

Women's Residences



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL, KARACHI

Introduction



Walking into the Women's Residences feels like one has left the chaotic Hospital and walked into a tranquil residential area. The Residences cater to the female faculty and staff of the Aga Khan University Hospital, and have been designed to suit their needs. Most of the women work in direct patient care departments, and enjoy the worry-free, secure living environment that the Residences provide, to rest and rejuvenate themselves for the next hectic day's work.

Due to Aga Khan University's on-going campus expansions, the requirement of staff has risen, leading to a steadily growing demand for women's short and long term stays in these Residences. Particularly in the last few years, the troubling law and order situation in the nation has led to increasing security concerns – and the Residence has become the preferred place for these women to live. Occupancy has regularly surpassed 95%, and the past year has seen a waiting list of 30–40 women wanting to be accommodated here.

As the need arises, rooms are also provided to off-station female professionals of the Aga Khan Development Network, and TKN volunteers.

800 Women
Residents
To Date

Key Aspects and Functioning

96

Single
Rooms
(Category A)

42

Single
Rooms with
Attached
Bathroom
(Category B)

12

Studio
Apartments
(Category C)

02

Resident
Guest Rooms



The Residences consist of 150 single occupancy rooms spread out over three buildings, the Karimi Residence, The Noor Residence and the Arman Rupani Residence. All the rooms are amply furnished, and include basic appliances such as a refrigerator and a clothes iron. The residence has 24-hour electricity, gas and water supplied. 70 of the rooms currently have air-conditioning.

The Residences are managed by four supervisors who take rotating shifts, a senior assistant, a receptionist and a coordinator. Housekeeping staff is available morning and night, in two shifts.

One of the most progressive features of the Women's Residences is that they are fully handicap accessible. Ramps and elevators are available at convenient locations, and the building management is happy to accommodate anyone with a temporary or permanent handicap, up to and including shifting their room to a more accessible floor, and nearer to the bathroom (in the case of A category rooms).

As a doctor at the AKU pointed out, “these residences seem to have been designed by someone who has seen disability – and knows what is needed”.

Benefits



The Residences provide individual accommodation for 150 women, with all the ancillary provisions necessary, such as laundry rooms in each building, a cafeteria which can seat up to 80 women (indoors and outdoors) at a time, common rooms on every floor with movie nights set up as per residents' requests and salon and retail services as required. These ensure that these women have all their immediate needs catered to within the premises. The lack of a real commute to work can also not be overlooked, as the absence of transport hassles and cost is an added benefit of living on campus. Furthermore, in the case of an emergency, many more women from the nursing staff can be accommodated by spreading bedding in the common rooms.

The benefits that the Women's residences offer are far more than just a safe place to live. Professional women who most of the time do not have family around, are allowed a space in which they can unwind and relax in a serene environment where they are taken care of, and treated like family. The diversity of the residences also allows them to meet with women from varied locations and backgrounds, encouraging friendship and networking.

AKU too has benefitted – the residence has allowed the University Hospital to retain many exceptional female workers because it is able to provide such accommodation to professionals who may otherwise have been hesitant to work here.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Women's Residences is that they have become an invaluable and irreplaceable addition to the AKU campus.

Resident Testimonials

“When we are in here, and there is a disturbance outside, the truth is not that we don’t get disturbed by it, the fact is we don’t even feel it.”



Sayyeda Reza, Senior Project

“The Residences are undoubtedly the safest, most peaceful place one can live in, in Karachi. Truthfully, the only reason our parents are comfortable with us being here is that we have this place. Whenever we come in looking tired they take care of us, ask us how we are doing, and treat us generally like we are family. They go out of their way for us...”



Left: Fatima Mir, Assistant Professor of Pediatrics and Child Health
Right: Aisha Yousafzai, Associate Professor of Child Development



Anita Jabeen, Neurophysiology Technician

“I belong to Gilgit Baltistan and I have been living in the hostel for one year. This is my first time in Karachi and this hostel is the only place I am satisfied. Even when I don’t speak to my parents, they don’t worry about me because they know that if I am living in the Women’s Residence in Aga Khan University, I am safe and secure. What else do you need?”



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The Aga Khan University Hospital
Karachi

