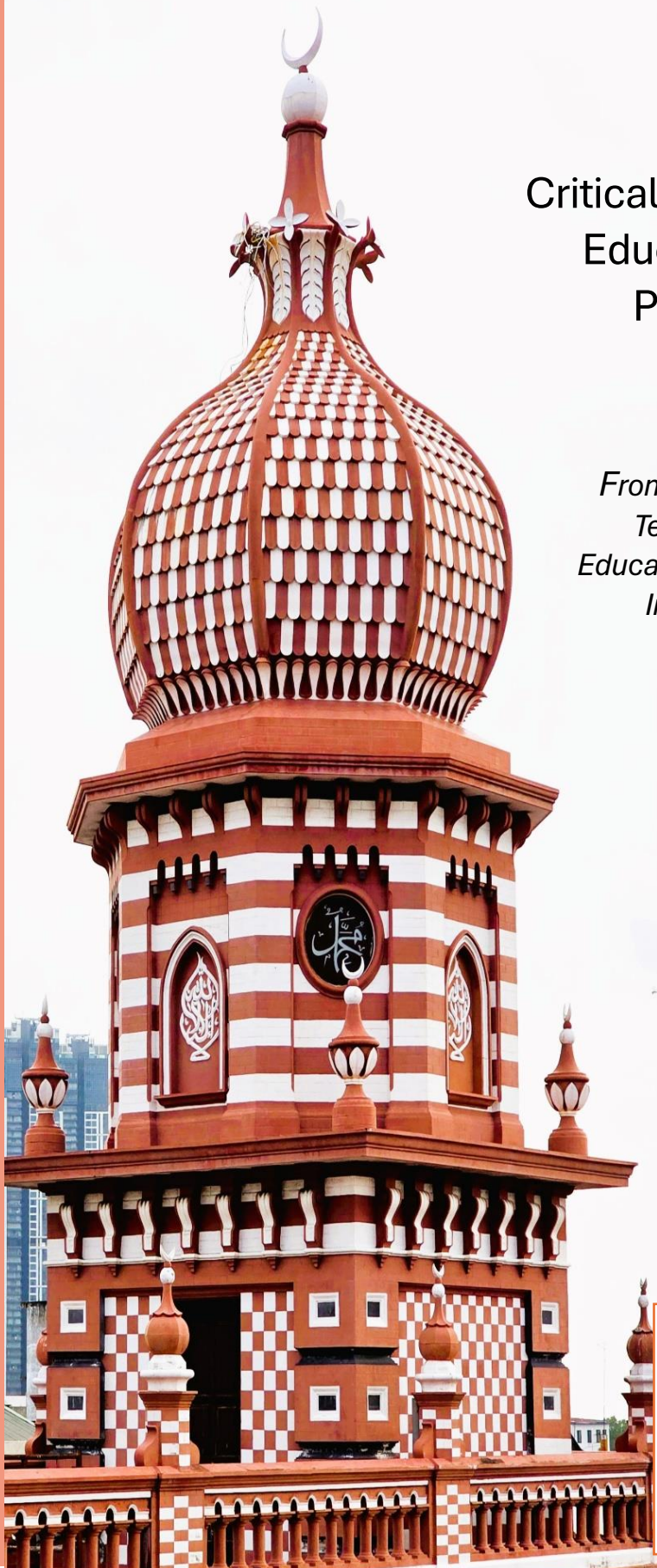


The International Warwick Islamic Education Summer School 2026

in collaboration with Ebrahim College



Critical Perspectives on Islamic Educational Philosophy & Pedagogical Praxis

*From Contextual and Transformative
Teaching/Learning of Islam to the
Educational Reconstruction of the Ummah
In the 21st-century world of
Global Uncertainties*



10-15 August 2026

Convened by

Dr. Abdullah Sahin

*Centre for Education Studies,
School of Education, Learning &
Communication Sciences (SELCS)*

Venue

401 High Street, Stratford, London

The International Warwick Islamic Education Summer School 2026

The International Warwick Islamic Education Summer School

The International Warwick Islamic Education Summer School brings together a distinctive learning community of researchers and practitioners from diverse disciplinary backgrounds, united by a shared interest in exploring critical issues at the intersection of education and Islam across both historical and contemporary Muslim-majority and minority contexts.

