

February 2008/09

**Issues paper**

This report is for information

This report summarises the characteristics of Islamic studies provision, at higher education level, within the UK between 2002-03 and 2005-06 and the students that undertake such courses.

# Islamic studies

## Trends and profiles

# Islamic studies: Trends and profiles

To	Heads of HEFCE-funded higher education institutions Heads of higher education institutions in Northern Ireland
Of interest to those responsible for	Teaching and researching Islamic Studies; Interfaith relations; Strategic planning
Reference	2008/09
Publication date	February 2008
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## Executive summary

### Purpose

1. This report summarises the characteristics of Islamic studies provision, at higher education level, within the UK between 2002-03 and 2005-06 and the students that undertake such courses. Underpinning this report are data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and the National Student Survey. The HESA data are based on individualised student records which contain student attributes, whereas the National Student Survey data are created from feedback given by final year undergraduates on their student experience.

### Key points

2. The analysis is intended to give an indicative overview of Islamic studies provision within UK higher education institution, in order to provide a context to HEFCE's work going forward. The data provide only an incomplete picture of the range and scope of Islamic studies provision in the UK. There are two main reasons for this:

- a. Data returned to HESA by universities allow us to identify students studying named Islamic studies courses but not those studying other courses with some Islamic studies content.
- b. Students undertaking courses or programmes in Islamic studies may be reported as undertaking theology and religious studies; international relations; area studies; or sociology - in fact Islamic studies can be found, and studied, within the broad range of disciplines and approaches in the social sciences and humanities. If Islamic studies students are reported to HESA as having undertaken sociology, say, we will be unable to identify them except where Islamic studies is named as a component of their course (for example 'Islam and international relations').

Nevertheless, the data underpinning this report are the best data currently available to HEFCE or any other agency in the UK.

3. With all this in mind, we find that:

a. Across the UK the number of students on Islamic studies programmes rose by 12 per cent between 2002-03 and 2005-06. This compares to a 7 per cent rise across all subjects of study<sup>1</sup>. A total of 635 students were studying Islamic studies (across all years of study) in 2005-06, 188 of these at first degree level.

b. From the 2005-06 cohort, we conclude that undergraduate students are mainly female and postgraduate students are mainly male. Most of the male postgraduates had not studied the subject before and most of them had not previously studied in UK higher education (HE). Of the 173 male postgraduate students in 2005-06, we find that, prior to commencing their study, 36 per cent had undertaken previous study on non-Islamic studies programmes at an earlier date; 21 per cent were not domiciled in the UK or their highest qualification was from outside the UK.

c. In the academic year 2005-06, the course with the most postgraduate students is Arabic and Islamic studies at University of Exeter (53 students). Amongst first degree programmes, Islamic studies at University of Birmingham has the most students (62 students).

d. Forty-three per cent of students studying Islamic studies programmes were identified as Asian/Asian British. This compares with the 8 per cent of students across all subjects of study and 5 per cent for subjects related to Islamic studies, in the academic year 2005-06.

e. From the National Student Survey, we find that there were only 72 responses from those studying Islamic studies across the three years of the survey so it is difficult to draw any robust conclusions. This compares with 2,571 responses from students studying theology and religious studies. With the small response rate for Islamic studies in mind, we find that those on Islamic studies programmes have lower overall satisfaction than students studying historical and philosophical studies – an overall satisfaction rating of 3.83 versus 4.47.

f. When we look at Islamic studies across the regions and countries of the United Kingdom, we find that the Midlands has 25 per cent of total provision (158 students across all levels of study) while the London region has 16 per cent of the UK's total provision. Scotland and Wales have the largest proportion of Islamic studies postgraduate students: 82 students, or 29 per cent of the UK's total postgraduate provision.

g. There is an interesting link between level and mode of study: 'other' undergraduate provision (certificates, diplomas, Higher National Diplomas and Certificates (HNDs, HNCs),

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<sup>1</sup> Students in Higher Education 2002/03 and 2005/05 published by the Higher Education Statistics Agency.

foundation degrees and institutional credits) is predominantly studied part-time (93 per cent), whereas at first degree level virtually all students study full-time (98 per cent of students).

h. The data do not show us the levels of staffing in the subject as this is not recorded to the level needed for an accurate analysis.

i. Relatively few students with a first degree in Islamic studies responded to the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education survey - around 50 each year over the years 2002-03 to 2005-06. Such small numbers make it difficult to draw any reliable conclusions from the data. Because of this we have not undertaken any further analysis considering, for example, employment status six months after graduation or whether Islamic studies is required for employment.

