the source materials on the Ismailis, the module will concentrate on the early history of the Ismailis from the 8th century to the foundation of the Fatimid caliphate in 909. The next part will be devoted to the history of the Nizari Ismailis during the Alamut period (1090-1256), while the final part will cover certain key patterns in the history of the post-Alamut Nizari Ismailis until the middle of the 19th century. The module will conclude with an investigation of the circumstances under which the Nizaris emerged in modern times as a progressive religious community under the leadership of their Imams, known internationally as the Aga Khans.

Research Design and Methods

The purpose of this module is to equip students with the necessary background knowledge and skills to proficiently plan and undertake research activity within the field of Social Sciences. The module will begin with a short introduction on the intellectual history of Social Sciences, including a critical overview of the debates and developments surrounding some of the involved disciplines. In the following phase, an in-depth examination of issues and approaches to qualitative research design will be undertaken, taking into account the most recent advances in the field. The module will then focus on the development of a number of key practical skills, including the design of research questions and proposals, literature reviews, surveys, fieldwork activities, data collection and analysis. This part will also involve a series of practical exercises, resulting in the drafting of a comprehensive research proposal that the students will employ for their upcoming Field Project. The module will examine techniques and approaches for writing a professional-level research paper, thus enabling students to proficiently translate their Field Project experience into an academic piece of excellent standard.

Ismailis in Modern Times

This module explores the key events, personalities and texts that have shaped the history of Ismaili communities in the modern period (from the late modern period, roughly late eighteenth century until present day) and considers the continuing relevance, perception and impact of this legacy on today's concerns. The emphasis will be on situating Ismailis within the larger framework of the ummah and other global communities. How do political and social theories related to transnational communities, global and local communities and minorities apply to Ismailis around the world? Particular attention will be paid to regional studies of Ismailis residing in different parts of the world, following diverse traditions. Adequate attention will also be paid to the Imamate of Aga Khan IV; the work of the Imamat and Ismaili institutions; and its subsequent impact on the social, economic and educational development of the community.

Religion, Literature and Identity in South Asian Muslim contexts

South Asia is home to the largest concentration of Muslims in the world. This module surveys the historical development of Muslim communities in the region focusing on various articulations of their identities. Using the Satpanthi Khoja communities of Gujarat, Sind and Punjab and their ginan literature as a case study, the module considers issues and themes related to constructions of identity within religious and socio-political contexts, as well as the broader framework of South Asian cultures as expressed in language, literature and the arts. The module also examines the various ways in which the terms "Islamic" and "Muslim" have been defined in pre-modern and modern discourses in South Asia, particularly those of colonialism, nationalism and "Islamisation".

Programme Structure

Programme Structure

Art, Literature and Religion I and II

The course will explore the literary and artistic dimensions of the world's Muslim societies, focusing on the role that literary genres (scriptures, panegyrics, love lyrics, epic romances, folk songs and folk tales) and the arts (music, dance, drama, architecture, calligraphy, miniature painting) play as expressions of piety and socio-political critique. Broadly speaking, it will explore how works of literature and art function within a given society and ways in which culture is produced, interpreted, and disseminated. A primary objective is to examine the relationships between religion, literature, and the arts in a variety of historical and cultural contexts. Case studies will highlight ways in which Arabic and Persian literary and artistic traditions have profoundly influenced the frameworks within which Islam, its texts, its rituals and practices have been interpreted and expressed. It will also explore the manner in which Arabic and Persian literary and artistic traditions interacted with those beyond the Middle East as Islam became a global religious tradition. This will illustrate how a literary and artistic approach to studying a religious tradition allows access to voices and interpretations that are often unheard, rendered marginal or declared "heretical" by those who claim to represent "official" religious institutions.

Intellectual Traditions in the History of Muslims

This module aims to shed light on fundamental currents of thought which prospered in the history of Muslims, by taking stock of recent advances in scholarship. Traditional historians of Islam used to focus on religious learned traditions and their role in shaping the social order and in facing, supporting or opposing those who seize political power. However, recent historical studies – particularly some works which attempted to build a comprehensive understanding of the whole spectrum of cultural developments in Muslim contexts, such as those by Marshall Hodgson and Mohamed Abed Jabri – have highlighted the diversity of intellectual traditions which thrived in predominantly Muslim environments, their interactions and their role in shaping intellectual outlooks among the elites as well as key aspects of everyday life within the population at large. The module will offer an understanding of the continuities that link those traditions with areas of interest and disciplines cultivated in the history of mankind across cultural and religious divides, as well as the diversity of forms and expressions these traditions have taken. Geographical and periodical classifications will be objects of close scrutiny in order to uncover assumptions that they may convey, and in order to help situate intellectual traditions which emerged in Muslim contexts within the wide framework of humanity's intellectual development.

