



**Sharia-compliant student finance proposal:
Our members' responses to the Government consultation**

Imperial College Union

12/06/2014

To what extent, if any, are you aware that students with religious objections to the charging of interest have been affected by the changes in tuition fees and student loans? Please illustrate your answer with any specific examples you may have.

As a Muslim student, taking out a loan was something that I pondered for a very long time considering the interest I would have to pay back. However, ultimately according to Shariah law, a Muslim abides by the law of the nation in which they live and so taking out a loan which I will pay back with interest is something that I felt was acceptable to do.

They are severely affected, some opting not to pursue higher education due to the noncompliance of the current system with their beliefs. I believe that this should be implemented to give equal access to further education to all students in the UK.

Yes. Interest based loans have been an issue for students

I don't know anyone is particular

None

Yes, I know of many students who cannot go to university because of how their religion doesn't permit the use of interest.

I think it does pose a large problem to students with these views. On a personal level, I know of several very academically well achieving and bright students who are currently in the process of deciding whether to even go to university or not, due to the loan system not currently being sharia compliant, and there being no way for them to afford the tuition fees and living costs themselves. I think it does pose a real moral dilemma for a smaller but increasing proportion of students. I only know that it would be a real shame for intelligent and able students to forgo a university education and degree because they could not reconcile the student loan system with their personal, moral beliefs. I think more universities, Imperial College, in particular working alongside the government, to create a loaning process that would be compliant with sharia laws regarding the charging of interest, could only be a good thing in enabling more students who are able enough to attend university and attain the qualifications they deserve, to reach their career potential.

Students with religious obligations have definitely been affected by the increase in tuition fees and student loans. In Islam, one is forbidden to engage in activities involving interest, such as those on student loans, even though it may be the only feasible means for a student to attend a world-class university. As a result, some students have been deterred and discouraged from attending universities in London, given the extortionately high living and rental costs.

Not aware of any

Many students have to take gap years and work throughout the university degree so they can afford the tuition fees for university instead of taking a student loan with interest

Yes, I know of several Muslims who are on student loans and they have to pay interest on these loans. It is a clear part of Islam that interest is forbidden and should not be taken or given or even a signed via a contract. I can only imagine how unnecessarily difficult it is for these Muslims as they should not have to be put in a situation where they have to choose between their religious obligation to God and their education!

Many won't be able to attend uni

Badly affected

It has been very difficult to find the funds to pay for the tuition free and I may consider quitting my degree as I may no longer be able to afford it.

Students with religious obligations will think twice about taking a loan and some will not even consider it. If I was taking a loan I would want it to be compliant with my religion.

I know of people who have not applied to university as they cannot pay the loan and they feel the tuition loan constitutes riba which is a grave sin in Islam ie. Interest. Considerably worse as interest is above rate of inflation although I know of people who were affected by this even when interest was set at rate of inflation.

As a Muslim, I am very aware of the fact that many Muslims cannot take out loans because interest is forbidden in Islam, and as such are in a very difficult financial position. Some, like me, have been forced to take out a loan even though it is against our religion.

I am very aware of this problem, I am personally aware of several muslim prospective students who have gone as far as to give up on the prospect of going to university at all, whilst their older siblings (born before the fee changes) had no such qualms. I am close friends with a member of the muslim community and a student here at imperial who, due to unforeseen financial circumstances, has had his entire university experience compromised and put into jeopardy due to the issue of interest being attached to governmental loans.

As the tuition fees are difficult for families to pay, students are seeking alternatives in studying in countries outside the UK, esp in the Middle East where tuition would be more affordable.

I was unaware

I am a Muslim and I have religious objections to the charging of interest.

Very much affected, to the extent that bright and very talented students have been left feeling that they cannot pursue university education.

I believe that in some cases it may prevent strict Muslim students from applying to Uni, rather wanting to wait and raise the money themselves in order to avoid taking out a loan under the current scheme.

I'm aware of a number of people who decided to not continue with higher education as they could not afford the fees and wouldn't take out a loan due to the interest charges.

Very aware, a number of people I know have been deterred from applying to university as they lack the funds to finance themselves.