### **Action required**

4. This report is for information.

## **Introduction**

5. The Government designated Islamic studies a strategically important subject in June 2007. We are developing a programme of work to support this field and note the analysis and recommendations in the report, 'Islam at Universities in England' submitted by Dr Attaulah Siddiqui to the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education ( web ref: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/publications/pdf/Updated%20Dr%20Siddiqui%20Report.pdf>). Further details about HEFCE's programme of work to support strategically important and vulnerable subjects are available on the HEFCE web-site under About us/ Strategically important subjects.

6. The analysis is intended to give an indicative overview of Islamic studies provision within UK higher education institutions (HEIs). This report falls into three main parts. The first describes the sources of information used within the report. The second part aims to identify the characteristics of Islamic studies students. And the final part considers the experience of Islamic studies students as reported in the National Student Survey.

## **Sources and definitions**

### **Data sources**

7. For the characteristics of Islamic studies students, data are drawn from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) individualised student records for 2002-03 to 2005-06. HESA has responsibility for integrating statistical data collection across all publicly-funded UK HEIs. As far as possible, the aim has been to generate a single record that can be applied to all institutions throughout the UK. The student records contain data on the attributes of students (for example age, gender, level of study and much more) within UK HEIs.

8. For information on the experiences of students studying Islamic studies courses, data are drawn from the National Student Survey. This survey is targeted mainly at final year undergraduates. It gives them an opportunity for them to give feedback on their academic experience.

9. We also examined data from the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education Survey (DLHE), a survey taken of graduates about six months after they have completed their qualification. The DLHE provides information about patterns of employment and further study or training. The graduates who are asked to take part in the DLHE are UK or other European Union (EU) domiciled qualifiers in first and postgraduate degrees and most other HE qualifications. Relatively few students responded to the DLHE with a first degree in Islamic studies - around 50 each year over the years 2002-3 to 2005-6. Such small numbers make it difficult to draw any reliable conclusions from the data. Because of this we have not undertaken any further analysis that considers, for example, employment status six months after graduation or whether Islamic studies is required for employment.

10. Analysis of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) individualised learner record (ILR) has shown no provision of Islamic studies programmes, at higher education level, in further education colleges (FECs). This may not reflect actual provision in FECs, but may be due to under-

reporting of FECs' Islamic studies provision in the ILR. We consider the difficulties of accurately identifying Islamic studies students in greater detail below.

11. This document does not examine Islamic studies staffing levels. This is because an initial analysis of HESA collected individualised staff information indicates that there are very few staff recorded as having Islamic studies as the subject of their highest qualification: around 10 out of 70,000 permanent academic staff in English HEIs. This low level may be due to under-reporting of staff with Islamic studies qualifications or a real phenomenon.

## **Defining Islamic studies students**

12. Students undertaking programmes of study in Islamic studies have been selected from the HESA individualised student record. Most of the analysis reported here is for the cohort of Islamic studies students in 2005-06; the most recent cohort available.

13. The main difficulty in carrying out this analysis has been to identify students on Islamic studies programmes accurately. A student's subject area of study is returned on the HESA student record using the Joint Academic Coding System (JACS) code. However, a student on an Islamic studies programme can be returned in several ways - for example, within the broad subject area of theology and religious studies or more specific codes, such as modern Middle Eastern studies or African society and culture studies.

14. Given the wide ranging nature of this discipline, and the differing ways it can be reported to HESA, we have found it very difficult to identify Islamic studies provision unambiguously. In this analysis we have used the JACS code associated specifically with the sub-classification of Islamic studies. A broader but less regular method of identification is based on searching for keywords in the title of the programme of study. So, for example, we have identified and included students reported as studying Islamic studies in their programme title, yet returned within the broad subject area of theology and religious studies. But we are unable to reliably (I've lost track of what it was originally – JS changed it) identify Islamic studies modules that are undertaken by students (institutions are not obliged to return these data to us).

15. Against this background, the approach we have taken for this analysis has been to ensure, as far as possible, that all the records used have referred to students on Islamic studies programmes. We are confident that those identified as Islamic studies students are indeed Islamic studies students. But, given the limitations we describe, this report inevitably provides an incomplete picture of Islamic studies capacity across the UK.

