

# MULTIDISCIPLINARY IN ACTION

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## **PREFACE**

### **FROM THE TABLE OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Multidisciplinary in Action Journal, published by Akademi Tenggara Enterprise.

This issue is a result of a collaborative effort with academics and students of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), Department of History & Civilisation, for the course Public History (HIST 2303).

It brings together twelve insightful articles that reflect various themes, from cultural identity and public history to educational advancements and political movements. Each piece offers a unique perspective, contributing to the understanding of our shared heritage and contemporary society.

The first article, “Batik Thursdays: Exploring Cultural Preservation in Government Workplaces through a Public History Lens”, discusses how the practice of wearing batik among public servants emphasizes cultural pride and national identity. The article highlights how this traditional attire remains relevant within the evolving professional landscape.

The second article, “KLCC Twin Towers Through the Lens of Public History: A National Icon Reflecting Malaysia’s Aspirations and Realities”, examines Malaysia's iconic landmark, reflecting its role as a symbol of national progress and the complexities tied to modernization efforts.

The third piece, “Fall of Barisan Nasional in GE14 and Media Framing: Revisiting the Event through Public History ”, examines one of Malaysia’s key political turning points, exploring the influence of media narratives during this crucial general election.





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## PREFACE

### FROM THE TABLE OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

In the fourth article, “Perceptions on the Establishment of AHAS KIRKHS, IIUM Through the Lens of Public History”, the authors explore the historical and societal impacts of this institution, shedding light on its contributions to Islamic education and intellectual growth. The student union has shaped student representation and contributed to campus dynamics.

The fifth contribution, “Reclaiming the Glory of ISTAC: A Journey Through Public History”, reflects on the historical significance of ISTAC and its role in advancing academic excellence, offering a thoughtful narrative on the institution’s transformation over time.

Following that, the sixth article, “Undi18 Reform: Exploring Youth Participation, Political Literacy, and Media Influence through a Public History Lens”, highlights the impact of the Undi 18 movement, demonstrating the growing political engagement among Malaysia’s younger generation.

In the seventh article, “Public Perception of the Establishment of IIUM Student Union: Relevance, Challenges, and Future Directions”, the authors investigate how the establishment of the student union has shaped student representation and contributed to campus dynamics.

The eighth piece, “Significance and Sustainability of Communiversity at IIUM: A Public History Project”, focuses on how the concept of “*communiversity*” nurtures stronger community ties and highlights the university’s role as a societal partner.

The ninth article, “The Phenomena of Ayam Gepuk: Culinary Assimilation and Identity Through Public History Lens”, narrates the story of this popular dish, emphasizing its cultural significance and how it serves as a reflection of local identity and entrepreneurship.





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# PREFACE

## FROM THE TABLE OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The tenth article, “Evolution of Learning and Malaysian Education Industry Digitization in the Pandemic Era (2020-2024): A Public History Project and Literature Survey” discusses how digital transformation has reshaped the education sector in recent years, with a focus on IIUM’s experiences.

The eleventh contribution, “Evaluating the Impact of COVID-19 on SPM 2020 Candidates: A Comparative Public History Analysis”, explores the pandemic’s impact on education, highlighting the resilience and adaptability shown by students and educators during unprecedented times.

Lastly, the twelfth article, “Visa Challenges at IIUM (2020-2024): Bureaucratic Hurdles and Their Impacts on International Students’ Enrolment”, provides an in-depth account of the administrative challenges faced by international students and their impact on access to education and inclusion.

On behalf of the Editorial Board, I extend heartfelt thanks to all contributors and reviewers whose efforts have brought this issue to fruition. We hope these articles will spark meaningful discussions, inspire future research, and serve as a resource for students, academics, and society at large.

