

# Summary report on the accreditation of the study programmes in Cluster D at al-Farabi Kazakh National University in Almaty: Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD), Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master), Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master), History (PhD)

Upon the request for accreditation of al-Farabi Kazakh National University from July 2013, AQ Austria conducted the accreditation procedure of the study programmes Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD), Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master), Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master), History (PhD). In accordance with the "Guideline for International Accreditation of Bachelor, Master and PhD Programmes" adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in July 2013, AQ Austria publishes the following summary report.

## 1 Short information on the application for accreditation

Information about the institution	
<b>Institution (applicant)</b>	Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (KazNU)
<b>Location of the institution</b>	Almaty (Kazakhstan)
Information about the study programmes	

<b>Name of the study programmes</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Archaeology and Ethnology</li> <li>2. Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments</li> <li>3. Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision</li> <li>4. History</li> </ol>
<b>Academic degrees</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Bachelor of Humanities in Archaeology and Ethnology             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Master of Humanities in Archaeology and Ethnology</li> <li>2. Bachelor of Art in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments</li> <li>2. Master of Art in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments</li> <li>3. Master of Social Sciences in Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision</li> <li>4. PhD in History</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

## 2 Short information on the accreditation procedure

Al-Farabi KazNU submitted an application for accreditation of the study programmes Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD), Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master), Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master), History (PhD) in July 2013. Place of delivery of the study programmes is Almaty.

In a circular resolution on 30 October 2013, the Board of AQ Austria passed the proposal for peers for the review and assessment of the study programmes.

Name	Institution	Role
Prof. Dr. Peter Akkermans	Leiden University	Peer from academia
Prof. Dr. Karl Stocker	FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences, Graz	Peer from academia, head of the Panel
Prof. Dr. Ursula Georgy	Cologne University of Applied Sciences	Peer from academia
Dr. Nikolay Mitrokhin	University of Bremen	Peer from academia
Prof. Dr. Zuleikha Mardanova	S. Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University	Panel member from Kazakhstan
Tanel Sits	University of Tallinn University of Tartu	Student panel member

A site visit at al-Farabi KazNU took place in Almaty from 18-19 February 2014, which was attended by all peers and a coordinator from AQ Austria.

The Board of AQ Austria took the accreditation decisions for the study programmes Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD), Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master), Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master) in its meeting on 13 May 2014. The accreditation decisions for the study programmes Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD), Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master), Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master) are valid as of 13 May 2014.

The Board of AQ Austria took the accreditation decision for the study programme History (PhD) in its meeting on 4 July 2014. The accreditation decision for the study programme History is valid as of 4 July 2014.

### 3 Subject matter of the application

**Bachelor programmes** '*Archaeology and Ethnology*' and '*Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments*' are offered as full-time four-year programmes providing education based on the combination of theory and practice. Graduates of the Bachelor programmes are equipped with knowledge and skills for the following career opportunities (source: self-evaluation reports submitted by al-Farabi KazNU).

*Archaeology and Ethnology.* Graduates of the programme are prepared for a range of professional activities related to studying and preservation of historical and cultural heritage including research in the respective fields, the introduction of modern technologies into processing, storage and protection of archaeological and ethnographic materials, as well as teaching history in schools and colleges.

*Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments.* Graduates of the programme are qualified to work at local and foreign museums, exhibition centres, universities, research centres, expert organisations and other institutions dealing with the issues of protection of monuments and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Kazakhstan and beyond (UNESCO, ICOM, and ICOMOS). Graduates are prepared to introduce new technologies into museums' activities, participate in the evaluations of museum objects, teach history courses in schools and organisations involved with local history, participate in the research work of museums.

**Master programmes** '*Archaeology and Ethnology*', '*Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments*', and '*Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision*' are full-time two year study programmes targeted at young professionals with different academic backgrounds, and are also open to graduates from respective undergraduate study programmes offered by al-Farabi University. Graduates of the Master programmes are qualified to pursue doctoral studies, or take up the following career paths.

*Archaeology and Ethnology; Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments.* In addition to the range of career paths open to graduates of respective Bachelor programmes, graduate employment opportunities include entry to higher level jobs in the public, private and non-governmental sectors, in particular junior teaching positions at higher education institutions and junior research positions at scientific research institutions and archives.

*Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision.* Graduates of the Master programme are prepared for careers which require knowledge and skills related to management of documentation systems and databases at public and private institutions,

expert evaluation of documents, etc. Graduates of the study programme are employable in different sectors of the labour market including archives, higher education, research institutions, media, banking, etc.

