

Chancellor's Message

This, the inaugural issue of our *Journal of Integrated Sciences*, marks a major milestone in the evolution and development of the International Open University as a truly unique and global mega educational institution, although only in its infancy as an eight-year-old institution

In the previous four years, IOU's "*Insights*" magazine acted as the university's public voice, highlighting for its readers the history of the institution, its courses, lecturers, staff, and student research articles on various topics of Islamic and socio-scientific importance. Published as a colorful, glossy, hard-copy magazine, *Insights* magazine filled to some degree the niche left behind when *Al Jumuah Magazine*, the widest circulating Islamic magazine in English, stopped printing in 2014.

From the initial launch of the undergraduate degree program in Islamic Studies (BAIS), most third-world students struggled to complete their course research essay assignments. It was abundantly evident that the rote method of learning, common in the third world, did not prepare the students for a critical-thinking Western-styled Islamic University like IOU. The graduating BA thesis requirement only added to the trials facing students to produce research papers for every course, in every semester. Consequently, when five new modern disciplines and an MA in Islamic Studies were added to the university's Islamic studies base, the need for developing a culture of research among students was acutely felt on all levels. As a result, the IOU was forced to place more stress on supervised research while simultaneously launching computer programs to identify plagiarism in order to ensure the originality of students' papers.

Two years ago, the DVC Academics at IOU, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ahsan and others, published a book on research writing for undergraduate and graduate students jointly with Punjab University and greater emphasis was placed on research in IOU's graduate program where midterm exams were replaced with research papers. All of these efforts were meant to raise the standard of research at IOU in order to help the university reach established global standards of research.

The next logical step was to launch a multidisciplinary academic journal to utilize and publicize some of the excellent research papers among the vast amounts of material being produced on both the undergraduate and graduate levels in all of our seven disciplines. The *Journal of Integrated Sciences* also provides a global platform for showcasing the contributions of independent scholars from various disciplines in different institutions around the world.

Thus, we now present the first Issue of the International Open University's academic *Journal of Integrated Sciences*. Our team of dedicated academics and professionals has worked tirelessly to ensure a high standard of both timely and academically sound papers.

As success belongs only to Allāh ﷻ, I implore Him to grant our journal academic acceptance.

Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips