THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

A GUIDE for Students Returning to Aga Khan University Campuses in Pakistan

Stadium Road and Karimabad Campuses

February 10, 2021 / version 8

This guide, intended for AKU students in Pakistan, will be updated as required based on guidance from regulatory bodies, health experts and the University's own assessment of its reopening plans and outcomes. AKU expresses its gratitude to the Higher Education Commission Pakistan (HEC) for the guidance and direction provided in the preparation of this guide. The contents of this guide derive from the work of individuals and groups at AKU who have worked unitedly in ensuring AKU reopens and operates in a manner that is healthy and safe.

Important notice: Adherence to COVID-19 SOPs and guidelines as prescribed by the University is of utmost importance. Failure to comply with SOPs, guidelines, and expected norms of behavior may result in severe disciplinary action, including but not limited, to suspension or expulsion. If you are in doubt with respect to any guideline or SOP, seek clarity immediately from the Student Health team and a University official from your programme such as your Year Chair or Coordinator. Ignorance of rules will not be accepted as a justification for breaching rules.

The latest version of this guide can be found at available at:
www.aku.edu/students/Pages/safe-return.aspx

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1. Overview

The Aga Khan University (AKU) closed its campuses on March 16, 2020 to comply with Government directives and to protect the University community. Guided by its intent to ensure the safety and health of all members of the AKU community, the University has undertaken a range of actions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including switching to online teaching and learning for many of its programmes. Foremost has been the University's intent in all matters to ensure the safety and health of all members of the AKU community.

In accordance with guidance from the Government including the National Command & Operation Centre (NCOC) and the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan (HEC) AKU invited students back to campus beginning from September 16, 2020 for a mix of face-to-face and online instruction

Following a further surge in COVID-19 infections countrywide, the University closed its campuses for the majority of students. Now, as per the latest guidance from government agencies students are being welcomed back to campus beginning February 9, 2021.

This guide serves as a comprehensive yet concise source of information for all AKU students in Pakistan to review prior to their return to campus.

In planning for the reopening, the following principles guide all considerations and decisions:

1. Protection of the health of all students and staff remains integral.
2. The University's mission in education, research and service must be ensured.
3. Equitable access to courses, high-quality learning experiences and advisory support.
4. Plans attuned to students' intellectual, social, emotional and mental wellbeing.
5. Manageability of the reopening and monitoring behaviour and health data will be critical.
6. Returning is voluntary; no one should be coerced into returning against his/her will.
7. Of utmost importance is the protection of the University's long-term institutional health.
8. Communications will be transparent, clear, and ongoing.
9. Full compliance to government regulations; non-compliance can lead to cancelling plans.

The following planning bodies and partnerships, either existing or established in light of the pandemic, are undertaking decision making and planning exercises for campus reopening as guided by the above principles.

University statutory bodies and the Executive
The statutory bodies of the university such as the Academic Council and the University's Executive Committee supported the Academy in taking adequate measures to ensure students' safety and continuity of the academic calendar.

Rapid Online and Remote Teaching Coordinating Group
This group was established in April 2020 to ensure an efficient and effective rapid transition to online teaching at AKU. The group includes representatives of all AKU academic programmes and academic support services. The group reports to the Provost through the Vice Provost Quality, Teaching and Learning.

Student Health Task Force

This task force is developing protocols for student health and safety in the context of students returning to campus and is guided by relevant experts from AKUH.

Ongoing communication

The primary medium of communication from AKU to its students on health and safety guidelines will be through email. However, WhatsApp and other channels will continue to be used as alternate means of communication. AKU will ensure students are informed of the most important measures to follow to keep safe.

Important notice: Adherence to COVID-19 SOPs and guidelines as prescribed by the University is of utmost importance. Failure to comply with SOPs, guidelines, and expected norms of behavior may result in severe disciplinary action, including but not limited, to suspension or expulsion. If you are in doubt with respect to any guideline or SOP, seek clarity immediately from the Student Health team and a University official from your programme such as your Year Chair or Coordinator. Ignorance of the rules will not be accepted as a justification for breaching those rules.

2. Public and Mental Health: On-Campus and in Wider Society

The following aspects of public and mental health are important for all members of society. Irrespective of students returning to campus, the University strongly advises all to adhere to these public health practices without compromise.

