



**INDEPENDENT AGENCY  
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN EDUCATION - IQAA**

***(Pilot accreditation in the framework Erasmus + project "PROMOTING INTERNATIONALIZATION OF RESEARCH THROUGH ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATIONALIZATION OF CYCLE 3 QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM IN LINE WITH THE EUROPEAN INTEGRATION" C3QA)***

**REPORT  
ON THE EXTERNAL REVIEW  
OF THE EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION**

**M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University**

**written by the IQAA expert group  
after the study of the self-evaluation report and the external review of the educational  
organization M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University in the framework of specialized  
(programme) accreditation of the study programme  
“01373931- International Law Academic Programme”  
(in accordance with the National classifier)**

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*The level of compliance of the self-evaluation report with the actual state of affairs of the study programme “6D030200-International law” (in accordance with the National classifier) in the university for each standard*

Standards	Indicate the level of compliance of the self-evaluation report with the actual state of affairs at HEI for each standard			
	Fully complies	Substantially complies	Partially complies	Doesn't comply
Standard 1. Policy in quality assurance of the study programme			X	
Standard 2. Quality of the teaching staff			X	
Standard 3. Quality of research work			X	
Standard 4. Effective system of support provided to doctoral students			X	
Standard 5. Resources		X		
Standard 6. Efficiency of learning outcomes of the study programme and public information			X	

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### CONTEXT AND AIMS OF THE SITE VISIT

#### **Introduction**

External review has been held at M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University (KAZGUU) within March 13-14, 2019 by visiting according to plan in Appendix 1 via meeting and interviewing of faculty, PhD students, alumni, employers, administration and etc. according to a list in Appendix 2 provided by the expert group as it listed in page 2.

Before the visit, KAZGUU provided the expert group with self-assessment report of educational program 01373931- International Law Academic Programme, its curriculum, attached documents (totally 6 annexes), and description of the program. The self-assessment report consists of 40 pages and describes conformity of the program to 6 basic standards such as (1) Quality assurance policy; (2) Quality of teaching staff; (3) Quality of research; (4) Effectiveness of doctoral student support system; (5) Resources; and (6) Effectiveness of learning outcomes with full level of preparedness and detailed description.

The interview with the management of the university made it possible to get acquainted with the mission, strategy, objectives and plans of the university. In addition, the management of the university announced the main achievements of the university, graduating departments and doctoral students enrolled in the educational program.

A visual inspection was carried out in order to get an idea of the resource possibilities of the university for the implementation of the educational program, to determine the conformity of the material and technical base of the university, laboratories, requirements and accreditation standards, and to be able to communicate directly with the faculty and other university staff at their workplaces (laboratories, department, library, service center for students of the university, etc.).

All members of KAZGUU showed eagerness and participation for the expert group during the accreditation overview.

#### **Main characteristics of the HEI**

Joint-stock company «M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University» is a higher educational institution, established on the strategic initiative of the Head of the State N. A. Nazarbayev on March 14, 1994. The mission of KAZGUU is to contribute to the development of the society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international level excellence. The aim of KAZGUU comes from its mission and is to equip students with the necessary knowledge for leading positions in the sphere of law, economics and humanities in the Republic of Kazakhstan and abroad.

KAZGUU trains specialists in the field of law, economics, finance, business within the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs. There are 4 schools – the General Education School, the Higher School of Economics, the KAZGUU Law School and KAZGUU Business School. Besides, the University suggests distance learning. Annually about 1000 students graduate from the University. Since the date of its foundation, KAZGUU has trained more than 30,000 skilled specialists.

The PhD Programme in International Law is carried out on the basis of the state license No. 01373931. International Law Programme (PhD) is supervised by the KAZGUU Law School.

The Programme was established in 2010 and the first PhD students graduated in 2013. The language of the study is English, the duration is 3 academic years. International Law academic programme was accredited for 5 years by FIBAA (Bonn, Germany) and IQAA (Astana, Kazakhstan) on unconditional basis. Since October 12, 2018 KAZGUU Law School holds the National Chapter of the Asian Society of International Law (ASIL). Also, International Law PhD Programme took first place in the national rating of educational programmes provided by ATAMEKEN, the national chamber of entrepreneurs of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

The Programme has clearly-defined goals and objectives, consistent with the mission and development strategy of the university, as well as meeting the demands of potential consumers and all interested parties. It focuses on fundamental study and research in International Law and its application into National Legislation. To reach these objectives, students of the doctoral program work closely with one or more faculty members of the school related to their fields of study. The PhD student is a key participant of education process involved directly or indirectly in all stages of the development of International Law Academic Programme.

International Law Programme (PhD) was developed in accordance with the State Compulsory Standard for PhD programmes adopted by the Decree of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan No1080 dated August 23, 2012.

The designed curriculum of the Programme adequately reflects the qualification objectives of the study programme. Each semester comprises 30 credits where each module includes certain number of subject units to be completed by students. The total workload of the Programme is 180 credits: educational component comprises 48 credits and research work amounts to 132 credits.

New Programme and curriculum for 2019 PhD cohort are developed in accordance with the State Compulsory Standard for Postgraduate Education adopted by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 31, 2018 № 604 (the Standard). The Standard provides a broad academic freedom to universities to create educational programmes of doctoral degree establishing a total workload of the program in hours (5400) and credits (180) and their distribution among educational (including theoretical education and internship) and research components. The new curriculum is in strict compliance with the Standard and contains all educational components: theoretical training (30 credits), pedagogical (15 credits) and research internships (8 credits), and research work (127 credits) including the defence of PhD dissertation (viva).

The content of International Law Programme is designed to meet the criteria of interdisciplinarity. International Law Academic Programme completely meets the criterion of student-oriented learning and teaching. Methods of teaching are also student-oriented. Objectives and learning outcomes of the International Law PhD Programme correspond to the Dublin descriptors for the doctoral degree and the State Compulsory Standard.

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## CHAPTER 2

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### EXTERNAL REVIEW REPORT

#### *Introduction*

This review was written by the expert group within visit of KAZGUU in March 13 and 14, 2019 to externally view the PhD program under accreditation 01373931- International Law Academic Programme and its compliance with standards of specialized (programme) accreditation

This report on results of the external review was written in accordance with the structure of the university's self-assessment report. It contains overview of the expert group of how the activities of the educational organization comply with all 6 standards for accreditation of specialized programme 01373931- International Law Academic Programme in KAZGUU.

The external review report was prepared on the basis of the university self-assessment report, in accordance with the standards and criteria for accreditation of PhD programs, as well as guidelines for organizing and conducting an external visit for IQAA institutional and specialized (program) accreditation procedures. The report contains the results of the expert group's work on the level of compliance of this program with all 6 standards for accreditation of specialized programme 01373931- International Law Academic Programme in KAZGUU.

## Standard 1. Policy in Quality Assurance of the Study Programme

### Analysis and evidence

The results of interviews with university management showed that the educational program is aimed at studying scientific personnel with a high level of professional knowledge, analytical and critical thinking skills, who are able to independently conduct research on current problems of international law and fluent in English.

The objectives and results of the PhD program in the field of international law correspond to Dublin doctoral descriptors and the state compulsory standard.

Interviews with PhD students showed that they understand what competencies they should develop as part of the educational program when preparing their PhD thesis:

- to formulate and solve problems arising in the process of research;
- to apply the most appropriate research methods that meet the needs of a particular study;
- to interpret and analyze the results and formulate them in the form of a scientific article (report, abstract, scientific article, scientific proposal, doctoral dissertation);
- to use modern information technology in research;
- to conduct research in accordance with scientific ethics and academic integrity.

Preparation of doctors PhD in M. Narikbayev KAZGUU carried out since 2010, on the basis of the State license №01373931.

The content of the educational program is implemented through the curriculum and disciplines.

The expert group was presented the PhD curriculum, which was developed in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The total workload is calculated for 3 academic years and amounts to 180 ECTS credits. Distribution of study load is carried out in a way when PhD students undergo theoretical training in the first semester; in the following semester, research work and various types of practices are provided. The final stage of study is the state exam and PhD thesis defense.

The curriculum is drawn up by international law departments and is approved by the KAZGUU Law School Committee on Academic Quality.

The group of experts was also presented a program for admission in 2019, which was compiled with the new requirements of the Republic of Kazakhstan, adopted in October 2018.

The study programs of 2018 and 2019 are prepared on the basis of an interdisciplinary approach. Accordingly, the goals and objectives of the program are aimed at transforming into an interdisciplinary approach in the academic and research field.

According to the self-assessment report, such courses as Publication and Research Methodology allow students to exchange ideas in various areas of legal research. PhD students have the opportunity to write collaborative works at the intersection of their scientific and professional interests.