**PhD programme** '*History*' is focused on the in-depth study of the history of Kazakhstan in the context of the world history. The distinctive features of the programme are cooperation of each PhD student with two academic supervisors (Kazakh and foreign), as well as a study abroad opportunity available to each student at the expense of the Kazakh Government. Graduates of the study programme are qualified to continue on to careers as professors in universities, senior researchers at scientific research institutions and archives, or to occupy advanced administrative positions in the public and non-governmental sectors.

## 4 Summarizing results from the assessments of the peers

### **Standard 1: Study programme and programme management**

Since 2010 al-Farabi KazNU has been making great effort changing the content and the structure of the study programmes to adapt them to the Bologna process standards. There are, however, areas for improvement including the following.

There is no clear correlation between the European (ECTS) and Kazakh credit transfer systems; ECTS is not used as a basis for calculating the students' workload; the principles of credit allocation for different kinds of educational activities (examinations, coursework, internships, etc.) are not clear. On the Bachelor and Master levels a small number of credits is assigned for writing qualification works. No standardised Diploma Supplement is issued to the university graduates.

The Panel finds the current study programmes as well as their aims and goals very general in nature. The learning outcomes are very generally stated as well. The modules of the study programmes are very heterogeneous in scope. The documents provided to the Panel do not specify the ratio of the basic disciplines to specific modules. Virtually each course is offered with long reading lists.

All programmes are delivered in full-time format. Master programmes are offered in the afternoon which allows students to balance their study and part-time work schedules. Both the students themselves and the Panel applaud this approach as good practice.

Although examinations may legally have three forms (written, oral, and testing), examinations take place in the form of written exams, each of which is based on merely three very general questions (which is the legal minimum). Social skills are outside the focus of assessment. The Panel emphasises that a much more diverse and challenging system of examination and grading is required.

Bachelor and Master theses are graded by a single supervisor, in contrast with the PhD thesis, which is graded by the supervisor plus a foreign advisor. Every PhD student has two academic advisors: a local professor and an academic or researcher from a foreign university/research centre. The Panel considers this to be a laudable, good practice. However, taking into account that PhD theses are nearly always written in either Russian or Kazakh, the Panel concludes

that foreign advisors without knowledge of these languages cannot serve as reliable judges about the content and quality of the theses.

The Panel notes the large number of organisations providing professional internship placements for the students on the basis of bilateral agreements with the university.

Admission requirements to all the study programmes are clearly stated, written down and open to public.

The study programmes 'Archaeology and Ethnology' are predominantly oriented at the local and regional issues in the research and training processes, which, as claimed by the university higher management, is of crucial importance for a young nation such as Kazakhstan.

Students of the study programmes 'Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments' are educated as ethnologists and historians rather than museum experts; the integration of museum and exhibition design skills into the intended learning outcomes of the study programmes is highly recommended.

The Master programme 'Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision' is not focused on current trends in the respective study fields; the "Documentation and Documents Provision" part of the study programme is considered by the Faculty as an ancillary discipline to Archive Studies, Museum Studies and History. One of the major strengths of the programme is its graduates' success on the local market of archives and documentation.

PhD programme 'History' is characterized by rather weak theoretical and methods preparation, as well as by weak international networking. The collaboration between PhD students who specialise in Early Turks and Middle Ages regional history is organized well.

### **Standard 2: Staff**

The Panel ascertains that the staff members are very motivated and enthusiastic. However, the Panel notes the excessive teaching load of the faculty. The opportunities for staff employment beyond the university are limited, and retirements of staff members because of old age are substantially postponed (due to low pensions). Low staff mobility hampers renewal of didactic principles, the introduction of new technologies, ideas and theoretical innovation, and the recruitment of new, promising staff. These difficulties are further enhanced by the fact that the university predominantly aims to recruit its staff from its own, locally educated reservoir of PhD candidates, which *de facto* implies a near zero work experience beyond the own institution. The Panel notices an absence of formal, objective procedures with regard to staff appointments and career opportunities and developments. Competition and selection on the basis of several potential candidates is lacking.

### **Standard 3: Quality assurance**

The university has a Center for Accreditation, Ranking and Quality Management, which reports to the First Vice-Rector. The Faculty has its own basic quality assurance system, where students regularly express their opinions on the teachers' performance through anonymous online evaluations. However, the Panel notes that the online system of student surveys is primarily aimed at the evaluation of the teaching performance but not the content and structure of study courses. Peer reviews of teaching performance are conducted on a voluntary basis for experienced teachers and are obligatory for beginning teachers. Specially

assigned faculty members serve as student mentors and inform students about programmes, options, procedures, etc.; there are no study advisors responsible for individual courses. There are no formal arrangements concerning fraud and/or scientific integrity (plagiarism, etc.).