2.1 Hygiene

1. **Wash hands often and well** – Use soap and water for at least 20 seconds; before and after eating food; after touching surfaces such as doorknobs, public computers, desks, etc.; and especially before touching your face, which you should also try to avoid. Carry a sanitizer at all times, as if you are unable to find soap and water, an alcohol-based sanitizer can be relied upon frequently throughout the day to disinfect your hands.

2. **Cough and sneeze etiquette** – When you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth in your elbow rather than your hands. If you are using a tissue, make sure to throw it away immediately after use. Wash your hands immediately after.

2.2 Protection

3. **Sehat Check** – All students enrolled at AKU, whether on-campus, at AKU housing, or in their own homes must complete the Sehat Check screening app every single day. This screening tool is our first line of defense to identify signs of potential COVID-19 infection and respond accordingly.

4. **Distancing** – Maintaining distance is important to ensure safety of all. Social distancing means avoiding gatherings where there is an increased likelihood of people who may be unknowingly infected. Crowded and/or closed spaces are to be avoided as much as possible; keeping doors and windows open for increased and natural ventilation is advised. Physical distancing means maintaining distance (at least 3 feet or 1 meter, as per WHO's latest guidance) from others as much as possible. Both social and physical distancing are important precautions.

5. **Wear a face mask in public spaces at all times** – Covering your nose and mouth protects you, particularly when it's hard to maintain distance with others. Your face mask also protects others in case you are unknowingly infected with COVID-19. Tips on the correct way to wear and use your mask will be communicated to all students during their orientation (details below).

2.3 Public Health Protocols on campus

In addition to the public health guidelines outlined above, more specific guidelines for AKU students returning to either Stadium Road or Karimabad campuses are as follows:

6. **All students** must take the COVID-19 test at AKUH, and receive a health declaration certificate as a requirement to enter campus (more detail provided below).

7. **Complete the Sehat Check app** once every 24 hours and honestly report all relevant symptoms.

8. **Wear a surgical face mask** at all times when in a public space on campus, including classrooms.

9. **Maintain distancing** of at least 3 feet in classrooms, laboratories, libraries, cafeterias, offices, corridors, staircases, and lifts.

10. **Use designated entrances** and exits only (more detail provided below).

11. Use communal facilities (e.g. kitchens, canteens, meeting rooms, etc.) in accordance with designated protocols; it may be necessary to stagger usage or to continue to hold remote meetings so as to maintain distancing.

12. **Obey all restrictions** on the use of communal equipment such as printers and photocopiers.

13. It is important for students to be cognizant of the spaces and people where significant time is spent. In case someone becomes COVID-19 'positive', this information can be very helpful for early identification and testing to prevent the spread of infection.

14. Limit your movements. Try not to move around the campus too much. Stick to your own space as much as possible.

15. Review the latest updates and general guidance on campus health and safety provided by the University on its webpage.

16. Awareness flyers on several of the protocol items above will be displayed throughout the campus to reinforce the health and safety precautions for all in the AKU community to practice.

2.4 Peer support in adherence to guidelines at AKU

At AKU, we care for one another and must keep an eye out to take supporting action where needed. If you observe any of your peers, staff and faculty members, patients, and/or attendants not adhering to the above guidelines, please politely inform or remind them to do so, as the guidelines are offered in the interest of everyone's health. If you observe significant violations taking place repeatedly, please report this to your Programme Head.

2.5 Transportation

17. **Re: your own vehicle** – If you are using your own vehicle, keep a sanitizer bottle with you and use it on entering and leaving the vehicle. Be sure to disinfect the seats, steering wheel and all other frequently touched surfaces often, and any time you invite passengers, especially if they are from outside your family circle.

18. **Re: public transportation** – If you are using public transportation, ask to keep windows open whenever possible. Make sure to keep a recommended distance of an arm's length (1-2 meters) between each person if possible. Wear a mask at all times and remember to use hand sanitizer before and after you get off.

19. **Re: Uber/Careem/Rickshaw** – If you are using a rickshaw/taxi or a ride-hailing app such as Uber or Careem, keep windows open where applicable, sit at the back, wear a face mask throughout the ride, and avoid touching handles and general surfaces. In instances where contact with the surfaces is unavoidable, use hand sanitizer.

