



FIBAA

YOUR PARTNER FOR EXCELLENCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

**Policy Brief for
Committee for Quality Assurance
in Science and Higher Education
(Kazakhstan)**

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Introduction

Dear Mr. Toibaev,

The Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation (“**FIBAA**”, henceforth: “**we**”), was requested by Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education (the “**Committee**”) to provide a policy brief (the “**Policy Brief**”) by answering 11 questions sent by the Committee on 28 August 2024.

This Policy Brief as of 23 October 2024 aims to provide an overview of the quality assurance system in Germany, outline the requirements for panel members, and present an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of study programs accredited by FIBAA in Kazakhstan.

We observe a consistent development in relation to quality of the higher education system in Kazakhstan and hope that this Policy Brief will contribute to further development and improvement of quality assurance in the region.

This Policy Brief is prepared solely for the internal use of the Committee and should not be disclosed or further distributed without prior written approval from FIBAA. All information provided in this document is confidential and intended exclusively for the Committee's review. Furthermore, our analysis has focused exclusively on study programmes accredited by FIBAA. Consequently, our findings are limited to these specific programmes and do not encompass other institutions or accreditation bodies.

If needed, we would be pleased to present our Policy Brief in a presentation format and address any questions related to its contents. We encourage open dialogue and collaboration to maximise the effectiveness of the recommendations provided.

Best regards,

Mag.^a Diane Freiberger
Managing Director

Questions of the Committee for Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education to the policy brief

1. How are accreditation bodies in higher education in Germany regulated? Are there any state requirements for them?

Accreditation bodies in higher education in Germany are regulated through a structured system overseen by both federal and state governments. The key regulatory framework is shaped by the German Accreditation Council¹ (*Akkreditierungsrat*).

The legal foundation of the accreditation system is formed by:

- Interstate Study Accreditation Treaty (*Studienakkreditierungsstaatsvertrag*) on the organisation of a joint accreditation system to ensure the quality of teaching and learning at German higher education institutions signed by all 16 German federal states (*Länder*)
- Specimen decree pursuant to Article 4, paragraphs 1 – 4 of the interstate study accreditation treaty
- State degrees of *Länder*
- Act Establishing the Foundation Accreditation Council
- Fee schedule of the Accreditation Council Foundation

The German accreditation system provides for three different types of procedures:

- the programme accreditation;
- the system accreditation (institutional accreditation); and
- alternative procedures.

The programme and system accreditation procedures are characterized by a two-stage procedure:

The assessment (peer review procedure) and preparation of an accreditation report with recommendations for resolutions and assessments in accordance with the standards laid down in the Specimen decree¹ and organised by an agency commissioned by the HEI. The responsibility for the accreditation decision, lies with the Accreditation Council. At the request of HEI, the Accreditation Council decides on the accreditation of a study programme or the internal quality management system (institutional accreditation) of the HEI. The decision is made based on the accreditation report, whereby a justified deviation from the experts' recommendation is possible.

2. Is there an analogue to the Kazakhstan Register of Recognized Accreditation Bodies in Germany? How many accreditation agencies are there in Germany, except yours?

According to article 5 (3) no. 5 of the Interstate study accreditation treaty, it is one of the tasks of the Accreditation Council to authorise agencies to operate in Germany. The Accreditation Council adopted a procedure for this at its meeting on 20 February 2018. Authorisation will be granted permanently on the basis of an agency's registration with the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), with the possibility of revocation. In addition, the Accreditation Council adopted a

¹ https://akkreditierungsrat.de/sites/default/files/downloads/2021/171207_Musterrechtsverordnung_Englisch.pdf.

transitional regulation for the agencies already active in Germany, which clarifies their responsibilities under the previous as well as the new law.

As of the day of this Policy Brief, there are 11 accreditation agencies have been authorised by the Accreditation Council to operate in Germany, including FIBAA.

3. Is accreditation of a university recognised in Germany if it has been accredited by a foreign accreditation agency?

Institutional Accreditation

Since 2001, the German Science and Humanities Council (*Wissenschaftsrat, WR*) has been carrying out the institutional accreditation of non-state higher education institutions on behalf of the states (*Länder*). This is a quality assurance procedure that is intended to clarify whether a non-state higher education institution is capable of providing services in research and teaching that meet recognised scientific standards. Accreditation agencies are not authorised to handle this procedure.

System Accreditation

System Accreditation is decided on by the Accreditation Council. Agencies carry out the procedure without awarding the seal. System accreditation assesses the internal quality assurance system of a state or state-recognised HEI in Germany. A positive system accreditation allows the HEI to award the Accreditation Council's seal for its self-assessed study programmes.

The Decision of the Accreditation Council as of 20 February 2018 also provides requirements for admission of agencies to the German system². In general, the Accreditation Council makes its decision regarding the authorisation of an agency in Germany based on its entry in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Thus, if a foreign agency is authorised by Accreditation Council in Germany, the accreditation procedures they perform are also recognised in Germany. For example, currently this applies to AQ Austria, the Swiss Agency of Accreditation and Quality Assurance (AAQ), and MusiQuE.

4. Is institutional or specialised accreditation for universities compulsory? What are the benefits of accreditation for universities?

Institutional accreditation is compulsory for private universities (see above).

HEIs are obliged to either have their study programmes assessed by an accreditation agency and submit the accreditation report to the Accreditation Council (programme accreditation) or, if they are system-accredited, to accredit their study programmes themselves internally (system accreditation). The accreditations, including all expert reports and resolutions, are stored and published in the 'Central Database of Accredited Study Programmes and Universities'³ (ELIAS). The Accreditation Council publishes the reports and resolutions in the programme accreditation. If a HEI is system-accredited, it publishes the report itself. In the case of a re-accreditation procedure, we as an agency check whether the HEI has accredited all study programmes at least once in its system and also check the ELIAS records. This happens every eight years.

I. System Accreditation

² AR_Beschluss_Zulassung_von_Agenturen_2018_02_20_Drs._AR_16-2018.pdf (akkreditierungsrat.de).

³ <https://antrag.akkreditierungsrat.de/>.

System accreditation assesses the internal quality assurance system of a state or state-recognised HEIs in Germany. A positive system accreditation allows the HEI to award the Accreditation Council's seal for its self-assessed study programmes. The process, based on peer review, involves demonstrating compliance with formal and academic criteria set in the specimen decree. The quality management system must regularly evaluate programmes and teaching, involving students, academic experts, professionals, and graduates.

A review panel, appointed by an accredited agency, includes at least three professors, one professional representative, and one student. The panel conducts two site visits, reviews documents, and prepares an experts' report, which forms the basis of the Accreditation Council's decision.

If the decision is positive, the HEI's quality management system receives the Accreditation Council's seal for eight years, and the institution can award the seal to its evaluated study programmes.

The HEI is not dependent on the frequency of meetings and the volume of applications submitted to the Accreditation Council. As of today, 134 universities in Germany are system accredited.

II. Programme Accreditation

Programme accreditation in Germany applies to Bachelor's and Master's programmes offered by state or state-recognised HEIs. Accredited programmes receive limited accreditation, with or without conditions, and bear the Accreditation Council's seal of quality. Programmes with a similar subject focus can undergo cluster accreditation, though decisions still apply to individual programmes.

The multi-stage process is based on peer review. The Accreditation Council-approved agency appoints a review panel, typically including at least two subject-related professors, one professional, and one student. The panel assesses both formal and academic criteria, conducting a site visit to the institution and preparing an accreditation report.

The Accreditation Council bases its decision on the formal report from the agency and the academic assessment from the review panel. If the decision is positive, the programme receives the Accreditation Council's seal, valid for eight years. The decision and expert reports are published in a central database.

The HEIs must take submission deadlines for applications into account. As a rule, the external programme accreditation procedure takes longer than the internal procedure.

As of today, 8647 study programmes have been accredited as part of a programme accreditation, while 8181 study programmes have received the seal of the Accreditation Council as part of an internal accreditation.

III. Alternative Procedure

HEIs can choose between programme accreditation, system accreditation, and alternative procedures approved by the Accreditation Council and the respective federal state. These alternative procedures, developed by the institutions, follow the same quality standards as traditional accreditation but offer insights into different approaches to external quality assurance.

For alternative procedures to replace the programme or system accreditation, they must first be accredited. Successful accreditation grants the institution the right to self-accredit its programmes under the alternative procedure, provided it meets the formal and subject-related criteria in the model ordinance.

The accreditation of alternative procedures follows a peer review process regulated by the Rules of Procedure for Alternative Accreditation. Before starting, the institution must obtain consent from the relevant scientific authority and the Accreditation Council. An agreement between the institution and the Accreditation Council outlines the assessment process, which involves external experts from academia, professional sectors, and students.

The assessment results in an expert report with recommendations, and the Accreditation Council may oversee or delegate parts of the process.

The Accreditation Council decides whether the alternative procedure is equivalent to programme or system accreditation. This decision is based on the self-evaluation report, expert report, and possibly a statement from the institution. If accredited, the institution is allowed to self-accredit its programmes, which must follow the accredited alternative procedure.

The decision, reports, and seal award are published in the central database of accredited programmes. Two years before accreditation expires, an independent evaluation assesses the alternative procedure, and the Accreditation Council decides if it should continue.

This is a new type of procedure, there is one finalised procedure.