Law, Ethics and Society I and II

This module aims to bring clarity to the use of notions such as ethics, morality, religious law, positive law and other similar widely used categories. It then offers an introduction to the emergence, during the so-called 'Axial Age', of important questions about the universe, the place of humanity in it, the meaning of life and the norms that should guide human behaviour. The ways those questions were addressed by various individuals and groups, some invoking the sole authority of reason, while others claiming some form of inspiration like religious revelation or mystical intuition, will be discussed. The processes by which some of these answers were institutionalised and gave birth to specific regulation systems and to the erection of particular social orders or political systems will also be examined. The module concludes by highlighting the idea of a sharp division between "is" and "ought" as it emerged in the 18th century, and how this idea brought an important shift to the discussions, in our time, about ethics, law and the social order.

Ritual, Worship and Practice

Employing an interdisciplinary approach including anthropology, sociology, history and religious studies, this module aims to provide students with a framework to understand the role of ritual, practice and spaces of worship in human societies with a particular focus on the Ismaili community. The module will first explore sociological and anthropological theories on ritual and religious practice as categories of experience and analysis. Students will familiarise themselves with key academic figures in the study of such pivotal yet elusive concepts; and will become aware of the latest developments in this field. As a second step, through a series of case studies of specific ritual practices and forms of worship, students will engage in an in-depth understanding of various ideas and concepts associated with ritual and worship, such as continuity and change; communal vs. individual; essence vs. form; ritualisation; performance and meaning-making; emotion; the ritual body; negotiation between 'local' and 'global'; authority, legitimation and social control through ritual; gender and ritual space. Last, focused case-studies will shed light on how rituals and forms of worships developed and evolved historically amongst Muslims; and particularly within the Ismaili community.

"Being a part of GPISH has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. The creative and unique programme looks at Islam from the perspectives of the humanities. Also, the diverse cohort setting adds to an intellectually stimulating environment which develops social skills required to cater to a globalised world."

Zehra Shallwani, Pakistan
GPISH 2019

Programme Structure

Language Study: Arabic or Persian

The study of Arabic (or Persian for those proficient in Arabic) is central to the programme as it enables students to read and understand the Qur'an and other primary texts. The study of Arabic is compulsory in the first two years of the programme for all students not proficient in this language. Three levels of Arabic are offered, and students are placed in a class based on their prior knowledge and experience. The overall aim is to equip students with the skills needed to read primary texts in Arabic. Students undertake a four-week intensive pre-sessional course at the IIS before the start of the first year. At the end of the first year, students participate in a summer Arabic immersion programme in an Arabic-speaking country.

Students who are already fluent in Arabic will be required to study Persian in order to read and understand core Persian texts. Persian language study includes participation in a summer Persian immersion programme in Iran (subject to UK Government travel advice).

Other learning opportunities include:

Leadership Skills Workshop

The primary objective of this workshop is to start integrating students' learning with the development of leadership skills congruent with today's fast-paced organisational requirements. The workshop provides practical leadership skills for communicating, influencing and motivating across cultures and deepening individual impact within society. The workshop links theoretical knowledge with practical application.

Topics in the Philosophy of Religion

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

Programme
Structure

Language Immersion

In addition to two years of language training at the IIS, students also attend a four-week intensive language immersion programme in an Arabic-speaking country (or Iran for those studying Persian) at the end of their first year. This is an opportunity for students to immerse themselves in the language and culture of an Arabic or Persian-speaking country. The language immersion programme is subject to UK Government travel advice.

Educational Field Trips

Whenever feasible, GPISH students are taken on a field trip to Spain in the course of the programme (subject to the UK Government travel advisory guidelines). The trip is focused on visits to Muslim architectural monuments of the Andalusian era, but also provides the opportunity to see the art and architecture of other periods. The field trip also allows the students to witness the contemporary use of the architectural sites. The trip contributes to the attainment of learning objectives of GPISH modules in which the focus is on learning about the formation of political and religious identity through the medium of art and architecture. For the students, who are accompanied by IIS faculty, these cultural and architectural trips serve to complement in-house academic modules.

