



2024
ANNUAL
NEWSLETTER
SSMAF

SIR SYED MENTORING AND ASSISTANCE FELLOWSHIP

Empowering Aligs



SSMAF Connect





About SSMAF

Founded in December 2021, the **Sir Syed Mentoring and Assistance Fellowship (SSMAF)** is a volunteer-led initiative inspired by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's belief in education as a tool for progress. This empowers Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) students and alumni through:

- **Mentorship:** Personalized academic and career guidance.
- **Financial Support:** Assistance with test and application fees.
- **Global Connections:** A network of mentors and alumni worldwide.

In just a few years, SSMAF has supported over 50 students, promoting mentorship and a culture of giving back, while opening doors to global opportunities.

This newsletter celebrates our mission and invites everyone who believes in the power of mentorship and education to join us.

What's inside?



Highlights of the Year 2023-24



From the Desk of the President



Celebrating Excellence: Awardees and Achievements



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Donation and Support: Empowering Dreams Together



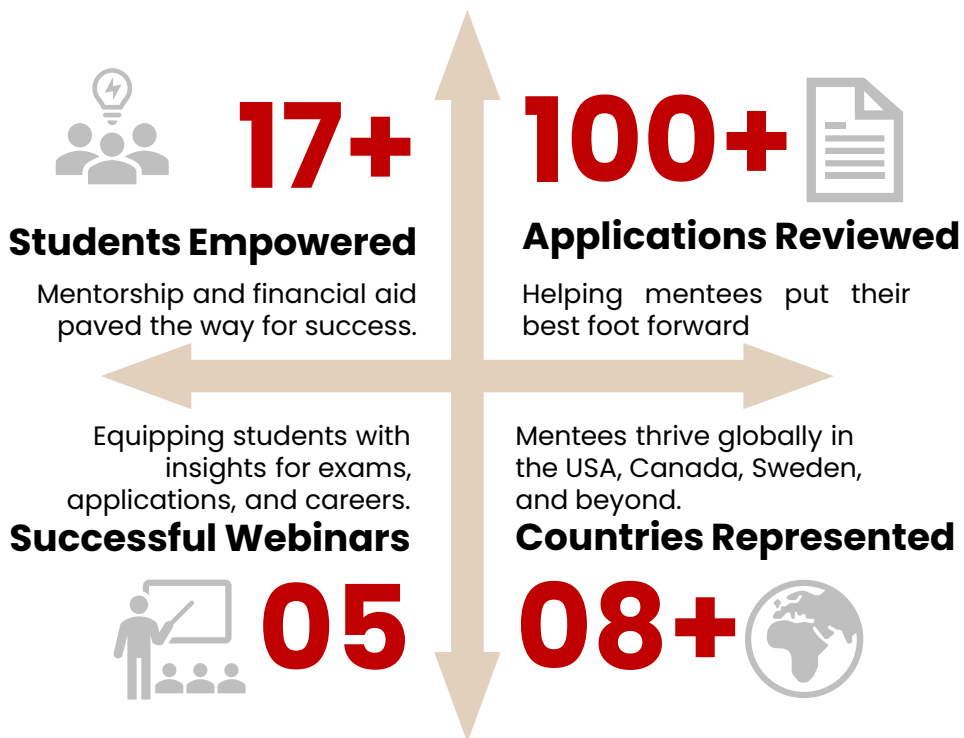
Editor's Note

Highlights of the Year 2023-24

A Year of Growth and Inspiration



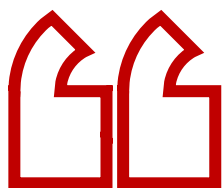
As we look back on 2023-24, we are filled with pride at the milestones achieved by the SSMAF community. From empowering students to fostering global connections, this year has been a testament to the power of collaboration and resilience.



Milestones Achieved

- **Expanded Financial Support:** Reimbursed 80-90% of test fees for all awardees, reducing the financial burden on aspiring scholars.
- **New Global Collaborations:** Strengthened ties with mentors and alumni across continents.

