



Academy Of Divinity And Science
QUESTION. UNDERSTAND. EXCEL.

Prospectus
2024



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Vision

The Academy of Divinity and Science (hereon referred to as the Academy) stands at the forefront of a pioneering educational endeavour, guided by the tagline: *Question. Understand. Excel.* This motto encapsulates the Academy's ethos, inviting students to embark on a journey of inquiry and discovery at the intersection of Islamic theology, philosophy, and the modern sciences. The Academy is dedicated to creating a space where questioning is not just encouraged but is seen as the first step towards understanding and excellence in both personal and intellectual growth.

At the Academy, we recognize the complexities and challenges that arise at the confluence of faith and empirical knowledge in the modern world. Our curriculum is designed to provide students with a comprehensive framework that integrates the rich traditions of Islamic thought with the methodologies and insights of contemporary science, as well as its philosophical considerations. By fostering a critical and dialogical approach to both religious and scientific discourses, the Academy aims to equip students with the tools they need to navigate the challenging interface of Islam and science.

Curriculum

The Academy's curriculum is structured around four distinct but interconnected streams of inquiry, each addressing critical dimensions of the interface between Islam and science:

1. ***Philosophy of Science***: This stream invites students to explore the foundations of scientific inquiry, emphasizing the importance of the philosophical underpinnings of scientific methods and theories. It aims to cultivate an appreciation for the scope and limits of scientific knowledge, and its implications for understanding the natural world and our place within it.
2. ***Islam and Science***: Focusing on contemporary intersections between Islamic thought and scientific discovery, this stream examines how faith and empirical inquiry engage one another. From the contributions of Muslim scholars in the golden age of Islamic science to the engagement with current scientific debates, students are encouraged to explore the synergies between their religious beliefs and scientific understanding.
3. ***Proofs for God's Existence***: Engaging with both classical and contemporary arguments for the existence of God, this stream delves into the philosophical and theological discourse surrounding faith and reason. It provides a platform for students to examine the evidence and arguments for God's existence, encouraging a thoughtful and informed approach to faith.
4. ***Islamic Theology***: This stream offers a deep dive into the core principles and beliefs of Islamic theology and the application of theological insights to contemporary

issues. It aims to ground students in their faith while also equipping them to engage with the modern world in a manner that is both authentic and informed.

Each stream within the Academy is thoughtfully structured to guide students through a progressive journey of discovery and understanding, from foundational concepts to advanced theoretical and practical applications. The curriculum is divided into four levels, ensuring a comprehensive and cohesive learning experience tailored to the diverse backgrounds and aspirations of our students.

- Level 1 courses serve as an introduction to each stream, designed with the assumption that students come with no prior background knowledge. These courses aim to lay the groundwork, providing essential concepts, terminology, and frameworks that form the basis for more advanced exploration.
- Level 2 courses build directly on the foundations established in Level 1, delving deeper into the subject matter to help students develop a robust and nuanced understanding of the core themes and issues at play. This level is designed to solidify students' grasp of the fundamental principles and prepare them for more complex inquiries.
- Levels 3 and 4 transition students from intermediate to advanced levels of engagement with the material. These courses are characterized by a more in-depth exploration of specific topics, theoretical debates, and practical applications. Students are encouraged to engage critically with the material, developing their own insights and perspectives. Level 3 focuses on broadening students' understanding and application of the concepts, while Level 4 emphasizes specialization, research, and the synthesis of knowledge, culminating in a comprehensive mastery of the subject.

Each course within the Academy's streams is centred around a primary text or core readings, which are mandatory for all students to study. This essential material is succinctly summarized in Table 1, offering a clear overview of the foundational texts that underpin the curriculum across different levels and streams.¹

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Philosophy of Science	<i>Philosophy of Science: A Very Short Introduction</i> by Samir Okasha	<i>Understanding Philosophy of Science</i> by James Ladyman	<i>God, Physics, and the Philosophy of Science</i> by Jeffrey Koperski	<i>Philosophy of Science for Theologians</i> by Gijsbert van den Brink
Islam and Science	<i>Religion and Science: The Basics</i> by Philip Clayton	<i>Islam's Quantum Question: Reconciling Muslim Tradition and Modern Science</i> by Nidhal Guessoum	<i>Islam and Natural Philosophy: Principles of Daqīq al-Kalām</i> by Basil Altaie	<i>Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm</i> by Shoaib Ahmed Malik

¹ The Academy will also offer one-off courses that are not part of the main program.

Proofs for God's Existence	<i>Contemporary Arguments in Natural Theology</i> by Colin Ruloff Peter Horban (8 arguments)	<i>Five Proofs of the Existence of God</i> by Edward Feser (5 arguments)	<i>The Teleological and Kalam Cosmological Arguments Revisited</i> by Andrew Loke (2 arguments)	<i>Necessary Existence</i> by Joshua Rasmussen and Alexander Pruss (1 argument)
Islamic Theology	<i>Islam and the Problem of Black Suffering</i> by Sherman Jackson	<i>Principles of Creed</i> from Book 2 of <i>The Revival of the Religious Sciences</i> by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī	The Jerusalem Epistle from Book 2 of <i>The Revival of the Religious Sciences</i> by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī	<i>Moderation in Belief</i> by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī

Table 1 – A summary of the courses currently offered at the Academy. The table shows the primary references² that will be used for each level and course.

