

Student Onboarding FAQs

جامعة الملك عبد الله
للعلوم والتقنية
King Abdullah University of
Science and Technology



Contents

Onboarding Process and Login

Visa, Immigration & Iqama

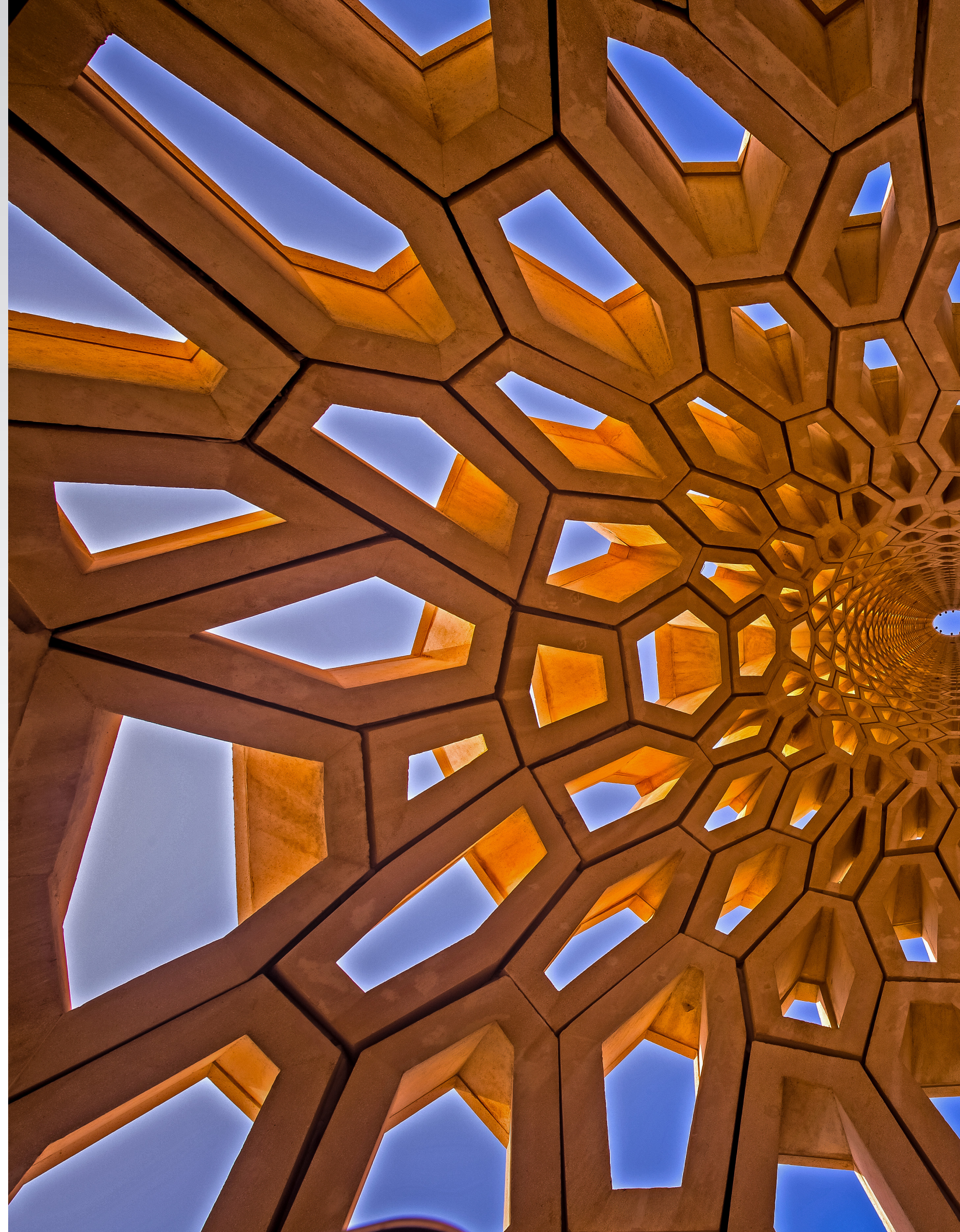
Housing & Accommodation

Financial Support

Academic Questions

Dependent and Family-Related Questions

Miscellaneous Questions



Onboarding Process and Login

1. I have problems with my Duo Login – what do I need to do?

For activating DUO kindly connect with the IT helpdesk on

Chatbot (<https://vita.kaust.edu.sa>)

2. I cannot access my KAUST email address.

Please review the "Created User Profile" or "Existing account status changed to active Regular Student" email sent from KAUST (Connect SAP IDM Team) on how to access your KAUST account if you have not already done so.

