



AZIZ

FOUNDATION

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIP BROCHURE



BACKGROUND

The Aziz Foundation was established in 2015 by the Aziz family, and is inspired by the values and teachings of Islam to support the most disadvantaged communities in Britain. It commenced its operations in delivering a dynamic programme of philanthropic work that included scholarships, research grants, grants for individuals and projects, and organisational development for charities.

Following a strategic review of the Foundation's work and the prevailing external realities, from 2019 onwards the Board of Trustees decided that the Foundation would focus on one area; supporting Muslim individuals by offering Masters scholarships. We are excited about enabling each scholarship recipient to progress in their career and make meaningful contributions to their industry, community and society as a whole.

A major milestone in the Foundation's journey was reached with the publication of its first social impact report (covering the period from 2019-23). The publication provides more details on the organisation's strategic direction, the evolution of its programmes, and the social impact generated through its projects and beneficiaries.

2025 marked the Foundation's decade of impact and giving. It commissioned an independent consultancy to evaluate its programmes, with the findings published in full in December of that year.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE AZIZ FOUNDATION

The Aziz Foundation wishes to partner with universities by offering scholarships schemes for British Muslims hoping to pursue postgraduate study at the Masters level. Your institution can assist the Foundation in meeting the demand – stimulated over the time of its operation – for its scholarships.

We are looking to partner with forward looking, inclusive institutions that take the principle of widening participation seriously and are taking the necessary steps to diversify their student cohorts at the postgraduate level.

We believe Aziz Scholarships offer myriad benefits to institutions:

- The scheme is generating demand for university courses amongst British Muslim communities that would not otherwise exist.
- The scholarships reduce the fee burden on universities. There is a greater likelihood that scholars will complete their degrees as they possess financial security.

700

Scholarships awarded since 2015!

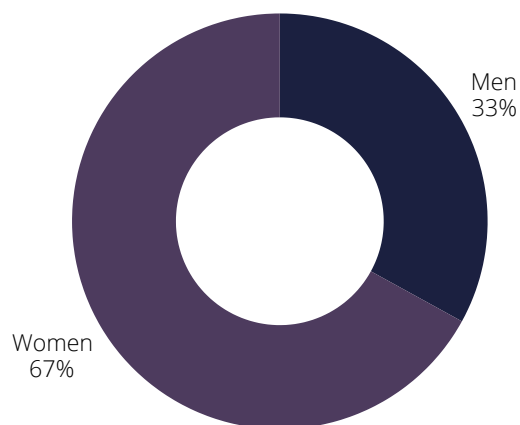


Figure 1. Scholarships awarded by gender (2015-2025)

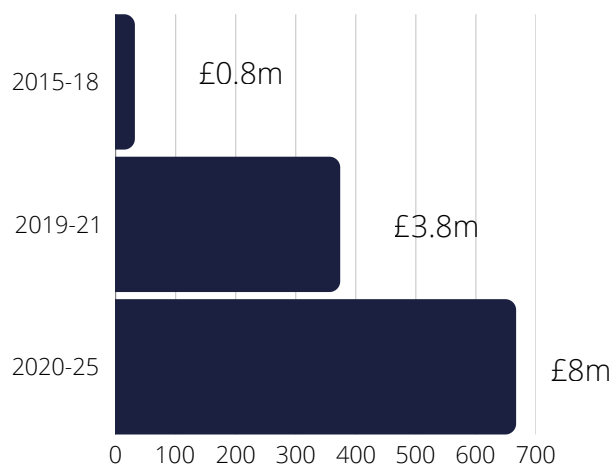


Figure 2. We've awarded over 700 scholarships over the past five years, valued at just under £8m.



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- We are plugging a funding gap at this level: undergraduate courses are covered by student finance and at the doctoral level by readily available research funding (e.g. research councils).
- The scheme is helping institutions meet their commitment to the Widening Participation agenda and access agreements, diversifying student cohorts, albeit at the postgraduate level. While the obligation ends at the undergraduate level, the principle of WP extends to the postgraduate level.
- To elaborate on the above, the scheme can aid institutions in dealing with the 'progression challenge', that is the decline in British Muslim participation between the undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
- The scholarships also act as an important Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) intervention, which, as part of a package of measures, can assist institutions in creating an inclusive learning environment for British Muslim students.
- The regulator, the Office for Students (OfS), has set the ambitious sector-wide target to eliminate the BME awarding gap by 2038. Third sector organisations with deep knowledge of disadvantaged communities - such as the Aziz Foundation - will have a role to play in helping universities achieve these targets.
- The OfS is, in a preliminary manner, exploring the possibility of extending WP to postgraduate provision. This will become a focal point for HE institutions that wish to take this matter seriously. The scheme is designed to assist institutions in achieving their widening participation objectives.
- The government's Post-16 Education Skills White Paper stated that it will explicitly seek 'to address the barriers faced of disadvantaged students in accessing and succeeding at postgraduate level.'