## **Analysis**

### **Introduction**

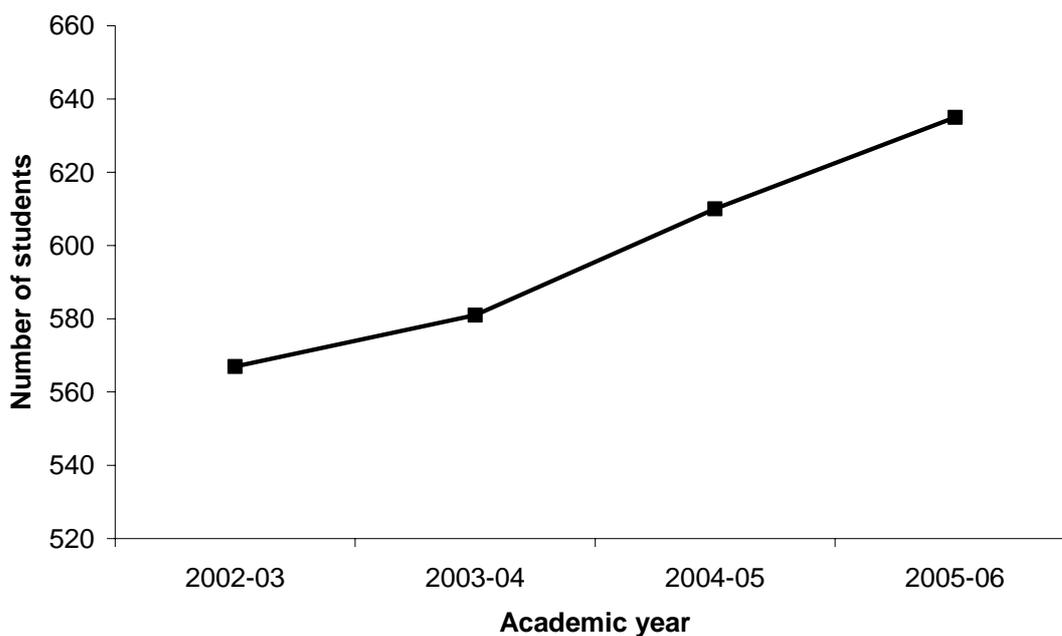
16. The first part of our analysis focuses on: trends in student numbers on Islamic studies programmes from 2002-03 through to 2005-06; and the profiles and characteristics of the student cohort on Islamic studies programmes in 2005-06.

## Trends in student numbers

17. We can not formally identify Islamic studies programmes prior to 2002-03 as before this point such study would have been classified under 'religious studies', which provided insufficient detail to allow formal identification of Islamic studies students.

18. For this reason the following time series details populations for 2002-03 through to 2005-06. Figure 1 shows that the total number of students recorded on Islamic studies programmes rose by 12 per cent, from 567 in 2002-03 to 635 in 2005-06.

**Figure 1 Numbers of students on Islamic studies programmes**



## Student headcounts at different levels of study

19. Table 1 shows our headcount of students on Islamic studies programmes in 2005-06 by qualification aim and whether they were identified using the formal JACS code or through analysis of the programme title.

20. The headcount is separated into one of three groups:

- a. Registered on a postgraduate-level programme at a UK HEI. These are referred to simply as 'postgraduate'.
- b. Registered on a first degree-level programme at a UK HEI. These are referred to as 'first degree'.
- c. Registered on another undergraduate level programme at a UK HEI. This includes students on programmes leading to certificates or diplomas in higher education, HNDs, HNCs, foundation degrees, or institutional credits. These are referred to as other undergraduate (OUG).

**Table 1 Headcount of Islamic studies students 2005-06**

Identification of programme	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Formal (JACS code)	74	26%	150	80%	111	67%	335	53%
Informal (programme title)	207	74%	38	20%	55	33%	300	47%
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100%</b>

21. Table 1 shows that in 2005-06 there were 635 students studying Islamic studies; 281 registered on postgraduate programmes, 188 first degree students and 166 studying for other undergraduate qualifications.

22. We have also examined the particular characteristics of Islamic studies programmes and the students that are on those programmes. We looked at the following characteristics:

- a. Most attended programme or courses.
- b. Institutions providing Islamic studies.
- c. Islamic studies by region.
- d. Mode of study (whether students study full- or part-time).
- e. Profile of the cohort of Islamic studies students by age and sex.
- f. Where students come from prior to starting their course (domicile).
- g. Ethnicity.

23. The following charts and tables report on the 2005-06 population of Islamic studies students. To provide context for interpretation and understanding, we have provided analysis of each of the above attributes at both a sector-wide level and for the broader subject areas of theology and religious studies and modern Middle Eastern studies. This analysis is provided at Annex B.

24. Reader should note that the headcount in some of the tables we present is very small (sometimes zero); any inferences drawn should be treated with caution. In these cases (where there are less than five students) we have grouped together some of the categories so that individuals cannot be identified.

