



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION

RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR DISSERTATION

February 2022

POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) programme at Aga Khan University (AKU) offers training for award of Master of Medicine (MMed) in different specialties as approved by the university Academic Council and the national regulatory authorities.

The overall implementation of the MMed programmes is the responsibility of the Dean, Medical College; the Associate Dean, Medical Education; departmental chairs who are also the Chief Internal Examiners, and all of who constitute the Medical College Faculty Council (MCFC). Program Directors and coordinators from all specialties make up the Postgraduate Medical Education Committee (PGMEC) charged with the day to day educational and clinical training activities. Each specialty has a standing Departmental Residency Training Committee (DRTC) comprised of faculty and student representatives. The DRTC coordinates the residency affairs of their respective departments.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AKU	Aga Khan University
CIE	Chief Internal Examiner
CITI	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
DBE	Departmental Board of Examiners
DDC	Departmental Dissertation Committee
DRC	Departmental Research Committee
DRTC	Departmental Residency Training Committee
DSC	Dissertation Standard Sub-Committee
FBE	Faculty Board of Examiners
ISERC	Institutional Scientific Ethics and Research Committee
KMPDC	Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council
MBChB	Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery
MCFC	Medical College Faculty Council
MMed	Master of Medicine
PD	Programme Director
PDF	Portable Document Format
PGME	Postgraduate Medical Education
PGMEC	Postgraduate Medical Education Committee
SRC	Scientific Research Committee
RO	Research Office

RULES AND REGULATIONS GOVERNING DISSERTATIONS IN THE POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

These Rules and Regulations are intended to guide Master of Medicine (MMed) residents, faculty and academic support staff on common and specific issues governing dissertations that are a part of the requirements for fulfillment for award of the MMed degree. The Rules and Regulations are presented in three sections: Section A covers the dissertation management process; Section B deals with the marking guidelines while Section C outlines the recommended format. Appendices of related University policies and applicable forms are included at the end of this document.

SECTION A

1.0 DISSERTATION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

1.1 Background

Successful completion of a dissertation is mandatory for all residents enrolled in the Postgraduate Medical Education Master of Medicine programme in East Africa. The time for design and execution of dissertation is provided for from the first to the fourth year of training in each programme. Residents are expected to have completed their study by end of the first quarter of their fourth year of study.

Where the words 'Thesis' and 'Theses' are used in this document for MMed Programmes they refer to 'Dissertation' and 'Dissertations' respectively.

1.2 General Regulations

- a) All students will be required to undertake and pass the recommended CITI modules before commencement of their dissertations. The transcripts and certificates following successful completion of the course must be submitted to the Academic Office.
- b) Monitoring process of ongoing research work related to dissertation shall be done in accordance with established Scientific Research Committee (SRC) guidelines.
- c) Each student should keep an up to date record of the *Dissertation Supervision Log* (Appendix V) during the course of their thesis writing, documenting all interactions with their supervisors and agreed action.

- d) The Departmental Dissertations Committee (DDC) and the Departmental Residency Training Committee (DRTC) will be responsible for ensuring compliance with dissertation timelines and maintenance of supervision/mentorship logs under oversight of Program Directors. The dissertation supervision log shall be submitted to the DRTC at the end of each academic year, and a copy sent to the Academic Office.
- e) References of reviewed literature shall be made in APA referencing style.
- f) The dissertation:
 - i. Shall be a paper of high standard and include an original research study.
 - ii. In addition to studies based on acquisition of original data, may include certain projects utilizing secondary data. Examples include case control studies where available records are sufficient to answer the research questions; data mining such as epidemiologic or genomic data; or scholarly reviews including systematic reviews and meta-analyses. In all cases, the choice of field of study must demonstrate applicable utility and high methodological rigor to demonstrate deep learning in research design, execution, analysis, and documentation. Designs may include either qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches, depending on research questions to be addressed. In each case, care should be taken to choose a supervisor(s) with expertise in the selected area of research.
 - iii. Shall be presented for critique at departmental level, research seminar series forums and in any other sessions as desired.
- g) Submission, assessment and recognition of outstanding work shall be based on approved university guidelines.
- h) A PDF soft copy version of the final dissertation, which includes research findings, shall be submitted for marking to the Academic Office by the end of March in the fourth year of study. The word limit for the dissertation should be no more than 15,000 words.
- i) Resubmission to the external examiner in the case of dissertation work marked as approved with major corrections shall be done only once. Those marked with minor corrections will not be resubmitted to the external examiners, but the recommended corrections will be effected by the candidates and approved by the supervisors.

- j) A candidate shall only be allowed to sit Part II examinations if his/her dissertation results have been presented at a University organised forum such as the Faculty Academic Rounds symposium and has been passed by the examiner(s). In addition, the candidate must show evidence of publication submission; or acceptance of their manuscript for publication in a credible or AKU approved journal.
- k) The final dissertation shall be presented to the Dissertations Standard Sub-Committee (DSC) for review, before submission to the Academic Office through the CIE for archiving. All source documents, including but not limited to questionnaires, consent forms and interview transcriptions must be surrendered to the Research Office for archiving before graduation.
- l) The General Guidelines for PhD and Masters Theses / Dissertations at AKU (Appendix II) apply.

1.3 Dissertation Writing Process

- a) The resident will develop the concept note, which will be approved by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC). The Concept note for the chosen study should have been developed by the end of the first year of study.
- b) On approval of the concept note, the resident proceeds to develop the study proposal under guidance of the Departmental Dissertation Committee (DDC). The full proposal outline shall be presented to the DBE and/or other forums by March of second year, before submission to the DSC and the Institutional Scientific and Ethics and Research (ISERC).
- c) Students will only proceed with the research after a written approval from the DSC and the ISERC.
- d) Subsequent development of research, including data collection, analysis, discussion of results and conclusions shall be undertaken under supervision of the Departmental Dissertation Committee (DDC).
- e) The finalised research work shall be forwarded to the Research Committee. In all respects, the role of the Research Committee will be advisory to the DDC. The Research Committee shall at all times submit copies of its review reports to ISERC highlighting matters of ethical concern. The Ethics Committee may however determine when to

seek opinion of Research Committee on methodological merit where the study is grossly flawed as to compromise the ethical integrity.

1.4 Supervision

- a) Dissertations shall have minimum of two and a maximum of four supervisors. The role of each supervisor should be justified to the CIE.
- b) It is the responsibility of the CIE and the DDC to guide residents on identification of suitably qualified supervisors for their dissertation projects. The Chair will approve the selected supervisor(s) in conformity with the *SRC Eligibility Criteria for Supervisors* to ascertain compliance with SRC and these dissertation guidelines.
- c) The primary supervisor shall be a full time AKU employee and considered to be the Principal Investigator for the study, and qualified as per SRC guidelines. Such a supervisor shall also, ideally, be the content expert. As the lead mentor for the body of work, such a person in any event should have demonstrated competence and ability to provide high quality supervision.
- d) The primary supervisor will be indicated as first supervisor on the dissertation. S/he shall advise the CIE on choice of other supervisors or substitution in the best interest for success of the work.
- e) Additional supervisors will be selected on the basis of need for strengthening the supervisory team, such as a second supervisor with competencies in methodology; or technical support in diagnostics; or in a specific research field. The additional supervisors shall be from within or outside the department, or be a person external to AKU in cases where the required competences are lacking internally. The additional supervisors are expected to undertake their supervisory roles as per their qualifications and as defined by SRC and approved by the CIE.
- f) Residents shall be allowed to propose dissertation supervisors provided the choice is consistent with the stipulated University guidelines and is approved by the CIE.
- g) Any change of supervisor/s will require approval of the CIE in accordance with SRC guidelines.

- h) All the supervisors of a candidate plus the CIE form the Departmental Dissertation Committee responsible for guiding the process of execution of dissertation project to successful conclusion.

1.5 Methodology support

- a) The University will endeavor to provide additional forums to support research methodology capacity development, critique and synthesis of study protocols; and results and publication.
- b) The SRC and Academic Office will maintain a register of approved methodology supervisors based on agreed criteria of merit. This will include methodology training qualifications and/or scientific publication track record showing ability to supervise and mentor students in research related activities. The SRC will from time to time update its inventory of approved supervisors and research training requirements for residents and supervisors.