Alumni Giving Back: Many former mentees have returned as mentors, creating a ripple effect of support and guidance.



From the Desk of the President

Shaping Futures, One Dream at a Time

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the strides made by the SSMAF this past year, I am humbled by the incredible progress we have achieved together. SSMAF has become a cornerstone of hope, empowering students to transcend limitations and realize their aspirations.

Since our inception in December 2021, we've seen extraordinary stories unfold—students breaking barriers to earn scholarships, mentors providing transformative guidance, and our network expanding globally. These milestones reaffirm our commitment to shaping futures through education and collaboration.

This year has been particularly significant: we celebrated mentees gaining admission to world-renowned institutions, strengthened our mentoring framework, and witnessed alumni embracing their roles as changemakers. The dedication of mentors, donors, and supporters like you is the driving force behind this success.

As we look to the future, the possibilities are endless. Whether as a mentor, donor, or advocate, I urge you to continue supporting SSMAF. Together, we can guide more students to brighter horizons, honor Sir Syed's legacy, and build a stronger, more empowered community.

With gratitude and hope,

Altafur Rahman

President, SSMAF

PhD Candidate, Plant Physiology

Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Budapest, Hungary



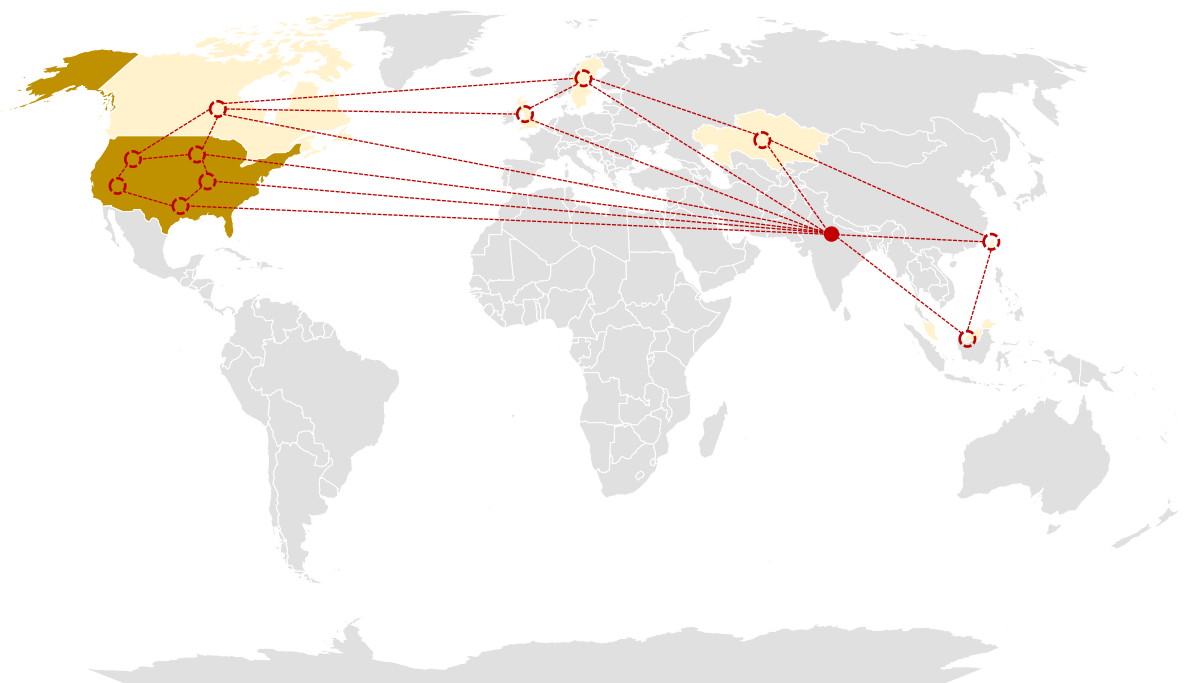
Celebrating Excellence: Awardees and Achievements



This year, SSMAF celebrates the incredible achievements of its awardees and mentees, who have secured admissions to top-tier institutions and prestigious international opportunities. Their success stories are a testament to their determination, hard work, and the transformative power of SSMAF's guidance.

