



آغا خان یونیورسٹی  
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

## MEDICAL COLLEGE

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Master of Early Child Development  
(MECD)  
Admission Information 2025 - 2026

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## **THE UNIVERSITY**

The Aga Khan University is a pioneering institution of higher education and research that works to improve quality of life in the developing world and beyond. We educate leaders, generate life-saving knowledge and set an example that raises standards in the societies in which we work. We empower women and the disadvantaged, strengthen pluralism and partner with world-renowned institutions to address problems that affect millions of people.

A not-for-profit institution, AKU was founded in 1983 by His Highness the Aga Khan. As Pakistan's first private university, we paved the way for the growth of the country's private higher education sector. In the early 2000s, the University expanded to Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and the United Kingdom.

At AKU, students flourish in a supportive environment that embraces diversity, demands excellence and encourages leadership and direct engagement with real-world challenges. Our graduates go on to study and work at eminent universities and organizations around the world, and to make a difference in their home countries.

AKU is open to all, regardless of race, religion, gender or geographic origin. Two-thirds of students and half of faculty members are women. Admission is based on merit, and our needs sensitive financial assistance programme ensures that individuals from lower-income backgrounds are able to attend.

While we do not discriminate on faith, gender or national origin, we are selective in the students we accept. Our selection process varies by academic programmes, but a common criterion includes fluency in English.

## **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

Aga Khan University focuses include significant emphasis on human development, and with this vision, Human Development Programme was initiated in 2003 as the first concrete initiative in this field.

### **Vision**

To become a leading centre of excellence in Human Development, with a special focus on Early Child Development at Aga Khan University, serving as a resource for regional, national, and international institutions.

### **Mission**

To promote human welfare in general and the welfare of the people of Pakistan in particular, through dissemination of knowledge, instruction, training, research, demonstration, and service.

The Programme aims to advance human development through a multidisciplinary, research-based approach. Its initial focus is on understanding how early life conditions influence lifelong outcomes, and on implementing culturally appropriate, long-term ECD interventions. Using an

integrated model of education, service, and research, the Programme seeks to ensure children reach their full potential in development, learning, health, and social well-being. HDP's community-based promotive interventions equip mothers, families, and communities with knowledge and skills to improve childcare and nurture, guided by evidence and research.

### **MASTER OF EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

Launched in 2025, the Human Development Programme (HDP) offers the Master of Early Child Development (MECD) to promote human development through a multidisciplinary, integrated approach combining education, service, and research. The programme builds an advanced knowledge base to strengthen human resource capacity and drive greater investment in Early Child Development (ECD). The- MECD programme is fully aligned with AKU's vision and mission. The goal of this programme is to provide high-quality education that develops skilled professionals and leaders in the field of ECD, with specializations in Health and Education, tailored for the Global South and other regions of the world.

Through MECD the rich expertise of AKU in ECD is brought together to deliver a unique academic programme, which offers a diverse and cross-border perspective, while maintaining local context. This collaboration involves the following AKU partners:

- 1) Human Development Programme (HDP): Coordinating Partner
- 2) Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health (CoE-WCH)
- 3) Institute for Education Development, East Africa (IED-EA)
- 4) Institute for Education Development, Pakistan (IED-P)
- 5) Institute for Human Development (IHD)

A key feature of this programme is its blended learning format, comprising a total of 36 credit hours, including 6 credit hours dedicated to the thesis. The programme includes a substantial online component alongside a smaller, modular on-campus face-to-face segment. This blended approach makes it accessible to working professionals, students from outside Karachi, and those from other countries. Having a diverse group of learners also provides a platform to develop collaborations and linkages optimizing education and research at national and regional levels.

The programme is recognized by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan.

### **TARGET AUDIENCE**

- Physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, educationists, nutritionists, psychologists, sociologists preferably with an experience in early childhood.
- Health, Education, Nutrition, Social Protection, WASH sector managers – public, NGOs and developmental agencies.
- Early-career professionals, interested in pursuing Early Child Development (ECD) as a potential career path.

