



2026

**ROOTS ACADEMY
ANNUAL REPORT**

Roots.
ACADEMY

Executive Summary

Over the past year, Roots Academy has continued its mission to nurture a generation of young Muslims grounded in faith, confident in identity, and equipped to live with purpose. Since its establishment in 2020, Roots has grown from a single campus initiative into an international movement, now serving students across dozens of universities through a carefully structured, in-person education model.

Our work is rooted in the belief that lasting transformation occurs through consistent learning, trusted relationships, and spaces where young people feel safe to ask difficult questions and reflect deeply.

This year, Roots is delivering semester-long Islamic education on more than 60 campuses, engaging approximately 3,000 active students and supported by over 75 trained instructors.

Through our five-module Essentials programme, students developed stronger intellectual foundations, deeper spiritual routines, and healthier personal habits. Data gathered through our digital ecosystem shows high levels of engagement and retention, with most participants completing the entire suite of modules and reporting clearer understanding of worship, character development, and self-purification.

Roots' impact extends beyond attendance figures. Our programmes consistently help students move from passive identification with Islam to active, lived practice. Surveys and reflections indicate measurable growth in prayer quality, Qur'an engagement, and emotional wellbeing, alongside renewed confidence in navigating university life as Muslims.

This transformation is supported by a robust curriculum development process, rigorous quality assurance, and continuous instructor training, ensuring that content remains relevant, accessible, and spiritually grounded.

Behind this work stands a largely volunteer-driven organisation, supported by a growing professional staff team and a network of dedicated instructors, partners, and donors.

This annual report reflects not only organisational growth, but a collective effort to revive faith, strengthen character, and build resilient Muslim communities for generations to come.

Introduction

Message from the Founder

Hisham Abu Yusuf



May Peace, God's Mercy, and His Blessings be upon you.

All praise is due to God, the Most Merciful, Exceptionally Merciful, the Most High, the Most Wise. He is without partner nor equal, the One, the Overpowering. To Him alone belongs all things in the heavens and the earth, from east to west. All strength and goodness is in His hands; He endows His blessings upon whomever He wills without measure and withholds them from whoever He wills. His guidance is the only true guidance, and by Him alone is true success found. May Peace and Blessings be upon His chosen and final Messenger, Muhammad, the most noble of humanity, the best of examples; his family, and his companions, to the Day of Standing.

This year Roots presented at the Spark Awards Finals in Qatar as one of four finalists out of two thousand global applications. It was incredibly humbling reflecting on the journey of how Roots started in 2020 in a single classroom in Nottingham to being a global movement in just six short years by God's assistance.

The desire for this work to expand comes not just from within Roots but from Muslims across the world. The interest in Roots only grows year on year, the list of cities expressing desire for a local Roots class has never been longer. Karachi. Istanbul. Dallas. Nairobi. Kuala Lumpur. Singapore. This past year has really cemented the global importance of this work and why it needs to not just continue but to expand.

Throughout the journey we've had numerous testimonials from students and families sharing how the work has impacted them, transforming their identity and relationship with God, reviving hearts, and sometimes even saving lives. People aren't just acknowledging our work based on figures on a sheet, they're feeling it. We are completely blown away by the support provided and the trust you've placed in us. Your donations aren't just financial contributions. They're your commitment to being a part of this global movement. You're saying: we believe in what you're building. We believe in the people you're serving. We believe this work matters.

There is so much to be grateful to God for, as shown in this report, communities that have been served, and lives that have been touched. But beyond the metrics, I want you to know: you've helped us build something truly visionary. A unique product that is making a real impact. A team culture where people matter more than outputs. A mission where mercy isn't a tagline, it's the operating system.

I know we haven't even touched the surface, but we are committed to diving to the depths. Building an educational legacy that will last generations by God's Grace, producing tomorrow's movers and shakers. To not just meet the needs of today, but to set foundations for the future. And with your continued support, God willing, we'll keep doing this work the way it deserves to be done: with excellence, with heart, and with presence.