This **SSMAF Program** recognizes individuals who have excelled academically and professionally, paving their way to global success. Supporting this initiative, the **Overseas Internship and Visiting Research (OIVR)** program has enabled students to secure fully funded internships and research opportunities at esteemed international institutions. Additionally, the **AMUSO Facebook Group platform** continues to empower students, particularly from AMU, by providing mentorship and resources for pursuing global education.

These success stories inspire us all, exemplifying the SSMAF spirit of resilience, ambition, and excellence on the international stage.



List of SSMAF awardees 2023-24



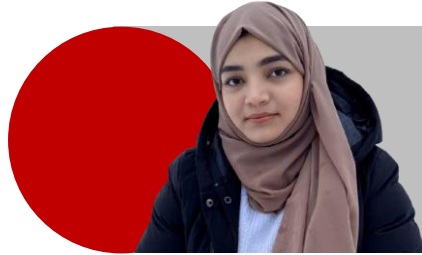
	Name	Department
1	Ahmar Khateeb	Civil Engineering
2	Areeba Khan	Medicine
3	Atif Anwar	Economics
4	Ehtesham Matin	Architecture
5	Fiza Fatima	Electrical Engineering
6	Habiba Sheikh	Law
7	Hadiya Ansari	Home Science
8	Inayat Rasool	Mechanical Engineering
9	Mohammad Saim	Computer Engineering
10	Mohd Musahib	Geology
11	Nimra Ahmad	Sociology
12	Safiya Ahsan	Nanotechnology
13	Somayya Tariq	Physics
14	Tooba Aqeel	Biochemistry
15	Yusuf Ahmed Khan	Electronics Engineering
16	Zainab Zahid	Chemistry
17	Ziya ur Rehman	Electrical Engineering



List of SSMAF awardees 2024-25

	Name	Department
1	Aiman Khan	Applied Chemistry
2	Ankush Babu	Electrical
3	Asra Mairaj	English
4	Amna Asim Khan	History
5	Amad Ashraf Ansari	Chemistry
6	Disha Singh	Civil
7	Faizah Fatima Zaidi	Food Tech
8	Imran Khan	Botany
9	Khushhal Ahmed	Psychology
10	Mohd Azhan Umar Kamil	Computer
11	Mohd Munazir Mairaj	Mechanical
12	Mudassir Jamil Akber	Agricultural Education
13	Mohd Uvaish Ansari	Geology
14	Namra Tasnim	Biotechnology
15	Sabahat Ahmad Khan	Civil
16	Saleha Khan	English
17	Sarah Arshad	Physics
18	Suhaib Shahid	Mechanical

Spotlight on Achievements



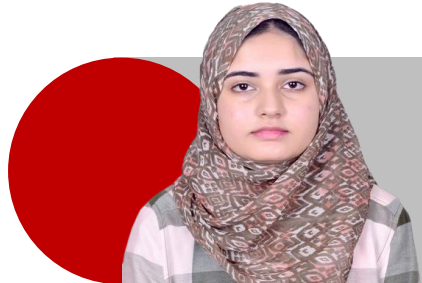
Safiya Hasan

PhD in Chemical Physics

*Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions
Stockholm University, Sweden*

Other Offers: Lund University,
Sweden

Mohd Mamoon
PhD in Computer Engineering
University of Kansas, USA
Other Offers: Purdue University,
USA; Arizona State University, USA



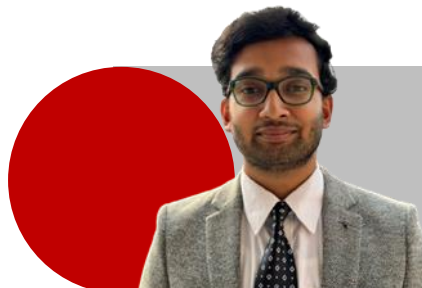
Somayya Tariq

PhD in Physics

University of Central Florida, USA

Other Offers: Clemson University;
University of South Florida, USA

Mohammad Saim
PhD in Computer Engineering
University of Cincinnati, USA
Other Offers: Purdue University,
USA; Arizona State University, USA



