

SCHOLAR QUARTERLY



Aga Khan Education Board for the United States of America

Welcome back to AKEB's Scholar Quarterly newsletter! We hope the first few months of the new academic year were a smooth transition for you! We are already halfway through the Fall semester. Be sure to look back and reflect on the personal and academic goals you set for yourself back in August. This is the perfect time to evaluate how you can make small changes in your daily life today in order to achieve your goals and finish the semester off strong!

“*In a Knowledge Society, the most productive investments we can make are investments in education.*”
- His Highness the Aga Khan
State Banquet in Bangladesh, 2008

Wellness Hacks

Maintaining a regular sleep schedule is important to your overall wellness! Teens should be getting between 8-10 hours of sleep each night to function best. Sleep deprivation can be harmful for your physical and mental health. Try setting a schedule and following it closely to ensure you get enough sleep each night to feel well-rested and focus on your schoolwork and daily activities!

Learning Extends Beyond the Classroom!

There are many ways to stretch your mind outside of the classroom. Next time you find yourself with some free time, download one of these applications and use your digital devices in a meaningful way to learn something new!



TED has many educational and inspiring speeches on a variety of topics!



Learn new words and definitions by challenging your friends to a game of Words with Friends!



Use Duolingo to practice learning a new language that may not be offered at your school!



Lumosity offers fun games that will help you exercise memory, attention, speed, flexibility and problem-solving!

Scholarships

Dell Scholars Program

Application due 12/1/20

National Honor Society Scholarship

Application due 12/7/20

**Education Financial Assistance and
Scholarship Program (EFAS)**

Application opens 12/13/20

Burger King Scholars Program

Application due 12/15/20

9TH GRADE



Plan Ahead

Winter break is a great time to recharge for the next semester and to think about volunteering! Engaging in community service will provide you with opportunities to help your local community and make positive change. Try to stay active in the community through activities sponsored by your local i-CERV group or through virtual volunteering opportunities. Some virtual volunteering ideas include providing tutoring for other students, making blankets for shelters, or organizing donation drives for your local hospitals!



Reflect and recharge

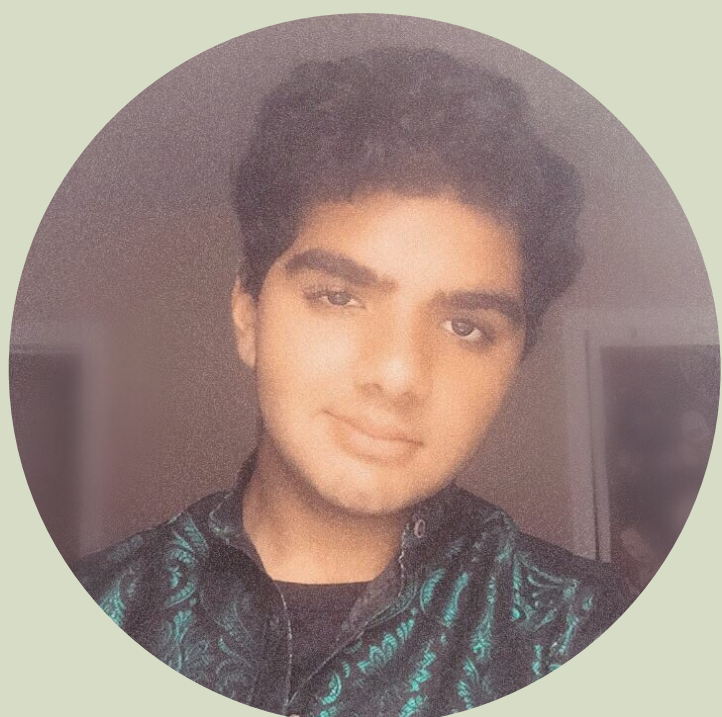
Now that you've had a chance to settle into high school and your new school schedule, it is important to start thinking about your study routine! While it may seem like you have plenty of time until your final exams, they can creep up quickly! Come up with a study schedule so you can plan ahead to finish all of your assignments and still have enough time to study and retain information for final exams. You can use planning tools such as Google Calendar, agenda planners, or paper calendars to stay organized and track all deadlines and important dates!