5. What professional networks of accreditation agencies (WAME analogue) can you recommend for Kazakhstan accreditation bodies?

FIBAA considers that membership and active participation of the following organisation and associations may be beneficial for Kazakhstan accreditation bodies:

- European University Association (EUA);
- International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE);
- Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education e.V. (CEENQA e.V.);
- APQN – Asia Pacific Quality Network.

Participation in these associations has provided FIBAA with opportunities to take part in various conferences, expand its network, engage in staff exchanges with other accreditation agencies, and foster knowledge sharing. Additionally, it allows FIBAA to stay updated on global trends in higher education and contribute to shaping international accreditation standards.

6. Is membership in EQAR and ENQA a prerequisite for accreditation bodies in Germany?

According to article 5 (3) no. 5 of the Interstate study accreditation treaty, it is one of the tasks of the Accreditation Council to authorise agencies to operate in Germany. The Accreditation Council adopted a procedure for this at its meeting on 20 February 2018. Authorisation will be granted permanently on the basis of an agency's registration with the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR), with the possibility of revocation. The agency is obliged to submit renewals of the EQAR registration without delay. Therefore, registration with EQAR is mandatory for agencies operating in Germany.

7. Does your agency set any requirements for participation of students in accreditation? How do you select them? Do you need any recommendations? Do you organise training for students, at what frequency?

There are requirements for students who should be added in the experts' pool. These requirements are established by FIBAA and officially published.⁴

I. Criteria for Appointing Students as Assessors for Programme Accreditation

The profile for students as FIBAA reviewers is based on a relevant study programme (business administration/ economics, social sciences, law studies).

These reviewers must meet the following criteria:

Required criteria

- being enrolled at a HEI as an undergraduate or a graduate student
- participation in bodies of the HEI

Optional criteria

- experience with accreditation and evaluation processes
- being open to the developments within the Bologna Process framework
- networking with companies and/ or cooperating with them
- professional experience in a legal field (e.g. AIESEC or ELSA)
- international experience
- foreign language skills

II. Criteria for Appointing Students as Assessors for Institutional Procedures

The profile for students as FIBAA reviewers is based on relevant experience with the self-government of a HEI and with accreditation processes. Furthermore, it is necessary to be enrolled in a relevant study programme.

These reviewers must meet the following criteria:

Required criteria

- being enrolled at a HEI as an undergraduate or a graduate student
- experience with accreditation and evaluation processes

Optional criteria

- being open to the developments within the Bologna Process framework
- networking with companies and/ or cooperating with them
- international experience
- foreign language skills

In addition, the FIBAA Expert Committee and the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee (F-ACC), also evaluate each student after a successful introduction. Therefore, students who have not been authorised by the FIBAA Expert Committee cannot be appointed on a permanent basis.

⁴ <https://www.fibaa.org/en/expert-management/criteria-for-appointing-fibaa-experts/>.

At least twice a year, we organise workshops for all our experts. During these workshops we discuss accreditation process, FIBAA Assessment criteria, roles of experts during the accreditation procedure and other matters related to accreditation procedure. Given that, our pool is quite international, we conduct such workshops both, in German and English languages. Student experts participate in all regular FIBAA training sessions on an equal basis with other members of the expert team.

Furthermore, we have access to local (e.g. KASAP-Pool⁵) and international students' pools (ESU-Pool). In Germany 'KASAP' manages a pool of students for accreditation procedures. This organisation is financially supported by FIBAA. These funds are used, among other, for student training. If necessary, agency representatives are also invited to these training sessions.

- 8. How many HEIs in Kazakhstan have been accredited by your agency since 2017 (show in breakdown by year, institutional and specialized separately)? Were there any cases of negative decisions on the results of accreditation, for what reasons?**

| HEI | Type of Accreditation | Year | Programmes Accredited |
|---|-----------------------------|------|-------------------------------|
| Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2017 | 4 Bachelor, 3 Master, 1 PhD |
| University of International Business, Almaty | Institutional accreditation | 2019 | - |
| KIMEP University, Almaty | Institutional accreditation | 2019 | - |
| ENUni, Astana | Programme Accreditation | 2019 | 6 Bachelor, 6 Master, 5 PhD |
| M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, Astana | Programme Accreditation | 2019 | 1 Master, 1 PhD |
| M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, Astana | Institutional accreditation | 2021 | - |
| M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University, Astana | Programme Accreditation | 2021 | 14 Bachelor, 5 Master, 1 PhD |
| Narxoz University, Almaty | Institutional accreditation | 2022 | - |
| Narxoz University, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2022 | 4 Bachelor, 2 Master, 1 PhD |
| Almaty UIB, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2022 | 3 Bachelor, 3 Master |
| KIMEP University, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2022 | 4 Bachelor, 3 Master, 5 PhD |
| Almaty UIB, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2023 | 2 Bachelor, 1 Master |
| ESIL University, Astana | Programme Accreditation | 2023 | 6 Bachelor, 6 Master |
| KIMEP University, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2023 | 10 Bachelor, 10 Master, 4 PhD |
| Narxoz University, Almaty | Programme Accreditation | 2023 | 9 Bachelor, 1 Master |
| SDU, Kaskelen | Programme Accreditation | 2024 | 7 Bachelor |

