



Institute of Arab & Islamic Studies (IAIS)

HRH Prince Alwaleed Al Saud Award



University
of Exeter

About the Prince Alwaleed Travel Award

What can the award be used for?

The Prince Alwaleed Travel Award is a prestigious scholarship providing IAIS students with the unique opportunity to deepen understanding of the Arabic-speaking world through immersive experiences that extend beyond Study Abroad modules. It aims to enhance Arabic language proficiency and cultural knowledge, offering a significant advantage that is not commonly available to many students.

In brief, the funding can be used for one of two primary purposes:

- 1. Study of Arabic at an Appropriate Institution in Arabic-speaking Countries:** Such an immersive environment is invaluable for language acquisition, providing students with the chance to practise language skills in real-life situations and gain a deeper understanding of cultural nuances.
- 2. Travel to the MENA Region for Dissertation Fieldwork:** The second option supports students who need to conduct fieldwork in Arabic-speaking countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This funding enables students to gather primary data, access resources that are not available outside the region, and conduct interviews that are critical for research projects. This hands-on experience is helpful in producing high-quality, original research that contributes to the academic field of Arab and Islamic Studies.

Who can apply and how much is it?

The amount awarded varies according to your programme of study. The award amounts listed below are for full-time IAIS students only. Part-time (50%) students may apply for up to half of these amounts dependent on programme of study.

IAIS Undergraduate students

Undergraduates on IAIS single or combined honours programmes may apply for up to £1,500 for one of the following purposes:

- Study of Arabic at an appropriate institution in an Arabic-speaking country
- Travel to the Arabic-speaking world to undertake fieldwork for a dissertation (prior to final examinations)

Undergraduate students from Flexible Combined Honours or Liberal Arts

Students with Arabic in their degree title are eligible to apply for up to £1,500 for the same purposes as IAIS Undergraduate students. You must be studying at least 60 credits of IAIS modules in each year you apply.

MArabic in Arabic and Islamic Studies

Stage 4 students can apply for up to £2,000 for additional Arabic study or research for dissertation (minimum of two weeks) in an Arabic-speaking country following the compulsory Study Abroad placement or in the Easter vacation prior to final examinations.

IAIS MA Programmes (1-Year)

Students undertaking any of the following 1-year IAIS MA Programmes are eligible to apply for up to £2,000 to either study Arabic at an appropriate institution in an Arabic-speaking country or to travel to the Arabic-speaking world to undertake fieldwork for their dissertation.

- MA Islamic Studies
- MA Kurdish Studies
- MA Magic and Occult Science
- MA Middle East Politics
- MA Middle East Studies
- MA Palestine Studies
- MA Politics of Energy, Infrastructure and Environment
- MRes Middle East Studies

IAIS MA Programmes (2-Year)

Students undertaking any of the following 2-year IAIS MA Programmes are eligible to apply for up to £2,000 for additional Arabic studying or fieldwork for dissertation (minimum of two weeks) in an Arabic-speaking country. The award is not to be used to pay for flights for the compulsory Study Abroad placement alone. However, if students wish to extend their compulsory period of study with an additional course of study (minimum of two weeks), Alwaleed funded flights could be used to cover both.

Alternatively, in the second year of study, £2,000 is available for Arabic language study and dissertation fieldwork.

- MA International Relations and Arabic
- MA Middle East Politics and International Relations

IAIS PhD Programmes

Awards of up to £2,500 are available to support PhD students for Arabic language study or fieldwork in an Arabic-speaking country attached to an Arab educational and/or research institution. Awards are made based on ethics approval and academic excellence of the candidate.

Award conditions

- The award is for IAIS students for travel to Arabic-speaking countries in the MENA region, defined as countries where Arabic is an official language
- Undergraduate students may apply for a maximum of two Alwaleed Awards per student over the course of their programme
- Postgraduate students may apply for a maximum of one Alwaleed Award per student over the course of their programme
- The award cannot contribute to the costs of visiting an Arab country to gain work experience, participate in unpaid or voluntary work, visit friends or family, or assist with writing an essay for a module (except the dissertation or other theses)
- Applications cannot be made retrospectively as a reimbursement for travel already undertaken
- Accommodation and flights must be booked through the University's travel partner, [Key Travel](#), for which you will need to [request access](#). **Booking your travel in any other way may result in you not being reimbursed.**

Application process and required documentation

To apply for this award, you must complete the [online application form](#). You must include the following attachments:

- **A rationale for the intended trip** (of up to 500 words), detailing where you wish to go abroad and the benefits this will have on your study
- Evidence that you have signed up for [email alerts from the Foreign Office](#) regarding your intended country of travel. The Award Committee may not approve awards intended for travel to areas when Foreign Office alerts are given, or where there may be particular concern for your safety
- **Approval from your language tutor, general academic tutor and/or dissertation supervisor** following their evaluation of the above-mentioned rationale
- **Full and completed [Fieldwork Risk Assessment \(In Country\)](#)** signed and dated by yourself (assessor) and your tutor or academic supervisor (approver)

Application deadlines

Applications will be reviewed in three rounds per year by a panel convened by the UG Coordinator and will include a language tutor and the PGR Coordinator.