2.6   Mental health

Maintaining a positive mindset with hope, optimism and resilience was never more important and probably more difficult than in these COVID-19 affected times. There is anxiety and uncertainty regarding health, personal goals, and schedules as well as increased feelings of loneliness. Dealing with this unpredictability and frustration requires a conscious effort to stay physically as well as psychologically well. Here are some suggestions to help maintain your wellbeing.

- Wellness begins with physical health. This involves not only taking a balanced diet, good sleep and exercise, but also trying your best to avoid getting sick. Self-care is incomplete without protection. Do follow the safety protocols.
- Activities help us achieve goals. While there are restrictions on some of our usual ways of doing things, we can reach our goals by getting out of our comfort zone and finding new ways of getting things done. Keep the larger picture in mind and stay focused but flexible.
- Stay connected to your family and friends. Share happy moments with them, as well as your anxieties and fears. Give and receive support.
- In these unusual times, many aspects of our life have been trimmed to essentials. Reflect if you are upset about your unfulfilled needs or are those actually only your preferences. Dwelling on what we can't have only leads to negative feelings. Try to find the positive around you and make the most of what you have.
- Find a relaxation strategy. Connect with nature and practice meditation, yoga or mindfulness. Engage in activities that generate positive emotion. Pursue hobbies, be creative, watch movies or shows that give you thrill, relaxation or a good laughter.

Beyond this, some students may feel acute distress due to family/friends' sicknesses or deaths due to COVID-19. For any support related to mental health, contact the Student Counseling and Wellness Office (see Section 7 below for contact information).

2.7   Ongoing communication

The primary medium of communication from AKU to its students on health and safety guidelines will be through email. However, WhatsApp and other channels will continue to be used as alternate means of communication. AKU will ensure students are informed of the most important measures to follow to keep safe.

3. Academic Plans

New academic calendars have been modified to allow students to complete curriculum requirements, with minimal alteration to the academic year.

3.1 Online education and the continuity of academic programming

The Aga Khan University has employed blended and digital learning modes since 2011. All AKU faculty and students have access to a Learning Management System (LMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) platform. With the closure of campus and HEC guidance to transition to online education, the AKU Network of Quality, Teaching and Learning (QTL_net) mobilised a range of existing capabilities and contingencies to uphold the 2019-2020, and now 2020-2021, academic years. These efforts have cemented the now integral position of online education within the University.

3.2 Gradual reopening

Under parameters provided by the HEC to all universities, AKU has adopted a phased approach for a gradual reopening of campuses. This phased approach is sensitive to (a) density thresholds relative to campus infrastructure, (b) housing needs of students who are not residents of Karachi, (c) risk levels associated with frequent use of public transportation for day scholars travelling to and from the campuses, and (d) regulations governing programmes of study that necessitate practical training in a clinical setting to ensure students stay on track to graduate in a timely manner.

For all students not yet invited back to campus, the provision of online education will continue. All official communication regarding changes in status, including invitations to return to campus, will be conducted over email.

3.3 Course delivery

In addition to the face-to-face mode of teaching and learning, and depending on class sizes and campus/classroom physical infrastructure, it will be necessary to also continue/deploy blended learning including through online platforms. In-person classes may be conducted in shifts to maintain distancing requirements.

Programme Offices, Coordinators, and Year Chairs will provide students periodic updates with respect to their classes, labs, clinics, etc.

Specific arrangements relating to course delivery plans are being prepared by academic entities at AKU. Orientation sessions for students and more specific communications will cover all pertinent aspects about course delivery, class composition and sizes, and corresponding schedules.

AKU will work on a case-by-case basis with students who opt not to attend.

4. Campus Plans

4.1 Protocol on campus

All students must adhere to the public and mental health guidelines stated in Section 2. Those guidelines are the foundation of keeping ourselves and those around us safe. Refer back to Section 2 frequently, ensure that you are aware of all guidelines, and adhere to those guidelines strictly.

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4.2 Back-to-campus orientations

Students will be informed of mandatory, online back-to-campus orientations as required. The orientations will address the key points in this guide, particularly mandatory procedures, and specific protocols established by a given academic entity.

4.3 Designated entrances/exits

Access to University areas will be restricted to students and employees through controlled access points. Adequate signage will be on display at appropriate locations to guide students as they enter and exit. Upon entering, all students must display their AKU student ID card, display their completed Sehat Check app with Green Tick, and must wear their face masks correctly (i.e. securely fastened from the intended position covering both the nose and mouth).