## **PROGRAMME OUTCOMES**

The MECD programme develops students to:

- apply specialized knowledge and current advances in ECD to address complex and multisectoral challenges across all critical aspects of ECD.
- demonstrate scholarship and the ability to design and conduct research that generates evidence for interdisciplinary and multiprofessional contexts, as well as within diverse ethnic groups.
- show effective communication skills, both verbal and written, based on ECD research findings to policymakers, practitioners, and community stakeholders, while advocating for greater investment in ECD programmes.
- analyse the social and environmental aspects of ECD to plan and implement interventions that respond to the needs of health, education, and social development systems, while promoting equity and inclusion.
- foster appreciation of strengths and capabilities of young children and the practices of their communities, recognizing their ethical and innovative leadership and active role in enhancing the status of ECD.

## **THE PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

The MECD programme spans four semesters, accumulating 36 credits in total. The first and second semesters consist of core courses. In the third semester, students are required to select their area of specialization. The MECD programme offers two streams of specialization: Education and Health, each consisting of three specialized courses. Additionally, students are required to select one elective course. The final semester requires students to conduct, submit and defend original research. Faculty members will supervise the thesis.

The teaching methods include a combination of pre-reading assignments, discussion forums on AKU VLE, web-based interaction, group work, field visits, role play, presentations and thesis. The delivery of this programme is Blended Learning (Online and 4 weeks in-person).

## **STUDENT EVALUATION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The following are minimum requirements for progression and graduation:

- A Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of at least 2.50 is required at the end of each Semester for progression.
- A Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.50 in all course work is required for graduating from the programme.
- Successful completion and defence of the thesis.

## **COURSE WORK**

Each semester offers three or four courses which have been carefully chosen to equip students with required skills.

## **ELECTIVES**

The aim of the electives is to help students build and/or gain expertise in areas of their own

interest. Elective courses are more advanced versions of courses offered in the core semesters or provide unique content to develop specific perspectives or skills. Students are required to select one elective course out of 4 courses to achieve three credits.

### **THESIS**

The preparation of the thesis takes place in second semester involving protocol writing, data collection and thesis writing, supported by a multi-disciplinary thesis committee. A thesis may employ qualitative, quantitative, combination of both, and any other acceptable research technique. Data collection can be undertaken in students' hometowns.

### **PROGRAMME RESOURCES**

The MECD Programme is led by a diverse and highly qualified team, including full-time AKU faculty and part-time or visiting experts from Pakistan, East Africa, and beyond bringing together a rich blend of theory, practice, and the latest national and global trends.

Access to AKU's considerable online library system is provided to the students. The students learn in the scholarly environment of AKU and freely access the various facilities provided by the University's Medical College to all students.

Field visits will be organized during the face-to-face component, offering opportunities for first-hand learning in real-world settings.

### **STANDALONE COURSES TOWARDS A MASTER'S DEGREE**

MECD offers selected courses as "Standalone Courses" which are ideal for individuals who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills in specific areas of Early Child Development without formally enrolling in the degree programme. Registration for these courses is advertised prior to the start of the semester in which a standalone course is being offered (not all courses are offered as standalone courses). Individuals can take up to 3 courses as standalone courses (accumulate up to 9 credits of course work). This option provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to get a flavor of the programme without committing two full years at the outset.

Candidates with a cGPA of 3.5 or higher after two courses, or 3.0 or higher after three courses, are exempt from the Admission Test but must attend an interview. Standalone courses are valid for three years toward entry into the regular MECD degree programme. For details on available standalone courses, please contact the Programme Office.

### **POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA**

Students who complete all required and elective courses, which consist of a total of 30 credits, but do not wish to pursue MECD thesis, may exit at this stage with postgraduate diploma (PGD) in ECD. Students are expected to complete their diploma in two years and can accrue credits towards the PGD, as long as a total duration of four years is not exceeded.

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENT OF MECD PROGRAMME

The following are minimum requirements for progression and graduation:

- A Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of at least 2.50 is required at the end of each Semester for progression.
- A Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.50 in all course work is required for graduating from the programme.
- Successful completion and defence of the thesis.

*Students should note that HEC requires a minimum cGPA of 3.0 out of 4.0 to make an application for a PhD programme.*

## ADMISSION TO THE MASTER OF EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Admission to the programme is based on merit and potential commitment to early child development. Merit will be evaluated through scholastic achievements and performance of candidates in the AKU Admission Test. The commitment of the candidate will be assessed through interviews with faculty at AKU who assess experience and future plans.