Warm regards,  
Dr. Lin Sakrawathi  
Editor-in-Chief, Multidisciplinary in Action  
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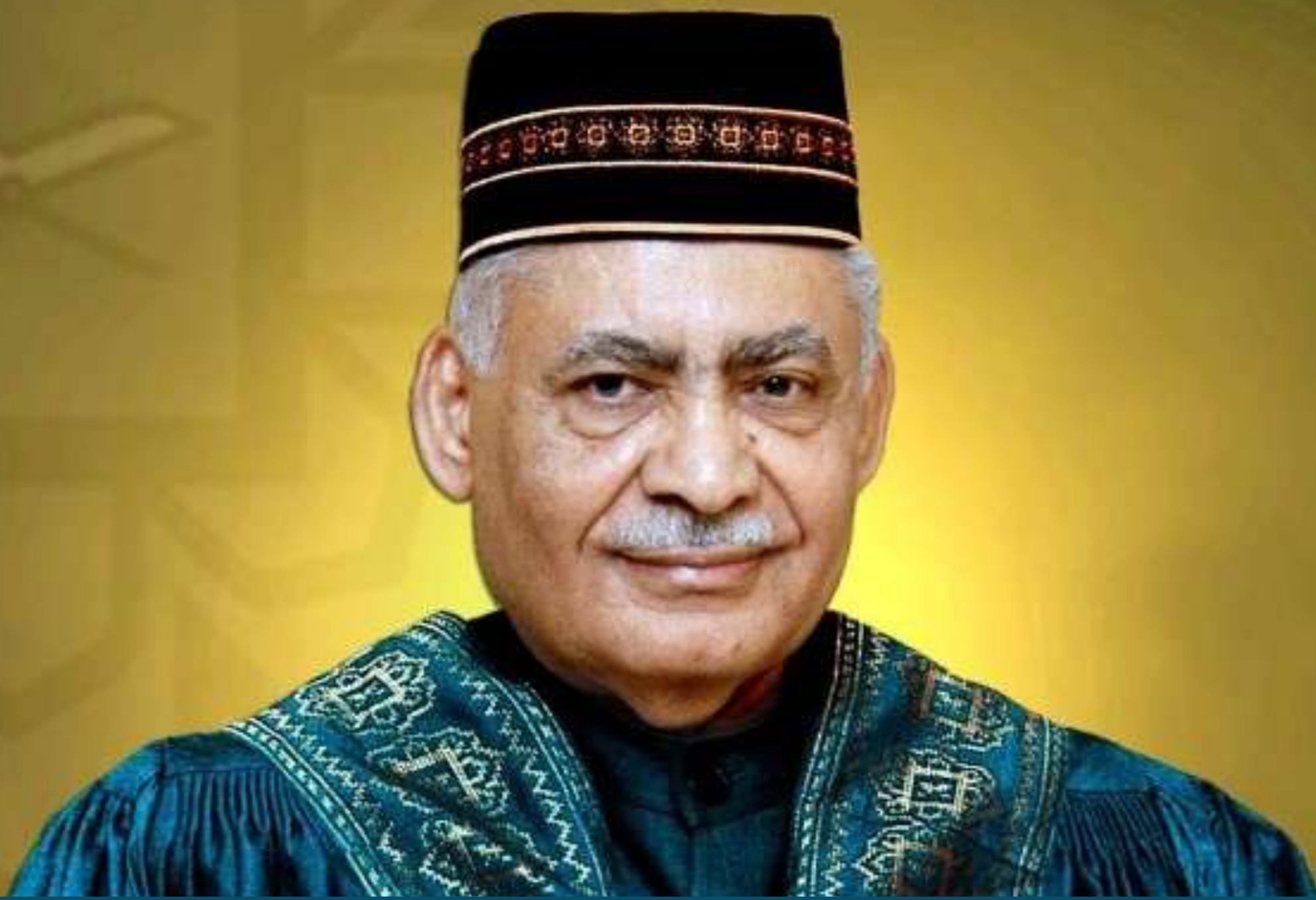
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# EXPLORING PERCEPTIONS OF AHAS KIRKHS ESTABLISHMENT AT IIUM:

