



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

# ADMISSIONS POLICY



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

The Institute of Ismaili Studies is committed to preparing competent future leadership for the Ismaili Community, while also augmenting to its larger goal of developing a cadre of trained human resources who contribute to a better understanding of Islam in the contemporary world. The Board of Governors (via the OSG and STEP OSG) continue to provide full strategic guidance on the recruitment and selection policies which result in strategic briefings for all those involved in these processes. The policy relates to all postgraduate programmes offered by the Institute of Ismaili Studies. The Institute is committed to ensuring that no student with potential to meet the entry requirements is deterred from applying. Each application received is considered and assessed on the basis of individual potential. The Institute has a robust, multi-tiered system for recruitment (see tables 1 and 2).

The Admissions Policy for the Institute of Ismaili Studies has been formulated in adherence to the expectations set out in Section B2 of the Quality Code<sup>1</sup>. The Oversight Sub-Committee Group approves the policy, its implementation and any changes. The present Policy, as well as the recruitment, selection and admission procedures, are regularly reviewed by the OSG every 2 years.

## **1. General Academic Entry Requirements**

1.1 The Institute of Ismaili Studies requires all candidates to have completed a first degree of good standing from an accredited university, equivalent to a British Bachelor's degree. International qualifications will be evaluated by referring to UK NARIC. For applicants to STEP, UCL IOE evaluates the qualifications according to their internal procedures.

1.2 Applications from candidates with a wide range of appropriate first degrees are encouraged, and applicants are directed to check individual programme requirements. Applicants are advised to check for specific entry requirements given in the relevant prospectus for the year of application before making an application to either GPISH or STEP (available on the IIS website).



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

1.3 The Institute will ensure that entry requirements and selection criteria will include no unnecessary barriers for perspective students.

## **2. English Language Competency**

Applicants will be required to demonstrate competency in English language as teaching on the programmes take place in English. The criteria set by the Institute are meant to meet, and in some cases exceed, UKVI requirements.

### **1. Other criteria**

3.1 In addition to academic qualifications, when selecting candidates we will also consider whether an applicant is suitably motivated to complete their chosen programme of study, and whether the provision will challenge and benefit the student. Further considerations include whether the applicant fits the Institute's stated ambition of developing leadership and human resources for the community. The Institute will also consider academic suitability, motivation, experience and self-discipline. We will also consider relevant interests outside of studies, such as work or voluntary experience.

3.2 STEP also has additional compulsory requirements such as evidence of BAI teaching practice. These will be detailed in the programme entry requirements.

3.3 The Institute of Ismaili Studies adheres to compliancy requirements (e.g. the UKVI policy) when reviewing each application.

3.4 The Institute of Ismaili Studies reserves the right not to consider an applicant for admittance if the candidate has previously been withdrawn from the Institute on Academic grounds; has submitted fraudulent documentation; and/or inaccurate or incorrect information to the Institute.

## **2. Admission Criteria and Selection**

4.1 To ensure a fair and consistent admissions process, the Institute of Ismaili Studies will ensure that the following principles are adhered to:

- All programmes will clearly state their entry criteria, including academic qualifications, along with appropriate experience and skills required for entry.
- Entry criteria will be easily accessible through our website.



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

- Applicants will be informed in general terms on how they can demonstrate their achievements (both academic and experiential) and motivation to study.
- An offer below the normal entry requirements may be made in exceptional cases where there is evidence that the applicant's grades may have been affected by individual extenuating circumstances.

4.2 Where programmes include interviews or tests as part of their selection criteria we will make this explicit to candidates, and provide details on how the interviews will be conducted and the criteria used to select successful candidates.

4.3 The Institute may require candidates to provide additional written work to supplement an application, details of which will be specified in the relevant programme prospectus.

## **5. Responsibility of the Applicant**

5.1 It is the applicant's responsibility to provide complete and accurate information in an application and to notify the Institute of any changes or amendments to the original application.

5.2 By accepting an offer of admission, the applicant agrees to abide by the rules and regulations of the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

5.3 If an applicant is found to have provided fraudulent documentation or inaccurate/incorrect information (including failing to provide information which may have affected a decision) in support of their application to the Institute or UK visa application, any offer of admission from the Institute will be invalid and withdrawn.