I know a lot of students who choose not to go to university because of the nature of the student loan and instead decide other career plans. Those people who do go to university with the student loan feel like they have no alternative choice and feel guilty in doing so.

I am aware that it is a major concern for many students as the loans are currently charging interest and this goes against their religious values so many students are put off from applying for loans, or unfortunately forced into applying as they have no other alternative.

Not that I know of.

This is an incredibly important matter for many Muslims. In Islam it is an obligation upon Muslims to avoid any such transactions that involve interest. The current system of student loan does not provide an alternative for this and it has caused many students including myself uncertainty and doubt on whether or not I should be applying to study at University so that I may avoid interest.

It has resulted in many students not willing to go to university as they cannot go against their religious beliefs of obtaining an interest loan. Also, many students who do go to university feel very guilty after doing so - education should be a liberation, so the correct environment and rules should be applied to cater for all.

I'm affected by it personally. My father had to pay a very large amount of money to get us (my siblings and I) to go to university

I know many students who do not attend a University due to their religious stance on not taking loans with interest

my muslims freinds have problems taking out loans as they cant take interest

I'm personally aware of many Muslim friends who have decided to avoid going into higher education, despite top grades in A-levels and high career aspirations, due to the religious obligation to avoid interest-bearing loans; these loans being the only way many families can afford the new £9k fees.

I am not aware specifically on the exact changes, but I can assume that interest is charged on tuition fees and loans by percentage, and therefore the rise in tuition fees would simply mean paying back more interest.

Other than the possible "no interest" on the loans and tuition fees that seem to be on a lot of people's mind, I am fully aware on the positive impact it will have on any religious persons.

Me any my sisters cannot take out student loans as under sharia law it prohibits us as a result this is putting a severe financial strain on my father as he has to fund it all from his own pocket. Having sharia compliant loans will be very beneficial to my family and all other muslims suffering from the same problem.

A friend of mine was made to live at home whilst studying as she does not believe in taking out a student loan due to the interest. This meant she was unable to choose the course she prefered due to the distance from her home.

I am not aware of any students that have been affected thus far, simply because I am not in contact with any potential applicants. However I can imagine it would be problematic for many muslims wanting to go to university and being forced to go against their religious principles by applying for a student loan, with which interest would be included in the repayment.

To be honest, not very aware.

I have heard that some Muslims are not going to university because of interest, which is not fair on them, as they are unable to attain higher education and so will not be able to get a job

I believe students have been affected, as interested is majorly objected in Islamic teachings, and therefore the charging of interest in student loans may deter students from education, or pro-long the time before going to university in order to save money to pay fees directly (which is of course very difficult given the 9K/year fees).

I have many friends who have chosen not to pursue higher education because of the interest involved in the student loan.

I decided to take a loan out for my tuition fees as I felt I had no other option of pursuing a scientific career and I feel we need more educated Muslims within society to make changes like these for example.

I have many friends who have been compelled to look for other routes such as internships, starting work without higher education or even not working at all because the student loans are unacceptable. Therefore I believe it is essential to bring about the sharia compliant loans as it will give everyone an equal opportunity to get into higher education.

Yes, I am well aware. I live in the east of London in a mixed community and personally know several local young Muslims. The majority of them have decided to postpone university due to the increase in fees and intend to enrol after having accumulated some funds through working. Even then, they might enrol onto part-time degree courses, thus potentially ruling them out from great full-time places like Imperial.

I've realised student loan plays a huge role in interest schemes which is unacceptable in the Islamic shariah which makes students like myself uneasy and puts us in a predicament.

Many are reconsidering applying to university, as they cannot find an acceptable alternative to the changes in tuition fees and student loans that are in line with their religious beliefs.

Because of the interest base student loan it makes it difficult for a Muslim student to part take the system, hence entering or delaying them taking up higher education.

Significantly - I personally know several people who have applied abroad instead of the UK.

Potential students who, when finding out about the proposed fee changes, desperately tried to get jobs and contacted family members to raise enough money to be able to pay up front the fees rather than taking out those loans.

