



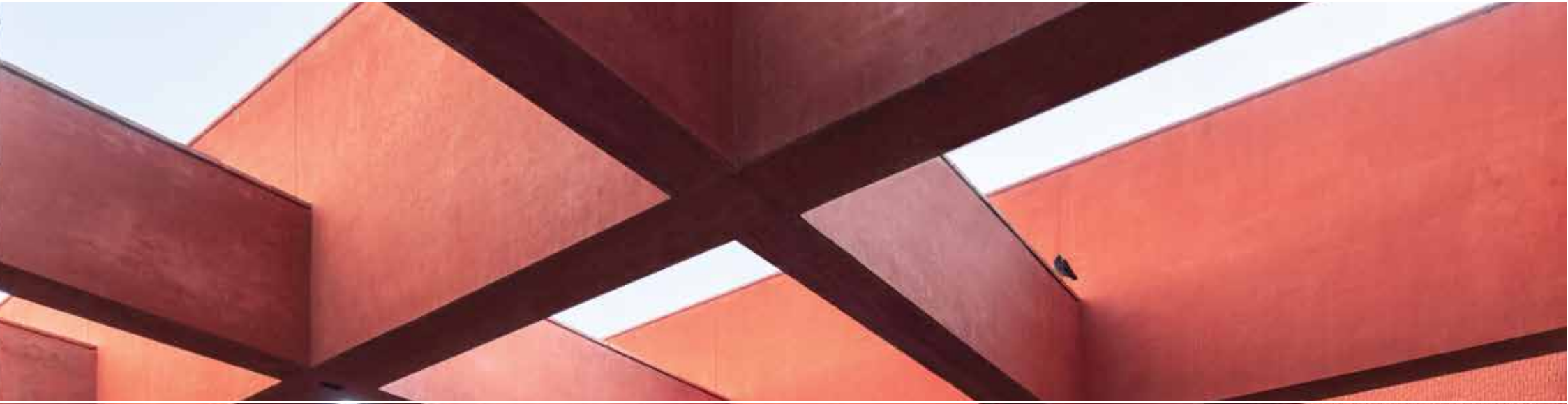
THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Office of the University Librarian



UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

2025-2029
STRATEGIC PLAN



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Tania Bubela

Provost and Vice President Academic

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic, Research and Extension

For nearly four decades, the Aga Khan University (AKU) Libraries have stood at the heart of the University's commitment to curiosity, discovery, and service. Today our network spans six countries and five campuses, uniting ten physical libraries, a vibrant Digital Scholarship Centre, and the University Archives. Together, these hubs provide seamless access to more than 200,000 print books, an expanding collection of 100,000 e-books, and a hundred specialised databases—resources that sustain the intellectual life of our students, faculty, and partners around the world.

This strategic plan for 2025-2029 charts the next stage of the journey for AKU's libraries. It sets ambitious yet achievable goals to deepen research impact, elevate teaching and learning, and preserve the University's institutional memory. It will lead to building responsive, multilingual collections; simplifying discovery across regions; and guiding investments in cutting-edge technologies that open new avenues for scholarship. Equitable access and lifelong learning will guide every decision, ensuring that our services remain inclusive and attuned to the diverse needs of the AKU community.

Underlying this plan is a renewed commitment to collaboration—within AKU and with global partners. By championing open scholarship, cultivating research partnerships, and nurturing innovative spaces and services, our libraries will advance knowledge that improves lives across the geographies we serve. These pages outline how we will steward our people, collections, and infrastructure to realize this vision. As Provost and Vice President, Academic, I invite our colleagues and stakeholders to join us in shaping libraries that not only keep pace with change, but lead it—libraries ready to inspire the next generation of scholars, clinicians, and leaders who will create a more just and enlightened world. I congratulate the hard work of Dr. Peter Gatiti and his team on this visionary strategic plan to take our libraries into the future.

Executive Summary

The Aga Khan University (AKU) Libraries network, comprising ten libraries, a Digital Scholarship Centre, and a University Archives, serves as a cornerstone for the University's academic, teaching, and research initiatives. Spanning six countries and five campuses, the libraries provide comprehensive access to a diverse array of information resources in both print and digital formats, supporting the University's mission to advance knowledge and learning. The AKU Libraries aspire to be leading research libraries with a significant global impact, collaborating with the University and wider communities in creating, preserving, and exploring knowledge.

