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Islamic Studies in Australia's Higher Education Sector

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ISLAMIC STUDIES IN AUSTRALIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Halim Rane*, Adis Duderija** and Jessica Mamone***

Abstract: This report presents an overview of the discipline of Islamic studies in the Australia's higher education sector collected in 2017. After a brief exploration of the history of teaching Islam and Islamic studies in modern Western institutions, the report briefly discusses the types of theoretical and methodological issues that concern the contemporary discipline of Islamic studies in the Western context. This leads to the main subject matter of the report, which focuses on identifying the major Australian universities that currently offer substantial Islamic studies courses and discusses the types of majors and programs offered; the institutional background in which these majors and programs emerged and currently operate; the breakdown and content of the courses offered; and what graduate outcomes the institutions envisage for their graduates. Finally, the report makes a few brief, general and preliminary observations regarding the future of Islamic studies in the Australian context.

Keywords: *Islamic studies, higher education, university, Australia*

ISLAMIC STUDIES IN MODERN WESTERN INSTITUTIONS

A 2008 report commissioned by Higher Education Funding Council of England (HEFCE) titled *International Approaches to Islamic Studies in Higher Education*¹ identified the increased prominence and importance of the academic discipline of Islamic studies in the post 9/11 era, especially as a major instrument for better understanding of Muslim communities globally, including the increasing number of those living in the West.²

Relative to countries in Western Europe, such as Germany, the United Kingdom, France and the Netherlands, the academic discipline of Islamic studies in Australia is of much more recent provenance. The most well-established programs in Islamic studies, such as at the University of Melbourne, have only been offered since the latter half of the 20th century. Many

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¹ The Higher Education Academy, *International Approaches to Islamic Studies in Higher Education: A Report to HEFCE* (York, UK: The Higher Education Academy, 2008), https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/52069/1/rd07_08.pdf.

² *Ibid.*, 3.

other Islamic studies programs in Australia were only established in the past decade or so. Moreover, as the modern discipline of Islamic studies has become increasingly concerned with relations between Muslims and non-Muslims in the Australian national and international contexts, the need to review and revise Islamic studies programs in Western institutions of higher learning has become a pressing priority.³ The aforementioned HEFCE report was, in many ways, responding to this reality. One of the primary aims of the report was to provide comparative information on the approaches to Islamic studies in the higher education sector.⁴ The report encompassed eight countries, the majority of which are part of what is commonly referred to as the West or Western civilisation.⁵ Among others, the report presented findings on:

1. The historical development of the discipline of Islamic studies in the respective countries
2. The size, scope and capacity of Islamic studies provision and an assessment of the 'health of the discipline' in each country
3. Developments in Islamic studies in the respective countries in the past ten years and the responses of governments, policy makers and funding bodies, where appropriate.

While the HEFCE report included Australia in its discussion, the findings in the report are not only nearly a decade old but also very sparse on details. This is especially in relation to the breakdown and content of courses on offer, student demographics and associated recent trends in this regard. Hence, the HEFCE report does not provide an adequate, current overview of the state and nature of Islamic studies in Australian higher education. This report presents an up-to-date and reasonably comprehensive overview of Islamic studies in the Australia's higher education sector. After a brief exploration of the emergence of the academic discipline of Islamic studies in modern Western institutions and the most significant issues associated with its definition, approaches and methodology, this report:

1. Identifies the major Australian universities that currently offer substantial Islamic studies courses and describes the types of programs on offer
2. Identifies current Islamic studies student demographics in the Australian context on the basis of several criteria, including residency status, gender, study format (i.e. online versus in person), ratio of non-Muslim versus Muslim students, total number of students enrolled in 2016 and recent (2015-2016) enrolment trends
3. Discusses the institutional background in which Islamic studies programs emerged and operate

³ Brannon M. Wheeler, *Teaching Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴ This action was taken following the release of the report *Islam at Universities in England*, prepared by Dr. Ataullah Siddiqui, and the recognition that debates surrounding the nature of Islamic studies in UK's higher education sector and the role it does or could play in broader social and political issues also apply to other countries.

⁵ These are: the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Netherlands, United States, Australia, Turkey and Malaysia.

4. Provides information with respect to the classification and analysis of the courses' content and what kind of graduate outcomes the institutions that offer Islamic studies programs envisage for their graduates

Before this is outlined, the next section provides a few definitions of the discipline of Islamic studies, a brief overview of the emergence and the most pressing theoretical challenges confronting the contemporary discipline of Islamic studies in the Western context.

Definitions of Islamic Studies

From the perspective of traditional Islamic sciences, Islamic studies can be defined as referring to and/or constituting the following bodies of knowledge:

- “1. The sciences of the Qur'an: its readings, recitation, miraculous nature, exegesis and juristic interpretations.
2. The sciences of the hadith and its methodologies including its transmission, collection, commentaries and juristic interpretations.
3. Jurisprudence, comprising its methodologies and various branches that regulate every aspect of human life from worship to politics.
4. Creed and theology including the study of various Muslim sects and the study of other religions (*milal*).
5. Sufism.
6. History in its various forms such as biographies, chronologies and annals.
7. The science of Arabic language including its grammar, literature and lexicology, which is seen as instrumental in understanding the religious textual sources.
8. Logic and philosophy, though strictly not part of religious sciences but included in many religious curricula.”⁶

Several definitions of the *modern* academic discipline of Islamic studies in the West have been put forward,⁷ which in some ways reflect and in other ways depart from the definition provided above. Waardenburg, for example, defines the discipline in relation to four broad fields of research and incorporates various theoretical and methodological approaches. The first broad field includes what could be termed as the core Islamic sciences pertaining to the study of the Qur'ān (*'ulum al Qur'ān*), the prophetic traditions (*'ulum al hadith*), Islamic theology (*kalam*), religious sciences (*'ulum/usul al din*), spirituality (*tasawwuf*) and Islamic law (*fiqh*). The second area encompasses the study of the history of Islamic religion and civilisation (*tarikh/sira*). The third relates to the study of Muslim societies past and present. The final layer pertains to the study of relations between Muslims and non-Muslim societies as well as Islam and other civilisations/religions.⁸ Khir offers a more succinct and general description of the discipline of modern academic Islamic studies and argues it encompasses a field of academic

⁶ Bustami Khir, “Islamic Studies within Islam: Definition, Approaches and Challenges of Modernity,” *Journal of Beliefs and Values: Studies in Religion and Education* 28, no. 3 (2007): 261.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 260; Jean J. Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors: Islamic Meanings and Muslim Interpretations in the Perspective of the Study of Religions* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2007), 109.

⁸ Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors*, 109.

areas of enquiry in relation to Islam/Muslims that employ various disciplines including anthropology, sociology, theology, cultural studies, history and international relations.⁹

From the definitions presented above, we conclude that Islamic studies as conceived in modern Western institutions of higher learning as a broad, multidisciplinary field of academic study. It is far from clear, however, as to what makes Islamic studies theoretically and/or methodologically a coherent and systematic area of academic enquiry. The authors of the “Islamic Studies” entry in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* refer to this conundrum in the following manner:

The term “Islamic studies” as currently used in professional journals, academic departments, and institutions of higher learning encompasses a vast field of research, all of which has “Islam” as its common bond. References to Islam, whether in the sense of a culture, civilization, or religious tradition, have become ever more frequent with the appearance of a plethora of literature in European languages treating the notion of political (“fundamentalist”) Islam, or “Islamism.” That literature speaks of Islamic banks, Islamic economics, Islamic political order, Islamic democracy, Islamic human rights, and so on ... the academic discourse on Islamic studies as conducted by its current practitioners, the “Islamicists,” finds itself still unable to proffer an explanation of how so many diverse fields, theories, cultural spheres, disciplines, and concepts can be associated with a single word, Islam, and why the discussion remains so one-dimensional where Islam is concerned.¹⁰

These definitional challenges are but one aspect of other challenges that pertain to the nature of the modern discipline of Islamic studies in Western institutions of higher learning, some of which will be addressed in more detail below. What follows is a brief overview of the emergence of the discipline of modern Islamic studies in Western institutions of higher learning.

Brief Overview of the Emergence of Modern Islamic Studies in Western Institutions of Higher Learning

Although interest in Islam as a religion and Muslim people in the West goes back to the time of the birth of Islam and the early Muslim conquests,¹¹ the emergence of the modern academic discipline of Islamic studies can be traced to the Enlightenment tradition of European scholarship.¹² From this perspective, the academic field of Islamic studies is a branch of Oriental studies or Orientalism, whose basic institutional and disciplinary parameters were put

⁹ Khir, “Islamic Studies within Islam,” 260.

¹⁰ Richard C. Martin et al., “Islamic Studies,” in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, accessed January 24, 2017, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0395#e0395-s2>.