The Panel draws attention to the fact that the English version of the Faculty webpage does not contain the minimum of information on the study programmes and degrees, research projects, staff CVs, etc.

#### **Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure**

Although the facilities definitely require an upgrade (equipment of teaching and learning rooms, computer facilities, Wi-Fi provision on campus, lift, etc.), both staff and students are satisfied with the current circumstances.

The study grants offered by the Kazakh Government differ in size from one level to another (lowest in the Bachelor, highest in the PhD programmes). Another source of income are the government-funded or foreign-sponsored research projects, which pay students and staff for their participation, support their publications, and also allow staff and students to attend research conferences.

The new university library has an impressive collection of resources and materials. The Panel notices, however, that students need easier access to Western literature and global research resources.

Students of the programmes 'Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments' need space for experimental, creative work in collaboration with museologists and designers.

#### **Standard 5: Research**

Research is considered as a key indicator for internal university ranking, but time and other resources for research are allocated on a minimal basis. Hence, the change from a predominantly teaching-oriented institution towards a research-driven university implies a very high workload for the current personnel. Strengths in respect of research activities are a number of state-funded research projects and the associated creation of research centres at the university. Students are actively integrated in the research and earn money in these research projects (in addition to their scholarships). PhD students carry out research in close cooperation with both national and international researchers and/or advisors.

In the field of Archaeology, the research results are integrated into the teaching programme. In case of the study programmes 'Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments', research of the staff deal more with the topics of History and Ethnology. Regarding the Master programme 'Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision', there is no research strategy or profile of the programme; the staff do not conduct research in the core areas of the disciplines. The most important research topics of the PhD programme 'History' are related to various aspects of Kazakh studies; the level of the faculty's publications in internationally recognized historical journals is low, and so is the level of their participation in thematic conferences.

### **Standard 6: National and international co-operations**

The al-Farabi KazNU History Faculty and its Departments are national leaders in their respective fields of expertise. There is obvious cooperation at the national level between the Faculty, on the one hand, and the archives, museums and privately-owned companies on the other. There is evidence of the faculty's great desire to participate in professional development programmes abroad, though there is less aspiration for conducting research. Efforts are being made towards internationalisation, but the latter requires a strong push on the basis of a systematic and comprehensive, underlying strategy.

## 5 Accreditation decisions and statements of grounds

At its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014, the Board of AQ Austria decided:

- 1) The programmes "**Bachelor of Humanities in Archaeology and Ethnology**", "**Master of Humanities in Archaeology and Ethnology**" and "**PhD in Archaeology and Ethnology**" at al-Farabi KazNU in Almaty, Kazakhstan, **meet the standards** of the „Guideline for International Accreditation of Bachelor, Master and PhD Programmes“ ("Guideline...") adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in July 2013.
- 2) Pursuant to 3.5 of the "Guideline..." the Board of AQ Austria grants accreditation to the programmes for a period of six years, i.e. until 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- 3) The Board of AQ Austria notes that the programmes meet some of the standards only partially. Pursuant to 3.5 of the „Guideline...“ accreditation is therefore granted subject to fulfilment of the following conditions. The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2015) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

### Condition 1 (standard 1.4)

ECTS must be implemented in compliance with the ECTS Users' Guide to reflect the real workload. The workload must be defined and calculated.

### Condition 2 (standard 1.8)

A standardized "Diploma Supplement" must be issued to all graduates.

### Condition 3 (standard 1.3)

The principles of module formation must be reconsidered; the module names and descriptions in the annotations must be revised.

### Condition 4 (standard 1.3)

Clear module annotations to provide students with the relevant information must be developed.

### Condition 5 (standard 1.3)

Prerequisites must be identified in the module handbooks.

### Condition 6 (standard 1.6)

More credits for Bachelor and Master qualification works / theses must be allocated.

### Condition 7 (standard 1.3)

The list of required readings must be shortened to 5-6 sources of relevant and up-to-date literature for each course (in agreement with the credits per course); thereby, differentiations between obligatory and optional publications to read must be made.

**Condition 8 (standard 1.7)**

The opportunities fixed in the national educational legislation must be used and taken advantage of all the three forms of examinations - written, oral, and testing. Problem-based assignments at exams must be used. The tasks must be made more specific and thus the grading environment more challenging.