3. What are the main steps of the onboarding process?

1. Completing your onboarding form.
2. Clearing medical screening,
3. Completing the visa process (for international students)
4. Travel arrangements,
5. Arriving at KAUST.

4. How much time do I need to plan for the whole onboarding process?

For local students, you would be onboarded within 2 weeks. For international students, it would take around 8-12 weeks.

5. What do I need to do before being able to arrive at KAUST?

As an international student, you will require a student visa to enter Saudi Arabia. Once you fill out the onboarding form you will receive detailed instructions via email informing you about the steps required to obtain your visa. KAUST has connections with visa agencies in your home country to help you with the visa process.

6. Is medical screening a requirement?

Yes, it is a requirement for local and international students.

For international students, the embassy would require medical tests to issue your student visa. Please upload your Visa Medical Report as soon as you have it using the link provided by your onboarding advisor. Our KAUST Health Department (KH) will review it and approve your medical clearance. Since it is also a requirement by KAUST Health Department (KH) to ensure the availability of medical services and medications for all students they might reach out to you in case additional tests are requested by KH.

Visa, Immigration & Iqama



1. Do I need to be sponsored by KAUST?

Yes, non-Saudi Arabian students studying at KAUST are required to have a university-sponsored iqama (Residence Permit). If you are already living in Saudi Arabia under another iqama, you will need to transfer your sponsorship to KAUST. In case your current employer/sponsor does not support the iqama transfer process you will have to exit the Kingdom first and start the visa process from your home country. In that case, please reach out to our Onboarding advisor for further information and support.

2. What is the process for obtaining my student visa?

1. Contact your Visa Agent

Please contact the local visa agent in the country you will be applying from for your **"Student visa"** (depending on the country, it can also be named "Educational Government visa") and ask for the visa requirements list. The recommended visa agency list is found in the [link](#)

If there is no visa agent in the country you are applying from, we have listed the relevant Embassy for you to contact. The agency will ask you to provide an **"Invitation Letter"** or a **"Visa Approval Number."** This document will be sent to you within 10 days from submitting the onboarding form.

2. Check Your Passport Validity

Make sure you have a passport valid for at least twelve (12) months with at least two (2) clear visa pages adjacent to each other. Otherwise please renew your passport before filling out the onboarding form as your visa invitation letter will be connected to the passport information provided in the onboarding form.

3. Start the Attestation of Your Important Documents

The degree attestation process is complex in many countries and, under normal circumstances, can take up to 60 days to finalize. Discuss this process with your visa agent and start it as soon as possible. If your degree/diploma has not yet been issued, please inform the Onboarding team so that we can proceed accordingly. You may need to have attested other documents, including birth and marriage certificates.

To get started, we encourage you to:

- Obtain the original and notarized and/or authenticated copies of your degree transcripts/diplomas.
- Once you have your documents, start the Degree attestation process (per instructions from your agent).
- If required by your agent, please start the birth certificate and (if applicable) marriage certificate attestation process.

4. Medical Appointments for your Medical Report

Please check with your visa agency first how long your medical report will be valid. This might differ from country to country but generally it should be valid for 90 days. Your visa agent should be able to inform you about what physicians you will need to meet with.

3. What is included in the visa medical checkup?

In addition to the medical form (in your onboarding form), please send us or upload the scanned copy of the GAMCA (Gulf Approved Medical Centers Association) Medical Report or Visa Medical Report. This report will include the results of blood tests for infectious diseases (HIV, Hep B...), Urine tests, Eye checkups, VDRL, and Chest X-Ray.

The report is mandatory to submit along with your other documents for the visa process. If the Medical Report is not in English, an English translation must also be provided.

NOTE: You must ensure the doctor includes tests for **Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, HIV, VDRL, and Tuberculosis** – a positive test for one (or more) of these conditions will exclude you (or your dependent) from holding an Iqama (residency permit) and therefore entering the Kingdom.