Doesn't just affect religious people, poor people are affected too and they'd also benefit from a new system.

People have looked to apprenticeships instead of going to university.

I know of many people who are not able to take loans or attend university due to the interest applied on loans, due to religious reasons. Many of my friends have had to borrow money of family and friends, in order to get through university.

More people are having to fund studies with loans but with a lot of guilt and anxiety with regards to the interest. Most people I know would not want to compromise on going to university just because of financial reasons but many have opted not to go to university or have chosen a shorter course. Those who are attending with interest bearing loans are burdened by the religious compromise.

I have been made aware of the issue and understand the concern, but do not have any specific examples of anyone I know being affected.

I was oblivious to the problem until it was raised in the public eye. I personally don't know of any cases myself. I as a Muslim, feel very bad for not complying though. I was considering studying abroad where it would be a lot cheaper and thus affordable. But since I received a great offer from a great university in the UK, I didn't want to waste that chance either, and I would be closer to home, which is always more pleasant, especially at my age.

I along with many friends decided not to take out a student loan due to the involvement of interest, which is against basic principles of Islam. My friends decided not to study at university and ended up getting a full time job. I was very fortunate to secure a scholarship which pays for all my tuition fees. This means it is permissible for me to study at university since I am not dealing with any dealings that involve interest.

these students are in a very difficult financial situation compared to other students

No objection.

I have many bright and smart friends who have not gone on to study at university due to the interest-applied on student loans

I, personally object to the use of student loans simply because of the presence of interest. My parents also hold strong views on this and consequently, affected the university life of both my brother and sister.

Not going to university as no viable funding options

people who are not willing to pay the interest end up not going to university. I also have not taken out any loan from this system due to the nature of the repayments, but have gone on to university as my family have been saving money for many years. Other people less well off financially may be unwilling to go to university altogether

I personally have had my education funded by family in order to avoid paying usury as the paying and receiving of usury in Islam is considered a great sin and universally forbidden.

Many Muslim students who are currently doing their A-Levels or equivalent are facing a difficult decision as to whether pursue Higher Education and take a loan which goes against their faith, or to put off Higher Education and try to find employment with their current qualifications. Unfortunately many who aren't able to afford the tuition fees outright are forced to take the latter path, and thus miss out on continuing their education, despite them wanting to. My family is currently facing difficulty to secure the necessary funds to cover my younger brother's fees (currently in his first year at Imperial), and this has created a burden on our household, with the future years still looking uncertain for my brother.

Higher fees have forced many muslim students to take out interest based student loans. They have been deeply affected by this as it contravenes their religious beliefs.

Due to the increase in fees, in order to avoid having to take out a tuition fee loan, many of my friends are having to work part time along their studies to fund their education. This has a detrimental effect on their performance.

yes i understands

for example muslims do not accept to charge/be charge interest

None.

I myself, have taken tuition fee loans to fund my education - under the Hadith that what is unlawful May become lawful at times of necessity. However, I have had doubts and feel uncomfortable with the interest on the fees.

Student loans funded by the government in our society aren't in accordance with the laws Muslims follow since interest has to be paid back for the loan.

Unable to attend university as their parents cannot afford to pay the high tuition fees or take out the interest-filled loans.

At the current time, there is no option for muslim students to avoid the use of interest when taking out a student finance loan in the UK.

I don't anyone personally who has been seriously affected, but I am informed by many fellow muslims that it has been a major cause for concern for some. Certainly as a muslim, I avoid the charging of interest where possible, but as my education is a high priority, the need to take out non-sharia loans has had to be necessary- but I am confident that many muslims, myself included, would greatly appreciate a sharia-compliant loan so that we don't feel guilty about simply trying to make ends meet when studying in a costly city such as London.

I myself have opted not to take a tuition fee loan, because of interest, and due to this reason i have to carefully manage my expenses

I personally stopped taking student loans altogether because of interest. Fortunately I had a ~3600 pound fee. I would have really struggled to pay ~9000 pounds, as would many other Muslim students in the country.

