



# The Islamic College Strategic Plan 2023-2028

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation in 1998, The Islamic College has been dedicated to promoting a sound understanding of Islam and serving as a centre of excellence for teaching and research in the field of Islamic Studies. Now, in our third decade, we continue to shape the future by creating a supportive environment for those who seek to acquire a good grounding in various aspects of Islamic Studies in the extended sense of this term. Moreover, as part of its mission and vision, the College has strived, from day one, to establish itself as a cultural-spiritual hub in the service of the larger community locally and globally through its various on-campus and online initiatives.

To keep its high standards of teaching, research, and pastoral activities and improve them, the College tries to adopt the latest educational technologies and adapt them to the requirements of its faculty, administrative staff, and students.

The College's courses, academic programmes, and extracurricular activities are designed (and constantly revised) in line with the intellectual, ethical, spiritual, and professional needs of all those who benefit from the College's wide range of services. This commitment is especially vital in a world in which changes are taking place with a bewildering pace and tend to leave individuals and communities vulnerable to unexpected and undesired developments.

In its relatively short yet impactful history of a quarter of a century of service to the community, the College has built a record of achievement of which it can be justly proud. It has educated hundreds of highly knowledgeable individuals, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, across a range of disciplines that fall under the umbrella of Islamic Studies, through a collaborative programme with Middlesex University.

Alongside its modern academic programmes, it has also introduced a unique and highly specialised Hawza system based on the traditional methods of teaching and scholarship in Muslim seminaries over the centuries. Students who have successfully completed the College's programmes, whether in the UK or anywhere else in the world, have each become a force for good in their respective societies as Imams, community leaders, teachers, political analysts, academics, journalists, and professionals in many other fields.

Looking ahead, the College is actively preparing itself to meet the challenges of the future, including the significant disruption that advances in Generative AI Technologies (GAITs) have brought to the academic landscape. In response, The College has made a conscious effort to design and adapt its curricula to equip students with the skills and critical awareness needed to navigate these emerging realities.

Until recently, the College enjoyed a very successful partnership with Middlesex University. However, financial difficulties and administrative necessities has compelled Middlesex University to radically change its approach to academic partnership. As a result, the College has resolved to draw on its academic and institutional strengths to pursue independent degree-awarding powers while also seeking new academic partners on a global scale. In pursuit of this goal the College has applied to the Office of Students (OfS).

The higher education sector is undergoing an unprecedented pace of change – a trend that shows no signs of slowing. The next five years are expected to present significant challenges. Our success will depend on having a clear strategy and credible, shared plans to which all members of the institution are fully committed. At the same time, we must preserve the qualities that have underpinned our

achievements thus far: flexibility, adaptability, responsiveness, credibility, a culture that embraces change and innovation, strong leadership and governance, a dedicated academic and professional staff, a forward-looking mindset, the ability to identify emerging trends, and the readiness to respond appropriately -while remaining grounded in our moral and ethical vision.

The following pages present an outline of the College's strategic plan for the next five years. This plan is a living document—designed to guide us through an environment marked by uncertainty and complexity, while ensuring we remain true to our core ethos and values.

# OUR AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The College is committed to vigorously pursuing the following goals, all of which are rooted in its core ethos and long-term vision:

- Continue to provide high-quality education in Islamic Studies at the undergraduate, postgraduate, and Hawza levels in our Undergraduate, Postgraduate equivalent programmes.
- Promote research across a wide range of subjects, including the study of Islamic ideas and ideals, the history of Islamic societies, contemporary trends in thought and practice within Islamic communities worldwide, and other areas of interest within the field of Islamic Studies.
- Introduce a variety of effective research methods and methodologies to those undertaking systematic inquiry into various aspects of Islamic Studies understood in its broadest and most inclusive sense.
- Continue to assist its students and those who are associated with the College, including all those who attend the College's monthly and annual lectures and conferences and extracurricular educational programmes, to become more articulate, independent, and flexible learners and develop a critical and rational frame of mind.

- Continue to provide an inclusive learning environment founded on strong moral and educational values, welcoming individuals from diverse cultures and backgrounds.
- Foster a culture in which all staff members, while maintaining their independent and critical perspectives, are fully, consciously, and willingly committed to the success of the College's mission and vision.
- Strengthen academic partnerships with universities and research centres around the world.
- Encourage both UK-based and international prospective students to benefit from the College's excellent teaching and research opportunities by becoming part of its academic community.
- Offer high-quality, accessible, and cost-effective educational programmes and courses to students and researchers worldwide.
- Continue to improve the College's overall graduate employability level in the upper level of UK educational institutions.
- Launch new initiatives, including schemes for appointing research associates and research fellows.