4. Whom can I ask for help if I have any issues with my visa agencies?

Please contact GradOpsOnboarding@KAUST.EDU.SA, they would coordinate with KAUST Embassies Relations team to resolve any agency/visa related issues.

5. What documents do I need to submit for my student visa application?

Once you receive the visa invitation letter, please contact the approved visa agency in your home country to obtain the latest information and requirements. Typically, you will need the following additional documents:

- **KAUST admission letter:** This will be sent automatically once you have completed the onboarding form.
- **Visa medical checkup and resulting report.**
- **Attested educational degrees:** These should be attested by the Saudi Cultural Mission.
- **A valid passport.**

6. Will I be responsible for obtaining my student visa or my onboarding advisor?

You are responsible for obtaining your student visa by contacting your visa agency, providing the visa requirements, and submitting to the Saudi Embassy.

7. Will KAUST assist with the visa process for my dependents (spouse/children)?

Whether your dependents are arriving with you to KAUST or coming at a later stage, the Onboarding Advisor would support you in getting the visa invitation letter for your dependents, assigning you to a family unit, and their travel arrangements.

8. What is the procedure for Iqama (residence permit) issuance once I arrive?

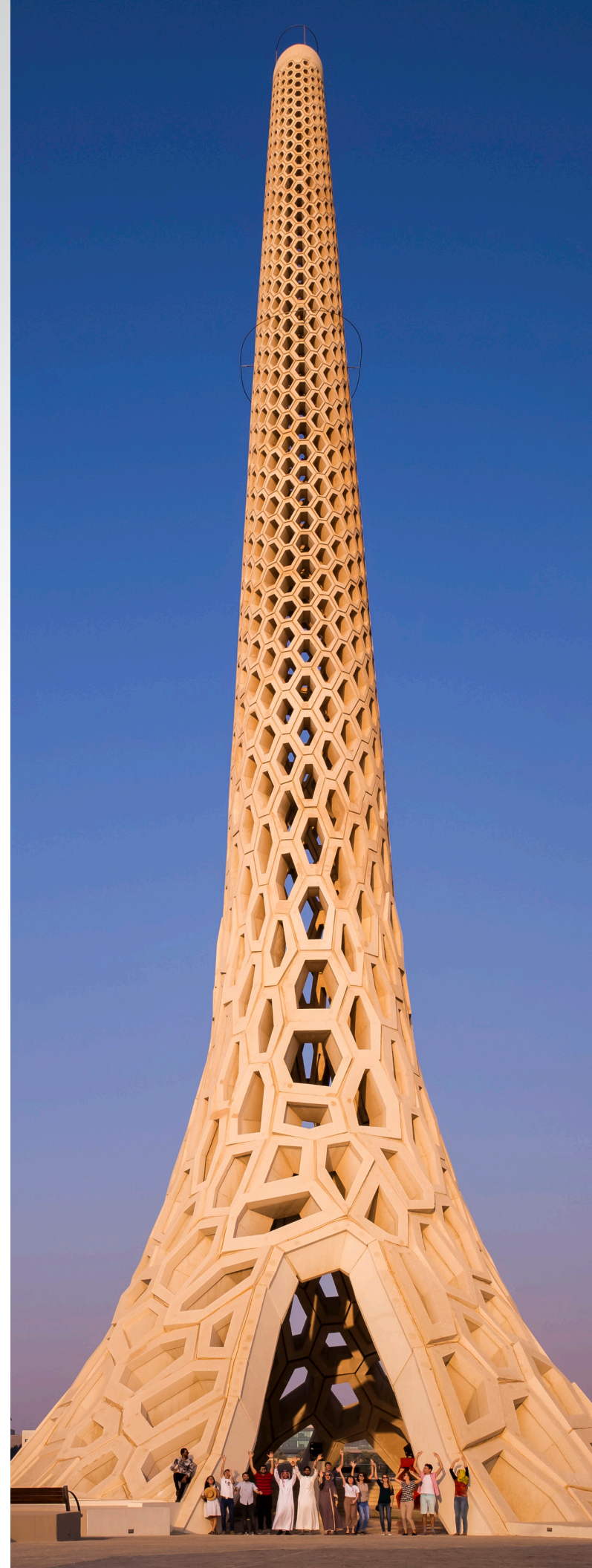
Once you arrive at KAUST, you will need to do your Iqama medical test, which will be arranged during the orientation week on campus. If you arrive after Orientation Week, you will receive an email from your Onboarding Advisor with the date and time to attend the Iqama medical session at KAUST Health. Once your medical is done, you will be able to submit your iqama request through the GA portal. The issuance of the Iqama from Government Affairs will take approximately 7-10 days after arrival, and you will receive an email once your iqama is ready for pick up at the Government Affairs Service Center (GASC) on the spine.

