



Conference 2017

Between Collaboration & Competition: The Promises &  
Challenges for Quality Assurance in Higher Education

# **Cross-Border Student Mobility: a case study of Aga Khan University**

Faisal Notta & Dr Tashmin Khamis

# Cross-Border Student Mobility

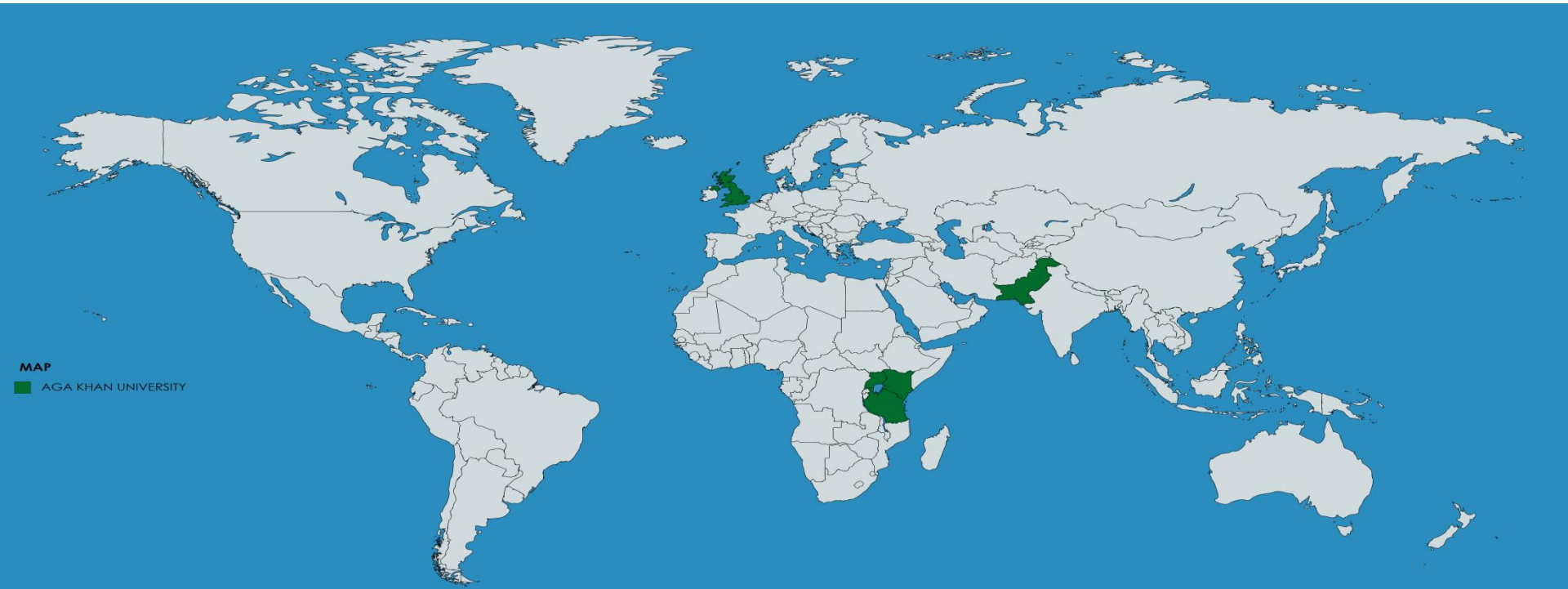
A photograph of the Aga Khan University (AKU) Medical College Campus in Karachi, Pakistan, taken at dusk. The image shows a large, modern, multi-story building with a grid of windows, many of which are illuminated from within, casting a warm glow. The building is reflected in a calm body of water in the foreground. Several palm trees are scattered around the building, and the sky is a clear, deep blue. The overall atmosphere is serene and professional.

Aga Khan University (AKU)

Medical College Campus, Karachi, Pakistan

# The Aga Khan University

- Founded in 1983 in Pakistan as first private, not-for-profit university.
- In 2000, it expanded to East Africa – followed by the United Kingdom.
- TODAY: 3 continents, 5 countries **ASIA** (Pakistan), **AFRICA** (Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda), and **EUROPE** (United Kingdom)



