

Accreditation of study programmes

KIMEP University

International Relations

At its 16th meeting on 3rd September 2013, the Board of AQ Austria **decided to grant accreditation** to the programmes

"Bachelor of International Relations"

"Master of International Relations"

at KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan for a period of five years, **without conditions**. The fulfilment of these conditions must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 3rd of June 2014) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

If KIMEP changes the two programmes substantially and intends to keep its accreditation, it shall inform AQ Austria about these changes. The following changes require AQ Austria's approval: substantial deviations from the standards to be met; holding company; name of the higher education institution; name of the study programme; qualification objective and profile of the study programme; duration and scope of the study programme; wording of the academic degrees to be awarded; location/s of the higher education institution. KIMEP shall apply for approval of the changes and submit all data and documents required to check whether the changes are suitable to meet AQ Austria's standards. If necessary, AQ Austria will involve a peer in checking the changes and will decide whether the accreditation standards are met.



Agency for
Quality Assurance
and Accreditation
Austria

Report of the review team

Bachelor of International Relations

Master of International Relations

KIMEP University

5 July 2013

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1 General information

KIMEP University mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the Bachelor programme in International Relations and the Master programme in International Relations.

These two study programmes of the same discipline are assessed in the following report. The report includes statements on the Bachelor resp. the Master programme, where deviations require different descriptions.

The assessments of the Bachelor and the Master programmes are strictly separated.

1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

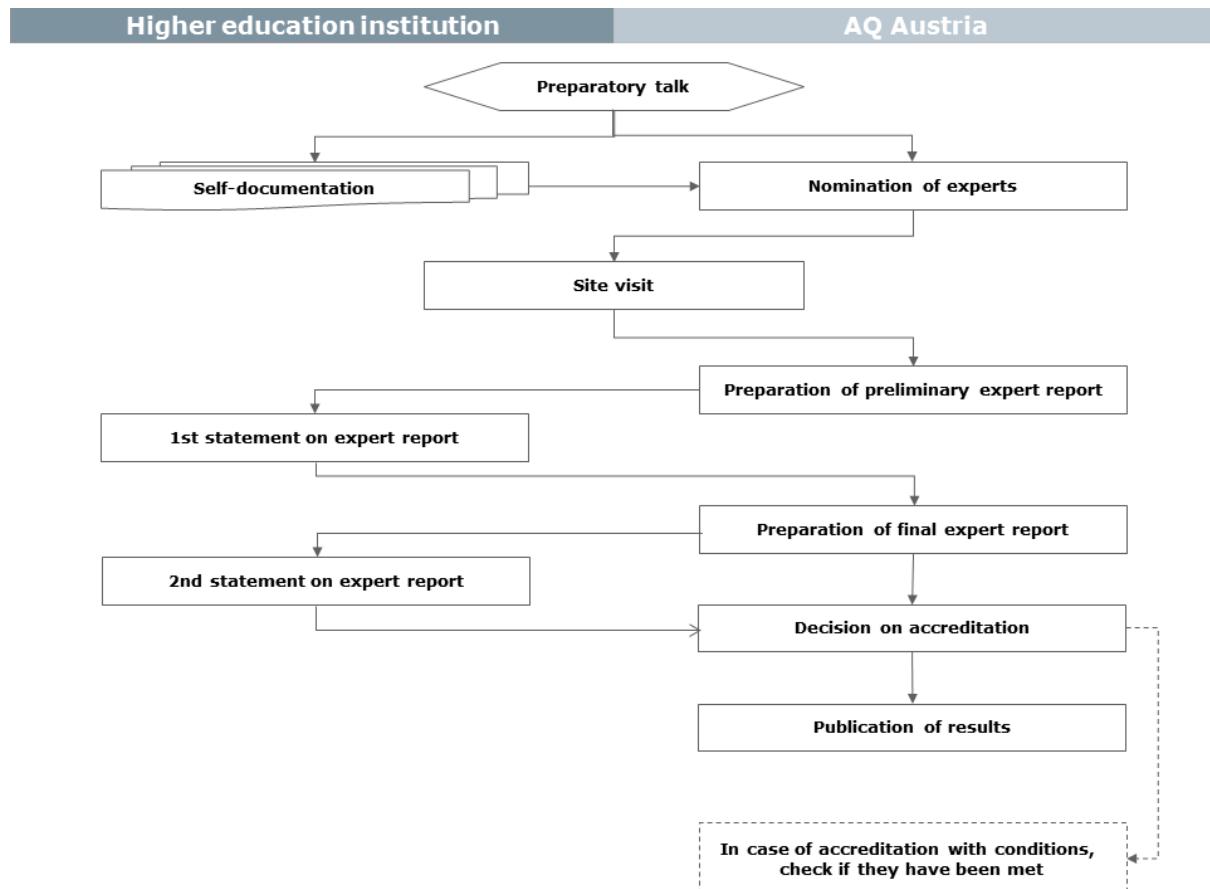
AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area, in particular the autonomy and diversity of higher education institutions and independent quality assurance.