INSIGHTS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PUBLIC HISTORY





# MULTIDISCIPLINARY IN ACTION

## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

Fathima Nuha Fasmi Mohamed Farhan, Faqihah Sajidah Jabarudin, Nur Athirah Ab.lah, Nur Syazwani Abdul Rahman, Nurul Irdina Zahimi, Siti Hadija Mohd, and Yasmin Hannan Kamal Naim

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### Abstract

The integration of the *Kulliyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) and the *Kulliyah* of Human Sciences (HS) in 1990 has sparked numerous discussions, continuing to shape perceptions from the early stages to the present day. This public history project explores the perceptions surrounding the establishment of the AbdulHamid AbuSulayman *Kulliyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS) within the educational framework of the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). This study investigates how the integration of these two *Kulliyahs* facilitates a balance between worldly and *ukhrawi* (spiritual) knowledge, impacting students from both IRK and HS disciplines. The research addresses two key questions: 1) As a student, do you acquire additional knowledge when IRK and HS are combined? 2) Are you aware of the purpose behind the integration of the *Kulliyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and the *Kulliyah* of Human Sciences? By employing a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques—such as case studies, surveys, and interviews—the findings give emphasis to the potential of this integration to nurture a holistic educational experience, aligned with IIUM's vision for the Islamization of knowledge.

**Keywords:** *Human Sciences and Islamic Revealed Knowledge, Islamization, Integration, Curriculum, IIUM, Public History*

### Introduction

In 1990, the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (KIRKHS) was established at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) with a mission to integrate Islamic values and principles with contemporary disciplines. Under the leadership of Prof. Emeritus Tan Sri Dr. Mohd Kamal Hassan and Dato Mohd Mokhtar Shafi'i, the Kulliyah began with just 100 students and 10 academic staff, laying the foundation for a transformative approach to higher education. This mission resonates with broader discussions on the Islamization of Human Knowledge, as highlighted by Hashim and Ssekamanya (2014) and Hassan (n.d.), who emphasize the need to merge Islamic traditions with modern sciences to address global challenges.



## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

Mohamed Farhan, F. N. F., Jabarudin, F. S., Ab.lah, N. A., Abdul Rahman, N. S., Zahimi, N. I., Mohd, S. H., & Kamal Naim, Y. H. (2025). Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History. *Multidisciplinary in Action*, 1(1). Akademi Tenggara Press

From its inception, KIRKHS aimed to produce Muslim professionals and intellectuals capable of navigating the complexities of a globalized world. Its vision as a centre of excellence in education and research was rooted in the integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences, as well as the Islamization and contextualization of knowledge to meet contemporary needs (Hassan, Abdullah, Aziz, & Salleh, 2022; Hussien, Mamat, & Abdallah, 2018). Zein (2014) observed that IIUM's initiatives, such as KIRKHS, have contributed significantly to redefining Islamic education by embedding Islamic values in modern academic disciplines.

Over the past three decades, KIRKHS has grown into IIUM's largest Kulliyyah, with more than 6,000 students and 215 academic staff, reflecting its success in bridging Islamic and worldly knowledge. The Kulliyyah encompasses diverse fields such as *Usul al-Din*, Quranic Studies, Sociology, Political Science, and Psychology, encouraging intellectual collaboration guided by the *tawhidic* worldview. This holistic approach aligns with Hashim's (2017) findings that integrating Islamic values into academic curricula is crucial for producing professionals who are equally grounded in Islamic and modern sciences. Moreover, KIRKHS embodies IIUM's educational philosophy of balancing traditional Islamic knowledge with contemporary relevance, a theme explored in studies like Rahmah and Quayum (2018), which describe IIUM as a success story in integrating Islamic and human sciences. The Kulliyyah also plays a key role in research and innovation, supporting initiatives that align with the principles of Islamization and integration of knowledge (Mamat, Ismail, Hussien, Haron, & Abdullah, 2012; Mohd Amin, 2014).