In the ***Philosophy of Science*** stream, Levels 1 and 2 provide a broad introduction to key topics within the field, laying a solid foundation for students. These philosophical concepts are then juxtaposed in the broader contexts of science and religion (Level 3), and theology (Level 4), respectively. This approach allows students to not only grasp the fundamental principles of the philosophy of science but also to understand their implications and applications in the intersecting realms of scientific inquiry and theological considerations.

In the ***Islam and Science*** stream, the curriculum begins with Level 1 by examining the broad interfaces between science and religion, including cosmology, origins, human sciences, and miracles, among others. Level 2 transitions into contemporary discussions within Islam and science, providing students with a current perspective on ongoing debates and developments. Level 3 delves into natural philosophy, focusing on how concepts like space, time, motion, and matter work across Islamic theology and contemporary science. The stream culminates in Level 4 with a focused case study on evolution, offering a high-resolution analysis of this particular area within the context of Islam and science, showcasing the nuanced and complex nature of this dialogue.

In the ***Proofs for God's Existence*** stream, Level 1 sets the groundwork by exploring a wide range of arguments for God's existence, including the ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments, alongside the argument from morality and consciousness. Level 2 widens the students' exposure to proofs of God's existence by delving into historical philosophical proofs, including those from Aristotle, Plotinus, Augustine, Aquinas, and Leibniz, and examines various dimensions of natural theology. The curriculum then narrows its focus in Level 3, offering an in-depth look at the kalām cosmological argument and the teleological argument, revisiting these concepts with greater sophistication. The stream culminates in Level 4 with a detailed study of the contingency argument, presenting various perspectives on the necessary being. This progression from a broad exploration of arguments to a focused analysis at the higher levels provides students with a comprehensive understanding of the rational grounds for God's existence, aligning with the analytical rigour of historical and philosophical thought.

² Students will be given other materials to stay updated with the latest developments.

The **Islamic Theology** stream initiates with a foundational overview in Level 1, introducing students to the Mu‘tazilī, Ash‘arī, Māturīdī, Atharī, and Falsafī schools of thought, allowing students to appreciate the various theological and philosophical perspectives in Islam. The subsequent levels delve into the progressive works of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, a seminal Ash‘arī theologian.³ Level 2 engages with Book 2 of *The Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*), specifically, to discuss the basic principles of creed (*qawā’id al-‘aqā’id*), contrasting al-Ghazālī’s approach with the popular creed of al-Ṭaḥawī. Students will also be exposed to al-Ghazālī’s pedagogical approach to theology. Level 3 expands this exploration through *The Jerusalem Epistle* (*al-Risāla al-Qudsiyya*), offering a more thorough examination of al-Ghazālī’s theological exposition. The culmination, Level 4, presents an in-depth study of *Moderation in Belief* (*al-Iqtisād fī al-I‘tiqād*), al-Ghazālī’s advanced treatment of Ash‘arī theology, providing students with a comprehensive understanding of its complexities and nuances. This cohesive progression from introductory concepts to advanced theological discussions enables a deep and nuanced engagement with Islamic theological thought, centered around al-Ghazālī’s influential works.

Course Schedule

Each course at the Academy is designed to last 8-10 weeks, with one lesson scheduled each week.⁴ This pace allows students the opportunity to engage with the content thoroughly, participate in meaningful discussions, and absorb the material fully. To maintain a coherent educational progression, courses at each level are offered sequentially over a single semester—whether it be fall, spring, or summer—beginning with Level 1. After completing Level 1 in one semester, Level 2 courses will be offered the next semester, and so on, with the sequence continuing through Levels 3 and 4. After Level 4, the Academy cycles back to Level 1 courses. Thus, each level is offered only once in a one-and-a-half-year or four-semester cycle. This systematic approach ensures that every level is taught in order and that students can plan their educational journey with clear expectations of course availability. The inaugural cycle will commence in the Summer of 2024, starting with the Level 1 courses.

Course Delivery

The Academy’s courses are delivered through online Zoom meetings, offering a dynamic and interactive learning environment. While these weekly sessions are recorded, enabling students to revisit the material at their convenience, the importance of attending the live meetings cannot be overstated. Active participation in these sessions is crucial, as it provides opportunities for real-time interaction, immediate feedback, and engaging discussions that are integral to the learning process. The Academy utilizes Google Classroom as its learning management system, ensuring a structured and accessible platform for course materials, assignments, and announcements. Additionally, WhatsApp serves as a tool for informal communication outside of class hours, fostering a sense of community and continuous engagement among all participants. Together, these tools create a comprehensive and supportive online learning experience, emphasizing the value of live participation to fully benefit from the course offerings.

