

Aga Khan University
Postgraduate Medical Education - EA
Residency Selection Policy

Preamble

Selection seems deceptively easy if there are more applicants than places as you could simply choose the best applicants. In practice, it is rather more complex especially since we have clearly stated that our programmes select for attainment of excellence in communication skills, scholarship, professional, leadership, team-work and health promotion. The straight forward tendency is to choose the best student. This however is commonly interpreted to mean 'most knowledgeable' and therefore hides many subtleties and complexities. For example, medical schools, including AKU, are developing courses which require learning in small groups and may prefer students who work together cooperatively rather than competitively. Selecting on a single criterion such as intellectual ability would likely lose out to such qualities.

The PGME programmes have over the past four years adequately piloted tools that select for defined "canonical traits" that are mentioned above. These traits are deemed to be able to determine future professional behavior. A framework for stability of selection is now proposed for adoption by all PGME-EA programmes. The summary is listed in table 1.

The policy

The following tools will be utilized during the selection process:

1. **Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ):** A generic broad-based knowledge MCQ will be administered to all candidates. There is a need to administer a high quality, valid pre-admission paper that tests application of knowledge expected after completion of medical internship. Blue-printing will be done at the level of expected learning outcomes of an MBChB/MBBS graduate. An assessment committee shall review the quality of the paper before it is administered. The cut score shall be determined by standard setting, which must be attained in order for candidates to proceed to the next level of selection interviewing. This is consistent with the approved PASS/FAIL criterion that is in practice for PGME-EA examinations.
2. **Article Critique:** A generic article for critique testing comprehension and interpretation of information shall be administered. A standard marking sheet will be used to rate candidates' short answer responses following this critical analysis exercise.
3. **Ethical Scenario:** Each programme shall administer an ethical dilemma that further evaluates communication skills within a team and ability to think clearly around ethical challenges. The administered challenge should be discussed by the candidates in small groups, which will be observed and rated by selected faculty in accordance with the laid down criteria in the group interaction dimension of the selection tool.

4. **Panel interviews:** To be conducted by competent and trained interviewers using a clear structure. During this process, the candidate's statement of intent and curriculum vitae (CV) will be probed.

This statement of intent, together with the CV will be used to determine the candidate's motivation and experience of medicine as a career. Faculty will have an opportunity to review these statements beforehand and define carefully constructed descriptors of the various characteristics to be explored during panel interviews of the shortlisted candidates. The statement of intent therefore provides an opportunity for applicants to defend their interests expressed in the statement and CV during panel interviews; and opens up a focused discussion with interviewers on specific issues.

Table 1

SNo.	Generic Requirements	Notes
1	Exclude incomplete applications	Accompanying documents MUST include: (a) Statement of Intent (b) Detailed CV (c) Certified copies of Medical School transcripts (d) Certified photocopies of degrees held (e) Certified copy of MPDB license or temporary license (f) Two passport size photographs (g) Original bank slip of application fee
2	MCQ	Administer generic MCQ to all for short-listing. The paper will have a predetermined cut score. At least 10 or 25% of candidates – whichever is higher, who pass the test will proceed to the next phase of interviews. The administered test shall not contribute to final tally of score.
3	Article Critique	A generic article will be administered to all shortlisted candidates. This will be marked and rated by faculty using a standard answer sheet.
4	Ethical Dilemma/Group Interaction	Shortlisted candidates will be presented with an ethical/case scenario in small groups (maximum 5-6) to discuss. Faculty will observe and rate each individual in the group.
5	Panel to one Interview	2 interview panels each consisting of 3 interviewers. Each candidate will be interviewed by both panels. Panelists will post individual ratings and not consensus ratings.
6	The Selection Score Sheet (SSS)	A standardized reporting format will be used.
7	Successful candidates plus reserve list by rank order	Compiled at the end of the interview and submitted by the Program Director to the Director Postgraduate Medical Education and copied to the Chair of the Department.
8	Notification	All successful, waitlisted and unsuccessful candidates are notified after approval of the selection process by the BGS.