Similarly, Waardenburg has argued “there is no generally accepted definition of the discipline of Islamic Studies, that its boundaries are not clearly fixed, and that there are no uniform and generally accepted programs...” – Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors*, 15.

¹¹ Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors*, 113-114; Martin et al., “Islamic Studies.”

¹² Azim Nanji, ed., *Mapping Islamic Studies: Genealogy, Continuity and Change* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997), ix.

in place in the 19th and 20th centuries.¹³ The major foundations of the discipline were laid by scholars such as Ignác Goldziher (1850–1921) and Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936).¹⁴ These scholars are considered to have “formulated the central problematic and core rationale of the new discipline” as well as bestowed upon the discipline its coherence.¹⁵

As a sub-discipline of Oriental studies, the academic discipline of Islamic studies was conceptualised or conceived of first and foremost as an intellectual facet of Western civilisation’s engagement with non-Western peoples, societies and civilisations. One of the implications of this disciplinary and institutional positioning of Islamic studies is that it was approached from the perspective of European history and (post-)Enlightenment epistemology. In other words, modern day Islamic studies emerged in a modern Western culture and was part of it.¹⁶ The recent literature on Orientalist studies that takes a critical stance to this body of knowledge highlights the many biases inherent in it, including the use of Orientalist studies for political and ideological interests.¹⁷

In the early modern period of the academic study of Islam (i.e. 19th century), the discipline of Islamic studies was primarily restricted to the study of major historical and philosophical works from the era of classical Islam. The dominant methodological approach of the academic enquiry was that of philology. This approach to the study of Islam, for example, was reflected in the professorial chairs, journals and institutions that were established at the beginning of the 20th century.¹⁸ One of the major shortcomings of this approach is that it overlooked, to a significant extent, the living spiritual dimension of Islam and the actual study of Muslim societies.¹⁹

In the 20th century, Oriental studies has continued to evolve in scope as well as self-understanding. In the post-WWII period in particular the Western academy’s methods and theoretical approaches to the study of non-Western societies underwent major conceptualisation shifts. Scholarship become more technical and specialised with respect to discipline-specific instruments of research and their ethos.²⁰ Consequently, Oriental studies and its methods increasingly gave way to area studies and social scientific approaches to the study of religion, which examined Islam as a socio-cultural phenomenon rather than a religious tradition/faith.²¹ However, over the last 30 years, new specialists in Islamic studies including political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists, international relations experts, gender studies

¹³ Ibid., ix; John O. Voll, “Changing Western Approaches to Islamic Studies,” in *The State of Islamic Studies in American Universities*, ed. Mumtaz Ahmad, Zahid Bukhari and Sulayman Nyang (London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2009), 29-31.

¹⁴ Dietrich Jung, *Orientalists, Islamists and the Global Public Sphere: A Genealogy of the Modern Essentialist Image of Islam* (London: Equinox, 2011), 158.

¹⁵ Ibid., 160.

¹⁶ Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors*, 126.

¹⁷ Muhsin Mahdi, “The Study of Islam, Orientalism and America,” in *Mapping Islamic Studies*, ed. Azim Nanji (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1997), 175; Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

¹⁸ Voll, “Changing Western Approaches,” 29-31.

¹⁹ Ibid.; Martin et al., “Islamic Studies.”

²⁰ Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors*, 116.

²¹ Voll, “Changing Western Approaches,” 32.

specialists and most recently terrorism studies experts emerged onto the scene. In the 21st century, these approaches have started to dominate the field of Islamic studies.²²

In the contemporary context, the approaches to Islamic studies and methods employed can be characterised as being multiple (philological, historical, anthropological, political science/international relations, gender, religious studies, sociological) and inter-disciplinary.²³ However, many of the approaches to contemporary Islamic studies in Western institutions of higher learning are considered to operate under the hegemony of Western scientific reasoning that uncritically and unreflexively imposes Enlightenment era “classifications, categories, definitions, distinctions, concepts, and theories” onto this body of knowledge.²⁴

Research regarding the desirable future developments and trends in Islamic studies highlight the importance of Islamic studies scholars’ need to be cognisant and up-to-date with the scholarly developments in wider humanities and social sciences, including the science of religions, which are relevant for their research and need to avoid narrow focus on just one discipline.²⁵ Calls for higher level abstraction in Islamic studies that in particular deal with problems associated with the study of the method and theory of religion in general and associated strategies of research have also been identified as requiring attention of present and future Islamic studies scholars.²⁶ The same applies to the need to increase the number of female scholars in the field.²⁷

To some extent, these challenges are slowly being met. For example, in 2012, a complete issue of the journal *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* (Brill) was devoted to a discussion of the state of Islamic studies in the modern study of religion.²⁸ Furthermore, the authors of the “Islamic Studies” encyclopedia entry referred to above argue that contemporary scholars of Islamic studies are increasingly working with the bodies of knowledge that are influential in the studies of humanities and social sciences in the Western academy, such as postmodernism, literary studies and inter-disciplinary studies.²⁹ The rising profile of gender studies specific to Islamic studies is taken as an example of this trend. However, the same authors argue that complete integration of Islamic studies into the Western tradition of academic and cultural research is not yet on the horizon.

²² Tariq Ramadan, “Plotting the Future of Islamic Studies: Teaching and Research in the Current Political Climate,” *Academic Matters* (2007): 6.

²³ Mahdi, “The Study of Islam, Orientalism and America,” 182.

²⁴ Martin et al., “Islamic Studies.”

²⁵ Waardenburg, *Muslims as Actors*, 211.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Nanji, *Mapping Islamic Studies*, xix.

²⁸ Lisa Muscolino-Steensma, ed., *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 24, no. 4-5 (2012), <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/15700682/24/4-5>.

These discussions are expanded on in the blog for the Bulletin for the Study of Religion in 2014 in which several leading Muslim and non-Muslim scholars of Islamic studies (primarily based in the USA) debated issues pertaining to the state and nature of Islamic studies in Western academy. Philip L. Tite, “Rethinking Contested Ground: The Study of Islam in/and the Study of Religion,” *Religion Bulletin*, December 19, 2014, <https://bulletin.equinoxpub.com/2014/12/rethinking-contested-ground-the-study-of-islam-inand-the-study-of-religion/>.

²⁹ Martin et al., “Islamic Studies.”

Having sketched the broad contours of the modern discipline of Islamic studies in Western institutions of higher learning, we now turn our attention to the central part of the report and its main aims.

AUSTRALIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR

Australia has 43 universities, of which seven offer programs or majors in the field of Islamic studies (and related fields), while another seven offer courses/subjects in these field as electives and/or as part of other programs or majors, such as Arabic language and cultures. Various titles are used for programs and majors in the field, including Islamic Studies, Islam–West Relations and Islam in the Modern World. However, the former tends to be the most popular. This section will summarise the Islamic studies program and course offerings pertaining to each university. To begin, the universities that offer only courses in this field as electives will be briefly elaborated on. Following this, a more in-depth examination of the universities with Islamic studies programs and/or majors will occur. The areas of examination will consist of current offerings, backgrounds, course overview and graduate outcomes.

Of the universities that offer courses/subjects in this field separate to programs or majors, there is Macquarie, Murdoch, the University of New South Wales, University of Southern Queensland (USQ) and University of Technology Sydney (UTS). These offerings vary significantly in their focus and quantity of courses. Macquarie, for example, offers five courses aimed at the historical, anthropological and political spectrums of Islamic studies. Macquarie is likewise unique as it is the only university discovered within this research to possess two separate research hubs directly and indirectly related to the field. These include the Centre for Middle East and North African Studies³⁰ headed by Dr. Noah Bassil, and the Study for Contemporary Muslim Lives³¹ directed by Dr. Gabriele Marranci.

Comparatively, Murdoch offers four courses pitched specifically at international politics students. In addition, Murdoch is home to the Asia Research Centre headed by Professor Garry Rodan. The centre establishes its overlap into the Islamic studies field with projects like “State, Class and Islamic Populism: Indonesia in Comparative Perspective,” which received the Australian Research Council Future Fellowship.³²

Similar to Murdoch, the University of Western Australia has only a small offering of two courses with a focus on international politics yet also possesses a research centre offering higher degrees by research. The Centre for Muslim States and Societies³³ is directed by

³⁰ “Centre for Middle East and North African Studies,” Macquarie University, accessed August 15, 2016, https://www.mq.edu.au/pubstatic/research/centres_and_groups/centre_for_middle_east_north_african_studies/.

³¹ “Study of Contemporary Muslim Lives,” Macquarie University, accessed August 15, 2016, http://www.mq.edu.au/research/centres_and_groups/study_of_contemporary_muslim_lives/.