Specific entrances/exits for students follows from the academic entity under which they are enrolled. The listing below outlines the specific entrance and exit points by academic entity. Other entry points that are typically open for students at their given academic premises will be closed. At Stadium Road campus, access points connecting the University with the Hospital will be closed.

Academic Entity	Student Entrance/Exit
School of Nursing and Midwifery (Stadium Road campus)	Main entrance of SONAM off the University ring road
Medical College (Stadium Road campus)	Main entrance of the Medical College next to the Dean's Office (Gate 5)
Institute for Educational Development (Karimabad campus)	Main vehicular entrance of IED (Gate 10)

Table 1: Designated entrances/exits

Security guards and other personnel will be stationed at each of the mentioned entrances with handheld infrared thermometers to screen all students. If a students' temperature is found to be above 38ºC, students will be required to visit the Student Health Physician for urgent assessment.

Information will be periodically be provided on the status (i.e. open or closed) of general, common-use areas and lounges for students on each campus as well as more specific areas normally accessible to students in a given academic entity.

4.5   Sports and Rehabilitation Centre

The Sports and Rehabilitation Centre (SRC) is partially open for student usage. Following are specific guidelines relating to use of SRC facilities and services in the present situation:

- SRC timings are from 12:00 Noon to 9:00 PM.
- Only students and registered staff members allowed – NO family members allowed until further notice.
- Display of AKU ID Card and SRC Membership Card (both) is mandatory – NO entry will be allowed incase ID cards are unavailable.
- Health screening (temperature check) will be done at the entrance. Entry register must be filled.
- All members must bring their own sports gears and equipment, sharing of sports gear must be avoided.
- Use of face mask is mandatory, however, can be taken off during the game.
- Gathering of no more than 4 person allowed at any given space.
- Users must maintain social distancing.
- SRC Management and AKU Safety & Security reserves the right to refuse permission to use in case there is any breach of SOPs.

Available services are:
- Squash
- Table Tennis (inside female aerobics room)
- Cricket -only AKU teams
- Tennis
- Outdoor Volleyball
- Outdoor Basketball
- Outdoor Futsal

The remainder of the SRC is closed until further notice.

4.6   Documentation for re-entering campus

As guided by HEC, the following documentation must be arranged/completed for all students returning to campus.

- **Invitation letter** – Only students authorised to do so will receive an official AKU invitation letter through email. Letters have been issued with a unique serial number that correlates to a listing of returning students, which will be cross-referenced at the time of students' health assessment. Students must read the contents of the letter and affidavit (detailed below) carefully before signing. The invitation letter makes it clear that students who have COVID-19 symptoms, or who are in contact with others who may be COVID-19 'positive', are to remain at home or seek medical attention. They must not return to campus. Such students must inform Mr. Amin Keashwani in the Office of the Registrar of

their circumstance (see contact sheet in Section 7). Such students will receive a subsequent invitation letter once the Student Health Team has made their reassessment through AKUH's tele-health clinic. To enter campus, you will be required to show your invitation letter.

☐ **Affidavit** – The affidavit documents the voluntary nature of the decision taken by students to return to campus. All returning students are to sign an affidavit stating they have been given an option to not return, and have chosen to return, and that they will adhere to all safety protocols and other instructions regarding the reopening of campus, and that they will not hold the University liable if they contract the virus in spite of the safety protocols. If this has been submitted earlier, it will remain valid. The affidavit is included in the Return Package. Students are to submit the signed affidavit to the Office of the Registrar as per instructions provided.

☐ **Health declaration** – Students should follow the instructions provided in the invitation letter to obtain the Health Declaration from Student Health Services. This includes:
   a. Calling AKUH call centre at 021 111 911 911 for an appointment at the AKUH COVID-19 testing centre. Call at least 5 working days in advance of your preferred timing and do so in time to receive results before your scheduled date to return to classes.
   b. A Google form to collect student health data will be sent shortly to all returning students. This form must be completed **within 24 hours** before the testing appointment.
   c. On the appointment date, report to the COVID-19 testing centre site directly, accessible from Stadium Road just before the University entrance gate no. 1.
   d. **All students will be assessed first by the doctor and then tested**. Based on the assessment, students may be guided to self-quarantine.
   e. . Test results will be available in 24 hours. **All students will be required to be in quarantine till their test results are available.** Students will be informed via email through Student Health Services of next steps (i.e. receive clearance to return to campus or to go into isolation).
   f. A health declaration certificate will be issued to students who are COVID-19 'negative'. These services, the test and the certificate are provided at no cost to students. The health declaration certificate is required before being allowed to attend classes on campus.