The analysis of the disciplines included in the curriculum 2018 and 2019 shows that the disciplines are aimed at developing research skills. In particular:

- to help doctoral students the content and functions of scientific knowledge;
- to understand the peculiarities of conducting research in the field of International law;



- to reveal the content of general logical research methods, empirical research methods, as well as special research methods in the field of international law.

However, the inclusion of the English language and International Law and the World Economy disciplines in the curriculum is not entirely clear. First, students admitted to PhD studies are those who are fluent in English, this subject is studied in the framework of general education and basic disciplines in undergraduate and graduate programs. Since the university did not provide a program for this discipline, it is therefore difficult to assess the practical importance. Probably, this discipline was not in doubt, if the title referred, for example, to the skills of scientific translation. The same question concerns the International Law and the World Economy discipline. As is known, international law and the world economy are separate disciplines, subjects, academic fields and even individual specialties. The purpose and content of this discipline could not be determined, since the curriculum was not presented.

The University has a mechanism for adjusting the topic of the thesis at the request of the PhD student in the event of the detection of the irrelevance of the dissertation research. The experts did not reveal the facts of dissatisfaction by the PhD students with the scientific guidance provided by the scientific consultants.

In addition, PhD students receive practical knowledge on writing scientific articles in accordance with the requirements of leading scientific publications, mechanisms for promoting articles in journals with a high impact factor.

According to the curriculum, PhD students undergo a pedagogical and research internship. The main purpose of the pedagogical internship is the development of pedagogical skills that should be useful in the future professional activity of graduates of the PhD program in international law.

The educational program in international law meets the criterion of student-centered learning and teaching. According to the self-assessment report, all theoretical education courses are compiled during the first semester, which allows students to gain knowledge, skills and competencies that are useful for their PhD studies. In addition, this approach allows students to concentrate longer on their PhD studies, without being distracted by theoretical studies. Topics of the thematic workshop are determined by the program head based on the research of each student. Such an individual approach allows conducting research more efficiently, since it provides PhD students with theoretical and practical information relevant to their dissertations.

According to the self-assessment report and the results of interviews with the teaching staff, the expert group revealed that teachers working with PhD students make extensive use of interactive methodology in their teaching practice. Among them: a case method, brainstorming, a project method and others.

The rules of admission to the doctoral candidate are set forth in the “Policy for admission of students to the M. Narikbayev KAZGUU”, confirmed by the Board decision Protocol No. 162 dated June 18, 2018.

The rules establish the requirements for receiving documents, the deadlines for receiving documents, a list of required documents. Separately stipulated conditions for applying for graduates of foreign universities.

PhD studies accept individuals who have mastered an appropriate or related postgraduate education program in the amount of at least 120 ECTS.

Admission of individuals to PhD studies is carried out on a competitive basis based on the results of entrance exams.

Entrance examinations for citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan include:

- exam in a foreign language;
- exam in the specialty.

Applicants who have an international certificate confirming the knowledge of a foreign language are given the highest score on a 100-point grading scale and they are exempt from passing a foreign language to the MES RK.

In the case of the same indicators of competitive points, the right of priority for enrollment is given to those who have the highest score in the specialty.

When enrolling in a PhD doctoral program, scientific achievements are compiled that correspond to the profile of the chosen specialty: scientific publications, including in rating scientific journals; certificates of scientific projects; certificates for the award of scientific scholarships, grants; certificates / diplomas for participation in scientific conferences and competitions, work experience in the specialty.

There is a question on the previous education profile of applicants entering the PhD program that remains open. Model rules for admission to educational institutions that implement educational programs of higher and postgraduate education, approved by Order of the Minister of Education of October 31, 2018 No. 600, do not imply the presence of a major prior education. The same is written in the rules of the KAZGUU. However, during the interview, the dean of the School of Law noted that only those who have a law degree at the undergraduate and graduate levels are admitted to the PhD program in International Law. Applicants without a law degree cannot enroll in a PhD program.

According to the paragraph 10.6.6 of the Rules for Admission to the PhD program, posted on the University's website, the examination in the specialty for PhD programs in International Law and Jurisprudence consists of two parts: the written one assumes the format for solving practical cases and the oral question where applicants must provide a rationale for scientific research. However, in the academic policy of KAZGUU for PhD doctoral studies it is stated that the exam in the specialty is held in writing for 120 minutes. It is not clear which document shall prevail.

Requirements for work experience of applicants for PhD studies also raised a question. The Academic policy describes the position that applicants pass two entrance examinations on the results of which commission defines the admitted candidate. However, there is also a provision concerning the interview, which solve work experience issues of applicants.

According to the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, applicants for PhD studies require at least 1 year of work experience, while the University's Academic Policy stipulates that experience in the relevant field of the chosen program is required for those who do not have a corresponding Bachelor's or Master's degree. This indicates that for other applicants the work experience is not required. Here a certain contradiction to the current legislation.

Overall, the internal quality assurance system is at a good level. The university has an internal framework for the regulation of internal processes, the issue of admission to PhD studies, the learning process, thesis defense. The system aims to achieve its mission and aims to regulate and control the entire process.

### *Good practice*

- Attendance by doctoral students of the visiting professors' lectures, as well as the opportunity to get additional advice.
- Availability of a research ethics committee. Before the data collection stage, students test research proposals on scientific ethics.
- The presence of its own dissertation council, whose members have an excellent knowledge of English.

### *Remarks*

- The inclusion of the disciplines "English language" and "The International law and the world economy" in the PhD curriculum does not meet the objectives of the preparation of PhD students in International Law Academic Programme.
- The inconsistency of the academic policy of the university in terms of previous experience, education and the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- It is necessary to correct the question of interviewing (the format of the interview, the purpose, the time of the interview and the significance of the results of the interview) applicants regarding work experience for admission to a PhD program.
- Contradictions in the internal rules of the entrance exam for the specialty in a PhD program.
- Basic legal education (bachelor, master) compulsory for PhD students is not reflected in the internal documentation of the university.

### *Areas for improvement*

- It is necessary to establish the compliance of the Academic policy of the university and the rules for admission to the university PhD programs with the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- It is required to recruit applicants for the PhD program of the KAZGUU Law School in accordance with the established regulations at the republican and university levels.
- It is required to review the disciplines of the educational program. General disciplines must either be replaced by major or excluded from the educational program.

Compliance level – «**partial**».

## Standard 2. Quality of the Teaching Staff

### Analysis and evidence

Regarding personnel policy that contributes to the quality of the educational program, the expert group highlights the following points.

The quality of the educational program can come out through the quality of the university staff and teachers. First of all, as intuitive as this remark may be, the teaching and administrative teams met during the interviews testify to a real dynamism and a strong implication. There is an important desire to enable this doctoral program to succeed, especially through the necessary increase in the number of theses defended, a number that is currently far too weak.

The strong involvement of academic staff translates by several parameters:

- the organization of weekly meetings between the supervisor and the PhD student: the regularity of these exchanges and the weekly rhythm are very relevant, so relevant that it is surprising to see so few defenses in these conditions
- PhD students have adapted premises and equipment in large numbers (computers, databases, books, master's thesis, and PhD theses), sometimes in dedicated rooms.

Moreover, the international opening of the academic team is interesting. It manifests itself in several ways:

- by the occasional presence of foreign lecturers, although it should be noted that these speakers are only 4 in number (with an objective of 5). If the country of origin is usefully indicated (countries of the European Union), no details are unfortunately given on their activities: some courses? a conference or more?
- by obtaining foreign diplomas by some Kazakhstani teachers. The self-assessment report indicates that almost a dozen Kazakhstani teachers have been trained abroad, most often for the PhD, which is in minority cases in the process of obtaining.

Also, the self-assessment report explains the score-rating system of the teachers set up with very interesting clarifications on the criteria, the procedures and the actors involved. Presented in this way, the system seems quite relevant. However, nothing is indicated about the consequences of both good and bad ratings. Moreover, nothing is said about the practical application of this system to the academic team.

Finally, the self-assessment report indicates that training workshop sessions are planned and carried out for teachers, including on inclusive education in relation to actors outside KAZGUU, such as employer representatives.

It should also be noted that, as seen in Standard 4, according to interviews conducted (especially with the head of the PD and the director of post graduated), the conditions allowing an academic staff to supervise a thesis are simple: to hold a doctorate and work in the field of the directed thesis. These criteria seem relevant but it would be possible to imagine requiring an academic experience of a certain duration (for example 5 years), as is done in other Kazakhstani universities. The fact that there is a limit on the number of dissertations that can be under the guidance of each teacher is evaluated positively (3). However, no information allowed to verify this in practice (do all the teachers of this doctoral program provide scientific guidance?). At the same time, the expert group revealed that almost all PhD students write their PhD dissertations under the guidance of Professor M. M. Daulenov. Thus, the expert group established more than

five topics of dissertations, various areas of research under the guidance of Professor M. Daulenov (Raisova Gulshat, Shaikhutdinov William, Iskakova Assel, Muhammadiev Erlan, Espenbetova Lydia, and Mukhametzhanova Dana).