AZIZ FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS: AN OVERVIEW

1. Vision

The Aziz Foundation is awarding 100% tuition fee Masters scholarships to Muslims lacking the financial means to complete postgraduate degrees at British universities. These scholarships aim to empower British Muslims to bring positive change to their communities and beyond.

Thus, they are aimed at those who:

- Aspire to make a positive contribution to society - people who want to help others
- View themselves as future British Muslim leaders - change makers

2. Courses

The scholarship scheme is open to Masters courses at any British university that has opted into the preferred partnership scheme. Emerging leaders must show how the course will increase their effectiveness in one of the following areas relating to British Muslims.

a. Effective Advocacy and Enhance Public Perception

Facilitate better representation and contribution of Muslims to civil society and positively transform perceptions of British Muslims.

b. Community Service and Social Development

Raise aspirations and standards within British Muslim communities.

Masters courses will be awarded in the following subject areas only:

- **Media & Journalism:**

Candidates are driven to ensure better representation and fairer reporting in the media industry

- **Technology:**

Candidates who wish to be at the forefront of harnessing the power of technological innovation, acting as disruptors within the tech industry

- **Sustainability / Environment:**

Candidates dedicated to working on the pressing generational issues of sustainability and protecting the environment

- **Law (LLM (LPC or BPTC); SQE.):**

Candidates who hold aspirations to excel in the legal profession, particularly in human rights, family law, criminal law etc. (excluding corporate law) and then go on to become judges.

- **Policy (Public Policy, Politics, etc.):**

Candidates with a passion for influencing public policy in the UK to ensure that it is equitable and responsive to the needs of minority communities, especially Muslim communities.

- **Arts and Culture:**

Candidates who are determined to shape perceptions, narratives and social attitudes through creating original content (writers, script writers, producers etc.).

- **Sports:**

Candidates who are enthusiastic about sporting excellence and can make key contributions, through administration and management, to the industry.

- **Philanthropy and Grant making:**

For those who want to work in the third sector, for Trusts and Foundations, to direct grant making and philanthropic efforts.



AZIZ FOUNDATION SCHOLASHIPS: AN OVERVIEW (CONTINUED)

3. Personal Qualities:

We are looking for candidates who are authentic; aspirational; confident; courageous; resilient.

Application Process:

The applicant must meet the above criteria and submit:

- An application form
- A statement of no more than 1,000 words
- The details of two referees

Means Testing:

The Foundation will apply a means test to determine the finances of the candidate. We will consider the secondary school(s) they attended, amount of student debt, household income, caring responsibilities, dependencies, living arrangements, financial commitments and available government data about their background.

As well as indicators based on individual circumstances, area based data such as POLAR and IMD will be utilised.

Scholarships are being given as Zakat (as charity dependent on financial need), and candidates encouraged to self-assess their eligibility using appropriate online calculators.



PROPOSAL AGREEMENT WITH UNIVERSITIES

The Aziz Foundation Masters Scholarships programme offers Masters scholarship awards (tuition fees only) to Muslims who qualify for home fees at UK universities. It has become clear to us that the number of awards offered does not meet the demand that is being generated by the programme, therefore the Foundation is looking at ways to extend its scholarships offer through seeking concessions from Higher Education Institutions (see below).

The awards will be allocated to **Preferred Partner institutions and selected courses** – this will constitute the majority of scholarship awards and have a wide application window.

Preferred Partner institutions will be listed on our website and applicants will be encouraged to apply to them. The Foundation will leverage its networks and engagement with Muslim civil society and representative communities to promote these scholarships. Preferred Partner institutions:

- share **core values** with the Aziz Foundation and **actively promote Widening Participation** at the postgraduate level
- are aware of concerns of **unconscious bias** and address the **degree awarding gap**
- provide **specific cultural and social support to BME students** (for example, BME advocacy schemes, mentoring programmes, having a Muslim chaplaincy or faith advisor in place, etc.)
- are committed to **tackle Islamophobia on campus** (this could include: having robust reporting mechanisms for dealing with racial harassment in place, auditing the British Muslim student experience to understand their lived experiences, adopting a definition of Islamophobia, awareness training, etc.)
- offer to cover the costs of a living stipend (maintenance) or financial discount on tuition fees** according to the sliding scale:

Number of Scholarships Awarded:	Discount Offer per award*:
1 - 3	20%
4 - 9	30%
10+	50%

If you meet the conditions of being a Preferred Partner and would like to join the scheme please contact us on **scholarships@azizfoundation.org.uk**

*Please note that the discounts are applied by bands, so the 20% will only be applied to scholarships 1-3, 30% on 4-9, and 50% on scholarships 10 and above

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: 2020-22 Scholarship Scheme Overview: Analysis & data

According to the data below, the vast majority of the Foundation's scholarship recipients were **young women, recently graduated**. A significant proportion of beneficiaries also hold financial obligations to their family, just below half are the first in their family into higher education, and almost a third have caring responsibilities.