There was a refusal for the accreditation of one study programme (Master) based on the decision dated 23 March 2018. There were several criteria that were not met; however, the main reason

⁵ Der Studentische Pool – Studentischer Akkreditierungspool (studentischer-pool.de).

was that the curriculum did not contain a sufficient amount of international content to meet the objectives of the programme and did not correspond with the programme name.

Furthermore, one study programme was withdrawn from the accreditation process due to a negative assessment.

9. Do your standards take into account the German national legislation in the field of higher education?

FIBAA uses Assessment Guides for accreditation procedures, which contain questions which have to be answered by the HEI – this ensures that the HEI provides all relevant information. They also contain all relevant quality standards and requirements for the assessment by the expert panel – hence, the Assessment Guides define clearly the scope of assessment. The HEI has to submit a self-evaluation report to FIBAA according to the respective FIBAA Assessment Guide including required appendices.

We use FIBAA's Assessment Guide for international accreditation procedures. FIBAA's Assessment Guide for programme accreditation defines, which quality requirements have to be met in order to comply with the following international guidelines and frameworks:

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG);
- ECTS Guidelines;
- Dublin Descriptors;
- EQUAL MBA Guidelines;
- Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region (in relation to crediting study and exam performance from higher education institutions) (Lisbon Recognition Convention);
- Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (QF-EHEA) (for programme accreditation, provided there is no applicable national qualification framework);
- National regulations, if applicable.

In the accreditation procedures FIBAA also considers the respective national requirements. In case of a contradiction between the national Higher Education requirements and the ESG, the national requirements take priority.

The Accreditation Council in their criteria also refers to these European standards.

The Programme Accreditation checks if the following areas of the study programme(s) are in line with European quality standards:

- Objectives
- Admission
- Contents, Structure, Didactical Concept, Employability
- Academic Environment and Framework Conditions
- Quality Assurance and Documentation

Within the framework of programme accreditation, FIBAA uses two assessment guides: Assessment Guide for Bachelor's and Master's programmes and for Doctoral programmes. The guides contain transparent benchmarks for when a criterion is met and on the basis of which the programmes are assessed, which are used for FIBAA international programme accreditation in all countries.

10. How does your agency select the experts in the expert group for accreditation? On average, how many experts are on an expert group?

The subject-specific qualification of each study programme is at the heart of the procedure. The assessment is assured by outstanding peer-reviewers from the relevant scientific field (experts from the specific study field of the programme). They contribute to the work of the agency through input from various perspectives.

FIBAA composes an expert team according to the subject-specific study programme to be accredited and according to the requirements of the ESG (*chapter 2.4 peer-review experts*). To be appointed, the experts must have an outstanding scientific expertise and competence in encouraging the growth of knowledge and education in higher education. At the beginning of each procedure, the experts are asked to declare their impartiality. Furthermore, there is a **FIBAA Expert Committee**, which is responsible for appointment of experts for each accreditation or certification procedure. The F-ACC elects two university representatives, one practice representative and one student from among its members to the FIBAA Expert Committee. The current information of the FIBAA Expert Committee and its composition is available on our website⁶.

FIBAA has laid down a series of criteria for the appointment of FIBAA Experts, which are intended to ensure that FIBAA Experts have relevant and comprehensive expertise. In doing so, it is guided by the guidelines for the appointment of FIBAA Experts and the composition of expert groups for accreditation procedures as issued by the German Rectors' Conference (HRK).

If the applicant higher education institution submits an offer of future involvement in teaching or research during the procedure, the expert is obliged to inform FIBAA of this immediately.

The FIBAA expert team would consist of:

- Three (3) experts from the scientific field (expertise in the specific study fields of the programmes + one (1) expertise who is familiar with the university's national Higher Education Area
- One (1) student member (studying in the study field and involvement in the University self-administration)
- One (1) member from the professional field of the study field (e.g. company, industry, etc.).

FIBAA has currently specified its appointment criteria for country experts in based on the feedback collected from HEIs being accredited by FIBAA:

- Holder of a doctoral degree / PhD degree
- Preferably, status of a Professor or Associate Professor
- Experience in outcome-based education
- At least (former) experience as a Programme Director (responsibility for content and organization of a study programme)
- English language proficiency at least at the level B2/C1 of the common European Language Framework

⁶ <https://www.fibaa.org/en/fibaa/about-us/our-structure-and-bodies/>.

