



Cambridge Muslim College Admissions Policy

1. Purpose

This policy sets out the policy, and associated procedures, for dealing with admissions onto the BA (Hons) in Islamic Studies programme, with the aim of ensuring consistent and fair treatment for all applicants.

2. Scope

This policy applies to applicants of the College's BA (Hons) programme.

3. Principles

- 3.1. The College is committed to understanding its responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law. In creating this policy, the College has referred to the compliance advice 'UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law', published by the Competition and Markets Authority (Appendix 1).
- 3.2. The College is committed to making its admissions processes accessible to applicants with disabilities. This includes arranging for the application form to be translated into alternative formats and putting in place appropriate support if the applicant is selected for interview and offered a place on the programme.
- 3.3. Applications must be made using the application form available on the website, which may be submitted electronically or in hard copy.
- 3.4. If any applicant is dissatisfied about the handling of their application, they have the right to make either a complaint or appeal (following the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy).
- 3.5. The College ensures that all applicant records, including application forms, references and correspondence, are kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. All information is treated as confidential between the applicant and the College, and any other parties (e.g. referees, medical practitioners, educational psychologists) the applicant has consented to. Only named staff members, with a legitimate need to see these details, will have access.

- 3.6. Since printed materials may have been published well in advance of the start of any course, the College reserves the right to make reasonable and necessary variations to the published contents.
- 3.7. The Open University signs off all printed and electronic publicity produced to describe the programme.

4. Responsibility

The BA Programme Manager is owner of this policy and is responsible for its implementation along with the College Coordinator (BA Programme).

5. References

- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) Guidance (Appendix 1)
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2 (Appendix 2)
- QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Part C: Information about HE Provision
- Programme Publicity & Consumer Protection Policy
- Assessment Policy
- Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Student Records System Users' Manual
- Disability and Equal Opportunities Policy

6. Programme Publicity

- 6.1. The College Coordinator (BA Programme) updates the Application Form and Guidance Notes and uploads the current version to the website, prior to the opening of applications.
- 6.2. The College Coordinator (BA Programme) works with the College's Communications team to advertise the opening of applications via the College's online platforms and mailing lists.
- 6.3. The College Coordinator (BA Programme) contacts potential applicants who have expressed interest prior to the opening of applications and invites them to apply.
- 6.4. The College Coordinator (BA Programme) ensures that all information available online is up-to-date.

7. Programme Enquiries

- 7.1. The appointed Admissions Officer will keep a log of the names and contact details of enquirers and prospective applicants.
- 7.2. The Admissions Officer will answer any queries from prospective applicants, forwarding to the BA Programme Manager any queries that require a more detailed response.
- 7.3. The Admissions Officer encourages enquirers, applicants and their families to visit the College informally prior to application. During these visits there is opportunity for the

enquirer(s) to tour the College, meet key academic, operational staff and current students and sit in on lectures.

8. Criteria for Programme Entry

8.1. English Language Skills

- 8.1.1. Only English speakers (according to the UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) list of English speaking countries) are exempt from taking an English language proficiency test.
- 8.1.2. For entry at Level 4, applicants requiring an English language proficiency test must pass an ACADEMIC IELTS test with a score of 6.5 at a UKVI approved SELTS Centre with a minimum 6.0 in all the skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking).

