



Impact Report

2023-2026

AF
AVICENNA
FOUNDATION





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Message from our Patron

“This Impact Report demonstrates the scale and seriousness of the Avicenna Foundation’s work. With over £2.8 million invested and hundreds of scholarships awarded, the Foundation has established a strong track record in developing talent and leadership for the long term.”

“Alongside this core work, the report also highlights targeted support for organisations and initiatives that strengthen education, leadership and public discourse. Taken together, these efforts reflect a thoughtful, long-term approach to impact that goes beyond individual opportunity to address wider structural challenges.”



Sir Mufti Hamid Patel CBE
Patron

Message from the Board

"The Avicenna Foundation was established on a conviction that leadership is defined not only by personal success, but by the capacity to contribute purposefully to society and to engage with the institutions that shape it.

Our scholars demonstrate what becomes possible when potential meets structured opportunity. With the right support, exposure, and development, capable young people can translate ambition into genuine participation in public and professional life - not as an exception, but as a pattern we can replicate and scale.

This programme is not simply about development; it is about direction. We are committed to ensuring that scholars are not merely progressing academically, but positioning themselves within pathways that facilitate sustained contribution and enduring influence.

Avicenna's defining feature remains its four-year development programme: structured leadership formation, high-value professional networks, and the breadth of experience that helps scholars understand both their potential and their responsibility as active contributors to society.

As a board, our focus for the period ahead is clear; deepening impact, strengthening the network, and continuing to expand access to scholars who demonstrate the integrity and determination required for effective leadership. The evidence from our scholars to date gives us every reason for confidence.

The Board of Trustees **Avicenna Foundation**

Executive Summary

This report outlines the Avicenna Foundation's role in developing individuals who are equipped to contribute meaningfully to British society and operate within its institutions.

Through a structured combination of financial support, leadership development, and access to networks, the Foundation translates potential into capability, and capability into opportunity.

Crucially, this work extends beyond individual outcomes. By supporting individuals who are confident in their identity and prepared to engage with public life, Avicenna contributes to a broader shift towards greater participation, representation, and influence across key sectors.

Over time, this approach enables the development of a network of individuals positioned not only to succeed, but to contribute to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the United Kingdom.



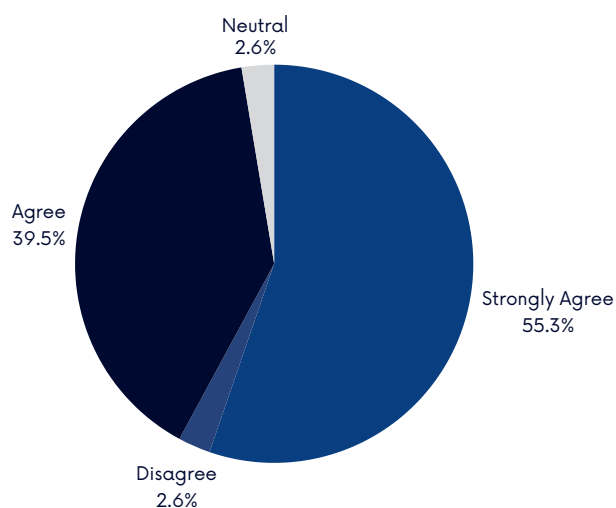
Our Impact So Far

The Foundation's impact is best understood not only through outcomes, but through trajectory.

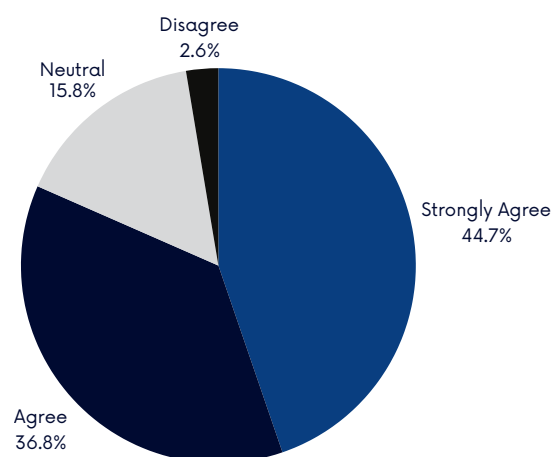
Scholars report increased ambition, stronger leadership capability, and expanded access to networks. These are not isolated improvements, but indicators of a broader shift towards greater participation in environments where decisions are made and influence is exercised.