Thank you for walking this path with us. Thank you for believing in something that goes beyond. Thank you for being companions in this work.

Let's keep building. Together.

Mission and Vision

Vision

A generation of young Muslims who embody and promote a God-centred way of life.

Mission

To deliver a structured and transformative education in the Essentials of Islam in a way that lowers barriers to access, develops a deep certainty, and inspires action.

Our Values

1

Rooted in Unity – Many Branches, One Tree

We treat every detail as a trust (Amānah). We strive for beauty and sincerity, knowing that while we pedal the bike, Allah provides the propulsion (Tawfiq).

2

Rooted in Excellence – Excellence as Worship

We are united by the Qur'an and Sunnah. We rise above divisions, welcoming all backgrounds and speaking with wisdom to bridge gaps rather than create them.

3

Rooted in Transformation – Connecting Revelation to Reality

We facilitate change that lasts – through community, relatable instructors, and discussion-driven learning that compels students to think, act, and grow.

Roots exists to provide:



Safe, relatable spaces for young Muslims to ask and tackle the big questions: existence of God, addictions, identity, problem of evil and more



A structured, relevant, accessible introduction to the basics of Islam



Strategies to deal with onslaught of conflicting ideas, temptations and doubts





Who we are and what we do

At Roots we have learned that a holistic approach is required for real lasting impact and transformation with students. Our method is greater than the sum of its parts and comprises three key components:



The Curriculum



The Experience



Scaling and Reach

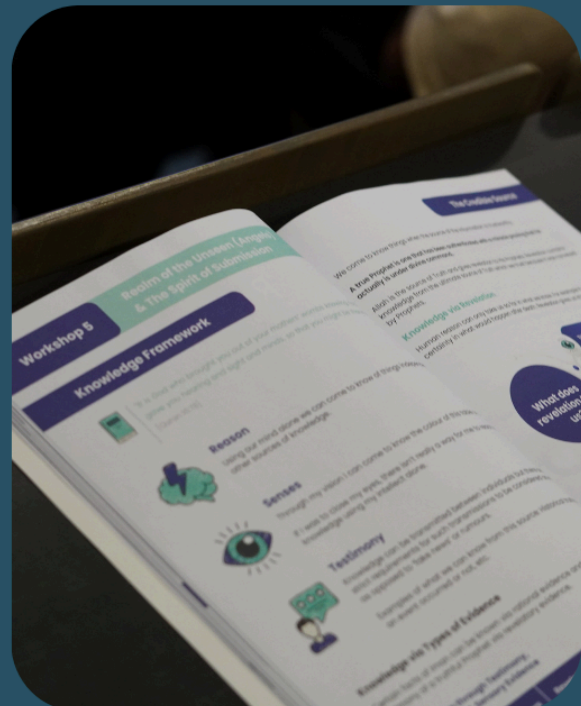
Each of these three areas individually are unable to make the impact we desire to see in the Ummah (Nation), but when each is refined to a world-class standard and applied together in a synergistic ecosystem, we are able to drive lasting change in students and communities.

The Curriculum

The Essentials

Since our establishment in 2020, we've been developing The Essentials, a programme that teaches the foundations of Islam across five modules.

Each module is designed to be simple to understand yet deep in application, with the goal of facilitating long term transformation. Two modules are taught every academic year and they are continuously revised to ensure that we are always up to date.



The Essentials.

QUR'AN

Uncover divine speech.

Qur'an

Connecting with God's words.

The Essentials.

CERTAINTY

Develop certainty.

Certainty

Building an intellectual foundation to withstand doubt and certainty of our creator

The Essentials.

SEERAH

A life on divine values.

Seerah

Studying the Prophet's life to model our own on perfected values.

The Essentials.

WORSHIP

Transform the outward.

Worship

Transforming outward rituals into meaningful connection.

The Essentials.

PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

Transform the inward.

Practical Spirituality

Moving beyond theory to practical ways of transforming yourself.

How did we build and maintain a curriculum that remains relevant and engaging in an ever-changing world?



Content

We have a team of researchers from diverse academic backgrounds study traditional materials and repackage them in a contemporary way while respecting our rich scholarly heritage.