The increase in tuition fees has stopped many from going to university since when the price was lower they could get loans or manage to pay for their own tuition fee through family and friends and working. now the tuition fee increase means they can't do that and it is not viable for them to ask family and others and because of religious obligations they feel they don't want a loan from the government. personally I know of one person at least who wanted to further their education but felt they couldn't because of these religious obligations. they are working now. others, they feel they would say rather do a three year instead of a four year degree to minimise the amount of loan they take because of this, yet they have taken the loan for the three years anyway and feel they have had to compromise on religious principles to go to university to get a degree and a good job and support a family etc.

Many are reconsidering whether they would even attend university or not. In particular my very own cousin was thinking about giving up even going to university to study law. His dad will be funding his education now, which will put a heavy strain on the family. With £9000 fees, those from low-income households, cannot obtain enough maintenance grant to pay off majority of the tuition fees. Where as at £3000, this was very much possible and in my case, I only had to pay a few hundred on top to cover my fees.

Many Muslim students cannot afford to study anymore as they cannot take up a loan to pay for the increased tuition fees.

When I was coming to university, although my parents were okay with me going ahead with a student loan, I still didn't feel completely comfortable with the interest which had to be paid back after the end of my three year degree. Not because you have to pay back ~9% but because I felt that I was not adhering to my religious beliefs. Many muslims face the dilemma of going against what their religion says about interest vs not going to university and not fulfilling their own potential.

If a person has no option but to go against their own beliefs, then they can become very effected emotionally and not perform to the best of their ability. A sharia-compliant alternative, comprising of no interest could be provided, many more british muslims would be encouraged to apply and pursue academic careers.

As a side note, as a student in receipt of the Imperial Financial Support package, I think the university has done a great job in alleviating stress from students and families who struggle to cover their own student costs. I feel so much love for this institution and so happy to be here, and it is the same for my peers who receive the same support. As a muslim, I feel so welcomed and at home here where halal meat is provided, there is a prayer room which can be used anytime and I don't have to stress about where I am going to have to pray every friday. The union has done, and continue to accommodate the needs of muslims on campus, and as mentioned in our last friday prayer sermon every muslim on campus is appreciative of what we are privileged to enjoy here. All this only leads to positivity, and the want to give back and represent Imperial college, proudly, as an institution both now, and later on.

This is what makes Imperial College great.

If the loans are not in agreement with the teachings that Muslims follow then many will not be able to take them. Many have been discussing this issue and its implications.

Yes. Muslims are required to avoid interest in financial transactions, and so the current student loan system is in conflict with this.

I know many of my Muslim friends and I (also Muslim) have held long discussions about how to deal with the massive existent dilemma regarding the current student loans and our religion. They clearly now charge interest which is heavily forbidden in Islam, but a lot of us can't afford our education without them. It has got to the extent where some of us have had to live in substandard accommodation and work long shifts throughout the year to avoid the loan and make ends meet.

Was not aware until the ISOC sent an email.

As a member of the Islamic society in the college, which represents a large portion of the Muslim student community, it is vivid that charging an interest is unacceptable and affects their education.

I know many students have been put off applying to university due to the changes in student loans. Myself personally, I had to think twice about whether I did want to go through with it or not and sometimes I do wonder if I made the right decision. An alternative would make many Muslim students a lot more

comfortable with applying for student loans and in turn university.

I know that there are students who aren't able to support themselves financially through university without the help of a student loan but who don't feel that they are able to take one because religiously interest is strictly banned so they have no alternative.

I personally know that it is an obligation in the Islamic faith to avoid interest (usury) in all transactions and the current system denies access to an option for anyone who wants to avoid interest.

I am aware as I am Muslim.

With the raising of student fees, students have a clear choice. To go against their views and to take a loan out of necessity, a guilt they may live with for time or to have the family fund their education entirely. Many choose the latter meaning only the most privileged Muslim students can enter imperial.

No

Many students have been heavily affected to the extent that they must work whilst studying to try and cover their tuition costs. This is a very disruptive burden.