The Warwick IE Summer School forms part of the *Warwick Islamic Education Learning Community*, comprising current taught and postgraduate research students alongside a growing alumni network. It has developed out of an imaginative and sustained model of collaboration between British Muslim communities and the University of Warwick, grounded in a shared transformative vision of education and a strong commitment to social justice and inclusion.

Inspired by the Islamic conception of education as *tarbiyah*—compassionate, transformative human flourishing—and its key pedagogical principle of *ta'āruf*—openness to learning from one another—the Summer School fosters an interdisciplinary academic environment that advances dialogue, collaborative research, and research-informed reflective practice through the exchange of knowledge, skills, and best pedagogical practices. Situated within an increasingly conflict-ridden and unequal global context—marked by authoritarian political trends and market-driven models of neo-liberal education that continue to reproduce conditions of coloniality—the Warwick IE Summer School advances a vision of inclusive, empowering, and compassionate education.

The Warwick Islamic Education Summer School seeks to revive the transformative Muslim culture of learning, teaching, and reflective inquiry by rethinking Islamic education within the context of a secular, culturally and religiously plural Europe, as well as the wider Muslim-majority world. It contributes to educational advancement and pedagogical creativity within British Muslim communities, nurturing mature expressions of British Islam while also enhancing public understanding of Islam across Muslim diaspora contexts. Furthermore, it promotes collaboration between Muslim educators, Religious Education practitioners, and mainstream education professionals in fostering critical Islamic literacy and advancing intercultural and interfaith understanding. The Summer School offers participants opportunities to engage in sustained and critical dialogue between Islamic and Western traditions of education, fostering new pedagogical imaginaries for a more just and inclusive shared educational future.

Each annual gathering focuses on a specific theme, offering an in-depth exploration of both the theoretical and practical dimensions of contextualising the teaching and learning of Islam within diverse contemporary Muslim and secular educational settings.

Previous Sessions

The following themes have been explored in previous years:

Decolonising University: Integrating Islamic Ed within Secular Education Studies Curricula: This session marked the launch of Islamic Education Studies as an interdisciplinary field of scholarship, empirical inquiry, and professional development at the University of Warwick. It explored the key ideological and methodological challenges facing the field and contributed to the development of a broad teaching and research agenda, laying the foundation for sustained collaboration among scholars, practitioners, and policy makers curating for the mainstream secular university and faith-embedded higher education institutions.

The Qur'an as a Devotional/Spiritual and Reflective/Critical Pedagogical Discourse: This theme examined the pedagogical dimensions of the Qur'an and its diverse educational interpretations, classical pedagogies of Quranic Sciences, and challenges of studying/teaching the Qur'an (critical Quran literacy) within diverse contemporary Islamic and secular educational settings.

Gender Inequality and Education in Muslim Contexts: This session addressed issues of gender disparity in the educational systems of both Muslim-minority and Muslim-majority societies, with particular focus on the development of Muslim female faith and educational leadership.

Pedagogical Cultures in Dialogue: This theme explored traditions of human formation within Islamic and Western educational cultures, advocating pedagogical dialogue as a missing catalyst for peace-making in the conflict-ridden diversity of the modern world.

Cultural and Religious Diversity in 21st-Century Classrooms: Building on the previous gathering, this session examined the educational experiences of Muslim children and young people within European education systems as a case study for understanding the challenges of educational inclusion of minority communities in culturally and religiously plural modern secular Europe.



The International Warwick Islamic Education Summer School 2026

Who Should Participate?

The Summer School is open to researchers and practitioners interested in deepening their understanding of the educational heritage of Islam and the contemporary challenges facing Muslim communities, both within Muslim-majority contexts and in mainstream secular educational settings. Early-career researchers and doctoral students are particularly encouraged to apply, as the programme offers valuable opportunities to engage in scholarly dialogue with senior academics and leading experts in the field, as well as to connect with community-embedded Islamic education leaders and practitioners.