Once the expert panel has been confirmed by the HEI and approved by FIBAA Expert Committee, the expert team receive the higher education institution's self-documentation for review.

Every individual quality standard in FIBAA's Assessment Guide will be assessed by the experts (assessment scores include not meeting the requirements, meeting the requirements, exceeding the requirements, exceptional) and documented in full and in a verifiable manner and draft a recommendation for decision to the FIBAA Accreditation and Certification Committee.

FIBAA experts receive general training and specific training for each procedure, in which reference is made to the requirements and special features of the country and its higher education laws and to the special features of the university. The Assessors are only appointed to the FIBAA "expert pool" after a "trial phase".

Besides experts from Germany, Austria and Switzerland FIBAA's expert pool includes experts from countries like Albania, Czech Republic, France, Great Britain, Lebanon, Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia, Turkey, Luxembourg, Denmark and Norway. The pool of experts is designed internationally and, in all procedures outside of Germany at least one member of the expert panel comes from the specific country of the HEI.

11. What are the maximum and minimum accreditation periods for which you accredit higher education institutions? What does it depend on? In what cases are HEIs accredited for the maximum terms?

The accreditation periods granted by FIBAA to HEIs are as follows:

- Initial accreditation is valid for five years.
- Re-accreditation is valid for seven years.

12. What in your opinion are the weaknesses and strengths of the Kazakhstan education system and the Kazakhstan model of quality assurance? What should be worked on, what recommendations can you give us?

I. General Information

The FIBAA accreditation process evaluates study programs against several quality criteria. Key points regarding the evaluation include:

- Asterisk (*) Criteria: These are essential and must achieve at least the rating "Meets quality requirements." Failure to meet any of these will result in a condition being imposed on the accreditation.
- Non-asterisk Criteria: If these are assessed as "not met," they lead to recommendations but do not jeopardize accreditation.
- FIBAA Quality Seal: The seal is awarded if no more than seven asterisk criteria are not met, and criteria 1.1 and 3.1.1 are fulfilled. If more than seven asterisk criteria are unmet or either criterion 1.1 or 3.1.1 is not fulfilled, the accreditation will be refused. A new application can be made after a waiting period of at least one year.

Our analysis below is based on four institutional accreditations and 115 study programmes accredited by FIBAA between January 2019 and October 2024 at seven HEIs, consisting of:

- 60 bachelor's programmes
- 37 master's programmes
- 18 doctoral programmes (PhD)

Since January 2019, none of the study programmes have been denied accreditation. A higher number of accreditations were recorded in 2022 and 2023, indicating an active engagement in maintaining and achieving quality standards across various programmes.

II. Weaknesses

Bachelor and Master

Some programmes have been accredited with conditions. According to the FIBAA Assessment Guide, HEIs have nine months to fulfil these conditions, with the possibility of a one-time extension of up to six months in special cases.

Please refer to *Table 1* of [Annex 1](#) for a review of which Asterisk (*) Criteria were not fulfilled leading to accreditation with conditions.

Some criteria have not been met for different study programmes within the same HEI (e.g., Rationale for degree and programme name (3.1.2*), Methods and scientific practice (3.1.6*), etc.). However, there are also criteria that have not been met across several HEIs. Therefore, based on the analysis of the conditions set by the experts during the accreditation processes, we can highlight the following common weaknesses in bachelor's and master's study programmes:

Lack of Standardised Assessment for Methodology in Final Theses

- There is no uniform assessment system for the correct methodology in final theses. Therefore, it was a condition to implement a standardised assessment system of methodology at the required level in final theses for lecturers and establish corresponding guidelines for students.

Absence of Syllabi for Theses

- It was a condition to design a syllabus for the Bachelor and Master thesis.

Unregulated Final Assessment Procedure

- It was a condition to provide the exam regulation for the final assessment and final group projects.

Lack of Syllabi for Internships and Theses

- It was a condition to provide syllabi for all mandatory internships and the theses in the study programmes and ensure that they give complete and coherent information on the courses and the formal syllabus review process.

Incomplete Course Descriptions

- Newly introduced courses lack corresponding descriptions. Therefore, it was a requirement to provide a complete set of course descriptions for all courses in the curriculum.

Non-Compliance with Lisbon Recognition Convention

- With regard to the recognition of study periods abroad, there was no reference to the principles stated in the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Therefore, it was a condition to implement the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention — general recognition of study periods abroad if no substantial differences can be proven by the HEI in the study and examination regulations.