AQ Austria has been admitted to the "Register of accreditation agencies" by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan to carry through accreditation procedures of study programmes at higher education institutions in Kazakhstan.

By granting international accreditation to a study programme, AQ Austria confirms its compliance with European quality standards. These standards are derived from the principles laid down in the Bologna Process and the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG).

- Standard 1 Qualification objectives
- Standard 2 Content and design
- Standard 3 Academic feasibility
- Standard 4 Examination system
- Standard 5 Resources
- Standard 6 Transparency and documentation
- Standard 7 Quality assurance and development
- Standard 8 Equal opportunities
- Standard 9 Programme-related co-operation

The accreditation pursues the principles of a peer-review and follows the procedural steps:



The expert report and the higher education institution's statement constitute the basis for the accreditation decision, which is taken by the 14-members-board of AQ Austria. There are three options for the decision:

Accreditation without conditions

The quality requirements are being met. Any recommendations given in the expert opinion are supposed to help the higher education institution continuously develop the study programme. The agency grants the accreditation for a period of five years.

Accreditation with conditions

Deficiencies have been detected which are likely to be corrected within nine months. The higher education institution proves that the conditions have been met, and this will be verified by AQ Austria.

Denial of accreditation

Serious deficiencies have been detected which are not likely to be corrected within nine months.

If the accreditation decision is positive, AQ Austria will issue a certificate to the higher education institution.

1.2 Profile and concept of the study programmes and brief description of KIMEP

The following information derives from the self-evaluation report of KIMEP resp. its website.

Bachelor of International Relations

Date of introduction:	August 1999
Regular study period:	8 semesters
Number of ECTS credits:	240
Majors:	Global Security and International Affairs Regional Studies and Energy Politics

The objectives of the programme are:

- to train professionals capable of taking on challenging jobs and playing leadership roles in the international arena, as diplomats, consular agents, communications officers, international affairs analysts and advertising specialists;
- to provide a solid foundation for future scholars who want to pursue graduate study and research in international relations and related fields in the social sciences and humanities;
- to foster students' critical and analytical thinking and to expand their linguistic, technical, research and communication skills;
- to analyse the core fields and sub-fields in the discipline through innovative teaching;
- to develop student/faculty collaboration that allows students to attain the political literacy necessary for good citizenship;
- to help students understand the concepts, theories and methodologies used in the disciplines so that students can integrate theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Upon the successful completion of the programme, graduates will be able to:

- describe and articulate the key concepts, major paradigms and theoretical perspectives within the discipline;
- appraise the impact of cultural, historical, geographic, and economic factors on the formation of different states, regions and civilizations within the international system;
- analyze the structure and dynamics shaping the contemporary international system and regional structures such as the European Union, NATO, the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Asia Pacific Economic Conference, and others;
- explain the behavior and interactions of the primary actors within the international system and regional subsystems, so as to be able to explain their impact on state-level policy decision-making, risk assessment and conflict resolution;
- appraise the structure of political systems and the impact of social classes, ethnic groups, social/political movements and interest groups on the formation of foreign and domestic policy in various states;
- evaluate the role of global institutions, international law, and fundamental values or ethical considerations in the formulation of foreign and domestic policy;
- assess the impact of major threats to the global order, including the breakdown of the global financial system, economic and social polarization, geopolitical rivalry, resource scarcity, environmental degradation, terrorism and nuclear proliferation;

- utilize the skills and knowledge noted above to frame the policies of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states in a global context;
- implement basic social scientific research skills, critical thinking models and effective communication techniques in the preparation of original compositions in the field of international relations and regional studies;
- work effectively with others in the pursuit of common objectives.