It might be said that on these trips the academic modules that the students take are brought to life, as they visit the places in which key historical events took place and they see artistic and architectural heritage with their own eyes.

Some of the primary sites that students visit during this trip are the Great Mosque of Cordoba, which is the only surviving monument of the Caliphate of Cordoba; the ruins of Madinat-al-Zahra; and the fountains and gardens of Alhambra, which exemplify the blending of Moorish and traditional Andalusian architecture.
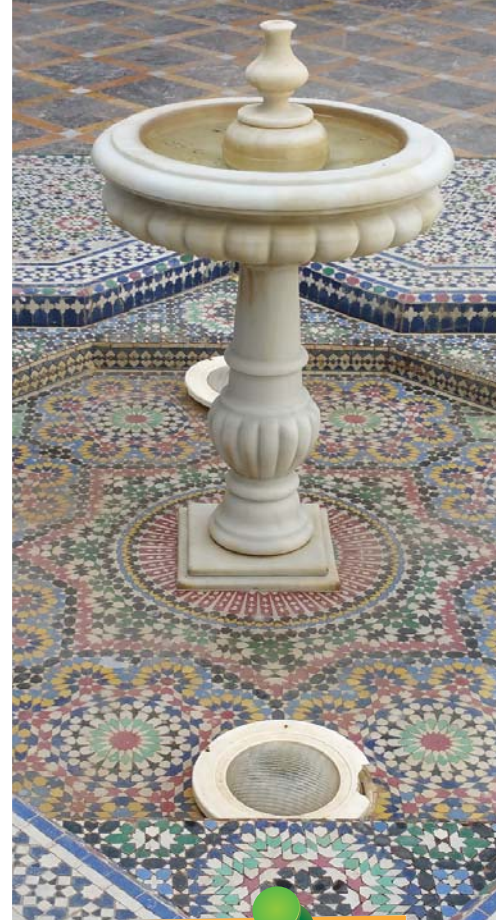
"GPISH has enhanced my career opportunities through its global alumni network. It has been incredibly helpful to be able to make connections with a diverse group of individuals spanning industries, occupations and geographies."

Naveed Nanjee,
GPISH 2014 alumnus

Identity in the advocacy and activism of Naz Male Health Alliance in Lahore, Pakistan

Articulation of Religious Pluralism in the Early Childhood Education Curriculum: Madrasa Programme in Kampala, Uganda

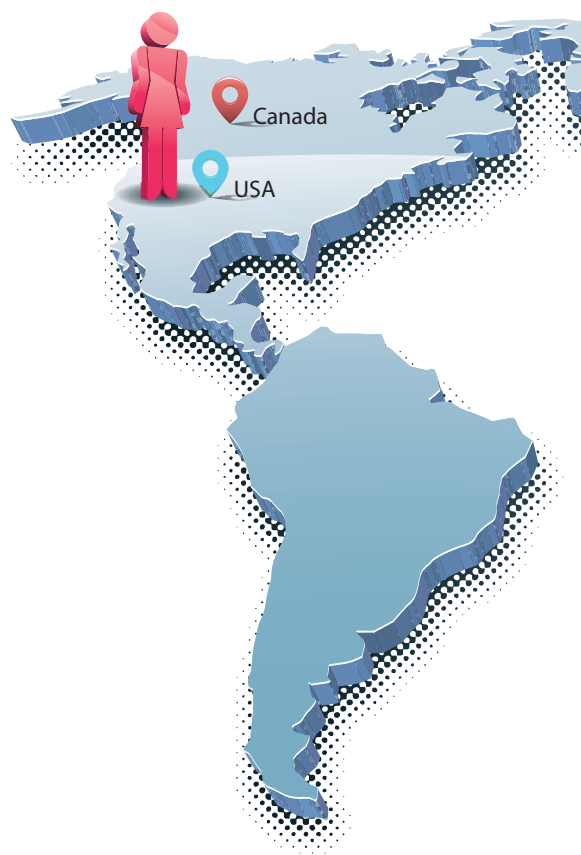*Language as a Marker of Identity among Wakhi Speakers of Rawalpindi, Pakistan*

"Kafala" (sponsorship) system in Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the challenges associated with it for the labour migrants from Indonesia and the Philippines

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Field Project

The field project is an integral part of the Graduate Programme and is designed to encourage each student to formulate and conduct a research project which can serve as a basis for continued postgraduate study or career development. Students conduct research during the summer of their second academic year and produce an original piece of research.