Inadequate Quality Management for Document Updates

- The quality management should be responsible for checking document quality and have the authority to implement necessary revisions. Therefore, it was a condition to include in its quality management system a process to monitor and update the programmes' documentation.

Insufficient Student Workload Analysis

- The student workload is not systematically monitored. Therefore, it was a condition to implement a student workload evaluation system for each course which includes a systematic control loop from the survey to the analysis of the results and the taking of appropriate measures.

Poor Documentation and Publication of Study Programmes

- Information on the website about the single study programmes was scarce. Therefore, it was a condition to deliver basic information about the study programmes like qualification objectives, standard curricula and career prospects on its website.
- Although the study programmes' curricula are regularly updated, this has led to discrepancies in the English documentation (course overviews, module descriptions, and curriculum overview) that need revision. Therefore, it is a condition for the HEI to align the information in the curricula, content, and study regulations across all documentation.

Furthermore, there are non-asterisk criteria which non-fulfilment does not lead to conditions but only to recommendations, which are reviewed during the re-accreditation process. Please refer to *Table 2* of [Annex 2](#) for a review of which non-asterisk criteria were not fulfilled leading to recommendations.

By analysing the non-asterisk criteria that were not met, the common weakness is a lack of enrolled international students. Therefore, it was a recommendation to review measures of the HEI to attract international students into the accredited study programme, as well as setting up a system to attract international students (e.g., by offering scholarships). In addition, introducing lecturing tutors can support the students in the learning process and help them develop competences and skills.

Although the criteria are met, the panel may give some recommendations for further improvement and development of study programmes. We can highlight the common recommendations provided by the panel for accredited study programmes in Kazakhstan:

| Topic | Recommendations |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Curriculum Development | Integration of IT: Intensively incorporate IT skills (software, data protection, etc.) into the study programme. |
| | Content Updates: Update literature and ensure internationalisation of course materials. |
| | Ethical Considerations: Include ethical aspects in the syllabi and develop courses focused on ethical questions. |
| | Elective Course Review: Reduce the number of elective courses offered, focusing on those that can be effectively de- |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>livered, and consider making some electives compulsory.</p> <p>Focus on Lifelong Learning: Incorporate principles of life-long learning into the programmes to prepare students for ongoing professional development and adaptability in their careers.</p> <p>Innovation in Curriculum: Emphasise innovative approaches within the curriculum that reflect current trends and challenges in the business landscape, including sustainability and digital transformation.</p> |
| Faculty and Staff Development | <p>Staff Composition: Raise the academic staff's qualifications and increase the number of PhDs among teaching staff.</p> <p>Professional Development: Support lecturers to attend international conferences and implement a mentoring programme for faculty.</p> <p>Teaching Load Management: Limit teaching loads to allow faculty more time for research and development activities.</p> <p>Faculty Training: Implement regular training sessions for lecturers on innovative teaching methods and the latest pedagogical approaches to improve educational quality.</p> |
| Student Support and Development | <p>Student-Centered Learning: Strengthen student-centred learning by increasing group work and peer assessments.</p> <p>English Proficiency: Ensure students' English proficiency is adequate for coursework.</p> <p>Career Services: Placement services, including workshops for students and graduates on writing motivational letters, CVs, etc.</p> <p>Barrier-Free Access: To keep up the effort to further improve the ratio of premises with barrier-free access.</p> |
| Assessment | <p>Diverse Examination Formats: Increase the variety of assessment methods beyond multiple-choice exams, focusing on competence-based evaluations.</p> <p>Communication of Survey Outcomes: Proactively communicate student survey results to enhance feedback loops.</p> <p>Final Thesis: Increase the emphasis on the final thesis and enhance theoretical depth in class.</p> |
| Internationalisation | <p>Faculty and Student Mobility: Intensify cooperation with foreign universities and broaden the international faculty and student body.</p> <p>Literature: Use more international literature to offer students a broader perspective.</p> <p>Support for International Students: Develop support systems specifically for international students to facilitate their integration and success within the HEI.</p> |

PhD

| Topic | Recommendations |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Strengthening Networking | <p>Actively promote exchange programmes with other doctoral students both in Kazakhstan and especially abroad in the programme's networking concept.</p> <p>More actively encourage doctoral students to participate in</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | international conferences as part of the programme's networking concept. |
| Internationality | Actively encourage students to present their research on an international platform promotes global academic interaction. |
| Faculty Development and Support | Take into account the need for growth and development of teaching staff to ensure comprehensive training of scientific personnel. |
| | Ensure appropriate software support. |
| | Describe more into detail the methods and duration of assessments and examinations |