### **Most attended programmes or courses**

25. In terms of Islamic studies programme, Table 2 gives the three most attended postgraduate, first degree and other undergraduate programmes.

**Table 2 The three most attended programmes of each qualification aim**

Qualification aim	Qualification title	Institution name	Number of students
Postgraduate	Arab and Islamic studies	University of Exeter	53
	MA Islamic studies	Birkbeck College	33
	PHD(R) Islamic and Middle Eastern studies	University of Edinburgh	20
First degree	Islamic studies	University of Birmingham	62
	BA (Hons) Arabic & Islamic studies	University of Manchester	31

	Arabic and Islamic studies	School of Oriental and African Studies	22
Other undergraduate	CEC Islamic Studies	University of Leeds	45
	Islamic studies Undergraduate	University of Birmingham	34
	Diploma/Certificate in Higher Education	Cardiff University	20

### Institutions providing Islamic studies

26. Analysis has shown that the 2005-06 cohort is undertaking 21 first degree programmes in Islamic studies at nine different institutions. In terms of postgraduate programmes there are 33 programmes at 15 institutions, while 13 other undergraduate programmes are undertaken at 10 institutions.

27. Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 show the distribution of provision by institution in terms of student numbers. Table 6 shows that University of Birmingham has the highest proportion of Islamic studies provision; 23 per cent of all Islamic studies students, and 36 per cent of first degree students (Table 4) are registered at this institution.

28. There is also substantial provision at University of Exeter and University of Leeds. Both of these institutions account for 11 per cent of total Islamic studies student numbers (Table 6), while 22 per cent of postgraduate students are registered on programmes at University of Exeter (Table 3).

**Table 3 Number of postgraduate Islamic studies students by institution**

Institution name	Number	%
Birkbeck College	42	15%
School of Oriental and African Studies	28	10%
University of Aberdeen	19	7%
University of Birmingham	46	16%
University of Edinburgh	30	11%
University of Exeter	63	22%
University of Wales, Lampeter	28	10%
Other Institutions	25	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4 Number of first degree Islamic studies students by institution**

Institution name	Number	%
School of Oriental and African Studies	22	12%
University of Birmingham	67	36%
University of Durham	13	7%
University of Exeter	9	5%
University of Leeds	24	13%
University of Manchester	33	18%
University of Oxford	7	4%
University of Wales, Lampeter	9	5%
Other Institutions	4	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 5 Number of other undergraduate Islamic studies students by institution**

Institution name	Number	%
Cardiff University	20	12%
Lancaster University	8	5%
Manchester Metropolitan University	22	13%
University of Birmingham	34	20%
University of Glasgow	10	6%
University of Leeds	45	27%
University of Wales, Lampeter	11	7%
University of Warwick	7	4%
Other Institutions	9	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 6 Number of Islamic studies students by institution for all qualification aims**

Institution name	Number	%
Birkbeck College	47	7%
Cardiff University	24	4%
Lancaster University	8	1%
Manchester Metropolitan University	22	3%
School of Oriental and African Studies	50	8%
University of Aberdeen	19	3%
University of Birmingham	147	23%
University of Durham	16	3%
University of Edinburgh	30	5%
University of Exeter	72	11%
University of Glasgow	15	2%
University of Leeds	69	11%
University of Manchester	39	6%
University of Oxford	11	2%
University of Wales, Lampeter	48	8%
University of Warwick	7	1%
Other Institutions	11	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Islamic studies students by region**

29. The distribution of Islamic studies students by region of institution is shown in Table 7. It shows that 25 per cent of provision is undertaken at institutions in the Midlands, while Scotland and Wales together provide the largest proportion of Islamic studies postgraduate students: 82 students, or 29 per cent of the UK's total postgraduate provision.

**Table 7 Islamic studies students by region of institution**

Region of institution	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
South	68	24%	16	9%	0	0%	<b>84</b>	<b>13%</b>
London	72	26%	22	12%	5	3%	<b>99</b>	<b>16%</b>

Midlands	50	18%	67	36%	41	25%	<b>158</b>	<b>25%</b>
North	9	3%	46	24%	34	20%	<b>89</b>	<b>14%</b>
Yorkshire/Humberside	0	0%	24	13%	45	27%	<b>69</b>	<b>11%</b>
Scotland/Wales	82	29%	13	7%	41	25%	<b>136</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes: Annex B, Tables B1 and B2 show the equivalent information for the wider subject area and at a sector-wide level respectively.

### Mode of study (whether students study full- or part-time)

30. Fifty-seven per cent of all students study on a full-time basis. When we consider the three qualification types individually we see three very different distributions.