Applicants wishing to present are invited to submit a 500-word abstract aligned with the main theme and guiding questions of the Summer School (see below for details of this year's theme), outlining the focus, research questions, methodology, and contribution of their proposed paper.

The Warwick International Islamic Education Research Network

The Summer School has led to the establishment of the Warwick International Islamic Education Research Network, which comprises over two hundred members, including past and current PhD students affiliated with the Warwick Islamic Education Research Programme. The Network promotes cross-disciplinary engagement with critical issues at the intersection of Islam and education across diverse Muslim-minority and Muslim-majority contexts. It serves as a dynamic platform for sustained scholarly exchange, knowledge co-production, and the advancement of Islamic educational research in global contexts. Participants in the Summer School will have the opportunity to join the Research Network by completing a short registration form, which will be shared during the final session of the programme.

The International Warwick Islamic Education Summer School 2026

Introduction

This year's Summer School will be delivered in collaboration with Ebrahim College (EC) in London. The Summer School benefits from a strong membership base at EC, whose support has enabled the programme to be hosted within a community-based setting, fostering greater engagement and impact. EC is dedicated to educating the next generation of British Muslim faith and educational leaders. It offers an innovative, integrated *Ālim/Ālima* curriculum, providing training in classical Arabic alongside a rigorous traditional Islamic theological education. This programme combines the classical Islamic sciences with contemporary disciplines such as Philosophy, Psychology, Law, History, and Education Sciences.

The Summer School will include an advanced series of seminars introducing the research-informed, transformative Islamic Education model developed at the University of Warwick to community-based teachers, chaplains, and youth workers. Please note that participants will receive a detailed programme schedule, including daily session information and relevant study materials, separately.

The structured professional development seminar series will cover the following themes:

- Educational Reconstruction of the Ummah in Crisis: An Introduction to Islamic Education Studies*
- Theological, Philosophical, and Pedagogical Sources of Education in Islam*
- Prophetic Pedagogies for Facilitating Critical Islamic Literacy and Faith Development*
- Supporting Learner Agency and Moral/Spiritual Self-Cultivation in Islamic Education*
- Essential Research Skills for Developing Reflective Practice in Islamic Education*

The Summer School will be delivered in person, with a selection of sessions also available for online participation. The programme will combine interactive workshops, lectures, and research presentations. Participants will receive a **Certificate of Attendance** upon successful completion of the programme.

Submissions & Enquiries

Abstract Submissions / Academic Enquiries: a.sahin@warwick.ac.uk

For queries regarding registration (day/residential delegates), accommodation, logistics, please contact:

Mizan: Ebrahim College info@islamiccourses.org



Critical Perspectives on Islamic Educational Philosophy and Pedagogical Praxis:*From Contextual and Transformative Teaching/Learning of Islam to Educational Reconstruction of the Ummah in the 21st Century World of Global Uncertainties****Background and Rationale***

Europe's largely unacknowledged Islamic past has significantly contributed to the formation of its modern cultural, political, socio-economic, and educational institutions. This historical amnesia can be partly explained by the fact that the major pre-modern Islamic presences in Europe—al-Andalus in the south and the Ottoman Balkans in the east—have predominantly been framed in historiography as imperial expansions, often overshadowing their intellectual and cultural contributions. In contrast, the more recent post-Second World War mass migration to Western Europe has led to the permanent settlement of Muslim *minority* communities across the continent. This, in turn, has facilitated the development of Islamic educational traditions and institutions that play a vital role in fostering a shared sense of belonging within an ethnically and culturally diverse, postcolonial Western European Muslim *umma*. With the growing politicisation of the Muslim presence in Europe/West—manifested in debates surrounding the 'integration,' 'assimilation,' and 'self-segregation' of Muslim minority communities in liberal, secular societies—education has emerged as a key site of state intervention, securitisation policies, and academic inquiry. Community-embedded educational practices, such as Islamic Education, have thus assumed a central role in contemporary debates on identity formation, citizenship, personal well-being, and social cohesion.