Targeted

The programme is tailored to match the university semester with 9 workshops spread across 9 or 10 weeks. In workshops, every powerpoint slide asks the question: how is this content relevant to a Muslim university student audience?



Unity

The curriculum only covers content that all Sunni muslims agree upon, to ensure that it does not cause controversy but instead can act as a uniting force that is easily shared throughout the world.



Annual updates

There's an iterative feedback loop with instructors and students, leading to consistent year-on-year module updates and improvement.



The Experience

A curriculum without a vehicle or mode of delivery just becomes documents on a shelf or on the cloud that fail to make a difference. At Roots we design not just the curriculum but tailor the whole student experience end to end to foster transformation.



Free and no-hassle

We do our utmost to reduce the barrier to entry and any friction to attending a workshop for all students. We do this through making our workshops free – so any student can just turn up. No signups, no registration, and no money taken from their already-stretched student budget.



Inclusive and welcoming

When a student enters a Roots session, one of the first things they'll notice is that all of our content is in English, from instructor delivery, to supplementary material like slides. We also do not assume any prior knowledge, each module and class can be understood fully from start to finish by a brand new learner.

It might sound obvious, but many organisations teaching Islam to a general audience will often confuse them with frequent usage of Arabic terminology, making references with no explanation, and skipping over concepts they assume everyone knows. We ensure that the content is as accessible as possible, with all references to the Quran, sayings of the Prophet (pbuh) and other Arabic texts all presented in easy-to-understand, straightforward English.