☐ **AKU student ID cards** – Students permitted to re-enter campus should display their ID card at all times.

4.8 Protocol for being present on campus after initial re-entry

1. **Active self-screening:** Each day before coming to campus, students must use the Sehat Check mobile application developed by the University. Depending on the colour card you receive following self-screening through the app, the student will either come to campus if the app deems so or must follow the instructions provided by the app to check one's health (if a temperature of 38ºC or higher is recorded, for example). Upon entering the campus, students must display the green entry card issued by the Sehat Check app on their mobile device. Please be advised that the Sehat Check app automatically sends reports to the student health nurse and respective programme director. The Sehat Check app is available for downloading at Google Play Store and Apple App Store. Further details have been provided to students during their orientation sessions.

2. **Weekly mandatory testing:** After an initial negative result, students will be required to continue having weekly mandatory COVID PCR tests to provide to AKU important data to support the monitoring of transmission levels and any further plans required for campus health and safety. If indicated, random testing will be undertaken regularly to monitor infection levels. The costs for testing are covered by AKU.

3. **In case of symptoms and/or contact with infected persons:** Any student who may be experiencing COVID-19 symptoms or who knows of a member of his/her family who develops symptoms or has been in a contact with a COVID-19 infected person should not return to campus. He/she should go into self-quarantine and contact the Student Health Services hotline or send them an email (as per contact information provided in Section 7).

4.9 Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs)

Students participating in clinical rotations will be required to adhere to policies and practices established by the Aga Khan University Hospital for using PPEs. These will be communicated to students at the start of each rotation.

4.10 Classroom layouts

While each academic entity will establish their own specific approaches to reconfiguring classrooms as required to maintain distancing requirements, the following minimum guidelines will be followed across both campuses. Cleaning and disinfection guidelines are detailed in a subsequent section.

- Rooms will be reorganised to allow for more physical distancing between furniture, students and the instructor. Specifically, place seating/desks at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart where feasible. In lecture halls, consider taping off seats and rows to ensure distancing.

- Where there is moveable furniture, classrooms will be arranged such that students do not face each other.

- Capacity of rooms will be limited to a number that allows for physical distancing.

- Informational signage and directional markings will be positioned to guide foot traffic flow through entrances and hallways.

- Signage will be placed to promote and encourage hygiene practices.

- Ventilation systems will be checked to ensure they operate properly, increasing circulation of outdoor air as much as possible.

- For laboratories, workstations and devices will be spaced or used in alignment to physical distancing requirements. Supplies and equipment will be limited to essential items and used by one group of students at a time.

4.11 Examinations

Information about assessments and certification examinations will be discussed with all AKU students by course/programme leads according to a calendar that will be provided in advance.

4.12 Dining

Where AKU dining halls/cafeterias are open, students must adhere to protocols in place as established for other users of these spaces (patients, attendees, staff). AKU Nutrition and Food Services Department has arranged for all food from these facilities to be packed and distributed.

4.13   Cleaning

Keeping the campus and its several buildings and facilities clean and disinfected as far as possible will be critical in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. The University continues its regular cleaning and maintenance schedule for all air handling units as per industry standards. Additionally, the following arrangements are being made and procedures followed:

- Daily cleaning and disinfecting supervisor checklist developed to support monitoring and task completion, as well as for a record of the date/time of inspection.

- Additional housekeeping staff are arranged for frequent cleaning and disinfection of all common spaces of the campus, including corridors.

- Additional disinfecting cleaning supplies are on hand to ensure cleanliness and help stem infection. These supplies are being used regularly.

- Classrooms, laboratories and other such frequently used spaces will be cleaned and disinfected at least twice daily.

- All students are asked to keep their personal items (e.g. cell phones, laptops and other electronics) clean by using disinfectant wipes. Students can also contribute to campus cleanliness by wiping down shared desks, laboratory equipment and other objects and surfaces before and after use.