The support for creativity and research activities of the faculty can be found in several ways:

- dedicated modules for research training but also for education are mandatory for doctoral students, a tool of great relevance to develop research skills and meet the conditions for a thesis defense within the deadlines;
- important links are forged with socio-economic actors, both with employer representatives and with public institutions and other universities. The different accreditations obtained testify very positively in this sense;
- the flexibility of organization of the courses followed but also the methods of interactive teaching are also an element in favor of the evaluated program.

With regard to the use of modern pedagogical teaching methods and innovations in the educational process, the following points can be highlighted.

An appreciation of the application of modern pedagogical methods and innovations in the educational process can be drawn from two three points.

Firstly, the important opening to the methodology courses of the research but also of the training is a very positive element as it could be said previously within this same standard.

Secondly, the presence of various equipment, including computer, is noted, as has been said previously. The same caution pushes to ask the question of the target audience of this equipment, information unknown but which greatly determines the assessment of the relevance of the equipment.

Thirdly, it is necessary to note the contribution of the teaching staff to the improvement of the educational program being accredited, the definition of educational goals and results, and the increase in the efficiency of study.

The university implements the practice of inviting highly qualified specialists from leading domestic and foreign organizations and business sector for teaching disciplines and scientific guidance.

For experts from domestic organizations, the self assessment report does not provide precise informations on this subject, preventing experts from making a favorable judgment. The only available element is the partnerships that KAZGUU has forged with other Kazakhstani universities and with some public actors such as the Academy of Justice, but there is no evidence as to whether people from these institutions are invited to provide courses or give lectures within this doctoral program. It is only necessary to note the obtaining of foreign diplomas by some Kazakhstani teachers, as indicated in point 2.1 (about ten Kazakhstan education abroad, most of the time for the doctorate, which is in minority cases in the course of) but it concerns program staff and not external people who would be invited to this program.

With regard to highly qualified specialists from foreign organizations, this same report indicates, as seen in point 2.1, the punctual presence of foreign lecturers. As said, the approach is very positive but it should be noted that these speakers are only 4 in number (with a goal set at 5) and that no details are unfortunately given on their activities.

It is important to note the creation of conditions for the supervisor and a foreign scientific consultant (for the educational program for the preparation of the PhD of a scientific and pedagogical orientation) for the proper fulfillment of their duties.

We must separate two aspects in this point.

As regards, first of all, the working conditions of the supervisor, that is to say, the Kazakhstani teacher, the self assessment report specifies some interesting elements:

- The internal rating system can put teachers in a positive dynamic of continuous improvement of the quality of their activities. But, as said before, the report gives no details on the application of this grading system and on the type of grades that teachers of the doctoral program receive,
- The setting up of some formations is quite interesting, as seen in point 2.1. These training workshop sessions are intended for teachers linked to actors outside KAZGUU, such as employer representatives, which is evidence of a relevant approach.
- As regards the material resources available to teachers, the self assessment report mentions too little information. However, the interviews as well as the visits on site suggest, a priori, that the material working conditions are adapted and sufficient.

Regarding the foreign supervisor, the self assessment report contains little informations. However, as seen with regard to standard 4, certain interviews (with the head of the PD and the director of post graduate) made it possible to know the role that this international supervisor plays during the defense: he/she is only invited to the defense of the PhD student he has followed. His/her participation is not obligatory, which seems shocking in view of his/her role. In practice, the sending of comments before the defense and a participation by videoconference are able to offset these difficulties in good part. It is difficult to decide on the other conditions, the experts do not have any informations on this subject.

The university is implementing advanced training of domestic consultants who engaged in scientific supervision.

The professional development of Kazakhstani supervisors seems to be one of the real objectives of this doctoral program, as can be seen in the grading system described precisely by the self assessment report. As mentioned above, this system is very interesting but the lack of informations on its practical application and on the scores obtained by the teachers of the program do not allow the experts to confirm this relevance.

This improvement is also apparent from the course evaluation system, which is carried out by both doctoral students and teachers. These evaluations are centralized by the administration and are the subject of a restitution to the teachers, allowing the maintenance or the stop of the responsibility of the course. This system is also relevant although the experts do not have information on its application.

### ***Good practice***

- A real involvement of the academic teams
- Material conditions proposed to doctoral students in a relevant way a priori
- The teacher rating system (although we do not know its application)

## *Remarks*

- Quality assessment of the program through the quality of the faculty involved can be carried out with a combination of several elements: dynamic work and strong influence; strong faculty participation; international opening of the academic community.
- At the time of the audit the self-assessment report lacks quantitative and qualitative faculty indicators for the last 5 years, which makes it difficult to prepare an analysis on the dynamics of the faculty for the expert group. No information is provided on the availability of the individual curriculum of the teaching staff and reports, including educational, methodological and research activities and educational work; analysis about the degree of involvement of teaching staff in the system of internal quality assurance of education; analysis regarding the consideration of issues of academic integrity of faculty and staff.
- The report on the self-assessment lacks data on the publication activity of faculty in foreign and domestic publications, the implementation of research results in the educational process.
- Despite the existence of a teacher evaluation system, information on the implications of the quality assessment of teaching staff is not explained, and the opinion of teaching staff members on the assessment system itself is not reflected.
- There is no information regarding the activities of foreign consultants, which makes it difficult to prepare an analysis by an expert group on this issue.

## *Areas for improvement*

- Despite the provision of strong support to PhD students by the teaching staff, it is necessary to strengthen the professional influence of the teaching staff on the defense of PhD theses.
- The self-assessment report should:
  - indicate the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the teaching staff over the past 5 years. Also, it is recommended to specify the regulatory documents that define the quality policy (University Charter, Internal Regulations, Code of Corporate Ethics, etc.) using the resources of the university website;
  - add an analysis about the publication activity of faculty in foreign and domestic publications, the implementation of research results in the educational process;
  - specify information about the activities of foreign consultants;
  - indicate courses held for the teaching staff (country, location), the dynamics and frequency of passing them by the teaching staff, as well as their effectiveness.
- It is necessary to carry out explanatory work with the teaching staff on the practical importance of the teaching staff assessment system.
- The international opening of the academic community has a positive effect, but it is necessary to increase the implementation of this practice.

Compliance level – «**partial**».

## Standard 3. Quality of Research Work

### Analysis and evidence

PhD doctoral research work is carried out in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Academic policy of the university.

The PhD student begins his research work, which is carried out within the framework of the main theme of the study after enrolling in the first year of doctoral studies at the University.

The topic of doctoral dissertation is discussed by the PhD student together with the supervisor in the first year of study and approved by the Academic Council of the university. The foreign scientific consultant is also approved in the first year.

After the approval of the supervisors and the topic of scientific works, PhD student make his individual plan, which detailed the tasks of PhD students for three years, stating the form and date of the report. The plan is agreed at a meeting of the Department and approved by the Director of the Institute of postgraduate education and international relations.

In the first year, after the approval of the topic of scientific research, as well as scientific consultants, the PhD student necessarily prepares research proposal. This is one of the main stages in the studying PhD students. This document is provided to the Research Committee of the Law School and without a successful defense the PhD student is not transferred to the next course. In this research proposal, PhD students reveal the relevance of the research topic, work plan, goals, objectives, literature review, research methodology, etc. The Research Committee evaluates the work of the PhD student from 0 to 100, depending on the protection and content. The PhD student cannot be transferred to the next course in the case of unsatisfactory assessment. It is possible to redefend research proposal, with the note that it has to be not earlier than a month after the date of defense.

After defending Research Proposal, the PhD student signs an agreement, according to which he undertakes to achieve all the tasks set in research proposal within the framework of the dissertation research.

For three years of studying PhD students this work is under constant supervision (reports in the Research Committee or review for each semester). PhD students can use various tools to collect information and substantiate their results: the collection of empirical material, the collection of theoretical material (including internships), conducting surveys, studying law enforcement practices (including using online access to digital institutions of the legal system of the Republic of Kazakhstan) and others. In the course of research, the PhD student must choose the appropriate justification for the provisions to be protected. To ensure this provision, KAZGUU carries out strict control over the choice of the place of research practice, so that the internships coincide with the topic on which the PhD student works.

