

Master in Islamic Religious Leadership

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD POLICY & PROCEDURES



BOSTON
ISLAMIC
SEMINARY

Effective Date: Academic Year 2026-2027

1. Purpose

Boston Islamic Seminary (BIS) is committed to making its programs accessible to qualified students who demonstrate financial need, academic promise, leadership potential, and a commitment to the Seminary's mission. BIS views scholarship support as an investment in students, their families, their communities, and the future of Islamic scholarship and leadership.

This policy establishes a fair, transparent, and accountable process for awarding, renewing, adjusting, and disbursing BIS scholarship funds.

BIS does not participate in federal or state-sponsored grant or loan programs. BIS scholarships are institutional awards funded through Seminary resources, donor gifts, or donor-designated scholarship funds.

2. Scope

This policy applies to institutional scholarship awards for students admitted to or enrolled in the Master of Islamic Religious Leadership (MIRL) program and to any other BIS program to which the Seminary formally extends this policy.

Scholarship funds are limited and are awarded at the discretion of BIS. Submission of a scholarship application does not guarantee an award.

3. Guiding Principles

BIS administers scholarships according to the following principles:

1. Student support: BIS seeks to support students who are committed, respectful in communication, and making sincere efforts to meet their academic and financial responsibilities.
2. Fairness and consistency: Applications are reviewed using common criteria, including financial need, academic performance, leadership, service, and enrollment plans.
3. Transparency: Students will be informed of award amounts, award conditions, renewal requirements, and the effect of enrollment changes.
4. Accountability: Scholarship funds are applied only to eligible tuition charges and must be used in accordance with BIS policy and any applicable donor restrictions.
5. Confidentiality: Financial and personal information submitted by applicants will be treated as confidential and shared only with authorized personnel involved in scholarship review, approval, administration, or compliance.
6. Stewardship: BIS seeks to distribute scholarship funds responsibly so support can reach eligible students while preserving meaningful assistance for those

with significant need.

4. Types of Scholarship Support

BIS may award partial scholarships based on one or more of the following:

1. Demonstrated financial need.
2. Academic merit.
3. Leadership, service, and community contribution.
4. Qur'an memorization and demonstrated Islamic learning.
5. Special circumstances or hardship.
6. Donor-designated scholarship support, when applicable.

Scholarships are normally partial awards. Unless otherwise approved by senior leadership, institutional scholarships may cover up to 80% of tuition of eligible tuition charges for the applicable academic year, with a maximum of \$2,500 per student per academic year, whichever is lower.

5. Donor-Funded Scholarships

BIS may accept donor gifts designated for student scholarships. Donor-funded scholarships may support:

- The general BIS Scholarship Fund
- a named annual scholarship
- a named endowed scholarship
- Another scholarship purpose approved by BIS.

Donors may express a preference for the type of student they wish to support, such as students with financial need, academic excellence, Qur'an memorization, community leadership, preparation for Islamic service, or documented hardship. BIS will honor donor preferences when possible and when consistent with BIS policy, applicable law, student privacy, and institutional priorities.

BIS retains final authority over scholarship eligibility, recipient selection, award amounts, disbursements, renewals, reductions, and cancellations. Donors may not directly select scholarship recipients or receive confidential student information unless the student provides written consent.

Donor-funded scholarships are applied directly to eligible tuition charges on the student's BIS account. They are not paid directly to students.

BIS may provide donors with general impact reports, such as the number of students supported, total funds awarded, general program impact, and non-confidential student testimonials when permission is granted. BIS will not share student financial records, private academic records, hardship details, or personally identifying information without appropriate consent.

If a donor-funded scholarship is not fully used because a student withdraws, defers, takes a leave of absence, reduces enrollment, becomes ineligible, or does not accept the award, BIS may reallocate the unused funds to another eligible student or to the general BIS Scholarship Fund, consistent with donor intent and BIS policy.

Named scholarships, restricted gifts, multi-year pledges, endowed scholarships, or zakat-designated gifts may require a written gift agreement approved by BIS leadership.

