

Accreditation of study programmes

KIMEP University

Language: Two foreign Languages

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

"Master of Arts in Teaching Foreign Languages (Language: Two Foreign Languages)"

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 In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.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

Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

KIMEP University

3 July 2013

Index

1 General information	3
1.1 Basic principles of the procedure	3
1.2 Profile and concept of the study programme and brief description of KIMEP	5
1.3 Accreditation procedure at KIMEP	7
2 Assessment results	8
2.1 Standard 1: Qualification objectives	8
2.2 Standard 2: Content and design	9
2.3 Standard 3: Academic feasibility	10
2.4 Standard 4: Examination system	12
2.5 Standard 5: Resources	13
2.6 Standard 6: Transparency and documentation	14
2.7 Standard 7: Quality assurance and development	15
2.8 Standard 8: Equal opportunities	16
2.9 Standard 9: Programme-related co-operation	17

1 General information

KIMEP University mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the Master programme in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. This study programme is assessed in the following report.

1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

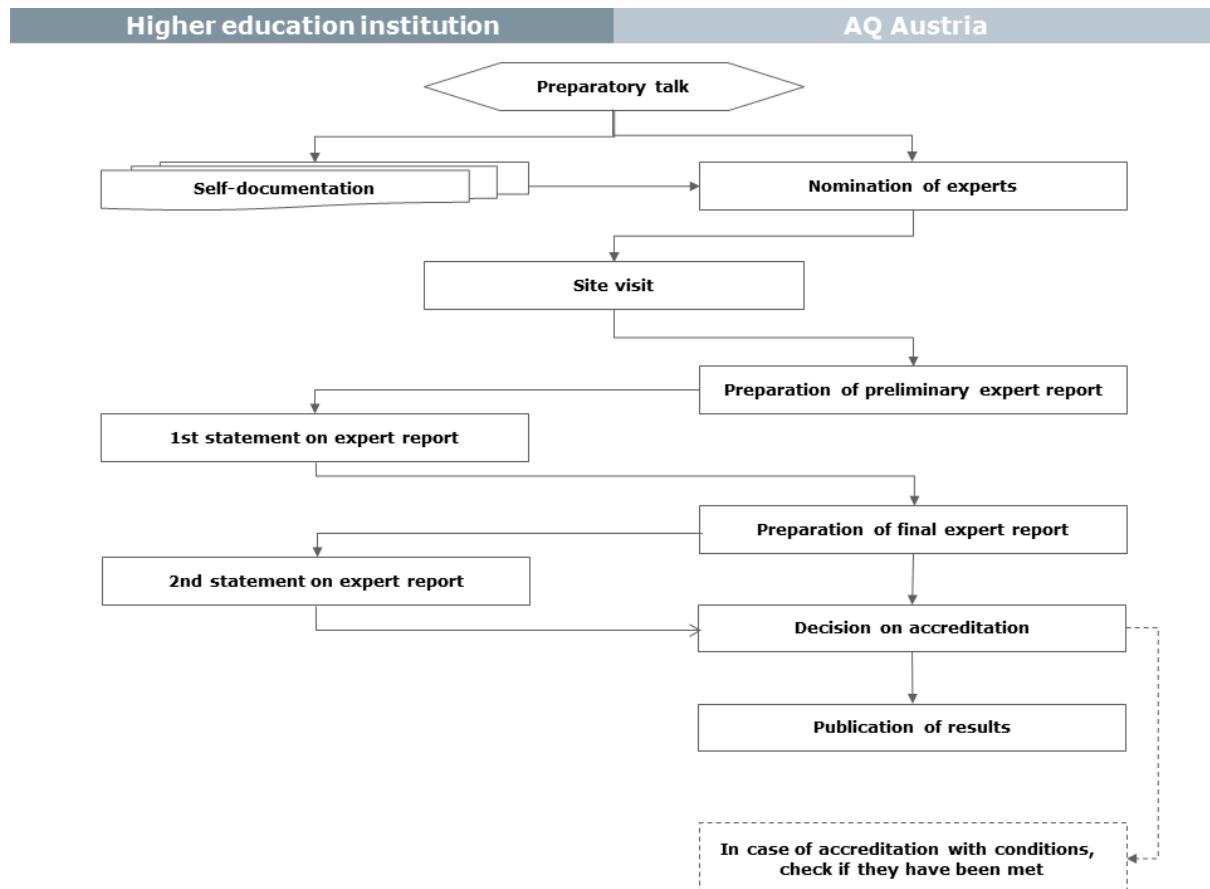
AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area,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