The strategic plan for 2025-2029 focuses on enhancing research output and supporting teaching and learning at AKU. Key objectives include creating and delivering responsive, multi-format, multi-lingual collections that meet the needs of a diverse global user base; preserving the University's institutional memory; and simplifying access to and discovery of collections across all regions.

A commitment to excellence remains central, with a focus on continuously improving information resources and services, adopting cutting-edge technologies, ensuring equitable access to information, and promoting lifelong learning across diverse campuses. Furthermore, the plan seeks to foster meaningful engagement and knowledge exchange within AKU and with global partners while supporting scholarly initiatives, advancing teaching and learning, championing open scholarship, fostering research partnerships, and investing in resources and technologies that enhance academic excellence worldwide.

The plan seeks to build on the current print collection of books in the global library network that exceeds 200,000 volumes, over 100,000 subscription-based eBooks, and about 100 databases with access to millions of digital resources. The strategic initiatives outlined for 2025-2029 underscore the AKU Libraries' commitment to serving the University's global academic community with resources and services that foster growth in authorship, research, and publications. By focusing on responsive collections, innovative spaces and services, and organizational stewardship, the libraries aim to achieve future goals and ensure continued excellence in supporting AKU's mission.

The AKU global network of libraries supports students, staff, and faculty in their academic, teaching, and research endeavors. Through ten libraries, a Digital Scholarship Centre, and University Archives, the University Librarian's Office offers dynamic environments that support and enhance learning and research.



Libraries in Pakistan

- Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Karachi
- Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), Karachi
- Institute for Educational Development (IED), Karachi
- Professional Development Centre North (PDCN), Gilgit
- Professional Development Centre (PDCC), Chitral
- Digital Scholarship Centre (DSC), Karachi
- University Archives



Libraries in East Africa

- The Aga Khan University Nairobi (AKUL), Kenya
- Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
- Institute for Educational Development (IED), Dar es Salam, Tanzania
- Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), Kampala, Uganda



Library in United Kingdom

- Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (ISMC), London (Aga Khan Library)

Mission

We support the quest for knowledge by providing inclusive access to information, fostering lifelong learning, and partnering in transformative research and education across AKU's global network.

Mission Statement

The Aga Khan University Libraries provide equitable access to quality information resources that support teaching, learning, and research across a global network. We promote information literacy, ethical scholarship, and lifelong learning for students, faculty, and researchers.

We support the full research lifecycle, preserve institutional memory, and champion open access. Through inclusive spaces, expert services, and innovative technologies, we advance the University's mission to improve lives through knowledge and education.

Values

We value integrity, excellence, equity, innovation, collaboration, and service as the foundation of everything we do to support teaching, learning, research, and community engagement.

Vision

To be globally leading academic libraries advancing information discovery and access while supporting teaching, learning, research and the quest for knowledge.





Strategic Directions for 2025–2029

The following strategic directions will guide the Office of the University Librarian at The Aga Khan University to achieve its goals and follow its vision through personal values and commitments.

Advance Teaching, Learning, Research and Scholarship

AKU Libraries will lead in the rapidly evolving information landscape by advancing scholarly excellence and supporting teaching, learning, and research across all campuses.

- Advance Teaching, Learning, Research and Scholarship
- Provide Information Literacy programs that support Lifelong Learning
- Embed Library-Led Information Retrieval Skills in Undergraduate Curricula
- Advance Open Access Initiatives for greater global visibility
- Offer and deliver comprehensive Research Support Services

Engage with Communities

We will create meaningful engagement and knowledge exchange opportunities within AKU campuses and our international partners.

- Ensure access to information resources to all users without any discrimination.
- Promote lifelong learning across our diverse campuses
- Build and strengthen partnerships with national and international organizations
- Showcase the library's impact, achievements, and value across AKU's international network

Develop Responsive Collections

We will enrich and promote our diverse collections and provide the latest tools to access and discover these resources within and off campus, anywhere and anytime.