Candidates currently working in the public or private sector from Pakistan and overseas may apply. A high academic score in any single discipline or any outstanding achievement alone may not be sufficient for selection.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Preference is given to candidates who have at least one year of full-time work experience in an ECD-related field or the social sector after graduation (voluntary work, part-time roles, or unpaid internships are not included). Applicants must meet these criteria at the time of application.

- Sixteen (16) years of education, or four (4) years after HSSC/F.A./F.Sc./Grade 12 (or equivalent) from an accredited / recognized university including but not limited to fields such as health, psychology, sociology, social work, education, or nutrition and other social sciences discipline.

## ADMISSION PROCESS SUMMARY

Candidates are evaluated in stages:

<b>Stage I</b>	Online submission of application. candidates are invited to write the AKU Admission Test.
<b>Stage II</b>	Candidates who are shortlisted based on the Admission Test will be required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• submit relevant academic documents, work experience certificate/ letter, personal statement and reference letters</li><li>• attend interviews with senior faculty members of the University.</li></ul>
<b>Stage III</b>	Final selection is based on an overall assessment of each candidate's dossier which is formally approved by the University's Admission Review Committee.

## ADMISSION TEST

The Admission Test comprises three components: English Language, Quantitative Reasoning and a Subject Specific Exam.

- The English Language component evaluates a candidate's competency in the English language and serves as a qualifier.
- The Quantitative Reasoning component is designed to assess problem solving and logical thinking ability.
- The Subject Specific Exam will assess basic knowledge related to the specialty.

**NOTE: The test will be conducted online onsite on computers.**

Sample test paper for the Test is available on:

<https://www.aku.edu/admissions/mecd/Pages/home.aspx>

*The University does not provide any special preparation for the Admission Test, nor does it authorize any publication or preparatory classes for this purpose.*

## SHORT-LISTING AND INTERVIEWS

Candidates will be shortlisted on the basis of the Admission Test. Interviews will be conducted for shortlisted candidates only. There will be multiple independent interviews with faculty members of the University. The purpose of the interview is to assess a variety of attributes, including motivation, maturity, communication skills, awareness of issues in Early Child Development and evidence of interest, and commitment to the Programme.

Interviews are conducted in Pakistan. For candidates who reside overseas, interviews are conducted over Skype / Zoom.

## VALIDITY OF TEST SCORES

The AKU Admission Test scores are valid for a period of two years from the date the test is written.

## APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Applications for admission will be accepted between **September 1, 2025, and September 30, 2025**. Candidates must apply online by logging on to [www.aku.edu/apply-online](http://www.aku.edu/apply-online)

**Applications must be submitted via the online process. Applications will only be accepted if a candidate completes the following:**

1. Upload the application fee on the online form.
2. Upload CNIC/NICOP both sides as one file or relevant Passport pages (for foreign nationals)



3. HEC attested undergraduate mark sheet /16 years or receipt from HEC as evidence that an application has been made. (front & back copy pdf)
4. HEC attested undergraduate degree /16 years or receipt from HEC as evidence that an application has been made. (front & back copy pdf)
5. HEC equivalence for 16 years of education or receipt from HEC as evidence that an application has been made. (if applying with Post RN BScN or foreign qualification)
6. For unattested documents, upload HEC receipt as evidence. **This is a mandatory requirement.**
7. Upload Detailed curriculum vitae (see CV specification section)
8. Relevant Work Experience Letter / Certificate
9. Submit the application form online. *(Candidate will receive a copy of the application form on their registered email as confirmation when the application is submitted successfully)*

Incomplete application or submission of applications after the deadline is not accepted.

#### **NOTE FOR ALL CANDIDATES**

Candidates are requested to ensure they meet application eligibility requirements before applying. These are listed in the programme brochure. Moreover, candidates applying online are responsible for completing the application and other requirements according to the published instructions and time schedule.

Aga Khan University reserves the right to admission; to revoke admission and registration if an application is discovered to be inaccurate or incomplete, or if supporting documents are discovered to be fraudulent. Any candidate who presents a fraudulent document in support of an application for admission may be identified to other universities and colleges.