However, after reading the self-assessment report and during the interviews with university staff, the experts were faced with the lack of the required documents for the preparation of a full analysis on this standard. In particular, the final lists of PhD students with the subject of scientific research were not presented. The university presented various documents with various data. In addition, there were different topics presented in the individual works of PhD students. Documents on changing the research topic were not presented. Due to the lack of these documents, it seems that the topics are changed by PhD students themselves.



A significant observation is the fact that almost all PhD students write their PhD dissertations under the guidance of Professor M.M.Daulenov. According to the submitted lists of PhD students, the experts found more than five topics of dissertations with various areas of research under the guidance of Professor M.Daulenov (Raisova Gulshat, Shaikhutdinov William, Iskakova Assel, Mukhamadiev Yerlan, Espenbetova Lidiya, and Mukhametzhanova Dana). Since Professor M.M. Daulenov is the first vice-rector, a man with an administrative position at the University, experts consider it inadmissible to have such a number of PhD students under his supervision. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan does not limit the number of PhD students for scientific supervising, various interviews showed that KAZGUU decided to apply a limit on the number of theses that can be supervised by each teacher (3). On this issue, experts believe that such number of PhD students under one research supervisor negatively affects the quality of work and contradicts internal rules. This is evidenced by the frequent changes in PhD theses and the low level of defense of PhD theses.

Experts consider the fact that law masters are involved as PhD students' supervisors is an unacceptable violation (O.Lofovaya - Vice Dean for Graduate Studies and Development of the KAZGUU Law School has a master's degree). Thus, the university itself violates its academic policy, namely paragraph 5.1 on the requirements for PhD students' supervisors. The main requirement is the availability of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, PhD in Law, Doctor of Law.

Academic integrity and research ethics are key values that the University promotes among its graduate students, faculty and researchers. The University has developed and approved an institutional policy called "Guidelines on academic integrity" to establish a common understanding of academic integrity and its principles, which describes in detail the requirements for course assignments and research results, as well as delineated practices and procedures that take place in the case of academic dishonesty and misconduct.

Meetings are regularly held on relevant research areas with the participation of representatives of the student scientific society of specialized departments to ensure the scientific interests of PhD students.

The scientific interests of PhD students are realized by writing dissertations, scientific publications and reports at international and republican scientific conferences.

The expert group was provided with information on the number of defended dissertations over the past 5 years. During this period there was not a single successful dissertation defense. To the question why PhD students are not defended in time, the Dean of the Law Faculty replied that the University has more stringent requirements for PhD students. In particular, one of the mandatory requirements that has been established is that the thesis should be written mainly in English. The second requirement is publication in journals included in the Scopus database with quartile 1 (Q1). The Dean of the Law Faculty also noted that the articles should be published in journals included in the 1st quartile (Q1). This is a fairly strict requirement, which should have been reflected in the internal documents. PhD students who came to the interview did not hear about such a requirement. The experts could not find this requirement in the submitted documents. As you know, scientific journals with Q1 are the most famous and reputable papers. The articles in these journals are characterized not only by the high level of uniqueness of scientific achievements and in-depth analysis of the problem, but also by a clear structure,

scientific style of presentation, and the use of modern methodological tools. The expert group considers it unacceptable to impose such requirements on young, novice scholars. Moreover, there is no such requirement in the requirements of the MES RK.

PhD students are required to comply with the principles of academic integrity and scientific ethics in accordance with the academic code of conduct during the preparation of dissertation research. PhD students are responsible for violating the requirements of academic policy, as well as the academic code of conduct and plagiarism, if any, found in dissertation research. The thesis should be checked by the supervisor for plagiarism in other programs. After each dissertation check on plagiarism, the supervisor gives a comment in the Turnitin system and forms an official report in pdf format. PhD dissertation should not contain plagiarism. The level of originality of the text and citation is determined by the supervisor of the dissertation research. The facts of the detection of plagiarism in the dissertation work and the further responsibility of the PhD students and supervisor are governed by the academic code of conduct of the university. The final verification of the dissertation work on originality is carried out by the JSC "National Center for Scientific and Technical Information" with the issuance of an official supporting document indicating the level of originality of the dissertation work.

The Department of International Affairs presents internship and mobility programs with an indication of the partner institution, the estimated cost of the internship program or mobility, as well as a list of activities included in the internship program for PhD students. Following the results of familiarization with the presented opportunities, PhD students fill out an application for participation in an internship or academic mobility program. On the basis of the collected applications, the Department of International Affairs forms lists of groups of PhD students and sends them to the partner universities for approval.

PhD students undergo internship and academic mobility in foreign universities as part of their PhD program twice during the entire training period (up to 30 days) in order to improve the scientific base of dissertation research, receive advice from foreign experts and work in the world's leading libraries.

Under the internship program and academic mobility, a PhD student:

- works in accordance with the organization's charter, internal rules, requirements of other regulatory documents governing the process of internship and stay at a host partner institution;
- visits the library, gets acquainted with the electronic resources of the partner university;
- attends lectures by leading scientists in relevant fields;
- performs all the tasks of the internship program;
- collects empirical and theoretical material on the research topic;
- keeps records of work performed.

Upon completion of the internship, PhD student is required to submit a written report on the results of the internship at the meeting of the department. Department members decide on its approval, revision or rejection, and also make recommendations on the use of internship results in a PhD thesis. Each participant in the academic mobility program provides the official transcript with the host university to the dean's office, where the deputy dean for PhD programs ensures the recognition and award of credits issued during the academic mobility program.

### ***Good practice***

Submitted to the expert group in the framework of the external visit, the topics of dissertation research of PhD students on the educational program of international law are relevant and have scientific novelty. They are devoted to various problematic aspects of modern science of international law.

The university has its own dissertation council, whose members speak English.

### ***Remarks***

- The lack of university control for the proper filling by the PhD students of individual plans regarding the definition and modification of the dissertation research topics.
- Attracting masters as scientific leaders of dissertation research (for example, O.V. Lozovaya, Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Education and Development of KAZGUU Law School has a master's degree) leads to a violation of the university's academic policy, namely paragraph 5.1 of the Requirements for PhD students (The requirement is the availability of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, PhD in Law, Doctor of Law).
- PhD students are not given the right to choose a language for writing a dissertation research.
- The exaggerated requirement for PhD students for publication in journals indexed in Scopus databases with quartile 1 (Q1) is inappropriate, moreover it is not reflected in the internal documents of the university or in the documents of the MES RK.
- Quality decline of scientific management of thesis and the lack of successful defense of dissertations by PhD students is caused by the simultaneous guidance of more than five thesis topics of PhD students by one teacher (For example, more than five PhD students wrote dissertations under the supervision of professor M.M. Daulenov)

### ***Areas for improvement***

- to remove the scientific supervising of the dissertation research from teachers who do not meet the requirements for PhD supervisors.
- to provide PhD students with the right to choose the language for writing thesis (Kazakh, Russian, English), since this is their inalienable right.
- to reduce the requirement for PhD students to publish in journals indexed in Scopus databases with quartile 1 (Q1).
- to establish the maximum allowable rate of scientific supervising of thesis per teacher to ensure the successful defense of PhD students.

Compliance level – «**partial**».

## Standard 4. Effective system of support provided to doctoral students

### Analysis and evidence

This standard is based on two forms of support: the one provided generally to PhD students but also that specifically provided for certain kinds of doctoral students. Let's take these two points successively.

First, let's consider general support. In order to better understand these supports and to see if they correspond to the needs of doctoral students, we asked during the various interviews what were the difficulties faced by doctoral students. It emerged that various difficulties existed, which seems normal and reveals an opportune freedom of speech. Be that as it may, the doctoral student support system does exist. It is reflected by the investment of academic staff but also in a material way: technical equipment, books, journals, database, work rooms, all this is usefully proposed to doctoral students. The existence of psychological support but also a service center offered to doctoral students should be particularly noted as very positive tools. It is also necessary to note the adaptation of the days and the hours of course allowing the employed doctoral students to combine the realization of their thesis and their professional activity.

This support must also be manifested by the possibility of supporting one's thesis. However, the number of KAZGUU doctoral students who have finished their programme with a supported thesis is too small, which is problematic.

Then, with regard to the specific support given to certain kinds of doctoral students, several things emerge:

- It is difficult to assess the support provided to doctoral students with disabilities, since the various interviews did not reveal the number of doctoral students with disabilities enrolled in this doctoral program since its creation. No problem seems to appear but an analysis of the forms of support mentioned in the self assessment report will be carried out in standard 4.5;
- It is the same with doctoral students transferred from other universities, that is to say from other Kazakhstani institutions. No statistics could be transmitted on this type of flow.