As scholars progress, they are increasingly positioned to enter high-impact fields and engage with public and professional life with confidence and clarity. This reflects a transition from potential, to participation, and ultimately towards holding influence.

"The scholarship has helped me develop in confidence and as a leader."



"The programme has had a positive impact on my sense of identity and belonging as a British Muslim in higher education and beyond."



Our Impact In Numbers

95%

Agreed that, 'Being an Avicenna Scholar has expanded their **ambitions** and long-term **goals**.'

89%

Agreed that, 'Being an Avicenna scholar has improved their ability to **access spaces, opportunities, or networks** that I may not have otherwise had.'

97%

Agreed that, 'The support of the programme has **motivated me to aim higher** in my personal and professional journey.'

"My leadership skills and confidence has greatly grown. I have also sharpened my focus and ambition as I have seen how high the other scholars want to reach and the impact they want to have." - **Avicenna Scholar**

92%

Agreed that 'The programme has enabled me to **strengthen** or **develop** specific **leadership skills** and qualities.'

82%

Agreed that, 'The programme has had a positive impact on my sense of **identity and belonging** in higher education and beyond.'



Avicenna's 2023 and 2024 cohorts were anonymously surveyed, with over 80% responding. All referenced statistics are drawn from these survey results.

67

Undergraduate Scholarships
Awarded

£1.3m+

Invested Into Degrees

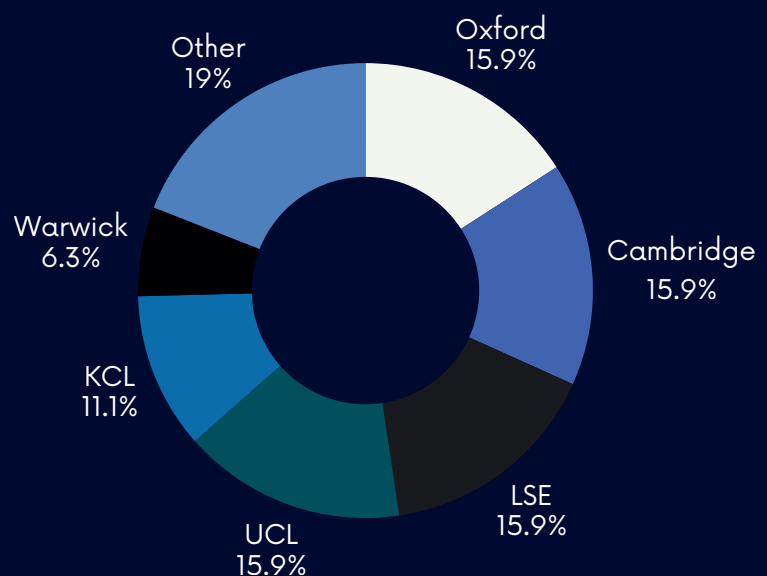
30+

Scholarship Events Hosted

700+

Applications annually

Universities Represented
Across the Programme



The Foundation

Our Vision

A society in which individuals from all backgrounds are able to participate fully in public life, contribute with confidence, and play a meaningful role in shaping the future of the country.

Our Mission

Our mission is to develop individuals who are equipped with the skills, confidence, and networks required to operate within institutions, contribute to society, and influence outcomes in their respective fields.

Our Trustees



Safwan Adam
Founder & Chair



Asim Hafiz OBE
Co-Founder



Talha Valli
Treasurer

Our Patron



Sir Mufti Hamid Patel CBE

Our Values

Our values are not only guiding principles, but foundations for leadership. They enable individuals to act with integrity, think with clarity, and contribute with purpose, ensuring that their impact is both meaningful and responsible:

Ehsan

Excellence

إحسان

We pursue excellence in all endeavours, encouraging scholars to achieve their highest potential and make a lasting impact.

Ethar

Altruism

إيثار

We inspire selflessness and empathy, encouraging scholars to prioritise the needs of others and uplift their communities.

Hikmah

Wisdom

حكمة

We strive to cultivate wisdom and critical thinking, empowering scholars to apply knowledge with purpose for the greater good.

Kidmah

Service

خدمة

We champion servant leadership, empowering scholars to drive meaningful change through service and advocacy.