Yusuf Ahmed Khan

PhD in Electrical Engineering

Pennsylvania State University, USA

Other Offers: University of Alberta,
Canada; King Abdullah University,
KSA

Tooba Aqeel

MS in Molecular Biotechnology

University of Birmingham, England

Other Offers: King Abdul Aziz
University, KSA; University of Bath, UK



**UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM**



**SOUTH DAKOTA
STATE UNIVERSITY**



Inayat Rasool

**MS in Biosystems and Agricultural
Engineering**

South Dakota State University, USA

Other Offers: University of Nebraska-
Lincoln, USA

Kanak Gautam

MS in Computing Science

Simon Fraser University, Canada

(SSMAF OIVR Awardee)



**SIMON FRASER
UNIVERSITY**



國立中山大學
NATIONAL SUN YAT-SEN UNIVERSITY



Mohammad Abu Hanifa

MS in Electric Power Engineering

National Sun Yat-Sen University, Taiwan

Other Offers: Warsaw University of Technology,
Poland (*AMUSO*)

Manauwar Bin Ehsan

MS in Geology

Universiti Malaya, Malaysia

(AMUSO)



**UNIVERSITY
OF MALAYA**



**NAZARBAYEV
UNIVERSITY**



Md Zaid

Master in Public Policy

Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan

Other Offers: EMLE, Erasmus Mundus
Joint Master Degree Programme (*AMUSO*)

Events and Webinars

Guiding the Way Through Knowledge



SSMAF has always prioritized equipping students with the skills and insights needed to navigate the global academic landscape. Our carefully curated events and webinars are designed to educate, inspire, and guide mentees toward achieving their aspirations.



Sir Syed Mentoring and Assistance Fellowship



Scoring Big in IELTS: Tips and Strategies for Success

Rashid Ahmed Khan
Post Graduate Research Assistant, PhD
Electrical Machine and Drive (EMD) Research Group
Department of Electrical Engineering
University of Sheffield, United Kingdom

meet.google.com is sharing your screen. [Stop sharing](#) [Help](#)
30th of September 2023



Scoring Big in IELTS: Tips and Strategies for Success

- **Speakers:** Rashid Ahmed Khan (Ph.D. Candidate, University of Sheffield, UK), moderated by Nadeem Akhtar (MS Student, National Taiwan University)
- **Overview:**

This webinar helped over 50 participants with actionable strategies to excel in the IELTS exam. From time management techniques to test-day tips, attendees gained valuable insights that left them feeling confident and prepared.

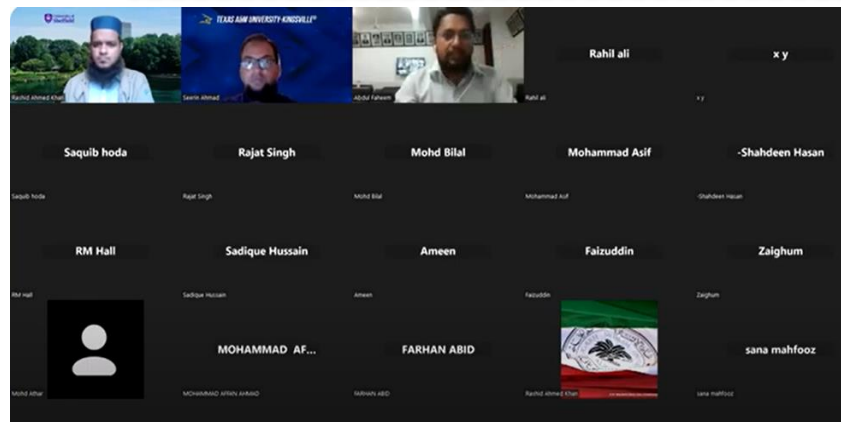


**September 30,
2023**

Securing Admission and Funding for Graduate School Abroad

- **Speakers:**
 - Seerin Ahmad (Ph.D. Candidate, TAMUK, USA)
 - Rashid Ahmed Khan (Ph.D. Candidate, University of Sheffield, UK)
 - Moderators: Er. Abdul Faheem (Residential Warden), Mohd. Shahwar Khan (Warden), and Prof. Mohammad Asif (Provost)
- **Overview:**