4.14   Hostels   *(last updated: 15 September 2021)*
Please see further guidance for hostel residents here.

To help ensure a safe return to campus, single occupancy rooms are permitted for use by returning students requiring hostel accommodations till they get Covid test results. Care has been taken to accommodate students on and off campus in single and shared rooms. Students who are permitted to return to AKU hostels will be notified through the invitation letter included in the Return Package. Specific protocol is as follows.

Pre-arrival
- Follow the instructions above (Section 4.8) for testing and to receive the health declaration certificate. Students must arrange their own travel to the AKUH COVID-19 testing centre.

- Students must prepare to bring with them on their return to the hostel a COVID-19 safety kit, the contents of which they are responsible for replenishing. The kit must include **surgical masks** to be worn at all times while in public spaces on campus, a **thermometer** for daily monitoring including when using the SEHAT app, **hand sanitizer** with at least 60% alcohol useful for when wash basins are not easily accessible, **alcohol swabs** for disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, and **cleaning supplies** for cleaning/disinfecting one's hostel room.

Arrival

- **Before arriving** please call the Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH) call center at +92 21 **111 911 911** to book your COVID-19 assessment and test appointment. The validity of test is 72 hours. You must arrange your travelling logistics accordingly.
- On the day of arrival please report to on-campus Hostel Reception counter to complete the check-in formalities, drop your luggage and then report directly to the COVID testing

site to get the assessment and test done. The COVID assessment and testing site is open from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM Monday to Saturday.

- The test result is expected in 24 hours.
- During this time, depending on the assessment of the physician, you will be required to self-quarantine in your room at the on/off campus hostel.
- Students declared COVID-19 '**Negative'** will start formal activities as recommended by the Student Health Physician.
- Based on the symptoms, exposure and Physician assessment you may be required to self-quarantine in Hotel till you get result and clearance from SHS.
- Any student declared COVID-19 '**Positive'** would be required to stay in the designated hotel arrangements made by the University.
- If the results are positive, Student Health Services (SHS) will raise the Accomodation results for hostel students. Accomodation team will coordinate with the Hostel management and student for completion of transfer process.
- In case of symptoms, students may take routine medications from the hostel team as recommended by SHS while leaving for isolation.
- Students will be re-evaluated during and at the end of the self-isolation period by Student Health Physician based on which decision will be made about discontinuation of isolation.
- During self –isolation for moderate to severe symptoms students may be referred to the ER for evaluation regarding Hospital admission.
- For those under isolation and where mild to severe symptoms are experienced/persist, they may be referred by a physician to be admitted to AKUH for medical attention.

During self-quarantine / isolation

- Movement of students is restricted, and they will not be allowed to leave the hostel premises or socialise.

- Entry into the hostel for visitors is completely restricted. Only urgent maintenance complaints will receive attention.

- Room cleaning will be the responsibility of the individual student to avoid potential infectious spread.

- During the self-Quarantine period, the new students will be provide packed 'economy' meals in hostels. Students will not be charged for the food during this period and only these meals can be consumed. No other food will be allowed (i.e. students cannot order or accept food from any other, external source).

- Students are encouraged to stay connected with family and friends remotely.

If unwell while staying at the hostel

- If you have symptoms such as cough, fever, Body ache, diarrhea or other respiratory problems, contact Student Health Services or the Employee and Student Hotline **+92-300-827-8350** (10:00am-10:00pm) or email student.healthpk@aku.edu to get advice about your problem.
- TELE-CLINIC may be the option to contact your Student physician depending on your complaint. Check with Student Physician /Nurse, or schedule an appointment online with Student Health Services.

- Students should stay in contact via phone/email with the hostel management team and Student Health Services who will provide instructions on self-monitoring procedures and any related actions (see contact information in Section 7 below).

Protocol for students' stay at AKU hostels
- Students are to maintain physical distancing at all times when around others; particularly when using laundry facilities, pantry areas and bathrooms.
- Students must not plan to meet other hostel residents in gatherings of more than 4 people. The more people an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the greater the risk of becoming infected with and unknowingly spreading COVID-19.
- Taking care of one's emotional health is paramount. Physical distancing does not mean social isolation. Remain connected and reach out to family and friends remotely. Take advantage of the Student Services outlined below.
- See the contact information in Section 7 below for how to reach out to hostel staff.