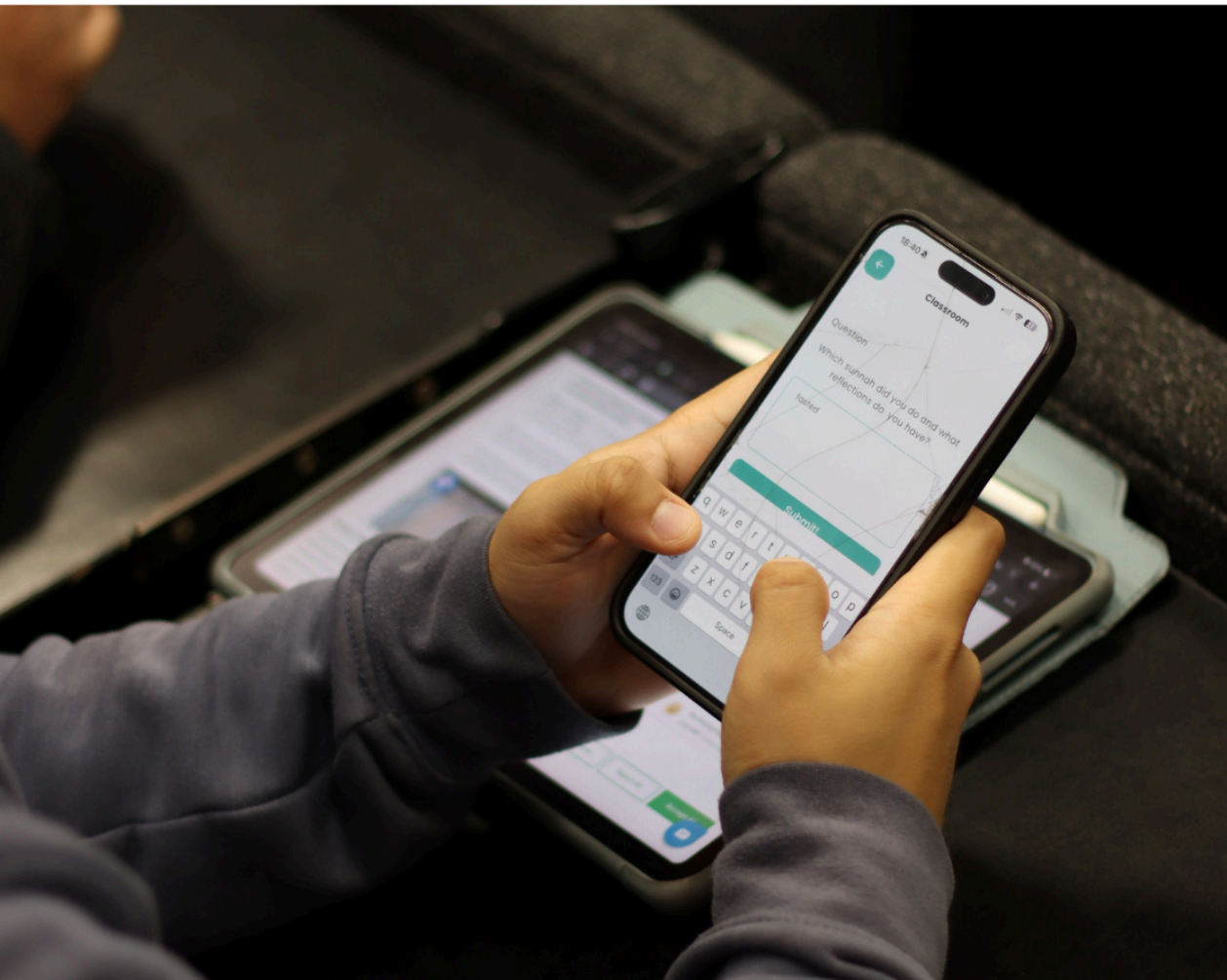


In-person and community building

These workshops are fully in-person with no online component, because we firmly believe that true transformation takes place through heart-to-heart connection and face-to-face discussions.

The workshops are designed to create a relaxed but engaging learning atmosphere, encouraging not only curiosity and intellectual discussions, but real relationship building amongst peers and with the instructors. We do this through incorporating the best pedagogical methods such as regular reflection prompts, group discussions and activities, and opportunities to ask questions.

We also gear the Roots workshop to be a social opportunity for students, offering selective support to Universities for food and drink after the workshop and additional opportunities to engage with the instructor.



Instructors

With such a carefully tailored curriculum and specific target audience, it's not just anyone that can teach the Roots Essentials.



Our instructors are hand-picked for their relatability, knowledge, and ability. To make sure they're relatable, they must have studied in a western higher educational institution, and therefore have had similar personal experiences to their students.

They also need to have a strong background in the Islamic sciences, whether that's a formal qualification or informal studies with known teachers.

To round it all off, they also need to be able to deliver highly engaging, interactive workshops that encourage discussion and student participation.

However, we don't just expect the perfect instructors to appear out of thin air. Our education team ensures that instructors receive support throughout their journey with Roots. Through helping our instructors in their personal development, we not only build the teaching engine of each workshop, but also positively impact all their good workout instructors do beyond the Roots classroom.

These are some examples of how we assist and support our instructors:

Quality Assurance

We employ a rigorous assessment of teaching standards by specialist trained educators (with professional education backgrounds) via in-person site visits and workshop recording viewing, including a comprehensive performance metric assessing content, oration, time management, and interactivensess. Instructors receive a tailored written report and support meetings where we help them improve step by step.

Instructor training

We sponsor all our instructors twice a year to meet face to face for instructor training. One of them is a two day one night fully covered retreat, and the other is an evening intensive. These cover the educational aspects of the upcoming module being taught on campuses globally, and is also a team-wide delivery upskilling opportunity which includes but is not limited to: marketing, safeguarding, student engagement techniques, and public speaking skills.



Scaling and reach

Building a trailblazing Digital Experience

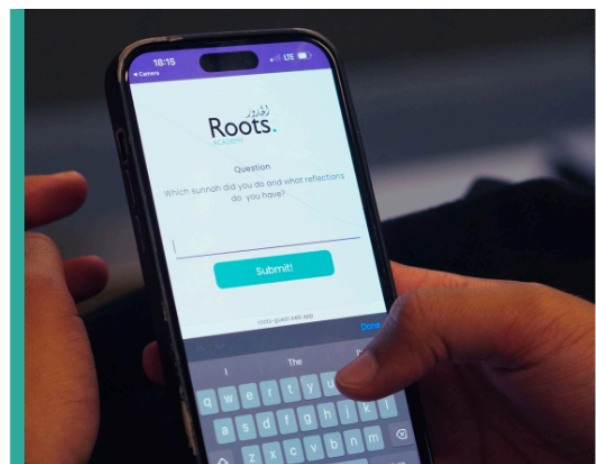
All of the above features of a Roots class is underpinned by a world class digital experience, fully built in house. This supports our instructors in lesson preparation, facilitates student engagement in the class, and even assists class logistics management.