6. Eligibility

To be eligible for scholarship consideration, a student must:

1. Be admitted to BIS or be a continuing student in good standing.
2. Submit a completed scholarship application by the applicable deadline.
3. Provide accurate financial, academic, and enrollment information.
4. Sign the Scholarship Award Acceptance Letter and Financial Responsibility Letter by the stated deadline.
5. Maintain required academic progress and enrollment status.
6. Remain respectful, responsive, and professional in communications with BIS administration, faculty, and staff.
7. Remain current on any agreed payment plan, unless BIS has approved an exception due to documented hardship.

BIS reserves the right to deny, reduce, suspend, or revoke a scholarship if a student submits false or misleading information, fails to meet scholarship conditions, violates BIS policies, or does not fulfill financial responsibilities.

7. Application Process

A. New Students

New applicants who wish to be considered for scholarship support should submit the scholarship application shortly after their admission application.

Scholarship review may occur only after the admissions application is sufficiently complete for BIS to determine the applicant's eligibility for the program.

B. Returning Students

Returning students must apply for scholarship consideration annually. Prior receipt of a scholarship does not guarantee renewal.

Returning students will be reviewed based on continued financial need, academic progress, enrollment plans, communication history, and compliance with prior scholarship and payment obligations.

C. Application Platform

Scholarship applications must be submitted through the designated BIS system, normally Populi, using the scholarship application form for the applicable academic year.

D. Documentation

The Scholarship Committee may request documentation to verify financial or academic information. Documentation may include, but is not limited to:

1. Tax returns.
2. W-2s, 1099s, or equivalent income documentation.
3. Pay stubs or employment verification.
4. Proof of rent, mortgage, property tax, or other major expenses.
5. Documentation of dependents.
6. Student loan payment documentation.
7. Tuition obligations for dependent children.
8. Documentation of unusual hardship or changed circumstances.

Failure to provide requested documentation by the stated deadline may result in denial, reduction, or delay of the award.

8. Priority Deadline and Late Applications

The annual priority deadline is normally June 15, unless BIS announces a different date for a particular year.

Students who submit complete applications by the priority deadline receive priority consideration.

Applications received after the priority deadline may still be reviewed, subject to availability of funds. BIS may reserve a portion of the annual scholarship budget, normally up to 25%, for late applicants, appeals, and students with documented changes in financial circumstances.

9. Scholarship Committee

Scholarship applications are reviewed by a Scholarship Committee appointed or approved by BIS leadership.

The Committee is responsible for:

1. Reviewing applications and supporting documentation.
2. Applying scholarship criteria consistently.
3. Recommending award amounts.
4. Reviewing appeals.
5. Maintaining confidentiality.
6. Identifying exceptional circumstances that may require senior leadership review.

Committee members must disclose any actual or perceived conflict of interest involving an applicant. A committee member with a conflict of interest may be recused from any discussion or decision-making regarding that applicant.

Final scholarship budgets, approval, and any institutional award caps are determined by BIS senior leadership.

10. Award Criteria

Scholarship awards are based on a combination of need, merit, enrollment status, and available funds.

The Committee may consider the following factors:

A. Financial Need

Financial need may be evaluated using:

1. Personal income.
2. Household income.
3. State of residence and estimated tax burden.
4. Rent or mortgage payments.
5. Number of dependents.
6. Tuition obligations for dependent children.
7. Major medical, family, employment, or emergency hardship.
8. Other documented financial obligations.
9. External scholarships, employer support, sponsorship, or other educational funding.

BIS may consider both ordinary financial need and special circumstances that affect the student's ability to pay.

B. Academic Merit

Academic merit may include:

1. Current BIS GPA for continuing students.
2. Prior degree GPA for new students.
3. Academic performance in relevant coursework.
4. Timely course completion.
5. Incompletes, withdrawals, or repeated courses.
6. Faculty or academic advisor input, when appropriate.

C. Leadership, Service, and Achievement

The Committee may consider:

1. Community service.
2. Islamic leadership or teaching.

3. Professional leadership.
4. Honors and awards.
5. Research or publications.
6. External *ijazat* or traditional study.
7. Contributions to BIS or the broader Muslim community.

D. Qur'an Memorization

Applicants may report the amount of the Qur'an they have memorized. BIS may request a brief assessment to verify the quality and accuracy of memorization.