**Condition 9 (standard 2.1)**

The teaching load of faculty members must be decreased.

**Condition 10 (standard 2.1)**

A strategic plan with regard to recruitment, employment and development of the staff in the five years ahead must be developed.

**Condition 11 (standards 1.2 and 5.1)**

Full information about academic and research activity must be published on the Department's webpage including full CVs of all academic staff members, as well as lists of their publications.

**Condition 12 (standards 3.2 and 3.3)**

Compulsory evaluation of each course, at the end of each course, must be introduced.

**Condition 13 (standards 1.2 and 1.3)**

All relevant information must be translated from Russian and Kazakh into English (incl. module handbooks) and published on the Faculty website.

At its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014, the Board of AQ Austria decided:

- 1) The programmes "**Bachelor of Art in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments**" and "**Master of Art in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments**" at al-Farabi KazNU in Almaty, Kazakhstan, **meet the standards** of the „Guideline for International Accreditation of Bachelor, Master and PhD Programmes“ ("Guideline...") adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in July 2013.
- 2) Pursuant to 3.5 of the "Guideline..." the Board of AQ Austria grants accreditation to the programmes for a period of six years, i.e. until 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- 3) The Board of AQ Austria notes that the programmes meet some of the standards only partially. Pursuant to 3.5 of the „Guideline...“ accreditation is therefore granted subject to fulfilment of the following conditions. The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2015) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

#### Condition 1 (standard 1.4)

ECTS must be implemented in compliance with the ECTS Users' Guide to reflect the real workload. The workload must be defined and calculated.

#### Condition 2 (standard 1.8)

A standardized "Diploma Supplement" must be issued to all graduates.

#### Condition 3 (valid for the Bachelor programme) (standard 1.3)

More focus must be placed on museum design, classes/lectures about design aspects in museums and exhibitions in cooperations/invitations of architect and scenographers must be introduced.

#### Condition 4 (valid for the Master programme) (standard 1.2)

The A. Goal and the B. Goal of the Master degree programme must be re-written: five of the competencies are quite the same in A. Goal and B. Goal. All three goals look very arbitrary, where the focus must be placed on museology. The word "vnemuzeynyh" must be translated into the English language!

#### Condition 5 (standard 1.3)

The principles of module formation must be reconsidered; the module names and descriptions in the annotations must be revised.

#### Condition 6 (standard 1.3)

Clear module annotations must be developed to provide students with the relevant information

#### Condition 7 (standard 1.3)

Prerequisites must be identified in the module handbooks.

Condition 8 (standard 1.6)

More credits must be allocated to Bachelor and Master qualification works /theses.

Condition 9 (standard 1.7)

The opportunities fixed in the national educational legislation must be used and taken advantage of all the three forms of examinations - written, oral, and testing. Problem-based assignments at exams must be used. The tasks must be made more specific and thus the grading environment more challenging.

Condition 10 (standard 1.3)

Exhibition environments at the department must be provided as experimental space to be used as a training base for students.

Condition 11 (standard 2.1)

Teaching load of faculty members must be reduced.

Condition 12 (standard 1.2; standard 5.1)

Full information about academic and research activity must be published on the Department's webpage including full CVs of all academic staff members, as well as lists of their publications.

Condition 13 (standard 3.2; standard 3.3)

Compulsory evaluation of each course, at the end of each course, must be introduced.

Condition 14 (standard 1.2; standard 1.3)

All relevant information must be translated from Russian and Kazakh into English (incl. Module Handbook) and published it on the Faculty website.

Condition 15 (standard 1.3; standard 1.5; standard 5.3)

It must be ensured that research sets its focus on museum topics, not only on ethnology or history issues; research questions like how to deal with objects, how to collect them, how to exhibit them, must be integrated into the research.

At its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2014, the Board of AQ Austria decided:

- 1) The programme **“Master of Social Sciences in Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision”** at al-Farabi KazNU in Almaty, Kazakhstan, meets the standards of the „Guideline for International Accreditation of Bachelor, Master and PhD Programmes“ (“Guideline...”) adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in July 2013.
- 2) Pursuant to 3.5 of the “Guideline...” the Board of AQ Austria grants accreditation to the programme for a period of six years, i.e. until 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020.
- 3) The Board of AQ Austria notes that the programme meets some of the standards only partially. Pursuant to 3.5 of the „Guideline...“ accreditation is therefore granted subject to fulfilment of the following conditions. The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 13<sup>th</sup> of February 2015) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

**Condition 1 (standard 1.4)**

ECTS must be implemented in compliance with the ECTS Users’ Guide to reflect the real workload. The workload must be defined and calculated.

