Afghanistan Research Initiative

The University of Central Asia announces the launch of the Afghanistan Research Initiative (ARI), which aims to help sustain the research and capacity gains made over the last decade and continue producing knowledge critical to the country's present and future. This Initiative is particularly vital today because of the precarious state of in-country Afghan research and the departure of many researchers who are now refugees in various countries. The accelerated brain drain has dispersed research capacity, and knowledge risks being lost as intellectuals vie for a place in new surroundings. Moreover, the Initiative seeks to create a new pipeline of researchers by assisting young scholars in admission to post-graduate studies.

ARI, a programme of the University’s Graduate School of Development, is supported by a three-year grant by Canada’s International Development Research Centre and the Aga Khan Foundation of Canada. ARI will develop a network that gives voice to displaced Afghan scholars and students and helps them connect to research communities. It will assist promising young scholars in gaining admission to doctorate programmes by delivering courses that build research capacity, offer fellowships to students in doctoral studies and promote knowledge creation with a grants programme. It will also host a platform for exchanging information to help forge a research community as an asset for the future. ARI is based at the University’s main office in Bishkek, the Kyrgyz Republic.

For further information about ARI, contact: ari@ucentralasia.org.

University Preparatory Courses

ARI delivers two free synchronous online courses to prepare Afghan students for graduate studies. The English for Academic Purposes course started in August 2022, and the first intake of 23 students (among them 11 females) will complete their studies by the end of October. The cohort is comprised of senior undergraduates and master’s students from diverse disciplines. Lydia Chikalova, the course instructor, noted, "The group has been very active in class discussion and collaboration in coming analyzing with various research studies on issues facing their country." Ms. Chikalova, a UCA staff member with two master's degrees (international journalism and security policy) is a Cambridge-certified professional English instructor. The second
course of the programme, Statistical Reasoning and Analysis will start in November. It is taught by Dr. Marzhan Aikimbaeva, an economist and research fellow at the Graduate School’s Institute of Public Policy and Administration. The courses will have additional cycles, and those interested in enrolling should contact ARI. Students that excel in their studies are eligible for a grant and additional mentoring to help them succeed when applying to universities.

**PROFILES OF SCHOLARS IN THE DIASPORA**

**Dr. Shakardokh Jafari**
Born in Daikundi in 1977, when she was six years old her family emigrated to Iran when the war broke out. After completing an undergraduate degree at Tabriz University of Medical Sciences, she moved to Afghanistan in 2003 and started teaching at Kabul Medical University and completed a master’s degree in radiation physics. In 2010 she moved to the University of Surrey to study for a master’s in medical physics and in 2015 received a doctorate in medical physics. Her innovative technology was patented in 2019. Dr. Jafari is part of the UK Sirius programme for graduate entrepreneurs. Some of her works and awards are available [here](#).

**Dr. Arian Sharifi**
Dr. Arian Sharifi is a national security professional with over a decade of high-level policy and research experience. He has served as Director General of National Threat Assessment at Afghan National Security Council, as Operations Research Analyst at the International Center for Political Violence and Terrorism Research in Singapore, as an Analyst for the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, and most recently as a Senior Adviser to Afghanistan’s Foreign Minister until the fall of Kabul.

Dr. Sharifi holds a Ph.D. in International Security Studies from Tufts University’s Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, a Master’s in Public Affairs from the Princeton University School of Public and International Affairs, and a Bachelor’s in Political Science from Wesleyan University. Dr. Sharifi is fluent in Dari, Pashto, and English, and understands Urdu. He has published widely in Afghan and international media. He is a frequent commentator on issues related to terrorism and security in Afghanistan and South and Central Asia.

**Dr. Ali Karimi**
Dr. Karimi is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Pennsylvania’s Center for Advanced Research in Global Communication (CARGC), which is a research center at the Annenberg School for Communication. He holds a Ph.D. in communication studies from McGill University, Canada. His research is focused on techniques and technologies of surveillance, and information and governance. He is particularly interested in numerical information and the instruments used to quantify, classify, and measure people and places. A list of his publications and achievements are available [here](#).
The Haunting of Hajji Hotak and Other Stories is a moving exploration of characters grappling with the ghosts of war and displacement and one that speaks to the immediate political landscape we reckon with today.

Always Faithful entwines the stories of Marine Major Tom Schueman, and his friend and Afghan interpreter, Zainullah “Zak” Zaki, as they describe their parallel lives, culminating in Zak and his family’s harrowing escape from Kabul. Published: August 09, 2022.

NEW BOOKS

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Germany: German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD)
Study level: masters, PhD.
Covers: living expenses, book allowance, host, tuition fee.
Deadline: 30 November 2022.
Fields of study: multiple fields in the social, managerial, natural sciences and engineering.
Monthly stipend: master’s degree – 850 euros per month; PhD degree – 1,200 euros per month.

Pakistan: Allama Iqbal Scholarships
Study level: undergraduate, masters, PhD.
Covers: living expenses, book allowance, host, tuition fee.
Fields of study: multiple fields in the social, managerial, natural sciences, engineering and more.
Who can apply: applicants should be from Afghanistan; do not hold any other scholarship at the time of application and during the study period.

UK: Chevening Scholarship for Afghans
Study level: masters programmes.
(one year), fields of study not restricted.
Covers: living expenses, book allowance, host, tuition fee.