8.2. Classical Arabic Language Skills

- 8.2.1. Applicants to the programme are expected to have a sufficient command of Classical Arabic to follow the curriculum, working with relevant foundational texts in their original language.
- 8.2.2. Applicants' Classical Arabic language skills will be assessed at interview. Applicants will take the on-line written test delivered by the College's Arabic language partner, Qasid Institute. College Arabic language specialist staff will also conduct short, individual oral tests.
- 8.2.3. Successful applicants whose language skills are not yet at the required level will be expected to take the Prerequisite Arabic Intensive course, delivered by Qasid Institute, in Amman, Jordan. Passing the Prerequisite Arabic Intensive level is a necessary criterion for admission. Students are encouraged to use the College's chosen Arabic language provider, in order to keep the student body together. For those students unavailable to travel to Qasid Institute, the College will provide a list of providers in the UK that the students can access in order to bring them up to the level required for entry to the BA (Hons) programme, as Qasid Institute is currently unable to provide a distance learning provision. These students would be asked to take Qasid's online test once they are ready to be assessed.
- 8.2.4. Successful applicants with a level of Classical Arabic equivalent to or better than that required to pass the Prerequisite Arabic Intensive course will be offered a direct entry place on the programme.

8.3. Academic Criteria

- 8.3.1. UK applicants will normally be expected to have achieved at least three B grades at Advanced ('A') Level qualifications, or equivalent. The College recognises the Critical Thinking 'A'-Level as a valid qualification for the purposes of an application.
- 8.3.2. Preference will be given to applicants with 'A'-Level results in humanities subjects. A good performance in Key Skills and General Studies may also be an advantage.

- 8.3.3. Applicants who have completed 'A'-Levels do not need to provide GCSE results.
 - 8.3.4. Mature applicants who already have a first degree are exempted from these requirements and are judged on the relevance of their qualification as well as their degree classification.
 - 8.3.5. Applicants still studying for A-Levels should give their predicted grades and the best eight GCSEs achieved.
 - 8.3.6. EU applicants are expected to have a high grade in their leaving examination such as the French Baccalaureate or the German Abitur.
 - 8.3.7. In order for the College to be assured that its academic conditions have been satisfied, the applicant must provide copies of certificates of relevant academic qualifications at enrolment.
 - 8.3.8. If there is any doubt about an applicant meeting the academic criteria, the College may request to see any prior written work that would aid in assessing suitability.
 - 8.3.9. It is the applicant's responsibility to inform the College of any extenuating circumstances that may lead, or have led to, past academic performance that is not truly indicative of their potential. The College reserves the right, if deemed necessary, and with the applicant's permission, to request further information from a third party when an applicant requests extenuating circumstances for past qualifications.
 - 8.3.10. All students are required to present original certificates of academic qualifications together with their passports to the Admissions Officer, during Induction Week. Documentation will be verified by the Admissions Officer. If any information relevant to the application is found to be fraudulent or inconsistent with the application, the application will be deemed void, the offer of a place will be cancelled, and the deposit will be retained as an administration fee.
- 8.4. Age Criteria
The minimum age of entry is 18 years at the point of enrolment.
- 8.5. References
- 8.5.1. Two written references must be received.
 - 8.5.2. References are confidential and must be sought 'in confidence'.
 - 8.5.3. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that that references are received by the application deadline.
 - 8.5.4. Appropriate referees are those who have direct experience of an applicant's education or employment - preferably in a supervisory capacity.

- 8.5.5. At least one of the referees should be able to comment on the applicant's academic ability and record. The second referee may also be an academic referee, or someone who has known the applicant in another capacity for at least one year.
- 8.5.6. References from relatives or friends cannot be accepted.
- 8.5.7. Wherever possible, references must be written on headed stationery and/or bear the stamp of the referee's institution or be submitted from an institutional email address.
- 8.5.8. College policy is to discourage telephone references but are accepted where time pressures or the location of referees dictate that this may be appropriate. Recruiters should ensure that they are certain as to the identity of the person to whom they are speaking.

8.6. Immigration Criteria

- 8.6.1. The College complies with UK Visa and Immigration regulations governing the recruitment of international applicants.
- 8.6.2. It is a requirement for entry onto the programme that students hold full British or EU passports, or permanent resident status.
- 8.6.3. Non-EU nationals can only be considered if they already have relevant visa status demonstrating the right to full-time study in the UK. Such evidence must be shown and discussed at the time of application, and again at interview.