To analyze the provision of services that help PhD students implement academic mobility (internal and external), several points were considered:

- With regard to the internal mobility of doctoral students (that is from KAZGUU to another Kazakhstani university), it appears that no information has been transmitted, thus making it impossible to know how many students benefit from it, which is problematic. The reason may be the program's willingness to focus on international mobility. This does not seem problematic as long as the objective of international mobility is actually achieved, which will have to be verified.
- With regard to the external mobility of doctoral students (that is from KAZGUU to a foreign university), interviews show that this plays an important role, which seems positive at first glance.

This translates, firstly, into the assignment to each doctoral student of a supervisor from a foreign university in addition to the supervisor reporting to KAZGUU. This international dimension is fundamental and it is very relevant that it is planned, but several nuances must be made:

- This system is not part of an initiative of the KAZGUU PhD program but corresponds to a compulsory system provided by the Republic of Kazakhstan,
- International supervisors seem to come from a certain diversity of foreign universities, mostly from Western Europe, which is very interesting, but it was not possible to know precisely from the list of names, first names and universities of these supervisors, which caused difficulty in analyzing this issue.
- Some interviews (with the head of the PD and the director of post graduate) made it possible to know the role that this international supervisor plays during the defense: he or she is only invited to the defense of the doctoral student he or she has followed. His participation is not obligatory, which seems shocking in view of his or her role. In practice, the sending of comments before the defense and a participation by videoconference are able to offset these difficulties in good part.

This is followed by internships abroad. According to the interviews, these internships are not compulsory but all students benefit. They are carried out in a variety of countries, including within the European Union, which is very positive. These elements are quite interesting but the self-assessment report as well as the possible additional documents transmitted during the audit did not allow to have information in English, letting know the exact list of international internships completed, the country of achievement, duration, host university (which is different from the list of partner universities) etc., which is problematic to better appreciate the scope of the work done in this program on this topic.

Be that as it may, we must now analyze the support that PhD students receive in the framework of this international mobility. However, the support of the university seems real since, according to the self-assessment report, these mobilities are managed not by dedicated staff within the doctoral program but by a specialized body within KAZGUU, the department of international relations, which is a guarantee of specialized skills. The system of equivalence seems well organized (calculation, adaptation).

This criterion is essential to ensure the quality of the program. The first question that guided the interviews is whether this complaint and dispute resolution system is used. However, as the analysis of the criterion mentioned in 4.1 revealed, some difficulties seem to be naturally encountered by the PhD students of this program, but without it being thought to study in practice the use of this system of handling complaints. As a result, it is impossible to analyze the practical relevance of this device or the people involved (is there a great deal of appeal from PhD students, is there a trend upwards, downwards? who are these remedies trained for, how are they treated, how are they addressed and what are the impacts on the program?). Only a theoretical analysis can be done. However, this theoretical system is based on a multiple entry: different time slots are provided for exchanges between doctoral students and teachers, the personal blog of the rector is open to these requests. These devices are quite interesting but it is possible to regret the absence of a conciliation commission specifically provided for difficulties relating to the supervision of the thesis, the conflict sometimes needing to be managed collectively without the presence of a teacher. The self-assessment report does not mention an organ of this type both in its principle and in its modalities (compositions, powers). Moreover, it would have been very useful to know, after the procedure has been completed, what action is taken on possible complaints, but the experts have no information on this subject. Are the complaints analyzed?

At what levels of the university (department, vice-rector, rector, etc.)? What corrective measures are taken next?

This qualification can be appreciated through several points:

- International openness through international supervisors: it is very positive to note that each doctoral student has two supervisors (one is Kazakhstani, the other is from a foreign university). This makes it possible to give the subject treated and the work done a certain international dimension. It is therefore an excellent device. In practice, however, the self assessment report and the interviews conducted do not allow the experts to have sufficient information, especially a list indicating the names, first names and universities of these supervisors, which is a pity.
- This international openness can also be appreciated through the mobility made abroad by academic staff. According to the interviews, these mobilities exist in a notable way, but again both the self-assessment report and the interviews did not allow the experts to have precise information in English on the actual content of these mobilities (which colleagues? which universities? in which language? for what duration?).
- According to interviews conducted (especially with the head of the PD and the director of post graduated), the conditions for an academic staff to supervise a thesis are simple: to hold a doctorate and work in the field of the thesis directed. These criteria seem relevant but it would be possible to imagine requiring an academic experience of a certain duration (for example 5 years), as it's done in other Kazakhstani universities. The limitation of the number of theses that can be supervised by each teacher (3) must be analyzed as very positive although no information has allowed to verify it in practice.

The self-assessment report as well as the interviews did not reveal whether the PhD program audited had hosted since its creation PhD students with disabilities, foreign PhD students or transferred from another Kazakhstani university. Two conclusions are possible: either PhD students of this type are registered, but why not say so? Either no PhD student of this type is registered in this program and this can be interpreted in a neutral way or reveal a problem of attractiveness of the PhD program.

The assessment of support mechanisms for PhD students with disabilities, transferred or foreign is therefore theoretical unless it means that the support does not exist at all that it causes the absence of this type of PhD students:

- For doctoral students with disabilities, a large number of hardware devices in buildings to facilitate the arrival and movement are provided, which is an excellent thing,
- For foreign doctoral students, the self-assessment report indicates different types of help (multilingual staff, material support)
- For the transferred doctoral students, the self-assessment report does not bring out any particular device.

Overall, the expert group on this issue was not fully provided with information by the university, which makes it difficult to conduct a proper analysis.

### ***Good practice***

- Real diversity of support systems for PhD students (service center, adaptation of days and hours of classes, psychological support)

- Quality of equipment and available resources (technical materials, work rooms, documents, financial support, limitation of the number of supervised theses)
- Existence of a double supervision (national and international supervisors)
- Theoretical system of general support for PhD students but also for specific doctoral students (disabled, transferred, employees)

### ***Remarks***

- Failure to provide full information about international internships, as well as the number of PhD students with disabilities working or transferred from other institutions
- A gap between internal mobility and external mobility of PhD students, which is most developed in high school.
- The lack of practical implementation in the system for the consideration and resolution of student complaints and appeals (only a theoretical analysis could be done).

### ***Areas for improvement***

- to increase the attractiveness of the program (currently there are no following categories of PhD students in the general student population);
- to adjust the terms for PhD students of the program to defend their thesis within the deadlines;
- to strengthen the internal mobility of PhD students between Kazakhstani universities;
- to consider the issue of practical implementation of the system for the consideration and resolution of student complaints and appeals at the university.

Compliance level – «**partial**».

## Standard 5. Resources

### Analysis and evidence

The expert group stated that KAZGUU has sufficient material resources for the implementation of the study programme in line with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The university generally follows the country's requirements for successful completion of the doctoral programme as well as the application criteria for incoming doctoral students (albeit there appears to be a bit of a disconnect between the formal criteria published on the university's website and internal criteria used by the law school in evaluating applicants as far as their undergraduate degree/previous study in law).<sup>1</sup> As further described below, the university provides access to doctoral students in International Law programme to certain electronic research databases, access to internet, access to faculty and some foreign advisers (mostly, this is for the students to find and connect with foreign advisers). The curriculum appears to be geared toward helping the doctoral students be successful in their programme objectives (focused on publishing skills, research skills, etc.). Unfortunately, the expert group was not able to validate successful completion of the program (successful defense and publishing of a thesis) by doctoral students since the PhD in International Law programme's accreditation in 2010. The expert group recommends that the university critically assesses its curriculum and management of each doctoral student's progress to understand and address potential obstacles preventing students from successfully completing the programme.

As stated in KazGUU's self-assessment report, since the PhD programme in International Law belongs to the humanities, no specific laboratories or equipment are required for the doctoral programme.<sup>2</sup> While this may generally be true as compared to science-related programmes, there are certain resources that are required for successful completion of the programme objectives. Such resources and equipment would include availability of research databases and printed materials, study rooms, computer and printer equipment as well as internet access.

KazGUU has well-established facilities for doctoral students' studies and discussions. As noted in KazGUU's self-assessment report, in 2017 the university opened a PhD room within the framework of the C3QA Project, which was equipped with eight computers and one multi-functional machine (printer-scanner-copier). This was validated by the expert group during its external review visit in March 2019. The room should be sufficiently large to accommodate the various doctoral students as, one might expect, not all students would use it at the same time. The PhD room is well decorated, including some previously published doctoral theses by other students in law, and appears to have in place sufficiently comfortable study desks and chairs.

Printer equipment is available in the PhD room as well as in the other study rooms located in the library. Printing is available at a charge per sheet. This may be limiting for doctoral students as they are often working with large texts, which they may need to refer to. This would

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<sup>1</sup> The Republic of Kazakhstan legislation requires that doctoral applicants hold a valid bachelor's/undergraduate degree but does not specify whether such degree should be in the field of study applied for in the doctoral programme. KazGUU having followed the legal requirements, published similar information on its website, but from interviews with the university's staff and management the expert group understands that previous study in law is a prerequisite for the incoming doctoral students. While not critical (as applicants also have to take the university's law related exam, which would arguably demonstrate candidate's legal reasoning abilities), we would recommend KazGUU address the inconsistency to avoid challenges from potential candidates.

