



آغا خان یونیورسٹی  
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

## MEDICAL COLLEGE

Master of Philosophy in Biological  
and Biomedical Sciences (MPhil)  
Admission Information 2021-2022

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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.

## **MPhil in Biological and Biomedical Sciences Programme**

The MPhil in Biological and Biomedical Sciences Programme, launched in 2019, is accredited by the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan. The programme is designed to produce competent, confident and productive biomedical scientists who can continue their passion for research and learning onto PhD training or have a successful career in academia and industry straightaway. Our mission is to educate graduate students with broad-based integrated concepts of basic health sciences in the field of research based education, to integrate the desired attributes of knowledge, skills and attitude as outcomes and to welcome meritorious applicants from a wide range of disciplines. Upon completion of the MPhil, we expect that the students will have the capacity to ask innovative questions and provide answers to these questions using innovative approaches; contributing to their fields by unfolding their creative energy. Our graduates will have the choice to join academia, industry or pursue PhD studies as it dovetails with AKU's PhD Programme in Health Sciences.

The MPhil programme is an interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary programme in Biological and Biomedical Sciences with four specialities/streams.

- Anatomy
- Physiology
- Biochemistry
- Pharmacology

## **PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES**

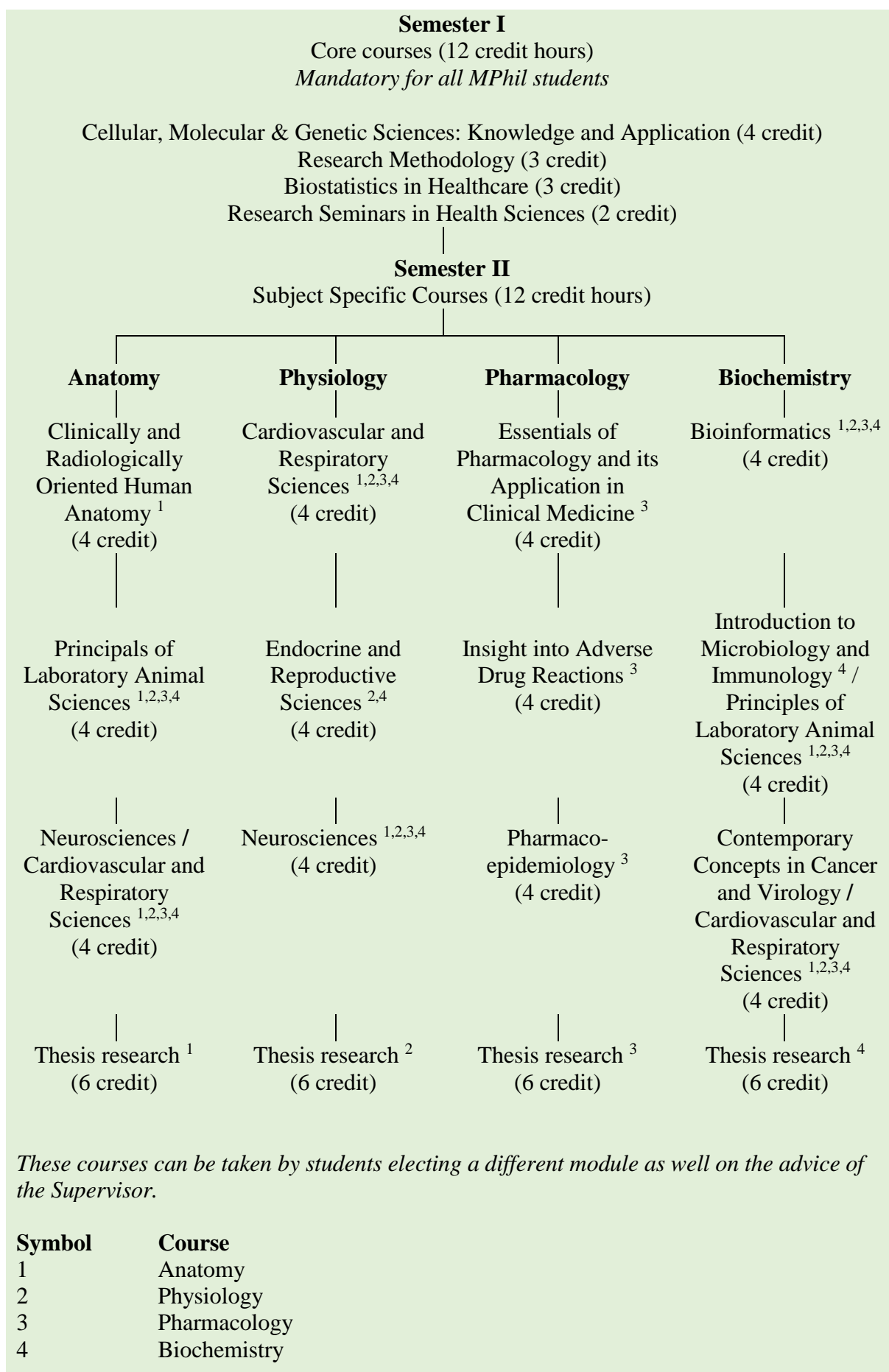
- To provide an understanding of modern and integrated concepts in biological and biomedical sciences by recognizing and applying subject-specific theories, paradigms, concepts.
- To provide research friendly enabling environment to nurture scientists.
- Develop skills to apply subject knowledge and understanding to address familiar and unfamiliar problems
- Recognize the moral and ethical issues of investigations and appreciate the need for ethical standards and professional codes of conduct.
- Develop the ability to read and use appropriate literature with a full and critical understanding, while addressing such questions as content, context, aims, objectives, quality of information, and its interpretation and application.
- Develop the ability to employ a variety of methods of study in investigating, recording, analyzing and reporting investigations.
- Develop the ability to think independently, set tasks and solve problems.
- Develop an appreciation of the multidisciplinary nature of science and of the validity of different points of view.
- Developing the skills necessary for self-managed and lifelong learning.
- Obtaining, recording, collating and analyzing data using appropriate techniques working by students themselves or in a group, as deemed most appropriate for the subject under study.
- To enable students to understand modern concepts of health and disease, opportunities and dilemmas.

