

*Keynote Speech*

**FUTURE OF ISLAMIC AND ARABIC STUDIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION -  
USIM'S EXPERIENCES**

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This paper seeks to examine the challenges of Islamic and Arabic Studies (IAS) in higher education in the age of digital technologies. It has been predicted that if the universities do not undergo change, many will be closed in less than 50 years. The discussion of the future universities is also will affect the future outlook of Islamic and Arabic Studies. Therefore, as many universities in Islamic history started in a mosque and renowned for fundamental sciences, the transformation of IAS is considered as imperative. This paper will discuss the concept and curriculum, objectives, issues and challenges faced by IAS in the national and international development. A need for paradigm shift and Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia's experiences will also be discussed. It is argued that creativity and innovation is essential for the IAS to craft for new economic circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century education.