³² “Asia Research Centre, Celebrating 20 Years,” Murdoch University, accessed 16 January, 2021, <https://www.murdoch.edu.au/docs/default-source/research/arc-20th-anniversary-publication.pdf>.

³³ “Centre for Muslim States and Societies,” The University of Western Australia, last modified November 27, 2020, <http://www.cmss.uwa.edu.au/>.

Professor Samina Yasmeen and focuses primarily on countries in the Indian Ocean region, Muslim immigrants and social inclusion/exclusion as well as immigrant Muslim women.

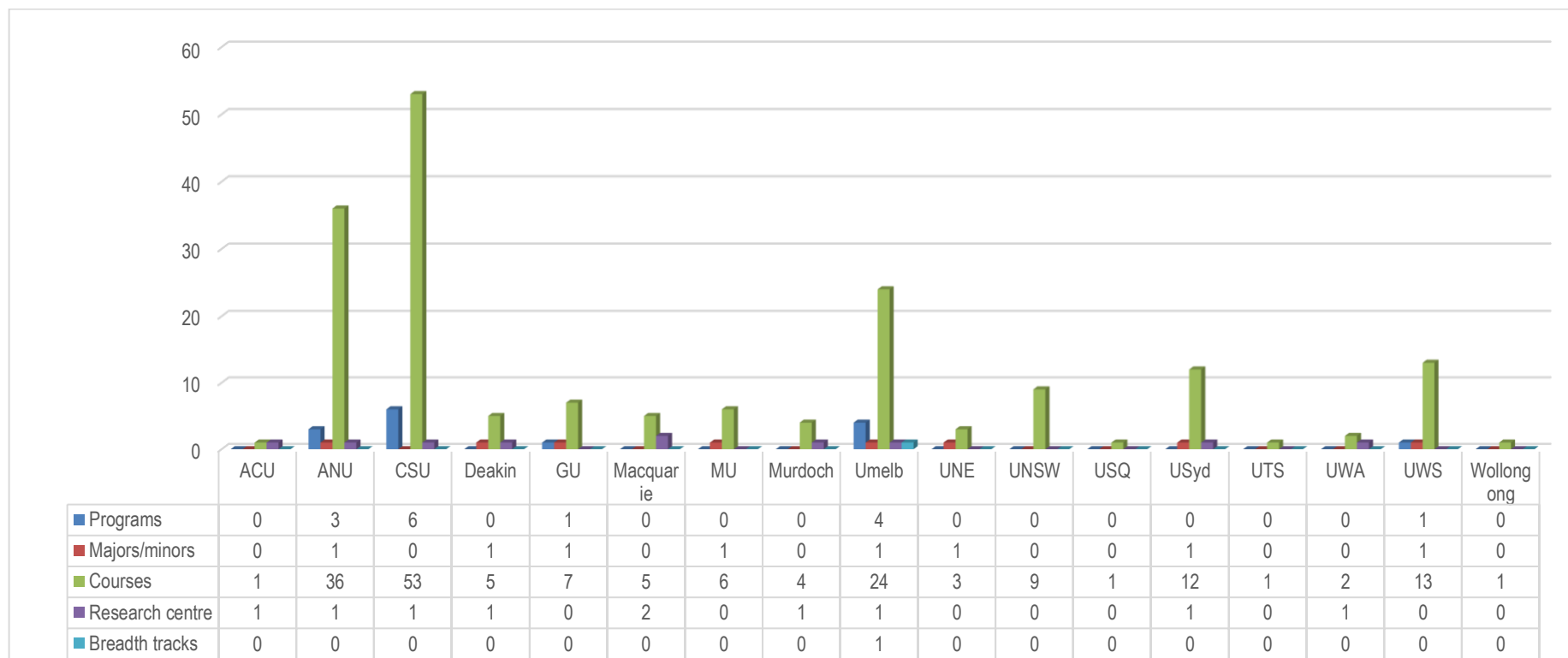
With nine courses, the University of New South Wales offers the largest number of Islamic studies electives without a program or major attached. These courses encompass political, sociological and legal perspectives with a geographical focus primarily on South East Asia. In contrast, USQ and UTS only offer a singular course related to the field. USQ has opted for a broad examination of Islam–West relations, while UTS explores Islamic legal thought as an elective for law students.

Sydney University (USyd) possesses a major, 12 courses and a research centre. However, USyd is included in this section and not analysed individually as the courses and major are only indirectly related to the field of Islamic studies. Rather, USyd’s focus lies in Arabic language and cultures,³⁴ as is the title of the major and research centre headed by Professor Sahar Amer. USyd offers an extensive examination of contemporary and historical culture within the North African and Middle Eastern regions.

The Australian universities with programs and/or majors directly related to the Islamic studies field consist of the Australian National University (ANU), Charles Sturt University (CSU), Griffith University (GU), Monash University (MU), University of Melbourne (UMelb), University of New England (UNE) and Western Sydney University (WSU). Of these universities, ANU, UMelb, UNE and MU have relatively well-established programs in Islamic studies dating back several decades. Islamic studies program at other universities, including GU, WSU and CSU, are much younger, having been established within the past decade. These will now be individually examined in greater depth. The data presented in this report was generated through a combination of information available on the universities’ websites as well as that provided by the course and program convenors at each institution.

³⁴ “Department of Arabic Language and Cultures,” The University of Sydney, accessed February 2, 2016, <http://sydney.edu.au/arts/arabic/>.

Graph 1: Islamic studies in tertiary education – Australia



Each university uses its own terminology when referring to the education modules it has on offer. However, for this study and in the interest of comparison, the following definitions will be applied:

Program: A program is an approved course of study leading to an award by the university. A student is admitted to a program, undertakes study while enrolled in that program, and on successful completion of all program requirements, is awarded the qualification to which the program relates (inclusive of any degree, diploma or graduate certificate).

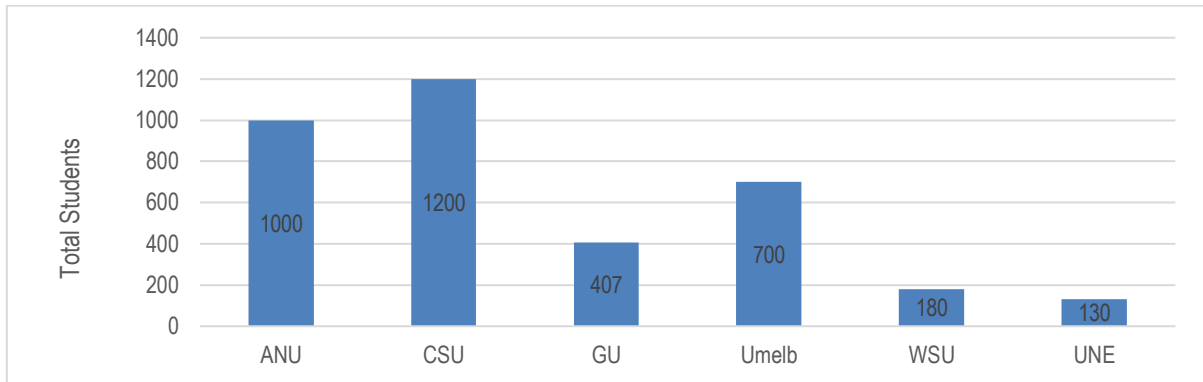
Major/Minor: Majors and minors are a sequence of courses, which develop a coherent academic theme culminating in advanced level courses.

Course: A course is a component of a qualification, normally undertaken over a single semester, in which the student enrolls and on completion of which the student is awarded a grade; such grades appear on a student’s academic record. Learning outcomes, assessment tasks and achievement standards are specified for each course appropriate to a level and qualification type (also called subjects/units).

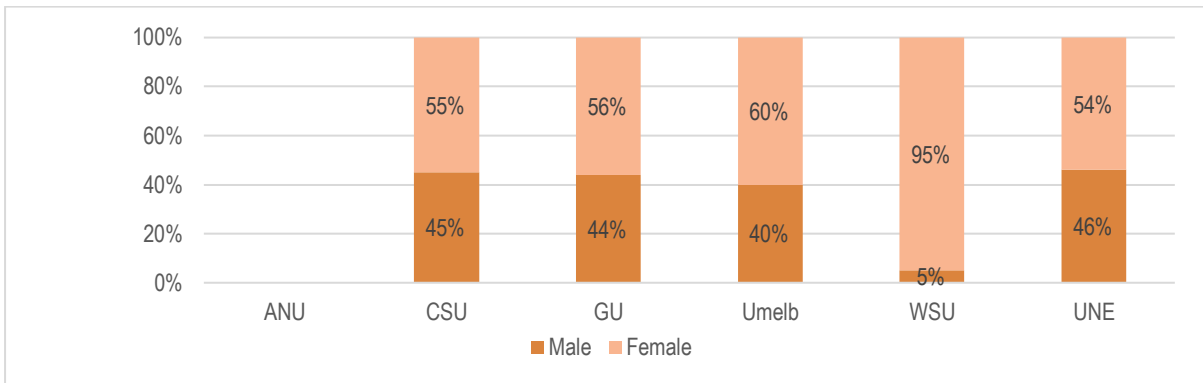
Breadth track: A small collection of courses to introduce a topic with or without attachment of a broader degree.