The following information derives from the self-evaluation report provided by KIMEP and from its website.

Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA in TESOL)

Date of introduction: January 2007
Regular study period: 4 semesters
Number of ECTS credit points: 120 ECTS

The overarching goals of the MA in TESOL programme are:

- to provide an academically and professionally rewarding and challenging education in the study and practice of applied and educational linguistics that builds and strengthens capacities of its graduates in teaching, curriculum design, evaluation and educational leadership;
- to train its graduate students with theory and practice in the latest approaches and ideas in foreign language teaching; and appropriate research experiences, which will assist them in completing theses based on original research;
- to prepare its graduates for ethical service in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and the broader international community.

The MA in TESOL programme's learning objectives are based on the TESOL International Organization and the US-based National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education standards with some revisions taking into consideration the different contextual needs.

By the completion of their studies, MA in TESOL students will be able to:

- describe language and language development. Students know, understand, and use concepts, theories, and research related to the nature and acquisition of English and other languages to construct educational settings that support foreign language students;
- understand cultural influences in instructional settings. Students understand and apply concepts, principles, theories, and research related to culture and cultural groups to construct learning environments that support students' home backgrounds, acquisition of written and spoken foreign languages and content-area achievement;
- plan, implement, and manage foreign language instruction. Students know, understand, and use standards-based practices and strategies for planning, implementing, and managing instruction in English and other languages, including classroom organisation, teaching strategies for developing and integrating reading and writing, and choosing and adapting classroom resources;
- understand instructional assessments and evaluation. Students understand issues of assessment and use standards-based assessment measures with foreign language students;
- serve as professional educators. Students demonstrate knowledge of historical approaches to foreign language teaching. They maintain understanding of new instructional techniques, research results, and innovations in the foreign language teaching field, as well as public policy issues. Students use such information in collaboration with other colleagues to reflect upon and improve foreign language education and provide support and advocacy for foreign language adult students.

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 Master programme in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages 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	16 April 2013
Site-visit at KIMEP by review team	8-9 May 2013
1 st draft of the report of the review team	10 June 2013
Formal statement by KIMEP	24 June 2013
Final report of the review team	3 July 2013
Statement on the final report by KIMEP	15 July 2013
Accreditation decision by board of AQ Austria	3 September 2013

Members of the review team

Name	Institution	Role
Prof. Dr. David Newby	Institute of English Studies at Graz University	Reviewer from academia, head of the review team
Martin Roundell Greene	British Council Accreditation Scheme	Reviewer from academia
Annakaisa Tikkinen	Student Union of the University of Oulu	Student reviewer
Anna Zabolotneva	English Language Learning Center "A&F Education"	Reviewer with professional experience

AQ Austria Coordinator

Zhanna Kuzminykh

2 Assessment results

2.1 Standard 1: Qualification objectives

The qualification objectives of the programme 'Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages' (MA in TESOL) are clearly defined in the KIMEP self-study report and are to a large extent implemented in the programme. Both academic, subject-related competences and generic competences are well-represented. The learning outcomes of the programme ensure that adequate employment opportunities are likely to be available to graduates.

