Master of Science in
Epidemiology and Biostatistics

Admission Information
2016 – 2017
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.

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 on-going 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 five campuses spread over three continents, we are planning three new faculties and seven graduate schools to deliver a range of educational choices in an environment that respects cultural diversity.

Our merit-based, transparent admissions process and need-based financial assistance programme attempts to ensure 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.

THE PROGRAMME

The Department of Community Health Sciences (CHS) of the Aga Khan University offers a two-year Master of Science (MSc) in Epidemiology and Biostatistics Programme, which is recognized by Higher Education Commission (HEC) 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 means and ways for addressing them. To date, most of our graduates have been offered excellent employment opportunities by well-known international organisations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

After completing the programme, it is expected that the graduates would be able to:

- Understand the principles of epidemiology and biostatistics;
- Critically identify public health problems and use epidemiology and biostatistics to characterise them at the population level.
- Design and conduct epidemiological studies, manage and analyse data and use results to design interventions;
- Apply epidemiological principles to public health problems in the context of resource limitations of developing countries.

**Programme Structure**

This is a two-year programme comprising eight terms of three months duration each. In addition to course work, students are also required to complete a thesis on a critical and current public health problem affecting the region. Faculty members provide all possible 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 class presentations, home assignments, report writing, mid-term and final examinations during each term. Some students also get the opportunity to assist faculty in teaching in the undergraduate programme offered by AKU based on their accomplishments and availability during their two years study time at AKU.

**Part-time Programme**

The University is offering candidates the choice to complete their stipulated two-year 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.

**Individual Study Courses / Standalone Courses**

The Department of Community Health Sciences is offering selected (taught within the Master of Science in Epidemiology & Biostatistics) courses as “Standalone courses” which are ideal for individuals who wish to enhance their knowledge and skills in specific areas of area of Epidemiology and Biostatistics without formally enrolling in the MSc programme. Admission in these courses is opened prior to the beginning of the term in which a standalone course is being offered (not all courses are offered as standalone courses). Individuals can take up to 3-4 courses as standalone courses (accumulate up to 9 credits of course work). This option provides an excellent opportunity for individuals to get a flavour of the programme without committing two full years at the outset. Candidates who do exceptionally well in the individual courses are eligible for admission in the MSc EB programme without having to appear for the Admission Test. The course scores will be valid for three years for entry into the MSc EB programme. For further details on available standalone courses please contact the Programme Office.
**THE CURRICULUM**

The curriculum of the programme focuses on the integration of its major components: epidemiology, biostatistics and public health. Recently the curriculum of the programme has 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. Students also get to choose 4 elective courses that they take during the two year programme.

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

**THESIS RESEARCH**

The programme takes pride in the quality of thesis work students carry out as a requirement for graduating from the programme. MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics thesis are based on primary data collection and address a local public health issue. 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. Theses committees supervise the students’ research projects. Each thesis committee comprises a thesis supervisor and at least two committee members.

**CLINICAL RESEARCH SPECIALISATION**

This track is designed for academicians and clinical researchers as well as residents, fellows, young faculty and clinical nurses from medical and allied fields who wish to pursue a career in clinical cum research work.

Students enrolling in the Epidemiology and Biostatistics programme may select the Clinical Research track as a specialisation within this MSc degree programme. Programme course selection will require students to replace some epidemiology and biostatistics courses with courses designed specifically for the clinical research specialisation. Candidates interested in this specialisation must indicate their preference on their admission application form.

**STUDENT EVALUATION AND GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

The following are minimum requirements for progression and graduation:

- Grade Point Average (GPA) of at least 2.50 at the end of Year 1 is required to continue in the programme, both for regular and part-time students.
- A Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of at least 2.50 in all course work is required for graduating from the programme.
- Successful completion and defence of the thesis.
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 levels. Our alumni are engaged with various esteemed international organisations such as World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (Vancouver, Canada), Centre of Disease Control (USA), academic institutions in USA, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, public health institutes of Middle East and with national institutes such as Aga Khan University (as faculty and fellows), Aga Khan Development Network (Aga Khan Foundation), Health Services Academy, National Institute of Health, Islamabad and different non-government organizations.

ADMISSION TO THE PROGRAMME

Admission in the programme is based on merit and potential 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 who assess past 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.

CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION

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:

- 4 or 5 years of Bachelors education in Health Sciences (Medical, Dental, Nursing, Pharmacy) or
- 4 years of Bachelors education in Social Sciences (Development Studies, Public Administration, Management, Political Science, Economics, Sociology or related field) or
- 2/3 years of Bachelors and 1/2 year of Masters in Social Sciences (Development Studies, Public Administration, Management, Political Science, Economics, Sociology or related field)

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION

Application for admission will be accepted from January 11, 2016 until February 15, 2016 only.
The programme brochure and sample test paper may be downloaded from our website www.aku.edu/registrar. The application form may be completed online by logging on to www.aku.edu/apply-online. Please follow the necessary instructions to complete the online application.

An application must be submitted either online or on the prescribed paper based application form. Before submitting an application, candidates must ensure that they have complied with the instructions given with the application form. Incomplete applications will not be processed.

The completed application form along with the documents mentioned on checklist should be posted by registered mail or sent through a reliable courier service or delivered in person to the Admission Office from Monday to Friday, between 9:00 am and 12:00 noon only. There is no provision for processing applications after the closing date.

It remains the responsibility of the candidate to complete the application requirements according to the instructions and time schedule. The Admission Office will send no reminders. Once acknowledged, an application will not be returned.

Aga Khan University reserves the right to revoke admission and registration if an application form 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.

All applications must be mailed to the following address:

Graduate Programme Admission Office
Office of the Registrar
Aga Khan University – Medical College
Stadium Road, P.O. Box 3500,
Karachi 74800
Pakistan

SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION

Candidates must submit the following as application to the programme:

a  Completed application form: PDF of the completed online application; downloaded or paper application; two photographs with your name labeled at the back; this should be coloured on a white background showing full front view of the candidate.

b  One attested copy of CNIC / NICOP / Passport (passport is required for foreign nationals);

c  Curriculum Vita and list of publications, if any;

d  Letters of recommendation from at least 3 people who are well-acquainted with the applicant’s previous academic work and professional experience. These letters should
not be more than one year old;
e Scholastic Achievements: For all achievements mentioned in the application form: attested set of official transcripts of academic record (secondary school, college, graduate school, and/or professional schools, with certification of degrees conferred, courses taken and grades received);
f Grade Card / Transcript or enrolment information of the courses completed at Aga Khan University in the past or currently in progress, if applicable;
g Application fee: The application fee is non-refundable; the fee can be paid online or as a bank draft in favour of “The Aga Khan University”. Cash, money orders, postal orders and personal cheques are not acceptable;

Application Fee:
- For candidates applying from Pakistan: Rs 5,500/-;
- For candidates who will be overseas during the admission process it is US$ 250/-.

h Attested copies of Work Experience Certificate (of all the experiences mentioned in the application form);
i If you are currently enrolled in any other institution, please provide attested mark-sheets of recent examination taken or progress reports, as applicable.

PHOTOGRAPH SPECIFICATION

Your photograph is a vital part of your application. Please follow these instructions carefully. If photographs received do not meet these requirements your application will be considered incomplete.

- A colour photo is required;
- The background of the photograph should be plain white.
- The photo must measure: width: 1.5 inch, height: 2 inch
- Should have been taken within the last 1 week to reflect your current appearance.
- The photo should show a clear, front view, full face of the person. Side or angled views are NOT acceptable.
- Snapshots, magazine photos, low quality vending machine or mobile phone photos and full-length photographs are not acceptable.

If your photograph does not reflect your current appearance, even if it is not older than one week, the university will not allow you to write the Admission Test.
MODE OF PAYMENT

Candidates may pay their application fee through the following modes of payment: The payment can be made by a demand draft in favour of “The Aga Khan University” or by online deposit to any branch of Soneri Bank Limited. The banking details are as follows:

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<th>Title</th>
<th>The Aga Khan University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Account No.</td>
<td>01021227508</td>
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<tr>
<td>Branch Code</td>
<td>0024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Branch</td>
<td>The Aga Khan University Branch, Stadium Road, Karachi</td>
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The deposit slip given by the bank, which is the acknowledgement of payment to the bank, should be submitted with the application form to the Admission Office.

EVALUATION OF CANDIDATES

Candidates are evaluated in stages:

Stage I: Applications are reviewed and candidates are invited to write the AKU Admission Test.

Stage II: Candidates who pass the Admission Test are invited for interviews with senior faculty members of the University.

Stage III: Final selection will be made on the basis of an overall assessment of each candidate and is formally approved by the board of Graduate Studies at AKU.

ADMISSION TEST

All candidates are required to write the AKU Admission Test. Candidates will be issued an admit card enabling them to write the Admission Test. Where it is not received in time, candidates are advised to write the Admission Test at a convenient centre taking a copy of the application form, a photo ID and appropriate documents for identification.