Student Demographics

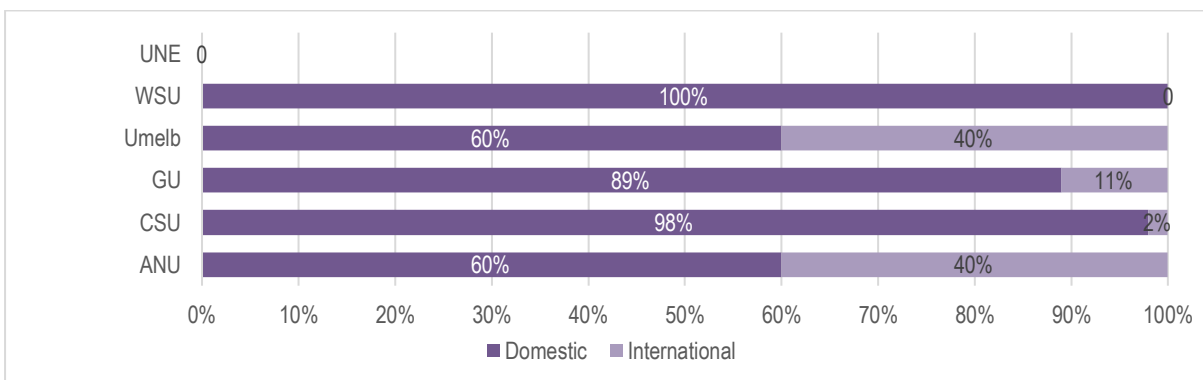
Graph 2: Student numbers – 2016



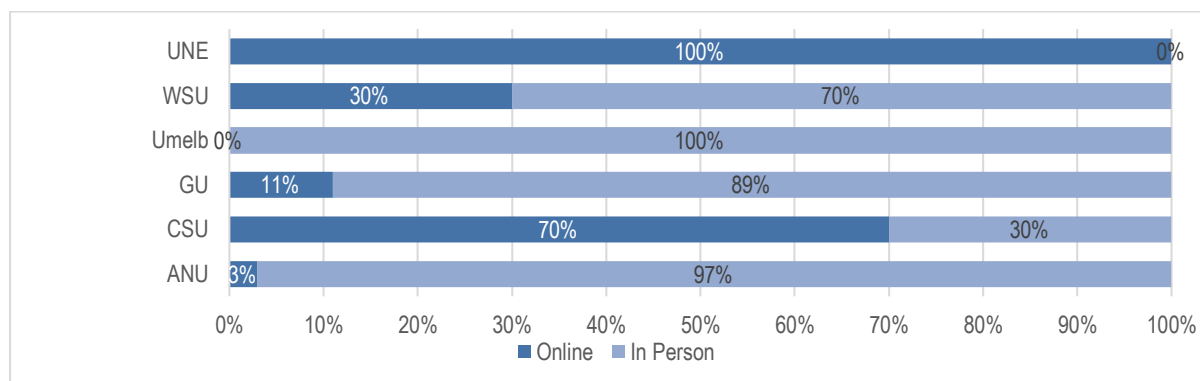
Graph 3: Student gender profile – 2016



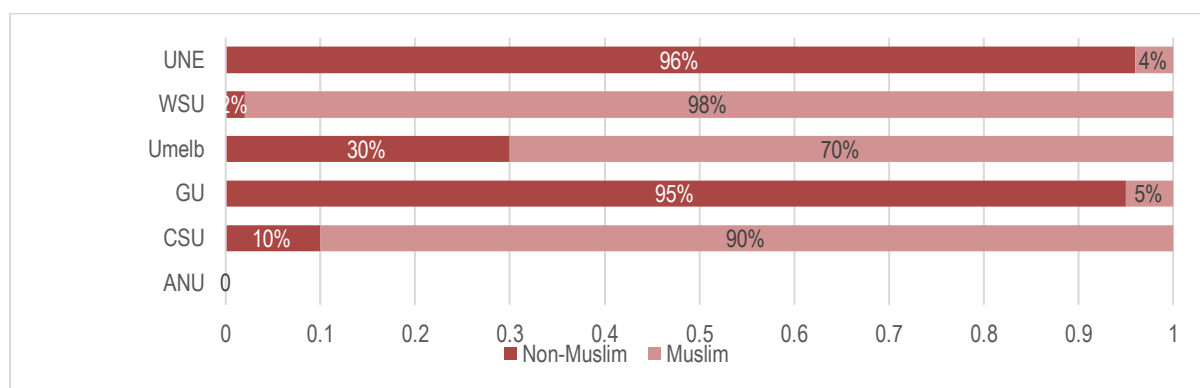
Graph 4: Student residency status – 2016



Graph 5: Student study format – 2016



Graph 6: Student religion – 2016

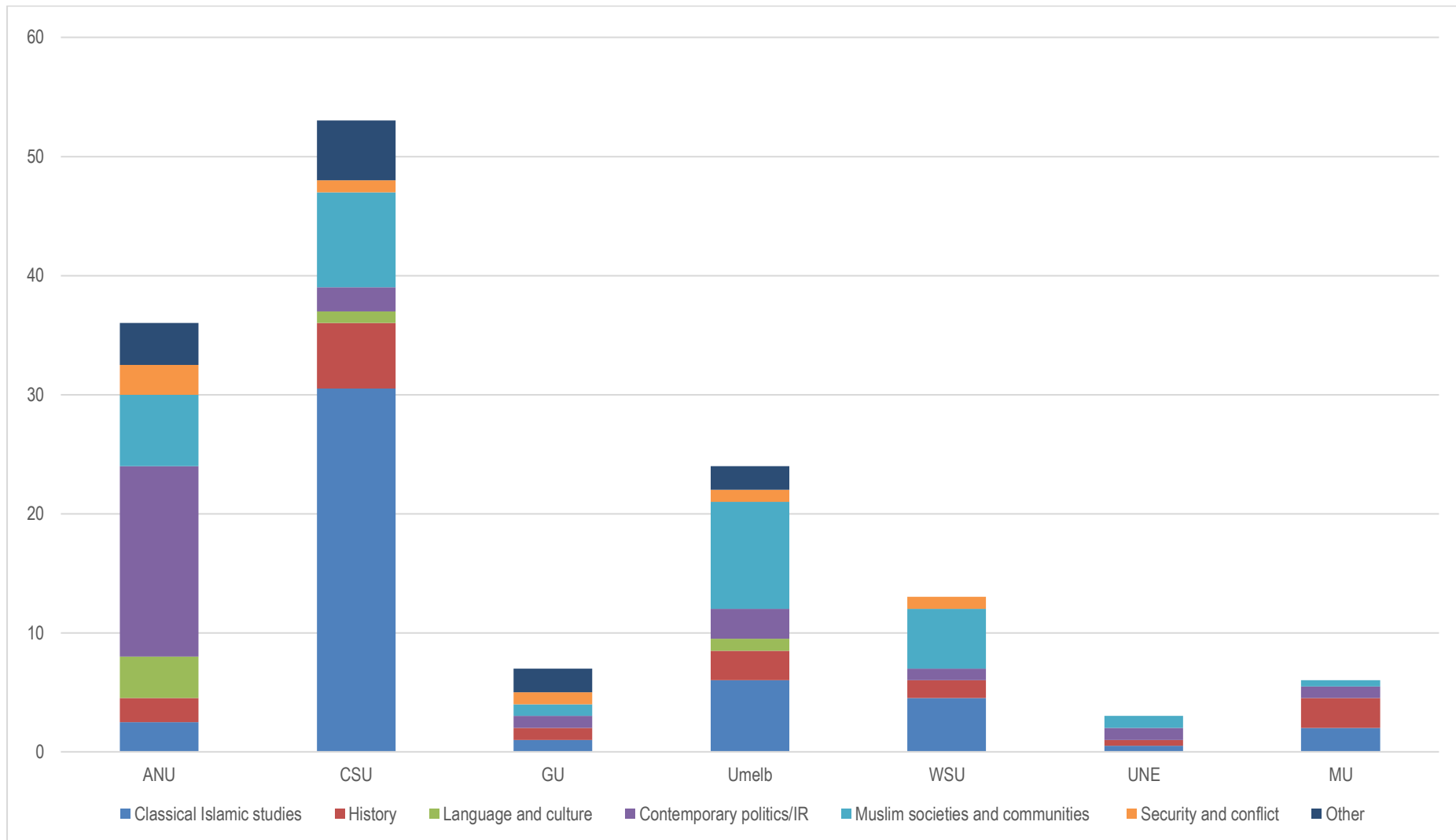


Course Breakdown

For this study, the Islamic studies courses taught in Australian tertiary education have been placed in eight categories (see table below). Naturally, for several of the courses examined, there are elements suggesting overlap. In acknowledging this, each course can be assigned up to two categories that best reflect their content.