5. Libraries

The Covid-19 pandemic has birthed a difficult and challenging working environment for libraries globally. Libraries are generally appreciated as physical learning spaces, but due to the present pandemic, the utilization of libraries has been greatly hindered, largely by the fear of the airborne nature of the virus and its rapid spread in public spaces.

This new formality has restricted the manner in which we use library spaces, therefore we have come up with the following standard operating procedures (SOPs).

5.1. SOPs for reopening of AKU Libraries in Pakistan:

1. Library Timings:

FHS Library: Monday – Friday: 8:00 am to 10:00 pm.
                       Saturday: 9:00am to 5:00pm.
AV-LRC: Monday – Friday: 8:00 am to 10:00 pm.
IED Library: Monday – Friday: 8:00 am to 8:00 pm.

2. Libraries and AV-LRC Visits:

- To reduce the risk of viral spread, we shall limit the number of physical users in the library and the AV-LRC at any one time to ease the maintenance of social distancing. Users will be advised to visit the library and the AV-LRC only when absolutely necessary, as most library resources are available online through the library webpage and are accessible through the intranet and via the virtual private network (VPN).

- Each visitor will be required to wear a face mask and sanitise their hands at the entry point.

- Library patrons shall not be allowed to personally browse the book shelves, but shall instead request the required books or materials (for reading and borrowing) through library staff in advance via email or upon their visit to the library.

3. Staff measures:

- Personal health and safety plus hygiene is crucial, therefore library and AV-LRC staff are required to use gloves and facemasks while attending to patrons at the circulation counter/front desk.

- It is recommended that one patron at a time shall be assisted at the counter.

- In case a queue develops, a distance of six feet shall be maintained.

4. Materials:

- The returned materials shall be kept in quarantine for at least twenty-four (24) hours.

- Users are requested to sanitize their hands before touching any public computer, keyboard or mouse.

- To maintain recommended social distance, LRC staff will ensure that users are using computer workstations leaving one station empty in between.

- Borrowed laptops and accessories shall upon return be cleaned by the library and AV-LRC staff using alcohol swabs or disinfectant solution before reissuing.

- Library and AV-LRC staff will clean the public computer keyboard and mouse after regular intervals and where possible after every individual use.

- The housekeeping staff shall clean all tables and chair hand-rests daily by using the recommended disinfectant solution.

- There shall be no library fines until an improvement in the pandemic situation or until further communication from the library.

- Night shift library services shall be discontinued until further communication.

6. Student Services

As AKU welcomes students back to its campuses, Student Services will offer an increasing level of service and co-curricular opportunities in a similar phase-wise approach. In keeping with the guiding principles and plans outlined in previous sections, the relevant Offices of Student Experience and Student Counselling Services and Wellness must approve in advance all in-person activities including counselling sessions, mentorship events, social events, etc.

During Phase 1, Student Services will provide student health services; online counselling and psychiatric appointments; online webinars and self-help resources to help students deal with uncertainty, changed routines and related emotions; peer mental health support; and consultations on co-curricular activities, events, leadership opportunities and matters related to Student Code of Conduct. To reach any of the above units, see the contact information in Section 7 below.

Specific notes/guidelines for availing services and co-curricular activities include:

- Primary communication about available services will be made through official university student email accounts (e.g. @scholar.aku.edu or @student.aku.edu). Email accounts should be checked regularly.

- Updates to the Safe Return to Campus strategy will be posted on https://www.aku.edu/students/Pages/safe-return.aspx. Students are encouraged to bookmark this site and visit it frequently for evolving procedures once students have returned to campus.

- Secondary communication will take place through Class Representatives. Students must take notice of communication from their peer student leaders over WhatsApp and/or through class groups on social media, where applicable.

- When attempting to avail services including student health, counselling sessions, and seeking approval for events, students must reach out to the concerned staff via email and/or telephone before trying to meet anyone in person. Until further guidance is received, AKU must minimise non-essential face-to-face contact.

- Spaces will be examined for suitability to conduct small-scale events and activities. Information on venues being considered for co-curricular activities will be communicated on an ongoing basis.

- Decisions on every event or activity being planned will be taken on a case-by-case basis. These decisions will include guidance on how to comply with standard operating procedures and safety protocols. Stipulations will be applied on the maximum number of attendees, on venue restrictions, on time duration limits, on the nature of activity, and more. Grounds for cancellation of approved activity will be underlined. Any event may be subject to cancellation in order to ensure the health and safety of members of the AKU community.