- Develop multi-format collections that meet the needs of a diverse, global user base
- Preserve the University's institutional memory and world-class collections with a global perspective
- Enhance preservation, access, and engagement with the University's art, archives, and gallery collections through digital initiatives and collaborations.
- Simplify access to and discovery of collections across all regions
- Continuously assess and improve collections to serve a global audience

Create Innovative Spaces and Services

We will evolve our physical and virtual spaces to meet the diverse needs of Library users across AKU campuses, ensuring services contribute to academic excellence.

- Reimagine library spaces and services to meet the evolving needs of our academic community
- Provide technology-rich spaces that inspire creativity in research, teaching, and learning across AKU campuses.
- Enhance the digital experience for a global audience
- Continuously innovate to improve Library services and address the needs of users worldwide

Steward AKU Libraries

Adopt international best practice through implementing academic librarians' faculty status, and developing competencies of other AKU libraries staff.

- Align procedures with our vision, mission, values, and global commitments
- Develop organizational agility to respond effectively to changing environments across campuses
- Promote transparency, accountability, and collegiality within our international network
- Foster a culture of professional development, mentorship, and continuous learning across all campuses
- Advance sustainable practices in our operations globally
- Strategically manage and invest in people and technology to support research, teaching, and learning across our international network.

Copyright and Digital Scholarship Services

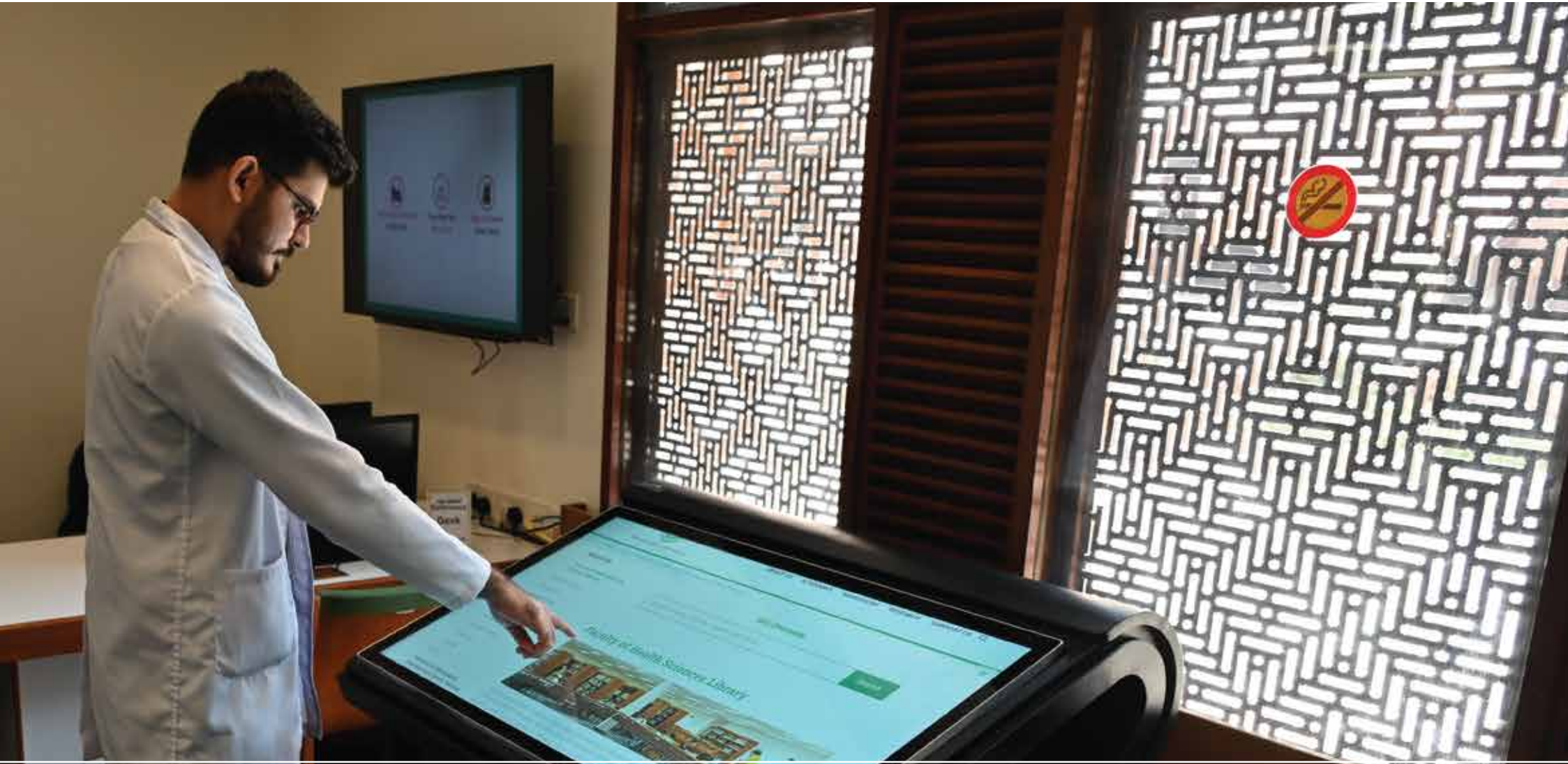
Promote respect for copyright while advancing digital scholarship, and equip learning commons with emerging technologies.