1.6 Endorsement, marking and submission

- a) Dissertations shall only be submitted for marking with approval of all the supervisors. Endorsement by the CIE. A note to the Associate Dean, Medical Education will be required as confirmation that the DRC is satisfied with the quality of work submitted.
- b) PDF soft copy of the finalized dissertation shall be submitted for marking. The submission shall include a *Turnitin* report of the similarity index, and the work should meet the approved similarity threshold.
- c) A dissertation shall be marked by at least two examiners, one of who should be an external examiner.
- d) An independent examiner with acknowledged research and supervision experience appointed by the CIE, following advice of the SRC, shall be asked to arbitrate in cases where one examiner passes and the other fails a dissertation. The recommendations of the independent reviewer shall final and binding.
- e) Dissertations will only be declared as “pass” if passed by two examiners.
- f) Final dissertation submission shall be accompanied by a letter of acknowledgement of submission receipt or acceptance for publication as evidence for manuscript submission to a peer review journal, along with a copy of the submission.

- g) **A PDF** soft copy of the final dissertation shall be submitted to the Academic Office and the bound **hard copy** deposited in the AKU Library.

1.7 Authorship

A candidate will be the first author and the primary supervisor the corresponding and last author. Exceptions will need to be justified to the CIE for approval in compliance with AKU Authorship Policy (*Appendix VII*) guidelines who will otherwise demand acceptable explanation.

SECTION B

2.0 MARKING GUIDELINES

2.1 Background

The Aga Khan University, Postgraduate Medical Education MMed programme is based on dissertation and course work. The University requires critical and comprehensive review of dissertations.

2.2 Requirements

Finalised dissertations must comply with current *General Guidelines for PhD and Master's Theses / Dissertations at AKU* (Appendix III). These include:

- a) Adherence to the approved, pre-defined format, including references.
- b) Abstracts of dissertations must be structured with sub-headings: Introduction, Objectives/Research Question, Methods (population, design, intervention and outcome/s of interest, analysis), Results, Conclusions and Recommendations.
- c) Correction for any typographical errors. Extremely long or short sentences should be avoided and one should not start sentences with figures. Paragraphs should stand independently and should have a minimum of two sentences, at the least.
- d) Signatures of all the supervisors must be appended before submission for marking.
- e) Ethical/Scientific Committee approval/report must be appended.

2.3 Expected originality and quality of Work

- a) It should be evident that study addresses a new research question, which helps to fill an important knowledge gap and not “research for the sake of research”.
- b) It Should be self-evident as to what clinical or public health contribution the findings will make.
- c) The study should be of high enough quality to warrant publication in a peer reviewed journal as judged by independent reviewers; and as advised by the DDC.

2.4 Literature Review

- a) The literature review should demonstrate command of the area of content and ability to differentiate good quality from bad quality publications. Emphasis should be reliance on quality of cited material rather than quantity.
- b) There should be logical flow of presentation starting from broad to narrow problem context that terminates in persuasive study justification (study rationale) on the basis of demonstrated knowledge gap in the subject matter.
- c) To the extent that information is available, there should be citations of searches from reputable and credible peer-reviewed databases like *Cochrane Library or Best Evidence, Pubmen, Medline, Scopus, Google scholar, WHO Library Information System (WHOLIS) and Index Medicus*, among others.

2.5 Study Question/Objectives

- a) Failure or success of a research study is based on ability to answer research questions or effectively meet the study objectives.
- b) The more focused the question/objective, the more likely to succeed and meet necessary methodological rigor.
- c) All study sections from Introduction to Conclusions must be consistent with the objectives.
- d) Objectives must not be changed “mid-stream” as they are determined *a priori* (well in advance). Changing the objectives mid-stream would increase the likelihood of scientific deceit unless the choice of methodology so allows and has had prior approval of scientific and ethics committee.

2.6 Methodology

The methods must be complete and clearly demonstrate how the study was carried out from beginning to end. The following sections must be clearly defined with respect to the study:

- a) Definition of study design chosen (should be ideal for research question or otherwise satisfactorily justified).
- b) Study site
- c) Study population
- d) Inclusion and exclusion criteria (eligibility criteria)

- e) Sampling procedures
- f) Study duration
- g) Group allocation where applicable
- h) Data collection procedures
- i) Diagnostic criteria for exposure and outcome variables
- j) Objective criteria for documentation of all important study outcomes
- k) Gold standard (where applicable)
- l) Data analysis plan and the statistical methods used for each specific and secondary objectives;
- m) Sample size computation and justification of estimates used; there should be distinction between statistical and clinical significance
- n) Evidence of ethical approval obtained.

2.7 Results

The results should be presented in an organized manner. This section presents the results and places them in the context of other literature; with a focus on the study objectives to demonstrate if study objectives have been met, and if not, why not. The discussion of results should be comprised of:

- a) Tabulations and illustration of baseline characteristics, with accurate labeling and computations
- b) Analytical methods used
- c) Appropriate use of descriptive statistics – e.g. means, medians, chi square tests, multi-variate and univariate analysis.
- d) Appropriate use of illustrations with accurate descriptions, labeling and computations.
- e) Indicators of levels of precision (e.g. 95% confidence intervals, SD, SE etc.)

2.8 Discussion

The discussion should place the findings into the context of existing literature, including a synthesis of any contradictions or unexpected findings. The section should:

- a) Focus on the study objectives to demonstrate if study objectives are met – and if not, why not.

- b) Answer research question(s) convincingly, and address the objective of the study.

2.9 Conclusions and Recommendations

The study should refer to own findings and interpret them in the context of what is known or expected; and identify and discuss consistencies and inconsistencies in data. Conclusions and Recommendations should be based on own study findings rather than recital of the study findings. It should include a statement on overall implications of the findings and their utility, including suggestions for further work to progress the field

2.10 References

The writer should ensure that all references and citations used are accurate and up to date.

- a) The references should include latest journal citations to demonstrate candidate's ability to keep abreast with current knowledge.
- b) The references should be consistent with the recommended style guide.
- c) Students should use APA style of referencing

2.11 Dissertation Evaluation Form



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

**Faculty of Health Sciences
Postgraduate Medical Education, East Africa**

Dissertation Evaluation Form

Registration Number of Candidate:

..... **Title of Dissertation: Supervisors:**

	Name
First	
Second	
Third	

Please frankly state whether the dissertation is:

Tick as appropriate

Approved without correction	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved with minor corrections	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved with major revision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not approved for Masters degree work	<input type="checkbox"/>

P.T.O for descriptors of standards for assessment

Comments: Kindly attach an unsigned separate review structured as follows:

- a. *Brief summary of dissertation as you understand it as an examiner.*
- b. *Itemized specific comments indicating location in dissertation by page, line, table number etc., and paragraph for ease of reference to authenticate the checked remarks above.*
- c. *Conclusions & recommendations.*

Name and signature of Examiner:

Date:

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Descriptors of Standards for Assessment

Passed Dissertation:

A passed dissertation would have the following minimum characteristics:

- Appropriate research question/topic capable of being researched in available time.
- Literature review clearly connected with the problem statement.
- Methods and techniques suited to the research question.
- Evidence of some ability to describe the process of implementing the study and any challenges encountered, events/incidents and reflect upon them with some critical awareness.
- Data analysed to sufficient degree to support acceptable conclusions and awareness of powers of methodology and conclusions.
- Basic clarity, focus and competence in organization and presentation of arguments and conclusions.

Minor Revisions include the following:

- Instances of incorrect referencing.
- Instances of spelling, grammar, line spacing and syntax errors.
- Overall, the work has all requisite data collected in an acceptable manner but falls short in final presentation of the materials in an acceptable scientific format. Readily amenable to editing and formatting within one week.

Major Revisions include:

- Limited range of sources consulted at literature review.
- No major methodological flaw but requires substantial time to revise flow and presentation of the write up or re-analysis of data which is already available.
- Incomplete presentation of findings.
- Available/presented data analysed but less extensively and only partly supports the conclusions and recommendations.
- Organization and presentation of arguments including use of language require improvement.