Roots Digital Portal

An in-house built instructor's platform providing access to resources and pre-prepared presentation slides. Resources include detailed lesson plans with unique teachers' guidance, comprehensive notes, and video tutorials for every lesson module.

Roots App

The app is a companion for students inside and outside the Roots workshop. It assists in class accessibility, having class dates, times, and venues at the student's fingertips. In the workshop, the app is an easy to use workshop companion for live engagement, polls, and feedback. Beyond the workshop, the app assists students in taking learning beyond the classroom and into everyday life such as reminders of each module's closing action point.



The Roots digital roadmap is extensive, and we are positioning this to be the extra value add that cements transformation and facilitates international expansion while providing useful insights that will lead to benefits for all Muslims.

Our Team

We have built an international team to meet the need for international operations. Our team members reside in over 6 different countries from the United Kingdom, to Turkiye, to Australia, and are trained to ensure the ship sails smoothly.

The team is mostly volunteers, in total comprising:

3.5

FTE Staff

150

Volunteers

75

Instructors

Education

Finance

Governance

Legal

Quality Assurance

Design

Digital

Marketing

Partnerships

Our teams include:

Education Team – support the Educational offering through teaching, curriculum support, quality assessment and skills development. Also spearheads internal spiritual refinement initiatives and anchors the heart of the organisation.

Marketing & Communications Team – helps us tell our story through social media, content creation, design, storytelling, and brand strategy.

Digital, Data and Tech Teams – builds and maintains our internal and external platforms, website, data systems, and digital tools that power our processes and programs.

Onsite Team – working hand in hand with the Education team, ensures classes run like clockwork and that students are supported through planning, coordination, and operations.

Fundraising Team – custodians of sustainable financial growth by helping raise funds that drive the mission and importantly, make our programmes accessible and impactful.

People team – supports hiring, internal communications, contracting, payroll, and volunteer appreciation.



The Impact

The question we ask ourselves at Roots constantly is 'How do we drive and sustain Transformation'. Our operational feedback loops and data collection techniques are all geared towards answering this golden question.

The figures and stories you will read about in this section are not merely to signal success but as an opportunity to reflect what we value, what we are trying to achieve, and how we are keeping ourselves accountable.

Each testimonial from a student we have supported this year by God's help stands as testament to the power and importance of education as the most powerful catalyst for impactful, lasting change and to inspire confidence that our system is sustainable for growth internationally.

2020

2026

Why it matters

1

Campus

60

Campuses

Established national footprint across almost all major UK campuses, including early but strong expansion into new international locations.

1

Country

6

Countries

Sustained international growth, with established presence across multiple regions.

5

Weekly students

3000

Weekly students

Strong, consistent weekly engagement, showing deep sustained reach that grows year on year.

3

Instructors

75

Instructors

Consistent, scalable grass roots delivery by trained instructors and a method that supports instructor retention and support.

<10

Volunteers

142

Volunteers

A growing delivery core of alumni and ex-students that believe in the mission, showing long term impact and institutional development

0

FTE Staff

3.5

FTE Staff

Commitment of resource to ensure the sustainability of the mission and the maintenance of critical operations

Behind the numbers

Attraction: Who is being drawn to Roots?

Roots attracts a rare mix of students which includes: newly practising Muslims, those rebuilding their faith, students of knowledge, and first-time learners. This diversity creates a unified campus environment centred on companionship, learning, and worship.