## **PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND DESIGN**

The MPhil programme is a two-year full-time programme, requiring 24 credits of coursework and 6 credits of original research. Classes are scheduled between 8:30 AM and 5:00 PM.

Upon successful completion of coursework with minimum cGPA of 2.5 followed by review and approval of research work by internal and external reviewers and successful defence of the thesis, the candidate will be awarded the degree of the “Master of Philosophy in Biological and Biomedical Sciences”. Specialization can be undertaken in any one of the 4 disciplines - Anatomy, Biochemistry, Physiology and Pharmacology.

## COURSEWORK



## **RESEARCH WORK**

The basic research work for the thesis will proceed in parallel with the subject specific coursework. Thus, by the time students reach Semester 2, they would have selected a Principal Thesis Supervisor, and started to formulate a research project. When developing the protocol/ proposal, approval from the Ethics Review Committee will be required for research on human subjects and/or animals.

The research project of MPhil students, leading to a thesis and the award of degree will follow the AKU policy.

## **MENTORSHIP**

In the MPhil programme, mentoring is a custom-built feature. Each student will be assigned a Primary supervisor, and a Secondary supervisor, who would be seasoned scientists in their field of interest and have prior history of supervising the thesis research of graduate students.

## **PLACEMENTS**

In cases where students require placements, i.e. to attend other institutions and work places for specific research exposure, data collection, laboratory or field-based work, etc., the primary responsibility will remain with the principal thesis supervisor and the student. The arrangement, however, will need to be approved by the Programme Committee of the Department.

## **PROGRAMME TIMELINES**

Minimum completion time for the MPhil is 2 years. Maximum time limit for the completion of the degree is 3 years for full-time students. An additional one year extension can be requested for extenuating circumstances with the approval of the Registrar's Working Group.

## **SCHEDULE OF SEMESTERS**

The programme will have two regular Semesters (Spring and Fall), each comprising of 17 weeks and an 8-week summer break. The summer break may be used by students to undertake research electives to gain more exposure to research or complete their remedial courses if required.

## **PROGRESSION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENT**

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 Cumulative Grade Point Average (cGPA) of at least 2.50 in all the course work is required to be eligible for defence of thesis.
- Successful completion and defence of the thesis.



## ADMISSION ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Candidates must have at least 16 years of undergraduate education / 4 years of education (124 credit hours) after HSSC or equivalent in Health Sciences with a minimum cGPA of 2.50 or equivalent in percentage.

## ADMISSION PROCESS SUMMARY

Candidates are evaluated in stages:

<b>Stage I</b>	Online submission of application. Candidates are invited to write an 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 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.
- 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 speciality.

Sample test paper for the Test is available on: [www.aku.edu/admissions/mphil-bbs](http://www.aku.edu/admissions/mphil-bbs)

*The University does not provide any special preparation for the Admission Test nor does it authorise 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, social and cultural awareness, knowledge of public health issues in developing nations and evidence of interest, and commitment to the programme.

