Programme specification 2016/2017

School of Oriental and African Studies

The following information forms the programme specification at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. It gives definitive information relating to a programme of study and is written for a public audience, particularly prospective and current students. It is also used for other purposes such as initial programme approval, and is therefore produced at the start of the programme development process. Once approved, it forms the base-line information for all statements relating to the programme and is updated as approved amendments are made.

CORE INFORMATION

Programme title	BA Arabic and Islamic Studies
Final award	BA Honours
Intermediate awards	n/a
Mode of attendance	Full-time
UCAS code	QT96 BA/ArlslSt
Professional body accreditation	n/a
Date specification created/updated	February 2016

WHY CHOOSE THIS PROGRAMME?

Why study at SOAS?	SOAS is unique as the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The School also has the largest concentration of specialist faculty concerned with the study of these areas at any university in the world. SOAS is consistently ranked among the top higher education institutions in the UK and the world and it also offers a friendly, vibrant environment for students in a diverse and close-knit community.
What is special about this programme?	This four-year programme is intended to give students a solid grounding in Modern Standard and classical Arabic, familiarity with the core textual tradition of Islam, a broad knowledge of Islamic history and some insight into the methodology of religious studies. The third year is spent at a university in the Middle East.
Who would it suit?	Anyone who enjoys language learning and has a special interest in Islam and the Arab Middle East, a region of outstanding international and geo-

	political importance. Graduates go on to - work in fields such as the Arab and Islamic media, banking, finance, trade or diplomacy - join educational institutions, cultural centres, companies, government agencies, NGOs or other organisations that have dealings with Arab or Islamic affairs - specialise at MA level in fields such religious studies, anthropology, economics, law, politics or international relations - engage in research and teaching in Arabic or Islamic Studies .
Programme structure	BA Arabic and Islamic Studies is a 4-year degree that combines language learning with a solid and wide-ranging study of Islamic thought, literature and culture. It consists of four course units every year at SOAS and a year of language study in the Middle East. In the first year the programme's major component is the intensive study of Modern Standard Arabic. This consists of three course units involving up to 15 hours of tuition per week. The fourth course unit is an introductory course such as Introduction to Arabic Culture or Literatures of the Near and Middle East. The second year continues the study of Modern Standard Arabic (Arabic 2); additionally, students select the following course: Introduction to Islamic Texts, which is compulsory. They can can also choose from a further course such as Introduction to Arabic Literature or the Muslim World: Unity in Diversity. Lastly, students can select one unit from the lists of Islamic and Arabic-related options (lists B or C) OR one other unit (open option) at an approved level.

	The third year of the degree is the Year Abroad programme. Students spend the year at one of the following institutions: the Alexandria School of Languages, (ACL) in Alexandria, Egypt; An-Najah National University in the West Bank, Nablus; the Alif Institute in Fez, Morocco; or The Qasid Institute in Amman, Jordan. Students will study a range of units including the colloquial language as well as Modern Standard Arabic and will write an extended essay on an approved topic of their choice. In the final year, language study is continued with a course at advanced level (Arabic 4). To continue the first-hand experience of the primary sources the choice of other modules in Islamic text-reading is compulsory. The third and fourth units are selected from the list of options; students who wish to specialize in particular fields of Islamic studies are able to opt for further text-reading courses. There is also an opportunity to write a dissertation (Independent Study Project).
Assessment summary	Courses are typically assessed 25% by coursework and 75% by exam.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

SOAS has general minimum entrance requirements for registration for an undergraduate degree and these can be viewed at (http://www.soas.ac.uk/admissions/ug/entryreq/)

- **A Levels**: AAB -ABB
- A Level language preferred
- **IB**: 36 (6/6/6)

- **BTEC**: DDM
- **Scottish Highers**: AAABB
- **Scottish Advanced Highers**: AAB equiv.
- **Irish LC**: 340 points from 5 Higher level subjects at grade C1 or above

- **Advanced Placement**: 4 4 5 (Two semesters UCAS Group A) plus US HSGD with GPA 3.0
- **Euro Bacc**: 80%
- **French Bacc**: 14/20
- **German Abitur**: 2.0
- **Italy DES**: 80/100
- **Austria Mat**: 2.0
- **Polish Mat**: 75%

Minimum Entry Requirements: Languages at SOAS are taught ab initio, and no prior knowledge of Arabic is required.

Subjects Preferred: A good pass in a foreign language at A-level, or equivalent, is preferred.

Interview Policy: Candidates with "non-standard" qualifications may be invited for interview.

PROGRAMME AIMS
What will this programme give the student an opportunity to achieve?

- To provide an excellent and broad-ranging knowledge of Islam.
- To make the student competent in Classical and Modern Standard Arabic.
- To provide conversational ability in colloquial Arabic.
- To provide a structured experience of living and studying in a Middle Eastern country during the Year Abroad.
- To prepare the student for working in Middle Eastern societies or in a context with Arab and Middle Eastern connections.

PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge
- Advanced knowledge of the Arabic language.
- Wide-ranging knowledge of the foundational texts of Islam
- Key methods and concepts of linguistic, literary and cultural analysis
- Intercultural awareness and understanding

Intellectual(thinking) skills
Ability to:
1. Identify, describe and analyse problems and devise appropriate strategies for their resolution
2. Communicate information, ideas and arguments cogently and coherently both orally and in writing with due regard for the target audience
3. Apply linguistic, literary and cultural concepts
4. Demonstrate and exercise independence of mind and thought
5. Appreciate the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge

Subject-based practical skills
Ability to:
1. Demonstrate a broad knowledge and, using appropriate methodologies, a

critical understanding of the foundational texts of Islam in the original Arabic, including Qur'anic exegesis, the Prophetic traditions, as well as key works of theology, law and mysticism.

2. Communicate in Arabic appropriately and with a high degree of grammatical accuracy, with native and other competent speakers

2. Exploit for a variety of purposes and, as appropriate, contextualise a broad range of materials written or spoken in Arabic

3. Apply effectively and appropriately Arabic-language skills in a professional context

4. Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and effective understanding of the structures, registers and varieties of Arabic

5. Demonstrate a detailed knowledge and effective understanding of the linguistic principles required to analyse Arabic

Transferable skills

The programme will encourage students to:

1. Gather, process and evaluate critically information from a variety of paper, audio-visual and electronic sources
2. Structure and communicate ideas effectively both orally and in writing
3. Use IT effectively both as a means of communication and as an aid to learning
4. Manage time and work to deadlines
5. Work independently
6. Be self-reliant and confident
7. Assess the relevance and importance of others' ideas
8. Participate constructively in groups

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS FOR GAINING AN AWARD

Structure, duration and requirements for gaining an award

SOAS has standard requirements relating to the structure and duration of undergraduate programmes and for the award and classification of these programmes. Details can be found at
http://www.soas.ac.uk/registry/degreeregulations/file60378.pdf

Programme structure diagram

Below is a structure diagram for this programme.

Level	Year of study	Course code	Course title	Credit	Status	Notes
4	1	155900896	Arabic 1	90	Core	
4	1	157400020 155900991 154800230	Introduction to Arabic Culture or Literatures of the Near and Middle East or Introduction to the History of the Near and Middle	30	Compulsory	

			East			
5	2	155900897	Arabic 2	30	Core	
5	2	Awaiting code	Introduction to Islamic Texts	30	Compulsory	
5	2	155901258	The Muslim World: Unity in Diversity	30	Compulsory	
	2		Module from List A **Or** an open option	30	Optional	
5	3	n/a	Year abroad	4 units = 120	Core	
6	4	155900899	Arabic 4	30	Core	
6	4		Module from List B – Year 4 Compulsory Courses	30	Compulsory	
6	4	n/a	A further modules from List B or a module from List C	30	Optional	
n/a	4	n/a	A further module from List B/List C/List D or an an open option	30	Optional	

The availability of optional/elective courses may vary in a given academic session due to factors such as staff absence and student numbers. For an up to date list of courses running in a given academic session please refer to the degree structures as listed on the SOAS website for the degree programmes taught by each Department.

List A: Second Year Options
- Introduction to Arabic Literature
- Introduction to Sufism 155901375
- Introduction to Arabic Dialects 155901396
- Persian for Readers of Arabic Script 155905002
- Elementary Written Turkish 155901051
- Introductory Akkadian 155900426
- Modern Hebrew Language: Elementary 155901407
- H248 The Making of the Modern Middle East 154800227
- Islamic Painting 154900009
- Islamic Architecture 154900107
- The Sources of Islamic Art and Architecture 154900108
- Mosaics, Manuscripts, and Wall Painting in Islamic Art 154900134
- Art and Material Culture of the Islamic World: 7th to 14th Centuries 154900138
- The Decorative Arts of Islam 154900109

- Government and politics of the Middle East 153400060
- Economic development of the modern Middle East 153400031
- Islamic Law 155200037

List B: Year 4 Arabic and Islamic Compulsory Courses (not all are running every year)
- Quran and Hadith Studies 155900734
- Islamic Texts 155900356
- Reading Classical Arabic historians 155901334
- Islamic Intellectual Traditions 155901338

List C: Year 4 Arabic and Islamic related Options
- Politics and Aesthetics in Modern Arabic Literature 155901382
- Language and Oral Literature of an Arabic Vernacular 155901376
- Sufism: Texts and History 155901381
- Medieval Arabic Thought 155901377
- Culture, Society and Politics in Classical Arabic Literature 155901373
- Arabic Womens' Writing 155901406
- Islamic Architecture 154900107
- Islamic Painting 154900009
- The Sources of Islamic Art and Architecture 154900108
- Art and Material Culture of the Islamic World: 7th to 14th Centuries 154900138
- Mosaics, Manuscripts, and Wall Painting in Islamic Art 154900134
- Islamic Law 155200037

List D: Other Approved (Arabic related) Options (not all available every year)
- Cinemas of the Middle East and North Africa 1 155905000
- Cinemas of the Middle East and North Africa 2 155905001
- Independent Study Project in Arabic Studies (using language sources) 155901344
- Independent Study Project in Arabic Studies 155900733
- Independent Study Project in Islamic Studies 155901339
- Introductory Akkadian 155900426
- Elementary Written Turkish 155901051
- Persian for Readers of Arabic Script 155905002
- Modern Hebrew Language: Elementary 155901407
- H348 The Making of the Modern Middle East 154800227
- Government and politics of the Middle East 153400060
- Economic development of the modern Middle East 153400031

Language courses at an advanced level are also available to students who have the necessary background.