Candidates may apply for multiple programmes simultaneously. Candidates who are shortlisted for interviews in multiple programmes will be required to provide their order of preference. This information will remain confidential with the Admission Office, and the candidates must attend interviews for all shortlisted programmes. If the candidate is accepted in more than one programme, the preference order provided by the candidate will be considered by the University, the University reserves the right in its absolute discretion to offer the programme, which it determines to be the most suitable for the candidate and the decision made by the University will be final.

#### **ADMIT CARD**

The admit card to allow you to write the test will be received by candidates who apply online on their portal and/or through an email.

In cases where the admit card is not received 12 days before the date of the test; candidates must email the Admission Office at [postgrad.query@aku.edu](mailto:postgrad.query@aku.edu) for the required information and application details.

If a candidate would like to take the test at a different test centre from the one originally noted

in the application form, candidate must inform the admission office via email at least 72 hours before the test so that information can be sent to the Test Centre. Walk in candidates are not encouraged.

**Please Note:** The University does not take responsibility to conduct the test for candidates who walk into a Test Centre without information.

**Please note:**

To be allowed into the Test Centre to write the Test, candidates must bring:

- A hard copy of the admit card issued by AKU, **AND**
- A valid current photo ID card/original CNIC/college ID card/enrolment card for identification.

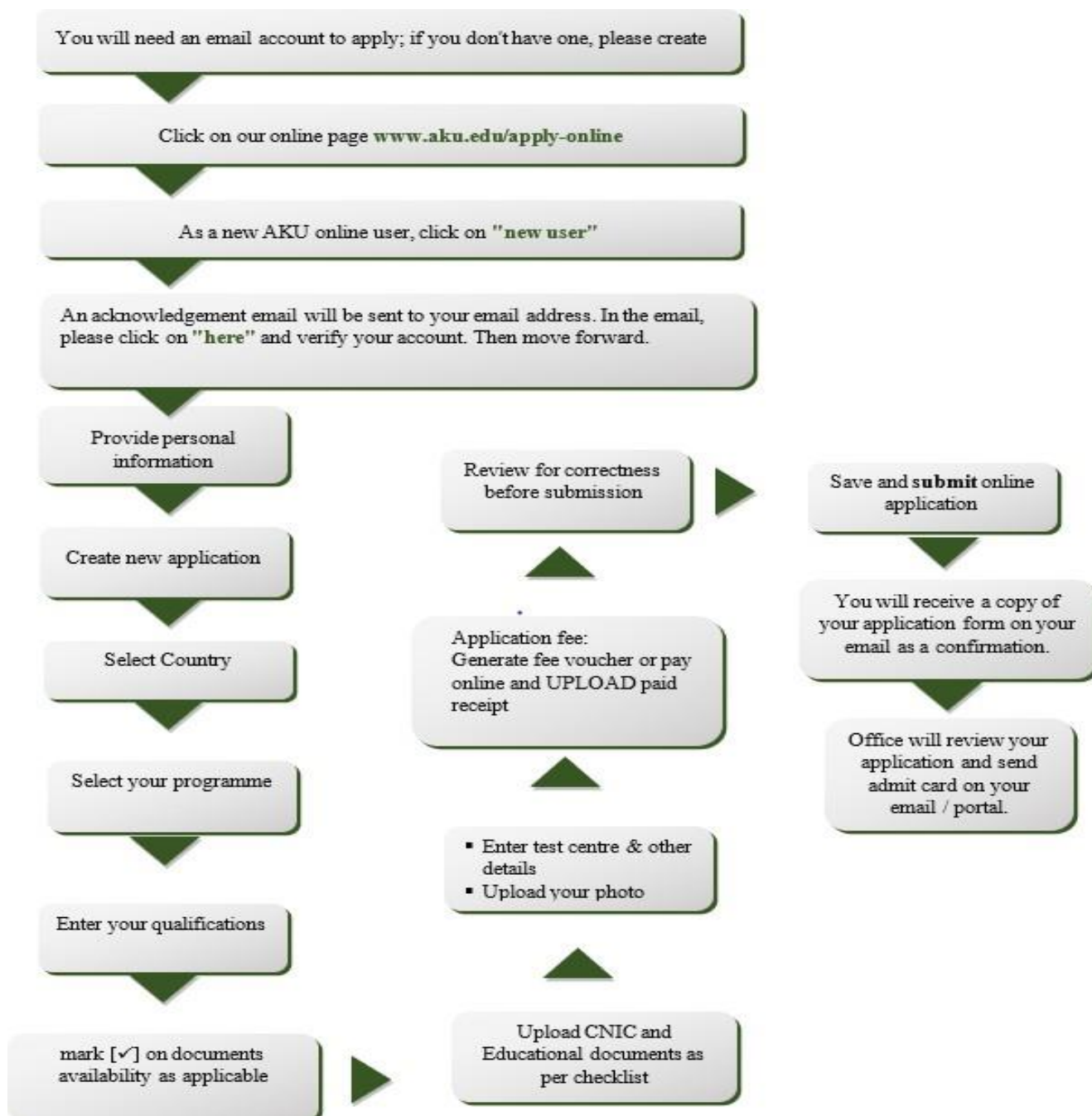
Without these documents, AKU reserves the right not to allow you to write the Test.