- Term 1: Deadline end of week 6 (Fri 02/10/26); result by the end of week 9
- Term 2: Deadline end of week 2 (Fri 22/01/27); result by the end of week 5
- Term 3: Deadline end of week 1 (Fri 30/04/27); result by the end of week 4

Term dates for 2026/27 can be [found here](#).

Incomplete applications will be returned to you for completion, so **we strongly advise applying as early as possible – about a week BEFORE the deadline**. This will give you time to update anything that you need to. Almost all applications are returned to applicants due to errors on risk assessments!

Applications received after the deadline will be considered at the next deadline in the following term.

Approval process

On approval of your application for an Alwaleed Award, you must:

- **Submit proof of purchase of university [travel insurance](#):**
 - o Travel insurance for [undergraduate students](#) – you pay for this yourself, but it can be claimed back via Expenses on T1 later
 - o For postgraduate/doctoral students, follow the link to the ‘online travel form’ from the ‘International travel’ drop down on the [travel insurance webpage](#)
- **Pay for flights and accommodation using the Alwaleed budget code via the University’s travel partner, [Key Travel](#).** To book through Key Travel, you will need your completed and signed risk assessment, your travel insurance and the Alwaleed budget code (provided in your award confirmation letter). If Key Travel are unable to provide a travel solution alternative travel arrangements can be booked as an exception. To request this, please contact procurement-operations@exeter.ac.uk.
- **[Organise access to T1](#).**

After your trip

You are required to **submit a report** (of up to 250 words) within two weeks after you return from your trip. In the report, please include details of your destination, and how you have benefitted from the award, both in terms of your programme of study and cultural experience. You can also give feedback on the language school, where relevant.

Do let us know if you are happy for us to share your report on social media, and please include photos if you are!

Please submit your report to alwaleedawards@exeter.ac.uk. Failure to do so will affect your ability to apply for further funding.

Expenses

You must submit your expenses within two weeks of your return to the UK accompanied by **all receipts**. We accept that in certain regions/countries formal receipts are harder to come by, therefore we accept signed and dated records of amounts in handwritten format or email.

Acceptable expenses with received funds include:

- Food
- Non-alcoholic beverages
- Translation services
- Transport - car hire (including insurance), taxi fares, airport transfer(s), coach, bus, aeroplane, water ferry, etc.
- Accommodation
- Course/programme costs
- Conference fees
- Insurance costs
- Inoculation/vaccination fees
- Study materials
- Guided tours

Unacceptable expenses with received funds include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing
- Toys
- Electrical goods
- Souvenirs
- General/non-cultural leisure activities (e.g. cinema tickets, shisha, etc.)
- Alcoholic beverages
- Assistant fees

General travel advice

As you prepare for your journey to study Arabic abroad, it's essential to understand that cultural nuances and differences will significantly shape your experience. Mastering the language is just one part of the adventure; immersing yourself in the local culture is equally important, and it is crucial to remember certain things:

1. Embracing Local Hospitality

Hospitality is a cornerstone of many cultures in the MENA region. As a guest, you will often be treated with exceptional kindness and generosity, which can sometimes be overwhelming if you're not accustomed to it. Embrace this hospitality by accepting invitations, participating in communal meals, and learning the etiquette around gift-giving.

2. Respecting Social Hierarchies

Understanding and respecting social hierarchy and the importance of elders is crucial. In many Arabic-speaking countries showing deference to older individuals and those in authority is highly valued. This respect is demonstrated through the use of formal titles, respectful language, and certain behaviours. Adhering to these norms will help you build positive relationships and avoid misunderstandings.

3. Navigating Dress Codes

Dress codes in the MENA region generally emphasise modesty. Therefore, be mindful of local expectations. Dress codes can vary significantly between urban and rural areas, and between more conservative and liberal countries. Researching and respecting these norms before you arrive will prevent discomfort and ensure smoother integration into the community.

4. Understanding Dialectical Difference

While Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is taught in most formal education settings, spoken Arabic varies widely across the region. Each country – and even regions within countries – has its own dialect, which can be both a challenge and an opportunity. While you may initially struggle with dialectal differences, mastering the local dialect will greatly enhance your ability to communicate effectively and form deeper connections with native speakers.