Volunteer



Since we are close to halfway done with the academic year, take some time to reflect on how the first few months of high school have been for you. Do you need to find a new study routine that works for you? Would it be beneficial to branch out and explore new extra-curricular activities? Do you want to take on a more active role in any clubs you are currently a part of? It's never too early to start thinking about what organizations you might want to get more involved in. By learning about different organizations at your school, you may find an opportunity that truly interests you!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Aahil Bhimani
10th grader - Richmond, VA

“Some advice I wish someone had given me before the school year began would be to take advantage of all opportunities and to branch out. I really wish I could have had more involvement in the clubs and extracurricular activities offered at my school. With all the diversity, I feel like the more involvement you have the better!

Given the current circumstances I believe that in this time students such as myself, should take advantage by continuing to learn. For me this has been focusing more on the things I haven't had time for previously such as learning a new language. Something that is also very productive is focusing on personal hobbies such as art or sports!

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10TH GRADE



Check-in with yourself

How are you doing 10th graders? This is an unprecedented time and school may look a little different from what you envisioned. Take some time to check in on your mental health and overall wellness. Taking walks outside, connecting with friends virtually, and picking up new hobbies can help you manage stress effectively and maintain your wellness. Mental health is just as important as physical health, so it's a great idea to take mental breaks if you're feeling overwhelmed with academic pressures.

This is a great time to start thinking about mentorship. Are there any 11th or 12th graders who had a great summer program experience or are taking a class you hope to take next year? Try reaching out to them to see if they may be able to share their study tips or if they have any advice for you as you gear up to prepare for your final exams, standardized tests and summer plans! If you are looking for volunteer opportunities or formal summer programs, many applications will open up in December or January. Plan early so you can keep track of important deadlines!

Find mentors



Winter break is a great time to recharge for the next semester and to think about volunteering! Engaging in community service will provide you with opportunities to help your local community and make positive change. Try to stay active in the community through activities sponsored by your local i-CERV group or through virtual volunteering opportunities. Some virtual volunteering ideas include providing tutoring for other students, making blankets for shelters, or organizing donation drives for your local hospitals!



Volunteer

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Ashish Ali
11th grader - Spring, TX

In order to make the most of circumstances given COVID-19, students should communicate with each other through video-chat, such as Zoom, because this is one of the only ways that we all can stay connected since we can't meet each other in person due to the pandemic.

In an effort to maintain a sense of normalcy, I have been going outside for walks or bike rides around my neighborhood. Being inside all of the time can take a toll on mental health so going outside can help you get out of the home and enjoy nature as well.



11TH GRADE



Explore colleges

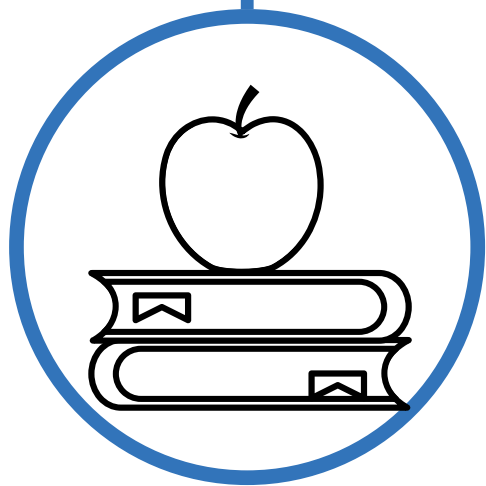
Did COVID-19 ruin your plans to be a PSAT superstar? Don't worry - you can still focus on the SAT and ACT! Just because testing is optional this year for college applications, don't take it for granted. Taking both the SAT and ACT may be beneficial because they both test different aspects of your knowledge and you may score better on one test compared to the other! Use sites such as Collegeboard.org or Commondataset.org to see how different colleges compare with each other when it comes to test scores for incoming students. Right now is also a great time to start thinking about your upcoming final exams. Getting an early start on studying or seeking a tutor may be exactly what you need to finish the semester with stellar grades!



Expand extra-curricular involvement

Study breaks between long stretches of assignments may be the perfect time to start daydreaming about college, but you can do more than just daydream! Look out for the next round of AKEB Virtual College Expeditions or take a virtual tour of a college you are interested in (check out campusreel.org for this!). While you're at it, use the College Board site to see the average GPA and SAT/ACT scores for accepted students to see how you compare. Along with your grades and test scores, your college essays and letters of recommendation will help you get into your dream school! This is a great time to start thinking about teachers and coaches that may be able to write your recommendations next year when you are ready to apply.