Failed Dissertation:

A failed dissertation would have the following predominant characteristics:

- Research and topic/question limited and aimed primarily at describing events/incidents.
- Limited use of literature and evidence of misunderstanding of arguments in literature.
- Findings are not well supported, self-centered writing lacking insightful observations.
- Inadequate or confused interpretation of data.
- Unawareness of the power and limitations of methodology and conclusions.
- Poorly organized and unfocussed presentation of arguments and conclusions. Conclusions unconvincing.

Has major unredeemable methodological flaws, revision of such magnitude as would not be correctable within available time, evident non-factual information bordering on falsification or deficit in accomplishment of projected sample size that renders power too low for justification of conclusions. There is considered not to be sufficient time for more recruitment to redeem the situation.

SECTION C

3.0 DISSERTATION FORMAT

3.1 Title page

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

Type the name of Department, Faculty / Institute

Type the title of your dissertation in capital letters (bold)

By

Type candidate's name in capital letters

(if desired state qualifications or distinction)

A dissertation submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
[fill in the title of the degree]

City / Country

Date (Day, Month, Year)

3.2 Acknowledgement Section

“ACKNOWLEDGEMENT”

First of all, I am grateful to my supervisor _____, whose scholarly advice, help and constant encouragement have contributed significantly to the completion of this study.

I wish to thank my Dissertation Committee members for their critical input for my study.

I also wish to thank the management, staff, faculty members, and my fellow residents for their invaluable input and for being a great source of support to me during my study.

I am appreciative of the services of _____ who assisted in the proofreading and editing of my paper and to _____ and _____ who assisted with formatting and other technical aspects.

My gratitude to the library staff as well as _____ for their support. [You may want to acknowledge any family members or special friends here]

Thank you all

3.3 Declaration Section

DECLARATION

I declare this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and that to the best of my knowledge it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference have been made in the text.

[If editorial assistance has been obtained, the following should be added]:

The editorial assistance provided to me has in no way added to the substance of my dissertation which is the product of my own research endeavours.

(Signature of candidate)

Date

3.4 Approval

Aga Khan University

Type the name of Department, Faculty / Institute

Submitted to the Medical College Faculty Council
in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Medicine in *[fill in the title of the degree]*

Members of the Departmental Dissertation Committee who vetted the dissertation of

[Type candidate's name in capital letters]

find it satisfactory and recommended that it be submitted for evaluation by external
examiners

Signature

Name (printed and underlined) Chief Internal Examiner

Signature

Name (printed and underlined) Supervisor

Signature

Name (printed and underlined) Supervisor

Signature

Name (printed and underlined) Supervisor

Date (day, month, year)

3.5 Abstract

The abstract should present a brief summary of the study, thereby allowing readers a glimpse of what the dissertation has accomplished. The abstract should provide sufficient information regarding the main aim and objectives of the investigation; the context and background to the research conducted; the main methods of study and a summary of the results and findings; as well as the main conclusions and recommendations that arise.

3.6 Abbreviations and Acronyms

3.7 Tables of Contents

The contents page should provide a list-wise outline of the chapter headings, appendices and references, along with the page numbers where each of these items can be found. The lists of tables, list of figures and abbreviations must all be provided separately. These should be generated automatically using the indexing and style functions in the document editor.

3.8 Operational Definition of Terms

3.9 Chapter 1: Introduction

The Introduction section should set out the background to the dissertation and focus on:

- Background of the study
- Problem Statement
- Literature Review
- Justification
- Research Question
- Study Objectives

3.10 Chapter 2: Methodology

The chapter on methodology outlines the rationale, the process by which the study questions were answered and justifies the way in which the study was organised. This chapter is comprised of sections such as:

- Study Setting
- Study Design
- Study Population
- Sample Size
- Sampling Procedure
- Study Variables
- Data Management

3.13 Chapter 3: Results

The results section mainly presents the data obtained in an organised, logical and coherent way so as to provide clarity of the interpretation and the writer's thought processes. Depending on the type of study, the results may be presented using detailed quantitative models, hypothesis testing, basic analysis using descriptive statistics or qualitative techniques dealing with structured content analysis, textual analysis, or case study descriptions.

3.14 Chapter 4: Discussion

The discussion presents an analytic and critical evaluation of the primary results and analysis with reference to the theoretical arguments elucidated in the literature review. Major relationships, similarities and differences from the literature or between different groups should be highlighted, as should any outstanding significance behind features or decisions being discussed.

3.15 Conclusion and Recommendations

The conclusion should of necessity show how the research plan has been accomplished, thereby resulting in substantiation arising from the evidence of the dissertation. The chapter should also present suggestions for further research among those who might wish to undertake research in this area in the future. There should also be a short statement of the limitations of the research

3.16 References

All references used in writing the dissertation should follow the APA style guide (whether direct quotations, citations or paraphrasing), and should be included in a reference list/bibliography, compiled in alphabetical order by author.

3.17 Appendices

The appendices section provides subsidiary material relevant to the study. This may include supportive items pertinent to the study for purposes of reference. Examples include questionnaires, interview guides and other relevant tools or resources.

4.0 RESEARCH POLICIES

AKU faculty and students are expected to commit to, and pursue excellence in research through a collective process where all research activities are conducted within a framework of ethical principles, and are steered and regulated by guidelines which ensure protection against violations of human rights and misrepresentations of data, whether intentionally or unintentionally. High standards of integrity, responsibility should be maintained, without prejudice to any ethnic or religious group.

All students should familiarize themselves with, and adhere to policies that define offenses like fabrication of data, plagiarism, abuse of confidentiality, dishonesty in publication, intellectual property violations, claim to authorship and contribution and research misconduct and how to address them. A list of these policies is available in *Appendix VII*.

APPENDICES

Appendix I: Important dissertation writing and submission timelines

Year of Study	Action Date	Activities and Expected Output
1	End of June July – Sept October November December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research question ready & 1st and 2nd supervisor known • Concept Note development • Approval and appointment of Supervisors • Review of the Concept Note by the Departmental Research Committee (DRC) • Approved Concept Note
2	January – May July July – Sept November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal development • Proposal submission to IERC for Ethics Review. • Incorporation of recommendations and proposal re-submission where necessary • Commencement of Data Collection
3	Jan – August September – November December December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection, • Data Analysis and Discussion • Finalisation of dissertation write-up • Review of the study by the Departmental Research Committee
4	January – March March April - June June August August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a Manuscript and submission to a Peer Reviewed Journal • Submission of the Dissertation to the Academic Office by March 31 • Marking of Dissertations • Incorporation of external examiners' recommendations • Submission of Finalised Dissertation to the Academic Office and a bound copy to the Library • Submission of all source documents to the Research Office

Appendix II: Student Academic Integrity Policy

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

Policy Name	Student Academic Integrity Policy
Policy Number	017
Approved by	Academic Council
Date of Original Approval	July 22, 2010
Date of Revision	January 27, 2015
Contact Office	Office of the Registrar

1.0 Overview

- 1.1 The main purpose of a university is to encourage and facilitate the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. The attainment of this purpose requires the individual integrity of all members of the University student community, including all non-degree / visiting, undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate students.
- 1.2 The mission, vision, values, policies and practices of the Aga Khan University declare unequivocally that academic integrity is considered to be an integral component of ethical, professional and personal behaviour.
- 1.3 It is the responsibility of all students at Aga Khan University to ensure that all academic work (formative, summative, certifying, papers, theses, dissertations, all examinations – professional, midterms, finals, etc. – projects, group work assignment etc.) submitted as part of their course work and / or programme of study, in whole or in part, meets the University's test for academic integrity.

2.0 Students

2.1 *Definition:* for the purposes of this Policy, a student shall mean and include any individual admitted to and/or enrolled at the University for any course including those leading to an undergraduate, graduate or postgraduate certificate, diploma, or degree or any individual registered with any other university or institution who has been accepted for an approved programme of study or training or approved to take a course at the University.

2.1.1 For the purposes of the Student Academic Integrity Policy, Postgraduate Medical Education (PGME) Interns, Residents and Fellows shall be deemed to be students of the University.

2.2 Students are responsible for being aware of and demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work, including but not limited to:

2.2.1 Following faculty member's instructions related to referencing sources of information, the proper methods for collaborating on academic work and / or engaging in group work.

2.2.2 Asking for clarification of the instructions where necessary.

2.2.3 Adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.

2.3 Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the definitions of breaches of academic integrity in the University's research related policies.