Additionally, the class is a support system for new Muslims, non-muslims and all those who feel alienated in more traditional settings, providing an alternative comfortable, judgement-free learning space. We are honoured to foster such spaces where anyone, regardless of background, can feel empowered to embark on a journey of growing closer to God.

- Based on a survey conducted at the start of our most recent Qur'an module, 44% of students reported low confidence in engaging with the Qur'an (6 or below out of 10), and 12% reported very low confidence (4 or below).



"I am a revert and the weekly sessions at Roots enhanced my sincere remembrance of Allah... I want to continue applying what I've learnt."
- Reading

Engagement: Are sessions emotionally & intellectually engaging?

Supported by our curated workshop environment and digital tools, students highlight that learning feels safe and personally relevant.

- 90% of students who attended and engaged in the first session came back for the final workshop.
- 500+ questions were submitted in a single session, indicating both trust, curiosity and a focus on real application.



"The addition of [the Roots app] is very useful for people that are shy... it made the sessions feel very comfortable." - Nottingham

Retention: Is learning retained beyond the classroom?

Retention is reinforced through reflection prompts and discussion, practical personal tasks, and follow-up reminders that help students turn learning into routines.

- 82% reported a direct shift in understanding of key Islamic ideas, including worship, spiritual purification, and character growth.
- 98% reported Roots deepened or clarified their understanding of spiritual purification.
- In one Worship class, 100% of students who attended reported a stronger understanding of the wisdom behind acts of worship.



"It has helped me view my health holistically - the mental, physical and spirituality." - Cambridge

Application: Are students changing habits and practice?

Students often cite barriers to worship such as focus during prescribed acts of worship, praying on time amidst busy schedules, and maintaining consistency. Roots addresses these through helping surface the purpose and meaning of acts of worship, and practical strategies to help uphold them.

- 45% of students described a specific habit they changed, or a clear intention to implement (e.g., improving prayer focus, daily remembrance, leaving harmful habits).
- When assigned individual action points to work on between workshops, 100% of respondents reported putting at least one new virtuous action into practice.
- 95% reported a changed understanding of overcoming sins and negative habits, shifting from self-blame to actionable spiritual strategies rooted in repentance and God-consciousness.



"Truly transformed my [prayer]... practical guidance to get closer to Allah." - Sheffield

Transformation: Is there lasting spiritual and emotional change?

The Roots ecosystem endeavours to introduce and encourage virtuous actions, allow the students to deeply experience the positive impact, and then inspire and support habit creation and long-term change. Examples of this are the post-lesson action points and in-class group reflective exercises that produce these measurable shifts.

- After an activity where students imagined standing for their final prayer before meeting their Creator, over 85% reported an improvement in their spiritual state.
- 68% of students explicitly described feeling closer to God or experiencing revived certainty as a direct outcome of the course.
- 66% reported an immediate positive emotional shift after reflective prompts (e.g., greater peace, awe of God, reduced distractions).



"It was the light to reconnect me to my religion after I was in the darkness for so long." - Manchester

Scale and Longevity: Impact That Compounds

Roots is not a one-off event. Weekly sessions create routine, accountability, and a campus ecosystem where students return consistently, bring friends, and form friendship groups that last beyond the course.

As cohorts graduate, they take these habits into workplaces, families, and wider community spaces - extending benefit beyond the individual workshop.

- Around 30% of students independently described Roots as their primary source of Muslim community at university.



"It is the only time I get to be really a Muslim for one hour and a half at university." - Swansea



"My whole friend group comes from these sessions." - Sheffield

Student Stories: Sharing Real Impact

Case Study 1: A revert finds belonging and confidence

For new Muslims, Roots provides a beginner-friendly entry point, a welcoming community, and a weekly anchor that keeps them connected to God and a local Muslim community.

A 90% semester completion rate suggests students are not only attending, but staying through the full learning journey.



"As a revert for two years, I've attended many courses and events and I genuinely didn't benefit as much as this course. The delivery and practical advice has changed how I see life. I even made friends through Roots who are now in my close circle, constantly reminding each other of Allah."