# Aga Khan University (AKU)

An International University with local relevance

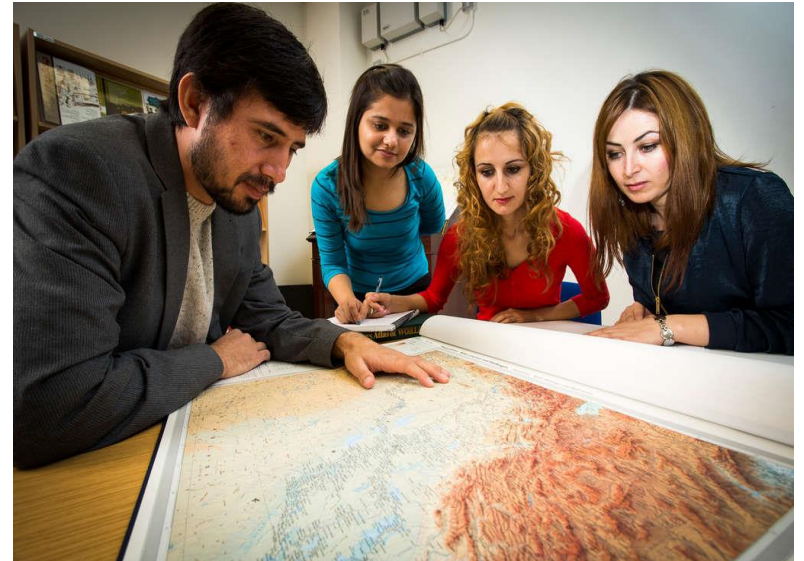
- Multi-country, multi-campus university
- One university integrated
- Guiding principles: quality, access, relevance, impact
- Opportunities for students, faculty & staff to experience Cross Border Higher Education (CBHE)



# The Aga Khan University

## Vision

Student and faculty to provide them opportunities of spending/attending part of the same programme through mobility across national borders



# AKU: The first thirty years

- ❖ Medicine
- ❖ Nursing
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations



# Aga Khan University: the next 30 years

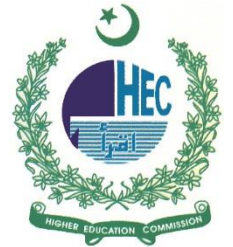
Becoming a comprehensive University

- 
- A person is standing in a vast, green, hilly landscape under a cloudy sky. The person is positioned in the middle ground, looking towards the horizon. The landscape is filled with tall grass and rolling hills, with mountains visible in the distance. The sky is blue with scattered white and grey clouds.
- ❖ Faculty of Arts and Sciences (liberal arts and general education) in Tanzania and Pakistan
  - ❖ Graduate Professional Schools
  - ❖ East African Institute
  - ❖ Human Development Programme

# National Quality Assurance Agencies

## Pakistan

Higher Education Commission (HEC)



## UK

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA)



**East Africa** Inter-University Council  
for East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and  
Uganda).





# Current Models Cross Border Higher Education

- Branch campus
- Transnational education
- Joint or dual degree programmes
- Cross-border collaborative arrangements
- Franchise
- Twinning programmes



# Issues of Cross-Border

- Recognition of credits
- Degrees
- Equivalence of qualifications
- Accreditation of credentials in different national jurisdictions



# Approach of analysis

- Analytical Framework
- Systematic processes of continuous reflection



# QA framework and approach

<b>Higher Education Commission Pakistan</b>	<b>Inter-University Council for East Africa East Africa</b>	<b>Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education UK</b>
1. Self-Assessment of programmes	1. Self-Assessment of programmes	1. Self-Assessment of Programmes
2. Programme Accreditation	2. External Peer Review of programmes	2. External Peer Review of programmes
		3. Annual monitoring

# Academic Standards/Cells

Country /Region: Pakistan	Country/ Region: East Africa	Country/ Region: UK
Quality Assurance: Higher Education Commission (HEC, Pakistan) <b>8 Standards/Criteria [Cells]</b>	Quality Assurance: Inter University Council for East Africa (IUCEA) <b>18 Cells</b>	Quality Assurance: Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA, UK) <b>19 Expectations / Cells within 3 themes</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Program Mission, objectives and outcomes <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>2. Curriculum Design and Organization <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>3. Laboratories and Computing Facilities <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>4. Student Support and Advising <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>5. Process Control [students admission, recruitment, retention, monitoring of <u>students progress</u>, and <u>graduates</u>] <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>6. Faculty <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>7. Institutional Facilities <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>8. Institutional Support [finance] <math>\gamma</math></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Requirements from Stakeholders <math>\alpha</math></li> <li>2. Expected Learning Outcomes <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>3. Program Specifications <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>4. Content of the Program <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>5. Organization of the program <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>6. Didactic Concept (Teaching pedagogy) <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>7. Student Assessment <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>8. Quality of Academic Staff <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>9. Quality of Support staff</li> <li>10. Profile of students <math>\Omega</math></li> </ol>	<b>Theme A: Setting &amp; maintain academic standards (n=7 Expectations)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Aligned with threshold requirements with qualification framework in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Scotland</li> <li>2. Governance for an award of academic credit and qualification <math>\Omega</math></li> <li>3. Record/database of qualification approved, delivery, and assessment.</li> <li>4. Processes for approval of taught and research programmes. <math>\alpha</math></li> <li>5. Achieved Learning Outcomes through demonstration for award of a credit. <math>\Omega</math></li> </ol>

