

Summer School

Reading and Analysing Persian Archival Sources from Afghanistan

International Summer School organised by the Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague

The Department of Oriental Studies at the Czech Academy of Sciences is offering a summer school on reading and analysing Persian archival sources from Afghanistan.

The one-week intensive course will focus on a largely neglected body of materials preserved in Afghan archives and private collections, which have played only a limited role thus far in research on the country's history and that of the wider region. Additionally, the course will address the development of archives in Afghanistan, including the current state of archival holdings, cataloguing attempts, acquisition policies, access issues, and the impact of war and political ideologies on collections.

Participants will work primarily with Persian documents from the 19th and 20th centuries. The summer school will introduce participants to basic archival and palaeographical skills, including reading *Nasta'liq* and *Shikasta* scripts, identifying document types and seals, and understanding administrative terminology, text structure, and content. The programme combines close reading and analysis of sources with short lectures and discussions on themes related to the sources, archival practices, and personal experiences of working in archives in Afghanistan.

When and where?

The Summer School will take place at Charles University, Prague, from Monday 7 September to Friday 11 September 2026. The event will be held on-site only; online attendance will not be available.

Instructors and course overview

The intensive course comprises two hands-on reading and analysis sessions in the mornings from 9:30–11:00 and 11:30–13:00, introduced and instructed by Masuma Nazari, a trained librarian and archivist and former Director of the National Archives of Afghanistan in Kabul, and Ahmad Azizy (Oriental Institute, Czech Academy of Sciences).

In the afternoons (14:30–16:00), there will be lectures on related topics by various invited guests: Arezou Azad (University of Oxford), James Caron (SOAS), Ali Karimi (University of Calgary), and Faridah Qaderi (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin).

Eligibility and course level

The languages of instruction are English and Dari-Persian. Participants from any relevant discipline and at any career level and an intermediate level of Persian are welcome to apply. Students who have acquired an intermediate level of Persian and are able to read the Arabo-Persian script are invited to apply. A sufficient knowledge of both languages is required.

Participation is free of charge; however, no financial support for travel or accommodation can be provided. The number of places is limited to 15 participants to allow for fruitful interaction and direct mentorship.

Application/Registration

To participate, please send your CV and a short description of your interest in the course to azizy@orient.cas.cz & loy@orient.cas.cz by June 30 at the latest.