They'll be charged even more interest and it's against their religious practices

I am aware that many students have religious objections to the charging of interest. This was the case with me and with many of my friends back in sixth form. I had to work over my summer holidays and ask for support from my family to be able to pay my full tuition fees as I was not eligible for a maintenance grant. Many of my friends used their maintenance grants to pay their tuition fees. However, that was only feasible when university fees were around £3,200. Now with tuition fees at a soaring £9,000, my parents are under a lot of pressure to be able to fund my brother and sister's university degrees simultaneously as both will enter university at the same year. That will be £18,000 for three years (at least) which is not easy to secure by any means.

In my experience students have been affected greatly. Granted the repayment procedure is based on interest, which is fundamentally forbidden in Islam, this poses an obstacle towards prospective students who could potentially achieve great things in the future, hence a halal loan will serve as an incentive towards higher education.

Do you believe that there would be demand among students and potential students for an alternative finance product which was Sharia-compliant?

I think Muslim students would be in agreement for this deal. In addition, if the option was open to everyone then all students would be open to it as it doesn't get better than an interest free loan. I haven't understood from the information provided whether this would be a loan scheme exclusively for Muslim students. If this is the case then there will be a huge proportion of the student body against it as it would be extremely unfair.

A particular religion should NOT be given special treatment over any other religion.

Having a shariah compliant fees system would give access to many more students, many of whom would be hard working, very able and would be able to provide their local communities with the best of what an Imperial education provides.

I believe that there will be a large demand for sharia-complaint tuition fees and student loans. It will almost be the default means of paying back the student loans for students with religious obligations.

The Sharia-compliant system has been successful in the past in many different places. It is a system that is different to the British culture in some way, but an effective and workable system none-the-less!

Interest is a major sin for Muslims

I believe most Muslims would go for it.

There would be a huge demand for a Sharia-compliant loan as there are a huge amount of Muslims who would benefit greatly from it.

I believe there would be a very positive response from the young muslim population regarding such a change.

I think it would encourage more Muslims to go into higher education and contribute further to the economy of this country.

I feel that the demand will be there for the sharia compliant loans from every single Muslim student studying and needing a loan as well as those others to have objections to interest being from other faiths (i.e. Jewish, orthodox, catholic)

I think it matters to the individual but personally, as a Muslim, I don't mind the current system.

Most of the Muslim Students I know on campus are aware of the Islamic rulings on interest and it is a topic discussed time and time again on campus. If the government were to offer an alternative finance product to the current one for Muslim Students I am confident that most Muslims if not all would favour the alternative finance product.

Nearly every Muslim student I know would prefer this option

Many muslims are often limited in choice because of the fact they can't take loans. I can imagine many putting off the idea of going to university just because of this. With university fees increasing, this is certainly affecting more and more families.

Most if not all muslims atleast will definitely take up this offer

I believe there will be a lot more support from parents to push their students to university if they know that there is no violation of interests. Thus, this would provide a great support to those who do attend university, from their family/friends.

Also it would really help the individual themselves, knowing that they are able to attend an institution to study a degree in the subject they love, whilst also complying with their religious beliefs and actions.

Earning and spending in an islamically approved manner is of paramount importance to Muslims. It is important for a Muslim to know what money is gained

is done so in an ethical manner

There would most certainly be a demand given the large number of Muslim students in university who would welcome the alternative

I know of many people who would go to university if it were changed. I am sure there is a high demand.

Yes - the other alternative is that we exclude large sections of the community from university over the coming years.

I feel even poor, non-Muslim students would benefit.

There would definitely be a high demand for this, especially due to the large body of practicing muslims at Imperial and elsewhere

If there was an option available, individuals with religious obligations would definitely opt for this and would feel that obtaining an education with financial support in this way would be fine as it allows practice of religious financial responsibility.

The availability of an alternative financial product with more acceptability to those who hold certain beliefs should have demand. It'll enable students who otherwise could not attend college due to a lack of it and also give peace of mind to a segment students who'd be able to attend even otherwise.

I am strictly against introducing such schemes at ICL. We have a system in the UK which works and it is unreasonable to cater for a small minority and waste man-hours and cost.

Absolutely. As a faithful muslim, one must abide by the it's (Islam) teachings. It is not permissible to allow or to acquire interest hence one would have to seek alternative financial means. However if there were an sharia-compliant finance product available, muslim students would undoubtedly undertake this package as it would be in line with the islamic ethics in finance.

