SECONDARY
TEACHER
EDUCATION
PROGRAMME

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

PROSPECTUS 2024

The Institute of Ismaili Studies

Contents

Message from the Director of the IIS

For 45 years, the Institute of Ismaili Studies has made significant strides in fostering and promoting scholarship on Muslim societies and cultures. Our mission is to preserve and study the intellectual and literary heritage of those traditions, with a focus on the contemporary as well as the historic.

Our students contribute towards the extension of a living faith tradition and help to shape and deliver on our mission.

The IIS's Department of Graduate Studies offers two postgraduate study programmes: the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies (GPISH) and the Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP).

STEP welcomes students who will teach the interdisciplinary Secondary Curriculum, also developed by the IIS, to young Ismaili students around the world. It 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 (MA) awarded by SOAS, and a Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip), awarded by UCL.

The MA is designed to provide in-depth study of Islam and Ismaili heritage within the broader dimensions of Muslim societies and civilisations. The PGDip offers a coherent teacher education programme that supports participants to become skilled classroom practitioners.

Our students gain knowledge and confidence that they take with them into the classroom and their work with young people. I am sure you will find the programme dynamic and rewarding and look forward to welcoming you to London and the IIS.

Professor Zayn Kassam
Director, The Institute of Ismaili Studies

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

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.

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 five 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 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) informs the ongoing needs of STEP teachers, supporting them in their ongoing growth and development, and includes:

- Ongoing individualised mentorship including an IIS facilitated CPD

- Professional Learning Communities

- Access to online and physical resources

- Funding for research

- Conferences and related activities

- 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 counselling or education research
- work as teacher trainers for primary level classrooms
- 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 research needs are: Ismaili Studies, wider Shi'i Studies, Qur'anic Studies, Islamic Law, Education and Manuscript Studies. 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 five-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

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 Master's 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.

**Nowrooz Ali Mohammadi
Afghanistan, STEP 2025**

"Before I joined the STEP programme, my educational journey felt limited in its diversity. However, this programme completely changed that! Through learning at UCL and IIS and gaining experience in various educational settings across the UK, I've been able to enrich my teaching skills. The feedback and guidance from both institutions have been invaluable, while delving into the history of Islam from new angles has broadened my perspectives. Being in the UK has exposed me to vibrant multiculturalism, provided expert support for STEP students, and granted access to world-class cultural experiences. Visiting the London Museum has been particularly thrilling and has added depth to my academic adventures. STEP has infused diversity, cultural immersion, and personal development into my academic journey, profoundly shaping me as an educator. With the support of UCL tutors and IIS advisors, my teaching practice has flourished, and I now feel equipped for success in my career."

**Rahila Zareen
Pakistan, STEP 2025**

"As a student who embarked on a journey of self-discovery and existential exploration, I have found solace and direction in the STEP programme. STEP isn't just an academic pursuit; it's a holistic and transformative journey which involves intellectual, spiritual, and social development. Transitioning from attending courses at the IIS and UCL to engaging in professional teaching within both mainstream educational settings and Bait al-Ilm of UK, allows you to interchange between the roles of student and professional. It encourages interactions with individuals of varied experiences and contexts. The rigorous academic pursuits and impassioned dialogues within such a diverse environment inspire me to explore different matters, of religion in particular and life in general, in greater depth. Reflecting on how far I have come since joining STEP fills me with immense gratitude for the opportunity to be a part of something truly meaningful. STEP not only shapes your academic and professional endeavours but also nourishes your soul and ignites your passion for lifelong learning and growth. If you too find yourself yearning for something more—a driving force, that makes life worthwhile—then STEP is the programme for you."