9. Recognition of Prior Learning

- 9.1. Currently, the recognition of prior learning is most relevant to competence in Classical Arabic, which is assessed in consultation with Qasid Institute with reference to the standards of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- 9.2. Other relevant prior learning may also be considered.
- 9.3. Recognition of Prior Learning is covered more fully in the Assessment Policy.

10. Application Submissions

- 10.1. The Admissions Officer acknowledges the application within three working days of receipt, by email, and stores the applicants' basic details, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Student Records System Users' Manual.
- 10.2. The Admissions Officer creates electronic and hard copies of the application forms and supporting documentation such as references. Electronic copies are printed and stored; hard copies are scanned and stored.

11. Shortlisting

- 11.1. The BA Programme Manager convenes an Interview Panel prior to the closing date, to review the applications and assist in the shortlisting process.
- 11.2. The Interview Panel should consist of a minimum of three people (at least one of each gender) including two members of the College academic staff and a third person, preferably from the Welfare Team, to balance the panel's perspective. Any member who already knows an applicant should declare this. All members should be willing and able to attend all interviews for the duration of the admissions process to maintain consistency and to ensure fair treatment of all applicants. All panel members will be made familiar with the admissions criteria.
- 11.3. The Admissions Officer will arrange dates for meetings:
 - 11.3.1.1. to shortlist applicants for interview
 - 11.3.1.2. for applicant interview
 - 11.3.1.3. to select the successful applications.
- 11.4. At least two members of the Interview Panel, including the BA Programme Manager, will meet to assess the applications to determine which applicants are to be shortlisted for interview, basing their shortlisting decisions on evidence that the applicant has met the criteria for entry.

12. The Interview

- 12.1. Interviews are arranged with the shortlisted applicants within one month of the closing date and take place at the College. The aim is to bring all or most applicants together on the same day, or, where applicant numbers are large, over two days.
- 12.2. The Admissions Officer notifies shortlisted applicants by email of their interview date, time and arrangements. Details of the email will include:
 - 12.2.1. date, time and venue of their interview (and instructions on how to find the venue)
 - 12.2.2. the format of the interview, which normally includes group discussions, the Classical Arabic language assessment and individual interviews with panel members
 - 12.2.3. the names and positions of those on the Interview Panel
 - 12.2.4. details of the Classical Arabic language assessment, and any other test or presentation they will be required to take; how long the test will take, its format, topic areas, whether a dictionary can be used etc.
 - 12.2.5. anything they should bring with them (eg qualification certificates, relevant visa status demonstrating the right to full-time study in the UK if a non-EU national)
 - 12.2.6. encouragement to contact the Admissions Officer if they have any particular requirements or to discuss the interview facilities (related to access to the venue or any other need related to a disability)
 - 12.2.7. an invitation to keep travel receipts/a note of car mileage in order to claim back travel costs (if applicable)

- 12.2.8. a deadline by which they should respond to the invitation to interview, confirming intention to attend or otherwise.
- 12.3. As a matter of best practice, the Admissions Officer will write to candidates who have not been shortlisted.
- 12.4. The Interview Panel will decide in advance who will chair the panel and what areas of questioning are required to cover all the elements of the admissions criteria.
 - 12.4.1. The Panel will agree in advance the question areas to be explored by each panel member to avoid overlap or repetition.
 - 12.4.2. The Panel may find it helpful to discuss their expectations of full answers to the questions, prior to the interview.
 - 12.4.3. The Panel will ensure that the same areas of questioning are covered with all applicants.
 - 12.4.4. The Panel will ensure that assumptions are not made regarding the expertise or abilities of candidates because of their academic or employment history.
 - 12.4.5. The Panel will ensure that interview questions are phrased so that they do not favour any one applicant or group of applicants.
 - 12.4.6. The Panel will use supplementary questions to probe for further information or clarification where answers are incomplete or ambiguous.
 - 12.4.7. The Panel will take care to avoid questions that could be construed as discriminatory (e.g. questions about personal circumstances). Information regarding personal circumstances which is offered in the application form or at interview must not be taken into consideration in reaching a selection decision.
 - 12.4.8. Each panellist will take interview notes to help the panel make an informed decision based on the content of the interviews. Such notes must relate to how applicants demonstrate their knowledge, competencies, skills, experience and expertise in relation to the admissions criteria.
 - 12.4.9. If an applicant is not in the UK, or otherwise unable to travel to Cambridge, a remote interview is arranged between the applicant and at least two members of the Interview Panel via Skype or phone, who will submit a full report to the Interview Panel.
 - 12.4.10. Applicants interviewed remotely will sit the Classical Arabic language assessment under self-imposed examination conditions.