<sup>2</sup> KazGUU's Self-Assessment Report, p. 27.



be less of an issue should the university hold a vast collection of printed research materials for its International Law doctoral students. Unfortunately, the expert group was not able to confirm existence of a large base of printed materials for law students or doctoral students in International Law. Most of the library's printed materials on law are outdated and relate to either dated reviews of Kazakhstani laws or Soviet-time era materials. Doctoral students in International Law need access to current international materials in order to be able to successfully complete the programme. At the moment, this may not be a significant issue due to availability of electronic databases and research materials, but it certainly makes it imperative that such resources are available to the students.

One of the initiatives the university is currently considering is potential cooperation with the U.S. Library of the Congress to allow for the exchange and loan of printed materials. This is an excellent initiative that would be invaluable for doctoral and other students alike. The university should focus its efforts on resetting its filing system to comply with the minimum requirements of the U.S. Library of the Congress to be able to implement this important initiative.

As far as computers, there are eight computers in the PhD room and six other open rooms with computers at the library. Given that the library is open to all students, undergraduate/graduate/doctoral, and that there are more PhD students than eight, it appears there would not be sufficient computer resources for the doctoral students in International Law should they not have their own computers/laptops. This is quite understandable as it would be quite a challenge for the university to provide all students with computer resources, but, as is the practice in many international institutions, owning a laptop that meets university requirements may be a pre-requisite to enrolling in the PhD in International Law programme.

Last but not least, for all students but especially so for students in the PhD in International Law programme internet access is critical in order to be able to complete research and communicate with their offsite programme advisers. KazGUU has a well-functioning wi-fi system on the university premises that appears to be reliable and fast, as would be needed by the students. Furthermore, as noted in KazGUU's self-assessment report, doctoral students are provided with unlimited access to the wi-fi network.

KazGUU has recently upgraded its study facilities for the doctoral students as already mentioned: the PhD room, the PhD seminar room, faculty and doctoral students' coffee room, and the library more generally. As already mentioned, the expert group would recommend that the university pay special attention to upgrading/extending its printed materials for international legal research and try to add new subscriptions to online databases as being requested by the doctoral students.

As already mentioned, the university has recently completed several projects, including a new PhD room for doctoral students, study rooms for law students, room for PhD seminars, and coffee/tea room for law school faculty and doctoral students. Similarly, the currently maintained subscriptions to online databases would have been automatically up-to-date as long as there is a valid subscription. KazGUU would benefit from further expanding its printed material library.

In its assessment report, KazGUU states that the university uses its website and institutional policies to communicate with doctoral students in International Law. While both of these routes provide for a unified system of providing information to students, there is no or limited opportunity for the students to interact or ask questions. In that respect, KazGUU's reference in its assessment report to the fact that starting September 2018 the university uses Canvas as the

new learning management system for undergraduate programmes, is a promising development. KazGUU mentions in the report that it is planning to upload all information related to PhD studies in Canvas next year. This would be highly recommended to allow for a unified system of information support for the students as well as the ability to interact, ask questions, and exchange ideas with the other students and the faculty.

As stated in KazGUU's self-assessment report, the university maintains and provides to doctoral students with access to several online research databases, including IPR Books, Oxford University Press, Polpred, Bestprofi, LexisNexis, EBS "Lan," Zakon KZ, EBSCO Open Dissertations, Cambridge University Press Open Journals, and others. The expert group was able to verify access to the following databases during its external review visit: EBSCO, Springer, Scopus, FT, Bestprofi, Thomson Reuters, IPR Books, Oxford Scholarship Online, Zakon KZ. Students would have access to the databases as long as they have the university's (or the dormitory's) IP address. Generally, the list of available resource databases appears to be sufficient for purposes of effective research and thesis writing by the International Law doctoral students. It should be noted through that during interviews with students there were several mentions of need of access to JStore, HeinOnline, Lexis, which KazGUU currently does not maintain (contrary to what was stated in the self-assessment report). In addition, some students mentioned the possibilities of exchange programs at foreign universities as an opportunity to get access to better research resources, including Scopus. The expert group highly recommends that KazGUU consider adding Scopus to its list of subscriptions for databases to further improve and expand doctoral students' ability to conduct successful research. This is especially important for doctoral students in International Law as most of the legal reasoning and recent developments would have been in the international arena.

### ***Good practice***

- Availability of study and break rooms for the doctoral students
- Unlimited internet connection for the doctoral students
- Access to online resources and databases from the university library and the dormitory
- New initiatives (to be realized), such as implementation of Canvas and possibility of exchange/loan of printed materials with the U.S. Library of the Congress.

### ***Remarks***

- Insufficient amount of printed materials on legal (legal) research for doctoral students of the program of international law.
- No subscription to other online HeinOnline database.
- The discrepancy between the information posted on the website of the university about the prerequisites of the program and the requirements for its completion, and the actually approved program documents of the university.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- to increase the number of printed legal research resources for doctoral students in the International Law programme;

- to add a subscription to other online databases, such as HeinOnline, Jstore, LexisNexis;
- to consider working with the university’s bookstore to make available for purchase a large number of legal research texts for students (current selection is very limited);
- to eliminate discrepancies between the information posted on the university’s website for program pre-requisites and requirements for completion and actual approved university’s program documents.

Compliance level – “**significant**”

## **Standard 6. Efficiency of Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme and Public Information**

### **Analysis and evidence**

This standard implies the usage of internal regulations on assessment procedure and entitles to monitor a PhD student's progression, both of research work and theoretical training.

The commission has received the Syllabus for the course "Research methods and publishing" and has interviewed the lecturer Nurzhan S. Yeshniyazov.

The main aim of the course is set as "to prepare doctoral students to publication of their results of their researches".

Accordingly, a measurable indicator of the effectiveness of preparing PhD students in the educational program should be the results of dissertation research, which are presented as scientific articles at various national and international conferences.

All the interviewed students pointed out the problem of publishing their papers in the foreign scientific journals, though the PhD students are required to have publications.

According to the results of interviews with the PhD students, the expert group revealed a small publication activity of doctoral students' scientific articles over the past 5 years, as well as the absence of their publications in the KAZGUU scientific journal "The State and the Law".

Individual plans of the PhD students that have been reviewed by the Commission lacked the information about the published papers.

The abovementioned points led us to the conclusion that the course "Research methods and publishing" does not fully meet the needs of the PhD students.

The individual plans of PhD students have shown that the systematic assessment of the progress does take place, as there have been supporting documents of thesis supervisors and foreign supervisors. The PhD students' achievements are monitored throughout the entire learning process for all components of education (theoretical, research and internships).

The expert group, after reviewing the self-assessment report, noted that the effectiveness of the PhD students' knowledge is analyzed by teachers of the KAZGUU Law School, who independently determine the form and content of the intermediate and final assessment of doctoral candidates for a particular course. Student performance and grades are assessed by the achievement of learning outcomes and their overall program performance. Type of assessment depends on the subject. However, academic freedom of teaching staff determines the choice of types of assessment.

According to the results of the course, teachers prepare a self-assessment report based on the results of the evaluation of academic committees and students. This report serves as the basis for revising and improving the educational program.

As the self-assessment report on the pilot accreditation of the educational program shows, the assessment of the PhD students' progress in teaching and research internships is based on two key components — the PhD students' internship evaluators and the internship commission's decision. According to the results of internships, the doctoral candidate provides a report on the internship commission.

Evaluation of the research results of the PhD students is made in the form of protection of the interim report on dissertation research. The expert group, having reviewed the individual

plans of the PhD students, positively notes the presence of intermediate reports on dissertation research.

Regarding the successful defense of the PhD dissertations to the expert group, not one defended dissertation in English and not a single doctoral research paper was presented to the expert group.

Though the practice of invitation of foreign lecturers, foreign internship of PhD students, providing the students with needed resources, cooperation of the KAZGUU with Kazakh and foreign governmental and non-governmental entities provides a cornerstone for the achievement of the expected results of the educational programme.

Moreover, following an interview with graduates, the expert group identified a zero defense indicator for dissertation research (*It refers to the period from 2015 to the present. The last defense of the thesis took place in 2014*) under the PhD program, although the program was completed. It should be noted that the PhD student submitted to the interview as a graduate cannot be defined in the graduate category, since he did not defend his dissertation research. This, in turn, caused difficulty for the expert group in determining the competencies of graduates in the educational program at the exit that meet the requirements of the market.