Interviews will be conducted in Pakistan. For all candidates who reside overseas, interviews will be conducted on 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 **April 19 and July 28, 2021**. Candidates must apply online by logging on to [www.aku.edu/apply-online](http://www.aku.edu/apply-online)

In cases where applicants are unable to access the online portal, candidates may request for a paper based application by e-mailing [postgrad.query@aku.edu](mailto:postgrad.query@aku.edu)

Candidates completing the paper-based form are requested to follow the instructions mentioned within the form for fee payment and submission. Please courier the completed paper based form to reach the Admission Office latest by **July 28, 2021**. Applications are not accepted over the counter and after the deadline.

### 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 or through a paper-based application, are responsible to complete 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.

### ADMIT CARD

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

Candidates who submit a paper application will receive their admit card 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 write 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:

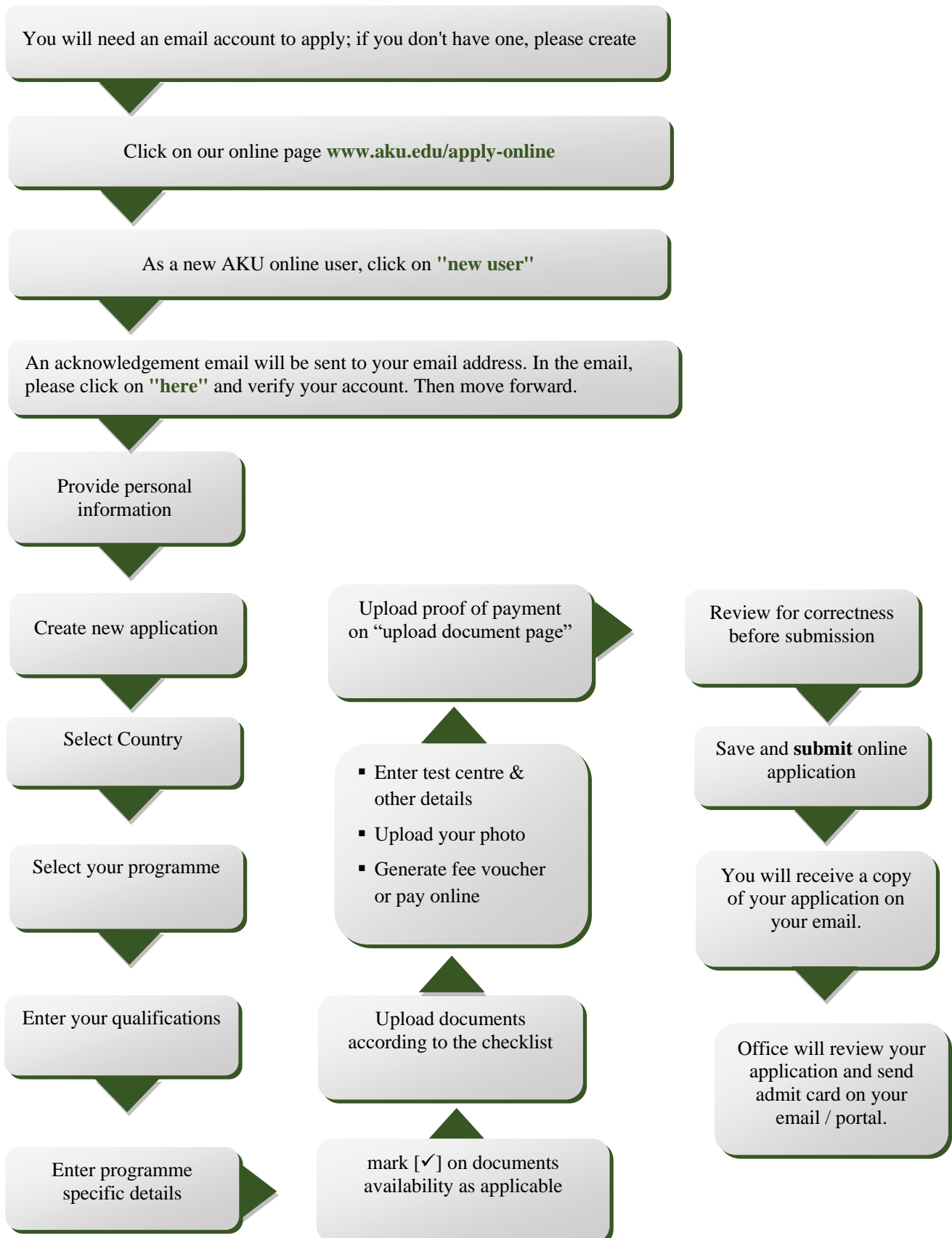
- A hard copy of the admit card issued by AKU **AND**
- A valid current photo ID card/original CNIC/college ID card/enrolment card for identification.