31. We find that 59 per cent of postgraduate students study full-time. In comparison, the mode of study for almost all Islamic studies first degree students is full-time (98 per cent), while almost all other undergraduate students (such as certificates, diplomas, HNDs, HNCs, foundation degrees and institutional credits) study on a part-time basis (93 per cent). For related subject areas, 83 per cent of students study full-time, whereas across the sector 81 per cent of students study full-time.

32. There is an interesting split therefore between other undergraduate study, which is predominantly part-time, and first degrees, which are nearly all studied full-time.

### The age and sex of students undertaking Islamic studies

33. The profile of Islamic studies students by age and sex is given in Table 8. Young postgraduates (those aged 21 and under when commencing their study) have not been split by sex due to the small number involved. The overall age/sex profile for 2005-06 is similar to profiles observed in earlier years.

**Table 8 Islamic studies students by age and sex**

Age group	Sex	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Young (21 and under)	Female	8	2%	104	55%	19	11%	<b>127</b>	<b>20%</b>
	Male			23	12%	6	4%		
Mature (over 21)	Female	100	36%	39	21%	91	55%	<b>230</b>	<b>36%</b>
	Male	173	62%	22	12%	50	30%	<b>245</b>	<b>39%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>281</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes: Tables B3 and B4 at Annex B describe the mode of study for students in the wider subject area and the sector respectively.

34. Table 8 shows a particularly low proportion of mature females in the population of first degree Islamic studies students. This feature is evident in each year 2002-03 through to 2005-06. However, further analysis has failed to identify any variables or attributes that offer an explanation of this distribution.

35. Table 8 shows that in 2005-06 173 mature male students were registered on postgraduate programmes. Given that only 23 young males were undertaking a first degree, the large number

of male postgraduate students may appear somewhat anomalous. But we do find similar, although less pronounced, characteristics for the wider subject area: 63 per cent of first degrees are undertaken by females, whereas 57 per cent of postgraduates are male.

### Where students come from prior to starting their course (domicile)

36. Table 9 shows where Islamic studies students come from prior to starting their course (or their home domicile).

**Table 9 Islamic studies students by domicile**

Domicile	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
North	11	4%	35	19%	24	14%	66	10%
Yorkshire/Humberside			22	12%	48	29%	74	12%
South	20	7%	18	10%	6	4%	39	6%
London	69	25%	16	9%			90	14%
Midlands	22	8%	70	37%	34	20%	126	20%
Other UK	23	8%	13	7%	34	20%	70	11%
EU	12	4%	7	4%	10	6%	23	4%
Other Worldwide			7	4%				
Unknown	124	44%	0	0%	10	6%	147	23%
Grand Total	281	100%	188	100%	166	100%	635	100%

Categories are grouped because of small numbers in some cells.

37. Table 9 shows that the majority of other undergraduate Islamic studies students were domiciled in Yorkshire/Humberside (29 per cent), while amongst first degree students, the largest proportion were domiciled in the Midlands (37 per cent). The number of these students whose domicile was outside of the UK is particularly small; a total of 14 and 10 first degree and other undergraduate students respectively.

38. When we consider students registered on Islamic studies postgraduate programmes, 281 students in 2005-06, we see that almost half have a non-UK domicile; 4 per cent have an EU domiciles. The majority of home-domiciled postgraduate students are from the London region (69 students).

### Ethnicity

39. The profile of Islamic studies students by ethnicity is shown in Table 10. Analysis has shown that the ethnicity profile of overseas students is not materially different from that of home-domiciled students.

40. We see that in all cases the largest proportion of students are returned as having Asian or Asian British ethnicity; this ethnic group accounts for 43 per cent of all Islamic studies students and over half (57 per cent) of first degree students. This compares with 5 per cent of students with Asian/Asian British background ethnic background across related subjects, and 8 per cent sector-wide.

41. Table 10 also shows that a more than a quarter (26 per cent) of students are white.

**Table 10 Islamic studies students by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
White	67	24%	43	23%	54	33%	<b>164</b>	<b>26%</b>
Black/Black British	12	4%	0	0%	5	3%	<b>17</b>	<b>3%</b>
Asian/Asian British	89	32%	108	57%	76	46%	<b>273</b>	<b>43%</b>
Chinese	6	2%	0	0%	0	0%	<b>6</b>	<b>1%</b>
Mixed and any other	42	15%	21	11%	9	5%	<b>72</b>	<b>11%</b>
Unknown	65	23%	16	9%	22	13%	<b>103</b>	<b>16%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>281</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>100%</b>

Notes: Tables B7 and B8 at Annex B describe the ethnicity profile of students in the wider subject area and the sector respectively.