This study focuses on the establishment and evolution of AHAS KIRKHS, exploring public perceptions alongside the views of lecturers and students regarding the integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences. The research aims to highlight the Kulliyyah's contributions to producing graduates who excel in both Islamic and worldly knowledge, ultimately shaping a new generation of professionals and scholars. As emphasized by Kenney (2015) and Ssekamanya, Suhailah, Nik, and IIUM (n.d.), the success of KIRKHS lies in its ability to nurture interdisciplinary collaboration while remaining rooted in Islamic principles.



## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

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### Objectives

The objectives of this research focus on two main aspects. First, the study aims to enhance public understanding of AHAS KIRKHS, its mission, and its role in integrating Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences. By providing insights into how this *Kulliyyah* operates, the research aims to inform a broader audience about its contribution to shaping both spiritual and worldly education. Second, the research explores the reasons behind the requirement for students to take minors from both HS and IRK courses. It seeks to understand the academic and philosophical reasoning behind this curricular structure, particularly how it benefits students by expanding their academic perspectives. The study will investigate how this integration encourages a more well-rounded educational experience, aligning with IIUM's mission of producing holistic graduates. This research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges and advantages of such a curriculum, incorporating the views of both students and lecturers. These objectives together aim to offer a clearer view of how the integration within AHAS KIRKHS influences public perception. In doing so, the study hopes to provide a more detailed understanding of how this integration has shaped students' development and how the public perceives it. The study also aims to answer two central questions:

1. As a student, do you gain additional knowledge when IRK and HS are integrated?
2. Are you aware of the purpose behind the integration of the *Kulliyyah* of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and the *Kulliyyah* of Human Sciences?

### Problem statement

The core issue this project seeks to address is the extent to which the integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) and Human Sciences (HS) within AHAS KIRKHS at IIUM effectively balances both worldly and *ukhrawi* (spiritual) knowledge in students. The integration aims to cultivate well-rounded individuals capable of navigating modern challenges while remaining grounded in Islamic principles. However, questions persist regarding whether this dual approach truly promotes intellectual and spiritual harmony in students from both disciplines. This project explores whether this objective is being met, emphasizing both accomplishments and areas that may need further attention. By considering the perspectives of students and lecturers, the research aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of this integration, its impact on academic development, and its relevance to the educational demands of today.

## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

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### Methodology

This research employed a mixed-methods approach to explore the integration of AHAS KIRKHS and its effect on balancing worldly and *ukhrawi* knowledge. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allowed for a thorough examination of the research problem. The study adopted a historical research methodology, incorporating oral history interviews and surveys. This design enabled the exploration of the perceptions of both lecturers and students from various departments, particularly *HS* and *IRK*, regarding the integration of these fields.

Data was gathered through oral interviews with three lecturers from the *HS* and *IRK* departments and two students from *HS*. A survey was also administered to 34 student respondents from both *HS* and *IRK*, specifically from Year 1 and Year 3. The interviews were conducted using audio recording devices to capture detailed responses, while the surveys were distributed online via Google Forms. The survey was conducted over a 10-day period, from April 30, 2024, to May 9, 2024. For the interviews, audio recordings ensured the accuracy of responses, while the survey was designed and distributed using Google Forms. The survey contained a variety of question types, including yes/no questions, open-ended queries, and scaled questions rated from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree).

The study included interviews with three lecturers and two students from *HS*, along with 34 survey respondents from both *HS* and *IRK* departments, selected from Year 1 and Year 3 students. This sample size provided a balanced representation of both academic views and student experiences. The qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and analysed thematically to identify key themes, while the quantitative data from the surveys were analysed statistically to uncover patterns and relationships in the perceptions of students and lecturers concerning the integration of *HS* and *IRK*. The combined analysis provided a comprehensive understanding of the relevance and impact of the integration efforts within the Kulliyyah.