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:

Learning, Teaching and Reflective Practice
30 credits

IDEA

Principles of Learning and Teaching
30 credits

Leading Learning in Ismaili Contexts
30 credits

Teachers as Authors: Curriculum Design and Development
30 credits

Total: 120

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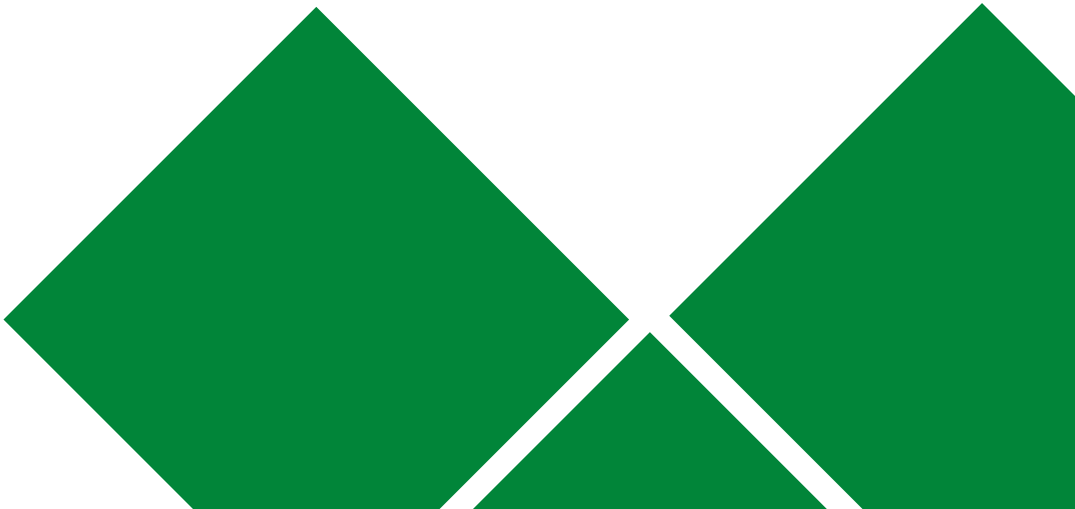
Teaching Practice

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 assigned a mainstream school placement in London or the surrounding regions and will follow a structured placement experience to inform their developing theoretical understanding of reflective practice in a different educational context. Working closely with their allocated school-based mentor, students will be supported and professionally guided to develop as teachers. Students are provided with personal, mainly humanities-based, timetables and individually supported to plan, support, and lead lessons. In addition, students will be encouraged to observe a range of teaching practice across the school, to attend school-based training and meetings where relevant, and to engage in a range of other school-based experiences such as educational visits and extracurricular clubs.

Students will be supported in their developmental teaching practice with formative lesson observations and written feedback, regular teaching reviews, and a joint UCL tutor and school-based mentor observation. Students' school-based learning is the foundation of the first-year written assignments, which develop reflective practice and enquiry as sustainable approaches to teacher learning.

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.

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, IOE, (UCL's Faculty of Education and Society), 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-Sha'ar (IIS)
Classical Arabic Literature and Thought; Ethics in Muslim Traditions; Qur'anic Exegesis.

Professor Ali Asani (Harvard)
Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures.

Dr Rosa Barugh (IIS)
Global Ethics; Postgraduate Teaching; International Teaching and International Programmes.

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 (IOE)
Teachers as Authors; Social Justice; Allyship; Inclusion & Wellbeing.

Professor Jacek Brant (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 Dagikhudo Dagiev (IIS)
Regime Transitions in Central Asia; Democratisation; Nationalism and Islam; Shi'i and Ismaili Studies.

Dr Zamira Dildorbekova (IIS)
Islam in Central Asia; Ismaili Studies; Curriculum Development; Research Methods.

Dr Guy Durden (IOE)
Teachers' Knowledge; Phenomenography/ Variation Theory; Learning/Lesson Study; Economics Education.

Dr Christopher Edwards (IOE)
The Production of History Education Curriculum Knowledge; Culture Wars; Critical Pedagogies and Constructivist Learning Theory.

Ms Zeinab El-Khateeb (IOE)
Interfaith Understanding and Citizenship Education; Intercultural Understanding and Global Competence; Research-based teaching and learning.

Dr Mary Fargher (IOE)
Education; Geography; Geographic Information Systems.

Ms Yvonne Fraser (IIS)
Applied Linguistics; English Language Teaching; Teacher Training.

Ms Polly Glegg (IOE)
Pre-and In-service Teacher Education; Pedagogies of Teacher Education; Coaching; Mentoring.