Recommended institutions and language schools

Drawing on the extensive travel and study experiences of IAIS students, we have compiled recommendations for language schools and institutions in countries where Arabic is an official language. These recommendations are based on years of firsthand experience, ensuring high-quality education and a supportive environment for foreign students.

Bahrain

Bahrain, a small yet culturally rich island nation in the Gulf, offers a welcoming environment for Arabic language studies. Students can learn Modern Standard Arabic and the Bahraini dialect, part of the Gulf Arabic family. Bahrain's blend of ancient history and modernity, evident in its archaeological sites and contemporary developments, provides a unique learning context. The country's multicultural society, vibrant arts scene, and historic landmarks offer students numerous opportunities to practise Arabic and experience Bahrain's rich cultural heritage.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Berlitz Language Center](#) - Manama
- [Teach Bahrain](#) - Manama

Egypt

Egypt is renowned for its vibrant culture and rich history, making it a prime destination for studying Arabic. Students benefit from immersion in both Modern Standard Arabic and Egyptian Arabic, a widely understood dialect in the Arab world due to Egypt's influential media industry. Beyond the classroom, Egypt's diverse cultural heritage, including iconic landmarks like the Pyramids and the Sphinx, offers students a chance to explore and practise the language in real-world contexts. Alexandria, with its historic library and Mediterranean charm, also provides a unique learning environment.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [International House Cairo](#) - Cairo
- [Ahlan Egypt](#) - Alexandria and Cairo
- [Arabeya Arabic Language Center](#) - Cairo and Giza
- [Kalimat Language & Cultural Center](#) - Cairo

Jordan

Jordan, with its stable political environment and rich cultural history, is an excellent destination for Arabic language learners. Jordanian Arabic, a Levantine dialect, is highly useful for communication across the Levant region. The country's diverse landscapes, from the ancient city of Petra to the vast deserts of Wadi Rum, provide students with varied experiences outside the classroom. The welcoming nature of Jordanians and the country's blend of traditional and modern lifestyles make it an engaging place to learn and practise Arabic.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Qasid Arabic Institute](#) - Amman
- [Jordan Language Academy \(JLA\)](#) - Amman
- [Ali Baba International Center](#) - Amman
- [Sijal Institute](#) - Amman
- [Modern Language Center](#) - Amman

Lebanon

Lebanon, known for its multilingual society and cultural diversity, offers a dynamic environment for studying Arabic. Students can learn both Modern Standard Arabic and the Lebanese dialect, which is widely understood in the Levant region. Lebanon's rich history, stunning landscapes, and vibrant arts scene provide ample opportunities for cultural immersion. From the bustling, cosmopolitan streets of Beirut to the historic ruins of Baalbek, learners can engage with the language in varied settings, enhancing their linguistic and cultural understanding.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Saifi Institute](#) - Beirut
- [American University of Beirut \(AUB\)](#) - Beirut
- [Lebanese American University \(LAU\)](#) - Beirut
- [Institut Français du Liban](#) - Beirut

Morocco

Morocco, with its rich cultural heritage and linguistic diversity, is a popular destination for Arabic learners. Moroccan Arabic, or Darija, differs significantly from other dialects but provides a fascinating linguistic challenge. Additionally, students can learn Modern Standard Arabic. The country's vibrant souks, historic medinas, and stunning landscapes, from the Sahara Desert to the Atlas Mountains, offer students numerous opportunities to practise Arabic in authentic settings and experience Moroccan hospitality.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Qalam wa Lawh Center](#) - Rabat
- [Al Akhawayn University](#) - Ifrane
- [Arabic Language Institute in Fez \(ALIF\)](#) - Fez
- [American Language Center](#) - Rabat

Oman

Oman, known for its stunning natural beauty and preserved cultural heritage, is an excellent destination for Arabic learners. Students can learn both Modern Standard Arabic and Omani Arabic, a dialect that reflects the country's diverse influences. Oman's warm hospitality, historic forts, and breathtaking landscapes, from desert dunes to coastal shores, provide an immersive backdrop for language practice and cultural exploration.