Mode of Study (2020-2023)	
F/T	71%
P/T	26%
D/L	3%

POLAR Data (2020-2024)	
Quintile	Percentage
Q1 - 2	16%
Q3 - 5	84%

First Generation Students: 48%
Ave. Student Debt: £17,144
(2020-23 figures)

Social Indices (2025)	
Financially contributes to family	77%
Free School Meals	70%
With dependents	28%
Caring Responsibilities	21%
Carer with dependents	9%

Gender Breakdown (2015-2025)		
Female	446	67%
Male	221	33%
Total	667	100%



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Appendix 2: Statistics demonstrating the structural disadvantages faced by British Muslim communities

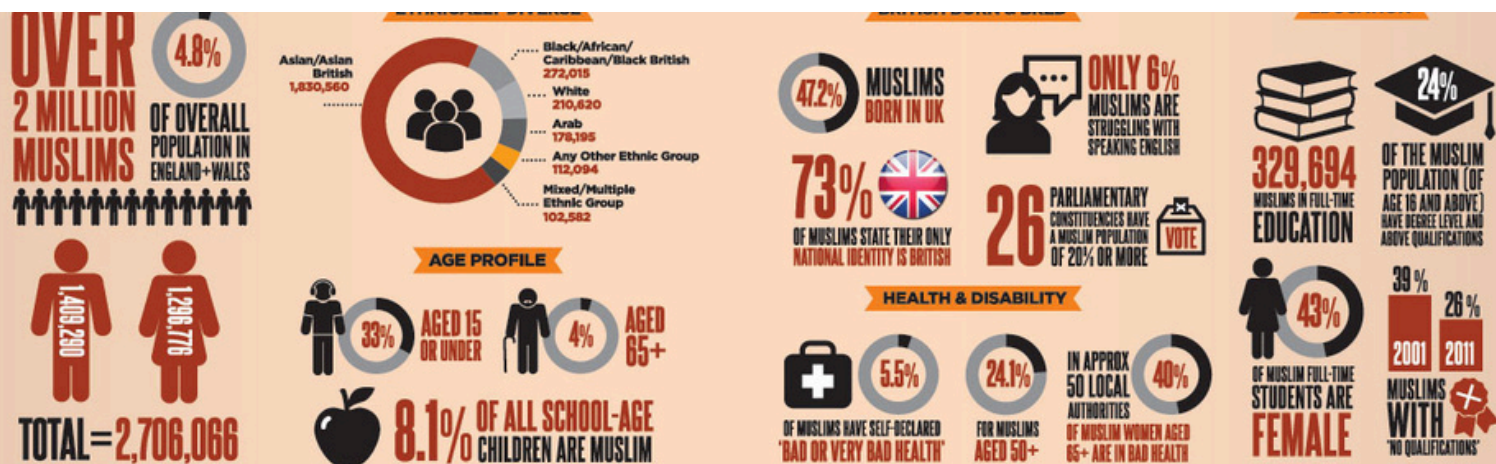
The statistics below, taken from authoritative sources and produced through rigorous research and data collection techniques, demonstrate some of the structural disadvantages faced by British Muslim communities. These focus on the lack of upwards social mobility realised by these faith communities, particularly in education and employment, and lends credibility to the claims British Muslim communities have on special programmes and initiatives at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) that increase access and participation, most specifically at the postgraduate level.