- Ensure Copyright Compliance at AKU
- Encourage Fair Use through Creative Commons Licensing
- Enhancing Digital Scholarship Services
- Strengthening Teaching & Learning Commons

Establish Evidence Synthesis Services

To position AKU Libraries as a leading partner in evidence synthesis by expanding services, building internal capacity, and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration across the university.

- Implement Evidence Synthesis Services in all Disciplines
- Build Internal Capacity and Expertise
- Strengthen Research Collaboration and Partnerships
- Develop Resources and Tools to Support Researchers
- Monitor, Evaluate, and Communicate Impact



Advance Teaching,
Learning and Research

A photograph of a diverse group of students in a modern lecture hall. In the foreground, a young woman with glasses and a green shawl is speaking into a black microphone. She is gesturing with her right hand. To her left, another woman in a blue floral dress is partially visible. In the background, several other students are seated, some looking towards the speaker and others looking down. The setting appears to be a contemporary educational environment with large windows and modern furniture.

**In a rapidly evolving
information landscape,
AKU Libraries will lead
globally, enhancing
scholarship across all
forms.**

Advance Teaching, Learning, and Research:

We will enhance teaching and learning experiences across all AKU campuses by providing resources and support that foster transformational education. This includes integrating innovative technologies, offering instructional support, and developing programmes that cater to diverse learning styles. We aim to create environments that enable faculty and students to engage deeply with their subjects and advocate the uptake of evidence-based practice across all the disciplines.

Champion Quality Research and Evidence-Based Practices:

AKU Libraries will take a leading role in promoting and advancing open access practices. We will collaborate with researchers, institutions, and open-access platforms to increase the visibility and accessibility of research outputs. By supporting open access initiatives and sharing knowledge openly, we will contribute to the global academic community and ensure that our research is accessible to a wider audience. We will provide state-of-the-art services, resources, and facilities, enhancing researchers' abilities to publish and present their work in high-quality journals and conferences. Additionally, we will compile and promote the scholarly output of our researchers. We shall provide academic writing support services to increase their publication acceptance rate.

Build strong research partnerships across our entities:

We will build and nurture robust partnerships with researchers, academic institutions, and other stakeholders throughout the research process. This involves collaborating on research projects, providing relevant resources to researchers

Invest in collections and cutting-edge technologies that support research and learning on a global scale:

We will continually enhance our collections and technologies to support research and learning. This includes acquiring new information resources, upgrading technological infrastructure, and implementing advanced tools.

We will adapt to the evolving needs of students and faculty, creating a dynamic, comfortable, and collaborative environment. To ensure relevance and quality, our physical and digital collections will be continuously evaluated and updated based on usage statistics, feedback, and the needs of the university community.



Engage with
Communities

We will create opportunities for meaningful engagement and knowledge exchange within AKU Global and with external partners across AKU campuses.