Institutional Accreditation

| Topic | Recommendations |
|---|--|
| Student Potential & Career Paths | Investigate and understand where potential students may come from and their desired career paths after graduation. |
| Quality Assurance Processes | For the QA processes take into consideration elaborating action plans and SWOT analyses. |
| Industry Cooperation | Enhance and expand collaboration with businesses and industries to improve student employability. |
| Career Services | Evaluate career services to identify and implement additional support measures. |
| Development Plan & Strategic Goals | Harmonise communication of the Development Plan across all channels. |
| | Work on attracting more foreign faculty members. |

III. Strengths

Bachelor and Master

Some study programmes have received accreditation without any conditions, highlighting the strengths of HEIs in Kazakhstan. Additionally, certain criteria are often exceeded, particularly in the following areas:

- **Counseling for Prospective Students:** Guidance provided to help students make informed decisions about their educational paths.
- **Foreign Language Content:** Integration of foreign language elements into the curriculum to enhance language proficiency.
- **Skills for Employment/Employability:** A strong emphasis on equipping students with skills that are relevant to the job market.
- **Student Support by Faculty:** Robust support systems established to assist students throughout their studies.
- **Quality of Teaching Facilities:** Adequate quantity and quality of teaching and group room resources, including media and IT equipment.
- **Access to Literature:** Availability of literature and learning resources for students.
- **Career Counseling and Placement Services:** Support provided to students for their career development and job placements.
- **Alumni Activities:** Engagement with alumni to foster networking and ongoing support.

Moreover, specific programmes demonstrate strengths in areas such as methodology, the practical experience of faculty, cooperation with businesses, and clearly defined admission requirements.

PhD

Some of the PhD programmes have exceeded the criteria related to:

- Networking of the Scientists
- Internationality of the Teaching Staff
- Management Support
- Literary Access and Support of the Library
- Quality Assurance and Quality Development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes

Institutional Accreditation

The following criteria were assessed as “exceed” during institutional accreditation procedures:

- Cooperation (systematic contacts with employers and internship providers)
- Public Relations
- Quality Management Strategy
- Research Transfer to the Areas of Studies and Teaching
- Advice and Information

IV. FIBAA Recommendations for Further Development

HEIs in Kazakhstan are significantly advanced, and the international accreditation process contributes to their continued development. This is particularly evident during the re-accreditation process, where the panel's recommendations are actively considered and implemented. However, it is important to note that there are still areas for improvement, particularly in enhancing the alignment of curricula with global standards and ensuring that faculty members engage in continuous professional development to stay current with global industry trends and educational practices, as well as participant in joint research, international conferences, staff exchange, etc. Therefore, such development of academic staff should be further supported by the HEIs.

Additionally, fostering greater collaboration between HEIs and local businesses can create more internship and employment opportunities for students, bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world application. Efforts should also be made to promote research initiatives and encourage interdisciplinary approaches that can enrich the learning experience and drive innovation within the educational landscape.

Although, the accredited by FIBAA study programmes access to the literature is sufficient, it should be further developed and ensured that students have access to updated literature, online databases, and digital resources. This can include investing and allocating more budget in library services.

One of our key recommendations is to promote Kazakh universities in Europe and Asia, showcasing the strengths of Kazakh HEIs. Currently, there is a noticeable lack of international diversity among the student body, with the most students coming predominantly from the CIS region. However, several HEIs offer study programs in English, which could attract students from Asia and Europe.

To enhance their global presence, Kazakh HEIs should highlight their unique strengths, such as quality academic programmes, experienced faculty, innovative research initiatives and notable quality of teaching facilities. Additionally, marketing campaigns targeting international students could emphasise scholarships, cultural experiences, and career opportunities post-graduation. By effectively positioning themselves as worthy competitors to universities abroad, Kazakh HEIs can foster a more diverse and vibrant academic community, ultimately enriching the educational experience for all students and the faculty.

Annex 1

Table 1. List of asterisk criteria

| Assessment criteria | | Description | Study Programmes | HEI |
|---------------------|--|---|------------------|-----|
| 3.1.2* | Rationale for degree and programme name | The degree and programme name correspond to the contents of the curriculum and the pro-gramme objectives. | 4 | 1 |
| 3.1.6* | Methods and scientific practice | Students acquire methodological competences and are enabled to do scientific work on the required level. | 6 | 1 |
| 3.1.7* | Examination and final thesis | All exams, as they are defined for the modules/courses, are suited in format and content to ascertain the intended learning outcomes. The requirements are in accordance with the de-sired qualification level. The exams are characterised by a wide variety of test formats. The final theses/projects are evaluated based on previously published and coherently applied criteria, rules, and procedures. The students prove, especially in their thesis/final project, their ability to do scientific work and the achievement of the study programme's qualification objectives. | 15 | 3 |
| 3.2.1* | Modular structure of the study programme | The programme structure supports the smooth implementation of the curriculum and helps students to reach the defined learning outcomes. The programme consists of modules/courses and assigns credits per module/course on the basis of the necessary student workload. Practical components, if existent, are designed and integrated in such a way that credits can be acquired. The module/course descriptions provide detailed descriptions of intended learning out-comes and the information defined in the ECTS Users' Guide. | 7 | 3 |
| 3.2.2* | Study and exam regulation | There are legally binding study and exam regulations which contain all necessary rules and procedures and take into account, where applicable, national requirements. The study pro-gramme is designed so that students can study for a certain time at other HEIs or do internships without any extension of their overall study time. The recognition of degrees and periods of study at other HEIs is regulated in accordance with / analogous to the Lisbon Recognition Convention (if ratified by the country); the | 18 | 2 |