Master of International Relations

Date of introduction: August 2002
 Regular study period: 3 semesters
 Number of ECTS credits: 90

The objectives of the programme are:

- to provide students with graduate-level knowledge and analytical skills needed for employment in public, non-profit, and private organisations with an international orientation as well as government agencies and higher education institutions;
- to educate graduate students for ethical service to their society and the broader regional and international community;
- to prepare graduates for doctoral studies in areas relevant to international relations.

At the successful completion of this programme, graduates will be able to:

- identify and analyse the structure and fundamental dynamic processes of the international system;
- describe and articulate the major paradigms and theoretical perspectives within the discipline;
- explain the behaviour and interactions of the primary actors within the international system, so as to be able to construct basic models of policy decision-making;
- discuss and appraise the impact of culture, history, geography, and power and wealth differentials on the formulation of foreign policies of different states;
- appraise the impact of social classes, ethnic groups, social/political movements and interest groups on the formation of foreign policy in various states;
- evaluate the role of global institutions, international law, and fundamental values or ethical considerations in the formulation of foreign policy;
- utilize the skills and knowledge noted above to frame the policies of Kazakhstan and other Central Asian states in a global context;
- conduct original research and develop the capacity to communicate that knowledge via written and oral presentations at a satisfactory level in English.

KIMEP University

KIMEP was founded as the Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics, and Strategic Research by a resolution of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, in January 1992. In February 2012 the Institute was granted university status. A non-profit joint-stock company, KIMEP University is overseen by an independent Board of Trustees elected by its shareholders.

KIMEP University is the largest American-style coeducational higher education institution in Central Asia serving a multicultural, multinational student body. Students at KIMEP University come from 25 different countries, including Kazakhstan, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, the USA, the UK, Germany, China and Korea. Current annual enrolment on all programmes is about 4,000. Approximately 85% of currently enrolled students are undergraduates

(Business, Economics, Public and Municipal Administration, Journalism, International Relations and Regional Studies, Jurisprudence), with 15% studying on Masters (Business Administration, Economics, Public Administration International Law, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, International Journalism and Mass Communication, International Relations) and Doctoral (Business Administration) programmes. All degree programmes at KIMEP are delivered in English.

According to the American-style credit system, originally adopted by KIMEP University, one credit-hour (a KIMEP credit) is equal to 15 teaching hours with the expectation that a further 30 hours will be spent by students on independent study. Thus, the graduation requirement for a Master's degree varies between 36 and 60 KIMEP credits, depending on programme duration. To harmonize the University's credit system with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), it was determined in 2011 that one ECTS credit equals 27 learning hours, i.e. the workload of a 3 KIMEP-credit course is equal to a 5 ECTS-credit course.

In March 2010, Kazakhstan became the 47th state to join the Bologna Process, and for the last few years the country has been modernizing its higher education system by applying the main principles of the European framework including the three cycle degree system and a credit accumulation system.

1.3 Accreditation procedure at KIMEP

KIMEP University mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the Bachelor programme in International Relations and the Master programme in International Relations in January 2013 after preparatory discussions during autumn 2012.

Timetable of the accreditation procedure

Procedural step	Date
Delivery of self-evaluation reports by KIMEP	8 February 2013
Decision on review team members by the board of AQ Austria	12 February 2013
Preparatory skype meeting of the review team	9 April 2013
Site-visit at KIMEP by review team	6-7 May 2013
1 st draft of the report of the review team	12 June 2013
Formal statement by KIMEP	25 June 2013
Final report of the review team	5 July 2013
Statement on the final report by KIMEP	19 July 2013
Accreditation decision by board of AQ Austria	3 September 2013