The assessment will normally be limited to approximately 15 minutes. Applicants may specify the portions they are prepared to be tested on, even if those portions differ from what was initially reported on the application.

E. Enrollment Status and Course Load

Awards are based on the student's anticipated course load for the academic year.

Students must normally enroll in at least two courses in the Fall or Spring semester to receive scholarship support for that semester, unless BIS grants an exception. Winter or Summer enrollment may be considered according to the student's approved academic plan and the award distribution options described below.

II. Award Calculation Framework

BIS may use an internal calculation model to support consistency in award recommendations. The model may include:

1. Estimated adjusted income.
2. Estimated annual educational cost.
3. Demonstrated need.
4. Academic merit.
5. Leadership and service merit.
6. Qur'an memorization merit.
7. Anticipated Course load.
8. Available scholarship budget.
9. External funding.
10. Prior compliance with scholarship policies.

The calculation model is an administrative guide and does not create an entitlement to a specific award amount. The Committee may recommend adjustments based on documented hardship, unusual family circumstances, donor restrictions, institutional priorities, or available funds.

BIS may proportionately adjust recommended awards if total eligible requests exceed

the available scholarship budget.

12. Academic Progress and Renewal Requirements

Scholarships are awarded for a specific academic year and do not automatically renew.

To remain eligible for scholarship support, students must normally:

1. Maintain good academic standing.
2. Maintain the minimum GPA established by the program or Scholarship Committee.
3. Complete courses in a timely manner.
4. Avoid excessive withdrawals, incompletes, or repeated courses.
5. Maintain at least the enrollment level on which the award was based, unless BIS approves a revised plan.
6. Remain in good financial standing or comply with an approved payment plan.
7. Abide by BIS academic, conduct, and communication expectations.

If a student does not meet academic progress expectations, BIS may reduce, suspend, or decline scholarship funding. BIS may also allow a probationary scholarship period or reduced award when the student demonstrates sincere commitment and has an approved academic recovery plan.

13. Award Notification

Students approved for scholarship support will receive an award letter stating:

1. The total scholarship amount.
2. The academic year or semester covered.
3. The expected course load or credit hours on which the award is based.
4. The percentage or amount allocated to each semester.
5. Conditions for maintaining the award.
6. Required acceptance steps.
7. The deadline to accept the award.
8. The effect of reduced enrollment, withdrawal, leave of absence, or deferral.
9. Appeal instructions and appeal deadline.

Award letters should clearly state that scholarships are not cash payments to students and are applied directly to eligible tuition charges on the student's BIS account.

14. Acceptance of Award

Students must sign the Scholarship Award Acceptance Letter and Financial Responsibility Letter by the deadline stated in the award letter.

Students who do not complete the required acceptance steps by the Add/Drop deadline risk forfeiting the scholarship for that semester.

By accepting a scholarship, the student agrees to:

1. Use the award only for eligible BIS tuition charges.
2. Notify BIS promptly of any change in enrollment, financial circumstances, external funding, or ability to meet payment obligations.
3. Remain responsible for all tuition and fees not covered by the scholarship.
4. Comply with the terms of the award and this policy.

15. Disbursement of Awards

Scholarship awards are disbursed directly to the student's BIS account, normally through Populi, as institutional financial aid payments.

Scholarship funds may be applied only to eligible tuition charges. Scholarships may not be used to pay non-tuition charges unless BIS expressly approves an exception. Non-tuition charges may include, but are not limited to:

1. Application fees.
2. Student services fees.
3. Activities fees.
4. Late fees.
5. Books or supplies.
6. Graduation fees.
7. Other administrative fees.

16. Standard Award Distribution Options

Although awards are generally calculated based on Fall and Spring enrollment, students may request that part of the annual award be applied to Winter or Summer enrollment if consistent with their academic plan.

Students must select an approved distribution option in the Scholarship Award Acceptance Letter. Standard options may include:

1. 50% Fall / 50% Spring
2. 40% Fall / 20% Winter / 40% Spring
3. 40% Fall / 40% Spring / 20% Summer
4. 35% Fall / 15% Winter / 35% Spring / 15% Summer

BIS may approve a different distribution schedule when justified by the student's academic plan and available scholarship funds.