Classical Islamic studies	Focuses on theology, philosophy, spirituality, jurisprudence, ethics and analysis of sacred texts.
History	Focuses on Islamic history, inclusive of, but not restricted to the examination of empires, historical conflicts and historical figures.
Language and culture	Focuses on languages that the university acknowledges is affiliated with Islam (most notably Arabic). Likewise, the examination of culture as it exists in the Islamic world, inclusive of but not restricted to the arts, food and literature (non-sacred).
Contemporary politics/ international relations (IR)	Focuses on governance in Muslim nation states and relations between Muslim nation states and Western counterparts.
Muslim societies and communities	Focuses on the sociological, the examination of the Muslim individual and his community in the global sense and as relating to specific regions.
Security and conflict	Focuses on modern global conflicts, terrorism, radical Islam and efforts in combatting such.
Other	Represents the niche or expansive. For example, courses based upon individual student research cannot be generalised by topic.

Graph 7: Islamic studies Australia – course breakdown



AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Current Offerings

Islamic studies at ANU is offered primarily, but not exclusively, by the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (CAIS) (Middle East and Central Asia). CAIS offers an undergraduate Bachelor of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies, as well as a Middle Eastern and Central Asian major and minor for the relevant degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Arts/Master of International Affairs, Bachelor of Asia-Pacific Studies (Year in Asia) and Bachelor of Asian Studies.

CAIS also offers postgraduate programs: Master of Islam in the Modern World and Master of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies (as coursework and with the possibility of a sub-thesis extension), and a doctoral research program with a student population of approximately 25.

Background

CAIS is part of the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences. It was founded in 1994 as the Centre for Middle East and Central Asia. Its original focus was on Central Asia, Eurasia and Afghanistan. Its current focus is on “Middle Eastern and Central Asian contemporary politics, history, culture, political economy, economics, and the role of Islam within the broader framework of the changing global order.”³⁵ Distinguished Professor Amin Saikal is the foundation and current centre director. He holds a professorship in political science at ANU. In addition to Professor Saikal, CAIS employs several other Islamic studies specialists: Professor James Piscatori, Professor Armando Salvatore, Dr. Kirill Nourzhanov and Dr. Raihan Ismail.

Courses Overview

	Course name	Category/ies	
1	Islam, Faith and Community	Classical Islamic studies	
2	Islam and Democracy	Classical Islamic studies	Contemporary politics/IR
3	Shiite Islam in World Politics	Classical Islamic studies	Contemporary politics/IR
4	Islam: History and Institutions	Classical Islamic studies	Muslim societies and communities
5	Iranian History and Culture	History	Language and culture
6	Turkish History: Ottoman State to Modern Turkey	History	
7	Arab Current Affairs and Media Arabic	Language and culture	
8	A Semester in the Arab World	Language and culture	Other
9	Introductory Course to Arabic Literature	Language and culture	

³⁵ “CAIS,” Australian National University, accessed January 15, 2020, <https://cais.cass.anu.edu.au/about-us>.

	Course name	Category/ies	
10	Introduction to the Modern Middle East	Contemporary politics/IR	Muslim societies and communities
11	Dynamics of Business in the Middle East	Other	
12	Politics of Islam in Southeast Asia	Contemporary politics/IR	
13	New States of Eurasia: Emerging Issues in Politics and Security	Contemporary politics/IR	
14	Turkish Politics and Foreign Policy	Contemporary politics/IR	
15	The Political Economy of the Middle East	Contemporary politics/IR	
16	Politics in the Middle East	Contemporary politics/IR	
17	Politics in Central Asia	Contemporary politics/IR	
18	Oil Religion Politics and Conflict in the Middle East	Contemporary politics/IR	
19	Central Asia in Regional and Global Perspectives	Contemporary politics/IR	
20	Issues of Development in the Middle East	Contemporary politics/IR	
21	Geopolitics of Central Asia	Contemporary politics/IR	
22	Islam in World Politics	Contemporary politics/IR	
23	Modern Turkey: History, Culture and Regional Relations	Contemporary politics/IR	History
24	Gender and Culture in Iran and the Middle East	Muslim societies and communities	Language and culture
25	Islam in Central Asia	Muslim societies and communities	Contemporary politics/IR
26	Islam in Australia	Muslim societies and communities	
27	Islam In Turkey	Muslim societies and communities	
28	Approaches to the Study of Modern Muslim Societies	Muslim societies and communities	
29	Islam in Southeast Asia	Muslim societies and communities	
30	Islamic Radicalism	Security and conflict	Contemporary politics/IR
31	Energy and Security in Central Asia and the Caucasus	Security and conflict	Contemporary politics/IR
32	Islam, the West and International Terrorism	Security and conflict	Contemporary politics/IR
33	Dynamics of Israeli-Palestinian Conflict	Security and conflict	Contemporary politics/IR
34	The Gulf Strategic Environment	Security and conflict	Contemporary politics/IR
35	Islamic Banking	Other	
36	Islam and Modernity	Other	

CAIS offers one of the most extensive programs in Islamic studies with its concentration on the Middle East and Central Asia. However, these courses are not purely Islamic studies but also are based on IR, economics, politics, gender and the history of this broad region. This is the case for graduate and undergraduate courses. In doing so, CAIS leans away from classical

Islamic studies (i.e. there are no specific courses on the sacred texts, religious ethics and/or law).

CAIS courses focus primarily on modern issues such as democracy, politics, international business, regional differences, oil, international relations, global development, security strategy and terrorism. The CAIS program differentiates itself from other universities with its emphasis on language acquisition and intercultural dialogue. The Bachelor of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies, for example, requires students take a Middle Eastern or Central Asian language. For students to achieve this outcome it is required they complete either a major or minor in Arabic or Persian. CAIS also offers Turkish and Russian languages as electives. Components of Arabic, Turkish and Persian are available in the Masters programs as well. The language and culture based elements of the CAIS program include the opportunity to study for a semester in the Arab world.

Graduate Outcomes

The aim of the CAIS programs is to provide quality and coherent graduate education in Middle Eastern and Central Asian studies. They are designed for students who seek academic preparation for a career in a professional arena requiring solid understanding of Arabs, Islam, and the Middle East and Central Asia, whether in diplomacy, the public service, teaching, journalism or business. Qualified applicants from Australia and overseas are invited to apply.

The Master of Islam in the Modern World specifically aims to provide detailed understanding of the complex and diverse issues that are common to Muslim societies across the world. It also provides students with the opportunity to develop critical methods for the study of the modern Muslim experience. The program is designed for students who wish to familiarise themselves with debates on modern Islam as preparation for employment in international organisations, government, non-governmental organisations, development agencies, media organisations or private sector companies in which some knowledge of Islam and contemporary Islamic issues would be of value.

Student Demographics

Total number of students enrolled in Islamic studies courses in 2016	1,000*
Total number of students completing an Islamic studies major in 2016	N/A
Domestic/international student ratio	60/40*
Student gender ratio (M/F)	N/A
Study format (online/in person)	3/97*
Muslim/non-Muslim ratio	N/A
Enrolment trend 2015-2016	+10% increase*

* ANU notes these numbers are estimations only.

CHARLES STURT UNIVERSITY

Current Offerings

CSU offers the most extensive range of Islamic studies with 53 courses available. The programs vary in levels from undergraduate with a Bachelor of Islamic Studies to postgraduate with a Masters in Islamic Studies, Masters in Contemporary Islamic Studies, Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma. Moreover, CSU offers higher degree research programs like the Master of Arts (Islamic Studies Research) from which the student may choose to examine one of the following subjects: Islamic history, Islamic law, Islamic theology or Qur'ānic studies.

