

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



THE KING ABDULLAH
II BIN AL-HUSSEIN
COLLEGE FOR THE
TRAINING OF IMAMS



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Introduction

The King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein College for the Training of Imams, established in 2016, is an accredited, degree-granting constituent college of the World Islamic Sciences & Education (WISE) University.

The vision of the College is to produce a new generation of imams—those properly trained to lead Islamic communities around the world—by combining theological, judicial, pedagogical, leadership and communication skills instruction. The College's bespoke programmes of study promote a holistic understanding of traditional Sunni Islam: an embodiment of Prophetic orthodoxy, orthopraxy and wisdom applied to the modern world.

Under the guidance of HM King Abdullah II and the direct supervision of HRH Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad—Chief Advisor to the King for Religious and Cultural Affairs—the College continues the Hashemite vision of traditional Islam, a vision that has produced such seminal intra- and inter-faith initiatives as *The Amman Message* and *A Common Word*. Muslim communities cannot afford to have mosques doubling as centres of radicalization. Imam training



with the appropriate outlook is essential.

Programmes of study are customized and support both traditional and academic qualifications. Traditional studies focus on the mastery of didactic and canonical texts, leading to the student earning an *ijaza* (license to teach). Academic programmes of study range from a Bachelor of Arts in Shari'ah to a PhD programme. Students may combine both academic and traditional approaches during their course of study at the College.

The Role of Imams

The College trains foreign imams for their roles around the world, including Muslim-majority countries as well as countries where Muslims are a minority. In addition to leading prayers and offering basic Islamic instruction, imams from Muslim-minority countries often assume the roles of:

1. Official representative of the community to the press, social media and inter-faith events;
2. Civil status worker, including handling marriages and burials;
3. Islamic arbitrator for minor issues of conflict among the community;
4. Fatwa—answering questions on the application of Islam, including asking qualified scholars when the question goes beyond the imam's learning; and
5. Da'wa worker, engaging the non-Muslim community in dialogue.

Academic Programme

The King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein College for the Training of Imams has one of the highest concentrations of specialist traditional Islamic experts in the Middle East. The programme of study includes both theological and social training. The programme's theological component offers detailed instruction in orthopraxy and its derivation from the hermeneutic principles of the four Sunni schools: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i and Hanbali. In an era where the outgrowth of odd fatwas is causing the fabric of Muslim societies to split at the seams, it is not sufficient for imams to memorize legal verdicts. Rather, they must be able to actively engage the minds of those they teach. The College's programme of study is fluid, allowing students to further their studies in areas that are of particular relevance to their communities.

Upon arriving at the College, students will be evaluated and assigned a programme of study that meets their needs. Some students are better suited for the non-academic *ijaza* programme. Such programmes are customized and range from six months to three years.



Four Independent Departments of Islamic Jurisprudence

The overwhelming majority of university programmes in Shari’ah include a single department for Islamic jurisprudence. The King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein College for the Training of Imams has four such departments—one for each Sunni school. Departmental specialization helps maintain the fastidious standards of traditional Sunni jurisprudence. Most Shari’ah graduates have not mastered Sunni jurisprudence according to any consistent methodology. Instead of granting practical guidance or academic rigour, such non-specialized degrees leave graduates with an assortment of legal facts and no underlying methodological or practical framework.

Traditional Teaching Licenses

The College’s faculty members are traditionally-trained holders of *ijazat* (teaching licenses) in their respective disciplines. Students may obtain a license to teach a given text after studying it with an instructor and demonstrating mastery of the subject matter. Obtaining one or several *ijazat* can be done in conjunction with—or independently of—degree studies.



Undergraduate Programme

Students who successfully complete the College's programme will be awarded a Bachelor of Arts in Shari'ah. Upon commencing study at the College, undergraduate students will select a school of thought: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i or Hanbali. The bulk of undergraduate instruction is in Islamic jurisprudence and its hermeneutic principles (*fiqh wa usool al-fiqh*) according to the selected school of thought. Instruction will also be provided in:

1. Arabic grammar and morphology;
2. Logic;
3. Comparative Islamic jurisprudence (*al-fiqh al-muqaran*);
4. Islamic justice (*qada*);
5. Principles of delivering fatwas (*ifta*);
6. Orthodox Islamic creed (*aqida*); and
7. Schools within Islamic orthodoxy and orthopraxy, both as a survey of current Muslim demographics and from the perspective of historical development.

The King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein College for the Training of Imams is unique in its approach. In addition to studying theology and its ancillary disciplines according to traditional Sunni methodology from experts, undergraduate students undergo thorough training in professional skills, including:

1. Living as a minority: civic duty, pluralism and freedom of conviction;
2. Community leadership; and
3. Presentation and communication skills, with particular emphasis on addressing the press and use of social media in the era of sound bites.

It is estimated that the completion time of the programme is four to five years.

Graduate Programmes

Students who already hold the requisite undergraduate degree in Shari'ah or an equivalent discipline may enroll in either a postgraduate Higher Diploma in Imam Training or the PhD programme. The higher diploma is a practical qualification while the PhD programme is geared toward researchers and academics. As undergraduate programmes vary in their emphasis, graduate students may be asked to take some undergraduate courses as a requirement for completion of their course of study.

The estimated time to complete the Higher Diploma in Imam Training for holders of a Bachelor of Arts in Shari'ah is 12-18 months. The time to complete a PhD will vary, but will usually take six years of study and research following a Bachelor's degree.

Language Training

Instruction is in Arabic. Students from countries whose primary language of instruction is not Arabic will be evaluated and may be required to take a one-year programme at the Arabic Language Centre for Non-Arabic Speakers at WISE's main campus.

Extra-Curricular Enrichment

The College's faculty and students come from a variety of countries and backgrounds. Students have the opportunity to establish lifelong connections with other

imams and scholars. In most circumstances, students will reside in specially-assigned housing on the College's campus in al-Yadouda, a southern suburb of Greater Amman, Jordan.

Further Information

Please visit www.ImamTrainingCollege.com
for further information.

Enquiries may be sent to
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