Academic competences

The programme encompasses three major competence fields - theoretical, research and practical. Prior to the site visit to KIMEP there was a lack of clarity among the review team concerning the overall aims of the MA in TESOL programme: whether it was in essence a teacher training/development course or an applied linguistics course. Discussions with the Programme Coordinator and Executive Director of the Language Center and, in particular, with students and alumni of the programme served to clarify the aims. Indeed, it emerged as one of the strengths of the MA in TESOL programme that it seeks to develop both teaching skills and research-based competences in tandem and thus builds on the experiences of teaching that most students of the course bring with them.

One problem arising from the practice-to-theory rationale is that according to the entrance requirements of this course, it is available to students with no background in language teaching. It is recommended that the Executive Director of the Language Center gives consideration as to how a possible deficit in teaching practice might be made up – for example, by providing more teaching-related elective courses.

Language competences

A positive feature of the programme is that academic writing courses are offered which feed into content aspects of the course.

Generic competences

It is stated aim of the MA in TESOL programme to deliver a 'western-style' mode of training. On the other hand, the programme seeks to provide a degree that is 'culturally relevant and familiar to students and local administrators'. These, at first sight, conflicting aims were discussed with alumni and students, who provided a satisfactory explanation: what they perceived as 'western' education principles such as 'reflection,' 'independent thinking', 'learner-centred teaching', 'creativity' etc. were greatly valued and relevant to Kazakhstani educational institutions. Clearly, a good balance is achieved between insights from the international faculty, with its predominantly 'western' teaching and research background, and applications in a Kazakhstani context in the form of action-research projects, local conferences etc. It was further stated by faculty members that the cultural aspects of Kazakhstan and its educational system are an important feature of several courses.

Employment opportunities

Most of the students currently doing the MA in TESOL programme are teachers with practical experience at higher education institutions (HEIs) in Kazakhstan. So far, the programme has functioned to a considerable extent as a means of professional development for teachers

employed by KIMEP. As a result, alumni have continued their employment at KIMEP or have been recruited by the KIMEP Language Center. If the programme is to 'improve the quality of life in Kazakhstan' and to select students 'irrespective of their financial means', it is important that its benefits are to be felt more strongly in the state school sector. It is recommended that measures be considered as to how more state school teachers can be attracted to this programme – at present, the high course fees represent a barrier for state sector teachers. This would be particularly important given the role that the Language Center already plays in in-service teacher development. The Programme Coordinator stated that attempts are being made to diversify the student population, which can be seen as a positive development.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.2 Standard 2: Content and design

In general, the content and design of the MA in TESOL programme meet the standard of accreditation. The individual modules (courses) are well-designed and provide a coherent structure; the ECTS system is now being applied, albeit at a provisional stage.

Course content

The programme has been carefully constructed and provides for a coherent and supportive development from gaining theoretical knowledge, through to acquiring research skills and carrying out action research. An examination of three Masters' theses showed that students not only have a good command of research skills but choose topics which are of relevance to language education in Kazakhstan. As the Executive Director of the Language Center pointed out, the MA in TESOL programme has evolved from the language teaching activities of the Centre; thus, language teachers have gradually shifted in their role to become lecturers in applied linguistics. Whilst the principle that teachers should operate in tandem as language teachers and lecturers on the MA in TESOL programme is sound and in accordance with the overall aims of the programme, it has resulted in the fact that the content of the curriculum tends to be rather limited in scope, focusing on a relatively narrow range of applied linguistic topics. At present, an expansion of the programme and teaching staff is taking place. The Executive Director of the Language Center expressed his intention of hiring more specialists in applied linguistics. This is a necessary step if the programme is to increase its academic profile. This would also enable a wider range of applied linguistic subjects – corpus linguistics, psycho/cognitive linguistics etc. – to be taught.

The National Qualification Framework was approved by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) in 2012, but it has not been enacted or made publicly available yet. Hence it is not possible to assess the degree of the programme's compliance with this framework.