However, the philosophical, theological, and pedagogical foundations of modern Islamic Education—whether as a subject within European secular curricula (e.g., Islamic Religious Education), as a form of publicly funded faith-based schooling, or as an inherited model of traditional theological education (e.g., *Dār al-'Ulūm and Hawza*)—as reflected in emerging hybrid models of Islamic higher education, have yet to be fully developed. This has important practical consequences: traditional Islamic education programmes often struggle to align with mainstream academic degree qualifications, resulting in difficulties in meeting the requirements for degree-awarding powers. Consequently, institutions frequently rely on short-term validation agreements which, while pragmatically necessary, do not lead to the sustained development of institutional capacity, research excellence, or the academic culture required to protect academic freedom/independence for long-term growth and recognition.

Islamic Education in Muslim-majority societies reflects similar challenges. It is often primarily oriented towards achieving the citizenship objectives of nationalist education systems and serves as a *habitus* for reinscribing traditional moral norms that reinforce loyalty to political authority, rather than cultivating critical religious literacy and personal agency among learners whose life-worlds are often shaped by gendered inequalities, ethnic and cultural marginalisation, and deeply embedded class hierarchies that perpetuate intergenerational poverty and injustice.

The Westernisation of education has become increasingly entrenched in the modern Muslim world, where secular Western curricula—such as the International Baccalaureate (IB)—are widely adopted, including within Islamic schools. At the same time, Western elite universities, seeking new markets, particularly in the oil-rich Gulf and post-Soviet Muslim-majority nations of Central Asia, have established satellite campuses primarily catering to affluent and ruling classes. These developments reinforce the dominance of Western epistemologies—weakening the ecology of local knowledge systems—and contribute to the reproduction of existing socio-political hierarchies.

Modern higher education in Muslim-majority contexts—having largely displaced traditional institutions of Islamic higher learning once regarded as central to intellectual vitality, but increasingly criticised for perpetuating intellectual stagnation, political authoritarianism, and socio-economic underdevelopment—has been remodelled along the lines of the Western neo-liberal secular university. This includes for-profit private universities, which are also seen as spaces of ideological investment and are therefore open to governmental manipulation, as well as the emergence of parallel state-funded, faith-based higher education systems, as observed in countries such as Indonesia.



However, the academic provision in the *Shari‘a* sciences and Islamic Studies, often isolated from the humanities and social sciences, continues to exhibit weak theoretical grounding, limited philosophical coherence, and persistent pedagogical challenges. Both secular and Islamic education continue to fall short of functioning as transformative forces for empowerment, socio-economic justice, and the cultivation of inclusive and peaceful coexistence within the increasingly diverse, conflict-ridden, and uncertain conditions of the 21st-century *ummah*.

Rethinking Islamic Educational Theorising in Contemporary Contexts

Islamic Education can't be confined to a discrete subject within the curriculum. Rather, it represents a broader, faith-embedded educational philosophy grounded in a distinctive set of ontological, epistemological, and axiological commitments. As Sahin (2018) argues, this theoretical framework, together with its diverse sites of empirical inquiry, delineates a distinct interdisciplinary field of knowledge generation: Islamic Education Studies.

Despite the rich heritage of critical education in Islam, extensively documented in historical studies of the intellectual life and educational thought of classical Muslim polymaths, philosophers, and theologians, there remains relatively limited innovative theoretical work capable of addressing contemporary educational contexts. While growing archival research has deepened our understanding of traditions in scholastic philosophy, theology, mysticism, and science within the Muslim intellectual heritage, such work has often remained insufficiently connected to pressing contemporary educational challenges, including the underdeveloped research culture of universities in many modern Muslim societies. There remains, therefore, a pressing need for original *Islamic educational theorising* that can meaningfully inform curriculum design, pedagogical practice, assessment, and teacher education, while also responding to the evolving professional development needs of practitioners. Generating such creative perspectives may help reconfigure Islamic Education as a transformative and empowering praxis, contributing to the cultivation of a renewed *Islamic civility* in the modern world.