The Admission Test comprises three components: English Language, Quantitative Reasoning and Logical Reasoning. The English Language component evaluates a candidate’s competency in reading and comprehension. The Quantitative Reasoning component is designed to assess basic knowledge of the subject, including critical reasoning, deduction and problem solving ability. The Logical Reasoning component is aimed at assessing the logical thinking ability of the candidates.

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. The purpose of the interview is to assess a variety of attributes, including integrity, motivation and interest in the programme, maturity, social and cultural awareness, knowledge of public health issues in developing nations and evidence of initiative and commitment to the profession.

Interviews will be conducted in Pakistan. However, the University may be able to make special arrangements to interview candidates overseas in their place of residence.

VALIDITY OF TEST SCORES

The AKU Admission Test scores are valid for a period of two years from the date the test is written. For admission to the 2016-2017 academic year the results of the test written in the year 2014 or 2015 will be acceptable for further processing of an application, only in cases where the candidate does not write the Admission Test in the year of application.

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<tr>
<th>ADMISSION SCHEDULE 2016 – 2017</th>
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<tr>
<td>Last date to receive applications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Admission Test</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviews</td>
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<td>Announcement of Result</td>
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FINANCIAL INFORMATION

TUITION AND OTHER CHARGES

AKU charges fees for all of its programmes. The tuition and fees structure and schedule for the 2016-17 session will be available separately. Those responsible for a student’s financial obligations should plan accordingly.

The University categorises students as domestic and overseas. Overseas candidates are required to pay their dues in US dollars only. The University reviews its tuition and fees annually to cover inflation and other cost increases. Students are advised to plan their financial obligations for the course of study accordingly.

Candidates shall be categorised as “overseas students” (whether holding Pakistani or dual citizenship), if the candidate meets any one or more of the following criteria:

a) Residence of the principal earning member of the family and source of income during the previous three years;
b) Whether the student was educated in Pakistan or abroad during the three years prior to the application for admission;
c) Whether the student is eligible for State-supported education overseas;
d) Whether the candidate’s or principal earning member is reimbursed educational expenses by their employer.

Students holding Pakistani nationality, CNIC and / or passport should be aware that this does not guarantee “domestic student” classification for the payment of tuition fee and any other charges. The University’s conditions stated above for the application of “overseas” fee status will prevail.

If the candidate’s parents are Pakistani citizens deputed to a government mission overseas, such students will be charged the fee prescribed for students in Pakistan. Documentary evidence will however, be required in such cases.

Candidates doubtful of their fee status should seek clarification from the Office of the Registrar before applying. The Registrar’s decision on fee status shall be final and binding.

Successful candidates are required to pay a component of the fee on acceptance to the programme and the balance over the year of study.

Students defaulting on payments within the due dates may be suspended and/or barred from classes and/or progression to the next year of study until the clearance of dues in accordance with the University’s policies and procedures.

Payments may be made in cash or through a bank draft in favour of “The Aga Khan University”. Personal cheques are not acceptable.
**STUDENTS ON SPONSORSHIP**

Students expecting to receive sponsorships or scholarships to complete the programme are requested to submit the relevant approval letter 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 4537 / 5449 / 5456.

**UNIVERSITY FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Since admission at AKU is needs blind, the University operates a Financial Assistance Programme which ensures that no Pakistani student, resident in Pakistan, who qualifies for admission to programmes at the Aga Khan University, is excluded because of inability to pay tuition and fees.

Through the University's Financial Assistance Programme, students joining graduate programmes are awarded soft loans. The loan is payable in easy instalments after graduation from the programme. Details should be obtained from the Student Financial Assistance and Counselling Office.

Assistance is offered on the basis of demonstrated need as evaluated by the University from data provided by students and their families and other avenues that the University may deem appropriate. Every student applying for financial assistance must also demonstrate that he or she has thoroughly explored all other possible sources of assistance. However, every student is required to make some contribution towards fees, living expenses and other costs, so as to not totally depend on the University for assistance. Continuation of financial assistance is conditional upon yearly assessment of financial needs.

Applications for financial assistance for students admitted to the 2016-17 academic year will be acceptable within seven working days after receipt of the admission letter. Application forms are available online. These are also available from the Student Financial Assistance and Counselling Office

**ACCOMMODATION**

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

A fee is charged for all accommodation. The charges for hostel accommodation for the 2016-17 session are given separately. 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 appeals cities 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.