Licensing

With the changing of KIMEP's status from an institution to a university (2012), the programme "Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages" (MA in TESOL), like all the other KIMEP graduate programmes, had to undergo re-licensing to be eligible for further educational provision. State licenses are granted by the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) of the Republic of Kazakhstan strictly in compliance with the academic degree codes included in the State Classifier; the latter does not have a specific code for the MA in TESOL degree, which means that the programme is not recognised by the State as eligible for licensing. Currently the KIMEP University does not have a license to offer the MA in TESOL programme unless and until the Ministry of Education recognises TESOL in the State

Classifier. The most similar code in the State Classifier is 'Master of Arts in Foreign Language: Two Foreign Languages'. Due to the urgent need for an operational license, two sets of documents were submitted by KIMEP to the MES: (1) licensing package for the 'MA in Foreign Language: Two Foreign Languages' degree. The license for this degree was granted as of April 16, 2013; (2) a petition to have the MA in TESOL included to the State Classifier. If this is granted, KIMEP would be allowed to continue the programme delivery, as well as to shape this programme for all Kazakhstani universities that wish to offer this degree.

The need to comply with the national educational legislation laid down by the MES and the attempt on the part of KIMEP to break new ground by creating a new qualification category within this framework – 'TESOL', as opposed to 'Two Foreign Languages' has resulted in the fact that at the time of the accreditation the programme is in what the Vice-president for Academic Affairs referred to as a 'state of suspension'; thus, a programme is to be accredited which does not yet comply with the national framework. Senior management expressed confidence that the application to the MES to have the MA in TESOL degree recognised will be successful. Since the curriculum and learning outcomes of the MA in TESOL programme are virtually identical with that of the 'Master of Arts in Foreign Language: Two Foreign Languages' with the same number of ECTS credits, and since the MA in TESOL programme was granted a license without an expiration date prior to KIMEP's achieving university status, it is clearly a formality that the MA TESOL will be included in the State Classifier of academic degree codes of the MES and therefore officially recognized.

Practicum

The exact nature of the 'practicum' needs to be more clearly defined. In general, it would appear to refer to an action-research project, rather than teaching practice, which is how the term is normally understood. However, elements of teaching practice are apparently incorporated. In theory, the curriculum provides a window for carrying out the practicum abroad; however, at present there is no evidence of concrete plans for facilitating this. Clarification of the practicum would be particularly important should students take the opportunity to undertake this in a different country.

ECTS

At present KIMEP, and other Higher Education institutions in Kazakhstan, are in the process of implementing the Bologna Process and of adopting the ECTS system. Clearly, a good deal of thought has been given to this process at national and institutional levels. On the whole, the ECTS system is applied in ways which are in accordance with practices at European universities. It is recommended that closer consideration be given to the assigning of ECTS points to courses: 10 ECTS points is a high figure for certain courses and might be more appropriate in systems where a greater degree of individual work is expected of students.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.3 Standard 3: Academic feasibility

The academic feasibility of the MA in TESOL programme is ensured by suitable entry qualifications, a well-balanced curriculum, an achievable workload and appropriate support mechanisms and examinations.

Entry qualifications

The programme has been designed with the aim that that graduates in any subject should be able to complete it in the minimum permitted period of four semesters of study. There were

two areas the review team paid particular attention to: the required minimum level of English language proficiency and whether students with no teacher training and teaching experience would be able to complete the course satisfactorily.

The minimum English language level for all graduate programmes in Kazakhstan has recently been set by the MES at the equivalent of IELTS 6.0. For the MA in TESOL programme, this is rather lower than the minimum required in many countries: for instance most UK universities require a minimum level equivalent to IELTS of 6.5. However, the review team were told by faculty members that the students enrolled to date had comfortably met this minimum language requirement, a claim borne out during the review team's interviews with students, alumni and staff. The Language Center also has its own entrance tests, the KIMEP English Placement Test (KEPT), used to determine the proficiency of all applicants to the university, and a test used for MA in TESOL applicants consisting of a cloze test, two essays and a 30-minute interview with two faculty members. These in-house tests are adequate in that they provide experienced faculty members with a reasonably reliable indication of whether an applicant's English is sufficient to pursue the programme successfully. However, their scores and, where applicable, essay-grades have not been calibrated against any external tests or scales of proficiency, and one test sampled by the review team had not been sufficiently thoroughly proof-read.