During the First World Conference on Muslim Education in 1977 in Makkah, the late Al-Attas proposed a highly influential theory of Islamic Education to ‘decolonise’ education within emerging postcolonial Muslim nation-states. His largely reactionary stance towards Western secular education has sustained the appeal of his ideas within subsequent Islamic intellectual revival (*tajdid*) initiatives. These include the Islamisation of Knowledge project, which continues to shape the ideological orientation of contemporary Islamic schooling, a growing global movement that has emerged in response to the perceived morally corrupting influence of secular education on Muslim children and young people.

The idea of the Islamisation of Knowledge has been widely criticised and, consequently, has undergone several revisions within increasingly influential *neo-traditionalist* strands of Muslim thought. Nevertheless, it has largely been abandoned due to concerns that its perceived indoctrinatory and prescriptive orientation was not aligned with the political climate of the post-9/11 context. However, as Sahin (2014, 2018) argues, the weak theological grounding of Al-Attas’ conception of education in Islam—as *adab*—alongside its reliance on linguistic essentialism, philosophical perennialism, and a disciplinarian pedagogy of moral formation (*ta’dīb*) that perpetuates the educational culture of *taqlīd*, remains insufficiently acknowledged and critically examined in the literature.

Interestingly, *adab*, in classical Islamic epistemology, was originally associated with Muslim high culture and humanistic knowledge production—often contrasted with *ilm*, which is more closely linked to religious knowledge and its transmission. It was this distinction that inspired twentieth-century Arab nationalist reformers (T. Hussein, R. Al-Tahtawi, M. Arkoun) to utilise *adab* as the basis for constructing a new, overarching Arabo-Islamic humanistic cultural renaissance (*nahda*). They argued that this *neo-adabised* form of progressive Islamic humanism could bridge the religious–secular divide within the rapidly modernising educational landscape of the postcolonial Arab Muslim world.

This further illustrates how the legacy of *adab* within the collective Muslim memory has been mobilised in different ways across the postcolonial Muslim world: it has been invoked both to revive an elite aesthetic sensibility associated with an imagined ‘Islamic imperial civic order’ and to justify rigid forms of moral training aimed at regulating individual and social conduct, as well as to articulate a strand of nationalist humanism aligned with aspirations to engage and emulate—an idealised secular Europe.



The need for innovative perspectives in Islamic educational theory—particularly the development of contextual philosophies of education in Islam—has gained increasing recognition across research and practice, including related fields such as Muslim chaplaincy, Islamic psychology, and counselling. At the same time, the teaching of Islam in secular higher education remains contested, shaped by tensions between confessional theological approaches and secular frameworks often informed by (neo-) Orientalism. More broadly, *pedagogies of coloniality* continue to influence the Western social sciences and humanities, within which Islamic Studies occupies an uneasy space, shaped by persisting epistemological hierarchies rooted in colonial knowledge production.

Key Questions to Guide Discussion and Abstract Preparation

A piece of Prophetic wisdom in Islam suggests that ‘ignorance can only be cured through questioning’ (*shifā’ al-‘ayy al-su’āl*). Similarly, Western secular philosophical traditions depict questioning as a form of ‘intellectual piety’ at the heart of critical thinking.

The following questions are intended to critically unpack the central theme and stimulate discussion across diverse national and international educational contexts. These include both formal and informal Islamic educational settings, such as supplementary Islamic schooling (*maktabs/madrasas*), traditional seminaries (*Dār al-‘Ulūm/Hawza*), and Islamic higher education institutions. The scope also encompasses the teaching, learning, and study of Islam/Muslims within secular academic contexts in both Muslim-majority and minority societies.