A research supervisor is allocated to each student to guide them in planning, preparing, conducting and writing up their field report. The module on Research Design and Methods, taught in the second year, provides students with the necessary tools to plan and conduct an empirical study. Towards the completion of this module, students submit a project proposal for their field research. Each student's project is approved by a committee. Approved projects are awarded modest funding to contribute to the cost of travel to and from the place of research and other project-related expenses.

Students are evaluated on the presentation of their research project in the form of a report of 10,000 words.

Canada

USA

Programme
Structure

Students have carried out field projects in:

UK
Switzerland
Morocco
Mali
Lebanon
Syria
Egypt
Uganda
Kenya
Tanzania
Kyrgyzstan
Tajikistan
Turkey
Iran
Pakistan
Yemen
India
China
Japan
Malaysia
Australia

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Programme
Structure

Third Year Master's degree

Students spend the third year studying for a Master's degree at a UK university in a subject area that resonates with the aims of the Graduate Programme. Students receive guidance and support in selecting their third-year programmes and these choices need to be approved by the Department of Graduate Studies. The IIS may also invite third-year students to return to the IIS to present their work. Degrees from UK universities are recognized by institutions and companies around the world.

Universities students have attended

- University of Oxford
- University of Cambridge
- London School of Economics
- Other
- University of Sussex
- King's College London
- University College London
- London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine
- University of Edinburgh
- SOAS
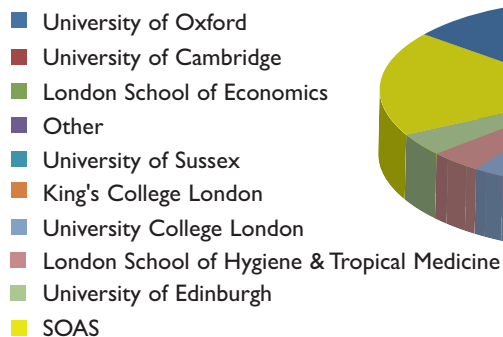
Third-year disciplines students have pursued

- Education
- Development Studies
- Law/Economics
- International Relations/Politics
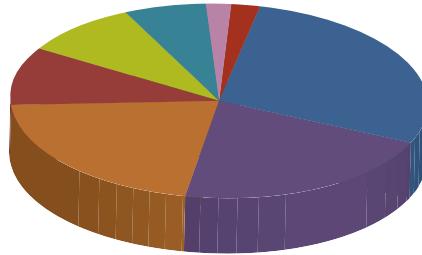- Social Sciences
- Islamic/Middle Eastern Studies
- Media
- Other

Programme
Structure

Career pathways followed by alumni

- Academia
- Development (including AKDN)
- Private Sector
- Education
- Jamati institutions
- Government
- Religious Education
- Health services

Doctoral Scholarships

For those interested in deepening their analysis and contributing intellectually to the academic world, as well as to the IIS and the Ismaili community, the IIS offers scholarships to pursue studies at doctoral level. The IIS has awarded more than 40 Doctoral Scholarships since 1997, mostly to graduates of GPISH. There is a great need for research in areas that are traditionally considered part of Islamic studies. Among these, the most relevant to the Institute's research needs are Ismaili studies, the wider Shi'i studies, Qur'anic studies, Islamic law and education. In addition, the scholarships are also open to any areas in which Islam can be analysed in one of its various manifestations (historical, theological, philosophical, legal, educational, political, ritual, cultural, etc.). Research can be conducted from any of the various perspectives and disciplines related to the humanities, including, for instance, anthropology and related disciplines, arts and material culture, digital humanities, education, literature, ethnomusicology, philosophy, political science or sociology, to name but a few. Both applications focusing on historical studies as well as those concentrating on contemporary studies are considered. Research may be focused on any region of the Muslim world. For more information, see http://iis.ac.uk/graduate-studies/doctoral-scholarships

Please note that undertaking GPISH does not entitle students to residency or employment in the UK.