In summary, for the students enrolled on the MA in TESOL programme so far, the minimum English language requirement for entry and the methods of testing appear to have worked satisfactorily. However, the review team recommend that the minimum English language entry requirement be reviewed and, if necessary, re-stated at a minimum level that the Language Center considers necessary for entry onto the MA in TESOL programme. The Language Center's own test should be calibrated against external tests and/or scales such as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (CEFR).

The curriculum for the MA in TESOL programme has been developed primarily to meet the needs of experienced English language teachers to extend their understanding of language acquisition and linguistics. It is not primarily focused on teacher training. The practicum element, which includes teaching practice and observation, accounts for less than seven per cent of the total graduation credits available. Given the needs and experience of past and present students, this focus on theory rather than practice appears satisfactory. However, the review team considered whether the curriculum would also be appropriate for students without any previous teacher training and experience. They concluded that if any such students were to apply in the future, the Language Center should stipulate that they complete an initial teacher teaching course in ELT before embarking on the MA in TESOL programme and that for such students the practicum provides a stronger element of teaching practice and observation.

Curriculum

As stated above, the design and content of the curriculum is appropriate for the present cohort of students, almost all of whom are practising English language teachers.

Workload

The programme workload is based in the American credit system and can be completed in a minimum of four semesters of full-time study. There are two regular semesters, Fall and Spring, of 18 learning weeks each per year. Each of these consists of 15 taught weeks, a reading week and two weeks of examinations. There are also two intensive optional Summer

semesters of eight and four weeks respectively. A full-time student is expected to undertake 1,620 learning hours of study each year, or 45 hours per week. This normally involves undertaking up to six courses per semester, depending on their assigned ECTS credits. The majority of students in the group the review team spoke to undertake three courses per semester and typically complete the programme in four years. Examination arrangements vary from course to course but usually take the form of one or more mid-term assessments and a final examination.

Faculty members said that they considered the student workload reasonable and this was confirmed by the students: they reported they felt under some pressure, especially towards the end of semesters, but thought the workload was reasonable and manageable. However, the MA in TESOL workload is not regularly checked for plausibility. The review team therefore recommend that the programme leaders design a set of guidelines to serve as a tool to check for the plausibility of student workload.

Support services

The Office of the Dean of Students offers welfare and health support to students including emergency financial support, recreational and sports facilities, student housing and student counselling. Pastoral support is also provided by faculty staff of the Learning Center. Student housing is available in the KIMEP Dormitory, but most MA in TESOL students to date have their own accommodation and only a few international students have required help. Health and catering services are available on campus. In summary, there is a range of appropriate support services available at KIMEP to students, although so far there has been little demand for these from Masters' students. However, as the programme expands, it is likely to include younger students, students from more diverse backgrounds and more students from outside Almaty. The review team therefore recommends that a more structured induction programme be introduced to include the University's and Language Center's facilities and services and the programme's regulations. A check-list of the induction programme's components should be used to verify its completion.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.4 Standard 4: Examination system

The programme practices both continuous assessment, such as mid-terms and essays, and has final exams or projects. The final examination is usually weighed at 40 percent of the total assessment. Individual faculty members are in charge of determining the type of examination used on their courses and determine the students' grades based on the intended learning outcomes set for the course. All examination papers are peer-reviewed by another member of staff before the students take the exam to assure the quality of examination. This is a good policy.

Special assessment arrangements are possible for final exams for students with disabilities, and these are made on case-by-case basis.

In general, the examination and grading of the programme is well structured, and the grading criteria are communicated to the students in the course syllabi. Students have the possibility to discuss their grades with their teachers and there have been cases where the teachers have adjusted their grading. There is also an official channel for complaints should the students feel unhappy with their grading, and the students are aware of this.