2.4 Students are responsible for their behaviour and may face penalties under this Policy, if found to be guilty of academic misconduct.

3.0 Academic Dishonesty

It shall be deemed a breach of the University's Student Academic Integrity Policy to:

3.1 Collaborate on academic work without approval or to improperly collaborate on academic work. For example, when the instructor,

- States that students must complete an assignment independently;
 - Ask students to complete an experiment (lab) with a partner but to write individual reports on the results.
- 3.2 Submit the same or substantially the same academic work for more than one course without prior written approval of the member(s) of faculty.
 - 3.3 Plagiarise (cf. Appendix A).
 - 3.4 Cheat on examinations, including the use of unauthorized aids during the writing of the examination.
 - 3.5 Submit false or altered documents.
 - 3.6 Submit false information or false medical documentation to gain a postponement, advantage or leave from mandatory session(s).
 - 3.7 Provide a false signature for attendance at any class or assessment procedure or on any document related to attendance or the submission of material where the signature is used as proof of authenticity or participation in the academic assessment.
 - 3.8 Misrepresent academic credentials from other institutions or to submit false information for the purpose of gaining admission or credits.
 - 3.9 Misrepresent registration/participation in a conference, seminar, symposium, etc.
 - 3.10 Submit or present work as one's own that has been purchased or acquired from another source.
 - 3.11 Receive and/or distribute test or course materials that are in the process of being prepared or have been stored.

- 3.12 Alter a grade or using altered course materials to have a course grade changed.
- 3.13 Steal, destroy or tamper with another student's work.
- 3.14 Forge, alter or fabricate Aga Khan University documents, including but not limited to transcripts, letters of reference or other official documents.
- 3.15 Impersonate another student either in person or electronically for the purpose of academic assessment.
- 3.16 Assist another student in the commission of academic misconduct.
- 3.17 A breach of the University's *Policy on Research Misconduct*. (cf. Appendix A)

4.0 Disciplinary Procedures

- 4.1 For undergraduate non-credit courses, certificates, diploma and undergraduate degree programmes, any breach of the Student Academic Integrity Policy will be immediately reported to the Board of Undergraduate Studies.
- 4.2 For graduate non-credit courses, certificates, advanced diplomas, postgraduate, post-doctoral and other graduate programmes, including PGME, any breach of the Student Academic Integrity Policy will be immediately reported to the Board of Graduate Studies.
- 4.3 Once informed, the University Registrar will convene and refer the matter to the University's Academic Integrity Committee for investigation.
- 4.4 The Academic Integrity Committee:
 - 4.4.1 The Academic Integrity Committee will be a standing committee, appointed by the Provost, and shall consist of at least five members of the faculty, one of whom shall be the Chairperson.

- 4.4.2 Normally, the Committee shall be composed of two members from Pakistan, two members from East Africa and one member from the UK.
 - 4.4.3 The University Registrar shall serve as secretary to the Academic Integrity Committee.
 - 4.4.4 Members of the Academic Integrity Committee will be appointed for a two-year term, which may be extended for a further period of two years.
 - 4.4.5 The Provost will ensure there is continuity of membership on the Committee and will have the discretion to extend the tenure or co-opt members on the Committee whose tenure have expired and who are involved in on-going cases.
 - 4.4.6 There must be a quorum of at least three members of the Committee present for a hearing to proceed.
 - 4.4.7 The Academic Integrity Committee will be entitled to use services of any personnel of the University as the Committee may deem appropriate for the purposes of assisting the Committee in conducting its hearings.
- 4.5 The Committee's proceedings:
- 4.5.1 Committee hearings will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.
 - 4.5.2 The Committee will invite the concerned student(s) to present his / her (their) point(s) of view.
 - 4.5.3 The Committee may, at its discretion, call other people deemed appropriate for seeking any information or evidence with regard to the offence.
 - 4.5.4 Unless otherwise authorized by the Provost, the Committee will normally complete its proceedings within 15 working days.

- 4.5.5 The outcome of the Committee's investigation will be communicated in writing to the Chair of the relevant Board of Studies who will inform the student(s) of the hearings outcome.
- 4.5.6 A copy of the decision of the Committee will be sent to the University Registrar.

5.0 Disciplinary Proceedings: Academic Dishonesty

- 5.1 When a student is found to have breached items 3.1 – 3.2 of the University's Student Academic Integrity Policy, the following penalties may be applied independently or in combination for any single violation.
 - 5.1.1 A letter reporting the academic dishonesty offence sent to the student and copied to the student's Dean / Director, the Registrar, the student's sponsoring agent, and, where applicable / appropriate, the student's parents.
 - 5.1.2 A reduction of the mark on the piece(s) of academic work.
 - 5.1.3 A mark of zero for the piece(s) of academic work.
 - 5.1.4 A reduction of the overall course grade.
 - 5.1.5 A failing mark for the course with a transcript notation.
 - 5.1.6 Cancellation of admission to the University and /or enrollment at the University.
 - 5.1.7 Suspension from the University, with a transcript notation.
 - 5.1.8 Expulsion from the University, with a transcript notation.
 - 5.1.9 A recommendation to Academic Council, the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor to rescind the student's degree.

- 5.1.10 Any other penalties as may be deemed appropriate for the circumstances, with a transcript notation.
- 5.2 When a student is found to have breached items 3.3 – 3.17 of the University’s Student Academic Integrity Policy, the following penalties may be applied independently or in combination for any single violation.
 - 5.2.1 Cancellation of admission to and / or enrollment at the University.
 - 5.2.2 Suspension, with a transcript notation.
 - 5.2.3 Expulsion, with a transcript notation.
 - 5.2.4 A recommendation to Academic Council, the Board of Trustees and the Chancellor to rescind the student’s degree.
 - 5.2.5 Any other penalties as may be deemed appropriate for the circumstances.

6.0 Appeals

- 6.1 Any appeal of the Academic Integrity Committee’s decision must be made within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the student of the decision.
 - 6.1.1 Disagreement with the Committee’s decision is not a reason for appeal.
 - 6.1.2 Students must clearly state the reason for the appeal.
 - 6.1.3 Students must make their appeal in writing.
 - 6.1.4 An appeal may only be made by the student. Appeals received from parties other than the student will not be considered.
- 6.2 Appeals should be addressed to the University Registrar who will be responsible for forwarding the matter to the University’s Provost.
- 6.3 In cases where the Provost is not available to consider an appeal within the prescribed timelines, the Provost will forward the matter to a Vice Provost who will act in her / his place.

6.4 Upon the receipt of an appeal, the Provost or his / her designate will convene and refer the matter to an Appeals Committee for investigation and review.

6.5 The Appeals Committee

6.5.1 The Appeals Committee will be an ad hoc committee and shall consist of three members of the faculty, one of whom shall be designated as the Chairperson of the Appeals Committee.

6.5.2 The Appeals Committee will be entitled to use services of any personnel of the University as the Committee may deem appropriate for the purposes of assisting the Committee in conducting the disciplinary proceedings.

6.5.3 The University Registrar will serve as the secretary to the Appeals Committee.

6.6 The Appeals Committee's proceedings:

6.6.1 The Appeals Committee hearings will be conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

6.6.2 The Appeals Committee will invite the concerned student(s) to present his / her (their) point(s) of view.

6.6.3 The Appeals Committee may, at its discretion, call other people deemed appropriate for seeking any information or evidence with regard to the offence.

6.6.4 Unless otherwise authorized by the Provost or his / her designate the Appeals Committee will complete its proceedings within 10 working days.

6.6.6 The outcome of the Appeals Committee's investigation will be communicated to the Provost or his / her designate in writing.

6.6.7 The Provost or his / her designate may act upon the recommendation(s) of the Appeals Committee or in accordance with his / her judgment.

6.6.8 In exercising his / her right of a making decision, the Provost shall not be required to provide a hearing to the student.

- 6.6.9 The decision of the Provost or his / her designate shall be final and binding on all parties.
- 6.6.10 A copy of the decision will be sent to the University Registrar who will convey the results of the appeal to the student(s).

