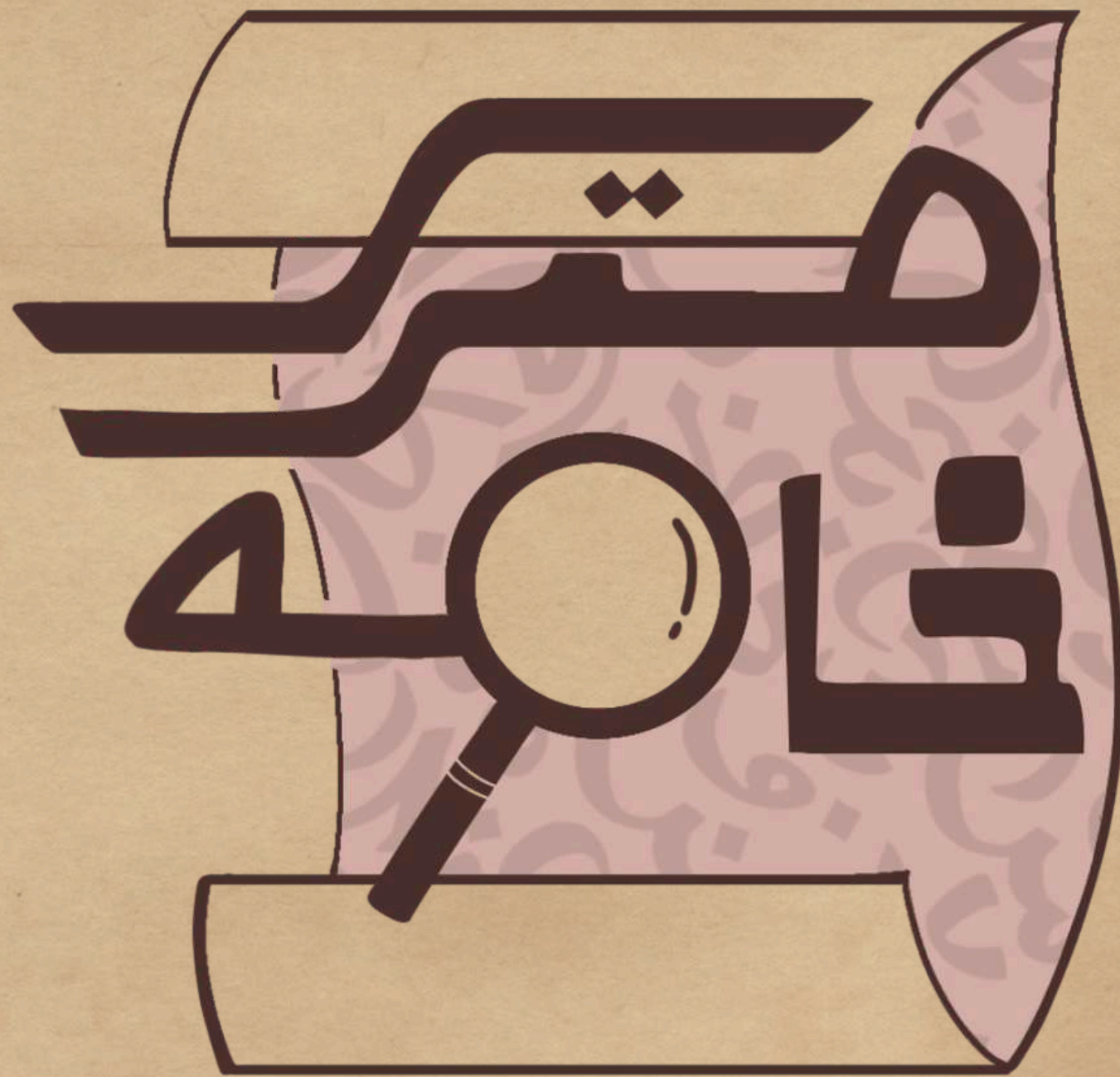




LUMS
RELIGIOUS FESTIVAL
OFFICIAL STUDY GUIDE



SAREER-E-KHAMA

INTRODUCTION

Sareer-e-Khama, literally meaning the sound of writing, is a research and publication category of LRF '26. In it, participants would digitally submit their research papers that they made on a topic of their choosing from our provided list of topics, and once selected give a presentation defending their work and providing a commentary on it to a panel of judges. Here, research papers does not mean already published work, but rather papers the participants write, by consulting traditional means of research via citation and referencing of authentic sources, to defend their core argument which they would make on one of our topics given below.

OVERVIEW

The goal of this category is to instil the love of writing and research in the hearts of the participants, and to make them realise the importance and significance of holding academic dialogue on some of the most pressing issues that plague society in the modern age. Whether they be political, spiritual, or religious.

ROUND I

Writing and Research:

This round has already started by the time you read this guide. This is the crux of this event - in it, participants shall be researching on one of the topics given below, formulating their argument on it at length, and writing a research paper proving the validity of their argument by addressing favourable examples and refuting counter-examples; essentially an argumentative piece that proves the main point you set out to make.

Even though this is an elimination round, the elimination criteria is quite forgiving at this stage. The only papers that risk getting disqualified are those that do not conform to the SOPs (given below) and/or are generally low-quality and poorly researched.

Deadline [VERY IMPORTANT]:

The final date by which participants can submit their work is 25th of January. The results of the screening will be released online by 28th-29th of January.