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



## 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. Application Fee: - **Applying from AKU residential countries\*** is **Rs. 7400/-**  
- **Applying from AKU non-residential countries** is **US \$ 375/-**  
- (*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 qualification / equivalent to 16 years - attested by Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan
4. Degree of undergraduate qualification / equivalent to 16 years - attested by (HEC)
5. HEC equivalence of 16 years for candidates applying with Post RN BScN or foreign degree
6. Detailed curriculum vitae (CV) - (*see CV specification section*)
7. Three 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.*)
8. Transcript / enrolment information of all the courses undertaken or completed at AKU (if applicable)
9. 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.***

### ▪ FEE VOUCHER (PAKISTANI CURRENCY ONLY)

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

1. On the application home page, please click on “Fee, photograph and other details”
2. For payment mode, select “Fee Voucher”
3. Click “Yes” to generate the voucher (*make sure that your popups are not blocked*)
4. Take the printed voucher to any branch of Habib Bank Ltd (HBL) and pay the fee
5. Upload the paid voucher on “Upload Document Page” by selecting fee payment
6. When uploading, type fee voucher receipt # on document name field.

### ▪ 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 “Fee, photograph and other details”
2. For payment mode, select “Online Payment” and click yes (*make sure that your popups are not blocked*)
3. Complete your payment details on online web portal: <https://payonline.aku.edu/>
4. Upload the payment acknowledgement email or screenshot on “Upload Document Page” by selecting fee payment
5. When uploading, type online payment reference # / transaction # on document name field.

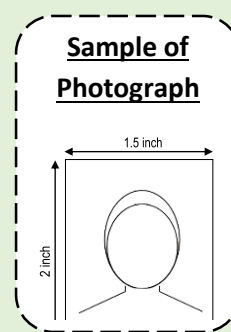
*In case you are unable to receive the payment acknowledgement, please notify the Finance Office by emailing: [student.finance@aku.edu](mailto:student.finance@aku.edu)*

## PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATION

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

- Passport size coloured photograph with white 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 write the Admission Test.**



## CURRICULUM VITAE (CV) SPECIFICATION

**Your CV must include the following:**

- qualifications with grades/percentage and passing year
- other Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses
- list of publications (if any)
- 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.

Upon acceptance into an academic programme, a student who is unable to pay for the cost of education at the University, may apply for financial assistance.

The financial information including student's fee paying status, fee structure for the 2021-2022 session, and financial assistance is available on: [www.aku.edu/admissions/fees-and-funding](http://www.aku.edu/admissions/fees-and-funding)

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

There are 2 scholarships available for candidates selected in the 2021-2022 admission cycle. The top candidates are selected on criteria designed by the University. No applications are required.

Students receiving the scholarship will have their tuition waived and will receive monthly stipend of Rs. 25,000/-

All M. Phil. students will get US \$ 350/- and PKR 50000/- start-up fund for their research project.

## **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 Programme Admission Office, Aga Khan University, Stadium Road, Karachi 74800, Pakistan, Phone: +92-21 3486 4410 / 4412.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Accommodation for outstation students is arranged in the hostels managed by the University. These are shared, non-air-conditioned, furnished accommodation. Hostel space is restricted to students from outside Karachi only.

A fee is charged for all accommodation. Accommodation charges for the 2021-2022 session is available online along with the fee structure. Meals may be purchased separately from the University's cafeteria.

All students living in the university hostels are expected to conform to rules and regulations. Residence is conditional upon proper use and care of the property, considerate behaviour and periodic reappraisal of the student's need for such accommodation.

## **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 appeal cites 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 2021-22 ADMISSIONS

<b>April 19– July 28, 2021</b>	<b><u>Admission Open</u> Registration</b>	
<b>Saturday, September 4, 2021</b>	<b><i>AKU Admission Test - Pakistan</i></b>	<b>Test Centres</b> Chitral, Faisalabad, Gilgit, Hyderabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi and Sukkur
<b>TBD</b> <i>To be determined</i>	<b><i>AKU Admission Test - Overseas</i></b>	Dubai, Iran, Kabul, London, Nairobi, Riyadh, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda  <i>(Overseas centres will be confirmed if there are at least 10 candidates to write the test)</i>
<b><i>Please note: Timings and address for the venue will be stated on the admit card. In case of a change, candidates will be notified through email.</i></b>		
<b>September 24</b>	<i>Last date to submit:</i> <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>	
<b>September / October</b>	Interviews	
<b>January 2022</b>	Commencement of Classes	

***\*HEC equivalence applicability:*** *In case of Post RN BScN and other foreign qualifications, equivalence letter from HEC must be submitted stating that the candidate has completed at least 16 years of education.*

## **DISCLAIMER**

This booklet contains information about the programme offered by the Aga Khan University, Pakistan, for the academic year 2021-22. 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 requirement, application and admission process from the University Admission Office.

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