Akhlaq

Ethical Character

أخلاق

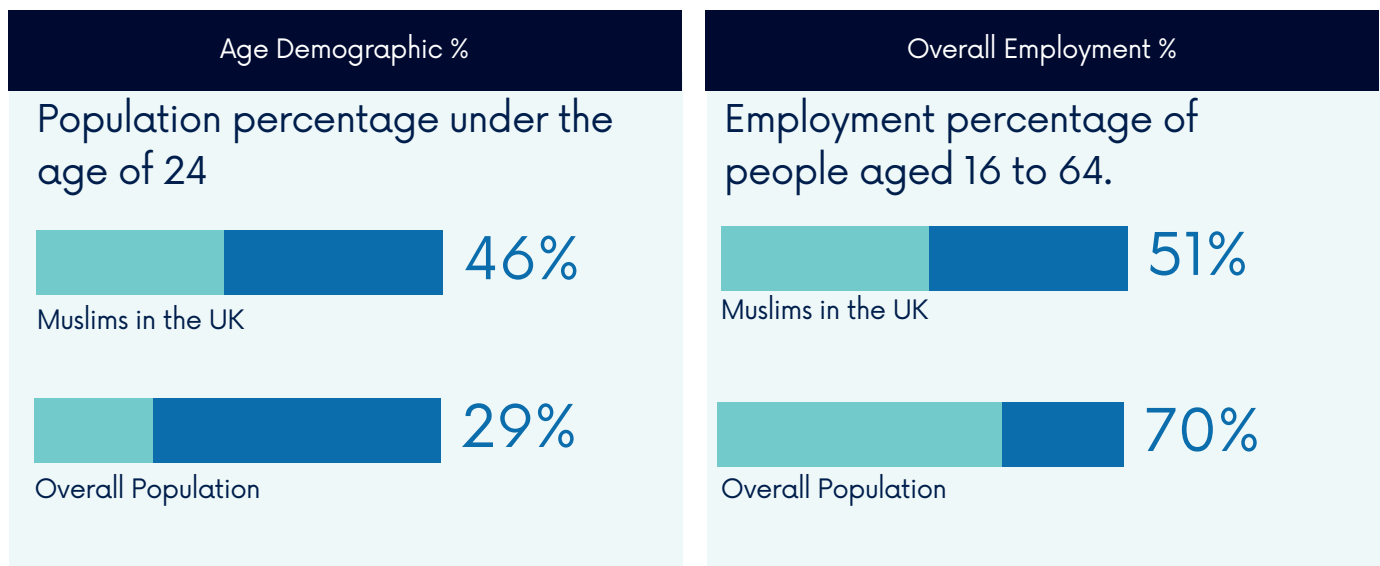
We prioritise ethical leadership by nurturing integrity, respect, and responsibility in all aspects of life.

The Opportunity

British Muslims represent one of the UK's most dynamic and ambitious communities, with significant potential to contribute across public life, business, and the professions.

The opportunity is not simply one of representation, but of meaningful participation within the institutions that shape society. With the right support, individuals are able to translate ambition into impact and engage with these environments with confidence and clarity.

Avicenna exists to support this transition, providing the structure, exposure, and networks required for individuals to move beyond potential and into positions of capability and influence.



Census 2021 from the Office for National Statistics
Office for National Statistics. 2023. "Religion by Housing, Health, Employment, and Education, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics." www.ons.gov.uk. March 24, 2023.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/religion/articles/religionbyhousinghealthemploymentandeducationenglandandwales/census2021>.

"CENSUS REPORT SUMMARY." 2025. <https://mcb.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/Census-Report-Summary-2025-.pdf>.

Programme Aims

Supporting Future Leaders

Avicenna scholars pursue subjects connected to public life, leadership, policy, social impact, and the wider common good. The programme is designed to help them build the confidence, strategic insight, and professional readiness needed to succeed in fields where their contribution can be especially meaningful.

Investing for the Long Term

The Foundation's approach is rooted in long-term development. Through sustained investment in leadership, skills, networks, and character, Avicenna seeks to support scholars over time so that they are well placed to grow into ethical, capable, and effective leaders at local, national, and international level.

“

“The ladder that I have to climb to achieve greatness has become significantly shorter due to the access and skills I gain from the programme.”

Expanding Representation

As more British Muslims enter leadership roles across politics, law, consultancy, public policy, and civil society, there is an opportunity to ensure that the institutions shaping the country are informed by a broader range of perspectives, experiences, and voices. Avicenna aims to help make that possible by preparing scholars not only to participate, but to lead.