Members of the review team

Name	Institution	Role
Prof. Dr. Richard Caplan	Oxford University	Reviewer from academia
Amina Turgulova	Kazakhstan Stock Exchange	Reviewer with professional experience
Karina Ufert	Vilnius University	Student reviewer
Ambassador Dr. Hans Winkler	Diplomatic Academy of Vienna	Reviewer from academia, head of the review team

AQ Austria Coordinator

Zhanna Kuzminykh

2 Assessment results

2.1 Standard 1: Qualification objectives

The objectives of the undergraduate programme (Bachelor of International Relations, BIR) are clearly articulated and transparent. Some of the objectives (in particular those relating to taking on jobs and playing leadership roles in the international arena, including positions within the diplomatic corps, multinational corporations, education and non-governmental organisations) are most likely too ambitious for an undergraduate programme. However, the design of the programme clearly shows the will to attain the objectives as far as possible.

The objective of providing a solid foundation for future scholars who want to pursue graduate study and research in international relations and related fields in the social sciences and humanities is clearly reached.

In order to reach the ambitious objective to hold all courses in English and to enable students to follow instruction from the beginning, the curriculum places a significant emphasis on, inter alia, English language instruction and learning skills development, and on general knowledge acquisition, so that before students begin their studies they are well prepared in reading, writing, and speaking English and have contextual knowledge of Western history, civilization, and philosophy.

The programme as it is designed emphasizes inter-disciplinarity. All the major areas of international relations and cross-disciplinarity, theories of international relations, comparative politics, international political economy, regional studies with a particular focus on Central Asia, political science, geopolitics, security studies, international institutions and law, and ethics are adequately covered. Soft skills, oral and social competencies and personal development, through internships and opportunities to study abroad, are covered by a sufficient number of courses and lectures.

The objectives of the graduate programme (Master of International Relations, MIR) are also clearly articulated and transparent. The overarching goals of the MIR programme (to promote excellence in the study of international relations and regional studies, to train professionals capable of taking on challenging jobs and playing leadership roles in the international arena, including as diplomats, consular agents, communications officers, international affairs analysts and advertising specialists, and to provide a solid foundation for scholars who want to pursue doctoral study and research in international relations) and its objectives are realistic and correspond to a large extent to the programme design and content.

However, the MIR programme's learning objectives are in some of its intended goals too broadly formulated to be realistic and the objectives do not always correspond to the actual programme content, at least as to the core courses mandatory for the completion of the programme. For example the MIR programme's learning objectives such as "to ensure that graduates have satisfactory knowledge of the major paradigms of international relations; international organisations, international law and the impact of development paradigms on political, social and cultural changes global civil society, and private multinational corporations" (the MIR programme's self-evaluation report, p.11) is very sweeping and broadly defined.

Among the important MIR programme's objectives are Central Asian security issues, geopolitics, economics and integration of the region in the international and global system. This clearly is the strength of the programme. However, the proclaimed "significant emphasis" on cross-disciplinarity does not fully correspond to the courses offered (see also section 2.2).

All in all, however, the objective to "ensure that graduates are provided with the knowledge and the cognitive and behavioural skills that enable them to gain leadership positions and provide ethical service in public, non-profit and business organisations, or to engage in further postgraduate study" is attained by the MIR programme.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.

The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.2 Standard 2: Content and design

The Bachelor programme in International Relations was first offered in August 1999 as a major in the four-year Bachelor of Social Science degree and was separated out as the Bachelor of Social Sciences in International Relations (BSSIR) in 2008. The Master programme in International Relations was launched in 2002. According to the self-evaluation reports, both programmes were licensed and then received state attestation in March 2003 and again in March 2008. Both programmes would appear, therefore, to comply with the national Ministry of Education and Science (MES) requirements. However, in November 2012 the MES announced the development of a new national qualifications framework which it has yet to make public and which KIMEP has not yet seen. The review team is unable to determine, therefore, whether and to what extent the study programmes under review conform to the new national standards.

Kazakhstan joined the European Higher Education Area in March 2010. However, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) has yet to be implemented although the MES has informed the European Commission that Kazakhstan is gradually introducing the Bologna award cycle structure and steps are being taken by KIMEP to equate its credit system with the ECTS. Both programmes under review would appear to have a sufficient number of credits (240 for the BIR programme, 90 for the MIR programme) to be ECTS compliant. There is clarity and transparency with regard to the credit requirements for both programmes.