Ensure global accessibility to library resources for all users:

AKU Libraries will proactively develop and support initiatives that connect with campus and external partners across AKU's global network. This includes organizing collaborative events, workshops, and lectures that facilitate the sharing of knowledge and ideas among faculty, students, and the academic community. We aim to create interactive forums that enhance educational experiences and promote dialogue across all AKU campuses.

Enrich the quality of life in local and international communities through outreach:

We are committed to ensuring that library resources are accessible to everyone, regardless of their campus location or background. This involves implementing user-friendly digital access systems, providing remote access to databases and digital collections, and ensuring that physical spaces are accessible to all individuals, either they are students, faculty, staff or visitors with special requests. We will also offer resources in multiple formats to meet the diverse needs of our international community.

Build and strengthen partnerships with global organizations and institutions:

We will foster a culture of continuous learning by providing a range of educational opportunities for all age groups across our campuses. This could involve hosting seminars, training sessions, and public lectures that cater to diverse interests and levels of expertise. By offering access to various learning resources and opportunities, we aim to support professional growth for AKU community. We will seek partnerships that align with our mission and values, working collaboratively on projects that benefit all involved. These relationships will enhance our ability to deliver valuable services and extend our impact across our global network. We will strengthen collaboration and partnerships by emphasizing ongoing professional development for our staff, ensuring they remain leaders in academic and library sciences.

Promote lifelong learning across our diverse campuses:

AKU University Libraries will actively contribute to the well-being of local communities by engaging in service projects and outreach programmes tailored to each campus's regional context. This includes offering educational programmes, workshops, and events that address local needs and interests. By collaborating with local organizations, we will support community development, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning in each campus's surrounding area. We aim to provide capacity building and support to other libraries and benchmarking opportunities.

Showcase the Library's impact, achievements, and value across AKU's international network:

To highlight the library's impact and significance, we will actively promote our successes, innovations, and contributions. This involves sharing stories of how the library has made a difference, showcasing achievements, and communicating our value to both the university community and the public. We will utilize various platforms, including social media, annual reports, and events, to keep stakeholders engaged with the library's activities and accomplishments. Develop and implement an ongoing assessment of AKU research impact, including bibliometric analysis and altmetric.

We will celebrate annual Authors' Day events to showcase the works authored by AKU faculty and students, providing a platform for them to engage with the community. Through these initiatives, the library will play a central role in fostering a vibrant and engaged community, contributing to the educational and cultural enrichment of both the university and the broader public across all AKU campuses.



Create and Deliver Responsive Collections

A group of people, primarily Black women, are gathered around a long table covered with numerous books. They are in a well-lit, modern building with a brick wall and a sign that reads "Kusumali A. Sonji Auditorium". The people are looking at the books, some holding them. The scene suggests a book fair or a library event. A green semi-transparent box with white text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

We will enhance and promote our diverse collections, providing innovative tools for research, synthesis, and discovery across our global campuses.

Develop multi-format collections that meet the needs of a diverse, global user base:

We will develop and maintain collections in multiple formats tailored to the diverse needs of users at our campuses. This approach ensures that each campus has access to relevant and comprehensive resources that reflect their unique academic and cultural contexts.

Preserve the University's institutional memory with a global perspective:

We will protect the University's institutional memory and the library's special collections by utilizing our archives section. This includes digitizing historical materials and preserving physical documents to maintain the continuity of AKU's rich academic heritage across all locations. Our digitization efforts at University Archives and an ambitious Oral History Project will protect the university's rich heritage by capturing the voices and experiences of those who have shaped its legacy. This will ensure that our archives remain accessible for future generations and provide valuable resources for researchers and historians.

Simplify access to and discovery of collections across all regions:

We will streamline processes to make our collections more discoverable and accessible to users at all campuses. This includes maintaining a unified, intuitive catalog system and implementing cross-campus digital access solutions to facilitate seamless use of resources regardless of location.

Continuously assess and improve collections to serve a global audience:

We will regularly assess our collections to ensure they meet the evolving needs of our international user base. This involves gathering feedback from all campuses, analyzing usage patterns, and incorporating new materials that reflect emerging trends and global research priorities.

