

آغا خان یونیورسٹی  
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

## MEDICAL COLLEGE

Master of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics (MSc)  
Admission Information 2023 - 2024

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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.

## **MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIostatISTICS PROGRAMME**

The Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) of the Aga Khan University offers a two-year programme of Master of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics (MSc EB), which is recognized by Higher Education Commission (HEC) in Pakistan. The programme is designed to train health professionals to have in-depth knowledge of epidemiology, biostatistics and their application in analysing major public health issues in Pakistan and developing countries with a focused approach to regional problems and needs.

Graduates of the programme are expected to play a leading role in the field of public health by analysing major public health problems and identifying ways to address them. To date, most of our graduates are employed by well-known national and international organisations.

### **CLINICAL RESEARCH TRACK**

MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics programme also offers a Clinical Research Track (CRT) which is a specialised track nested within the MSc EB programme. This track is unique in the country and the region as no such programme is offered by any other educational institution currently. This track is designed for academicians, clinical researchers, residents, fellows, nurses, young faculty and individuals in medical and allied fields who wish to pursue a career in clinical cum research work. Candidates interested in this specialisation must indicate their preference on their admission application form.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE MSc EPIDEMIOLOGY AND BIostatISTICS PROGRAMME**

After completing the programme, the graduates would be able to:

1. Conceptualize the principles and practice of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

2. Critically identify public health problems and use epidemiology and biostatistics to characterise them at the population level.
3. Manage epidemiological studies using appropriate design, and analytic techniques to interpret public health problems for proposing interventions.
4. Relate epidemiological principles to public health problems in the context of resource limitations of developing countries.

### **FOR CLINICAL RESEARCH TRACK**

In addition to the above four objectives, CRT students would also be able to:

1. Critically identify contemporary clinical problems.
2. Design, conduct and evaluate applied research; investigating clinical problems to enhance clinical care at individual and population level.
3. Demonstrate the use of principles of epidemiology and biostatistics within a specific clinical discipline.

### **PROGRAMME STRUCTURE**

This is a two-year programme comprising four semesters. Each semester will have a maximum of 12 credit hours courses. In addition to course work, students are required to complete a thesis on a critical and current public health problem affecting the region. Faculty members provide the required support and guidance as advisors and committee members for completion of thesis work. The students are required to defend their thesis at the end of the programme.

Different assessment techniques are used in each course for gauging students learning and understanding. These include home assignments, quizzes, class presentations, course projects, report writing, mid and final examinations during each semester.

### **PART-TIME PROGRAMME**

The University offers candidates the option of completing their stipulated two-year programme requirement in extended time. Health professionals who wish to upgrade their qualifications but have other responsibilities and commitments, may benefit from the part-time programme. Opting for a part-time option allows students the flexibility to complete the required courses in three or four years instead of two years. However, the part-time programme is not a weekend programme. Classes and tutorials are scheduled over the weekdays between 8:30 am and 5:30 pm. A part-time student takes fewer course credits in a semester than a full-time student per semester. For additional information about the part-time option, please contact the Programme Director and Programme Officer within the CHS.

### **INDIVIDUAL STUDY COURSES / STANDALONE COURSES**

The Department of Community Health Sciences offers selected courses (taught within the MSc EB programme) as “Standalone courses” which are ideal for individuals who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills in specific areas of Epidemiology and Biostatistics without formally enrolling in the MSc programme. Candidates with 16 years of education in Science or Health Sciences are eligible to apply for these courses. Admission in these courses open prior to the beginning of the semester in which the 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 have an insight into the programme without committing two full years at the outset.

Candidates who have achieved a cGPA of 3.5 or above after completing two courses or a cGPA of 3.0 or above after completing three courses are exempted from writing the Admission Test. They will be required to attend Interviews. These standalone courses are valid for three years for entry into the MSc EB programme. For further details on available standalone courses, please contact the Programme Office at [msceb.programme@aku.edu](mailto:msceb.programme@aku.edu)

## **THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum of the programme focuses on the integration of its major components: Epidemiology, Biostatistics and Public Health. The curriculum of the programme has recently been revised to align it with international programmes offered in the area of Epidemiology and Biostatistics. There is a good balance between Epidemiology and Biostatistics courses offered in the programme. MSc EB Students also choose elective courses during the two-year programme.

The students of Clinical Research Track are required to undertake track-specific courses.

The students have access to the latest information through free Internet access and a well-equipped library at the University.