The content and design of the two programmes are adequate for the purpose of meeting the programmes' goals, objectives, and learning outcomes, which are in harmony with KIMEP's stated mission. Courses are described transparently and clearly with regard to their content, learning objectives and intended learning outcomes, forms of learning and examination, admittance prerequisites and co-requisites (if any), credit value, and workload.

The curriculum of the BIR programme is suitably designed for gaining a solid knowledge base in the major core fields and subfields of International Relations; promoting the development of critical and analytical faculties; strengthening students' English-language communications skills (written and oral); and preparing students for either graduate study in International Relations or a professional career. The strengths of the BIR programme lie in its curriculum design, which reflects the major subject areas of the academic study of international relations, and its internship programme, which allows students to gain relevant practical/professional experience.

The curriculum of the MIR programme has comparable strengths but lacks the breadth of the undergraduate programme: there is little or no training in public international law, human rights, economics/political economy, EU studies and foreign languages (other than English). The strengths of the MIR programme are its concentration on Central Asia, which is unique among graduate programmes worldwide, and also its internship programme. The internship programmes in both instances are well integrated into the study programmes.

There are opportunities for students to study and to have internships abroad. Students receive credits for their study and internships abroad and, in some cases, a double degree.

Students can transfer credits or receive course waivers in recognition of prior academic experiences. The basis for granting a transfer or waiver is clear.

Admissions procedures are well established. Admissions requirements—based on a combination of formal educational requirements and English-language proficiency—are clearly stated and there is a transparent examination process governing admissions.

Given the mentioned considerations the review team recommendations to KIMEP are: 1) full implementation of ECTS; 2) review with an eye towards raising the English-language requirement; 3) promote greater interdisciplinarity in MIR by adding elective courses in public international law; international history; economics; and European studies.

The BIR programme partly complies with the standard.

The MIR programme partly complies with the standard.

In its first statement KIMEP responded with the following comments to the recommendations made in the section 2.2 of the present report:

Comments on Recommendation 1: The Department of International Relations and Regional Studies, which offers the BIR and MIR Programs, would like to pass as soon as possible to the ECTS, but it has the necessity to comply also with the standards of the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan. This passage cannot be taken by the Department alone and it needs the endorsement of KIMEP University. KIMEP University intends to introduce a system of parallel credits, measuring for each course both teaching-hours as requested by the Ministry and learning-hours as requested by the Bologna framework. In the meantime, the BIR and MIR programs have obtained Ministry attestation.

Comments on Recommendation 2: The Department recognizes that ideally English language admission criteria should be raised. The Department, in cooperation with the Language Center, is considering the feasibility of raising the standards to a 6.5 score on IELTS or equivalent. Anyway, it should be noted, this policy will create some problems with potential students in Central Asia who studied for their undergraduate degrees in non-English language universities. At this moment KIMEP University requires that its applicants who score less than 5.5 on IELTS or equivalent to take either one or two foundation courses (depending on their scores) before being admitted to any master class. Raising the standard will probably require more English foundation courses, up to the point where a prospective student may have to take English-language classes for more than one year before being able to start his master courses. While a solid foundation in English is required for being able to attend master courses taught in the English language, students are able to develop their skills during their master program usually taking fewer courses during the first semester in order to develop the required language skills.

Comments on Recommendation 3: The Department recognizes the importance for the MIR program of the subjects that the Commission is highlighting. For example, the Department agrees with the relevance of public international law. The Department would prefer to have a required course on international law rather than a course on management and a course on psychology, but these last two courses are required by the Ministry of Education of Kazakhstan and KIMEP University has no ground for not complying with local requirements. In any case, since the Commission is recommending the introduction of a series of subjects as elective courses, this is an option that, if necessary, can be easily satisfied. There are some discrepancies between what it is highlighted at the top of page 11 of the draft and what is written at the end of Section 2. In the first part of the text the following areas are suggested: public international law, human rights, economics/political economy, EU studies and foreign language; in the final passages with the recommendations, the following areas are recommended: public international law, international history, economics, European studies. I will address all of them:

Public International Law has been introduced for the Academic Year 2013-14 with the elective course "International Institutions and Law".