13. Selection

- 13.1. The Interview Panel will meet following the interviews to select the successful applications, based on the application documentation and performance at interview.
- 13.2. The Interview Panel will also decide which candidates will be offered scholarships. The panel will take into account the applicants' (i) academic potential, (ii) ability to self-fund, as indicated by the applicant on the application form and discussed at interview and (iii) whether a scholarship has been requested.
- 13.3. Unsuccessful applicants are informed that they may request feedback by contacting the BA Programme Manager.

14. Offer of Acceptance

- 14.1. The Admissions Officer informs applicants of the outcome of their application via a pdf letter attached to an email.
- 14.2. Successful applicants are asked to reply by letter and to make a refundable deposit by cheque or bank transfer, to be received within two weeks of receiving the offer, which confirms their acceptance of the College's offer.
- 14.3. When an offer is accepted, the College and prospective student enter into a contract. The College has legal responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law, which are detailed in Appendix 1.
- 14.4. Applicants should indicate that they wish to defer entry on their application form. Applications for deferred entry will be considered equally up until the point of confirmation. Deferred entry is granted on the discretion of the BA Programme Manager. Normally, deferred entry is granted for one year only.

15. College Arrival

- 15.1. The Admissions Officer informs accepted students of arrival and enrolment procedures, accommodation arrangements, and details of the induction programme. This is done via two letters, as pdf attachments to an email.
- 15.2. The first letter is sent six weeks before students' arrival and contains details of arrival times, arrangements for collecting keys to accommodation, induction programme, payment of fees and deposits.
- 15.3. The second letter is sent two-three weeks before arrival and contains details of the accommodation addresses, what to bring, and reiteration of arrival details and payment expectations.

16. Application Timeline

Below is the timeline for applications and admissions the College plans to work to (a different schedule may apply for the pilot phase of the programme).

Early October	Applications process opens
31 January	Deadline for applications <i>Applications received after the closing date may still be considered, at the discretion of the BA Programme Manager</i>
Within one month of the closing date – i.e. by 28 February	Application interviews take place
Within three weeks of interview – i.e. by late March	Applicants are informed of the outcome of their application
Within two weeks of receipt of offer letter – i.e. by mid-April	Successful applicants must reply to the offer with a letter of acceptance plus the requested deposit
Mid-September	Students arrive for induction and start of the programme

This policy has been adapted with reference to All Nations College, with grateful acknowledgment.

REVISION HISTORY

Revision Number	Effective Date	Description of Change
00	March 2017	New Document
01	26 April 2018	1. Formatting change 2. Policy number assignment 3. Change of policy ownership to BA Programme Manager

Appendix 1

Student Admissions and the Law

Introduction

The College is committed to understanding its responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law. In creating this policy, the College has referred to the compliance advice UK higher education providers – advice on consumer protection law, published by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which sets out minimum standards that apply to various aspects of an HE provider’s dealings with students.