Programme
Structure

Faculty

The faculty comprises lecturers who have made significant contributions to scholarship and are engaged in innovative research projects in their respective fields. Past and current lecturers include IIS and visiting scholars from leading international academic institutions:

Professor Kamal Abu-Deeb
Professor Ali Asani
Dr Omar Ali-de-Unzaga
Dr Stephen Burge
Dr Maria de Cillis
Dr Farhad Daftary
Dr Aziz Esmail
Dr Elizabeth Fowden
Professor Garth Fowden
Dr Laila Halani
Dr Shainool Jiwa
Dr Christie Johnson
Dr Tullio Lobetti

Dr Sharmina Mawani
Dr Toby Mayer
Dr Orkhan Mir-Kasimov
Dr Gurdofarid Miskinzoda
Dr Marodsilton Muborakshoeva
Mr Abdul J. Muhammad
Dr Anjoom Mukadam
Mr Wael Odeh
Dr Farid Panjwani
Dr Daryoush Mohammad Poor
Dr Maryam Rezaee
Dr Saeed Zeydabadi-Nejad

Please note not all lecturers teach every year

GPISH Extension Programme

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

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

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

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

Academic and Student Services

Academic Support

There are several ways that students are given academic support throughout their two-year study at the IIS.

Pre-sessional and In-sessional Academic Skills courses

Most students who have not had an experience of studying in an English-speaking country are enrolled on a pre-sessional language course, the period of study being dependent on the language test scores achieved. Those with the minimum required UKVI IELTS scores are normally enrolled on a 4- to 12-week presessional course. Some pre- and in-sessional Academic Skills classes will also be timetabled at the IIS for all students at the start of the first term. This is to orient students to the academic conventions of the IIS and enhance students' skills in this area prior to submission of the first assignments. Other sessions may be scheduled by the Academic Support Team according to need and upon request (see below for details).

In-house Support

Includes one-to-one sessions with individual Academic Advisers, lecturers and the Academic Support Team at the IIS. All students are allocated an Academic Adviser at the IIS, who will track and monitor their academic progress. Academic Advisers act as mentors and provide students with appropriate support throughout the programme.

Students who need additional support will be able to meet regularly with the IIS' Academic Support Team. A member of the Academic Support Team will work with students to determine the type of support they need. This 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 open to all students throughout their period of study at the IIS, subject to availability.

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

- **Writing Support**
  In addition to consultations with the Academic Support Team, the following are the main forms of writing support that are available:
  - an academic writing guide on Moodle (the IIS virtual learning environment)
  - an online writing support website

The IIS–ISMC Library

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

The Library include significant printed collection of Ismaili material which comprises a rare and special material and unpublished theses. At the heart of the rare books collection is a set of Post-Tanzimat Ottoman publications, as well as items from the personal collections of scholars, such as the leading German scholar Annemarie Schimmel (1922–2003), the late scholar of Persian literature Peter Avery (1923–2008) and the archive of the late Mohammad Arkoun (1928–2010).

Besides its rare and special collection, the Library has core collections in Islamic studies and Muslim civilisations comprising a total of nearly 35,000 volumes. Whereas the Ismaili holdings provide a specialised focus, the general collection has been planned on the basis of need, reflecting the academic and research activities of the two Institutes.

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

To ensure you get the most from the resources, the Library offers practical sessions and one-to-one help. These include an induction, practical skills sessions on various resources as well as sessions on how to use the Library's online catalogue. To support the academic needs of the IIS' academic community, the Library also provides an inter-lending and Document Delivery Service for items that cannot be fulfilled by other means. Requests can be made for any item that is not held in the Library including books, journal articles, theses and the like.

Students also have access to specialised library collections in Islamic studies at SOAS, University of London; Senate House; and the British Library.

Conference Fund

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

IT Facilities and Support

The IIS provides Mac and PC-based general computing facilities, including word processing software, email applications and internet access. The IIS building is WiFi enabled. Students are provided with a monthly printing allowance and are able to print remotely. In addition, an IT loan scheme enables students to purchase a laptop computer.

Student Services

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

Counselling Services

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

Disability Support

Students with disabilities will be supported to achieve equality of opportunity to engage with their studies. We can provide advice and guidance for all students with disabilities, help accessing funding for disability-related support, signpost additional support, and facilitate assistance to ensure that they can access all aspects of their course. Students are invited to discuss their needs with the Student Services Unit; all discussions are in complete confidence.