## **The student experience: National Student Survey**

### **Introduction**

42. This section reports briefly on the academic experiences of students studying Islamic studies courses.

### **Cohort for analysis of student experience**

43. The data used for this analysis comes from the National Student Survey which is a survey that is targeted mainly at final year undergraduates. The National Student Survey provides them with an opportunity to give feedback on their academic experience. The survey is commissioned by HEFCE supported by the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, the Scottish Funding Council and the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland.

44. Those surveyed are all students studying undergraduate courses (bachelors degrees, foundation degrees, higher education certificates and diplomas) are surveyed in their final year of study. A number of exceptions to this description are detailed below:

- a. Students on more flexible part-time programmes (whose final year cannot be easily predicted) are surveyed during their fourth year of study or at the point where they have completed the same amount of activity as a student on the full-time equivalent programme.
- b. Students who have withdrawn from study during the final year are included in the survey as their feedback is equally valuable.
- c. Students repeating their penultimate year are surveyed.
- d. Students who were surveyed in the previous year are not resurveyed unless they undertake new activity that has not already been surveyed.

45. The survey has been carried out for final year students in academic years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07. In order to create a large enough cohort of students on Islamic studies courses, the results from all three years have been combined in the results provided below.

## Overall satisfaction

46. The survey asks students the extent to which they agree with a series of statements about their course. Topic areas include teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources and personal development.

47. In total there are 22 questions but for this brief analysis we only report the outcome from the final question: 'Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course'. For this question, students can give one of five answers: definitely agree; mostly agree; neither agree nor disagree; mostly disagree; or definitely disagree. For this analysis, 'definitely agree' is scored as five through to 'definitely disagree' is scored as one.

48. Table 11 shows the mean score of students who answered this question split by the subject area of the qualification studied.

**Table 11 Overall satisfaction scores by subject area**

Broad subject area	No. responses	Overall satisfaction
<b>Islamic studies</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>3.83</b>
Others in theology and religious studies	2,571	4.29
History	18,055	4.25
Archaeology	1,827	4.23
Philosophy	3,521	4.18
Others in historical and philosophical studies	3,181	4.47
Medicine and dentistry	11,708	4.02
Subjects allied to medicine	31,787	4.00
Biological sciences	53,806	4.08
Veterinary science	1,069	3.98
Agriculture and related subjects	5,066	3.90
Physical sciences	21,711	4.19
Mathematical sciences	8,226	4.18
Computer science	29,963	3.86
Engineering and technology	27,980	3.92
Architecture, building and planning	11,506	3.83
Social studies	55,550	4.02
Law	25,692	4.10
Business and administrative studies	61,256	3.92
Mass communications and documentation	16,442	3.77
Languages	36,245	4.17
Creative arts and design	56,926	3.73
Education	21,567	3.98
Combined	10,358	4.36

49. Table 11 shows that there are only 72 responses from those studying Islamic studies programmes across the three-year period and so it is difficult to draw any robust conclusions from the surveys. It does suggest that those on Islamic studies programmes have a lower overall satisfaction score than those students who are studying other historical and philosophical studies (those in the grey box).

50. However this may be due to a number of reasons including the characteristics of survey respondents on these courses (such as the high percentage of students undertaking Islamic studies from Asian/Black Asian ethnicity, and the correlation between ethnic minority backgrounds and lower overall satisfaction rates in the National Student Survey); random variation caused by the small sample size; or a real difference in the experiences of the students on Islamic studies courses.

## **Conclusions and policy implications**

51. The data we have are the best available, but they provide an incomplete picture of Islamic studies provision in higher education. We are unable to say, with any degree of certainty, whether the trends and profiles we present here are representative of the totality of Islamic studies provision.

52. If policy makers and others need to know more then more detailed data are required. A first step towards better data is for institutions to report in such a way that Islamic studies can be unambiguously identified in their annual HESA returns. A separate sector wide survey is another option, and one which would help us identify research and teaching capacity, but one with considerable burden on HEFCE and HEIs. Response rates are likely to be patchy and definitions are a further issue. HEFCE and its stakeholders would need to consider very seriously the added value such a survey would provide, particularly given that surveys have been undertaken recently by Dr Attaullah Siddiqui and others.

53. We have not been able to identify any Islamic studies provision at HE level delivered within further education colleges. This may be to do with the characteristics of the data collected within the further education sector. We know that colleges play a vital role in helping students from lower social economic backgrounds progress from lower to higher level skills. The impact and role colleges play in helping Islamic studies students progress towards higher education is likely to be underestimated.