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current literature on theoretical and philosophical issues, including methodological discussions, in Islamic (higher) education?
- How is ‘educational philosophy’ understood within the Muslim intellectual heritage?
- What role did philosophy play within the curriculum of traditional Islamic higher education?
- In what ways have differing theological/spiritual interpretations shaped educational traditions within Islamic intellectual history?
- How are the concepts of ‘critique’ and ‘criticality’ understood and applied within classical Islamic scholarship?
- In what ways do *Sunni and Shi‘a* intellectual traditions converge and diverge in their approaches to philosophy and Islamic educational theology?
- How are the concepts of the educational good and the spirituality of learning articulated within Islamic educational traditions?
- To what extent did ancient Greek *paideia* & Sasanian ideals of high culture influence classical Islamic conceptions of education, particularly in relation to their personal, social, moral, and political ethos?
- How do contemporary Islamic schools, traditional seminaries, and hybrid Islamic higher education institutions frame and articulate their educational ethos while negotiating the tensions between transnational religious affiliations and the demands of local social contexts, particularly within Muslim-minority settings in the secular West?
- Do modern Islamic schools/higher education institutions prioritise moral/spiritual aims over civic/political goals of education in Islam, thereby limiting the inclusive educational vision of Islam?
- To what extent is it desirable and feasible to develop a contextual, learner-led, and pluralistic philosophy of Islamic (higher) education?
- To what extent might the current interest in Islamic scholastic pedagogies revive the intellectual dynamism and creativity (*ijtihād*) associated with the classical Muslim educational thought?
- Have traditions of critical philosophy of educational inquiry emerged within classical Muslim scholarship beyond its dominant focus on the ethics of bearing/transmitting knowledge (i.e., *adab ‘ilm/‘ālim-ta’lim/muta‘allim* paradigm) and classification of sciences (*iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm/ marātib al-‘ulūm*)?



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- What roles have *‘ilm* and the *‘ulamā* played in shaping both centralised, authoritarian and decentralised, pluralistic political orders in historical and modern Muslim societies?
- To what extent does the Muslim intellectual heritage provide a conceptual and pedagogical equivalent to classical Western liberal arts education, or does it articulate a fundamentally religious (theo-legal) model of higher learning?
- What was the impact of colonial educational reforms on the educational self-understanding of Muslims under colonial rule, in contexts such as French-controlled Madrasas in North Africa, British interventions in Indian Madrasa, and Dutch support for Indonesian *pesantren*?
- To what extent did post-classical madrasa pedagogies—centred on *taḥqīq* (verification) and *muṭāla‘a* (deep reflection), and primarily applied within the study of logic, law, and philosophical theology—sustain or transform the intellectual creativity of the classical Islamic tradition, or contribute to its perceived decline through the development of a conservative scholasticism associated with the ‘closing of the Muslim mind’?
- How have religious and secular dynamics interacted (conflicted) in shaping early modern and postcolonial educational reforms in the Muslim world?
- To what extent do minoritised language communities within the contemporary *ummah*—such as Kurdish-speaking contexts—articulate distinctive philosophies of Islamic education shaped by their linguistic and cultural traditions?
- How does the integration of traditional Islamic educational institutions into national education systems impact socio-economic development, recognition of minority educational rights, and democratic transition in Muslim-majority countries such as Turkey, post-conflict Syria, and Indonesia?
- Is there a pressing need for empirically informed theory development in Islamic Education?
- What is the scope for meaningful dialogue between secular and Islamic approaches to Ed philosophy?
- How should theoretical discussions in Islamic Education engage with the persistence of coloniality within contemporary Eurocentric educational philosophy?
- What are the strengths and limitations of Western theoretical/analytical frameworks—such as intersectionality, critical theory, critical race theory, feminism, and decolonization—for the development of Islamic educational theory?
- In what ways does artificial intelligence challenge, transform, or reconfigure traditional Islamic pedagogies of knowledge production, transmission, and scholarly authority?
- Why do structural forms of gendered inequality persist in shaping philosophical perspectives on modern Islamic Ed, despite the growing presence of Muslim women in educational/scholarly spaces?
- Does the contemporary overuse of decolonization discourse risk functioning as an apologetic that legitimises localized, “native” forms of authoritarianism, exclusion, and hegemonic control in shared public education spaces?
- To what extent do PhD projects on Islamic Education, conducted in Western universities, make original contributions to knowledge and generate impact on educational development in Muslim societies?
- To what extent do Muslim postgraduate research students in Western secular institutions engage in conscious or unconscious self-censorship regarding their faith commitments when framing their research and methodological approaches?
- What ethical and epistemological challenges arise in supervising Muslim researchers and research projects within Western secular academia, examining educational issues in modern Muslim societies?
- How can supervisors critically recognise and mitigate both intentional and unintentional Islamophobic influences that may shape the supervision of research projects on education in Muslim societies?