Definitely as muslim students really want to solve this dilemma between practicing their faith and pursuing higher education.

There would most definitely be demand for a loan system that doesn't involve interest, as many students are keen on pursuing their education, however some are currently barred from doing this solely by the interest factor present in the tuition loans offered.

There shouldn't be special treatment.

Most definitely

There would have to be a good regulation committee since some agencies that have been setup to combat the problem with loans in our society to fit with Sharia Law are actually not fully in compliance.

Many more students are able to attend university and receive a higher degree or continue with a higher degree of study such as a masters degree or PhD.

Absolutely I believe there would be demand amongst students for a Sharia-compliant finance solution.

There would be a huge wave of support for a sharia-complaint student loan.

Providing sharia-compliant student loans would be a big public service - people who would have otherwise struggled with how to pay for higher education would now be given a lot of ease.

If it was made available, Muslims would almost definitely go for it, if the benefits as the normal loan is the same and there are no attached complications in applying for it.

Dealing with interest is a grave sin in Islam. Thus anyone who adheres to the faith as such will avoid it as much as possible, even if it means giving up on higher education.

I personally know of at least three people who studied with me at school and college, full of potential, who chose not to go to university because of the interest on the loans. Dealing with interest is prohibited in the Quran which is believed by Muslims to be the word of God himself, and so any issue/dealing involving it is taken very seriously.

I think there will be a lot of demand as I have seen this being discussed as a major issue for many Muslims.

I know that a lot of students have discussed this issue, myself included - but the only issue is we had no way of changing the situation. Certain students would have to lay a heavy financial burden on their parents to pay their tuition fees by avoiding the current student loan system, and I am sure that some people may have put off applying to Uni because of this difficult situation.

DEFINITELY. We have been crying out for some sort of answer to this dilemma, never suspecting that the government would come in and be so incredibly receptive to our plight. We would JUMP at the opportunity for a Sharia-compliant alternative.

It is so important and vital to provide this for students. I can't stress it enough

The change to student loans is something many students are talking about and many Muslim families discuss so there would definitely be a demand.

This is something which is widely discussed amongst Muslim students and there is most definitely a demand for it

It is difficult to feel a conflict between fundamental beliefs and a desire to achieve the best in one's desired career plan. This would widen opportunity for many Muslims who feel this conflict.

I think there would be huge demand because this is something I have personally discussed with family and peers and we think a solution is needed but don't know how to get one.

Of course there would be. Many of us would prefer a scheme compliant with our religious beliefs. A lot of current students that follow the religion strictly, miss out on this opportunity because of the interest charged

I believe a Sharia compliant financial package would be very well received by Muslim students and their families alike.

Do you believe that students will be provided with sufficient assurance by a Sharia supervisory committee as to the Sharia-compliance of an alternative student finance product?

I think this is entirely dependent on who in fact is on the Sharia supervisory committee, but can safely say that were they to meet the demands of the student body regarding the loaning system, and follow Sharia laws correctly in its regard, many students would be sufficiently assured.

Most care more about the details than who rubber-stamps it

Yes, as long as it is a trusted and independent committee that understands Sharia law and the interests of the Muslim students the loan is providing for.

It would be beneficial to make the sharia compliance as publicly known as possible.

It is not difficult to determine if finance is Sharia compliant or not. The issue is publicity esp for pre university students.

Also, have it open to all students, as it is financially more sensible than the current system.

I hope so, hard to say until it is in place - or at least some sort of pilot in place.

As long as full information is provided as to who is overseeing the service and ensuring it is Sharia compliant. A detailed breakdown of how the service is provided should be given.

yes i feel that if the loans are implemented as the current proposal that there will be sufficient assurance

It's a great idea for those individuals who prefer to pay in the sharia way.

Yes providing it is AAOIFI (Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions) compliant

If it is made clear to the muslim students that there is a qualified committee of known scholars, muslims will definitely take their advice.