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 Kerslake (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 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 Amier Saidulla (IIS)
Islam in China with a focus on the Ismailis in Xinjiang, their history and culture.

Dr Katya Saville (IOE)
Bilingual education policy; School transitions; Multilingualism in higher education.

Mr Robert Sharples (IIS)
Applied Linguistics; Media Discourses Around Terrorism and Political Violence in North Africa and Western Europe.

Mr Colin Willetts (IOE)
PGCE Business Course Leader; Curriculum Development within Business Education; Mentor Training.

Dr Roy Wilson (IIS)
Applied Language Studies; International English Language Teaching; Academic Literacy.

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

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 results at the time of admissions, some students attend a pre-sessional course (PASHE) at the IOE for development of their academic English skills. Some will be invited to come to the UK up to one-month earlier to take part in In-House Pre-sessional Programme (IPREP) at the IIS for academic skills enhancement in advance of starting STEP. 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 (ASST) 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. 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 and UCL email address and Office 365 that enables them to download MS Office on up to five devices for free, as well as having the opportunity to take out a loan to purchase IT equipment.

IIS Student Services

The Student Services team is 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 students get the most out of their 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 and the Academic Skills Support Team prior to arrival in order to ensure needs are recognised and accounted for; all discussions are in complete confidence.

IOE Student Services and UCL Student Support and Wellbeing

As UCL students based at the IOE, STEP students also have access to a number of different resources and support from UCL, as well as support offered by the IOE Student Helpdesk team and the Academic Programme Office.

For more information about the IOE Student Helpdesk, please visit our website **www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/student-helpdesk/welcome-ioe-student-helpdesk**

As STEP students study as part of the IOE, they are able to access UCL's Student Support and Wellbeing Service (SSW). UCL's SSW service offers a range of support, including counselling, international student support, an interfaith service, support for disabled students and students with specific learning differences and neurodivergence. 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 and the IOE, the IIS also has a service agreement with Only Connect 2, a private counselling service, specialising in student well-being. 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 54,000 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 five librarians and two library assistants 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 90,000 ebooks and countless electronic resources including journals, databases, and reference works 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 online. 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.

Ismaili Special Collections

The Institute of Ismaili Studies holds a significant repository of special collections related to the heritage of Ismaili communities and that of other Muslim traditions. The Ismaili Special Collections Unit (ISCU) was established in 2013 with the aim to systematically preserve, develop, digitise and catalogue as well as study, undertake and facilitate research on the Institute's heritage collections. These collections include nearly 3,000 manuscripts in Arabic, Persian, Indic and other languages, coins, glass weights, medals and other historical artefacts, photographs and audio-visual materials, rare and special printed materials (including periodicals and magazines) and archival collections. ISCU Online Catalogue (special-collections.iis.ac.uk) includes information on about 4,000 items from the special collections housed at the IIS. The Ismaili Special Collections Unit regularly provides guidance and support to students and alumni for accessing as well as researching on heritage material.

IOE Library

The **IOE Library** is the largest education library in Europe and holds extensive collections of current and historical materials on education and related areas of social science in print and digital formats.

Visit **UCL Explore** search tool to discover 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, via library skills sessions, and in one-to-ones. Online library skills support is also available via **LibrarySkills@UCL**.

Visit our Subject Guides for information about discipline-specific 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.

Application and Admissions Procedure

Entry Requirements

- A UK 1st or 2nd Class Honours Degree or recognised equivalent. Applicants will need to satisfy both the IIS and UCL's academic requirements of a minimum of a UK Lower Second Class Bachelors (Honours) degree or overseas qualification of equivalent standard. Applicants can contact UK ENIC as well as check UCL's country specific requirements here: **www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/ graduate/taught-degrees/teaching- and-reflective-practice-pg-dip**

- 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 entry onto the Preparation for Academic Studies in Higher Education (PASHE) programme when it is taught face-to-face rather than online. Those who do not have a UKVI IELTS and are required to do face-to-face[1] 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 an overall score of 6.5 (with a minimum 6.0 in each component), or the standard equivalent in the alternative English language

tests listed on the UCL website, will be considered on the understanding that they will attend and engage in IELTS Retakes classes from January 2025 to mid-April 2025 and, if selected, will be eligible to receive a conditional offer and invited to retake IELTS in April 2025 (see further details below).