- Student testimony (Practical Spirituality)

Case Study 2: First steps into Islam – and the door stayed open

Roots is often a first safe exposure to Islam for students who are curious, exploring, or attending with friends. These moments shape first impressions of Muslim community and Islamic knowledge.



"As someone who is not Muslim and Roots was my first introduction to Islam, I felt so welcomed and gained so much knowledge."

- University College Dublin

Student Stories: Sharing Real Impact

Case Study 3: Digital detox, reflection, and higher-value living

In an 'offline hour' challenge (where students are tasked to remove all access to devices and the internet for an hour in their personal life), 94% of responding students completed the exercise. Many replaced screen time with high-value activities such as Qur'an, nature, family time, or sleep - demonstrating immediate behavioural change when students are given small, realistic tools.

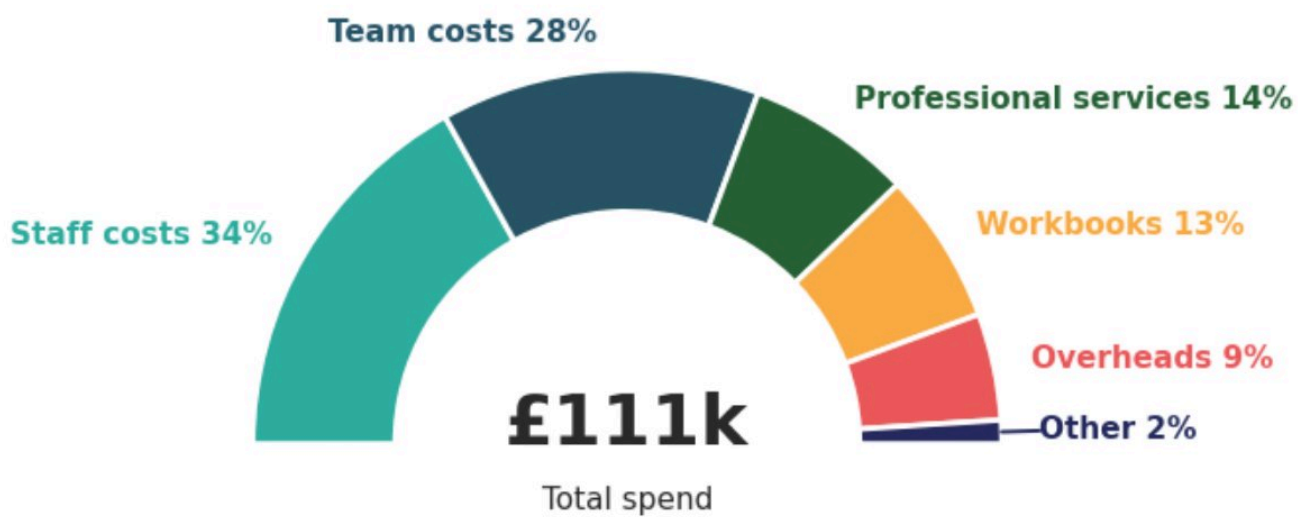


"... a noble messenger, who possesses great strength and is held in honour by the Lord of the Throne--he is obeyed there and worthy of trust."

[81:19-21]

Finances

Cashflow FY 24/25



Looking Ahead

While we've come a long way since 2020, we're only just getting started. We have two areas of focus for the coming years. Firstly, we want to keep improving the Essentials. This means building team capacity to bring the Roots classes to every place that needs it, maintaining the deep, transformative student experience. Secondly, we want to bring our students on an even more impactful journey past the Essentials to build the changemakers of tomorrow via our new offering: **Revival**.

Improving the Essentials

Growing the team

While we've grown substantially and now have classes in six countries, the only countries where we have significant coverage for the Muslim population are the UK and Ireland. We have classes in 60 campuses, the vision is for hundreds, covering all major universities in the world. This will require growing our team with world-class talent, complemented with efficient operations.



Additionally, we are increasing the educational capabilities of the team which is vital for the success of the mission. This will allow us to ensure that our curriculum is always relevant and always driving real transformation, and that our instructors are provided with industry-leading support.