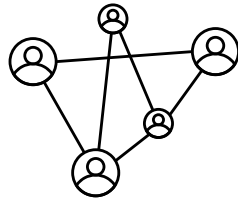
Contributing to British Society

At its core, the programme is about enabling talented young people to make a positive contribution to the UK. By combining academic opportunity with leadership formation, professional exposure, and a strong sense of service, Avicenna helps scholars channel their ambition into impact that benefits both their communities and the country as a whole.



Programme Areas

To develop influence, the Avicenna Foundation supports scholars by providing different types of capital which invest them with the best privileges and opportunities.



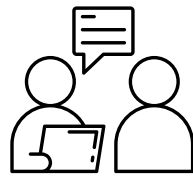
Social Capital

Access to influential networks opens doors for scholars to drive change.



Financial Capital

By removing economic barriers, we enable focused progression.



Cultural Capital

Equipping scholars with exposure to high-level environments empowers success.



Intellectual Capital

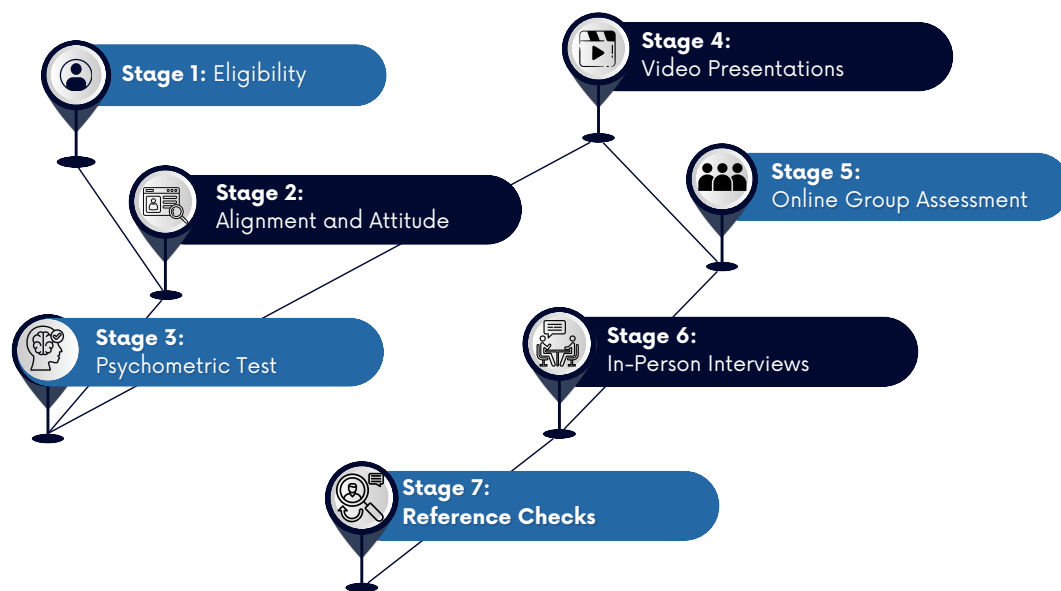
Development of critical thinking, policy expertise, and strategic leadership abilities so scholars can contribute meaningfully to society.



“The programme has provided me with the opportunity to attend university, connect with fellow scholars and very positively impact my identity as a British Muslim. The ability to be in spaces that I would have previously thought were inaccessible”

Selection Process

Scholarships are awarded through a multi-stage application process designed to assess candidates' potential to become high-impact leaders, innovators, and changemakers in their respective fields. Scholarships are limited to British Muslims studying humanities subjects who show a sustained commitment to the communal development of British society.



In line with our commitment to supporting changemakers, we do not discriminate based on the university attended. To ensure alignment with the Avicenna Foundation's mission of fostering transformative leaders, scholars will be selected based on the following criteria:

- **Zakat Eligibility:** Applicants must meet the requirements for Zakat eligibility as per Islamic principles.
- **Non-STEM Subjects:** Applicants must be pursuing, or planning to pursue, undergraduate or postgraduate studies in a non-STEM subject to foster leaders in public life and the private sector.
- **Attitude & Aptitude:** Scholars must demonstrate a positive attitude, ethical character, and a clear aptitude for leadership and academic success.
- **Drive & Motivation:** Scholars must exhibit a strong sense of purpose and determination to make a meaningful impact in their chosen field of study and community.
- **Alignment with Values:** Applicants must show alignment with the core values of the Avicenna Foundation: Hikmah (Wisdom), Akhlaq (Ethical Character), Ithar (Altruism), Khidmah (Service), and Ihsan (Excellence).