Scholarship funds may not be carried over to a future academic year unless BIS gives written approval due to extraordinary circumstances.

17. Enrollment Changes, Withdrawals, and Reduced Course Load

Scholarship awards are based on the course load and enrollment plan stated in the

award letter. If a student enrolls in fewer courses or credit hours than expected, the award may be proportionately reduced.

If a student withdraws from a course, the scholarship portion associated with that course may be forfeited, reduced, or returned to the scholarship fund in accordance with BIS tuition refund and withdrawal policies.

If a student drops below the minimum enrollment level required for scholarship eligibility, BIS may cancel the semester award unless an exception is approved.

A student who defers admission, takes a leave of absence, or does not enroll for the applicable semester will normally forfeit the scholarship funds allocated to that semester.

18. External Scholarships and Other Funding

Students must report external scholarships, employer tuition support, sponsorships, or other educational funding received for the same academic year.

BIS may consider external funding when determining or adjusting institutional scholarship awards. The purpose is to coordinate resources fairly and avoid awarding institutional funds beyond demonstrated tuition need.

When possible, BIS will seek to avoid unnecessary reductions in institutional aid that penalize students for obtaining outside support. However, BIS may reduce an institutional award if the total funding exceeds the eligible tuition charges or if donor restrictions require an adjustment.

19. Appeals

Students may appeal a scholarship decision within 5 calendar days of the date the award letter is sent, unless the award letter states a different deadline.

Appeals must be submitted through the designated Populi appeal form and must include the reason for the appeal.

Valid reasons for appeal may include:

1. Significant change in financial circumstances.
2. Loss of income or employment.
3. New documentation not previously available.
4. Special circumstances not adequately reflected in the original review.

The Scholarship Committee may request additional documentation.

Appeals are subject to the availability of funds. BIS does not guarantee that filing an appeal will result in an increased award.

Appeal decisions are normally final unless senior leadership determines that further

review is warranted.

20. Changes in Circumstances

Students are expected to notify BIS promptly if their financial, academic, or enrollment circumstances materially change after receiving an award.

BIS may review and adjust an award if:

1. The student's course load changes.
2. The student receives external funding.
3. The student's financial need significantly changes.
4. Information in the application is found to be inaccurate or incomplete.
5. The student fails to meet academic, conduct, communication, or financial responsibility expectations.
6. Scholarship funds become unavailable due to budgetary or donor restrictions.

BIS may also consider increasing support, when funds are available, for students who experience documented hardship after the original award decision.

21. Maximum Award and Student Contribution

BIS scholarships are intended to supplement, not replace, the student's own financial responsibility.

Students are expected to contribute toward their educational costs according to their means. The expected student contribution may include personal payment, family support, employer support, community sponsorship, participation in a payment plan, or outside scholarships.

Unless otherwise approved by BIS senior leadership, institutional scholarships may not exceed 80% of eligible tuition charges.

22. Payment Plans and Scholarship Coordination

Students who receive partial scholarships remain responsible for any remaining tuition balance.

Students may be eligible to participate in a BIS-approved payment plan. Scholarship awards do not eliminate the student's obligation to follow payment plan deadlines.

A student who repeatedly misses payments, fails to communicate respectfully and promptly, or does not comply with an approved payment plan may lose eligibility for future scholarship support.

BIS may consider flexibility for students who communicate early, demonstrate sincere commitment, and document hardship.

23. Confidentiality and Records

BIS will maintain scholarship records in accordance with institutional recordkeeping practices.

Financial documentation and scholarship deliberations are confidential. Access is limited to authorized BIS personnel with a legitimate administrative need.

Students should not submit unnecessary sensitive information unless requested by BIS for scholarship review.

24. False or Misleading Information

Students must provide complete and accurate information in all scholarship applications, supporting documents, and communications.

If BIS determines that a student submitted false, misleading, incomplete, or fraudulent information, BIS may:

1. Deny the application.
2. Reduce or revoke the award.
3. Require repayment of scholarship funds applied in error.
4. Deny future scholarship eligibility.
5. Refer the matter for disciplinary review under applicable BIS policies.