**DISABILITY**

Candidates aspiring to apply to and attend the Aga Khan University must declare formally any disability (whether, mental, physical or otherwise) with all evidence to the University. This includes but is not limited to dyslexia, medical conditions and mental health problems. This allows the University to share with the candidate reasonable accommodation as mandated under the relevant and applicable policies.

## APPLY ONLINE

Follow the steps below to apply for an academic programme online:



## PLEASE UPLOAD THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS WHEN APPLYING ONLINE

Note: The photograph should be in JPEG format with 2 MB size, and all other documents should be in PDF format with 5 MB file each.

1. Photograph (*see photograph specification section*)
2. CNIC / NICOP (*front & back copy*) or *relevant Passport pages (for foreign nationals)*
3. Detailed curriculum vitae (*see CV specification section*)
4. HEC attested undergraduate mark sheet/ degree (16 years) or receipt from HEC as evidence that an application has been made. (front & back copy pdf)
5. HEC equivalence for 16 years of education or receipt from HEC as evidence that an application has been made. (if applying with Post RN BScN or foreign qualification)
6. For unattested documents, upload HEC receipt as evidence. **This is a mandatory requirement.** Relevant Work Experience Letter / Certificate
- 7.

Application Fee: - **Applying from AKU residential countries\*** is Rs. 8000/-  
- **Applying from AKU non-residential countries** is US \$ 155/-  
- (*see mode of payment section for details*)

**The application fee is non-refundable.**

Candidates must ensure eligibility before applying.

\*Afghanistan, Burundi, Kenya, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda

## DOCUMENTS REQUIRED UPON SHORTLISTING

1. SSC / O Level / equivalent mark sheet or certificate.
2. HSSC / A Level / equivalent mark sheet or certificate.
3. Consolidated mark sheet of undergraduate/16 years qualification - attested by Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan.
4. Degree of undergraduate qualification / 16 years - attested by HEC.
5. HEC equivalence of 16 years for candidates applying with Post RN BScN or foreign degree.
6. All relevant work experience certificates as entered on the form.
7. Detailed curriculum vitae (CV) - (*see CV specification section*)
8. Two reference letters / recommendation to be sent in sealed envelopes or emailed directly by your referee to [postgrad.query@aku.edu](mailto:postgrad.query@aku.edu)  
(*Referees should be individuals who are well-acquainted with your previous academic work and professional experience. The letters should be current or not more than one-year-old.*)
9. Transcript / enrolment information of all the courses undertaken or completed at AKU (if applicable)
10. Latest mark sheets / progress reports, if currently enrolled in any other institution (if applicable)

## MODE OF PAYMENT

Candidates may pay the application fee through any of the following modes. *When the fee is paid, please upload the receipt on the online admission portal to complete the application.*

- **FEE VOUCHER (FOR PAKISTANI CURRENCY ONLY)**

Please follow these steps to pay the application fee through voucher:

1. On the application home page, please click on “Application Fee Information”
2. For **payment options**, select “Fee Voucher”
3. Click “Yes” to generate the voucher (*make sure that your pop ups aren't blocked*)
4. Take the printed voucher to any branch of Habib Bank Ltd (HBL) and pay the fee.  
(**Please do not transfer online**)
5. Upload the paid voucher by clicking the “Upload Button” on the proof of payment section.