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| | | recognition of periods of practical work – insofar intended – is also clearly defined. The final grade is supplied with an ECTS grading table. | | |
| 3.3.1* | Logic and plausibility of the didactical concept | <p>The didactical concept of the study programme is described, plausible, and oriented towards the programme objectives. It allows for the application of different teaching and learning methods, such as, for instance, case studies or practical projects. Students are encouraged to take an active role in creating the learning process.</p> <p>For blended-learning/distance learning study programmes, the following applies additionally: the methods are suited for distance learning. They include, for instance, independent work with the course materials, lectures, business games, and case studies. The selection and kind of the didactic materials (printed teaching material, textbooks, digital media) correspond to the study programme objectives.</p> | 6 | 1 |
| 3.3.2* | Course materials | <p>The accompanying course materials are oriented towards the intended learning outcomes and correspond to the required qualification level. They are up to date and digitally accessible for the students. They are user-friendly and encourage students to engage in further independent studies.</p> <p>For blended-learning/distance learning study programmes, the following applies additionally: when compiling the course materials, the specific didactical requirements are taken into account; they are well-designed and neatly reproduced.</p> | 3 | 3 |
| 3.4.1* | International contents and intercultural aspects | International contents are an integral part of the curriculum. Students are thus, prepared for the challenges in an international working environment. Through practical examples, students are enabled to act in an intercultural environment. | 4 | 1 |
| 4.1.2* | Academic qualification of faculty | The academic qualification of the faculty corresponds to the requirements and objectives of the study programme. The HEI verifies the qualifications of the faculty members by means of an established procedure. Specific measures for the further qualification of the faculty members are implemented. | 6 | 1 |
| 4.2.1* | Programme Director | The programme director coordinates the activities of everyone involved in the programme and ensures that the programme runs smoothly. | 3 | 1 |
| 4.4.2* | Access to literature | The opening hours of the library take students' needs sufficiently into account. Ac- | 1 | 1 |



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| | | cess to the literature and journals as well as to digital media (e.g. electronic media, databases) is ensured. The literature expressly required for the study programme is available and also kept up to date. | | |
| 5.1* | Quality assurance and quality development with respect to contents, processes and outcomes | A quality assurance and development procedure, which systematically and continuously monitors and develops the quality of the programme with respect to its contents, processes, and outcomes, has been set up. It takes into account the evaluation results and the analysis on student workload, success rate, and graduate employment as well as the student population. Faculty members and students participate in the respective committees to plan and assess the quality assurance and development procedures. Responsibilities are clearly defined. | 15 | 3 |
| 5.3.1* | Programme description | The study programme's content, curriculum and examination scheme have been suitably documented and published (e.g. course plan and exam regulations). | 9 | 2 |



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Annex 2

Table 2. List of non-asterisk criteria

| Assessment criteria | | Description | Study Programmes | HEI |
|---------------------|--|---|------------------|-----|
| 1.3.1 | Positioning of the study programme in the educational market | The reasons given for the positioning in the educational market of this study programme are plausible. | 5 | 2 |
| 1.3.2 | Positioning of the study programme on the job market for graduates (“Employability”) | The arguments in support of graduate employability on the basis of the stated qualification objectives are convincingly presented. The future fields of employment for graduates are plausibly set forth. | 3 | 1 |
| 1.3.3 | Positioning of the study programme within the HEI's overall strategic concept | The study programme is convincingly integrated into the HEI's overall strategic concept. The study programme's qualification goals are in line with the HEI's mission and strategic planning. | 8 | 2 |
| 3.3.4 | Lecturing tutors | Lecturing tutors or student assistants support the students in the learning process and help them develop competences and skills. | 9 | 2 |
| 3.4.2 | Internationality of the student body | The international composition of the student body corresponds to the programme concept. The measures taken to promote internationality are goal-oriented. | 21 | 3 |
| 4.1.4 | Practical business experience of faculty | The practical business experience of the faculty corresponds to the requirement of the programme to integrate theory and practice. | 2 | 1 |