They will want to help muslims and all others to have the most sharia compliant way

Most certainly, if the system works. I think you should have a box for "not sure" in case people aren't sure on how they will work.

The product should be done according to sharia. If a panel of scholars who are suitably qualified make the decision that is fine, as long as the decision and thought process is transparent

If the agreed new finance is clearly explained and is sharia compliant like mentioned.

As long as there is not just one person on the committee - it should be fine.

The fact that there is a committee in the first place shows that people are taking it seriously, and they can then directly be asked to explain their actions.

The vast majority should be satisfied with a simple assurance and this could be made stronger with an explanation to those who want it.

It would be good if there was an 'interest-free' loan, given that their payback rate is higher. According to Islamic Law, Sharia, Muslims are not allowed to pay nor receive payment in the form of interest. However, Muslims are also not allowed to die upon debts. It is therefore very important to ensure that those Muslims, who take out a loan to build up a future, will end up paying back their loan "IN FULL." This is something that would need to be arranged somehow.

I think that is only fair for the government as well as towards the Muslims.

if they were an established supervisory committee then that would reassure people

Yes so long as it is overseen by credible Muslim scholars and is AAOIFI compliant

Yes, as long as the supervisory committee consists of credible local Islamic scholars, and any proposed shariah model should be AAOIFI (Accounting and

Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions) compliant.

But members of this supervisory committee must be selected by the muslim community.

A Sharia Supervisory Committee would just be one person/group's interpretation. Dangerous to give it undue weight.

The development of possible options should be overseen by local credible Islamic scholars to make sure it is appropriate. The members of the panel should be British scholars who are aware of the current situation and can represent the views of the students.

As long as the Sharia supervisory committee is reputable and made up of well-known scholars within the British Muslim community, such as Haitham al Haddad, who has an interest in Islamic finance.

There would be a split between those who believe it is the next best thing and it is a step forward and those who believe it is the same as interest but with a different face. But given that most if not all muslims who take a student loan and are at university now would probably use it, and there would probably be more people who take it, I think there would be a sufficient number of people who would accept that there is sufficient assurance by a sharia supervisory committee.

Those involved in the committees should be respected individuals from the Muslim community who have credible knowledge of Islam and finance.

It is very important that credible UK scholars who are familiar with the UK situation oversee the development of the alternative. There is one organisation, the AAOIFI, which sets out standards that this should conform to.

BUT It would be nice if the process was also approved by some other Islamic authorities and popular scholars.

Taking into consideration that the supervisory committee includes credible scholars and is AAOIFI compliant.

Students would be sufficiently assured so long as the development of solutions are overseen by credible local Islamic scholars any proposed shariah model should be AAOIFI (Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions) compliant. Members should be eminent British scholars who understand the situation and who represent those communities affected by these changes the most.

As long as the scholars who endorse it are well qualified and knowledgeable in the subject

The muslim community would want eminent British scholars that understand the situation and represent those communities affected by these changes the most to be involved in the development of solutions and any proposed shariah model should be AAOIFI (Accounting and Auditing Organisation for Islamic Financial Institutions) compliant.

It would provide a legitimate means for students to take when they are going through education. Especially for courses such as medicine.

Explanations must be clear. Confirmation of shariah compliance must come from more than a single body.

With the correct publicity and transparency this project has a lot of potential and I believe students will feel assured by it.

Do you believe that students and potential students whose faith has resulted in concerns about the interest rate on traditional loans would find this alternative finance product acceptable?

Some may

Provided the details of the proposed sharia-compliant finance product is satisfactory, many people will find this acceptable.

However the current suggestion doesn't work for Muslims

Yes, as the main reason Muslims are hesitant about taking out loans is the interest that is charged. If a Sharia-compliant model was introduced and was supervised by a suitable committee this would benefit them.

So long as the package was sharia compliant and did not charge interest ;m certain muslim students would find this very agreeable.

As long as full information is provided as to who is overseeing the service and ensuring it is Sharia compliant. A detailed breakdown of how the service is provided should be given.

yes as the concept of interest is negated by this loan system

Yes but only if the panel included local credible scholars and it was in keeping with sound Islamic principles

Subject to details

I think this would be a lot fairer.