7.0 Use of Plagiarism-Detection Software

7.1 Preamble

- 7.1.1 In an effort to ensure the highest academic standards, the University supports academic integrity through academic policies that define academic dishonesty.
- 7.1.2 The University and its faculty expect that all students will be evaluated and graded on their own individual work.
- 7.1.3 The University recognises that students often have to use the ideas of others as expressed in written, published or unpublished works in the preparation of essays, papers, reports, theses, dissertations and publications. Students are encouraged to use anti-plagiarism software as a 'plagiarism protection' and learning tool.
- 7.1.4 The University expects that both the data and ideas obtained from any and all published or unpublished material will be properly acknowledged and sources disclosed including proper citations when work is copied or paraphrased. (cf. Appendix A)
- 7.1.5 Failure to follow this practice constitutes plagiarism.
- 7.1.6 The University, through the availability of plagiarism-detection software, specifically Turnitin.com, desires to encourage responsible student behaviour, deter plagiarism, improve student learning and ensure greater accountability amongst students.
- 7.1.7 Plagiarism-detection software uses proprietary search technology to check assignments against Internet resources, proprietary databases and previously submitted student assignments.

7.2 Policy

- 7.2.1 The University's Policy on the Use of Plagiarism-Detection Software will be published in all undergraduate and graduate programme Student Handbooks (or equivalent).
- 7.2.2 Faculty who wish to use plagiarism-detection software in their course(s) must comply with the requirements set out in this Policy.
- 7.2.2.1 "Use" is defined as member of faculty submitting students' assignments to plagiarism-detection software themselves and/or faculty members requiring students to submit their papers to plagiarism-detection software before papers are graded.
- 7.2.3 In the courses in which members of faculty intend to use plagiarism- detection software they must communicate this to the students in the course syllabus. The course syllabus should include:
- 7.2.3.1 A notice that plagiarism-detection software will or may be used for all student papers in the course:

Sample
Statement

In this course you will be required to submit some material in electronic form. When this is required, it will be noted. The electronic material will be submitted to Turnitin a plagiarism-detection service to which AKU subscribes. This is a service that checks textual material for originality. It is increasingly used in universities around the world. A page describing the plagiarism-detection software the University's reasons for using it are attached.

- 7.2.3.2 A notice to students that the work they submit to plagiarism-detection software will become part of the plagiarism-detection software database;
- 7.2.3.3 A statement that if the student objects to having his or her paper(s) submitted to the student papers database of plagiarism-detection software, that objection must be communicated in writing to the instructor at the beginning of the course. The paper(s) will then be run through plagiarism-

detection software excluding the student papers database, thus omitting the depositing of the paper(s) into that database.

- 7.2.4 Students who are advised of the use of plagiarism-detection software in a particular course, as set out above, are deemed to agree, by taking the course, to submit their papers to plagiarism-detection software for “textual similarity review.”
- 7.2.5 Students at all times retain the copyright in their work. Moreover, plagiarism- detection software protects students’ privacy because it does not make students’ papers available to outside third parties. Students should be advised of this.
- 7.2.6 In the courses in which plagiarism-detection software will or may be used, students should be provided with instruction and/or resources about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.
- 7.2.7 Where the results of a plagiarism-detection software originality report may be used to charge a student with academic misconduct, the student must be notified of the result of the report, and the student must be given an opportunity to respond before any disciplinary penalty is imposed. The date, time, and results of such a meeting should be documented. A hard copy of the original plagiarism-detection software originality report must be retained.

8.0 Office of the Registrar

- 8.1 The Office of the Registrar shall be responsible for developing policies and procedures to detect misrepresentation of credentials during the admissions process and to provide support in maintaining academic integrity during the writing of examinations.
- 8.2 The Office of the Registrar is responsible for the procurement of plagiarism detection software.

APPENDIX A

1.0 Definitions

1.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the submission or presentation of another person's thoughts or words or software, in whole or in part, as though they were your own. Any quotation from the published or unpublished works of other persons must, therefore, be clearly identified as such by being placed inside quotation marks, and students should identify their sources as accurately and fully as possible.

1.1.1 What does this mean?

- When writing an assignment, you must use your own words and thoughts.
- When you use another person's exact phrasing, you must distinguish the text or material taken from that source from your own (i.e. through the use of quotation marks or an indentation).
- When you use another person's thoughts or ideas, though you may not be directly quoting them, you must both acknowledge that these are not your own and reference the original source (i.e. through a footnote or other appropriate form of reference).
- If you are paraphrasing what another person has stated, you must use completely different language, essentially re-writing it. Altering a sentence or paragraph slightly is neither appropriate nor adequate. And remember, paraphrases still require a reference notation.
- Each instructor has specific expectations for how students are to acknowledge sources in their courses. These are often explained in the course outline or in class. You are encouraged to ask questions if you do not understand what your instructor expects of you when it comes to acknowledging sources used in course work or assignments.
- The work you do for a course must be unique to that course. Submitting an assignment that has already been graded in another course constitutes plagiarism unless you have sought and obtained the permission of the instructor in whose course you are currently enrolled.

- If you are unsure whether or not to reference a source, err on the side of caution and do so anyway, as the sanctions for plagiarism may be quite severe.

1.1.2 Why is this important?

The main purpose of a university is the pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. This requires the integrity of all members of the University community. As a student at the Aga Khan University, you are expected to practice intellectual honesty and to fully acknowledge the work of others by providing appropriate references in your scholarly work. Scholars do not take credit that is not earned. Academic dishonesty is destructive to the values of the University, not to mention unfair to students who pursue their studies honestly.

1.2 Research Misconduct

The University's *Policy on Research Misconduct* states that "Misconduct in research is defined to include any one or more of the following acts:"

- 1.2.1. Fabrication and / or falsification of research related data or in reporting research outcomes.
- 1.2.2. Plagiarism in all research related matters including publications, appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, outputs or words without giving appropriate credit.
- 1.2.3. Inappropriate use of others' intellectual property (without reference or acknowledgment).
- 1.2.4. Denial of individual rights such as authorship to collaborative partners in research publications.
- 1.2.5. Non-compliance with Institution's policies on 'conflict of interest', 'intellectual property rights' and 'authorship guidelines'.
- 1.2.6. Deliberate misuse of institutional or sponsor's funds for financial gains.
- 1.2.7. Wilful failure to honour an agreement or contract with the funding agency to perform certain tasks.
- 1.2.8. Publishing any data or results that are against the internationally accepted general principles of research and scholarly activities.
- 1.2.9. Deliberate destruction of one's own or others' research data or records or research related property.

- 1.2.10 Making use of any information in breach of any duty of confidentiality associated with the review of any manuscript or grant application.

Appendix III: General Guidelines for Phd and Master's Theses/Dissertations at AKU

1.0 PREAMBLE

These guidelines have been developed with the aim of bringing about uniformity in the preparation of Theses/Dissertations with respect to graduate programmes at the University. All students are expected to follow these guidelines when submitting their respective thesis/ dissertation for evaluation. However, in the case of theses/dissertations, which are submitted to external certifying bodies, the guidelines of the respective certifying body will be followed.

2.0 GENERAL REGULATIONS

- 2.1 Include documentary evidence to show that the Thesis Evaluation Committee has approved the thesis.
- 2.2 The thesis must be printed in black ink. Only highest quality of print and duplication will be accepted. Broken, uneven, blurred or light print will not be accepted.
- 2.3 Copies which are disfigured by correcting fluid or correcting tape will not be accepted.
- 2.4 The paper should have a vertical/ portrait orientation.
- 2.5 Text should appear on one side of the paper only.
- 2.6 All photographs and reproduction of photographs must be of excellent quality. Photocopies must not be used.
- 2.7 The pages of the thesis should be complete, numbered and properly collated. If the thesis is missing pages it may delay the awarding of the degree.
- 2.8 The spelling, grammar and syntax of the thesis should be carefully checked and errors rectified. It should be noted that AKU follows the British style of spelling.
- 2.9 The paper selected should be of international standard A4 size (i.e. 8.5 inches by 11 inches), white, acid free paper (of about 80 grams), and must be used throughout each copy of the manuscript. Acid free paper is required to be used to preserve the quality of the manuscript.