9. When will I receive my Iqama?

You will receive your Iqama from the Government Affairs Service Center (GASC) approximately 7-10 days after arrival.

10. Do I pay for my visa expenses?

Yes. After you arrive, KAUST will provide you with visa cost assistance that would be paid with your first stipend to assist with incurred visa costs and associated expenses during the onboarding phase.



Travel & Relocation

1. Do I need travel insurance for my trip to Saudi Arabia?

Students are advised to consider purchasing travel insurance to cover themselves and their dependents (if applicable) from their point of departure until their arrival in Saudi Arabia. This cost can be claimed for reimbursement together with the visa expenses when you arrive on campus. Excess or additional amounts can be considered with prior approval.

2. Who covers the transfer from home to the airport?

The transfer from home to the airport is the responsibility of the student.

3. Who will arrange my flight to Saudi Arabia?

Any travel booking needs to be made through the KAUST relocation team, who will arrange any onboarding or offboarding travel arrangements directly with the KAUST approved travel agency Kanoo.

4. Can I book my own flight and arrive in KAUST on my own?

No. KAUST will arrange for your flight using the most direct route and your transportation from KAU Jeddah airport to KAUST campus.

5. From which airport will my relocation take place?

Relocation will be from the nearest/most convenient international airport.

6. Will someone from KAUST meet me at the airport?

Yes, a GA representative will meet you at the airport, and a taxi will be arranged to take you directly to the KAUST campus.

7. What should I do if my flight is delayed or canceled?

Please email your onboarding and relocation advisors.

8. How do I get from the airport to KAUST campus?

A taxi would be waiting to pick you up from the airport to KAUST campus.

9. What should I do if my luggage is lost or delayed?

Report the issue to the airline immediately and get a claim reference number. Your relocation

advisor can help you track your luggage or file a compensation claim with the airline.

10. How do I get help if I face an emergency while traveling?

We have a 24/7 emergency assistance hotline (+966 544701348). You can contact us anytime for emergency support during your trip.

11. What is the baggage allowance policy for students?

KAUST covers up to 40kg of baggage allowance per student. Any additional baggage must be covered by the student.

12. Can I choose my arrival date?

Students need to arrive on the date assigned by KAUST, which is at the start of the semester to begin studies.

13. What if I want to change my return destination?

If a student changes their return destination, they are responsible for covering any fare difference.

Arrival Dates

2025-2026	Arrival from	Orientation	Start of studies
Fall	<u>15</u> August	17 August	31 August
Spring	<u>18</u> January	18 January	25 January
Summer	18 May	Orientation upon arrival	31 May

Housing & Accommodation



1. Will KAUST provide housing for me upon arrival?

Students are required to live on campus and will be allocated shared accommodation. For married students, family-style housing will be assigned.

2. What kind of housing will I be assigned?

The university has an established criteria for on-campus housing eligibility. Students may change their housing entitlement, subject to changes in accommodation criteria. Sharing may only be entered with other sharers of the same gender, and apartment blocks are gender specific.

3. Can I choose my accommodation or request specific housing?

No. Housing is assigned based on availability, and units are allocated and prepared prior to the new resident's arrival.

Single students are assigned shared accommodations. Preferences shared in advance may be accommodated depending upon availability.

Married students are assigned family-type accommodation if they come with their legal family (spouse and kids) to campus.

4. How do I apply for family housing if I am bringing in dependents?

To apply for family housing, you will have to start the dependent relocation process. First request a Family Residency Visa through the GA website, which provides the steps and

required documents. Once you have gathered the documents, we will review and update our records. After receiving the visa slip, contact GradOpsOnboarding@kaust.edu.sa to begin the family housing request process.