Hosted at Sir Ross Masood Hall, AMU, this session provided step-by-step guidance on building a strong academic profile, selecting universities, and securing funding. The event was praised for its practical advice and actionable takeaways.



Open Sessions/Talks

Featuring Mohammad Irfan Sarwar (AWS, France) and Rashid Ahmed Khan (Ph.D. Candidate, UK), this session provided invaluable insights into research opportunities and funding strategies.

Led by Altafur Rahman (Ph.D. Candidate, Hungary) and Asif Saud (Marie Curie Fellow, Denmark), this talk inspired students to dream big and pursue global opportunities.

**October 07,
2023**

**November 19,
2023**

**December 17,
2023**

Why These Events?



Expert Insights:

Delivered by accomplished scholars and professionals, each session is tailored to address real challenges faced by students.



Practical Guidance:

Actionable tips for exams, applications, and networking ensure participants leave with clear next steps.



Community Building:

These events bring together like-minded individuals, creating a support system that extends beyond the webinars.

What's Next?

SSMAF is committed to expanding its event portfolio in 2025 with:

1. Webinars on *career planning* and *internship opportunities*.
2. Interactive workshops for personal branding and research proposal writing.
3. Alumni-led sessions on industry insights and networking.





Mentorship Spotlight

The Heart of SSMAF: Mentorship in Action

Shaping Tomorrow's Leaders: A Journey of Shared Growth

At the heart of SSMAF lies mentorship—a bond of guidance, inspiration, and shared growth that transforms both mentors and mentees. Our mentorship program is more than just advice; it's a collaborative journey where knowledge meets ambition, creating a ripple effect of positive change.

Being an SSMAF mentor is a privilege, a chance to guide budding minds while rediscovering your own purpose. Our mentors help mentees navigate complex academic paths, refine their applications, and set ambitious goals. But beyond technical guidance, they foster resilience, empathy, and confidence.

Fareeha Arshad

Mentor & PhD Candidate, Biochemistry
Universiti Brunei Darussalam, Brunei

**Fareeha
Arshad**



Mentor Reflections:

"Each mentee reminds me of my own struggles and triumphs. It's humbling to see them evolve from uncertain beginners to confident achievers who aspire not just to succeed but to give back."

SSMAF Mentor
Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

Mentee Testimonials:

"My mentor didn't just guide me through my applications; they believed in me when I doubted myself. Their patience, encouragement, and insights were invaluable."

MS in Molecular Biotechnology
University of Birmingham, UK

**Tooba
Aqeel**



Mentorship in Action

From clarifying career aspirations to refining SOPs and CVs, mentors provide tailored guidance that meets each mentee's unique needs. Whether it's strategizing for admissions or navigating post-graduation opportunities, SSMAF mentors ensure no question goes unanswered and no dream feels out of reach.

Beyond Guidance: A Ripple Effect

SSMAF mentees don't just achieve—they inspire. Many have become mentors themselves, creating a cycle of support that embodies the spirit of giving back. This shared growth ensures that every success story sparks countless others.

Why Mentorship?



Personalized Guidance

Tailored advice for every step of the academic journey.



Empathy and Support:

A safe space to explore ideas and overcome challenges



Fostering Leadership:

Building a generation of confident, resilient achievers.





Pathfinders

Alumni Journeys Beyond SSMAF

The true measure of SSMAF's success lies in the incredible journeys of our alumni. From dreamers to achievers, these individuals have overcome challenges, embraced opportunities, and made their mark on the global stage. Here, we celebrate their stories of grit, perseverance, and the enduring impact of mentorship.