### Analysis

The data from both the survey and interviews provide a comprehensive perspective on AHAS KIRKHS's integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (*IRK*) and Human Sciences (*HS*). Among the 34 student respondents, 79.4% were from the *HS* department and 11.8% from *IRK*, with 97.1% (33 respondents) agreeing that the integration enriched their educational experience by combining spiritual and worldly knowledge. This highlights the students' recognition of the potential benefits of an integrated curriculum in preparing them for contemporary challenges. However, it also highlights areas for improvement, such as clearer communication of the integration's objectives, as only 58.8% of respondents were fully aware of its fundamental goals.

This integration aligns with the broader mission of AHAS KIRKHS, which, as M. Zein (2014) explains, seeks to address the issues of the Ummah and contemporary human challenges by merging Islamic principles with empirical social sciences. The process, known as relevantization, emphasizes maintaining a balance between Islamic norms and modern knowledge, equipping students to contribute meaningfully to society and academia. Hussien, Mamat, and Abdallah (2018) noted that this approach encourages interdisciplinary collaboration, grounding students in both Islamic ethics and empirical inquiry.



## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

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Student responses regarding the integration's necessity for achieving a balance between worldly and *ukhrawi* knowledge revealed mixed views. While 15 students slightly agreed with its importance, opinions on the long-term benefits were more varied, with 11 students slightly agreeing, 11 agreeing, 10 remaining neutral, and 2 slightly disagreeing. These findings suggest that while students perceive potential advantages, the practical impact of integration on their academic journey remains unclear to many. Interviews with lecturers provided additional insights into the integration process. Dr. Fauziah from the History and Civilization department highlighted the need for Islamic frameworks within the social sciences, which often rely on Western paradigms. Dr. Aliza emphasized that while faculties such as law and economics have established Islamization processes, human sciences are still undergoing transformation. Similarly, Dr. Helmi acknowledged that while progress has been made, the integration process remains a work in progress. Historical efforts to integrate IRK and HS were also discussed during the interviews. Figures such as *Allahyarham* Abdul Hamid AbuSulayman and political leaders like Dato Seri Anwar Ibrahim advocated for merging Islamic and secular knowledge during the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in response to the dominance of Western perspectives in social sciences. This historical context provides a foundation for AHAS KIRKHS's current endeavours to incorporate Islamic principles into academic disciplines.

The integration effort at AHAS KIRKHS draws upon classical Islamic epistemology, as emphasized by scholars like Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun, and Al-Dihlawi. These thinkers advocated for the unity of acquired and revealed knowledge, forming the basis for integrating Islamic and human sciences. As noted by Mohd Azam Mohd Amin (2014), classical frameworks, such as Al-Shafi'i's *qiyas* and Al-Ghazali's *Ihya'*, demonstrate how Islamic principles can guide intellectual and practical pursuits. AHAS KIRKHS builds upon this tradition by striving to produce graduates equipped to address modern challenges with a grounded understanding of both Islamic and human sciences. This aligns with M. Kamal's concept of the Islamization of knowledge, which serves as an academic foundation at AHAS KIRKHS, promoting a curriculum that integrates Islamic concepts with human sciences to address the ethical and social needs of the Ummah.

The department-specific mission of *Fiqh* and *Usul al-Fiqh* illustrates this integration by combining traditional and modern approaches to legal thought, training students to navigate contemporary jurisprudential challenges with Islamic values (Hasan et al., 2022). Similarly, Hussien et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of contextualizing Islamic sciences to address modern challenges, promoting scholars capable of formulating solutions for both Muslim and global concerns. Studies such as *Experience of Islamization of Knowledge at IIUM* (Ssekamanya et al., n.d.) reiterate the successes and challenges of incorporating Islamic viewpoints into IIUM's academic framework. While the integration strategy has effectively aligned Islamic ideals with various disciplines, challenges remain in standardizing its implementation across faculties. Hashim and Ssekamanya also emphasized the need for consistent institutional commitment and enhanced Islamized teaching resources. Despite these hurdles, curriculum reforms and faculty engagement reflect IIUM's dedication to providing an ethically grounded and intellectually rigorous education.



## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

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As a result of the survey and interview findings, several themes emerged: the need for clearer communication about the integration's objectives, practical applications of integrated knowledge, and greater student engagement to encourage an understanding of its relevance. Despite the challenges, optimism persists regarding AHAS KIRKHS's potential to serve as a model for a balanced education that combines both worldly and *ukhrawi* knowledge. With continued refinement and institutional support, AHAS KIRKHS is well-positioned to achieve its vision of cultivating graduates capable of addressing contemporary issues through a holistic Islamic framework.

### Outcomes

The research revealed several significant insights regarding the integration of Islamic Revealed Knowledge (IRK) and Human Sciences (HS) within AHAS KIRKHS. Most students acknowledged the potential long-term benefits of this integration, recognizing its capacity to improve their academic and professional opportunities. However, a number of students expressed reservations about the requirement for HS students to take IRK courses as minors. They preferred diversifying their learning by choosing minors from other *kulliyahs*, which reflects the challenges of merging these two academic domains within a single department. Lecturer interviews emphasized that the integration's goals would be achieved gradually, in line with a long-term vision aimed at promoting deeper collaboration between the fields of IRK and HS. Despite the progress made, lecturers indicated that the integration process is still evolving, and continuous efforts are needed to align the two disciplines more effectively.

A key takeaway from this research is the need for a more proactive engagement with students from both *kulliyahs*. Engaging students actively would enhance the understanding of the diverse perspectives within IRK and HS, ensuring that the integration succeeds in addressing the challenges and bridging the gap between these fields. This deeper engagement is essential for achieving the core objectives of AHAS KIRKHS, which focus on balancing worldly knowledge with *ukhrawi* knowledge, and addressing contemporary issues through Islamic perspectives. Moreover, the research highlights the importance of aligning students' academic experiences with the broader mission and vision of AHAS KIRKHS. This includes not only integrating Islamic and contemporary knowledge but also emphasizing the Islamization of Human Sciences. By continuously improving its approach and increasing collaboration between departments, AHAS KIRKHS is well-positioned to enhance the integration process, making it more impactful in both academic and practical contexts. This aligns with the institution's broader commitment to developing graduates who are equipped to address contemporary challenges with a solid understanding of both Islamic and modern knowledge.



## Exploring Perceptions of AHAS KIRKHS Establishment at IIUM: Insights from the Perspective of Public History

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### Conclusion

The integration of AHAS KIRKHS marks a key development in establishing a framework for the Islamization of social sciences, offering a distinct counter-narrative to Western ideologies. This integration highlights the importance of students engaging in minors in Islamic Revealed Knowledge courses, which are essential for fully understanding the Islamic worldview and its relevance to modern disciplines, particularly in Human Sciences. Both lecturers and students have expressed optimistic expectations for the integration's outcomes, recognizing its potential to promote academic and spiritual growth among students.

The creation of AHAS KIRKHS is seen as integral to the foundational objectives of IIUM, especially in fulfilling its mission to produce graduates who can successfully balance worldly knowledge with Islamic principles. Through this integration, students are provided with a unique academic experience that combines spiritual and secular learning, positioning IIUM as a frontrunner in the Islamization of knowledge. Although the process is still evolving and the complete realization of its goals may take time, the integration serves as a model for future educational reforms that aim to create a well-rounded and holistic approach to learning.

Understanding the development and integration of AHAS KIRKHS is crucial not only for assessing its academic impact but also for reinforcing IIUM's broader mission to create an educational environment where Islamic values are harmonized with contemporary knowledge. As the largest *kulliyah* at IIUM, AHAS KIRKHS plays a central role in shaping the next generation of intellectuals and professionals who can contribute to society from a balanced, Islamized perspective, in alignment with the university's vision of excellence in education and research.

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