- **ONLINE PAYMENT THROUGH DEBIT/CREDIT CARD (PAKISTANI & US\$ CURRENCY)**

Follow these steps to pay application fee online through a debit / credit card:

1. On the application home page, please click on “Application Fee Information”
2. For **payment options**, select “Online Payment” and click yes (*make sure that your pop ups aren't blocked*)
3. Complete your payment details on online web portal: <https://payonline.aku.edu/>
4. Upload the payment acknowledgement email or screenshot by clicking the “Upload Button” on the proof of payment section.

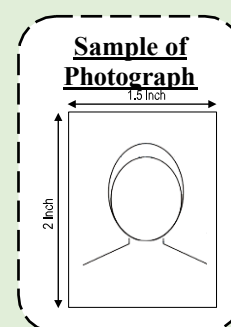
*In case you are unable to receive the payment acknowledgement, please notify the Finance Office by emailing your query along with tracking Id, name, and programme name at [student.finance@aku.edu](mailto:student.finance@aku.edu)*

## PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATION

Your photograph is a vital part of your application. Please follow these instructions carefully.

- Passport size colored photograph with a plain background; taken within the last 1 week to reflect your current appearance.
- File size and format: 2 MB and JPEG format.
- The photo should show a clear front view, full face of the person.

**If your photograph does not reflect your current appearance, the University will not allow you to take the Admission Test.**



## **CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) SPECIFICATION**

### **Your CV must include the following:**

- Qualifications with grades/percentage and passing year
- Work experiences with job responsibilities and duration along with current educational responsibilities
- Courses undertaken or completed at AKU (if applying with standalone courses)
- Other Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses / educational courses
- List of publications (if any)
- Academic achievements
- Computer related skills
- Other additional information to support your application

### **FEES AND FUNDING**

Admissions to all the academic programmes at Aga Khan University are based on merit and are needs blind, i.e. without considering the financial background of the student. The financial information including students' fee-paying status and fee structure for the 2025-2026 session is available on: [www.aku.edu/admissions/fees-and-funding](http://www.aku.edu/admissions/fees-and-funding)

### **STUDENTS ON SPONSORSHIP FROM EXTERNAL AGENCIES**

Students expecting to receive sponsorships or scholarships from external agencies to complete the programme are requested to submit the relevant documents and approval letter from external agency when accepting the offer of admission.

For more details, please contact Graduate Programmes Admission Office, Aga Khan University, Stadium Road, Karachi 74800, Pakistan, Phone: +92-21 3486 4410 / 4412.

### **CONTESTED DECISIONS**

In all matters pertaining to the selection of students, fees, grants, evaluation of scholastic performance, discipline and student affairs, the decision of the University shall be final. Appeals in matters of student selection will be considered within 15 days of the announcement of the new class only if the appeals cite circumstances suggesting that the University has violated provisions of its Charter or that there has been failure to comply with the admissions procedure as described in this document.

KEY DATES FOR 2025-26 ADMISSIONS	
September 1, 2025 – September 30, 2025	<p><b><u>Admission Open:</u></b> Apply online via <a href="http://www.aku.edu/apply-online">www.aku.edu/apply-online</a></p>
October 18, 2025	<p><b>Test Centres</b></p> <p><b><i>AKU Admission Test -Pakistan</i></b> Chitral, Gilgit, Karachi, and Islamabad</p>
	<p><b><i>AKU Admission Test - Overseas</i></b> Dar es Salam, Kabul, Kampala, Khorog, London, Nairobi.</p> <p><i>(Additional overseas centres will be confirmed if there are at least 10 candidates to take the test)</i></p>
<p><b><i>Please note:</i></b> Timings and address for the venue will be stated on the admit card. In case of a change, candidates will be notified through email.</p>	
Upon Shortlisting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>HEC attestation on 16 years of undergraduate transcript and degree</i></li> <li>▪ <i>HEC equivalence* (if applicable)</i></li> </ul>
November	Interviews
Mid-January 2026	Commencement of Classes

**DISCLAIMER**

This booklet contains information about the programme offered by the Aga Khan University, Pakistan, for the academic year 2025-26. The information provided is subject to change over time. Candidates aiming to apply for programmes in any other academic year are requested to get updated information about minimum eligibility requirements, application and admission process from the University Admission Office.

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