Mohd Aqib

Background: Civil Engineering Graduate, ZHCET, AMU

Current Role: MS Student, University of Alberta, Canada

Merging Tradition and Innovation in Civil Engineering

“When I started my application journey, I felt lost. There were so many steps, from writing a good SOP to choosing the right universities. That’s when SSMAF came into my life. My mentor, Md Asad Ahmad, guided me every step of the way, helping me write a strong application and focus my efforts. Today, I’m at the University of Alberta, applying AI to solve real-world problems in Civil Engineering. Presenting my work at conferences and collaborating with experts has been a dream come true. Now, I mentor juniors because I want them to feel the same support I did.”

Empowered by SSMAF: Scholar Stories



Mohammad Saim

Background: Computer Science Graduate, AMU

Current Role: PhD Candidate, University of Cincinnati, USA

“SSMAF transformed my application process by guiding me in building my profile, crafting tailored SOPs, and shortlisting universities based on research and career goals. Their mentorship, especially from my guide Masood Bhai, helped me navigate multiple offers and choose a PhD program at the University of Cincinnati that aligns with my aspirations. Inspired by their support, I am committed to giving back by mentoring students in creating strong, research-focused applications and achieving their dreams.”

Somayya Tariq

Background: Physics Graduate, AMU

Current Role: PhD Student, University of Central Florida, USA



“I owe much of my success in securing a fully funded PhD at UCF to the mentorship and support of SSMAF. My mentor helped me refine my CV and SOP, prepare for GRE and TOEFL, and gain valuable research experience, ensuring I presented the strongest version of myself. Their encouragement and financial assistance lightened the burden of the application process and gave me the confidence to keep going. To aspiring students, I say: take initiative, improve your communication skills, and seek guidance from programs like SSMAF. The unwavering support of donors and alumni has been life-changing, enabling me and many others to reach new heights.”





Challenges Faced and Future Vision

The story of SSMAF is one of resilience, collaboration, and an unwavering belief in the power of education. Inspired by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan's vision of progress through learning, we have worked tirelessly to empower AMU students to achieve their global academic and professional aspirations.

Overcoming Challenges

Building SSMAF into a thriving community has been no small feat. From coordinating mentorship across time zones to managing financial constraints, each step presented its own set of hurdles:

- **Global Coordination:** Managing mentorship across time zones demanded innovative scheduling and effective communication.
- **Resource Limitations:** A modest budget required prioritizing test fee reimbursements over other initiatives.
- **Volunteer Capacity:** Mentors balanced their commitments with the demands of mentorship.

Despite these hurdles, the dedication of mentors, donors, and alumni helped us push forward.

Victories Worth Celebrating

- Supported **60+ students** with mentorship and financial aid till now.
- **Reimbursed test fees** for selected awardees.
- Strengthened the alumni network, promoting a culture of giving back.

Seerin Ahmad, Ph.D.
Founder, SSMAF
Kingsville, TX, USA



Future Vision: SSMAF's Path Ahead

**Expand
Innovate
Empower**



Enhancing Financial Support

- **Increased Test Fee Coverage:** Aim to cover full IELTS/TOEFL test fees for all awardees.
- **University Application Fees:** Plan to reimburse application costs for multiple universities to reduce financial stress.



New Initiatives for Growth

- **OIVR Program:** Provide students with global research opportunities.
- **Skill-Building Webinars:** Focus on personal branding, research proposals, and advanced academic skills.



Strengthening Alumni Engagement

- Build a **sustainable mentorship cycle** where alumni return as mentors, creating a self-sustaining community.
- Launch an **Alumni Ambassador Program** to expand SSMAF's reach and inspire global collaboration.



Institutional Development

- Complete the **registration process** for SSMAF to formalize operations and build credibility for funding and partnerships.
- Establish a dedicated **fundraising team** to ensure financial sustainability.



A Call to Action

SSMAF's journey is powered by its community. To achieve these ambitious goals, we need your continued support:

- **As Mentors:** Share your expertise and guide the next generation.
- **As Donors:** Help us remove financial barriers for talented students.
- **As Advocates:** Spread the word about SSMAF's mission and impact.