Publicity, Enquiries and Applications

In terms of the provision of information about the programme at the stage when potential applicants are researching and applying, the College has responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law, namely the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). This means that the College must:

- ensure that potential applicants are given up front, clear, timely, accurate and comprehensive information
- provide prospective students with material information – including about the programme offered, its structure and fees/costs. This should be given before they make a decision about which courses and HE providers to apply to. This includes information given in writing, visually and verbally.
- make sure this information is accurate and does not omit important information that could affect students’ decisions.
- make all information should be easily accessible – for example, via the website, prospectus, programme handbooks and at open days.
- draw prospective students’ attention to important and surprising rules and regulations, which should be made accessible.

Offer Stage

When an offer is accepted, the College and prospective student enter into a contract. The College has responsibilities as an HE provider under consumer protection law, namely the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs). This means that the College must:

- continue to provide important information to prospective students to inform their decisions about which offer(s) to accept
- draw prospective students’ attention to the College’s full terms and conditions, that these are easily accessible, and that any particularly surprising or important terms are highlighted
- provide prospective students with the necessary pre-contract information under the CCRs at the latest before they accept an offer of a place on a course
- ensure that, where any pre-contract information already provided changes, that the College has obtained the student’s express agreement to the change before or at the time of making the offer

- where the College anticipates that some things might change after the offer is accepted, it makes clear in the pre-contract information what could change, when, and how, so that the student can agree to this
- any terms in the contract that purport to allow changes to the precontract information are fair under unfair terms legislation.

At the stage of offer and acceptance of a place on a course, a contract is concluded between the College and the student. The College must:

- provide confirmation of the contract on a durable medium, for example as attachments to an email. The confirmation must include all pre-contract information, unless it has already been provided on a durable medium
- give prospective students notice of their 14-day right to cancel.

Student Enrolment Stage

The compliance advice published by the Competition and Markets Authority recommends the following practices at student enrolment stage:

- In principle, the pre-contract information given to students at the offer stage should still be accurate on enrolment. In any event, if it has been necessary to make any changes that affect material information (as defined in the CPRs), the College should ensure that students are told about these at the earliest opportunity – failure to do this may be a misleading omission under the CPRs.
- The College should ensure that students' attention is drawn to its terms and conditions, and any other rules and regulations, and these should be made accessible. Any important and surprising terms and provisions should be highlighted to students.

Appendix 2 **QAA UK Quality Code**

The QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B2: Recruitment, selection and admission to higher education, states the following Expectation and Indicators:

Expectation

Recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures adhere to the principles of fair admission. They are transparent, reliable, valid, inclusive and underpinned by appropriate organisational structures and processes. They support higher education providers in the selection of students who are able to complete their programme.

Indicators

1. Recruitment, selection and admission policies are informed by the strategic priorities of the higher education provider. Higher education providers promote a shared understanding of their approach among all those involved in Recruitment, selection and admission.
2. Recruitment, selection and admission processes are conducted in a professional manner by authorised and competent representatives of the higher education provider.
3. Higher education providers have procedures for handling appeals and complaints about recruitment, selection and admission that are fair and accessible. Appeals and complaints procedures are conducted expeditiously and in accordance with a published timescale.
4. Higher education providers monitor, review and update their recruitment, selection and admission policies and procedures, in order to enhance them and to ensure that they continue to support the provider's mission and strategic objectives. Higher education providers determine the frequency with which monitoring and review are undertaken.
5. Recruitment activities undertaken by higher education providers assist prospective students in making informed decisions about higher education.
6. Higher education providers make clear to prospective students how the recruitment, selection and admission process will be conducted and what prospective students have to do.
7. Selection processes for entry into higher education are underpinned by transparent entry requirements, both academic and non-academic, and present no unnecessary barriers to prospective students.
8. Higher education providers determine how decisions and the reasons for those decisions are recorded and conveyed to prospective students.
9. Higher education providers inform prospective students, at the earliest opportunity, of any significant changes to a programme to which they have applied. Prospective students are advised promptly of the options available in the circumstances.
10. Higher education providers give successful applicants sufficient information to enable them to make the transition from prospective student to current student.