Collaborate with campus partners worldwide to reflect and address the legacy of AKU:

We will engage with faculty, researchers, and administrators at our campuses to understand and address the legacy of AKU since its inception. By collaborating with campus partners, we will identify and integrate region-specific resources and historical content, enriching our collections with diverse perspectives and enhancing their relevance to our global academic community.



Create Innovative
Spaces and Services



We will evolve our physical and virtual spaces to meet the diverse needs of Library users across our campuses, ensuring services contribute to academic distinction and best practices.

CLINICALKEY STUDY
THE BEST SUPPORT FOR YOUR STUDY

YOUR medical articles
have access to

Create your personal

Scan to



Now bookmark
enjoy ClinicalKey

www.clinicalkey.com

www.clinicalkey.com

Reimagine library spaces and services to meet the evolving needs of our international community:

In line with emerging library trends we shall create space that will enhance user experience. The libraries will be designed keeping in mind how modern libraries look like and create an exclusive feel for the students and researchers.

Create technology-driven spaces that enhance creativity in research, teaching, and learning across AKU campuses:

AKU shall implement RFID on campuses with the goal to install the system on all AKU campuses for a seamless check-out system and efficient inventory management. We will create technology driven spaces that would provide full support to bring out creative approaches to research, teaching, and learning. With the installation of the latest tools, we would enhance the learning experience and facilitate innovation and findings. Collaborative and individual learning spaces will be designed keeping in mind modern design making it efficient and welcoming to the users.

Provide an online experience connecting global AKU:

We will enhance digital platforms and invest in databases which would be user friendly and give a robust learning environment to our users. We will implement one system across all the AKU libraries, including Library Management System, Institutional Repository, Discovery Service, off-campus access platform, live chat service, library website and Library guides. We will lead the way in digital transformation and innovation by establishing state of the art facilities with modern technologies.

Continue to improve library services and address user needs promptly:

We will maintain quality library structures and spaces in line with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) standards and comply with AKU environmental sustainability goals in all library buildings. Regular assessment of services and surveys will be conducted to seek user experience and feedback and incorporate findings. The goal is to make sure the users are receiving the best library environment and academic innovation while using spaces in the library.



Steward AKU Libraries



**Adopt international
best practice through
implementing
academic librarians'
faculty status, and
developing
competencies of other
AKU libraries staff.**

EXCELLENCE

INNOVATION

Strengthen staff competencies to ensure academic excellence and leadership:

We will continue implementing academic faculty status for librarians across the global library network, aligning roles with scholarly services, teaching and research contributions as outlined in the 2024 AKU libraries Appointments and Promotions Guidelines.

Foster a culture of academic librarianship:

We will position AKU librarians as active academic contributors by supporting their scholarly work, professional practice, and engagement in university governance. We will ensure that library staff with faculty ranks are actively involved in teaching information literacy (IL) embedded in curriculum across AKU programmes.

Develop a culture of mentorship:

As a global network of libraries, we aim to develop a robust group of librarians who are continuously learning and are role models and mentors to their colleagues. Opportunities will be provided for staff to pursue skills and enhance their professional excellence to match the international academic ladder.

Enhance staff capacity through continuous professional development:

We will develop the skills and knowledge of all library staff to meet evolving institutional needs and prepare them for academic roles. We will encourage our library professionals to enhance their skills for the betterment of the organization. We will engage them to share their skillset with other librarians across campuses. We will continue to recruit from the best of the pool.



Copyright and Digital Scholarship Services



Ensure Copyright Compliance at AKU:

We will implement comprehensive measures to ensure that all activities at The Aga Khan University (AKU) comply with copyright laws. This includes regular training sessions for faculty and staff on copyright regulations and best practices for using and sharing educational materials. Our goal is to foster an environment where respect for intellectual property is paramount. Workshops and seminars will also be organized to enhance understanding and compliance.

Encourage Fair Use through Creative Commons Licensing :

We aim to promote a culture of fair use by advocating for the adoption of Creative Commons licenses. These licenses provide a flexible range of protections and freedoms for authors, allowing them to share their work while retaining certain rights. By facilitating access to resources under these licenses, we will empower educators and students to utilize materials in innovative ways.