Human Rights are already a substantial part of the program in the already existing elective course "Ethics in International Affairs". They will be further studied with the introduction of the course "International Institutions and Law" in the Academic Year 2013-14.

Economics/Political Economy. Here there may be a misunderstanding because the MIR program already requires the course "International Political Economy" and "Developmental Studies" and has elective courses with an economic component such as "Petropolitics". The MIR program will also introduce for the Academic Year 2013-14 the course "Emerging Powers and Markets" with a strong economic emphasis due to the development of its curriculum in the context of the agreement with the University of Agder, Norway.

EU studies. The Department is going to introduce the elective course "European Union: Politics and Foreign Policy" in the Academic Year 2013-14.

International History. While this component is already present in a number of courses, such as "Russian Foreign Policy", "Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy in the Post-Communist World", the Department recognizes that its focus has mostly been on Central Asia. Therefore, the Department is going to introduce the course "History of International Relations" in the Academic Year 2013-14.

Foreign Language. If we are considering English language, other than the foundation courses when required, and the fact that all courses are taught in English, the program has a required course entitled "Professional Foreign Language for International Relations" that focuses on English language skills specific for the field of study. If the suggestion is to introduce other languages, this is an option that we will consider in the future. Almost all our local students, who are so far the core of our program, speak at least two or three languages (Russian and/or Kazakh or other Central Asian languages and English). If the internationalization of the corpus of MIR students continues to grow, we will consider introducing course of Russian and Kazakh for non-Central Asian students.

The review team regards KIMEP's comments as a useful clarification but confirms its recommendations to the extent that these recommendations are not reflected in the actual and proposed curricula.

2.3 Standard 3: Academic feasibility

Entry qualifications are adequate for achieving the objectives of the programmes. Admission to the BIR programme requires evidence of completion of secondary or higher-level

education, which is verified by the Undergraduate Admissions Office, and demonstrated proficiency in the English language. Admission to the MIR programme requires evidence of holding a Bachelor degree or its equivalent and demonstrated proficiency in the English language. Applicants whose English is below the required minimum in either programme are required to take pre-degree English (Foundation English Program). In addition MIR students must complete two foundation courses, in Political Science and International Relations, or have completed equivalent coursework before embarking on the graduate programme.

The student workload is heavy but manageable. A full-time undergraduate or graduate is expected to take up to six courses and study up to 45 hours a week in the regular semesters (Fall and Spring). There are also intensive Summer options for students wishing to accelerate their study. Part-time study is also an option in both cases. Students interviewed by the review team concur that the workload is demanding but maintain that it does not deprive them of personal free time. The number and organisation of examinations are adequate.

Extensive support services are available to students in both programmes to help ensure that they achieve their maximum potential. The College Student Support Center comprises student support specialists who are able to advise and mentor students who are experiencing academic or personal problems. The Center offers tutoring and study skills seminars. An 'early alert' system exists that enables faculty members to identify problems at an early stage and to intervene in support of students before problems become serious. An Academic Excellence Programme assists students who are academically successful to enhance their academic performance.

Course study guides are available to students in both programmes. In addition, students in the MIR programme receive extensive guidance with respect to writing a Master's thesis.

Provisions and facilities exist to support students with special needs (e.g., physical disabilities, learning disorders). Students with special needs (and overseas students) are given priority in on-site student accommodation. However, the building in which the majority of teaching is conducted is not wheel-chair accessible.

Need-based financial aid and merit-based scholarships are available to students in both programmes, covering from 10 percent to 100 percent of tuition fees. The eligibility criteria are clear.

It is recommended to expand the breadth of the MIR curriculum, perhaps allowing students to take courses (for credit) in other programmes (e.g., Law).

The BIR programme complies with the standard.
The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.4 Standard 4: Examination system

The examination system contributes to meeting the aims and objectives of the two programmes. The requirements and evaluation rules for examinations are transparent and clear. Both continuous and final assessments are used to assess academic performance in the BIR and MIR programmes. Assessment is varied, taking the form of essays, in-class tests, mid-term examinations, oral presentations, final examinations, internship reports, and final term papers (for the BIR programme) and research theses (for the MIR programme).