5.4 In the light of additional information which was not available at the time of selection, an offer may be amended or, in exceptional circumstances, withdrawn. The Institute also reserves the right to correct errors where they have been made in the communication of decisions and offers. However, an offer made in error where all conditions have been satisfied will only be withdrawn with the applicant's consent.

5.5 The Institute reserves the right to exclude a candidate who is considered on justifiable grounds to be unsuitable for a place according to individual circumstances. This will also apply to applicants who are found to have been aggressive or abusive to the Institute of Ismaili Studies' staff or other stakeholders, including ITREB members or fellow students during the application process.



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

5.6 The Institute will promptly inform all applicants of any changes to their intended programme of study, no later than two weeks after such changes have been ratified, and in any case before an offer is made. Alternatives and options (when available) will also be communicated.

### **3. Decisions on Applications**

6.1 A formal decision is made by the Admissions Committee on each application and communicated directly to the applicant by Student Services via email. The decision by the Admissions Committee is considered final. An appeal on the decision may be made only if an administrative error has been made. In the first instance, an appeal should be directed to Student Services. The appeal will follow the process set out in the Department's Appeals and Complaints Procedure and can be obtained by emailing the Student Services.

6.2 An offer, whether conditional or unconditional, will be made in good faith taking into account information as supplied by the applicant and/or referees at the time of the application. In some circumstances, an offer may be conditional upon academic requirements e.g. successful completion of a first degree or non-academic requirements e.g. police checks which are deemed satisfactory. It is the applicant's responsibility to meet all conditions, academic or non-academic in nature, within the specified timelines. The Institute cannot reserve a place on any programme for an applicant who has not met the specified condition within the stipulated timelines.

### **7. Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS)**

7.1 All international students are required to obtain a Tier 4 student visa before they can study at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. International applicants who are offered a place on a programme will be given a CAS. A CAS is a unique reference number which is assigned and used by the UKVI. The CAS number will link to information about the applicant and their course of study. Every student will have a unique CAS number which is linked directly to their information.

7.2 The Institute generates a CAS via the UKVI Sponsor Management System, once an unconditional offer has been firmly accepted and the applicant's documents verified by the pertinent ITREB<sup>2</sup>.

7.3 A visa application can only be made in the 3 months prior to the planned start date. In order to apply for a UK student visa and register at the start of a programme, applicants will need to produce original certificates and transcripts. Applicants will be provided with more information about the process when the CAS is sent to them.



The Institute of Ismaili Studies

#### **4. Admission records at the Institute**

8.1 The Institute will keep admissions documentation for all students who enrol/register at the Institute for the duration of their studies and for six years after or until a UKVI officer has seen the documents and confirms that they may be removed, whichever is later.

8.2 Applicants are requested not to send original documents in advance of their arrival at the Institute as we cannot guarantee the safe receipt via the postal system. It must be however noted that international students will require the original documentation for the visa application process.

8.3 As part of the Institute's UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor License, the Institute of Ismaili Studies is required to view and maintain copies of all international students' current passport and visa details (valid for study at the Institute of Ismaili Studies) along with original qualification documents (including certified translations if these are not in English) on the basis of which admission was granted to the Institute (these will be listed on each CAS). The Institute of Ismaili Studies undertakes these checks as part of the registration process upon arrival and all documentation must be provided even when it has been sent to the Institute previously. The Institute will not permit an international student to enrol/register at the Institute without undertaking this process. In addition to the documentation required as part of our UKVI Tier 4 Sponsor License responsibilities, we will also file any other documentation sent to us in support of an application.

8.4 As part of the Admissions process, if an applicant is not successful in gaining a place at the Institute, we will keep their documentation for a minimum of six months. Within six-to-twelve months of receiving an unsuccessful decision all documentation in relation to unsuccessful applications will be confidentially destroyed/deleted.

8.5 If an applicant is offered a place at the Institute and declines, withdraws or fails to enrol, all documentation will be held for a minimum of six months. All documentation will be confidentially destroyed/deleted within twelve months of applicant declining, withdrawing or in the event of non-enrolment.