Background

CSU's Islamic studies program operates out of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation (CISAC). CISAC came about from a collaboration between CSU and the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia (ISRA), which was founded in 2009 and came into being as a direct result of the interfaith dialogue movement in Australia. The Islamic Studies program course content benefited from substantial input from ISRA's advisory committee, which is made up of some of the most respected Muslim scholars from the wider Australian Muslim community. ISRA, according to its website, aims to provide a "platform for cooperation between Australian Muslims and educational institutions around Australia."³⁶ While specific focus is placed on research and education in the aforementioned fields, ISRA also emphasises "community building and cooperation in religious, social, environmental and many other major areas for Australia and the global society."³⁷

Course Overview

	Course name	Category/ies
1	Islamic Worldview and Faith Essentials	Classical Islamic studies
2	Fiqh (Islamic Law) of the Five Pillars	Classical Islamic studies
3	Ihsan (Spirituality) Essentials	Classical Islamic studies
4	Sirah (Life of Prophet Muhammad)	Classical Islamic studies
5	Usul al-Din (Foundational Islamic Theology)	Classical Islamic studies
6	Usul al-Fiqh (Methodology of Islamic Law)	Classical Islamic studies
7	Usul al-Tafsir (Methodology of Qur'ānic Exegesis)	Classical Islamic studies
8	Usul al-Hadith (Methodology of Prophetic Traditions)	Classical Islamic studies

³⁶ "Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation," Charles Sturt University, accessed January 23, 2017, <https://arts-ed.csu.edu.au/centres/cisac>.

³⁷ "History of ISRA," Islamic Sciences and Research Academy, accessed February 12, 2017, <https://www.isra.org.au/history-of-isra>.

	Course name	Category/ies	
9	Advanced Study of Tafsir (Qur'anic Exegesis) Literature	Classical Islamic studies	
10	Advanced Study of Hadith Literature	Classical Islamic studies	
11	Mantiq (Logic) and Critical Reasoning	Classical Islamic studies	
12	Islam in the Modern World	Muslim societies and communities	Contemporary politics/IR
13	Akhlaq (Morality) and Adab (Manners) in Islam	Classical Islamic studies	
14	Purification of the Heart	Classical Islamic studies	
15	History of Prophets: Adam to Jesus	Classical Islamic studies	History
16	Religious Service and Community Leadership	Classical Islamic studies	Muslim societies and communities
17	Islamic Family Law	Classical Islamic studies	
18	World Religions in Australia	Muslim societies and communities	History
19	Women in Islam and Islamic Cultures	Muslim societies and communities	
20	Islamic History: 632 to Present	History	
21	Guided Research	Other	
22	Islamic Studies: Methodology and Sources	Classical Islamic studies	
23	Islamic Studies Honours Project/Dissertation	Other	
24	Interpreting Islamic Sacred Texts	Classical Islamic studies	
25	Islamic History, Law and Society	Classical Islamic studies	History
26	Islamic Worldview and Theology	Classical Islamic studies	
27	Essentials of Islamic Spirituality	Classical Islamic studies	
28	Islamic Jurisprudence of Five Pillars	Classical Islamic studies	
29	Methodology of Islamic Law (Usul al-Fiqh)	Classical Islamic studies	
30	Methodology of Qur'anic Exegesis (Usul al-Tafsir)	Classical Islamic studies	
31	Philosophy of Prophet Muhammad's Life (Sirah)	Classical Islamic studies	
32	Religious and Communal Leadership in Modern Society	Classical Islamic studies	Muslim societies and communities
33	Islamic Family Law and Society	Classical Islamic studies	
34	Women in Islam, Civilisations and Cultures	Muslim societies and communities	
35	Islam: Morality and Etiquette in Daily Life	Classical Islamic studies	
36	History of Islam: From Tribe to World Civilisation	History	
37	Islamic Theology: Classical to Contemporary Thought	Classical Islamic studies	
38	Islamic History, Law and Society (postgrad)	Classical Islamic studies	History
39	Guided Research in Islamic Studies (post grad)	Other	
40	Master Research (Islamic Studies) PT	Other	
41	Master Research (Islamic Studies) FT	Other	
42	Islamic World View	Classical Islamic studies	

	Course name	Category/ies	
43	Islamic Law and Practice in the Contemporary World	Classical Islamic studies	Muslim societies and communities
44	Islam Through Western Eyes	History	Muslim societies and communities
45	Muslims in the West: Identity and Culture	Muslim societies and communities	
46	Muslims in Australia: Past and Present	History	Muslim societies and communities
47	Radicalism, Terrorism and Extremism	Security and conflict	
48	Islam: Peace, Dialogue and Pluralism	Classical Islamic studies	Contemporary politics/IR
49	Islam in Politics and Society	Contemporary politics/IR	
50	Modern History of Islamic Societies	History	Muslim societies and communities
51	Islam and Science	Classical Islamic studies	
52	Contemporary Islamic Movements	Muslim societies and communities	
53	Spirit of Islam: Mysticism, Art and Architecture	Language and culture	

CSU's offering of Islamic studies courses is distinct among Australian tertiary education institutions. Unlike the majority, CSU comes closest to what could be described as classical Islamic studies with a focus on "comprehension of the theological, jurisprudential, historical, contemporary and spiritual aspects of Islam."³⁸ CSU describes its courses as a combination of "traditional Islamic science, such as the exegesis of the Qur'an (*tafsir*), Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) and Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) with modern disciplines and contemporary studies, providing a holistic perspective to Islamic studies for our modern world."³⁹ CSU also offers extensive Arabic language courses woven into the bachelors and masters programs. However, the function of this language element appears to differ from that of ANU. CSU focuses on developing students' ability to comprehend and do research in classical Islamic texts while ANU aims primarily to enable students to function effectively in international relations and diplomacy related contexts.

Graduate Outcomes

CSU has confirmed that previously 98% of students in the Islamic studies programs were of a Muslim background. However, it is expected the Master of Contemporary Islamic Studies being introduced in 2017 will have a predominantly non-Muslim enrolment.

³⁸ Charles Sturt University, "Bachelor of Islamic Studies Articulated Set," in *2017 CSU Handbook* (Australia: Charles Sturt University, 2017), <http://www.csu.edu.au/handbook/handbook17/courses/BachelorofIslamicStudiesArticulatedSet.html>.

³⁹ "Courses available through Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation Charles Sturt University," Charles Sturt University, accessed January 23, 2017, <https://arts-ed.csu.edu.au/centres/cisac/courses>.

Potential career paths for graduates envisioned by CSU include:

- Religious teaching opportunities in mosques, private study circles, schools or other institutions
- Public service
- Companies or any individual or institution regularly dealing with Muslims
- Academic research
- Islamic law

CSU identifies that most undergraduate students are pursuing teaching careers, while postgraduate students have often embarked on their study to enhance their ability to perform in their former profession in the fields of law, psychology, international relations, marketing and art to name a few.

Moreover, CSU graduate students are most likely to seek employment within the country as opposed to internationally. The university also acknowledges the religious component of their education in that a large cohort of students is studying for faith purposes primarily.

Student Demographics

Total number of students enrolled in Islamic studies courses in 2016	1,200
Total number of students completing an Islamic studies major in 2016	350
Domestic/international student ratio	98/2
Student gender ratio (M/F)	45/55
Study format (online/in person)	70/30
Muslim/non-Muslim ratio	90/10
Enrolment trend 2015-2016	9% increase

GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Current Offerings

GU terms its Islamic studies offerings as Islam–West relations in order to reflect the university’s focus on relations between Muslim communities and wider society at the national level and Muslim and Western countries in the international domain. It offers courses in this field at the undergraduate level including a Certificate in Islam–West Relations as well as a major in Islam–West relations, which can be taken as part of the Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Government and International Relations programs.

Background

Islamic studies was established at GU in 2008 as part of a consortium with UMelb and WSU following a successful tender to host the federal government-funded National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS). Since 2005, GU has offered a limited number of

places to PhD candidates to conduct their research within the Griffith Islamic Research Unit. In 2008, GU began offering a suite of 10 courses in Islamic studies as part of a major within the Bachelor of Arts degree. These courses were jointly developed by academics at GU, UMelb and WSU. This suite was revised down to seven in response to student interests and demands as well as a broader consolidation of course offerings comprising majors within the Bachelor of Arts program.

Course Overview

	Course name	Category/ies
1	Islam in the Modern World	Muslim societies and communities
2	Great Empires of Islamic Civilization	History
3	Islam, Media and Conflict	Security/conflict
4	Islamic Law in a Changing World	Classical Islamic studies
5	Islam–West Relations	Contemporary politics/IR
6	Advanced Islamic Studies	Other
7	Muslim World Study Tour	Other

GU's suite of Islamic studies courses aims to provide students with a sound foundation in the field including the knowledge and skills pertaining to Islamic beliefs and rituals, history, law and jurisprudence, modern Muslim thought, contemporary Islamic issues and debates, and relations with Western society and states. The first year introductory course, Islam in the Modern World, serves as the basis for the three second year courses that develop students' knowledge and skills in relation to Islamic history and civilisation (Great Empires of Islamic Civilisation), law and jurisprudence (Islamic Law in a Changing World), as well as analysis of media reporting and its impact on audiences (Islam, Media and Conflict). Second year students are also encouraged to undertake a semester in Morocco, where GU has an exchange agreement with L'École de Gouvernance et d'Économie de Rabat to facilitate Arabic language studies. GU's third year courses focus on the application of students' skills and knowledge. These include the Muslim World Study Tour in which a group of 12-14 students undertake this faculty-led overseas course, which involves one-month travel to three to four countries that showcase the diversity of Islamic civilisation, including Jordan, Oman, Malaysia, Morocco, Turkey and Spain. The other third year course is termed Advanced Islamic Studies, which is designed to enable students to work in-depth on a relevant topic of their choice and prepare them with the skills and experience to undertake postgraduate studies, and Islam–West Relations, which serves as a capstone for the major.