Course Pathways

It is important to note at the onset that students are not obligated to complete every level of a stream or to study all streams. The Academy’s curriculum is modular by design, providing maximum flexibility to cater to students’ needs and preferences. Therefore, students are

³ Thus, this stream focuses on Ash‘arī theology. Other theological streams will be incorporated into the Academy soon.

⁴ Students will be informed about exceptions – that is, courses that could exceed 8-10 weeks – in advance.

encouraged to select their courses based on their interests and goals. However, the following are some general suggestions. Newcomers are encouraged to start with Level 1 courses to build a strong foundation and gauge their interest in advancing further. Levels 1 and 2 collectively provide a comprehensive overview, sufficient for establishing a solid understanding of the fundamentals. Levels 3 and 4 are designed for more specialized, in-depth studies. Students aiming to complete one or more streams can choose between two approaches: they may focus on one stream at a time before starting another, or they may concurrently take courses from the same level across different streams. In making this decision, however, it is essential to keep in mind the sequence of the entire program, as mentioned earlier in the **Course Schedule** section.⁵

Fees

The pricing for the Academy’s courses is tiered by level, starting at 200 USD for Level 1 and increasing by 50 USD for each subsequent level, up to 350 USD for Level 4. Completing a single stream costs 1100 USD, while the full program across all streams is priced at 4,400 USD. See Table 2 for a summative overview.

Component	Price (USD)
Level 1 (per course)	200
Level 2 (per course)	250
Level 3 (per course)	300
Level 4 (per course)	350
Entire stream (Levels 1 to 4)	1,100
Entire program (all four streams)	4,400

Table 2 – Summary of the costs involved.

Given the modular nature of the curriculum, payment is only required for the specific courses a student chooses to enroll in; there is no obligation to pay for an entire stream or the entire program upfront.

Certification

Upon the conclusion of each level and stream, and the entire program within the Academy, students will be eligible to receive certificates, recognizing their engagement and accomplishments. These certificates are issued in two categories: *participation* and *completion*. A participation certificate is awarded to students for their attendance and involvement in the course, acknowledging their effort to engage with the material. The completion certificate, on the other hand, is reserved for those who not only attend but also successfully fulfil all the required assessments associated with the course. This distinction ensures that the certificates not only celebrate the commitment to learning but also the achievement of the specific competencies and understanding set out by the curriculum.

Instructor

The instructor at the helm of the Academy’s courses, Dr. Shoaib Ahmed Malik, also serves as the Academy’s director. With a rich background in Philosophy, Science, and Religion, Dr. Malik brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from his tenure at prestigious universities and seminaries across the globe, including the US, Canada, UK, Germany, Turkey, UAE, Jordan, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, and Indonesia. His academic journey is marked by notable achievements, including graduating as the top scorer from the University of Bath,

⁵ Prospective students seeking guidance on where to start can contact Dr. Shoaib Ahmed Malik for personalized advice. Please refer to the email provided at the end of the prospectus for contact details.

UK, with a BEng and being one of the first Muslim students to undertake an MSc in Philosophy, Science, and Religion at the University of Edinburgh, UK. He is a Lecturer in Science and Religion at the University of Edinburgh.

Dr. Malik's scholarly pursuits led him to earn two PhDs, the first in Chemical Engineering from the University of Nottingham, UK, and the second in Theology from St Mary's University, UK. He is also completing his 'ālimiyya studies under the private tutelage of Sh. Ali Laraki in the UK and Morocco, among other scholars.

He is a Senior Fellow of AdvanceHE and a Fellow of the International Society for Science and Religion (ISSR). Furthermore, Dr. Malik serves as the Chief Editor of the world's inaugural academic monograph series and encyclopedia on Islam and Science under the auspices of Palgrave Macmillan, highlighting his leadership in the interface of faith and scientific inquiry. His book, *Islam and Evolution: Al-Ghazālī and the Modern Evolutionary Paradigm* (Routledge), was acclaimed as the best academic book on science and religion by the ISSR in 2022, underscoring his pivotal role in contemporary discourse on science and religion. Dr. Malik continues to contribute to the academic landscape with his ongoing research, articles, book chapters, and books, all of which are accessible in his [academic profile](#).⁶

Miscellaneous

The Academy is well-equipped to develop customized programs that cater to the specific needs of institutions or groups. For such inquiries, please direct your email to Dr. Malik at smalik@mishkahu.com. Additionally, if you have any questions that this prospectus does not address, do not hesitate to get in touch through the provided email.

Finally, the Academy's website – <https://divinityandscience.com/> – is currently under construction. It should be completed by June 2024, if not earlier. Until then, to stay updated with the latest news, courses, and events, you can sign up for the Academy's mailing list [here](#).

⁶ Other instructors will gradually be brought into the Academy.