5. Who is eligible to live with me on campus?

Only legal dependents (spouse and children) can live with you on campus.

The University recognizes the following persons as eligible dependents for purposes of on-campus housing, provided that such persons reside on the University campus for no less than a total of 180 days per calendar year:

1. One spouse
2. Eligible dependent children as defined below:
 - Unmarried children of student, including step and legally adopted, up to and including age 19.
 - In cases where the University student has physical custody of a child for more than fifty percent (50%) of the time (or by court order has been granted physical custody for more than fifty percent (50%) of the time), such a child shall be considered an eligible dependent.

6. Do I have to pay for my accommodation?

There are no charges associated with shared accommodation. However, married students will be charged depending on eligibility and the type of housing they have been assigned and according to the charges prescribed in the terms and conditions.

7. When can I move into my assigned accommodation?

You can move into your assigned accommodation once the unit is ready. Unit preparation and readiness are coordinated based on the confirmed arrival date provided by the Graduate Operations Team. This ensures that your unit is fully prepared before your scheduled move-in.

8. Are utilities and Internet included in the housing?

Yes, utilities are included in your housing unit. Internet ports are available for wired network connectivity, and residents may purchase their own router for wireless access if needed.

The KAUST residential network service offers the residents wired network connectivity and access to both the Internet and internal University services. As a new resident, a premium Wi-Fi service (KAUST Wi-Fi+) is included in the residential unit. Some residents prefer to come to KAUST with their own routers purchased in their home countries.

9. What are the furniture and amenities provided in the student accommodation?

All units are fully furnished according to KAUST's standard setup for student accommodation. This includes basic furniture such as a bed, wardrobe, and living room. Additionally, the units are equipped with essential appliances to ensure a comfortable living environment.

All residences have domestic appliances including washer and drier, refrigerator, dishwasher and electric stove and oven. There are internationally renowned retail outlets

that offer the delivery of furniture items to meet any additional resident requirements and preferences, over and above standard provision.

10. Can I choose my roommate?

During the onboarding process, you will receive a request for your housemate preference, and efforts will be made to accommodate your request, if possible, based on availability. If you have a preferred roommate, please email their name and KAUST ID to HousingResident.Relations@KAUST.EDU.SA

11. What type of electrical plugs are used in Saudi Arabia?

The voltage of electricity distributed in residential accommodation is 220 volts. Sockets available in units include 3-pin sockets, which accept plug type G. This is the plug that has three rectangular pins in a triangular pattern.

12. What should I bring with me?

You only need to bring your personal belongings, and you can buy other items upon arrival either on campus or in Jeddah. Upon arrival to campus, the housing department will also provide a soft pack of basic items such as bedding, towels, and some kitchenware to help you settle in during the initial days.





Financial Support

1. How do I open a bank account?

It is necessary to have a residency document (Iqama) as well as a Saudi mobile phone number to be able to open a Saudi bank account. Once you receive your Iqama, you can open a bank account at one of the banks on campus. Once you have a Saudi bank account, please update your bank information through the student portal to receive your stipend. Local students who already have a Saudi bank account do NOT need to open a new bank account and only need to update their bank details on the student portal.

2. When will I receive my first stipend?

Your first stipend would be processed by the 10th of the next month after arrival and it would be prorated based on your arrival date. The usual payment schedule would be every 25th of the month. Please note that the stipend payment can only be processed once you have updated your bank account details on your student portal.

3. What is the security deposit and what will it be used for?

There would be a SAR 1000 deduction for the first 4 months for a total of SAR 4000 security deposit, which would be returned upon completing your exit clearance after graduation. It would be used to cover any property damage to the student apartment / furniture / any unpaid bills e.g. Library charges, traffic violations, etc.

4. What is the annual travel allowance, and how can I claim it?

KAUST offers travel assistance to MS and PhD students to help with travel expenses. MS students receive this assistance once during their program, while PhD students are eligible for it annually. The allowance is based on KAUST-approved rates for travel from Jeddah to the capital city of the student's home country. This assistance is a partial contribution toward travel costs and is not intended to cover all expenses for returning to the home country. Full details will be sent via email in March to all eligible students. Students must stay for at least 180 days before being eligible for a travel allowance.