- Alternatively, applicants can submit scores from a range of other English language tests as detailed on the UCL website: **www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective- students/graduate/english-language- requirements**. Note that these must be at UCL's Level 2 standard; applicants achieving only UCL's Level 1 standard would only be eligible for a conditional offer. All tests must be taken no more than two years prior to the start date of the programme. Note that, as above, those who take one of the non-SELT tests given on the UCL website and are required to do face-to-face[2] PASHE would need to retake an accepted SELT as a condition of entry.

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

- Those with IELTS scores that would confer 'conditional' offer status, will be expected to retake IELTS Academic in April 2024 (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. Attendance and engagement at IELTS Retakes classes is mandatory for those who do not yet have

[1] Note that if PASHE is taught online only, non-UKVI IELTS is acceptable and UKVI IELTS is not required.
[2] Note that if PASHE is taught online only, an English language test from the above list is acceptable and a SELT is not required.

IELTS or equivalent at band 7 overall with no less than 6.5 in all subscores. Failure to attend 90% of IELTS Retakes classes may result in any potential offer being withdrawn, or in the candidate having to pay for the PASHE course themselves, if selected. Applicants who attend and engage in IELTS Retakes classes, but do not achieve band 7 overall with no less than 6.5 in all subscores at the retest will be required to attend and successfully complete the PASHE programme at 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, Tanzania, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, United Kingdom, or the United States of America.

- To enter a contract-bound commitment of a minimum of 5 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.

Please note that we are currently not accepting applications from candidates from the ITREB Tajikistan jurisdiction.

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.

Muscan Momin
USA, STEP 2025

My STEP experience has been like sailing on a ship whose destination is confirmed, but the journey toward the destination is full of low and high tides. As soon as you arrive in London, a whole array of tasks awaits you, from Induction Week to settling in a new country. From your first IIS module to your first UCL module. From teaching in Mainstream schools in London to teaching in BAIs. Although this experience is full of challenges, exhaustion, curiosity, learning, laughter, and tears, it is a privilege and a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Along with dependable experts of the ship, such as the renowned scholars, teachers, professors, and faculty, as well as other passengers of the boat, such as my colleagues from the C-16 cohort, the GPISH and ISMC program, this journey has become deeply fulfilling regarding intellectual, cultural, and artistic exchange. When I disembark this ship, I will not only have the necessary tools to facilitate the education of adolescents about our faith back home but also teach them to embrace diversity and to become lifelong learners.

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 2022 for a 2024 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/english-language-requirements**

* Online and long distance courses do not qualify

In essence, STEP is more than just an academic endeavour; it's a journey of self-discovery and exploration. I believe it offers the best opportunity for those aspiring to build a career in teaching and reflective practice.

Nahida Shakoor
Pakistan, STEP 2025

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.

Please note that as of January 2024, overseas students will no longer be able to bring dependents to the UK unless on a postgraduate research course.

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 (Child workforce) from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). The DBS checks will be arranged by UCL Graduate Admissions team in line with the UK regulations. The cost of the DBS will be covered by UCL but there will be a charge (£15.00) to get your ID documents checked at a Post Office (reimbursed by UCL).

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 that there are none. If this information is not in English, students will also need to supply an official **certified** translation of the document. The cost of this check varies by country and is payable by the student. More information on how to obtain these can be found on **gov.uk**. 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**

* This information is published long time in advance
of enrolment and it is subject to change.

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 21 October 2024.**

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.

Nabila Esmail
Canada, STEP 2025

"Words cannot begin to describe how rewarding this STEP journey has been. I like to think about this journey as a road trip to a place where the most beautiful adventure awaits you. Although rigorous and with bumps and roadblocks along the way, I have never felt alone through the whole process. The pre-sessional seminars online provide you with a map to follow before you embark on your journey. The Student Services team acts like the friend you know you can call in case you have a flat tire as you hit the road."