- According to the latest figures from the Office for Students (OfS) and HESA, 12% of undergraduate students are British Muslim. This falls to 8% at the PGT level and declines further to 5% at PGR level. There is clearly a progression issue here as with both Christian students and those from non-faith backgrounds percentages remain steady across UG and PGT. (Student characteristics data: Outcomes data dashboard - Office for Students)
- The Aziz Foundation's own research, drawing on a survey of scholarship candidates, has identified a number of concerns raised by British Muslims students in respect to their experiences on campus. These include financial pressures, lack of adequate faith provision, encountering micro-aggressions and a curriculum not properly reflective of their lived experience (Samatar and Sardar, *Transitions: British Muslims between Undergraduate and PGT Studies*, October 2023. See the report [here](#)).
- Further to the point above, universities can do more to instigate institutional change in response to the challenges confronting British Muslim students (Zain Sardar, *Catalysing Institutional Reform: Creating an inclusive learning environment for British Muslim students*, University of Exeter Centre for Social Mobility, November 2021. See [here](#)).
- 18% of Muslim students achieved First Class degree classifications at the undergraduate level, compared to 30% of those from non-faith backgrounds. British Muslims also represent the smallest faith group at Russell Group Institutions (AdvanceHE, *Research Insight: Religion and Belief in UK Higher Education*, 2020)
- The MCB's report analysing the 2021 census, *British Muslims Striving for Fairness*, states that 40% of Muslims in the UK live in the 46 most deprived Local Authorities. These figures have not shifted in the last twenty years. This is while the number of Muslims with Level 4/ degree level qualifications has increased to 32.3%, up from 24% in 2011 (see the full report [here](#)).
- A recent report has also found that Prevent has reinforced negative stereotypes of Muslims and encouraged a culture of mutual suspicion and surveillance on university campuses (Alison Scott Baumann, 2020, see full report [here](#))
- According to NUS, one in three respondents reported having felt negatively affected by Prevent, with almost 43% of students feeling unable to express their views or disengaged from political debate altogether (Ghani & Nagdee, NUS, 2018) Full report available [here](#)).
- Muslims feel invisible in HE; there is an institutional failure to recognise their identity (Bridge Institute, *Muslim Students in UK HE Report*, 2018: Full report available [here](#))
- 46% of the Muslim population live in the 10% most deprived areas (Social Mobility Commission, *Social mobility challenges faced by young Muslims' report*, 2017: See full report [here](#)). The recent ONS census (2021) has revealed that 39% live in the most deprived areas of England and Wales and, overall, 60% live in the lowest 40% of areas ranked by deprivation score.
- More than a fifth (21.3%) of Muslims between the ages of 16-74 have never worked (excluding full time students) compared to 4% of the overall population (The Missing Muslims, Report by the Citizen's Commission on Islam, Participation and Public Life, 2017, p.23: See full report [here](#)).
- Those of Pakistani or Bangladeshi origin (of whom a large majority are Muslim) find it difficult to secure employment in the UK, despite outperforming (educationally) many of their counterparts from white British backgrounds and are less likely to be offered managerial and professional roles. In particular, there is ongoing discrimination against Muslim women (Ethnicity, Gender and Social Mobility, Social Mobility Commission, 2017, p.8: full report available [here](#))

APPENDIX

- Only 6% of Muslims are in 'higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations' compared to 10% of the overall population. In contrast, 24% of Muslims are classified as having 'Never worked/long-term unemployed' compared to just 6% for the overall population (Nomis/Office for National Statistics, 2013, and see: Employment opportunities for Muslims in the UK: second report of the HoC Women and Equalities Committees, Session 2016-17, HC 89)
- Muslims are under-represented in the 'top professions' higher and lower managerial and professional occupations) compared with other religious/non-religious groups, with only 16% of British Muslims holding professional or managerial jobs compared to a national average of 30% (ONS, 2015)
- Muslims also have slightly lower levels of qualifications, with approximately a quarter of Muslims over the age of 16 having 'Level 4 and above' (i.e. degree and above) qualifications (The Muslim Council of Britain, 2015: Full report [here](#)). As a consequence, Muslims, as a whole, are the most disadvantaged faith group in the UK labour market
- Muslims experience the greatest economic disadvantages of any group in UK society. Analysis of the 2011 census (Nomis/Office for National Statistics, 2013) shows that within the economically active population (age 16-74 years) only one in five (19.8%) of the Muslim population is in full-time employment, compared to more than one in three (34.9%) of the overall population (in England & Wales)
- Although the data on Muslim students are limited, research into Muslim students studying in HE business schools found that 77% of Muslim students attended post-1992 universities, 4% attended Russell Group institutions and 19% attended other pre-1992 universities (Dean and Probert, 2011)

Appendix 3: General figures on British Muslims taken from the MCB Report, *British Muslims in Numbers*



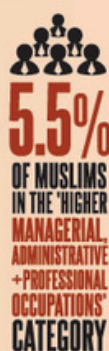
MCB

The Muslim Council of Britain

British Muslims in Numbers:

A Demographic, Socio-economic and Health Profile of Muslims in Britain drawing on the 2011 Census.

MUSLIMS AT WORK



HOUSING



PRISON POPULATION



DEPRIVATION





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