## **THESIS RESEARCH**

MSc EB theses are based on primary data collection and address local public health and clinical issues. All students are required to develop a research protocol, collect and analyse data and write a thesis. This provides the students an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of conducting a complete research study. Each thesis committee comprises a thesis supervisor and at least two committee members who provide guidance and support and supervise the research project. The programme takes pride in the quality of thesis work students carry out as a requirement for graduating from the programme

## **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.

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

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRADUATES**

To date all our graduates have been readily hired by different organisations. There are employment opportunities available for our graduates not only within the country but also at the regional and international level. Our alumni are engaged with various esteemed national / international organisations such as Aga Khan University (as faculty and fellows), Aga Khan Development Network (Aga Khan Foundation), Health Services Academy, National Institute of Health, Islamabad, World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (Vancouver, Canada), Centre of Disease Control (USA) and academic institutions in USA, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, public health institutes of Middle East and with different non-government organizations.

## **ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME**

Admission to the programme is based solely on merit and commitment to public health. 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 multiple interviews with senior faculty at AKU. Candidates currently working in the public or private sector from Pakistan and overseas may apply.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Candidates who have at least one year of full-time work experience after graduation in a health-related field at the time of application (voluntary work, part-time or unpaid internship is not included) and hold at least one of the following degrees are eligible to apply:

- Sixteen-year undergraduate degree from an accredited / recognised university in Sciences / Health Sciences including bachelor's degree such as MBBS, BDS, BScN, DVM, B Pharm (or equivalent).

Please Note:

- Candidates with clinical experience, especially young faculty in research track positions in clinical departments are also eligible.
- Residents and fellows who are completing their training programme this year are encouraged to apply.

## ADMISSION PROCESS SUMMARY

Candidates are evaluated in stages:

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| <b>Stage I</b>   | Online submission of application.<br>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, work experience certificate/letter 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.  |

[www.aku.edu/admissions/Documents/admission-process-summary.pdf](http://www.aku.edu/admissions/Documents/admission-process-summary.pdf)

## 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/msc-epi-bio](http://www.aku.edu/admissions/msc-epi-bio)

*The University does not provide any 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 based on 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 are conducted in Pakistan. For all 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 **March 12** and **May 4, 2023**. 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 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/ degree (16 years) or receipt from HEC as evidence that an application has been made. (front & back copy pdf)
4. 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)
5. For unattested documents, upload HEC receipt as evidence. **This is a mandatory requirement.**
6. Upload Detailed curriculum vitae (see CV specification section)
7. Relevant Work Experience Letter / Certificate
8. Submit the application form online. (*Candidate will receive a copy of the application form on their registered email as a confirmation when the application is submitted successfully*)

Incomplete applications 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 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.

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 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:

