



[About the Library](#)

In 2014, the Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) and the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations - [Aga Khan](#) University (AKU-ISMC) established one joint library instead of retaining the two separate libraries that had existed hitherto. The merging of the libraries aims to meet the Institutes' teaching needs, by catering for their academic programmes and continuing to build a unique collection on Islamic studies and Muslim civilisations.

The IIS Library was established in 1979 and has since been developing and preserving a unique collection which serves a diverse range of students, researchers and faculty specialising in Ismaili studies, wider Shi'i studies, Qur'anic studies and education. The library's collection includes printed materials, from rare imprints to recent monographs. It has grown over the years through a steady programme of new acquisitions. Donations made by benefactors have been crucial as well. In its relatively short history, it has thus evolved into a leading centre and repository for rare and significant resources illustrative of all facets of Ismaili thought and tradition.

The AKU-ISMC Library was established in 2008, in order to meet the teaching needs of the ISMC's academic programmes and to build a significant and distinctive scholarly research collection on Muslim cultures and civilisations, as well as to cover Muslim societies all over the world. Emphasis is placed on the published contributions of contemporary scholars in areas and languages of interest to the ISMC, with a particular highlight on Muslim reformers in different countries, such as Egypt, Pakistan and Iran.

After the significant step of merging the two libraries, emphasis will continue to be placed on building collections of primary and secondary resources, published and rare materials in the humanities in general, as well as in the fields of Islamic studies and Muslim civilisations in particular, in order to serve scholarship in areas and languages of interest to both institutes.

Dr Walid Ghali was appointed as Head of the IIS-ISMC Joint Library in February 2014. On the occasion of this appointment, he stated that:

The vision for the new library is to see it become a powerful, leading library in London, providing a niche of resources in order to build intellectual leadership and offering access to invaluable information and knowledge, broadly in the fields of Islamic studies, while focusing on Muslim civilisations, Shi'i studies, and Ismaili studies. It is also hoped that the Joint Library will enable professional growth and provide rare opportunities for the academic and research community.

Looking ahead to the move into the new building currently being planned for the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) at King's Cross, the library is envisioned to become a central hub of the new complex and take a leading role in building and cultivating the academic and research community. In this new prime location, the library will be a very visible representation of the intellectual activities of both Institutes.

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