5. Will travel assistance also be paid to Saudis?

Yes, it would follow the same timelines.

6. How much is the monthly stipend for MS/PhD students?

Degree Class	Credits per Semester	Stipend (USD)	Stipend (SAR)
MS	12	\$ 1,667	SAR 6,250
PhD (< 30 credits)	12	\$ 2,083	SAR 7,812
PhD (Above 30 credits)	12	\$ 2,500	SAR 9,375

7. Will KAUST cover my health insurance during my studies, and how do I access it?

Yes, KAUST will cover the health insurance for all local students as well as for all international students under KAUST sponsorship, from the day of your arrival at KAUST.

You will receive an email with an insurance certificate for you and your dependents (if applicable) within the first week of arrival. You can start using the medical services at KAUST Health immediately. International students are required to provide a copy of their iqama and Saudi mobile number once they are active. You can access your membership information by creating a user and logging into the **Bupa website**.

8. Do I get financial support for expenses in processing my visa?

KAUST offers visa cost assistance to MS and PhD students, which would be paid with the first stipend, to assist with incurred visa costs and associated expenses during the onboarding phase.

9. Is it possible to make payments on campus using my credit card or do I need to bring cash with me?

VISA and MasterCard are widely accepted so you can use your credit card; however, please be aware that there might be additional fees associated with this option. To avoid any inconvenience, we highly recommend having some cash on hand as an alternative payment method.

10. Can I receive my stipend through my international bank account outside the Kingdom?

No, your stipend will be wired only through to your Saudi bank account.

11. Where can I find the student portal?

<https://portal.kaust.edu.sa/>

To access the KAUST portal, students need a user ID & Password.





Academic Questions

1. When will I meet my academic advisor?

During orientation week (week prior to the start of the semester), a meeting with your designated advisor to discuss your custom study plan will be scheduled.

2. How do I register for courses?

Once on campus you will meet your Graduate Program Student Advisor who will help you navigate your student portal and register for your courses. A detailed guide on how to register for courses can be found on the registrar website:

<https://registrar.kaust.edu.sa/>

3. Are there any orientation sessions for new students?

During orientation week (week prior to the start of the semester), you will be introduced to different departments in KAUST: Registrar, Admissions, Student Affairs and Student Operations, etc. You will attend an introductory lecture about your divisions, and then another lecture about the specific degree program you are enrolled in. You will also be meeting your Graduate Program Coordinator (GPC). They will guide you through the academic procedures during your studies at KAUST. A meeting with your designated advisor to discuss your custom study plan will also be scheduled.

4. How do I request transcripts or other official documents?

You can request official transcripts, enrollment verifications, or other documents through the student services portal.

A photograph of the KAUST building at dusk, featuring a modern glass facade with warm interior lights visible. The building is situated behind a landscaped area with greenery and a body of water in the foreground.

Dependent and Family-Related Questions

1. What support is available for relocating my spouse/ children?

At KAUST, several support services are typically available to assist in relocating your spouse and children. These include:

1. Visa Processing: Assistance with visa applications and residency permits (Iqama) for family members.
2. Housing Assistance: Support in securing family accommodation on campus, including eligibility for family units.
3. Flight Arrangements: KAUST arrange travel for your spouse and children, ensuring that their flights align with your relocation schedule.
4. Health Insurance: KAUST provides health coverage for family members as part of your employment benefits.

2. What documentation do I need to bring my dependents into Saudi Arabia?

To bring your dependents into Saudi Arabia, you will need the following documentation:

1. Family Residency Visa: Apply through the Government Affairs **(GA) website**.
2. Valid Passports: For each dependent
3. Certified Marriage Certificate: If bringing a spouse.
4. Certified Birth Certificates: For children
5. Medical Reports: Health checkups or vaccination records (if required).
6. Visa Slip: After completing the visa process, you will receive the visa slip for your dependents.

3. Can my parents live with me in my student accommodation?

No

4. Can my parents visit me?

They can visit at a later stage. You will need your residency document (iqama) then you can apply for a visit visa for your parents through your student portal.