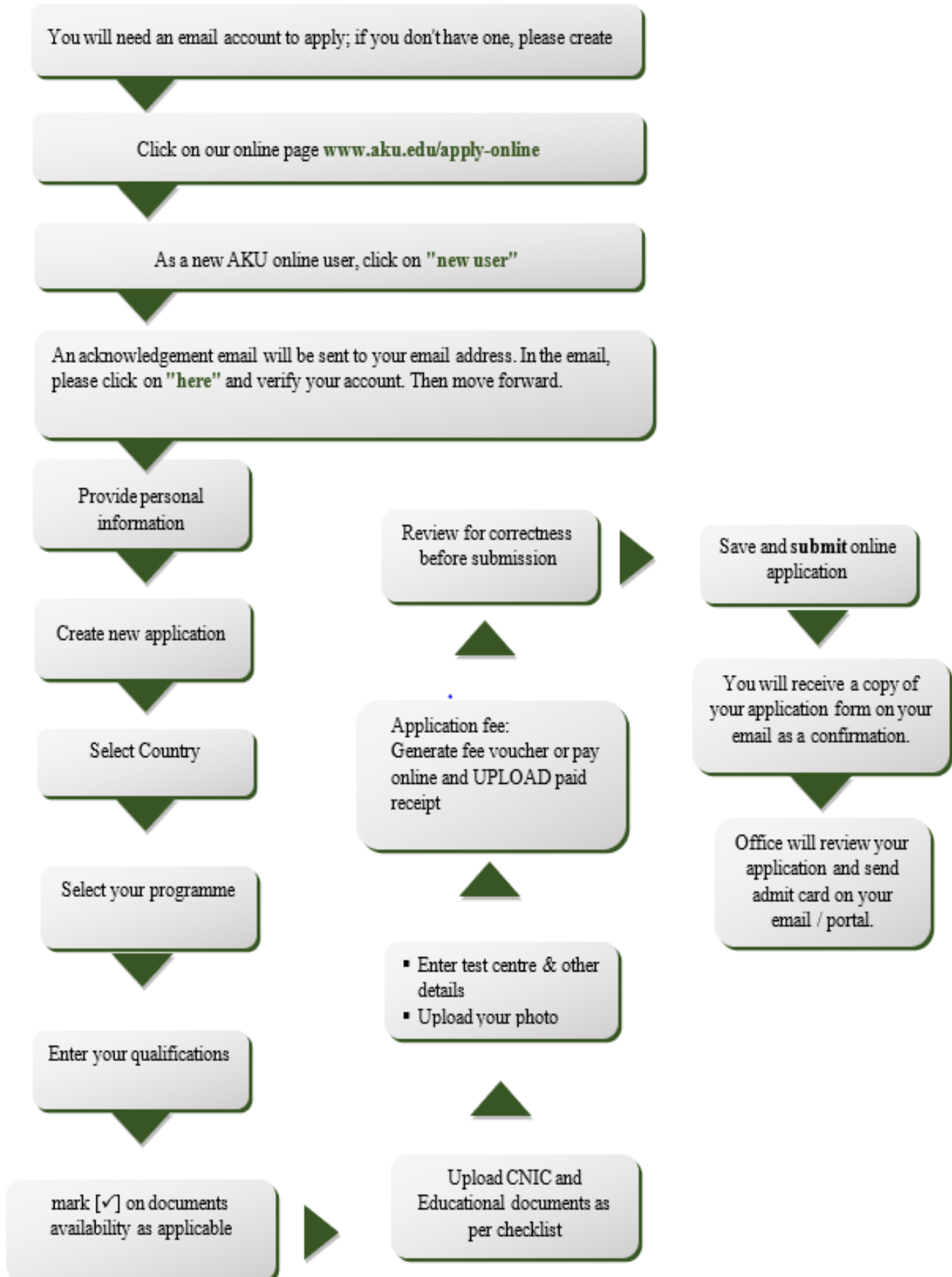
- A hard copy of the admit card issued by AKU **AND**
- A valid current photo ID card/original CNIC/college ID card/enrolment card for identification.

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. 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.**
7. Relevant Work Experience Letter / Certificate

Application Fee: - **Applying from AKU residential countries\*** is Rs. 7000/-  
- **Applying from AKU non-residential countries** is US \$ 150/-  
- (*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. All relevant work experience certificates as entered on the form.
7. Detailed curriculum vitae (CV) - (*see CV specification section*)
8. Three reference letters / recommendation to be sent in sealed envelopes or emailed directly by your referee to 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 fee 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.

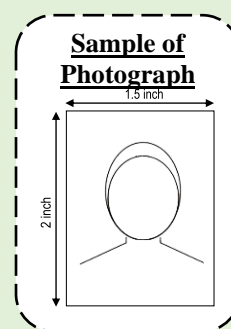
*In case you are unable to receive the payment acknowledgement, please notify the Finance Office by emailing your query along with tracking Id, name, and programme name at [student.finance@aku.edu](mailto:student.finance@aku.edu)*

## PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATION

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

- Passport size coloured 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 write 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
- courses undertaken or completed at AKU (if applying with standalone courses)
- 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 2023-2024 session, and financial assistance 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.

## 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 and is offered to graduate programme students, when available. Accommodation is limited.

A fee is charged for all accommodation. Accommodation charges for the 2023-2024 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.

| <b>KEY DATES FOR 2023-24 ADMISSIONS</b>   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <b>March 12 – May 4, 2023</b>   | <b>Admission Open:</b> Apply online via <a href="http://www.aku.edu/apply-online">www.aku.edu/apply-online</a>   |  |
| <b>June 4, 2023</b>   | <b>AKU Admission Test -Pakistan</b>  | <b>Test Centres</b><br>Chitral, Gilgit, Karachi, and Islamabad.  |
|   | <b>AKU Admission Test - Overseas</b>   | Dar es Salam, Kabul, Kampala, Khorog, London, Nairobi.<br><i>(Additional overseas centres will be confirmed if there are at least 10 candidates to write the test)</i> |
| <b>Please note:</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. |  |  |
| <b>Upon Shortlisting</b>  | <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>August</b>   | Interviews   |  |
| <b>February 2024</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 2023-24. 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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