# BOARD OF TRUSTEES STATEMENT

This document outlines the Islamic College's strategy for the Third Decade of Excellence, developed by the College's Principal and senior team and endorsed by the Board of Trustees of Irshad Trust (the charity financing the College).

As an academic institution committed to advancing and maintaining standards of excellence in learning, teaching and research with regard to a plethora of diverse areas and topics in Islamic Studies, it is of paramount importance to clearly identify the aims, objectives, priorities and targets that are aligned with the mission of persevering and enhancing the status of The Islamic College as a global centre of excellence.

The academic, administrative and service staff of the College are all committed to implementing the strategy highlighted in this Plan. Success in achieving all aspects of the College's strategy for the next five years requires not only the full dedication of all members of the College but also rigorous and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of each and every item specified in the Strategic Plan.

Building upon the foundations of the previous strategy, this Plan also reviews the progress made towards earlier targets and identifies areas where

further action is needed to address outstanding challenges.

The Trustees of the Irshad Trust hold high expectations of the Management Team of the Islamic College with regard to their successful implementation of the Strategic Plan 2023-2028. Given the outstanding performance of the College's Management Team, the Trustees are confident that their trust in the Team's ability to achieve success is well-placed.

As an academic institution committed to advancing and maintaining standards of excellence in learning, teaching and research subjects with regard to a plethora of diverse areas and topics pertaining to Islamic Studies, it is of paramount importance to clearly identify the aims, objectives, priorities and targets that are aligned with the mission that specify priorities and targets are set, so that they can assist the Islamic College in achieving its aspirations and objectives of persevering and enhancing the status of The Islamic College as a global centre of excellence to be identified clearly.



## PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT



The Islamic College is a unique, pioneering, and dynamic institution, a centre of excellence, specialising in Islamic Studies. Our mission is to train students not only to become distinguished researchers and scholars and practitioners across various disciplines within Islamic Studies but also to competently and effectively apply the expertise they acquire at the College in whichever career path or walk of life they choose.

To achieve this aim, we are dedicated to fostering an environment in which academic excellence, spiritual development, moral awareness, well-tuned social and political sensibility, and the realisation of students' positive potential are nurtured in a supportive and inclusive manner, regardless of individual beliefs, ethnic origin, or gender. beliefs, ethnic origin or gender.

**Isa Jahangir, PhD**  
**Principal**

We place a strong emphasis on addressing the needs of each student, striving to provide personalised support to ensure their journey at the Islamic College is both successful and fulfilling.

The Islamic College views itself as an integral part of the larger community and, as such, is committed to acting as a force for good for all who share our ideal of making the world a better place through promoting knowledge, understanding and universal values.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Islamic College.

# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE COLLEGE'S ACHIEVEMENTS 2017-2022 AND ITS STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-2028

The Islamic College is proud to confirm that it has achieved targets identified in its previous Strategic Plan (2012–2017). This success has provided the stability needed for the College to advance further and acquire greater academic development.

Our Strategic Plan (2017–2022) provided the College with the opportunity to reflect on its strengths and weaknesses in order to further refine its mission and vision for the years ahead. Now, the College enters a new phase with the development of the Strategic Plan (2023–2030), building on past achievements while addressing new challenges and opportunities.

Our mission and vision, as endorsed by the College's faculty, staff, and Board of Trustees, is to transform the College into a global hub that serves two primary purposes. First, it aims to provide high-quality learning and research opportunities for all those seeking to develop or further enhance their knowledge and expertise in Islamic Studies. Second, it seeks to establish an ecosystem that empowers individuals and communities who come into contact with the College's hub to enhance their personal and collective skills, enabling them to live with dignity and moral and spiritual stability in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.

The College's top achievements since 2018 are as follows:

- The College has applied to the Office for Students (OfS) to acquire Degree Awarding Powers (DAPs).
- While the College's academic partner of the past twenty-five years, Middlesex University, guaranteed to continue supporting existing students, the College has embarked on an independent pathway. It has introduced equivalent undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Islamic Studies. These programmes meet the content and standard of

formal qualifications but are not validated by institutions with independent DAPs.