It is important to note the results of interviews with employers, which showed that their presence is ensured by their participation in the work of the AMO (Academic Methodological Office) of the KAZGUU's Law programs during the development and improvement of the educational program. Employers and PhD students also explained that the implementation of the thesis research is often commissioned by employers.

As informing the public about the educational program, the expert group notes that the university website provides all the necessary information for both applicants and enrolled students.

As part of the visual inspection, the expert group presented KAZGUU image videos and a brand book. An overview of the university website showed links to official groups on social networks on Instagram, Facebook and VK.

A separate tab has been created on the activities of the university in the framework of the C3QA project on the website of the university.

The automated information system for managing the educational process “Platonus” (since 2007) is a significant improvement in the assessment of the achievements of acquired knowledge and skills of PhD students in the field of international law for all university staff and teachers, as well as the comprehensive automation of learning processes. This system, together with the university website, provides information on everything that is necessary for continuous assessment: the educational program, the expected learning outcomes, faculty and, of course, all student evaluations.

According to the self-assessment report, the university plans to upload all the information related to PhD studies (PhD schedule, course materials and course assignments) to the Canvas system next year.

As part of the interview, the university management demonstrated knowledge about the expected learning outcomes, final assessment procedures, assigned qualifications and employment opportunities in the PhD educational program. Interviewed PhD students noted that the university provides all the necessary information.

The expert group also notes the awareness of all interviewees about the PhD Academic Policy, which was presented as part of the external visit. In the survey, PhD students demonstrated to the expert group their knowledge of the internal quality assurance system, internal and external evaluation.

### ***Good practice***

The presence of foreign supervisors at the university has a positive effect on the research process in the field of international law.

### ***Remarks***

- PhD students seem to lack proper assistance on choosing the PhD thesis topic and that leads to wasting certain time of PhD training and diminishing their motivation
- Unsatisfactory fulfillment of research and scientific component of PhD training may be caused by lack of proper thesis supervision
- Educational component has proved to be insufficient as it does not lead to completion of PhD Program (thesis defense) and it does not deliver practical results and does not add to forming a PhD student as an independent researcher
- A proper research environment could be strengthened by systematic publishing of research results in KAZGUU's scientific journal "The state and the law".
- The lack of defense of PhD dissertation research over the past five years (*It refers to the period from 2015 to the present. The last defense of the thesis took place in 2014*).

### ***Areas for improvement***

- to provide more assistance for PhD students on the stage of choice of PhD thesis topic (some PhD students have spent a lot of time choosing their subject while others have changed subjects several times),
- to provide more assistance by the thesis supervisor for PhD students by effectively limiting the number of PhD students per supervisor,
- to review the courses (publications) as they have proved to be ineffective for reaching practical results (published papers),
- to lure the PhD students to publish the results of their research in the KAZGUU scientific journal and to create the University's own academic school.

Compliance level – «**partial**».

#### STANDARD 1. POLICY IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME

##### Compliance with the standard - “partial compliance”

###### *Good practice*

- Attendance by doctoral students of the visiting professors' lectures, as well as the opportunity to get additional advice.
- Availability of a research ethics committee. Before the data collection stage, students test research proposals on scientific ethics.
- The presence of its own dissertation council, whose members have an excellent knowledge of English.

###### *Remarks*

- The inclusion of the disciplines "English language" and "The International law and the world economy" in the PhD curriculum does not meet the objectives of the preparation of PhD students in International Law Academic Programme.
- The inconsistency of the academic policy of the university in terms of previous experience, education and the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- It is necessary to correct the question of interviewing (the format of the interview, the purpose, the time of the interview and the significance of the results of the interview) applicants regarding work experience for admission to a PhD program.
- Contradictions in the internal rules of the entrance exam for the specialty in a PhD program.
- Basic legal education (bachelor, master) compulsory for PhD students is not reflected in the internal documentation of the university.

###### *Areas for improvement*

- It is necessary to establish the compliance of the Academic policy of the university and the rules for admission to the university PhD programs with the current legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- It is required to recruit applicants for the PhD program of the KAZGUU Law School in accordance with the established regulations at the republican and university levels.
- It is required to review the disciplines of the educational program. General disciplines must either be replaced by major or excluded from the educational program.

#### STANDARD 2. QUALITY OF THE TEACHING STAFF

##### Compliance with the standard - “partial compliance”

### ***Good practice***

- A real involvement of the academic teams
- Material conditions proposed to doctoral students in a relevant way a priori
- The teacher rating system (although we do not know its application)

### ***Remarks***

- Quality assessment of the program through the quality of the faculty involved can be carried out with a combination of several elements: dynamic work and strong influence; strong faculty participation; international opening of the academic community.
- At the time of the audit the self-assessment report lacks quantitative and qualitative faculty indicators for the last 5 years, which makes it difficult to prepare an analysis on the dynamics of the faculty for the expert group. No information is provided on the availability of the individual curriculum of the teaching staff and reports, including educational, methodological and research activities and educational work; analysis about the degree of involvement of teaching staff in the system of internal quality assurance of education; analysis regarding the consideration of issues of academic integrity of faculty and staff.
- The report on the self-assessment lacks data on the publication activity of faculty in foreign and domestic publications, the implementation of research results in the educational process.
- Despite the existence of a teacher evaluation system, information on the implications of the quality assessment of teaching staff is not explained, and the opinion of teaching staff members on the assessment system itself is not reflected.
- There is no information regarding the activities of foreign consultants, which makes it difficult to prepare an analysis by an expert group on this issue.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- Despite the provision of strong support to PhD students by the teaching staff, it is necessary to strengthen the professional influence of the teaching staff on the defense of PhD theses.
- The self-assessment report should:
  - indicate the quantitative and qualitative indicators of the teaching staff over the past 5 years. Also, it is recommended to specify the regulatory documents that define the quality policy (University Charter, Internal Regulations, Code of Corporate Ethics, etc.) using the resources of the university website;
  - add an analysis about the publication activity of faculty in foreign and domestic publications, the implementation of research results in the educational process;
  - specify information about the activities of foreign consultants;
  - indicate courses held for the teaching staff (country, location), the dynamics and frequency of passing them by the teaching staff, as well as their effectiveness.
- It is necessary to carry out explanatory work with the teaching staff on the practical importance of the teaching staff assessment system.



- The international opening of the academic community has a positive effect, but it is necessary to increase the implementation of this practice.

### **STANDARD 3. QUALITY OF RESEARCH WORK**

#### **Compliance with the standard - “partial compliance”**

##### ***Good practice***

Submitted to the expert group in the framework of the external visit, the topics of dissertation research of PhD students on the educational program of international law are relevant and have scientific novelty. They are devoted to various problematic aspects of modern science of international law.

The university has its own dissertation council, whose members speak English.

##### ***Remarks***

- The lack of university control for the proper filling by the PhD students of individual plans regarding the definition and modification of the dissertation research topics.
- Attracting masters as scientific leaders of dissertation research (for example, O.V. Lozovaya, Deputy Dean for Postgraduate Education and Development of the KAZGUU Law School has a master's degree) leads to a violation of the university's academic policy, namely paragraph 5.1 of the Requirements for PhD students (The requirement is the availability of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, PhD in Law, Doctor of Law).
- PhD students are not given the right to choose a language for writing a dissertation research.
- The exaggerated requirement for PhD students for publication in journals indexed in Scopus databases with quartile 1 (Q1) is inappropriate, moreover it is not reflected in the internal documents of the university or in the documents of the MES RK.
- Quality decline of scientific management of thesis and the lack of successful defense of dissertations by PhD students is caused by the simultaneous guidance of more than five thesis topics of PhD students by one teacher (For example, more than five PhD students wrote dissertations under the supervision of professor M.M. Daulenov)

##### ***Areas for improvement***

- to remove the scientific supervising of the dissertation research from teachers who do not meet the requirements for PhD supervisors.
- to provide PhD students with the right to choose the language for writing thesis (Kazakh, Russian, English), since this is their inalienable right.
- to reduce the requirement for PhD students to publish in journals indexed in Scopus databases with quartile 1 (Q1).
- to establish the maximum allowable rate of scientific supervising of thesis per teacher to ensure the successful defense of PhD students.