Deeper student transformation

We want to continue improving the classroom experience for our students. This means introducing more support to get students of all backgrounds to join, and making the Roots class even more engaging. We are continuously striving to implement better measures and initiatives such as improved marketing support for the classes, financial support for refreshments, and a more robust digital experience.

Instructor Support

The instructor is the cornerstone of every class and we are committed to investing in our instructors and the instructor experience teaching for Roots. We are doing this through continuously developing and improving the digital resources available to our instructors, improving our quality assurance and instructor coaching mechanisms, and providing more ways for our instructors to support themselves financially

Roots Revival

Roots Revival is the next step after the Essentials. A structured, multi-year journey through thematic, accessible study of the Qur'an. This is an alternative route of study to the rigorously academic classic scholarly path, tailored to working professionals. We believe this fills a significant gap for solutions built to support the continuous growth of busy, non-scholarly muslims.

The course will help students understand divine revelation and allow it to shape their understanding and engagement with the world, transform their personal lives, and ultimately, lead to individuals with a strong and peaceful family environment who make deep impact in the world.

This is not just an empty dream, the work is already underway. We have established an entire separate team to support this effort while ensuring that we can maintain all the required operations for the Essentials. The team has successfully delivered pilot programmes such as Roots for Professionals and Anchored by the Qur'an (a full-day seminar on Surah Baqarah across 3 UK cities) to lay the groundwork and ensure that Revival has the same level of excellence in its design as the Essentials.



Thank You

All of this has only been possible by the will of God, and with the help and support of our incredible team and supporters. We sincerely pray that our efforts are accepted and that God continues to bestow his blessings upon us and allow us to dedicate ourselves to His service.

However, without regular, ongoing support, it will be difficult to build on these achievements, and reach the potential we know we can. So if our vision aligns with yours, if our work touched your heart, if you want to be a part of this incredible mission - then we need you to become a regular supporter. Invest in the next generation, invest in the future of this nation. This work needs to last centuries and for that we need sustainers.

Ready to step up? Go to rootsacademy.co.uk/donate

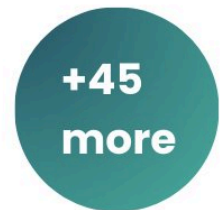
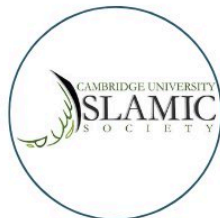




Appendices

Appendix 1 – Partners

Islamic Societies and Muslim Student Associations



Mosques



Appendix 2 – Additional Student Testimonials

Safety, belonging, and community

- “I was worried moving away to uni I would be... out of place and fall on the wrong path. But this has given me the chance to meet individuals who have their akhirah in focus.” – First-year student, Sheffield
- “Very welcoming and inclusive.” – Glasgow
- “Even when I’m busy, I look forward to attending Roots. There is a sense of community and the classes are well structured and beneficial.” – Nottingham
- “My whole friend group comes from these sessions.” – Sheffield

High-quality learning experience

- “The content and delivery of this course was phenomenal... each lesson felt too short.” – Essentials Online
- “This course is one of the best, well-thought-out courses I have taken. The teachers are extremely engaging.” – Nottingham
- “During my foundation year at university, Roots was the highlight of my week.” – Manchester

From engagement to application

- “This is probably the most beneficial and easy-to-follow course I’ve taken. It drew me closer to Allah and strengthened my foundation.” – Student
- “It inspired me to fix my habits and become more consistent in my salah and Qur’an.” – Student
- “I enjoyed how the instructor connected the topics to things that relate to us and kept the room engaged.” – Student

Safety, belonging, and community

- "This course was life-changing. It helped me become a better Muslim and brought me closer to Allah." – Student
- "Alhamdulillah I finally have the tools to engage in active tadabbur." – Aston
- "Now having completed the course, I have become much more firm in belief of Allah and come to appreciate His wisdom." – UCL
- "It is the only time I get to be really a Muslim for one hour and a half at university." – Swansea

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