5. Am I allowed to invite visitors to visit me?

Yes, once you are on campus and have a residency card (Iqama) you are eligible to invite personal visitors to campus. Details are available in your student portal/student handbook.

6. Are there schools on campus for my children, and how do I enroll them?

Yes, KAUST offers an on-campus school for children, The KAUST School (TKS), which provides education from age 4 (K2) through Grade 12.

The school enrollment is not automatic and is subject to availability of places and meeting the school admission criteria. It is the parents' responsibility to apply to the school via the enrollment link: <https://kaust.openapply.com/>.

Other schooling options would be World Academy at King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) <https://twa.edu.sa/admissions-procedure/> or the available schools in Thuwal. If you decide to send your children to a school off-campus, you are not entitled to claim any funding or other support for this.

7. Is the KAUST School (TKS) free?

The KAUST School (TKS) is a valuable benefit that KAUST provides to its eligible postgraduate students, free of charge. However, a nominal fee is charged by TKS for IT/Materials for enrolled pupils.

8. Is there a daycare or pre-school option for children under the age of 4?

Yes, KAUST also offers a daycare and pre-school facility for kids under 4 years, however this service is provided by a third party and therefore not free of charge. For further details please check the website of Building blocks: <https://bbiskaust.org/>

Students planning to enroll their kids in daycare will need to arrange this directly with the daycare service provider.

9. What healthcare options are available for my family members?

- Your family members have access to comprehensive healthcare services through the following options:
- Hospital Care: For more specialized or advanced medical treatments, referrals can be made to external hospitals in the region that KAUST partners with.
- Pharmacy Services: The KAUST Health Clinic has an on-site pharmacy where medications can be prescribed and filled.
- Health Insurance: KAUST provides health insurance coverage for family members, which includes access to medical care, specialist consultations, and emergency services in the Kingdom.

Miscellaneous Questions



1. What should I do when I first arrive at the KAUST campus?

When you arrive at KAUST, you should go directly to the Housing office. From there you will receive details of your housing contract and will be taken to your accommodation.

Once you have arrived at KAUST, we have various teams in place to welcome and assist you, and to answer your questions. You will also receive an arrival checklist to help you navigate your first days.

To connect to campus WIFI, you should use icampus network with your regular user ID and password. If you need a map of the campus, you can access the **KAUST maps**.

2. Do I need a local phone number? How can I get one?

Yes, having a local phone number is important for staying connected and accessing multiple services like government services, bank, medical insurance.

After you receive your Iqama (residency) document, you can buy a phone SIM card from the Mobile shop on campus. Please do not purchase a Saudi mobile SIM card at the airport as you will require a new Saudi mobile phone number connected to your iqama to open a local bank account.

3. Are there any restrictions on importing personal items or specific goods into the country?

You may check this [link](#) for list of prohibited items to bring to Saudi Arabia.

4. Are there any health or wellness resources available?

Yes, there are three recreation centers with sports clubs, swimming pools, counseling services, KH medical center, and other resources on campus and in Jeddah.

5. Are there internship or career development resources available?

Yes, the university's career services office guides internships, job placement, resume building, and networking opportunities. Some departments may also offer specific career development workshops.

6. What are my options for transportation?

Transportation options include campus shuttles, SHIFT rental cars, and taxis. Check the campus transportation office for maps and schedules.

7. How do I get my student ID card, and what is it used for?

You can typically get your student ID card during orientation. Your student ID provides access to:

- Campus facilities like libraries, labs, and gyms.
- Printing services and computer labs.

8. What cultural differences should I expect, and how can I adjust?

It's common to experience culture shock when studying in a new country. To adjust:

- Be open to learning about new customs, behaviors, and communication styles.
- Attend orientation programs offered by student services.
- Join student groups and engage in social activities.
- Don't hesitate to ask questions or seek guidance from locals and fellow students.

9. Will my spouse (wife or husband) be allowed to work at KAUST?

Due to the visa status of international students and their spouses, student spouses will not be allowed to work at KAUST unless they are Saudi Nationals. However, there are multiple volunteering opportunities at KAUST available for spouses. Further information can be found here:

[https://communitylife.kaust.edu.sa/activities/volunteering-opportunities-\(new\)](https://communitylife.kaust.edu.sa/activities/volunteering-opportunities-(new)).