Our Programme

The programme is designed not only to develop capability, but to position individuals within pathways that enable meaningful contribution and long-term impact.

Each component serves a clear purpose: preparing scholars to operate effectively within their chosen fields and to engage with the institutions that shape society.

Career and Professional Development

Designed to support scholars in achieving professional excellence, ensuring they have the necessary skills, experience, and networks to succeed in high-impact careers.

It places particular emphasis on mentoring, skills development, and industry exposure to facilitate career progression.

Leadership Development

Focuses on developing the strategic, personal, and professional leadership capabilities of scholars.

It provides them with the tools to navigate complex challenges, influence decision-making, and take on prominent roles in policy, governance, and civil society.

Ethics and Morale

Ensures that scholars develop a strong ethical foundation, rooted in broad Islamic principles that inform their leadership and professional decisions.

It fosters a sense of social responsibility, community engagement, and ethical leadership.

“



“The coaching that is available has been invaluable to my professional growth and the group that surrounds me has pushed me and given a desire to work harder. When you have such a powerful group supporting you, it does force you to think bigger and nearly everything becomes possible.”

Programme Intent

The programme is crafted to thoroughly cover all facets of leadership development throughout the four-year programme.

It strives to incorporate both British and Islamic values, which are considered to complement one another in a harmonious manner. The programme's goal goes beyond merely producing accomplished alumni; it aspires to nurture a network of knowledgeable and ethical leaders who serve as pioneers, setting the stage for the next generation of scholars and contributing to societal progress.

In the following sections, we will detail how the programme functions and the impact each component has made.

Identity

A central dimension of this work is the relationship between identity and leadership.

Avicenna supports the development of individuals who are grounded in their values, confident in their place within British society, and able to engage with public and professional life with clarity and purpose.

This is not about prescribing identity, but about ensuring that it becomes a source of strength - enabling individuals to navigate institutions, contribute meaningfully, and operate effectively in complex environments. In the following sections, we will detail how the programme functions and the impact each component has made.



Unlocking Potential

Research has consistently highlighted the significant potential within the British Muslim community, alongside the structural barriers that can limit access to professional opportunities, leadership pathways, and wider social mobility. The UK's Social Mobility Commission's 2016 report on young Muslims pointed to a number of important areas where greater investment, support, and opportunity can make a lasting difference.



Expanding Access to Networks and Opportunity

Many young Muslims feel they do not have sufficient access to the networks, relationships, and opportunities that can help accelerate success. By opening doors to influential spaces, role models, and professional support, there is real scope to empower the next generation to thrive and lead with confidence.



Rising Above Barriers with Confidence

Cultural differences and experiences of discrimination can create the sense that British Muslims have to work harder than others to succeed. Yet this also points to the resilience, determination, and untapped talent within the community. With the right support structures, these qualities can be transformed into powerful leadership and long-term impact.



Leading with Identity and Purpose

Research also suggests that some young Muslims wrestle with questions around identity and belonging as they pursue success. This presents an important opportunity to nurture leaders who are not forced to choose between faith, identity, and ambition, but are instead equipped to draw strength from all three as they contribute meaningfully to society.

Career & Professional Development

Designed to aid scholars in reaching professional excellence, the program ensures they possess the essential skills, experience, and networks to thrive in high-impact careers. It particularly focuses on mentoring, skills development, and industry exposure to enhance career advancement.

Without this key element, scholars would not be able to achieve in the short or longer term. The core components of the programme include:

Mentoring

Scholars benefit from structured mentoring by professionals and, eventually, programme alumni, providing valuable career guidance, industry insights, and support for personal development.

Soft Skill Training

Soft skills sessions have been well-received and have contributed to scholars' personal and professional growth.

Insight Sessions

Through panel discussions, professional site visits, and industry engagement, scholars gain exposure to a range of industries, policy spaces, and leadership pathways. Opportunities have included consultancy, the Civil Service, and politics, helping scholars better understand potential career paths.