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT
What methods will be used to achieve the learning outcomes?

Knowledge

- Competence in reading, writing and speaking Arabic will be achieved through a progression of intensive language courses taught in plenary and small groups that will develop and test all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing); assessment will consist of classroom tests, written coursework, oral presentations, and written and oral exams. Intermediate and advanced language courses and text courses will use a wide range of "real world" cultural and literary texts;
- A coherent and detailed knowledge of selected aspects of Islamic Studies, including Qur'anic exegesis, Prophetic biography and traditions, theology, law, mysticism as well as art and music will be developed through lecture courses delivered by specialists at the forefront of their disciplines; large lecture courses will also involve tutorials for small groups. Assessment will be through a combination of classroom presentations, coursework essays, written exams and the writing of an extended essay or Independent Study Project on a topic of the student's choice, which will involve the selection and analysis of primary texts and the critical discussion and assessment of secondary materials.
- First-hand knowledge and familiarity with Middle Eastern society and culture will be developed through the combination of language learning, studying and living in a Middle Eastern country during the year abroad, disciplinary courses related to that area and the ISP.

Intellectual (thinking) skills

- The ability to devise and sustain arguments, and/or to solve problems, using ideas and techniques at the forefront of knowledge related to Arabic and Islamic Studies, will be developed through lectures, tutorials, oral presentations, classroom discussions, and essay-writing;
- The ability to describe and comment upon particular aspects of current research related to Arabic and Islamic Studies will be developed through readings for lectures, tutorials, and oral presentations, and through classroom discussions and essay-writing;
- The appreciation of the uncertainty, ambiguity and limits of knowledge will be developed through the discussion of the conflicting ideas and debates relating to Arabic and Islamic Studies in lectures, tutorials, classroom discussions and questions set for coursework and exam essays.
- The ability to manage one's own learning, and to make use of scholarly reviews and primary sources such as research articles and/or original materials related to Arab world will be developed by encouraging students to choose their own topics for coursework essays in years 2 and 4 and for the Independent Study Project.

Subject-based practical skills

- The ability to analyse cultural data and make judgements on the basis of conflicting evidence will be fostered through course readings from year 1 onwards;
- The ability to comprehend, and communicate in Arabic language through both speech and writing will be fostered in the language courses;
- The ability to assess the validity of different approaches to the same data or

ideas will be fostered through essay questions and classroom discussions;
- The ability to research religious and cultural phenomena through both primary and secondary sources, making appropriate use of library and online resources, will be fostered in particular in the written essays, oral presentations and Independent Study Project.

Transferable skills
The programme will encourage students to:
- Write and speak with clarity and concision by setting clear guidelines and giving detailed feedback to essays and presentations from year 1 onward;
- Use a variety of sources as research materials in their essays, oral presentations and Independent Study Project. This is particularly exhilarating for students in their final year, who find they can write on quite original topics using materials that no one has used before;
- Work to deadlines, with clear deadlines for essays and penalty for late submission.
- Develop self-reflexiveness through classroom discussion, feedback on essays and presentations, and course assessment.
- Develop an understanding of the relativity of cultures and "cultural" (or encultured) attitudes, particularly through classroom discussion.
- Assess the validity of arguments and make judgements on complex situations, in particular in essays and presentations.

REFERENCE POINTS
What has been the basis for the design of this programme?
1. School learning and teaching strategy
2. QAA framework for higher education qualifications
3. QAA subject benchmark statement Languages and related studies (2007)

QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT
SOAS has internal procedures to assure the quality of provision to be offered to students and to enhance the quality in the light of experience following delivery, taking into account the input of external experts and students. The procedures are set out in the School's Quality Assurance Handbook and can be viewed at (http://www.soas.ac.uk/add/qualityassurance/quality-assurance-handbook/).

SOAS is also subject to periodic external review from bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education and relevant professional and statutory regulatory bodies.

The procedures described in the Quality Assurance Handbook are in place to provide a high quality student experience for those choosing to study at SOAS, and student input and evaluation of their experiences is greatly valued. Students make an input to the ongoing development of their programmes, and the environment in which they operate, in a number of ways, including:
- formal student evaluation as part of the annual programme review;
- student representation on School committees at various levels (through the Students' Union) where many relevant issues are discussed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

- [SOAS Vision and Strategy Statement](#);
- [Undergraduate](#) Handbook;
- [Quality Assurance Handbook](#);
- [UCAS website](#);
- [QAA website](#).