Prepare for the SAT and ACT



If you had to apply to colleges today, which extra-curricular activities could you add to your applications? Many activities have been interrupted due to COVID-19, but there are still other ways to stay involved with your extra-curricular commitments. For example, if you couldn't participate in Band this year, you can still practice at home or give lessons to others virtually! There are also ways to remain engaged with community service at this time. Did you know that many organizations allow you to volunteer virtually? Reach out to your local i-CERV group to identify more ways to stay involved right now!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Inara Shamji
12th grader - Los Angeles, CA

Although COVID-19 has limited the resources and opportunities of many students, I think that it has given us the time to work on new endeavors and improve our focus. For me, this pandemic has granted more time to focus on classes in school and college applications. I have also become more comfortable with learning virtually and have tried to become involved with many virtual programs, both within the Ismaili community and outside of it. I think in many ways that the abundance of programs available to the youth is a gift, and that many students should take advantage of it.

In many ways this pandemic has shifted my schedule and daily routine because I am used to going out and spending time in school. Because of this, I miss a lot of the social aspect that we used to have before this pandemic. Although my interactions with others are limited, I try to keep in contact with my close friends by calling them occasionally. I also maintain strong connections with my family at home, and with my cousins through Zoom.



12TH GRADE



Submit college applications

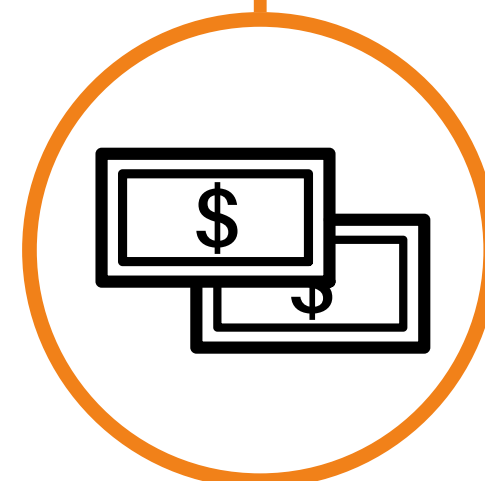
College can get expensive but there are ways to help bring the cost down through scholarships and financial aid! You can use websites such as FastWeb and Scholly to research scholarships - even one hour a day of research can make all the difference between making bank or breaking the bank when it comes to funding your college education! There are thousands of scholarships available - you just have to look for them! Additionally, be sure to submit financial aid documents on time to be eligible for the most aid from prospective schools. The earlier you apply, the more money you'll be eligible for.



Finish strong

You're on your final lap! Finish strong by making sure your grades are top-notch this semester, your early decision/early action college applications have their laces tied, and letters of recommendation are polished up. Reach out to a trusted elder cousin, neighbor, or college graduate to go over your application before submitting. You can even use online resources such as the **Fair Opportunity Project** which provides useful advice and guidance for navigating the college application process. Even though you may not be able to visit some colleges in-person, you can visit more schools virtually (check out campusreel.org for this) and even request meetings with admissions counselors to ask any questions you may have.

Financial aid planning



As you approach the halfway point of your senior year, evaluate what it will take for you to be prepared when you start college next Fall. Plan ahead for which AP exams or dual credit courses you might take which will get you college credits before you even begin as a freshman next year. Additionally, as college admissions get more competitive, schools are looking more closely at final semester performance when finalizing admissions, scholarships, and grants for incoming freshmen. Keep those grades up and stay involved through the end of your school year!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Aarzo Maknoja
Freshman at
Columbia University

Usually the two main things that impact the transition to a college are people and the work load. Due to COVID-19, my expectations of meeting all my classmates this academic semester were not the same compared to what a regular freshman year start would be: meeting your peers and slowly adjusting to the environment. A lot of classes now are mainly online which restricts me to get onto campus and meeting new people. As I took several AP classes in high school, I was prepared to handle the work load I am receiving now.

A few things current seniors should be focused on as they head into the next few months are staying on top of all deadlines for scholarships and college applications. Remember that senior year still counts. After you have submitted all of you applications, do well in all of your classes and your standardized exams. Along with all that, try to balance out the stress with some self care time. Take time out to take care of your body and your mind as well because I know school can get a bit stressful sometimes. If you are given the opportunity, schedule a few college visits so that when it comes down to picking between a few universities, you are prepared.