Communications Sessions with 'MHP Group'



Keynote Session with Saker Nusseibeh CBE

Leadership Development

The programme emphasises enhancing scholars' strategic, personal, and professional leadership skills. It equips them with the necessary tools to tackle complex challenges, influence decision-making, and assume significant roles in policy, governance, and civil society.

Coaching

Personalised, structured coaching to support scholars in developing self-awareness, resilience, and strategic thinking.

“The most impactful part of the programme for me has been the coaching sessions, which have helped me to understand my vision for my self-development and future legacy.”

Leadership Development Projects

Theme of leadership projects programme covering decision-making, strategic thinking, communication, and problem-solving as well as creating and developing initiatives which serve society.

Keynote Sessions

Exposure to high-profile leaders, CEOs, policymakers, and industry experts who share insights on leadership and systemic change. Speakers are selected on their ability to motivate and inspire action. These sessions explore key dimensions of leadership, such as resilience, practical wisdom, courage and integrity, through the experiences and insights of accomplished leaders from a range of fields.

Speakers have included:

- **Bano Sheikh** - Partner, KPMG
- **Emran Mian CB, OBE** - Permanent Secretary, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology
- **Lord Darren Mott OBE** - Former CEO, Conservative Party
- **Dawn Butler MP** - MP for Brent East, Labour Party
- **Major General Duncan Capps CBE** - Retired General, British Army
- **Sir (Mufti) Hamid Patel CBE** - CEO, Star Academies
- **Lord Ken Macdonald KC** - Barrister, Matrix Chambers
- **Syima Aslam MBE** - CEO, Bradford Literary Festival
- **Saker Nusseibeh CBE** - CEO, Federated Hermes

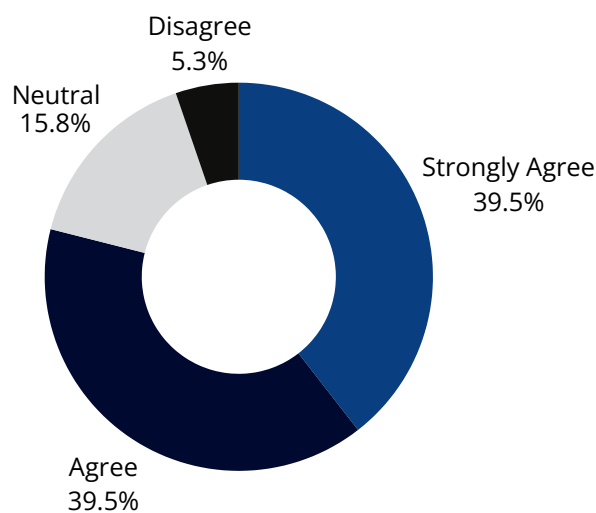
Civic Participation & Engagement

Engagement with public life is a natural extension of leadership.

The programme supports scholars in understanding how institutions function, how decisions are made, and how individuals can contribute meaningfully within these structures. The aim is not simply awareness, but preparedness - ensuring that scholars are equipped to participate in, and contribute to, the civic and political life of the country with confidence and clarity.



'Has Avicenna increased your political awareness?'



“

Avicenna scholars were asked: **'How has Avicenna impacted your likelihood to get politically involved?'**

“It has developed my critical thinking and taught me the role that Muslims can play with regards to local and national politics, while emphasising sustainability.”

“Seeing all the speakers, guests and visitors in top political positions has helped me realise that the best way for us to make change is to get to a position where we can influence policy. Avicenna has emphasised this and it has helped me consciously engage more with the political scene both in the UK and globally.”

“Avicenna has opened my eyes to the scope of political engagement, and how there are many ways to influence and engage with politics.”

Ethics and Morale Development

This part of the programme ensures scholars develop a robust ethical foundation rooted in British and Islamic principles, guiding their leadership and professional decisions.

It fosters a commitment to social responsibility, community involvement, and ethical leadership.

Character Development & Chaplaincy

A structured program focused on Islamic ethics, philosophy, values-based leadership, and character development. The Foundation also offers trained chaplains with mental health expertise to support scholars' mental well-being and spiritual understanding of the Islamic tradition of engagement, collaboration, and contribution.

Peer Mentor

A scholar-led support system designed to promote collaboration, reflection, and collective personal growth. This network enables scholars to support each other, creating a community of individuals who can propel one another forward.

Retreats

Leadership retreats, networking opportunities, and immersive experiences form a central part of the programme, designed to strengthen scholars' sense of identity, encourage reflection, and build a strong community.