Together, we can turn challenges into opportunities and dreams into achievements. Let's continue to inspire, guide, and uplift.



Donation and Support Empowering Dreams Together

We are pleased to share the latest updates on the SSMAF. Thanks to the generous contributions from our alumni and core team, we've been able to make a significant impact on deserving students' lives.

Impact at a Glance



Milestones 2023-24

80%

Test fees reimbursed for all selected awardees.

17+

Students supported with mentorship and financial aid.

2x Growth

Alumni participation as mentor and donors.



Goal for 2024-25

100%

Coverage

Reimburse all test fees and selected application costs.

25+

Students to be empowered through expanded support programs.

Global

Network

Strengthen Collaborations with Alumni and mentors.

Last year, despite a limited budget, we successfully reimbursed 80-90% of the IELTS/TOEFL fees for all selected awardees. However, due to funding constraints, we weren't able to cover university application fees.


This year, we hope to do more. Our goal is to reimburse all awardees advancing to the final round and help cover application fees for a few select universities. The total cost per awardee is around ₹26,000, which includes test fees and application charges.

Planned Financial Support for the Upcoming Session:

Expense	Estimated Cost per Student
IELTS/TOEFL Test Fees	\$200 (Approx.)
Application Fees (2 Universities)	\$120 (Approx.)
Total Per Student	\$320 (~₹26,000)

How to Contribute:

Please refer to the bank details provided below to make your donation.

Through Bank Account	UPI
Bank Name: Kotak Mahindra Bank Account Number: 0745294283 Branch: Aligarh IFSC Code: KKBK0005293	 9997838424@kotak

Please note, SSMAF is not a registered entity and doesn't have a dedicated bank account. However, we use separate accounts exclusively for SSMAF operations. We can provide detailed bank statements for transparency if needed.

Why Donate?

- 1. Transparency:** Every contribution is accounted for, with regular reports shared, if needed.
- 2. High Impact:** Your support funds exams and applications, easing financial stress.
- 3. Sustainable Growth:** Empowering one student inspires future mentors.
- 4. Real Change:** Your contribution opens doors to life-changing opportunities.

Join the Mission

Together, we can break barriers and make education accessible. Whether you're an alumnus giving back, a mentor guiding young minds, or a donor passionate about creating opportunities, your contribution helps shape a future where dreams aren't limited by financial constraints. Let's build a brighter tomorrow.

Visit [SSMAF Website](#) for more details.



Editor's Note

Together, We Light the Way Forward

Dear Readers,

It is an honor to present the 2024 edition of the SSMAF Annual Newsletter. This publication is more than just a collection of updates; it is a celebration of the shared vision, hard work, and achievements of our vibrant community.

From the inspiring journeys of our mentees to the unwavering support of mentors and donors, each story reflects the transformative power of education and mentorship. The past year has shown us that when we come together, we can overcome challenges, break barriers, and create opportunities that change lives.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our founder, **Dr. Seerin Ahmad**, whose visionary leadership drives SSMAF forward, and to our president and founding members **Altafur Rahman**, **Irfan Sarwar**, and **Shoeb Azam Farooqui**, for laying the foundation of this initiative.

This edition would not have been possible without the enthusiastic support of our editorial team and the contributions of the entire SSMAF family. Let's continue to inspire, empower, and shape futures together.

Warm regards,

Ehtesham Matin

Editor, SSMAF Newsletter 2024

PhD Scholar, Architecture

IIT Roorkee, India





“.....the seed which we sow today there may spring up a mighty tree whose branches, like those of the Banyan of the soil, shall in their turn strike firm roots into the earth and themselves send forth a new and vigorous saplings; that this College may expand into a University **whose sons shall go forth throughout the length and breadth of the land** to preach the gospel of free inquiry, of large- hearted toleration, and of pure morality.”

Justice Syed Mehmood

During Foundation Laying Ceremony
of MAO College (Now AMU)