The Topics: [IMPORTANT]

- Riasat-e-Madina: How can Islamic/Shariat based political and economic thinking solve our problems today?
- Indifference the new norm, Numbness the new religion: Why are people unbothered by all the micro and macro injustices in the society around them?
- Sufism - A Religion or a Way of Life: Detaching Sufism from religion; is it a valid interpretation or something that misses the bigger picture and lacks substance?
- Horizons of curiosity in the blasphemy sphere: How far can human curiosity go when dealing with topics that religion or society considers untouchable or dangerous. Is there a limit to religious curiosity; if yes, then how much is too much?
- The true nature of Human Morality: Can morality outside religion/without acknowledging the existence of God truly be an objective standard or something always subjective?

Note: Read these topics carefully - they are intentionally left to be open-ended so arguments formed do not all fall under the same boat. Understand what the topic is asking to address, and formulate an argumentative piece around the topic.

SOPs/Guidelines:

- Language: Formal and concise; easily readable and not overly verbose, notwithstanding the complexity of your argument.
- Originality: No plagiarism, and no parroting of cited sources.
- Conciseness: Do not cite too many sources. 1 source per argument/refutation is enough, but your paper should not become a list of sources.
- Authenticity: Rigorously double-check all sources cited; controversial figures and sources considered false/insignificant in academia should never be used in any paper.
- Tone: Encourage constructive discourse, your paper should never be confrontational and/or insensitive. Avoid generalizations and emotionally charged biases.
- Area of Focus (Situational): For geopolitical issues, or issues that mention specific schools of thought, your research should ideally be confined to the area/school in focus. i.e if a participant writes about central banking in South Asia, they should mention South Asian sources and/or data, and may draw examples from other regions. A multi-school or multi-regional approach in certain topics (not all) often makes the paper too generalized and ultimately vague.

Note: Your paper shall be screened on the basis of these SOPs so make sure you keep these in mind while writing.

Expected Format:

- Introduction: This is a concise preamble to your paper that summarizes the point of the paper entirely. It should have a hook, appropriate thesis statement, and flow naturally into the main body.
- Main Body: The criteria for this part is that you should have minimum 3 arguments in favour of your point, backed by relevant authentic sources, and minimum 3 arguments against your point that you must refute. How many paragraphs this takes is entirely up to you. This section is the crux of your argument, since through this back and forth argumentation do you prove the validity of your point.
- Conclusion: This is where the entire purpose of the paper comes full circle. You conclude the main point and tie it in with the discussion made so far; no need to force a conclusive 'one size fits all' solution, leave room for the reader to think. Some topics may not even have concise solutions.
- Bibliography: This is essential to your paper, and if it is not included at all, the paper will not be considered and simply discarded. Properly cite your sources by a format of choice; mistakes within the chosen format will not be penalized heavily, but a list of specifically all sources cited is essential.

Note: You may consult online resources on research paper formats. However, the format is left lax purposely to make sure time is not wasted tirelessly conforming to rigorous formatting.

ROUND 2

Presentation

This round shall be held physically on the 3rd day of LRF, 1st of February. Here, the participants who qualified will give a commentary on the work that they wrote in round 1. This commentary would include a presentation, in which participants would formulate their paper in a completed form and propose it as a genuine applicable solution to the problem they set out to tackle; if not a concise solution but a way forward for addressing the problem at hand in society at large.

The top 3 participants, after summing their round 1 and round 2 scores at equal weightages, will be announced at the closing ceremony held later that day. The presentation shall be held in front of an audience comprising of the Sareer-e-Khama participants, a panel of judges, and any other audience members that choose to attend since the event will be open to spectators. (strict disciplinary guidelines will be followed to make sure the audience does not impede the presenter(s)).

Modes of Presentation:

The presentation in question can be given in either a traditional slides format, complete with a powerpoint and full projector presenting setup, or a skit/talk format. The skit format can be given as a speech, acted out, or in any other creative way through which the presenter can 'sell' their main point to the audience.

A presenter may give a hybrid format presentation as well, incorporating a skit section in their slides. The grading will be judged relative to the medium used to ensure fairness across all mediums.

There is no strict format to this part. However, participants are encouraged to look up formats and/or tips for the medium they chose, as grading will also be done relative to how well the medium was used.

Judgement:

Judging will be done in real-time by a panel of judges that will be senior members of academia, both male and female, spanning a multitude of fields. Their judging criteria will mainly be focused on the following points, though further judgements can be made at their discretion on an individual basis:

- Confidence: This is how eloquently the presenter makes their point. Failings in this aspect will not be heavily penalised, nor will it be as rigorously judged as the other criteria.
- Content: The presentation will be judged on its conciseness, volume (avoid needless detail), and diversity (how many different view points you consider). By keeping in mind the mode of presentation, these attributes will be judged accordingly.
- Authenticity: Citing authentic sources, similar to round 1, is key. A proper bibliography must also be given at the end, to allow judgement of sources cited.

The panel may also ask questions after the presentation, the presenter must be able to defend his presentation, which is generally important advice for all research based activities. Presenters are encouraged to start work on the presentation as soon as the eliminations are announced, to avoid time crunches and disadvantages against presenters who participate in other categories as well.

REMARKS

A WhatsApp Group shall be made with the participants and the team of Sareer-e-Khama. Here, we shall answer any and all queries you may have regarding the event, with a FAQ document to avoid any doubt. Meetings can be held in case of general and common confusions, so keep a lookout on the group once it is made and stay up to date, since important announcements regarding the event will always be made on the group.

Finally, write and present whilst keeping the spirit of the event in mind. Despite being a competition at the end, treat it as a learning experience, a gateway into the rich world of research and academia. Many more activities are planned for participants, keep on the lookout for any interesting announcements to come in the near future. And remember:

"If you risk yourself in pursuit of honour, do not settle for less than the stars."

Al-Mutanabbi

BEST OF LUCK!