These retreats explore the intersection of personal identity, political context, and Islamic heritage within the cultural and historical settings of different countries, thereby enabling scholars to gain new perspectives and bring these insights back to the UK.

Each year, scholars travel to a different part of the world, including Spain, Bosnia, Turkey, and Qatar.

We also host an annual Winter Retreat. The 2025 retreat took place at Gilwell Park in London in partnership with the Muslim Scout Federation. This marked the first time all three cohorts gathered in one place.

A key aim of these retreats is to challenge scholars both intellectually and, at times, physically pushing them

to develop critical perspectives and strengthen their bonds with one another.

In the last two years, the Foundation has conducted retreats in Spain and Bosnia:

In Bosnia, scholars encountered powerful lessons of remembrance and resilience in modern Europe. Visits to Srebrenica and Igman Mountain, alongside bonding activities such as white-water rafting, encouraged reflection on unity and principled leadership while strengthening cohort ties.

In Spain, the retreat centred on faith, service, and leadership. Guided visits to Granada, the Alhambra, and the Albaicín were combined with facilitated discussions that deepened identity, critical thinking, and peer connection.



Highlights

A defining and crucial feature of the Avicenna experience is scholars' participation in retreats, leadership development sessions, and keynote seminars. Below are some highlights:



Cohort 2025 Induction at Norton Rose Fulbright - September 2025



Scholar debate on ethical values at the 2025 Winter Retreat in Gilwell Park



Keynote discussion with Syima Aslam MBE about culture and community (2025).



Insight session with Ahmed Gross on the Spanish Muslim community in Granada (2025)



Scholars learning how to create a campfire with the Muslim Scouts Fellowship (2025)



Keynote session from Down Butler MP with a briefing session provided by Imran Sanaullah MBE

Meet some of Our Scholars



Uzair Bhad, University of Warwick, 2023 Cohort

Uzair is an Economics student at the University of Warwick. At university, he is the treasurer of the Islamic Society. He has accepted an Associate Consultant role at OC&C Strategy Consultants.



Marjaan Aman, SOAS University of London, 2024 Cohort

Marjaan is in her penultimate year studying Law at SOAS where she is President of the SOAS Women in Law Society. She is currently undertaking an internship under the mentorship of civil rights attorney Clive Stafford Smith, where she is building practical skills in legal drafting, interviewing, and researching.



Alishba Sujawal, University of Cambridge, 2025 Cohort

Alishba is in her first year studying Law at Downing College, Cambridge. She won the moot final of a university competition and was awarded a mini-pupillage with Crown Office Chambers for her performance. Alongside her studies, she is a Student Ambassador, Faculty Ambassador and a member of the Cranworth Law Society.

Next Steps

As Avicenna continues to grow, its focus remains on developing a network of individuals positioned to contribute across sectors.

Over time, this network becomes a long-term asset, one that extends beyond individual success towards collective influence and sustained societal contribution. The Foundation's ambition is not only to support individuals, but to contribute to a broader shift, where capable, confident individuals are increasingly present within the institutions that shape the future of the United Kingdom.



How can you support?

Serve as an Avicenna Mentor

Sign up to be a mentor and offer our scholars crucial career guidance and support.

Lead an Insight Session for Avicenna Scholars

Serve on an Insight Panel and provide scholars with information and advice on your professional sector.

Help our scholars tap into your network

By connecting scholars to your network you can support Avicennians to get a leg-up in their career development.

Provide skills training

Leading training in an area of your expertise is a great way to support and instil scholars with critical skills to mould them as future leaders.

Spread the word about the Avicenna programme

Follow our social media platforms, engage with scholars and share our initiatives within your networks.

Contribute to our Scholarship

We will soon begin accepting public donations to support our scholarship program. This scholarship is eligible for Zakat and qualifies for Gift Aid.

Acknowledgements

This impact report was created and designed by the Avicenna Foundation team. We extend our sincere thanks to the partners, supporters, and colleagues who have stood with us since 2022.

Your generosity, collaboration, and belief in our mission have been fundamental to Avicenna's growth and to the continued development of the Avicenna Scholars programme. We are deeply grateful for your partnership in supporting and nurturing the next generation of principled leaders.

Funded by:



Special thanks:



Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office



House of Commons



HOUSE OF LORDS



Mishcon de Reya







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