Enhancing Digital Scholarship Services :

To bolster our digital scholarship initiatives, we will create a range of dynamic educational materials, including research posters, illustrations, video podcast, flyers, brochures, and other teaching and training resources. These materials will empower our community to effectively promote and showcase their educational activities. Our focus will be on producing high-quality teaching and learning content while documenting events through professional photography and video recordings to enrich the university archive. Additionally, we will assist in the digital design and printing of these materials to ensure they are visually appealing and impactful. We will also provide training on content production tools to enhance the capacity of our scholars.

Strengthening Teaching & Learning Commons:

We will enhance the Teaching & Learning Commons by maintaining facilities such as a digital board and multimedia screens, while also integrating a virtual reality experience. To further support our scholars, we will establish a media gadgets unit that will allow them to borrow essential equipment for independent digital content production. Moreover, we are considering the inclusion of 3D printing, immersive virtual reality, and robotics technology to align with global practices and foster creativity and learning within our community.



Establish Evidence Synthesis Services



Implement Evidence Synthesis Services in all Disciplines:

To effectively assess demand across various faculties for systematic, scoping, and other types of evidence reviews, it is essential to pilot cross-disciplinary support, particularly in education, social sciences, and emerging fields. This initiative can help in understanding the unique needs and challenges faced by different academic disciplines. In turn, tailored service models should be developed to cater specifically to these diverse areas of study. To ensure clarity and ease of access, a clear framework outlining the services offered is necessary. This framework should include comprehensive information on consultation, training, and support available for both faculty and students, fostering an environment that encourages evidence-based research and collaboration

Build Internal Capacity and Expertise :

To enhance our research capabilities, we propose the creation of a dedicated team of experts specializing in evidence synthesis methodologies, including systematic reviews, meta-analyses, and scoping reviews. This team will be responsible for training researchers in advanced techniques, tools, and databases related to evidence synthesis. Additionally, we aim to foster internal communities of practice and mentorship to support ongoing learning and collaboration in this field. To ensure effective collaboration, we will also establish clear guidelines and workflows that define the roles and involvement of librarians in review projects.

Strengthen Research Collaboration and Partnerships:

Positioning librarians as co-investigators or knowledge synthesis partners in grant proposals is essential for fostering effective research outcomes. By facilitating partnerships between researchers and information specialists early in the research process, institutions can leverage the unique expertise of librarians in managing and synthesizing information. Additionally, promoting librarian contributions through co-authorship in published reviews not only acknowledges their vital role in the research ecosystem but also enhances the overall quality and credibility of the findings. This collaborative approach can significantly enrich the research experience and outcomes for all involved.

Develop Resources and Tools to Support Researchers:

To enhance research capabilities, it is essential to create comprehensive research guides, templates, and training workshops that support researchers at various stages. This initiative should integrate evidence synthesis support throughout the research lifecycle, including critical phases such as grant writing, ethics review, and publishing. Additionally, establishing a digital hub for evidence synthesis resources on the library website will provide easy access to valuable materials, ensuring that researchers can utilize the best practices and tools available to them.

Monitor, Evaluate, and Communicate Impact:

To effectively enhance library engagement in evidence synthesis, it is essential to track library-supported reviews along with their citations, funding outcomes, and policy influence. Collecting feedback from researchers will help refine the services offered, ensuring they meet the evolving needs of the research community. Moreover, showcasing success stories can illustrate the tangible value of library involvement in evidence synthesis projects. Staying informed about advancements in evidence synthesis methodologies is also crucial; this knowledge allows libraries to adjust their services accordingly, maintaining relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly changing landscape.

The background of the slide is a photograph of a library. On the right side, there are tall wooden bookshelves filled with books, many of which have red spines. On the left side, a person wearing a white lab coat is partially visible, with their hand reaching towards a book. A large, semi-transparent green shape, resembling a stylized leaf or a book cover, is overlaid on the left side of the image.

Conclusion

The strategic directions give a perspective of the Office of the University Librarian's continued commitment and optimism to serve the AKU global academic entities with service and resources that will support teaching, learning, research and scholarship. The 2025-2029 AKU library strategic plan will pave the way for achieving future library goals and ensuring continued excellence.



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