3.0 ORDERING OF ITEMS FOR THE THESIS

- 3.1 Title page [*see template*]

- 3.2 Signed Committee Approval Page [*see template*]
- 3.3 Dedication (optional)
- 3.4 Copyright Agreement Page (if applicable)
- 3.5 Abstract
- 3.6 List of abbreviations and symbols used (if applicable)
- 3.7 Preface (optional)
- 3.8 Acknowledgement (Any special assistance given should be stated) [*see template*]
- 3.9 Declaration [*see template*]
- 3.10 Table of contents
- 3.11 List of tables
- 3.12 List of figures (if any)
- 3.13 List of illustrations (if any)
- 3.14 List of maps (if any)
- 3.15 List of terms, symbols or abbreviations (if any)
- 3.16 Body of text
- 3.17 Footnotes or endnotes (if required)
- 3.18 Bibliography (references/ literature cited)
- 3.19 Appendices (if any)
- 3.20 Glossary of frequently used acronyms (optional and depends on the thesis)
- 3.21 Vita (for PhD candidates only)

4.0 TITLE PAGE [*see template*]

The title page should include the following in order:

- 4.1 The name of the University
- 4.2 The name of the faculty/ department/ institute
- 4.3 Title of the thesis in capital letters.

- 4.4 Author's name (if desired state any qualifications or distinction).
- 4.5 A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of (fill in the title of the degree).
- 4.6 City / country.
- 4.7 Month and year of submission.

5.0 ABSTRACT

Every thesis should have a structured abstract, the number of words of which would be specified by the particular programme; generally for Master's thesis the abstract should be of approximately 300 words and for the Doctoral thesis the abstract should be of approximately 500 words.

6.0 FIGURES AND TABLES

- 6.1 A table generally refers to numerical data or textual information presented in a column format.
- 6.2 All graphs, charts, line drawings, maps, photographs, or other graphical representations are considered as figures.
- 6.3 All titles of figures and tables should be on the same page as the figure or table and should be labelled appropriately. The legend should be placed beneath the figure. However, where the figure and table fills the whole A4 page, the legend which is placed above the table, should be placed on the left hand (verso) page.
- 6.4 Tables should be inserted in the appropriate place in the text; however, if a group of tables relating to one topic is more than 4 consecutive pages then the table group should appear as an appendix.
- 6.5 Diagrams, maps, tables etc. exceeding A4 size (8.5 inches x 11 inches or 21.5 cm x 28 cm) should be folded so as to read as a right hand page when opened.
- 6.6 A figure/ table may be included with the text, or if it is larger than 4 inches long it may appear on a separate page with no text. If a table/ figure will not fit on the page of first mention move it to the top of the next page and fill in the text page that will normally come after the figure / table.
- 6.7 Leave 2 double line spaces between the text and the figure table. If a caption is longer than a line it should be single spaced.
- 6.8 Special requirement for tables: Left align table title above the table. Table captions or descriptions should be left aligned under the table.

7.0 FONT

7.1 For the main body of the text, the following fonts should only be used:

7.1.1 This font is called 'Times New Roman' and is of 12 point size.

7.1.2 'Helvetica' 11 point size.

7.1.3 This font is called 'Tahoma' and is of 11 point size.

7.1.4 This font is called 'Palatino' and is of 12 point size.

7.2 Condensed type is not acceptable.

7.3 Chapter title, section or chapters heading and subheadings, may be in a different style and should stand out clearly from the text and should be consistent throughout the thesis.

7.4 Characters not available on type writers, word processing equipment or text fonts (such as superscripts and mathematical symbols) may be written by hand neatly in black ink or fine felt pen.

8.0 FORM AND STYLE

Where it is not addressed in this document, reference should be made to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA), 5th Edition and later, or as specified by the Unit/ programme.

9.0 FOOTNOTES AND ENDNOTES

9.1 Footnotes and endnotes should be consistent with the practice in the profession. Each note should cite an authority for statements in the text.

9.2 Footnotes can be placed at the bottom of the page in which it appears in the text, at the end of the chapter, within the text or at the end of the thesis (endnotes) as long as placement and formatting are consistent throughout the thesis. Separate footnotes from the text with a line, and leave one single line of space between the line and the first footnote.

9.3 Do not footnote the title page.

10.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Reference List or Bibliography should cite all the literature or other sources referred to in the thesis. Individual entries should not be split over two pages. If an entire entry does not fit on one page, place the entire entry on the next page.

11.0 SPACING

- 11.1 The space between rows of text should be one and half lines or two lines. However, long quotations may be single line spaced and indented.

This sentence is an example of the use one and half line spacing. Some people prefer this spacing as compared to the double line spacing. However, this is a matter of choice and the sub-committee will have to decide if this or the double line spacing is to be adopted. Perhaps both kinds of line spacing could be allowed and the final choice left up to the student with the stipulation that it be consistently followed. Now this sentence is an example of double line spacing. Many prefer this kind of spacing as the text reads better. The line spacing in the appendices though may be of single line as the appendices are not part of the main body of the thesis. The subcommittee will have to decide on which line spacing to choose as there are pros and cons with respect to either kind. Perhaps both kinds could be allowed.

- 11.2 The 'Table of Contents', 'List of Tables', 'List of Figures', 'List of Symbols', 'Bibliography' may be single line spaced provided there are two spaces between individual entries.
- 11.3 Each Footnote and Endnote entry should be separated by a single line of space.
- 11.4 Appendices should be single line spaced.

12.0 PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF THE PAGE

- 12.1 For the purpose of binding a minimum of 1.5 inches, preferably 2 inches of left margin is required for all pages. Other margins should be one inch all round. This is applicable for all pages.
- 12.2 The page numbers should be printed at the bottom of the page and centred and should be approximately three quarters of an inch from the paper's edge.
- 12.3 Pagination

- 12.3.1 All pages shall be numbered in sequence. There should be no blank or duplicated pages.
 - 12.3.2 There is no page number written on the thesis title page but it is considered as page (i).
 - 12.3.3 All sections before the main text, including the preface, are numbered in small roman numerals (i, ii, iii, iv, etc).
 - 12.3.4 The main text onwards including chapter pages, illustrations, figures, tables and bibliography should be numbered in consecutive order in Arabic numerals (e.g. 1, 2, 3, etc).
 - 12.3.5 The appendices should also be numbered consecutively with Arabic numerals.
 - 12.3.6 Page numbers in landscaped pages should be in portrait orientation.
- 12.4 Declaration
- 12.4.1 The declaration should indicate if any material contained in the thesis has been used before and that the main text of the thesis is an original work. The declaration immediately follows the acknowledgment and must be signed by the candidate.
- 12.5 Distribution of the Thesis
- 12.5.1 One copy each should be submitted to the Chair of the Thesis Committee, main Library, Department, and Research Office.
 - 12.5.2 Individual departments or units may advise the number of extra copies to be provided by the student.
 - 12.5.3 It is customary to give each member of the thesis evaluation committee a copy of the final bound thesis. However, this requirement is programme specific.
 - 12.5.4 The cost of meeting the specifications for binding for up to four copies will be incurred by the candidate. If additional copies are required, the requesting body should bear the cost.
- 12.6 Specifications for Binding
- 12.6.1 The thesis should be sewn and bound in boards covered in book cloth or buckram or other binding fabrics.

- 12.6.2 The cover must be stiff enough to support the thesis when stacked upright.
- 12.6.3 The binding should ensure that sheets cannot be removed or added without evidence of tampering.
- 12.6.4 Supplementary material such as computer discs, folded maps and other large folded sheets can be placed in a pocket inside the back cover of the bound thesis.
- 12.6.5 The candidate's surname and initial, a short title, the title of the degree and the year should be printed on the spine. Lettering on the spine should read from top to bottom. *(For format of Title Page refer Item # 3)*
- 12.6.6 Thesis Binding Colour Scheme:
Master's Thesis: GREEN colour with embossed gold lettering
PhD Thesis: BLACK colour with embossed gold lettering
 AKU logo with the Ayat to be printed on the thesis front hardbound cover
- 12.7 Chapter title heading and sub-headings
 - 12.7.1 All Chapter title headings and subheadings *(up to three levels i.e. 1.0; 1.1; 1.1.1)* each of the different levels of headings.
 - 12.7.2 Headings should be single line spaced.
 - 12.7.3 Each chapter should begin on a new page.
 - 12.7.4 The first line of each paragraph should be indented.
- 12.8 Colour
 - 12.8.1 The use of colours is restricted to figures. All text must be in black ink.
 - 12.8.2 If colours are essential in interpreting graphic illustrations, then they reproduced accurately in these same colours for inclusion in the thesis.
- 12.9 Vita (for Doctoral candidates only)
 - 12.9.1 A vita of the author should be included at the end of the thesis should be preferably of one page.
 - 12.9.2 The information contained therein at a minimum should include: Candidate's name; Nationality; Academic qualifications; Special /

Research interests; Publications (if any); Awards and Special Honours and; any other information of pertinence.