# Academic Standards (*contd.*)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>11. Student Advice and Support <math>\Omega</math></li><li>12. Facilities and Infrastructure <math>\Omega</math></li><li>13. Student Evaluation <math>\Omega</math></li><li>14. Curriculum Design <math>\Omega</math></li><li>15. Staff Development activities <math>\Omega</math></li><li>16. Benchmarking <math>\Omega</math></li><li>17. Achieved Outcomes of Graduates <math>\Omega</math></li><li>18. Stakeholders satisfaction <math>\alpha</math></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>6. Processes for monitoring and review of programmes <math>\Omega</math></li><li>7. Use of external and independent expertise at key stages of setting and maintain academic standards. <math>\alpha</math></li></ul> <p><b>Theme B: Assuring and Enhancing Academic Quality (n=11 Expectations)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>8. Program design, development and approval <math>\Omega</math></li><li>9. Recruitment, Selection and Admission to Higher Education <math>\Omega</math></li></ul>
--	--	--

# Academic standards (*contd.*)

10. Learning and Teaching  $\Omega$
  11. Enabling Student Development and Achievement  $\Omega$
  12. Student Engagement  $\alpha$
  13. Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning  $\Omega$
  14. External Examining  $\alpha$
  15. Programme Monitoring and Review  $\Omega$
  16. Academic Appeals and Student Complaints  $\gamma$
  17. Managing Higher Education Provision with others  $\alpha$
  18. Research Degrees  $\alpha$
- Theme C: Information about Higher Education Provision**
19. Information is provided to intended audience

Key:  $\Omega$  Match,  $\gamma$  Somewhat match,  $\alpha$  not match

# Findings

## 1. Commonalities and Differences

Themes (common in all 3 frameworks)

- ❖ Expected learning outcomes of courses and programmes
- ❖ Curriculum design and organization
- ❖ Pedagogy of teaching and learning
- ❖ Quality of Students and Faculty members
- ❖ Processes of programme design
- ❖ Student recruitment, admissions and
- ❖ Processes of approval programme objectives
- ❖ Support for student advising
- ❖ Competency of faculty members





# Findings (*contd.*)

- QAA UK focus on input from expert advise such as external examiners in maintaining academic standards of programmes while HEC and IUCEA QA framework leave it with HEIs to follow
- Student Engagement
  2. Number of years for cyclical programme review
  3. Establishment of Quality Assurance Framework and process
  4. Sharing of SARs and PARs with public / stakeholders

# Implications for AKU

- ❖ No single QA framework covering 3 continents
- ❖ Different Qualification frameworks
- ❖ Submission of QA reports to respective Commissions
- ❖ Level of Maturity
- ❖ Different number of years for cyclical programme review
- ❖ Establishment of Quality Assurance Framework and process
- ❖ No or little understanding of academic standards between QA commissions



# AKU approach to address CBHE



- ❖ Established the Network of Quality Assurance and Improvement (QAI\_net) and Network of Teaching and Learning (TL\_net)
- ❖ University Academic Quality Framework
- ❖ University QA framework has 3 levels comprehensive IQA system:
  - Self-assessment [evidence-based]
  - External peer review (validation)
  - Monitoring of resulting improvement plans through an annual self-monitoring process
- ❖ Teaching and Learning Framework developed Graduate Attributes
- ❖ Robust IQA Evidence based
- ❖ University-wide Quality Assurance Review Committee (QARC)

# Conclusion & Recommendation



- ❖ Starting point to build synergies between EQAs
- ❖ University is in learning phase for CBHE
- ❖ Policy dialogues with QA agencies
- ❖ Engagement of University with QA agencies
- ❖ Strengthen regulatory framework
- ❖ Ponder on the processes involved in deciding QA framework standard
- ❖ Role of QA practitioner in development of academic standards
- ❖ Understand concrete results and outcomes of current processes of CBHE at AKU - Longitudinal study following students and alumni

Ideas/Suggestions/Comments

Thank-You