54. The National Student Survey suggests that Islamic studies programmes receive lower overall satisfaction than students on cognate disciplines such as theology and religious studies (although this conclusion is drawn from a small number of responses and therefore should be treated with caution). A factor in this may be the high percentage (43 per cent) of students undertaking Islamic studies programmes from Asian/Asian British backgrounds. We know that students from ethnic minority backgrounds have lower overall satisfaction rates in the National Student Survey. Work is in hand to find out why black and minority ethnic groups are less satisfied overall than their white counterparts. This research will be valuable for policy makers and others concerned with the future development of Islamic studies.

55. There is an interesting link between level and mode of study: other undergraduate provision (certificates, diplomas, HNDs, HNCs, foundation degrees and institutional credits) is predominantly studied part-time (93 per cent), whereas at first degree level virtual all students study full-time (98 per cent of students). An interesting research question would be to investigate how, and if, other undergraduate students progress in publicly-funded higher education and how they differ from those who undertake first degrees. We will investigate this further.

56. The fact that nearly half (43 per cent) of students undertaking Islamic studies programmes are from Asian/Black Asian backgrounds, when compared with 8 per cent across all programmes, is illuminating. Anecdotally we are aware that many faith-based programmes are studied by people of that faith. Understanding more about religious background and propensity, or otherwise, to study faith-based programmes would be helpful for those with an interest in interfaith relations (and would indeed be another valuable research project). As the data we hold consider ethnicity, and not religion, we are unable to investigate the relationship between faith or religious background and study in any greater detail.

57. Finally, and encouragingly, across the UK the number of reported students on Islamic studies programmes rose by 12 per cent between 2002-03 and 2005-06 to a total of 635 students. As Figure 1 illustrates, demand across the UK has clearly risen year-on-year across this time period. Data should be monitored year-on-year to see if this growth is sustained - at what levels of study, the regional picture and so on - in order to pinpoint any vulnerabilities in provision.

## **Annex A**

### **Cohort definitions**

#### **Original population**

The original population, for year X, is made up of students who fit one of the following sets of criteria:

- a. Recorded on HESA's individualised student record and formally identified as studying on an Islamic studies programme: JACS subject code 'V622' recorded in any of the three HESA subject of qualification aim fields; SBJQA1, SBJQA2, or SBJQA3.
  
- b. Or recorded on HESA's individualised student record and informally identified as studying on an Islamic studies programme: HESA field PTITLE contains the string ISLAM but is not 'MA Pre-Islamic Eastern Studies'.

Where there are multiple instances of the same student, only a single most relevant record is selected.

## Annex B

### Additional tables

The following tables are intended to provide context for interpretation and understanding of Islamic studies trends and profiles. Information is given for those studying in the wider subject area (encompassing theology and religious studies, and Middle Eastern studies) as well as for the sector as a whole.

**Table B1 Related subjects students by region of institution**

Region of institution	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
East of England	256	5%	307	4%	264	5%	<b>827</b>	<b>5%</b>
North	959	20%	1,497	18%	832	16%	<b>3,288</b>	<b>18%</b>
South	835	17%	1,764	22%	1,026	20%	<b>3,625</b>	<b>20%</b>
London	552	11%	945	12%	602	11%	<b>2,099</b>	<b>11%</b>
Midlands	387	8%	557	7%	407	8%	<b>1,351</b>	<b>7%</b>
Yorkshire/Humberside	407	8%	842	10%	310	6%	<b>1,559</b>	<b>9%</b>
Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland	1,493	31%	2,200	27%	1,812	34%	<b>5,505</b>	<b>30%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,889</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,253</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18,254</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B2 Sector-wide students by region of institution**

Region of institution	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
East of England	29,327	5%	60,613	5%	37,309	7%	<b>127,249</b>	<b>5%</b>
North	74,342	14%	204,247	15%	77,942	14%	<b>356,531</b>	<b>15%</b>
South	108,924	20%	336,358	25%	166,794	30%	<b>612,076</b>	<b>25%</b>
London	115,359	21%	199,781	15%	80,107	14%	<b>395,247</b>	<b>16%</b>
Midlands	85,776	16%	191,901	14%	74,692	13%	<b>352,369</b>	<b>14%</b>
Yorkshire/Humberside	41,424	8%	114,957	9%	39,437	7%	<b>195,818</b>	<b>8%</b>
Scotland / Wales / Northern Ireland	94,731	17%	230,810	17%	79,847	14%	<b>405,388</b>	<b>17%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>549,883</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,338,667</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556,128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,444,678</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B3 Related subjects students by age and sex**

