

**Aga Khan University- FHS-PhD Programme**  
**List of funded projects for potential PhD Candidates**

<b>Nursing Stream</b>						
<b>Sr. No.</b>	<b>Name, Email address and Department of Primary Supervisor</b>	<b>Supervisory Team</b>	<b>Title of Project/ Source of funding</b>	<b>Research Funding available</b>	<b>Funds available until</b>	<b>Key Objectives of research project</b>
1	Dr Tazeen S. Ali <a href="mailto:tazeen.ali@aku.edu">tazeen.ali@aku.edu</a> Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery	Dr Naghma Rizvi and Mr Sarmad Soomar	Innovative Gamification Strategies for Teaching Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) to BScN Students (1-4): A Mixed-method Approach'	USD 4096	Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the Effectiveness of Gamification in SRHR Education</li> <li>• Assess how gamification influences BScN students' knowledge acquisition, retention, and comprehension of sexual and reproductive health and rights concepts.</li> <li>• Enhance Student Engagement and Motivation</li> <li>• Explore how gamified teaching strategies impact students' motivation, engagement, and active participation in SRHR education compared to traditional teaching methods.</li> <li>• Identify Key Gamification Elements that Foster Learning</li> <li>• Identify specific gamification components (such as rewards, competition, role-play, simulations) that are most effective in facilitating understanding and retention of SRHR content.</li> <li>• Assess Student Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Gamified Learning</li> <li>• Gather qualitative insights on students' attitudes, experiences, and perceptions of gamified learning approaches to SRHR, including any perceived benefits or limitations.</li> <li>• Determine Impact on Practical Skills and Application</li> <li>• Measure the extent to which gamified learning enhances students' ability to apply SRHR knowledge in clinical or real-world settings, particularly in patient education and counseling.</li> <li>• Develop Recommendations for Integrating Gamification in Nursing Education</li> <li>• Evaluate Mixed-Methods Approach in Educational Research</li> <li>• Assess the value of a mixed-methods approach in capturing comprehensive insights into the effectiveness and acceptance of innovative teaching strategies within nursing education.</li> </ul>

**Pre-requisites of PhD candidate applicants (graduate qualification requirement): A faculty positioned or who teaching at clinical setting or public health nursing exposure**

2	Dr Tazeen S. Ali <a href="mailto:tazeen.ali@aku.edu">tazeen.ali@aku.edu</a> Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery	Drs Naghma Rizvi, Sumia Andleeb Abbasi and Mustafa Naseem	Gender-Based Violence in Digital Spaces: Measuring and Exploring Exposure among University Students in Pakistan	USD 25000	July 2025	The key objective is to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Characterize the extent, nature, and impact of GBV experienced in digital spaces among university students, with the goal to influence future policy and intervention development. This seed grant will also allow the interdisciplinary group of researchers from UM and AKU to (a) continue to explore these mutual research interests, (b) collect this pilot data, and (c) expand their nascent collaboration by applying for larger NIH funding to ultimately have an impact on addressing GBV in digital spaces in LMICs.</li> </ul>
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**Pre-requisites of PhD candidate applicants (graduate qualification requirement): The applicant must have the skills to collect (in-depth interviews) and analyze data on such sensitive issue.**

3	Dr Rubina Barolia <a href="mailto:rubina.barolia@aku.edu">rubina.barolia@aku.edu</a> Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery	Drs Faisal Ismail Wasim, Salma Rattani and Pammla Petrucka	Developing and testing of Home-Based Palliative Care intervention (HBPC) using simulation-based training for heart failure patient management in Pakistan	The research is supported from the primary supervisor's endowment funds		The key objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the views of health care providers regarding needs of palliative care for HF patients</li> <li>Develop contextual relevant home-based palliative care (HBPC) interventions through simulation-based education for informal and formal care givers</li> <li>To determine the efficacy of the HBPC intervention on HRQOL and symptoms frequency and distress of HF patients in the intervention group as compared to the HF patients in the attention control group at pre and eight weeks post-intervention via Quality-of-Life Inventory</li> <li>To determine the following feasibility outcomes of the intervention: acceptability, appropriateness, cost, feasibility, and fidelity</li> </ul>
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**Pre-requisites of PhD candidate applicants (graduate qualification requirement): Understanding of Palliative care and simulation-based learning. Experience in managing heart failure patients**

4	Dr Saleema Gulzar <a href="mailto:Saleema.gulzar@aku.edu">Saleema.gulzar@aku.edu</a> Associate Professor, School of	Drs Shariq Khoja and Hina Velji,	Beyond the Brick and Mortar, Revolutionizing School Health to Promote Student Wellness	PKR 5.5 million	March 2026	The key objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To re-evaluate and recommend a new scoop for School health nursing by identifying the use of digital health tools &amp; technology, ethical considerations, opportunities and risks and key partners.</li> <li>To define the role of School Health Nurses in the new Digital School Health field.</li> </ul>
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	Nursing and Midwifery		through Digital Solutions at Schools in Karachi, Pakistan			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To recommend new research and training needs for nurses and other stakeholders.</li> </ul>
Pre-requisites of PhD candidate applicants (graduate qualification requirement): Nursing background and experience.						
5	Dr Laila Ladak <a href="mailto:laila.ladak@aku.edu">laila.ladak@aku.edu</a> Associate Professor, School of Nursing and Midwifery	Dr Salman Kirmani	Exploring Experiences, Challenges, and Opportunities in Down Syndrome Care: A Mixed-Methods Study in Pakistan	USD 5000	December 2029	<p>The key objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patient and Family Experiences: To explore the lived experiences of children and adults with Down Syndrome and their families, with a focus on challenges, coping mechanisms, and support systems.</li> <li>Parental Literacy and Impact: To evaluate how parental literacy levels influence their understanding of Down Syndrome, care-seeking behaviors, and ability to manage their child's condition effectively.</li> <li>Health System Analysis: To assess the availability, accessibility, and effectiveness of existing healthcare resources, policies, and practices for individuals with Down Syndrome in Pakistan.</li> <li>Stakeholder Perspectives: To gather insights from healthcare providers, policymakers, and educators to identify existing gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improving Down Syndrome care.</li> <li>Intervention and Impact: To develop and implement an educational program for parents aimed at enhancing their knowledge and care practices and to assess its impact on family well-being, parental confidence, and patient outcomes</li> </ul>
Pre-requisites of PhD candidate applicants (graduate qualification requirement): Clinical experience in general and dealing with families having children with DS and/or other genetic disorders would be an asset.						