Recommended Arabic Language institutions include:

- [Sultan Qaboos Institute for Teaching Arabic to Non-Native Speakers](#) - Manah
- [Noor Majan Arabic Institute](#) - Muscat

Qatar

Qatar, a rapidly developing Gulf state, provides a dynamic setting for Arabic language studies. Students can learn Modern Standard Arabic as well as the Gulf dialect. Qatar's blend of tradition and modernity, exemplified by its futuristic skyline and cultural landmarks such as the Museum of Islamic Art, offers an enriching environment for language learners. The country's commitment to education and international collaboration makes it a welcoming and supportive place for students to immerse themselves in Arabic language and culture.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Doha Institute for Graduate Studies](#) - Doha
- [Georgetown University in Qatar Arabic Program](#) - Doha
- [Hamad Bin Khalifa University](#) - Doha

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia, the heartland of the Muslim world, offers an authentic environment for studying Arabic. Students can immerse themselves in both Modern Standard Arabic and the Saudi dialect. The country's profound cultural and religious significance, with sites like Mecca and Medina, provides a unique context for learning. Additionally, Saudi Arabia's recent cultural and social reforms are creating new opportunities for international students to explore and engage with its rich heritage and traditions.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Arabic Language Institute for Non-Native Speakers \(ALI\) at Umm Al-Qura University](#) - Mecca
- [King Abdulaziz University Arabic Language Institute](#) - Jeddah

Tunisia

Tunisia, with its strategic location in North Africa and rich cultural tapestry, offers a unique environment for studying Arabic. Learners can study both Modern Standard Arabic and Tunisian Arabic, a Maghrebi dialect. Tunisia's blend of Arab, Berber, and French influences provides a multifaceted cultural experience. The country's well-preserved archaeological sites, Mediterranean beaches, and vibrant arts scene offer students ample opportunities to immerse themselves in the language and culture, enhancing their overall learning experience.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Taa Marbouta](#) - Tunis
- [Institut Français de Tunisie](#) - Tunis

United Arab Emirates

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) offers a modern and cosmopolitan environment for Arabic language learners. Students can learn both Modern Standard Arabic and the Gulf dialect. The UAE's rapid development and multicultural society provide a unique context for language practice and cultural exchange. Beyond the classroom, learners can experience the UAE's rich blend of tradition and modernity, from exploring bustling souks and historic districts to visiting iconic skyscrapers and engaging in a variety of cultural events and activities.

Recommended Language Learning institutions include:

- [Eton Institute](#) - Dubai and Abu Dhabi
- [Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre](#) - Abu Dhabi
- [American University of Sharjah](#) - Sharjah
- [Berlitz Language Center Khalidiya](#) - Abu Dhabi

Useful guides and process documents

- Where is the [application form](#) for the Alwaleed Award?
- Which [risk assessment](#) do I need?
- How to [complete a risk assessment](#) and [international travel FAQs](#). The risk assessment must be signed and dated by you (assessor) and your tutor/supervisor (approver) and you must answer all the questions
- How to sign up for [Foreign Office alerts](#)
- How to buy travel insurance for [undergraduate students](#)
- How to organise travel insurance for postgraduate students: follow the link to the 'online travel form' from the 'International travel' drop down on the [travel insurance webpage](#)
- How to get [access](#) to Key Travel
- How to [log in](#) to Key Travel
- How to get set up on T1 – ask a staff member to fill in a “New User Request” [form](#) for you
- How to claim [expenses](#)
- What needs to be included on an **invoice** (e.g. for school fees)?
 - Headed paper with all contact details names and addresses of school/business
 - Date and unique reference number of invoice
 - "Paid with thanks" and exact total amount paid
 - Clear breakdown of individual charges (fees and airport pick-up etc.)
 - Your name and the University address and post code
- For questions about the Alwaleed Travel Award: alwaleedawards@exeter.ac.uk

Checklist

Pre-application	Application	Before travel	While overseas	When back in UK
• Get approval for travel from tutor/supervisor • Write 500 word rationale • Sign up for FCDO alerts for country of travel • Check visa requirements for your nationality and the country of travel • Fully complete and sign risk assessment • Complete application form • Attach approval, rationale, FCDO confirmation and risk assessment to application form • Send application form at least a week before deadline for checking	• Receive email confirming application • Make necessary changes to documents • Send updated application to meet the deadline • Request access to T1 • Request access to Key Travel	• Receive email confirming success of award and Alwaleed budget code • Organise university travel insurance • If you change your plans, get new approval from supervisor, complete and sign new risk assessment, change travel insurance to new dates or location, sign up for FCDO alerts for new country of travel if applicable • Choose accommodation and travel on Key Travel page • Use Alwaleed budget code to pay for travel and accommodation • If you can't find what you need on Key Travel, contact Procurement Operations • Organise visa if necessary • Book and pay for language school fees	• Collect receipts and invoices for eligible things that you pay for while abroad	• Submit an expenses request via T1, attaching all of your receipts • Submit a 250 word report and photos of your trip to alwaleedawards@exeter.ac.uk