12.10 Multiple-Volume Thesis

12.10.1 If the original thesis exceeds two inches in thickness, the thesis must be bound in more than one volume. The second volume should contain a title page which duplicates the title page of the first volume. Also, individual identification such as 'Volume One' and 'Volume Two' must be included on both title pages. All pages in additional volumes must continue the numbering from Volume 1 with the second title page not counted or numbered.

12.10.2 When published papers are submitted as evidence, they should normally be bound near the back of the thesis as an appendix. However, in case the published papers are of unusual size it may be desirable to bind them in a separate volume and they should be lettered in a way so as to simulate a bound volume of the thesis.

12.11 Electronic Version

12.11.1 The University requires electronic submission of all theses which should be kept by the relevant department. The document should be in Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) format. No compression or password protection should be employed.

12.11.2 It is the Author's responsibility to ensure that the PDF version of the thesis matches, for completeness and fidelity, with the print version of the thesis.

Approved by Board of Graduate Studies, June 5, 2008

Appendix IV: Dissertation Primary Supervisor Nomination Form

**AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Postgraduate Medical Education**

PRIMARY SUPERVISOR NOMINATION FORM FOR DISSERTATION

Faculty being considered as primary supervisors for MMed resident dissertations are required to complete and submit this form to the Chief Internal Examiner (CIE) for approval prior to undertaking dissertation research work with the resident(s).

EXCEPTIONS: Faculty supervisors who have previously been approved through this process.

Name of proposed Supervisor:	
Highest academic qualification:	
Current rank in MCEA:	
Date of appointment to this rank:	
Area of Specialisation:	
Department:	

A full CV with accurate citations and formatted according to the AKU MCEA template MUST also be submitted, and will include ALL of the following:

1. At least three publications where you are the first or senior author;
2. At least three manuscripts you last reviewed and the names of the journals;
3. Up to five dissertations you have supervised previously, clearly stating role (*e.g. primary, secondary supervisor etc*), and where the work was published/presented;
4. Research-related training (*e.g. epidemiology course, biostatistics, AKU research development etc*);
5. Any clinical trial experience, including role and with respective grant references identifiers.

Approval by Chief Internal Examiner:

The applicant meets the criteria for primary/secondary dissertation supervisor [*circle*].

Name of CIE: Signature: Date:

Guidance Notes:

- 1. Minimum Qualifications required for appointment as a primary supervisor:**
 - *Faculty appointment at assistant professor level or above*
 - *GCP certification (where relevant e.g. to supervise a clinical trial)*
 - *Experience as a supervisor (at least two as secondary supervisor or equivalent)*
 - *Publications:*
 - *Three as first and/or senior author*
 - *Research- related training (as indicated in item no. 4 Above)*
- 2. Appointment of the secondary supervisors (minimum of 1 and maximum 3) by the chief internal examiners will be justified on basis of additional support needed for the success of the dissertation work.**

Appendix V: Terms of Reference for Supervisors

Aga Khan University Postgraduate Medical Education Terms of Reference for Dissertation & Research Supervisors

1.0 Preamble

These Terms of Reference (ToRs) are intended to affirm the responsibilities of the members of faculty appointed to the role of Supervisors to guide and advise students/candidates assigned to them as supervisees in the course of their dissertation/thesis writing. These terms also describe the expectations on the part of the student whose work is being supervised.

The supervisors and supervisees should endeavor to meet sufficiently regularly to ensure that the dissertation writing progress is not slowed down for want of constructive advice and criticism. The supervisor must insist on seeing complete drafts of major sections of the thesis or proposals as the writing progresses. The supervisor endeavor to provide prompt responses and feedback on written submissions of the students, so as to ensure that the tasks and milestones are completed within the stipulated period. Students should only submit their work to the review committees or examiners with the approval of the supervisor, in which case the supervisor must see a complete draft before submission. However, the supervisor must not attempt to impose his/her own stamp, theoretical or stylistic leaning on the candidate's work.

At the end of each Academic Year, or at the request of the Chief Internal Examiner, the supervisor must report to the relevant committees or boards of examiners the progress of their supervisees, and make recommendations regarding involvement of the studies.

All faculty appointed to the role of dissertation supervisors, and their supervisees, should read the terms carefully, and append their signatures to confirm that they have read and understood their respective obligations and responsibilities during the dissertation writing or research process.

1.1 Responsibilities of the Supervisor

The Primary Supervisor is responsible for the largest proportion of academic supervision and should assist the candidate by:

- a) Giving guidance on the nature of the research, developing the proposal and the standard expected;
- b) Advising students/candidates to draw up a schedule which aligns with the key milestones and completion dates of different stages of the research project; and assisting with the management of this schedule;

- c) Providing information relating to relevant literature and sources;
- d) Linking the supervisee with researchers working on, or who have previously worked on related studies or in related fields, where possible;
- e) Discussing and critically evaluating the candidate's objectives, research questions, findings and ideas;
- f) Promptly reading, criticising and annotating draft chapters;
- g) Advising the student/candidate on the form and structure of the thesis;
- h) Ensuring that the candidate is (or becomes) familiar with, and observes institutionally recognised guides to scholarly convention, presentation, documentation of sources and the like;
- i) Referring the candidate to approved style manuals, where necessary;
- j) Ensuring that the candidate is aware that plagiarism is a serious offence that will be sanctioned and dealt with in accordance to the University disciplinary rules, and that the University has effective means of detecting plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty;
- k) Guiding and assisting the student in administrative requirements including approving the selection of Research assistants where necessary,
- l) Ensuring that the supervisee keeps an up to date Dissertation supervision log during the course of their thesis writing.

Responsibility of the student/Supervisee

The responsibilities of the supervisee shall include:

- a) Taking responsibility for their own scholarship in terms of personal and professional development in Research Methods, as well as in their chosen topic of research/study, recognising when they need help and seeking it in a timely manner;
- b) Setting and keeping to dissertation milestones and deadlines, including planning and submitting required work and generally maintaining satisfactory progress with the programme of research;
- c) Maintaining (a joint responsibility with supervisors) regular contact with supervisors; where students MUST attend formal supervisory meetings at least once every 4 weeks, or more frequently where the Departmental Residency Training Committee or Departmental Research Committee prescribes;
- d) Preparing adequately for meetings with supervisors, DDC or the examiners, or any other other committee reviews as may be necessary;
- e) Keeping their supervisors abreast of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect the progress of their work;

- f) Attending any Research Methods training sessions as well as other research-related opportunities, or obtaining specific recommended resources to meet their study requirements, as recommended by their supervisors;
- g) Adhering to the university's regulations, policies and guidance regarding PGME programmes, including those relating to examinations, dissertation and other research work.
- h) Conducting research with integrity, in accordance with the university's policy framework (including the ethical governance, research integrity and the research data management policy) and any other legal compliance and/or funder requirements;
- i) Ensuring (a joint responsibility with supervisors) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained before data collection commences;
- j) Maintaining up to date records of their supervision logs.

Signed off by:

Student:
(Name) (Signature) (Date)

Supervisor:
(Name) (Signature) (Date)

Received by:

Program Chair/CIE: Date.....

CC: Academic Office
DRTC

Appendix VI: Dissertation Supervision Log

**Aga Khan University
Postgraduate Medical Education
DISSERTATION SUPERVISION LOG**

Student's Name: _____

Department: _____

Dissertation Topic:
.....
.....
.....
.....

Date	Duration	Purpose	Learning outcome	Name of Supervisor	Signature of Supervisor

Thank you for maintaining this record of supervisory contact. The Academic Office will file this document with your records.

Please keep it safely and submit together with the final copy of your dissertation.