People should all have an equal opportunity to attain a degree.

After all, this is Britain- and discrimination should not occur

For many people its very difficult to make this decision, and most people would not sacrifice their faith and therefore this alternative finance product would be extremely attractive

Yes as long as the panel that supervises this is made up of credible Islamic scholars that stick by Islamic principles

Yes, if the solution was developed properly in accordance with sound Islamic principles, and that the scholars on the panel are widely accepted to be credible amongst the Muslim community.

ensure transparency on the handling of credit

If it is compliant with Sharia, then I don't see why they would object

They would be greatly relieved!

There would be a split, with some thinking it is good, and others thinking it is the same thing as interest but with a different spin on it, i.e. interest with a new face. existing students on the traditional student loan would definately find it acceptable. given the choice between the traditional one and the sharia one, i would no doubt choose the sharia one. i think more potential student would look into it and possibly find it acceptable, but there would always be those who didnt' accept it.

Solve the problem and the problem goes away :\ as simple as that really.

Provided that there was approval by credible, local scholars and the solution was in compliance with Islamic principles (no dodgy small print details!) then I believe the alternative finance product would be acceptable.

Again, if sufficient assurances and endorsement are provided by Muslim councils, we would definitely find it acceptable.

Once again this would only be an acceptable alternative as long as it is in strict accordance with sound Islamic principles. If there is a panel of credible scholars overseeing the putting together and implementation of this plan, the Muslim community would be accepting of it.

Do you believe that the working of the proposed alternative finance product would be understandable to those applying for a loan?

The process of applying for a loan with student finance under their current scheme is extremely confusing and based on this I don't think that the working of the alternative loan would be easy to understand.

I think that to those holding such views on the current loan system, and knowing the stance of Sharia laws on things pertaining to loans, would be able to understand the workings of a Sharia compliant loan - but of course, I think information and explanation could and should be made available to those not knowing about the details of the system, but wanting to know or perhaps simply interested in an alternative style of loaning.

Needs to be made very clear as can be quite a confusing concept to grasp

As long as it is explained clearly and the differences between the two types of loans are highlighted and made clear, there should be no problem.

As long as full information is provided as to who is overseeing the service and ensuring it is Sharia compliant. A detailed breakdown of how the service is provided should be given.

yes as from the proposal i found it very simple to understand and more simple than the current loans

if theres a description people have to read before agreeing to taking out the loan nobody should have a problem understanding

I feel this is the biggest challenge, being able to convey how exactly it will work because let's be real someone needs to make money because of students entering university.

Most people understand the rulings of interest in Islam and therefore this type of loan would be widely understood

it must be made clear from the start, and be open and available to all, not just muslims

Yes so long as it is explained clearly - the iSoc could even have a role in helping students understand it

As long as the model is explained to students well, just as the current system is, I think there should be no problem in students understanding it.

Students should be informed in layman's terms about how the new scheme is shariah compliant and how it works.

I believe it would be very well received by the student muslim community, who would be greatly appreciative that such provision has been made.

As long as it is explained properly

As long as it is explained properly yes. If Muslim organisations , mosques, Islamic societies, student societies are approached also, this would do a lot in making it more understandable, acceptable and appreciated.

From what I can see yes, but there is no harm in adding illustrations to help better understand how the system works.

I expect the Muslim community to aid in educating its members of an alternative product if it were to be introduced. As long as it is compatible with Islamic principles then I think it will be accepted by many, as many will be searching for such a solution.

The muslim community would greatly appreciate the alternative finance product, and it would be a great stress off the minds of many of them.

I liked the explanation provided and found it understandable. Again, a video provided and commentated by a recognised Islamic scholar would make it even easier/better understood.

Considering most people go into great detail in researching the student loans currently, any one interested in the alternative would be well looked into and if the system was explained in an easy to understand way, this would be easy to achieve.

I think that many people actually go into great depth to understand the current system, so any shariah compliant model would go down very well. It would be much appreciated by british muslims and large prominent Islamic organisations would get behind the model and promote it to ensure that it is easy to understand, this is if the final model is suitable.