The final exams are not currently double-marked. This is a question of resources, as double marking would greatly add to the staff workload, which is considerably high as it is. There are, however, plans to recruit more staff to comply with the needs of the MA in TESOL programme: therefore the team strongly recommends that the programme should consider introducing double marking for final exams when new staff have been recruited.

The programme uses double marking when marking theses. All theses are marked by the thesis supervisor and another member of the staff. However, there is no external marking. The team strongly recommends that a random sample of theses should be subjected to an external review in order to assure the quality of the thesis process.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.5 Standard 5: Resources

The Language Center consists of 60 academic staff; one in six or seven faculty members is a citizen of Kazakhstan.

The core MA in TESOL faculty are internationally well-qualified, hold academic degrees mostly at the level of Ph.D., and have professional qualifications, which are adequately supported by academic research publications and conference presentations. The publications reflect current issues in Kazakhstan education and practical aspects of teaching.

The procedure of recruiting the staff is carried out by advertising in "Chronicle of Higher Education", drawing up a shortlist of candidates by a hiring committee, conducting skype interviews and other detailed procedures.

As was seen from the site visit to KIMEP, there is a need for applied linguistics specialists to teach on the MA in TESOL programme (see also section 2.2). It is recommended that the Language Center employs more applied linguist specialists as well make systematic use of guest lecturers.

It is to be noted that the workload of faculty is to be regarded as somewhat excessive: both the high number of teaching hours and administrative duties allow too little time for research activities. Further, as the result of limited funding, the Language Center faculty members receive little support to attend international conferences. This impacts negatively on their research activities. It is recommended that the Language Center teaching faculty should be given more time and resources to enhance their research activities.

The Language Center also supports young academics working at KIMEP and taking the MA in TESOL programme. The students are given a teaching reduction (6 teaching hours out of their 15 hours per week for taking two courses in MA in TESOL) and 50% tuition fee reduction beginning from this calendar year. KIMEP University has set up the policy that any faculty members without a Master's degree will be reclassified and will be given fewer courses to teach. There is evidence that this stimulates employees of the Language Center to study for a Master's degree and hence produces better-qualified professionals.

The KIMEP budget is centralized; the Language Center thus receives funds from the financial centre of KIMEP. However, it has no budget for books. As a result, the Executive Director of

the Language Center gives access to students to his own private collection. It was observed during the site visit to the Language Center that the language laboratory is well-equipped though small in size.

It should be mentioned that KIMEP has a very good library which also provides electronic research facilities. There are enough computers and hardware. Students are also able to use their own laptops. There is wireless access to the internet and many books are accessible electronically. The Coordinator of the MA in TESOL programme has access to libraries abroad and is able to make these available to students as well. The library has enough space and resources to conduct workshops and to carry out project work. It is open for all students during working hours 7 days a week and hours are extended during exam periods. All faculty members and students use MOODLE as a course management tool which provides good access to materials and transparency of course content.

One problem encountered by students is a lack of multiple copies of course-related books and materials. It is recommended that the Language Center provide more information resources to support student research. It is also recommended that the Language Center extends the selections of books in the library and provides more multiple hard copies.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.6 Standard 6: Transparency and documentation

The study programme, course of studies, examination and admission requirements are well-documented although some details in publicity materials are potentially misleading.

The KIMEP self-evaluation report states that the university prides itself on its openness and transparency. This claim is to a great extent substantiated by the comprehensive and detailed information available to prospective and present students and staff.

The KIMEP websites are the main sources of information. As well as the main website, the Language Center and the MA in TESOL programme have their own. All pages are available in clear, accessible English and most in Kazakh, Russian, Chinese and Korean. The main site's home page leads to a great deal of information about the university, its governance and management, its range of programmes, admission requirements, programme structure and content, examinations and so on. There are sections for prospective students, current students, alumni, and student and faculty portals and links to the so-called L Drive, where course information and materials are available. Transparency extends to codes of practice for staff, sample contracts, disciplinary procedure, conference attendance and workload. The main website itself and all its sub-sites and individual pages are well-designed and easily navigable.