The examination system and requirements are made clear at the start of each course. During the meetings, interviewed students reported that the examination system they have experienced has been fair, noting, for example, that students have a right to appeal if they feel they have been treated unfairly. The Student Government of KIMEP assists the students in the event of an appeal.

Both academic staff and students have confirmed that the university has a strict policy against plagiarism with rare cases of expelling students as a consequence.

KIMEP has an early alarm system to identify students who are more likely to have difficulty passing their midterm evaluations. KIMEP staff contacts the students in a confidential manner to find out the reason for weak performance, and offers assistance, such as additional teaching hours. The same special treatment applies to students with special needs.

Students are not allowed to retake examinations but can retake the courses concerned. In exceptional cases, upon timely request of a student, faculty members are entitled to allow the student to postpone an examination if there are compelling and documented medical or family reasons that prevent or hinder the participation of the student during the day scheduled for the examination.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.

The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.5 Standard 5: Resources

Resources are generally sufficient to achieve the purpose of the programmes and offer students a pleasant environment conducive to pursuing the required courses and study tasks in an optimal framework. Particularly positive are the excellent library facilities. The extensive student support services, notably educational advising, career guidance, internships and financial assistance, are also quite impressive.

The resident faculty is sufficient, however it is recommended that efforts should be made to ensure that more guest lecturers from abroad be utilised, including through the Fulbright programme and similar schemes.

In order to expand teaching resources, opportunities for students to take courses in other programmes within KIMEP (e.g., public international law) should be explored.

Although research is listed as a priority, the teaching burden is heavy in comparison with North American and European universities, which makes it difficult for faculty to find time for research.

When recruiting new faculty, a global search is undertaken to ensure that the pool of candidates reflects the best available scholars. The holding of a doctoral degree from a recognized Western-style university in a field related to International Relations is a necessary requirement. The selection process is rigorous, administered by the Department of International Relations and Regional Studies. Relevant teaching experience and an appropriate array of publications are required for appointments above Assistant Professor. The remuneration package offered is competitive with those offered by European universities.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.
The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.6 Standard 6: Transparency and documentation

The KIMEP university website is a good and comprehensive e-resource of information both about the programmes and extracurricular activities. The programmes have their own web-pages with necessary information for potential and current students and their parents, including an opportunity to sign up for lecture observation, information about financial aid and an on-line application tool. The website is available in five different languages, which provides access to the information for international students.

The KIMEP Catalog (both printed and available on-line through the KIMEP web-page) is a comprehensive information source for newly admitted and existing students. It provides a full description of policies and procedures, rules of conduct and course descriptions, as well as academic requirements and the calendar. The website also provides information about financial aid, the faculty and extracurricular activities. For current students the university offers an information sharing drive – the L drive - aimed at providing students with information about course syllabi, course work and requirements, as well as other necessary information.

KIMEP has ensured sufficient and available information required for the students to successfully complete their course of studies. Both the website and the L-drive are up-to-date comprehensive sources of information for the students. In addition, students have confirmed that the professors are very approachable and willing to provide additional information if necessary.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.
The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.7 Standard 7: Quality assurance and development

Quality assurance is achieved through the national licensing and attestation process and national reporting requirements; periodic surveys conducted by the University's Department of Institutional Research; the activities of the Quality Enhancement Committee of the Department of International Relations and Regional Studies; and the early warning system for poor performing students; among other processes.

The University quality assurance processes have three broad objectives: 1) to improve the quality of teaching and learning; 2) to ensure that programme content remains current; that academic standards are appropriate; and that programme assessment methods are effective measures of student achievement; and 3) to enhance the flow of information within the University with regard to good practice in teaching and evaluation.

The University's Department of Institutional Research (DIR) conducts regular surveys of students with respect to faculty member teaching performance, the quality of class sessions and the course requirements and teaching materials. The results of these Faculty Teaching Evaluation Surveys (FTES) go to the head of department and faculty members. The DIR analyses the data and makes a report.

DIR also conducts student satisfactions surveys, KIMEP alumni surveys and employer surveys.