Graduate Outcomes

The majority of the student cohort undertaking Islamic studies at GU are non-Muslims pursuing careers in government departments and agencies, NGOs, community organisations, media and education as well as post-graduate studies including Honours and PhD.

Student Demographics

Total number of students enrolled in Islamic studies courses in 2016	407
Total number of students completing an Islamic studies major in 2016	33
Domestic/international student ratio	89/11
Student gender ratio (M/F)	44/56
Study format (online/in person)	11/89
Muslim/non-Muslim ratio	5/95
Enrolment trend 2015-2016	10% increase

UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE***Current Offerings***

Students at the UMelb engage in Islamic studies by way of a breadth track: a small collection of courses to introduce a topic with or without the attachment of a broader degree. Similarly, there is an Islamic studies major and Honours as part of the broader Bachelor of Arts, a Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma. Melbourne's offering likewise includes a Masters and PhD in Islamic studies as well. In total, 24 courses come under the umbrella of Islamic studies. Additionally, UMelb offers monthly forums for students, scholars and the larger community alike on the Qur'ān and its interpretations.

Background

The Islamic studies programs at UMelb are offered by the Asia Institute, which is based at the Faculty of Arts. Islamic studies in one form or another has been taught at UMelb since 1961 and a major in Islamic studies was established in the early 1990s. In 2007, UMelb collaborated with GU and WSU to establish the NCEIS, which resulted in some changes to the Islamic studies major, as the three universities sought to develop some commonly taught courses. As such, the three universities have a crossover of courses. UMelb also offers a major and Honours in Arabic.

Course Overview

	Course Name	Category/ies
1	Ethical Traditions in Islam	Classical Islamic studies
2	Sufism: The Spiritual Dimension of Islam	Classical Islamic studies
3	The Qur'ān: An Introduction	Classical Islamic studies
4	Reason and Revelation in Islam	Classical Islamic studies
5	The Challenge of Islamic Law	Classical Islamic studies
6	Islam and the Making of Europe	History
7	The First Centuries of Islam	History

	Course Name	Category/ies	
8	Architecture in the Islamic World	Language and culture	
9	Islam and Politics	Contemporary politics/IR	
10	Islamic Law and Politics in Asia	Contemporary politics/IR	
11	Asian Religions in Societal Context	Muslim societies and communities	
12	Indonesia in the World	Muslim societies and communities	
13	Islam in the Modern World	Muslim societies and communities	
14	Islam in the West	Muslim societies and communities	
15	Modern Southeast Asia	Muslim societies and communities	
16	Understanding Islam and Muslim Societies	Muslim societies and communities	
17	Islam and Human Rights	Classical Islamic studies	
18	Crisis Zone: Middle Eastern Politics	Contemporary politics/IR	Muslim societies and communities
19	The Modern Middle East	Muslim societies and communities	
20	Contemporary Middle East and Central Asia	Muslim societies and communities	
21	Islam, Media and Conflict	Muslim societies and communities	Security and conflict
22	Middle Eastern Wars: Jihad and Resistance	History	Security and conflict
23	Islamic Studies Thesis	Other	
24	Topics in Arabic and Islamic Studies	Other	

UMelb's first year courses – Islam in the Modern World (based on the course of the same name developed by GU) and Understanding Islam and Muslim Societies – focus on exploring core faith tenets as well as begin a discussion on issues of how Muslims encounter their faith in the contemporary context. By the second year level, UMelb distinguishes itself as possessing the largest range of courses regarding their themes and intent. For example, there are courses specific to sacred text analysis, ethical traditions, Islamic theology and philosophy and sect-specific courses. Significantly, alongside the focus on classical Islamic sciences is a definite focus on courses that adopt a social and political science perspective. For example, the conflict in the Middle East is covered, media representation of Islam, politics, the compatibility with democracy and human rights to name but a few.

Graduate Outcomes

Teaching staff at UMelb have estimated a little over a third of students that take the major are of Muslim background with the majority being born in Australia.

Potential career paths for graduates of the Bachelor of Arts with an Islamic studies major identified by UMelb include: NGOs, foreign affairs, immigration, journalism, international trade, social work, law, teaching, ethnic affairs, defence security and academic research.

Student Demographics

Total number of students enrolled in Islamic studies courses in 2016	700
Total number of students completing an Islamic studies major in 2016	22
Domestic/international student ratio	60/40
Student gender ratio (M/F)	40/60
Study format (online/in person)	0/100
Muslim/non-Muslim ratio	30/70
Enrolment trend 2015-2016	Consistent

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY***Current offerings***

WSU's approach to Islamic studies could be considered a sound introduction to the faith and the contemporary issues Muslim adherents and societies are concerned with. The university offers a substantial number (13) of Islamic studies courses. Likewise, it provides a Diploma in Islamic Studies and an Islamic studies major relevant to the Bachelor of Arts degree.

Background

Much like GU and UMelb, Islamic studies at WSU as it stands today was established in 2007 as part of the federal government-funded NCEIS, with a crossover of courses throughout the three universities.

Course Overview

	Course name	Category/ies	
1	Hadith: The Prophetic Tradition	Classical Islamic studies	
2	Islamic Law in a Changing World	Classical Islamic studies	
3	The Qur'an: An Introduction	Classical Islamic studies	
4	Ethical Traditions in Islam	Classical Islamic studies	
5	History of Muslim Civilisations and Ideas	History	
6	Islamic Revivalism in the Globalised World	History	Classical Islamic studies
7	The International Relations of the Middle East Since 1945	Contemporary politics/IR	
8	Understanding Islam and Muslim Societies	Muslim societies and communities	
9	Islam in the Modern World	Muslim societies and communities	
10	Women with Muslim Identity	Muslim societies and communities	
11	Islam in the West	Muslim societies and communities	
12	Islam in the southeast Asia	Muslim societies and communities	
13	Islam, Media and Conflict	Security and conflict	

WSU offers courses in Islamic studies that are highly relevant to contemporary Australian society. However, there is still an explicit recognition of the fact such “relevance can only come from a sound comprehension of past traditions in Islamic scholarship and their socio-historical contexts.”⁴⁰ This belief is clearly reflected in the layout of the Islamic studies major. First year students are required to establish a strong foundation with four compulsory courses on the two core sacred texts, Islamic law and an overview of Muslim societies throughout history. By the second year, students will build on these foundations and examine contemporary issues through the broad courses of Islam in the Modern World, Islam in the West and Women with Muslim Identity. By the third year, the courses become more plentiful with eight on offer and the individual course scopes narrow to examine courses focusing for example on regional Islam, revivalism, media representation and Islamic ethics. However, not all units are offered every year but on a rotational basis, with courses offered in alternating years. The diploma differs from the major only in that there is a greater focus on the foundations of social science with courses such as Understanding Society and is more basic in exploring the faith. Unlike CSU’s approach to Islamic studies that focuses on classical Islamic studies, WSU aims its programs and courses at Muslims and non-Muslim students from a social scientific perspective, in particular sociology.

Graduate Outcomes

WSU identifies its student base is primarily of a Muslim background. Upon graduation, students are most likely to seek employment nationally as opposed to internationally. Potential career paths for graduates of the Bachelor of Arts with an Islamic studies major include: Muslim community development officer, political adviser, foreign affairs, immigration, journalism, primary/secondary teaching (with further training), academia, police force, border protection and defence force.

Student Demographics

Total number of students enrolled in Islamic studies courses in 2016	180
Total number of students completing an Islamic studies major in 2016	30
Domestic/international student ratio	100/0
Student gender ratio (M/F)	95/5
Study format (online/in person)	30/70
Muslim/non-Muslim ratio	98/2
Enrolment trend 2015-2016	20% decrease

⁴⁰ “Bachelor of Arts,” Western Sydney University, accessed January 24, 2017, <https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/future/study/courses/undergraduate/bachelor-of-arts.html>.

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

Current Offerings

UNE offers a single undergraduate Islamic studies major relevant to the Bachelor of Arts program. Three Islamic studies courses form the core of the major: Islam in the Modern World, Women in Islam and Islam and the West: The Clash of Civilisations?