Age group	Sex	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Young (21 and under)	Female	143	3%	3,589	44%	256	5%	<b>3,988</b>	<b>22%</b>
	Male	59	1%	1,505	19%	71	1%	<b>1,635</b>	<b>9%</b>
Mature (over 21)	Female	1,956	40%	1,545	19%	2,937	56%	<b>6,438</b>	<b>35%</b>
	Male	2,731	56%	1,473	18%	1,989	38%	<b>6,193</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,889</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,253</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18,254</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B4 Sector-wide students by age and sex**

Age group	Sex	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Young (21 and under)	Female	11,849	2%	451,805	34%	58,575	11%	<b>522,229</b>	<b>21%</b>
	Male	8,394	2%	383,893	29%	39,543	7%	<b>431,830</b>	<b>18%</b>
Mature (over 21)	Female	276,602	50%	287,233	21%	308,405	55%	<b>872,240</b>	<b>36%</b>
	Male	253,038	46%	215,736	16%	149,605	27%	<b>618,379</b>	<b>25%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>549,883</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,338,667</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556,128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,444,678</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B5 Related subjects students by domicile**

Domicile	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
North	586	12%	1,142	14%	775	15%	<b>2,503</b>	<b>14%</b>
Yorkshire/Humberside	328	7%	554	7%	333	6%	<b>1,215</b>	<b>7%</b>
South	818	17%	1,719	21%	990	19%	<b>3,527</b>	<b>19%</b>
London	431	9%	1,018	13%	809	15%	<b>2,258</b>	<b>12%</b>
Midlands	433	9%	958	12%	578	11%	<b>1,969</b>	<b>11%</b>
Other UK	748	15%	2,065	25%	990	19%	<b>3,803</b>	<b>21%</b>
EU	283	6%	207	3%	386	7%	<b>876</b>	<b>5%</b>
Other Worldwide	1,168	24%	271	3%	168	3%	<b>1,607</b>	<b>9%</b>
Unknown	94	2%	178	2%	224	4%	<b>496</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,889</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,253</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18,254</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B6 Sector-wide students by domicile**

Domicile	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
North	49,344	9%	167,250	12%	82,115	15%	<b>298,709</b>	<b>12%</b>
Yorkshire/Humberside	23,463	4%	80,201	6%	42,162	8%	<b>145,826</b>	<b>6%</b>
South	73,263	13%	249,687	19%	98,208	18%	<b>421,158</b>	<b>17%</b>
London	61,827	11%	179,462	13%	69,021	12%	<b>310,310</b>	<b>13%</b>
Midlands	45,750	8%	171,997	13%	70,839	13%	<b>288,586</b>	<b>12%</b>
Other UK	80,972	15%	312,169	23%	126,285	23%	<b>519,426</b>	<b>21%</b>
EU	54,911	10%	56,993	4%	24,369	4%	<b>136,273</b>	<b>6%</b>
Other worldwide	150,189	27%	110,533	8%	26,990	5%	<b>287,712</b>	<b>12%</b>
Unknown	10,164	2%	10,375	1%	16,139	3%	<b>36,678</b>	<b>2%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>549,883</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,338,667</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556,128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,444,678</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B7 Related subjects students by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	3,438	70%	6,722	83%	4,053	77%	<b>14,213</b>	<b>78%</b>
Black/Black British	215	4%	205	3%	211	4%	<b>631</b>	<b>3%</b>
Asian/Asian British	306	6%	399	5%	182	3%	<b>887</b>	<b>5%</b>
Chinese	41	1%	17	0%	12	0%	<b>70</b>	<b>0%</b>
Mixed and any other	191	4%	336	4%	88	2%	<b>615</b>	<b>3%</b>
Unknown	698	14%	433	5%	707	13%	<b>1,838</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,889</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,112</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>5,253</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>18,254</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table B8 Sector-wide students by ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Postgraduate		First degree		OUG		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
White	319,480	58%	972,708	73%	407,076	73%	<b>1,699,264</b>	<b>70%</b>
Black/Black British	23,787	4%	61,511	5%	31,165	6%	<b>116,463</b>	<b>5%</b>
Asian/Asian British	49,555	9%	115,143	9%	26,740	5%	<b>191,438</b>	<b>8%</b>
Chinese	31,117	6%	34,859	3%	4,592	1%	<b>70,568</b>	<b>3%</b>
Mixed and any other	16,990	3%	41,455	3%	10,845	2%	<b>69,290</b>	<b>3%</b>
Unknown	108,954	20%	112,991	8%	75,710	14%	<b>297,655</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>549,883</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1,338,667</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>556,128</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,444,678</b>	<b>100%</b>