There is a general MA in TESOL brochure, available in print and as a pdf download, which gives an accurate general outline of the programme, staffing and admission requirements. However, it gives as one of the five reasons for considering the programme, "International – take the opportunity to study abroad with our dual degree and exchange programmes". Although there is an intention to offer this facility at some point in the future, at present there is no provision of dual degree and exchange programmes. This claim is therefore potentially misleading and should be removed from publicity as soon as practicable.

Full details of the programme are available in the annual KIMEP catalogue, which comprises an Administrative Catalogue of 130 pages giving full details of the academic calendar, policies, codes of conduct, disciplinary and appeals procedures, grading and graduation requirements, and Fall and Spring catalogues. This also presents the MA in TESOL course details and programme structure. The information is very comprehensive and accessible. However, in the current 2012-13 edition, the credits awarded per course are given as KIMEP credits, and an equivalent of 0.5 KIMEP credits to 1 ECTS credit is shown. This is not accurate and the review team recommends that a clearer definition and explanation is presented in the 2013-14 edition of the catalogue.

In addition to documentation and the websites, up to date information about the study programme, courses, examination and admission requirements are available on noticeboards, and from the Graduate Admissions Office and Language Center staff.

The programme only partly complies with the standard, due to the weakness in the brochure outlined above. However, generally, transparency and documentation are of a very high standard.

The programme partly complies with the standard.

2.7 Standard 7: Quality assurance and development

Like most universities, KIMEP carries out online anonymous student evaluations of teaching at fixed points throughout the year. This questionnaire is comprehensive and well-designed. However, according to KIMEP policy student feedback is gathered before the course final examination. Due to this the students lack the opportunity to give feedback on the exams and whether they feel the exams are designed in a reasonable way and in accordance to the course contents.

On the basis of the evidence supplied to the review team the impact of the student evaluations of teaching on quality assurance within the MA in TESOL programme can be regarded as negligible. Students interviewed by the review team either had not completed the questionnaire or did not take it seriously. Statistics showed a low rate of completion for the MA in TESOL programme (e.g., in Fall Semester 2012 the response rate for MA in TESOL was 25%, whereas for KIMEP it was 41.89%). Further, there was no evidence that the feedback from this questionnaire is directly acted upon and results are not communicated to students in a systematic fashion.

Within the programme there is no formalised evaluation of the programme as a whole or of specific courses although individual teachers carry out questionnaires relating to their own courses. However, it was stressed by students and alumni that regular feedback was given to teachers on an *ad hoc* basis and that teachers were very receptive to suggestions for changes and improvements. Given that students on the programme are mature and in many cases Language Center colleagues of their MA in TESOL lecturers, this type of informal feedback is quite appropriate and functions well.

Nevertheless, the review team recommends that a formalised system of course evaluation be introduced, which would have a pro-active rather than reactive function and thus assist in programme development in a more coherent way. It was pointed out by the Executive

Director of the Language Center that a programme review is to take place shortly, which is to be welcomed. Such a measure could be incorporated in the course of this review.

A very positive aspect of quality development is that monthly staff meetings take place at which programme-related content is discussed.

As far as the professional development of faculty is concerned, 'Research Talks' are held twice a year (2-3 days) at which faculty members share research experiences. Also, peer observations of teaching, both announced and unannounced take place on a regular, *ad hoc* basis. It is recommended that peer observation should be formalised.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.8 Standard 8: Equal opportunities

According to KIMEP core values KIMEP is committed to a policy of equal opportunities. Based on the SER and the interviews, both the university and the Language Center are willing to provide additional assistance to students with special needs. However, assistance is given on an *ad hoc*, case-by-case basis and no institutional procedures to guarantee accessibility of studies are in place. Based on the interviews, the students do not have a clear picture of how to seek additional assistance. The team recommends that KIMEP implements documented procedures for enhancing accessibility for students with learning or physical disabilities in order to guarantee equal treatment of all students. The procedures need to include both accessibility of study environment and the assistance offered to students to ensure that students with disabilities are able to participate in teaching and fulfil the course requirements. The MA in TESOL programme should in turn adopt these guidelines. These procedures need to be made transparent for new applicants as well as enrolled students in order to provide them with support to recognise possible learning difficulties and to make them aware of their rights as students.