A systematic review of the BIR and MIR programmes is undertaken every three years by the Quality Enhancement Committee of the Department of International Relations and Regional Studies. The purposes of the review are to ensure that the programmes' curricula remain current; to evaluate the continuing effectiveness of the course curricula and assessment; to analyse marking trends; and to assess the programmes' continuing validity and relevance.

The University's quality assurance processes appear to be robust and effective. Evidence of effectiveness is provided by testimony to the review team by members of DIR, faculty members and students.

The review team recommends to the BIR and MIR programmes that peer review be mandatory, not voluntary. It is also recommended to institutionalise the work of the departmental Quality Enhancement Committee (now in an experimental phase) and extend participation of students on this committee.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.

The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.8 Standard 8: Equal opportunities

The review team confirms that the overall KIMEP commitment to promote equal opportunities extends to the Bachelor and Master programmes in International Relations. The statement is supported by the findings with regards to the financial assistance scheme. The scheme offers scholarships to students on the basis of merit and need (or both). Scholarships extend from covering a portion of the tuition fee, to paying full fees and lodging at the University campus. KIMEP tries to reach out to students outside big cities, in more rural areas, by presenting their activities at local schools. The sample of interviewed students also reflected various groups – e.g., students with migrant backgrounds and students receiving need-based support.

MIR classes take place in the evening hours, allowing students who work full-time to combine their job and studies. Despite classes taking place in the evening hours and weekends, interviewed students expressed their satisfaction; the vast majority of them work and study.

Exchange students get support from a student mentor, who helps the student to know the local environment. Induction classes are offered by the staff as well. There is also an international student guide available for those students. On the other hand, students who come to study full time do not receive such support. The recommendation is to extend the mentoring support to full-time students as well.

KIMEP staff has stated that they are prepared to accommodate students with special needs and have facilities available for them. However, for the time being neither the BIR nor the MIR programme has such students. The team notes, however, that visited facilities can be hardly accessible for students requiring the use of a wheelchair.

The review team recommendations are to draft regulations governing provision (policy) for students with special needs and put them in place.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.
The MIR programme complies with the standard.

2.9 Standard 9: Programme-related co-operation

KIMEP has an extensive list of programme-related cooperation, both academic cooperation with foreign universities as well as cooperation with potential employers and organisations, that provide internship opportunities for the students. In addition, the university plans to establish ties with a number of academic institutions to provide professional advancement for the teachers.

To seek additional funding for scholarships, research and extracurricular activities, the university has established ties with a number of donor organisations including foreign embassies in Kazakhstan and has a good track record of successful cooperation and project implementation. The Central Asian Studies Center is working towards making KIMEP a key Central Asian academic institution active in joint research project with international partners.

KIMEP also disseminates information to foreign institutions about its study opportunities, thus attracting students from other countries focusing on Central Asian studies. The Center focuses on encouraging students to gain work experience through internships available at public and private institutions in Kazakhstan, with which KIMEP has formal agreements.

In addition, the students are encouraged to gain international experience abroad. Most of the interviewed KIMEP students are keen to continue their education or find internships in other countries. The university facilitates student exchange programmes with foreign universities based on official cooperation arrangements.

For MIR students, KIMEP has also signed a formal dual degree agreement with two universities - one in Europe (International Masters in Russian, Central & East European Studies at the University of Glasgow, Scotland) and one in Asia (Graduate School of International Studies of the Yonsei University in Seoul). This allows MIR students to gain experience in foreign universities and foreign countries, which is important for them as future International Relations scholars and professionals. KIMEP has also agreements with international organisations (such as the UN) that provide internship opportunities solely for graduate students.

In the framework of one of their grant projects (from the Norwegian Center for International Cooperation in Education) KIMEP is planning to develop curriculum jointly with the Norwegian University of Agder for a Master's course in such subjects as ethics in international relations, corporate social responsibility and emerging markets and powers. In addition, the project will allow KIMEP to enhance research cooperation for the faculty and introduce another cooperation project with professors in the University of Agder. The university continues its work towards expanding its network of potential partners for programme-related cooperation and aims to establish partnerships with high quality institutions.

The BIR programme complies with the standard.
The MIR programme complies with the standard.