## **STANDARD 4. EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF SUPPORT PROVIDED TO DOCTORAL STUDENTS**

### **Compliance with the standard - “partial compliance”**

#### ***Good practice***

- Real diversity of support systems for PhD students (service center, adaptation of days and hours of classes, psychological support)
- Quality of equipment and available resources (technical materials, work rooms, documents, financial support, limitation of the number of supervised theses)
- Existence of a double supervision (national and international supervisors)
- Theoretical system of general support for PhD students but also for specific doctoral students (disabled, transferred, employees)

#### ***Remarks***

- Failure to provide full information about international internships, as well as the number of PhD students with disabilities working or transferred from other institutions
- A gap between internal mobility and external mobility of PhD students, which is most developed in high school.
- The lack of practical implementation in the system for the consideration and resolution of student complaints and appeals (only a theoretical analysis could be done).
- An appropriate level of qualifications of staff providing support to doctoral students is revealed in a nuanced way by several points: international openness through international supervisors ; mobility made abroad by academic staff ; conditions for an academic staff to supervise a thesis.

#### ***Areas for improvement***

- to increase the attractiveness of the program (currently there are no following categories of PhD students in the general student population);
- to adjust the terms for PhD students of the program to defend their thesis within the deadlines;
- to strengthen the internal mobility of PhD students between Kazakhstani universities;
- to consider the issue of practical implementation of the system for the consideration and resolution of student complaints and appeals at the university.

## **STANDARD 5. RESOURCES**

### **Compliance with the standard - “ significant compliance”**

#### ***Good practice***

- Availability of study and break rooms for the doctoral students

- Unlimited internet connection for the doctoral students
- Access to online resources and databases from the university library and the dormitory
- New initiatives (to be realized), such as implementation of Canvas and possibility of exchange/loan of printed materials with the U.S. Library of the Congress.

### ***Remarks***

- Insufficient amount of printed materials on legal (legal) research for doctoral students of the program of international law.
- No subscription to other online HeinOnline database.
- The discrepancy between the information posted on the website of the university about the prerequisites of the program and the requirements for its completion, and the actually approved program documents of the university.

### ***Areas for improvement***

- to increase the number of printed legal research resources for doctoral students in the International Law programme;
- to add a subscription to other online databases, such as HeinOnline, Jstore, LexisNexis;
- to consider working with the university’s bookstore to make available for purchase a large number of legal research texts for students (current selection is very limited);
- to eliminate discrepancies between the information posted on the university’s website for program pre-requisites and requirements for completion and actual approved university’s program documents.

## **STANDARD 6. EFFICIENCY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE STUDY PROGRAMME AND PUBLIC INFORMATION**

### **Compliance with the standard - “partial compliance”**

#### ***Good practice***

The presence of foreign supervisors at the university has a positive effect on the research process in the field of international law.

#### ***Remarks***

- PhD students seem to lack proper assistance on choosing the PhD thesis topic and that leads to wasting certain time of PhD training and diminishing their motivation
- Unsatisfactory fulfillment of research and scientific component of PhD training may be caused by lack of proper thesis supervision
- Educational component has proved to be insufficient as it does not lead to completion of PhD Program (thesis defense) and it does not deliver practical results and does not add to forming a PhD student as an independent researcher
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### ***Areas for improvement***

- to provide more assistance for PhD students on the stage of choice of PhD thesis topic (some PhD students have spent a lot of time choosing their subject while others have changed subjects several times),
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- to review the courses (publications) as they have proved to be ineffective for reaching practical results (published papers),
- to lure the PhD students to publish the results of their research in the KAZGUU scientific journal and to create the University's own academic school.

## Appendix 1

The Appendix provides a full programme of the external review (site visit) in accordance with the following form:

### PROGRAM

of the external review by IQAA expert group in higher education institution  
(**M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University**) in the framework of specialized  
(**01373931- International Law Academic Programme**) accreditation

Time	Activity	Participants
<b>Day 1: March 13, 2019</b>		
11:30-12:00	Transfer from hotel to university	P, ET, C
12:00-13:00	Placement of experts in the office. Introductory meeting	P, ET, C
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-14:30	Interview with rector	P, ET, C, rector
14:30 – 14:40	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
14:40-15:10	Interview with provost	P, ET, C, provost
14:30 – 14:40	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
14:40 – 15:10	Interview with director of Law School, principal-director on postgraduate education and head of the programme	P, ET, C Director, principal-director, head of the programme
15:10 -15:20	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
15:20-16:00	Interview with doctoral students	P, ET, C,
16:00-16:10	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
16:10-16:50	Interview with alumni of the study programme	P, ET, C, alumni
16:50-17:00	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
17:00-17:30	Interview with employers	P, ET, C, employers
17:30-18:30	Discussion the results of the day	P, ET, C
18:30-19:00	Transfer from university to hotel	
<b>Day 2: March 14, 2019</b>		
8:45-9:15	Transfer from hotel to university	P, ET, C
9:15-9:45	Visual observation of school and academic unit delivering the study programme, library, support service	P, ET, C, director, heads of academic units

9:45-9:55	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
9:55-10:25	Interview with the faculty	P, ET, C, faculty
10:25-10:35	Private discussion of the expert team	P, ET, C
10:35-13:00	Work of ET on recommendations	
13:00-14:00	Lunch	P, ET, C
14:00-15:00	Work of ET on external review report	P, ET, C
15:00-16:00	Meeting with the leadership of university, presenting preliminary results	P, ET, C

**Note:** H - head of the expert group, EG - expert group, C - coordinator, RP - responsible person for accreditation from the university.

## Appendix 2

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### INTERVIEWEES

Lists of all interviewees with their contact information: administration of the university/college; heads of departments; teaching staff from the university/college; students from the university/college, graduates of the university/college, representatives of employers.

Responsible for the conduction of specialized accreditation

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Position, academic degree, title</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Miras M. Daulenov	Provost- Director of the Academy of the Fundamental and Applied Sciences named after S. Zimanov, PhD, associate professor	_____
2	Olga V. Lozovaya	Vice Dean of the KLS of Postgraduate Education and Development	_____
3	Yevgenia D. Oralova	Head of the study program, LLM	_____

#### University administration

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Position, academic degree, title</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Talgat M. Narikbayev	Rector, PhD in law, associate professor	_____
2	Miras M. Daulenov	Provost- Director of the Academy of the Fundamental and Applied Sciences named after S. Zimanov, PhD, associate professor	_____ _____

#### Heads of structural units

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Position, academic degree, title</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Olga V. Lozovaya	Vice Dean of the KLS of Postgraduate Education and Development	_____
2	Nazira M. Abdekova	Head of the Office of the Registrar	_____

### **Dean**

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Position, academic degree, title</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Sergei G. Pen	PhD in law, associate professor, 2012	_____

### **Head of the study program**

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Position, academic degree, title</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Yevgenia D. Oralova	Head of the study program, LLM	_____

### **Teaching staff of the study program**

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Position, academic degree, title</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Nurzhan S. Eshniyazov	Associate professor	_____
2	Ikboldzhon Koraboyev	Associate professor	_____
3	Ziemblicki Bartozs	Associate professor	_____

### **1-4 year students, PhD students**

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>	<b>GPA</b>
1	Aizhan Nigmatova	+77770399356 <a href="mailto:a_nigmatova@kazguu.kz">a_nigmatova@kazguu.kz</a>	3,18
2	Liliya Ispenbetova	+77053352379 <a href="mailto:l_ispenbetova@kazguu.kz">l_ispenbetova@kazguu.kz</a>	3,38
3	Sauryk Adirbek	+77774637594 <a href="mailto:s_adirbek@kazguu.kz">s_adirbek@kazguu.kz</a>	3,47

### **Representatives of employers**



<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Place of work, position</b>	<b>Contacts (tel., e-mail)</b>
1	Mira Zh. Kulikpayeva	Head of the International Law and Comparative Law Department of the Institute of Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan	

### **Graduates**

<b>№</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Specialty, year of graduation</b>	<b>Position, place of work, contacts</b>
1	Aisha Musakhan	International Law	Senior teacher, KAZGUU
	Malika Tastanova	International Law, 2014	Senior teacher, KAZGUU

## FACILITIES

Lists of all facilities the expert group visited and observed

1. KazGUU Law School
2. Maksut Narikbayev Library (reading rooms, electronic catalogs, library resources issuing department, electronic resources, repository)
3. PhD room equipped with eight computers and one multi-functional machine (printer-scanner- copier)
4. Meeting room
5. Forensic polygon
6. Open spaces
7. CCC lecture hall
8. Canteen
9. Sports hall.

### **LIST OF REQUESTED DOCUMENTS OF THE UNIVERSITY DURING EXTERNAL VISIT**

1. Statistics on contingent, admission and graduation, international students with disabilities
2. Mobility (internal and external) of teaching staff and PhD students: statistics for 5 years with indication of countries and universities
3. The research direction of the school, PhD students and their supervisors. Topics of PhD thesis
4. List of subjects taught by KAZGUU teachers and foreign teachers
5. Requirements for the thesis, for the publication of PhD students.
6. The list of topics of thesis, scientific and foreign consultants
7. Information on the employment of PhD students and graduates