- In line with the anticipation of obtaining DAPs, the College has introduced two new MA-equivalent programmes: Islamic Philosophy and Quranic Studies.
- The College has expanded its academic provision through a range of standalone courses including Islamic Law, Theology, Islamic Finance and Banking, Academic Writing, and more.
- The College continues to maintain high standards of teaching and research. Faculty members have published scholarly books, articles, and conference papers, both independently and through ICAS Press and peer-reviewed journals.
- The Journal of Shi'a Islamic Studies continues to be recognised as one of the most prestigious academic journals in its field.
- The College's academic prizes, first introduced in 2015–2016, have gained strong prestige and serve as a powerful motivator for students to strive for academic excellence.

• ICAS Press has grown into a respected international academic press, particularly in the field of Shi'a studies, with more than 54 titles published since 1999.

- Since 2018, the College has expanded its co-curricular offerings through annual educational camps that blend outdoor activities with spiritual mentoring.



- The annual Shi'a Studies Conference, now in its ninth year, remains a flagship academic event, with proceedings published by ICAS Press.
- Monthly academic lectures continue to bring together international scholars, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The College has maintained a consistent commitment to interfaith engagement, notably through its ongoing participation in the Oxford Muslim-Christian Summer School, running since 2008.
- In response to the rise of Generative AI Tools (GAIIs), the College has developed and continues to review a policy guiding ethical and professional use by staff and students.
- The groundwork has been laid for a one-year Postgraduate Diploma Programme for training Muslim chaplains, with specialisations in prison, hospital, educational, and corporate settings.
- Plans are in place to launch a vocational course for training Muslim teachers for secondary schools.
- The College is preparing to introduce Research Fellowship and Postdoctoral Fellowship schemes for scholars in Islamic Studies globally.
- Given the current absence of a finalized academic partnership, the College will enhance internal academic governance and seek collaborations with institutions aligned with its mission.
- Investment in digital infrastructure and blended learning will ensure delivery of high-quality education across physical and online platforms.
- A new alumni engagement programme will be developed to build professional networks and mentorship opportunities for current students.

of ethical leadership, intellectual excellence, and public service in the evolving landscape of higher education.

This Strategic Plan (2023–2028) is designed to consolidate the College's academic independence, reinforce its research capacity, expand its educational offerings, and strengthen its social contribution. The College remains dedicated to upholding its values

# OUR FOCUS IN 2023-2028

The Islamic College intends to focus on the following areas in the next five years of its activities:

- \* Establishing the Islamic College as a global hub which pursues two major aims. First, to provide high-quality learning and research opportunities in the field of Islamic Studies. Second, to create an ecosystem that empowers individuals and communities to enhance their personal and collective skills, enabling them to live with dignity, as well as moral and spiritual stability, in an increasingly complex and uncertain world.
- \* Acquiring DAP as explained in our SP document.
- \* Introducing two one-year postgraduate diploma vocational programmes for training Muslim chaplains and teachers.
- \* Launching research and postdoc fellowship programmes in Islamic Studies.
- \* Increasing the College's number of newly recruited students and retaining our existing students.
- \* Increasing its collaboration with the College's Alumni in order to enhance the College's positive role globally.
- \* Increasing the College's visibility in the local community through initiatives inviting leaders of the local community, religious leaders of various faith groups residing in the neighbourhood of the College, and students who study in the schools around the College to participate in the College's open-day programmes or monthly talks.
- \* Further enriching the College's library with top reference books in Islamic Studies.
- \* Stepping up our efforts in finding new academic partners.
- \* Intensifying our efforts to find placement and employment opportunities for our graduates.
- \* Boosting the College's research activities by increasing the College's research budget.
- \* Increasing the number of academic books published by the ICAS Press
- \* All the above activities will take place in tandem with the College's ongoing routine activities, including teaching and mentoring students, holding monthly talks, organising annual conferences, outdoor recreational-academic camps and many more.

## DELIVERING THE STRATEGY

Strategic Plan (2023–2028) articulates our mission and vision and sets out a clear strategic intent with institutional priorities.

In delivering this strategy, we will:

- Continuously track our progress towards achieving strategic objectives, monitoring performance by benchmarking externally against peers and sector norms, as well as internal metrics, and communicating results to internal and external stakeholders.

- Develop an enhanced set of institutional Key Performance Indicators to monitor our performance regarding student enrolment, students' achievement and experience, teaching quality, research and

enterprise, staff empowerment and sustainability. We will also monitor a set of financial and environmental metrics.

- Produce annual implementation plans at institutional, faculty and departmental levels, detailing specific actions and outcomes.

- Ensure that staff are empowered to contribute to institutional objectives by aligning their personal objectives with those set out in this plan.

- Contribute to and implement higher education policy imperatives.



[www.islamic-college.ac.uk](http://www.islamic-college.ac.uk)

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