**Condition 2 (standard 1.8)**

A standardized “Diploma Supplement” must be issued to all graduates.

**Condition 3 (standard 1.3)**

The principles of module formation must be reconsidered; the module names and descriptions in the annotations must be revised.

**Condition 4 (standard 1.3)**

Clear module annotations must be developed in order to provide students with the relevant information.

**Condition 5 (standard 1.3)**

Prerequisites must be identified in the module handbooks.

**Condition 6 (standard 1.6)**

More credits must be allocated for Master theses.

**Condition 7 (standard 1.3)**

The list of required readings must be reduced to five-six sources of relevant and up-to-date literature for each course; differentiations between obligatory and optional literature must be made.

**Condition 8 (standard 1.7)**

The opportunities fixed in the national educational legislation must be used and taken advantage of all the three forms of examinations - written, oral, and testing. Problem-based assignments at exams must be used. The tasks must be made more specific and thus the grading environment more challenging.

Condition 9 (standard 2.1)

The teaching load of faculty members must be decreased.

Condition 10 (standard 2.1)

A strategic plan with regard to recruitment, employment and development of the staff in the five years ahead must be developed.

Condition 11 (standards 1.2 and 5.1)

Full information about academic and research activity must be published on the Department's webpage including full CVs of all academic staff members, as well as lists of their publications.

Condition 12 (standards 3.2 and 3.3)

Compulsory evaluation of each course, at the end of each course, must be introduced.

Condition 13 (standards 1.2 and 1.3)

All relevant information must be translated from Russian and Kazakh into English (incl. module handbooks) and published it on the Faculty website.

Condition 14 (standards 1.2 and 5.1)

A scientific research profile plan and strategy of the Faculty for the next five years must be developed in order to serve as a basis for the development by the study programme of its own research and teaching profile.

At its 21<sup>st</sup> meeting on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014, the Board of AQ Austria decided:

- 1) The programme “**PhD in History**” at al-Farabi KazNU in Almaty, Kazakhstan, [meet the standards](#) of the „Guideline for International Accreditation of Bachelor, Master and PhD Programmes“ (“Guideline...”) adopted by the Board of AQ Austria in July 2013.
- 2) Pursuant to 3.5 of the “Guideline...” the Board of AQ Austria grants accreditation to the programmes for a period of six years, i.e. until 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020.
- 3) The Board of AQ Austria notes that the programmes meet some of the standards only partially. Pursuant to 3.5 of the „Guideline...“ accreditation is therefore granted subject to fulfilment of the following conditions. The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

#### Condition 1 (standard 1.8)

A standardized “Diploma Supplement” must be issued to all graduates.

#### Condition 2 (standard 1.3)

The principles of module formation must be reconsidered; the module names and descriptions in the annotations must be revised.

#### Condition 3 (standard 1.3)

Clear module annotations to provide students with the relevant information must be developed.

#### Condition 4 (standard 1.3)

Prerequisites must be identified in the module handbook.

#### Condition 5 (standard 1.7)

The opportunities fixed in the national educational legislation must be used and taken advantage of all the three forms of examinations - written, oral, and testing. Problem-based assignments at exams must be used. The tasks must be made more specific to link with stated learning outcomes.

#### Condition 6 (standard 2.1)

The teaching load of faculty members must be decreased.

#### Condition 7 (standard 2.1)

A strategic plan with regard to recruitment, employment and development of the staff in the five years ahead must be developed.

#### Condition 8 (standards 3.2 and 3.3)

Compulsory evaluation of each course, at the end of each course, must be introduced.

Condition 9 (standards 5.1 and 5.4)

A scientific research profile plan and strategy for the Faculty for the next five years must be developed and include international cooperation and activities. This shall serve as a basis for the development of the research and teaching profile of the PhD programme.

Condition 10 (standards 1.4 and 1.6)

ECTS must be implemented in compliance with the ECTS Users' Guide to reflect the real workload of students. The workload must be clearly defined and calculated.

Condition 11 (standards 1.2 and 5.1)

Full information about academic and research activity must be published on the Department's webpage including full CVs of all academic staff members, as well as lists of their publications.

Condition 12 (standard 4.2)

International literature acquisition must be broadened.

Condition 13 (standards 6.1 and 6.2)

An internationalisation strategy with specific actions and timelines must be developed.