MEDICAL COLLEGE

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Master of Science in Epidemiology and Biostatistics
Admission Information 2020 - 2021
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THE UNIVERSITY

Chartered in 1983, the Aga Khan University (AKU) is an international private university that currently operates in South and Central Asia, East Africa and the United Kingdom. It is a unique hybrid: an institution of academic excellence that is also an agent for social development.

AKU occupies a pivotal place in the Aga Khan Development Network, a group of development agencies working under the leadership of His Highness the Aga Khan and contributes in major ways to social development. AKU prioritises higher education and research initiatives relevant to the problems of the societies in which it operates, generally in the developing world.

Through ongoing partnerships with prestigious institutions worldwide, AKU brings international expertise to bear upon the establishment and enhancement of its current and future programmes and services. With a growing programme offering, in addition to our existing six campuses spread over three continents, we are planning three new faculties and six graduate schools to deliver a range of educational choices in an environment that respects cultural diversity.

Our merit-based, transparent admissions process and needs-sensitive financial assistance programme attempts to ensure, to the extent possible, that a diversity of high calibre students are able to attend the programmes at AKU.

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 some common criteria include: 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, it is expected that 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 of 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; i.e. either in three or four years. Health professionals with other responsibilities and commitments who wish to upgrade their qualifications are able to benefit from the part-time programme to complete the required courses in three or four years instead of two years. Additional details regarding this option are available from the Programme Director and Programme Office housed within the CHS. While part-time option is available to students; it must be noted that sessions and tutorials are spread over the weekdays and would require commitment in split timings over the weekdays.
**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 msc eb 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 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 in 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 work experience after graduation, preferably in a health-related field at the time of application (part-time, internship and voluntary work 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 degree such as MBBS, BDS, BScN, DVM, B Pharm (or equivalent).
- Candidates with clinical experience, especially young faculty in research track positions in clinical departments.
- Fellows within the PGME programme will receive consideration.
- Residents completing two years of their residency programme. All AKU-PGME trainees will require a nomination from their parent departments.

ADMISSION PROCESS SUMMARY

Candidates are evaluated in stages:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stage I</td>
<td>Applications are reviewed and candidates are invited to write the AKU Admission Test.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage II</td>
<td>Candidates who are shortlisted based on the Admission Test are invited for interviews with senior faculty members of the University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stage III</td>
<td>Final selection is based on an overall assessment of each candidate’s dossier which is formally approved by the University’s Admission Review Committee.</td>
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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

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 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 16, 2020 and June 17, 2020 until 5 pm (Pakistan Standard Time) only. Candidates must apply online by logging on to www.aku.edu/apply-online

In cases where applicants are unable to access our online portal, candidates may request for a paper based application by e-mailing postgrad.query@aku.edu

Candidates completing the paper based form are requested to follow the instructions mentioned on this form for fee payment and submission. Please courier the completed paper based form to reach the Admission Office latest by June 17, 2020. Applications are not accepted over the counter.

NOTE FOR ALL CANDIDATES

Candidates are required to ensure they meet application requirements before applying. These are listed in the programme brochure. Additionally, candidates applying online or with a paper based application, are responsible to complete the application 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 15 days before the date of the test; candidates must email the Admission Office at postgrad.query@aku.edu for the required information and application details.

Please note:

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:

1. You will need an email account to apply; if you don't have one, please create.
2. Click on our online page [www.aku.edu/apply-online](http://www.aku.edu/apply-online)
3. As a new AKU online user, click on "new user"
4. An acknowledgement email will be sent to your email address. Click on "here" to verify your account and move forward.
5. Provide personal information
6. Create new application
7. Select Country
8. Select your programme
9. Enter your qualifications
10. Enter programme specific details
11. Review for correctness before submission
12. Upload proof of payment on "upload document page"
13. Enter test centre & other details
14. Upload your photo
15. Generate fee voucher or pay online
16. Upload documents according to the checklist
17. Save and submit online application
18. You will receive a copy of your application on your email.
19. If eligible, you will receive admit card on your email.
PLEASE SUBMIT 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. Curriculum Vitae and list of publications, if any;
4. Attested copies of educational documents must be uploaded sequentially:
   - HSSC or equivalent;
   - Undergraduate qualification (E.g.: MBBS, BScN, BDS, BSc or equivalent). Undergraduate degree and mark sheets should be attested by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC).
   
   Note: In case of Post RN BScN and other foreign qualifications, equivalence letter from HEC must be submitted with the application stating that the candidate has completed at least 16 years of education.

5. Application Fee:  
   - Applying from AKU residential countries* is Rs. 6,800/-
   - Applying from AKU non-residential countries is US $ 350/-

   The application fee is non-refundable; candidates must ensure that they are eligible for the programme before applying. (see mode of payment section for details)

6. If applicable:
   - Transcript / enrolment information of all the courses undertaken or completed at AKU
   - Latest mark sheets / progress reports, if currently enrolled in any other institution

7. All work experience certificates as entered on the form

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

DOCUMENTS REQUIRED SEPARATELY

3 letters of recommendation / references to be sent in sealed envelopes or emailed directly by your referee to postgrad.query@aku.edu Name of your referees should be provided on the application form. (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.)
MODE OF PAYMENT

Candidates may pay the application fee either through the fee voucher or the AKU online payment portal. *When the fee is paid, please upload the receipt on the online admission portal.*

- **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 “Fee, photograph and other details”
  2. For payment mode, 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
  5. Upload the paid voucher on “Upload Document Page” by selecting fee payment

- **PAY ONLINE THROUGH DEBIT/CREDIT CARD (FOR 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 pop ups aren’t blocked*)
  3. Complete your payment details on online web portal: [https://payonline.aku.edu/](https://payonline.aku.edu/)
  4. Upload the payment acknowledgement email or screenshot on “Upload Document Page” by selecting fee payment
  
  In case you are unable to receive the payment acknowledgement, please notify the Finance Office by emailing 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.*
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 one of our academic programmes, students who are 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 2020-2021 session, and financial assistance is available on: www.aku.edu/admissions/fees-and-funding

STUDENTS ON SPONSORSHIP

Students expecting to receive sponsorships or scholarships from external agencies to complete the programme are requested to submit the relevant approval letter 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.

A fee is charged for all accommodation. Accommodation charges for the 2020-2021 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 2020-21 ADMISSIONS

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<th>Event</th>
<th>Date/Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Admission Open Registration</td>
<td>March 16 – June 17, 2020 by 5 pm <em>(Pakistan Standard Time)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Admission Test</td>
<td>September 5</td>
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<td>Test Centres:</td>
<td>Pakistan: Chitral, Faisalabad Gilgit, Hyderabad, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar, Quetta and Sukkur</td>
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<td>International: Doha, Dubai, Iran, Kabul, London, Nairobi, Riyadh, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania and Uganda</td>
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<td>Interviews</td>
<td>September / October</td>
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<td>Commencement of Classes</td>
<td>March 2021</td>
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DISCLAIMER
This booklet contains information about the programme offered by the Aga Khan University, Pakistan, for the academic year 2020-21. 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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