Academic and
Student Services
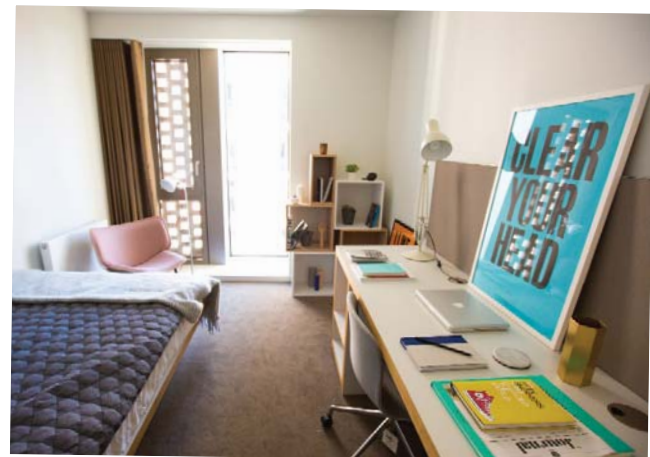
Accommodation

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

In each room, large desks let students spread out to facilitate different study habits; there is a double bed and plenty of storage space, an upholstered desk chair, and a lounge chair. Every room also comprises an en-suite bathroom. Wi-Fi is available throughout the building and each bedroom has a high-speed broadband connection. Each cluster has a communal dining area and kitchen that come fully equipped with all utensils. There is plenty of room to store groceries and cook.

Academic building (due to be completed in 2018)

The academic building has been designed by Pritzker prize-winning Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, who also designed the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat (Ottawa, 2008) and the Aga Khan Museum (Toronto, 2014). This signature building will feature a "ribbon of green spaces", inspired by the rich heritage of gardens in Muslim contexts. The essential concept is that each green space within our complex of buildings should correspond to the landscape of a given country or region of the Muslim world. The collection of gardens will be a unique and distinctive feature of the development. The relationship with the natural world will resonate harmoniously with the landscaped gardens, leafy parks, squares and pathways already welcoming the public across the King's Cross development.

It is envisaged that the thoughtful design and quality construction of the buildings will reflect the values of the academic, social and development activities of the Aga Khan Development Network and the Jamat, and weave these into the fabric of Britain's knowledge and cultural landscape. The halls of residence, the academic building and the gardens will in time become assets, demonstrating that, "*buildings can do more than simply house people and programmes. They can also reflect our deepest values, as great architecture captures esoteric thought in physical form*" (His Highness the Aga Khan, Inaugural Ceremony of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, Ottawa, Canada, 6 December 2008).

"Due to its focus on an interdisciplinary approach towards the study of Muslim societies and a strong research component, GPISH has given me the necessary theoretical and practical tools to pursue a promising career in international development with the Aga Khan Development Network."

Amirali Parpia, GPISH 2015 alumnus

Over 120
public libraries

100s
of bookshops

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

4
UNESCO World Heritage sites

Studying in London

London is home to more than 400,000 university students. Of these, over 100,000 international students are from over 200 different countries – that's more international students studying in London than in any other city in the world.

Studying in a global city has many advantages, including access to cosmopolitan cultural events and an international network of friends.

Exploring London

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

8
Royal Parks

150
theatres

London at a glance

Over 1,000
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, cafes and takeaways

Over 300
languages spoken in London

Application and Admissions Procedure

Entry Requirements
- A completed first degree of good standing from an accredited university, equivalent to a British Bachelor's degree.
- An acceptable level of English language proficiency. The minimum requirement is an overall band score of 6.5 in the IELTS (Academic) for UKVI qualification. Please see the Tier 4 requirement below for exemptions.

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

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

Tier 4 Student Visa Requirement
- In accordance with UK visa rules, the IIS exempts candidates from the English language requirements if they have completed undergraduate studies taught in the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, 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 that UKVI limits how long a student may spend in the UK studying at degree level (and above) to a total of 5 years. This may affect your application if you have already studied in the UK. Please promptly notify the Student Services Unit if you have any queries in this regard. For further information please visit the UKVI website.

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

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

How to Apply

For general enquires or to obtain an application pack, please email **admissions@iis.ac.uk**
Please make sure the name on your application is the **same as the name on your passport**.

Read the **guidance notes** before filling in the **application form**, and include the following:

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

Deadline: Completed applications, with all relevant documents, must be received/postmarked by **15 January 2018**. (For further information on the application process, including dates, please refer to the Notes of Guidance document that is available in the application pack.)

Mailing and courier address

Student Services Unit
Department of Graduate Studies
The Institute of Ismaili Studies
210 Euston Road
London NW1 2DA
UNITED KINGDOM

For complaints about the admissions process, please contact the Head of Department of Graduate Studies at dgs-hod@iis.ac.uk

Application and Admissions Procedure

www.iis.ac.uk/graduate-studies/gpish

For further information on studying 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