Most of the students currently enrolled on the programme are teachers at the Language Center. The teachers have had reductions on their teaching load based on the number of courses they are taking in the MA in TESOL programme. This is a good policy to support the professional development of the staff and the team recommends that this should be continued.

For students who are not part of Language Center staff KIMEP offers both merit and needs-based scholarships. The Language Center receives approximately five to six full scholarships to cover tuition fees per academic year and they are free to distribute the scholarships between students as they see appropriate. There have been some delays at university-level in reaching decisions on the scholarships and when recruiting new students the Language Center has not been able to share up-to-date information on the scholarships and the criteria used to distribute them. The team recommends that the timetable for the scholarship process as a whole should be more clearly stated in advance to allow timely communication with prospective and enrolled students. The review team recommends including a student observer in the Language Center scholarship committee to enhance transparency of the scholarship allocation process.

Many students of the MA in TESOL programme already have families. Based on the interviews with students the programme has taken this into account well by organising most of the contact teaching in the evening.

The Language Center has a Student Support Centre, which provides counselling for all students seeking help. However, it seems that students of the MA in TESOL programme do not take advantage of these services since they see them targeted more for undergraduate students. According to SER, Personal Development Plans are made only by students with a risk of experiencing academic difficulties. The team recommends that the programme adopt the use of Personal Development Plans for all students as a part of induction process for new students and use this as a tool to coordinate programme level student counselling. This will become of greater importance as the programme starts to attract more students outside KIMEP.

The programme complies with the standard.

2.9 Standard 9: Programme-related co-operation

Several international cooperations exist between KIMEP and other universities, including eleven dual degree programmes. As far as the MA in TESOL programme is concerned, both the self-evaluation report and the MA in TESOL advertising brochure refer to 'dual degree and exchange programmes' and list '[international] institutions that the faculty are affiliated with'. However, these cooperations do not as yet exist and can be regarded as aspirational, rather than available. It emerged in discussions with students and alumni of the MA in TESOL programme that they had not been made aware of possibilities for international exchanges or practica. Several students expressed a strong interest in taking part in such programmes.

Since this international aspect is one of the selling points of the programme and since the self-report also states that students have the opportunity to a) 'take an internship abroad' and b) 'study abroad on a credit-transfer basis', it is strongly recommended that concrete plans be drawn up and cooperations established.

One feature of international cooperation that is successful can be seen in the fact that the MA in TESOL programme attracts a number of applicants from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

At the national level, a very positive cooperation measure is the annual conference that takes place at KIMEP - KIMEP International Research Conference (KIRC); this has a strong focus on language teaching and attracts participants from other universities and institutions.

It was reported that faculty members go to foreign universities as guest lecturers (e.g. Uppsala University, Sweden; Management Centre Innsbruck, Austria) and participate in international conferences (e.g. TESOL Arabia). It can also be positively noted that one alumna of the MA in TESOL programme has held presentations on her MA thesis ('Speaking anxiety in foreign language classes in Kazakhstan') at international conferences and has published her findings in an international journal. However, the support for research activities such as conference attendance and presentations is reported to be low and would need to be increased if the status of KIMEP's programme is to gain an international profile, which is one of the expressed aims of KIMEP's President, Dr. Bang.

Clearly, exchange programmes are dependent on appropriate funding. It is strongly recommended that the university authorities seek means of financial support for cooperative measures.

The programme partly complies with the standard.