Background

Under the Federal National Reserve Priority Scheme, UNE received funding in 1995 to establish a Graduate Diploma in Islamic Studies by distance education. Initially entitled Understanding Muslim Societies in Asia, the graduate diploma, which consisted of nine units and a thesis option, became the first such designated Islamic studies postgraduate program within Australia. The program, which later expanded to include the Middle East, successfully attracted between 60-80 students per annum on a full-fee basis.

However, when rebadged as a Master of Arts (Islamic Studies) and switched to the Higher Education Contribution Scheme in 2002, these numbers began to decrease. This was partly because over the 22 years this program has run for (1995-2016), UNE has struggled to maintain the number of qualified academics not only in this field of expertise, but also those specialising on Asia. With the impending retirement of the current coordinator of Islamic studies, the Master's program (with the exception of the Women in Islam course) has been withdrawn from offer to students in 2017. The two remaining undergraduate courses, which continue to attract significant enrolments, are currently taught and operated through the School of Humanities.

Course Overview

	Course name	Category/ies	
1	Islam in the Modern World	Muslim societies and communities	Contemporary politics/IR
2	Women in Islam	Muslim societies and communities	Classical Islamic studies
3	Islam and the West: The Clash of Civilisations?	Contemporary politics/IR	History

In reference to the Islamic studies major, students are exposed to issues pertaining to questions of religion, politics, law, economics, business ethics, gender relations, cultural expressions, education and development. These aspects, which try to bring into focus the volatile interaction of modernism and Islamic tradition, are explored historically within the context of the fundamental beliefs and practices of Islam and the challenges Islam faces and poses in the world today.

Islam is studied also as part of the Studies in Religion and International Studies programs within the School of Humanities. First year students are introduced in the former to Islam as one of the major religions in the world and in the latter to the role Islam plays in terms of

international relations, terrorism and national security. Overall, while UNE still offers Islamic studies from a historical, religious, political and sociological perspective, the future viability of such study at UNE is uncertain.

Graduate Outcomes

Two different cohorts of student are enrolled in Islamic studies at UNE. At the undergraduate level, where non-Muslim students predominate, Islamic studies offers employment opportunities in teaching, the public services, journalism and business, where some knowledge of Islamic business practices is required. At the postgraduate level, the majority of PhD students are Australian Muslims or Muslims from countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia and lately the Middle East.

Student Demographics

Total number of students enrolled in Islamic studies courses in 2016	120-140
Total number of students completing an Islamic studies major in 2016	N/A
Domestic/international student ratio	N/A
Student gender ratio (M/F)	46/54
Study format (online/in person)	100/0
Muslim/non-Muslim ratio	4/96
Enrolment trend 2015-2016	Consistent

MONASH UNIVERSITY

Current Offerings

The Islamic studies offering at MU is minimal with only five undergraduate courses. MU, however, offers an Islamic studies minor as part of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Letters as single degrees, or alternatively within double degrees in which the Bachelor of Arts is included. The primary focus for Islamic studies at MU is to promote interfaith dialogue and understanding in Australia.

Background

The Islamic studies suite at MU is managed by the Faculty of Arts and offered by the Centre for Religious Studies. MU's involvement in Australia's history of interreligious dialogue is significant. The Monash Religious Centre, on the Clayton Campus, was built in 1967-8 and funded by the Christian and Jewish communities for the use of all faiths. It demonstrates striving towards interreligious dialogue and understanding; as such, it became the first of its kind in Australia. Islamic studies at MU has also benefitted from sponsorship within the broader community. The Centre for Religious Studies adds to this effort at interfaith connectivity, an academic platform.

Course Overview

	Course name	Category/ies	
1	Conflict and Coexistence 1: Jews, Christians and Muslims from Antiquity through the Middle Ages	History	
2	Islam: Principles, Civilisations, Influences	History	Classical Islamic studies
3	Islamic Responses to the Post-colonial Age	History	Classical Islamic studies
4	Imagining God: The Mystic Quest in Judaism, Christianity and Islam	Classical Islamic studies	
5	Conflict and Coexistence 2: Jews, Christians and Muslims in the Modern World	History	Muslim societies and communities
6	Middle East Politics	Contemporary politics/IR	

The Islamic studies courses on offer clearly reflect the university's religious history. For example, four courses reflect the shared history, modern relations and comparative spiritual elements between Islam, Judaism and Christianity, with another at honours level (Medieval Dialogues) exploring shared concerns in the medieval period. Additionally, one of the required units for the Islamic studies minor (World Religions) situates Islam among other religions. The units focusing solely on the Islamic faith do so from a historical and anthropological perspective, examining the impact of the postcolonial period and probing the core principles, influences and civilisations of Islam. While MU does not offer classical Islamic studies, its focus on interfaith dialogue historically and in the modern context reflects an approach more aligned with the social sciences.

Graduate Outcomes

Graduates of the Islamic studies minor are primarily non-Muslim. Likewise, MU promotes international study as part of its degree, which feeds into employment prospects, with students likely to seek jobs domestically and internationally. Fields of employment include teaching, social welfare, local government, public relations, journalism and librarianship.

Student Demographics

Unavailable for MU.

DISCUSSION

From the above overview of the state of Islamic studies in the Australian higher education sector several points of discussion emerge. In relation to course breakdown as per the adopted classification, it is primarily CSU and UMelb that have a strong focus on teaching classical Islamic studies whereas the rest of the surveyed universities adopt social and political science-based approaches. A non-exhaustive analysis of the individual courses on offer suggests the lacunae in relation to theoretical and methodological issues in Islamic studies taught in Western universities in general as discussed in this report are reflected in the Australian context. The

methods employed can be characterised as being multiple, including those that are philological, historical, anthropological, political science/international relations, religious studies and sociological in nature. Despite the increasing range of subjects on offer across several Australian universities in recent years, the lack of approaches to Islamic studies that deal with the subject matter in the context of problems associated with the contemporary study of the method and theory of religion in general and associated strategies of research identified in this report are particularly evident in Australian universities. No single course of such nature is currently on offer. Furthermore, although several institutions offer courses on “Women in Islam,” it is not clear if or to what extent these courses approach the subject matter from decidedly gender-based theoretical and methodological frameworks. This suggests, like the case of Islamic studies in Western universities in general as discussed above, more meaningful integration of Islamic studies offered at Australian universities into the contemporary Western tradition of academic and cultural research is yet to take place. However, in most of Australia’s universities that teach Islamic studies, the majors in which courses are offered are integrated into and reflect the interdisciplinary nature of the programs in which they are located. These are, however, preliminary findings as they are not based on an exhaustive study of individual courses and their contents.

Based on the available data, close to 4,000 students were enrolled in Islamic studies-related subjects across the surveyed universities during the 2015-2016 period. Apart from WSU, most other universities reported an increase in enrolments in the 9-20% range for the same period. The majority of students who enrol in Islamic studies courses are domestic students. In terms of gender balance, most universities reported gender balanced figures apart from WSU where male students dominate strongly (95%). Except for WSU and CSU,⁴¹ students tend to be from a non-Muslim background. In terms of study format, apart from CSU and UNE, the predominant study mode is in person as opposed to online. Finally, in terms of graduate outcomes and potential avenues for employment for their graduates, the surveyed institutions identified a broad range of industries and occupations, including public service, teaching, journalism, NGO work, foreign affairs, defence and security to name but the most prominent few.

CONCLUSION

An overview of the current state of affairs in the field of Islamic studies in higher education institutions in the West was first produced by the 2008 HEFCE report whose scope and main aims were briefly outlined in the introductory section of this report. As noted above, although the discipline of Islamic studies in Western academic institutions goes back centuries and has evolved in its approaches and methodologies several times, the incorporation of Islamic studies at Australian universities is a relatively recent phenomenon that emerged more forcefully only a decade ago or so. The main purpose of this report was to build on and expand this report’s

⁴¹ This is offset somewhat by the fact CSU, as noted above, has the largest predominantly Muslim student enrolment.

findings as they relate to the Australian higher education sector. The report presented an overview of findings from Australian universities which currently offer substantial Islamic studies including ANU, CSU, GU, MU, UMelb, UNE and WSU concerning the historical background behind the emergence and operation of Islamic studies programs at these institutions, the types of courses currently on offer, the kind of graduate outcomes the institutions have put in place for their graduates as well as basic students demographics including recent (2015-2016) enrolment trends. Overall findings suggest the theoretical and methodological issues that surround the discipline of Islamic studies in Western institutions in general are also reflected in the Australian context. In general terms, the available student demographic data indicates a continued interest and slightly increased demand for Islamic studies-related subjects in the Australian higher education sector.

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