Appendix VII: Research Methodology Support Guidelines

Aga Khan University

Department of Population Health

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY SUPPORT GUIDELINES

PREAMBLE

The Department of Population Health (DPH) provides research methodology support for AKU (EA) Faculty and Residents based in Nairobi, Kenya and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Department has expertise in health systems, epidemiology, social sciences, and biostatistics and services offered include supporting researchers in synthesizing their research questions, study design and analyses for both Quantitative and Qualitative studies.

The DPH Research Support services are not meant to usurp the role of a dissertation methodology supervisor but to address clearly defined research methodology or analysis issues. As such, the DPH methodology consultant will provide teaching for residents during the consultation process within and outside though related to the stated problem.

GUIDELINES FOR PROVISION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY SUPPORT

In order to streamline these services, ensure quality and enhance accountability, residents seeking research methodology support are expected to adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Those seeking DPH research methodology support services should complete and submit the “Research Methodology Support Request Form” (Appendix 1).
2. The Research Methodology Support Request Form should be completed in consultation with and signed off by the dissertation methodology supervisor, ensuring that support is sought only for those issues that the supervisors are unable to address.
3. Before the request form is sent to the DPH consultant, the resident/faculty seeking support should ensure to include all the relevant information and documents (published papers on the same subject matter) that will enable the consultant to address the query appropriately. An example of support request for quantitative studies is presented below:
 - a. If support to calculate sample size is required, the following should be provided along with the request, as per your study requirements.
 - b. Difference between proportions: what % of the outcome is expected in the comparison group and what difference will be worth detecting clinically (e.g. 25%)?
 - c. Difference between continuous measurements: what is the typical mean and standard deviation found (for example in the comparison group) and what difference will be clinically significant?

- d. Difference in odds, risks, rates or hazards (epidemiologic studies or survival analysis): what is the difference worth detecting (e.g. 25%) and what is the background frequency or odds or risk or rates or hazard?
 - e. Difference in counts e.g. Asthma exacerbations. What is the rate or counts in the comparison group and what difference do you want to detect?
 - f. Not testing a hypothesis, just descriptive e.g. % people with hypertension: what is the lowest % you think you will detect and what precision do you want around this % (e.g. 5 or 10%).
 - g. It will be very helpful to look at <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=137461> before the consultation, as well as to provide an article with similar a study.
 - h. If data analysis support is required, it is often best to provide a brief documentation/description of the variables in the dataset, data that are being analyzed and possible relationships to be investigated. Clarify the roles of each variable (primary exposures, outcomes, confounders, effect modifiers, or precision variables). If available, it is often helpful to provide samples of questionnaires or any forms used for data collection.
4. Examples of qualitative support requested would include determining if qualitative inquiry is the right fit for the research question, determining study sample size, help with research design, assistance with developing study guides, ethical questions and qualitative data analysis approaches among others.
 5. The completed research support request package should be sent via email to the DPH admin assistant (caroline.muthoni@aku.edu), who will forward it to the relevant DPH faculty with skills appropriate for the type of support required.
 6. A minimum five (5) days lead time will apply to enable the DPH consultant to review the request, consult internally (if necessary), process the request and plan for the appropriate feedback.
 7. Feedback will be provided either as written feedback and/or in the form of a meeting between the consultant handling the request, the resident and at least one of the supervisors (preferably methodology supervisor) especially during the concept stage of the project description.
 8. Where verbal/face-to-face feedback is considered necessary, this will be given during a meeting lasting 30 minutes to 1 hour. The resident shall take the minutes of the meeting to include inputs provided, next steps and duration of the meeting. The minutes will be shared with DPH consultant and the supervisor for review and approval within three (3) days. These minutes shall

then be filed for reference during future consultations as well as a basis for tracking progress on the methodological issues addressed.

9. Additionally, DPH will institute an open four (4) hour Research Support Clinic to be held on a specified morning once every six (6) weeks. This will be a forum manned by a DPH consultant, which will offer quick (15 minute) consultations to walk in residents with well-defined queries.
10. Faculty with extensive need for proposal development or analysis support are advised to enlist co-investigators with requisite skills or budget for consultant's time.

APPENDIX A: Research Methodology Support Request Form

AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY
Postgraduate Medical Education
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY SUPPORT REQUEST FORM

Please complete the form and email it back to the DPH Administrator

Date: DD/MM/YYYY	
Personal Details	
Name	
Email and Cell No.	
Request No.	
Designation: (select one)	Research grant /resident dissertation / Other (specify)
Proposal details	
Project Title	
Primary and secondary project supervisors' names	Primary: Secondary: Additional:
Methodology supervisor's approval for DPH methodology support request	(Signature)
Stage of Research (Mark Appropriately)	<input type="checkbox"/> Design stage <input type="checkbox"/> Proposal/Protocol/Grant preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Data collection/Statistical Analysis/Data Management/cleaning <input type="checkbox"/> Report Writing/ Manuscript preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Revision or review
Support Service (s) Required (Mark all that Apply)	<input type="checkbox"/> Study Design/Planning <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with Randomization <input type="checkbox"/> Data Management (Data cleaning e.g. quality/inconsistency checks) <input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis planning at proposal stage (incl. sample size estimation) <input type="checkbox"/> Analysis of collected data (<i>Please email data sets to avoid virus infection</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced Statistical analysis (preliminary analysis already done) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Please specify <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"></div>
FOR OFFICIAL USE	
DPH Consultant/Faculty name	
Date and time of feedback	DD/MM/YYYY hh:mm
Type of feedback (written/verbal)	
Comments	

Appendix VII: AKU Research Policies

1. [Authorship Policy](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Authorship%20Policy%2027th%20August%202021%20(Aproved).pdf) -
[https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Authorship%20Policy%2027th%20August%202021%20\(Aproved\).pdf](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Authorship%20Policy%2027th%20August%202021%20(Aproved).pdf)
2. [Intellectual Property Rights Policy](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Intellectual%20Property%20Rights%20Policy.pdf)
<https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Intellectual%20Property%20Rights%20Policy.pdf>
3. [Publications Policy](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Publications%20Policy.pdf)
<https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Publications%20Policy.pdf>
4. [Policy on Research Misconduct](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/02%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Misconduct%20(with%20Appendix%20Revised%2011OCT2018).pdf)
[https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/02%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Misconduct%20\(with%20Appendix%20Revised%2011OCT2018\).pdf](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/02%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Misconduct%20(with%20Appendix%20Revised%2011OCT2018).pdf)
5. [Code of Good Research Practice](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20on%20Code%20of%20Good%20Research%20Practice.pdf)
<https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20on%20Code%20of%20Good%20Research%20Practice.pdf>
6. [Policy Mechanism for Change of Principal Investigator](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20Mechanism%20for%20Change%20of%20PI%20(Aproved%2025th%20August%202021).pdf)
[https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20Mechanism%20for%20Change%20of%20PI%20\(Aproved%2025th%20August%202021\).pdf](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20Mechanism%20for%20Change%20of%20PI%20(Aproved%2025th%20August%202021).pdf)
7. [Policy for Submitting Extramural Grant Applications \(Pre-award\)](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20for%20Submitting%20Extramural%20Grant%20Applications%20-%2024%20Dec%202021%20MA.pdf)
<https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20for%20Submitting%20Extramural%20Grant%20Applications%20-%2024%20Dec%202021%20MA.pdf>
8. [Policy on Research Ethics Review](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/NEW%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20Review%20(Aproved%2010%20June%202021).pdf)
[https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/NEW%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20Review%20\(Aproved%2010%20June%202021\).pdf](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/NEW%20Policy%20on%20Research%20Ethics%20Review%20(Aproved%2010%20June%202021).pdf)
9. [Policy and Guidelines for URC Intramural Funding](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20URC%20Intramural%20Funding.pdf)
<https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20and%20Guidelines%20for%20URC%20Intramural%20Funding.pdf>
10. [Policy on Responding to Research Disruption](#)

<https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20on%20Research%20Disruption%2011Feb2021.pdf>

11. [Policy on Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes](#)

[https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20on%20Use%20of%20Animals%20for%20Scientific%20Purposes%20\(April%208th%202021\).pdf](https://www.aku.edu/research/policies/Documents/Policy%20on%20Use%20of%20Animals%20for%20Scientific%20Purposes%20(April%208th%202021).pdf)