7. Useful Contact Information

	Entity	Function	Phone Number / Email Address Email Address
1	Queries about COVID-19	General inquiry line for the AKU community.	corona.info@aku.edu
2	AKUH Call Centre	For booking COVID-19 test.	021 111 911 911
3	Office of the Registrar	For students who receive a letter of invitation and who have COVID-19 symptoms, stay at home and inform Mr. Amin Keashwani.	021 3486 4537 From on-campus: ext. 4537
4	Coordinator for Gilgit-Baltistan & Chitral in the Office of the Vice-Provost	Ms. Munira Shah has been liaising with students based in GB&C during campus and hostel closures, and will continue to facilitate as needed.	0315 355 5019 Ms. Munira Shah Specialist, Education Liaison GB&C
5	Academic Programme Focal Points:		
a.	School of Nursing and Midwifery	Assistant Dean, Teaching Learning & Undergraduate Programmes	Ms. Khairulnissa Ajani at 021 3486 5411 (ext. 5411) khairulnissa.ajani@aku.edu
b.	Medical College	Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education	Dr. Sadaf Khan at 021 3486 4500 (ext. 4500) sadaf.khan@aku.edu
c.	Institute for Educational Development	Associate Professor & Head, Graduate Programmes	Dr. Dilshad Ashraf 021 3486 8521 (ext. 8521) dilshad.ashraf@aku.edu
6	AKU Hostels:		
a.	AKU Hostels – Females	Managing all aspects of female students' hostel accommodations on- and off-campus.	General: 021 3486 5491/92 From on-campus: ext. 5491/92 Manager: Ms. Mehrunissa Kabani at 021 3486 5455 (ext. 5455) 0345 219 1801 mehrunissa.kabani@aku.edu

	Entity	Function	Phone Number / Email Address Email Address
b.	AKU Hostels – Males	Managing all aspects of make students' hostel accommodations on- and off-campus.	General: 021 3486 4421/2 General: ext. 4421/4422 Manager: Mr. Tabbasum Nadeem at 021 3486 4420 (ext. 4420) tabbasum.nadeem@aku.edu
7	Student Services:		
a.	Student Health Services hotline	24/7 employee and student hotlines	0300 827 8350 (7am – 10pm) 0305 222 1486 (10pm – 7am) student.healthpk@aku.edu
b.	Counselling Services and Wellness	For online counselling and psychiatric appointments, and for general support regarding mental health and wellbeing related issues.	Dr. Hadia Pasha, Ms. Aqsa Yaqoob at 021 3486 4456 (ext. 4456) and student.counsellor@aku.edu Dr. Sana Siddiqui at student.psychiatrist@aku.edu
d.	Student Experience personnel	Providing consultations on co-curricular activities, events, communications, leadership opportunities, and matters relating to the Student Code of Conduct.	General: student.experience@aku.edu Ms. Nadia Rehman at nadia.rehman@aku.edu Mr. Amin Lakhani at amin.lakhani@aku.edu and 0302 829 2214 Mr. Saad Zubair at saad.zubair@aku.edu and 0321 206 1860

Table 2: Useful contact information

8. References

While not a comprehensive list, the following sources have contributed to the formation of guidelines and advice presented in this guide:

- Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Karachi and the Department of Infection Prevention and Hospital Epidemiology (DIPHE)

- Aga Khan University Network of Quality, Teaching and Learning (QTL_net) "Teaching and Learning Guidelines"

- Brown University
  https://www.brown.edu/sites/g/files/dprerj316/files/healthy-brown-2020-21-plan.pdf

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html
  - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html#more-changes
  - https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html
  - https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/show-me-the-science-hand-sanitizer.html

- Cleveland Clinic
  https://my.clevelandclinic.org/-/scassets/files/org/employer-solutions/covid-19-returning-to-work-guide.ashx

- Higher Education Commission, Pakistan (HEC)
  "Strategy/Policy for Gradual Reopening of HEIs" presented in the 30th meeting of the Vice Chancellors Committee held on 23 June 2020, revised Sep 2, 2020.
  hec.gov.pk/english/HECAnnouncements/Documents/nCoVirus/Reopening-of-HEIs.pdf

- The City University of New York
  https://www.cuny.edu/coronavirus/

- World Health Organization
  .https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public