

# Accreditation of study programmes

## KIMEP University

### International Law

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

*"Master of International Law"*

at KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan for a period of five years, **under the following condition**. The fulfilment of the condition must be documented in writing within nine months (i.e. until 3<sup>rd</sup> of June 2014) and is subject to assessment by AQ Austria. In case of non-fulfilment, the accreditation will be withdrawn immediately.

#### Condition

1,5 additional permanent faculty members must be appointed to the School of Law through an adequate selection procedure.



Agency for  
Quality Assurance  
and Accreditation  
Austria

# Accreditation Report of the review team

## Master of International Law

## KIMEP University

July 2013

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# 1 General information

- KIMEP has the opportunity to write a statement about chapter 1 and 2. Chapter 3 is directed to the board of AQ Austria. Chapter 3.2 (Recommendations to KIMEP) will be forwarded to KIMEP after the accreditation decision of the board.
- AQ Austria prepares a “summary report” which includes summarizing statements on the study programmes, the decision of AQ Austria board including the justification and – if necessary – conditions, and names of review team members.

## 1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

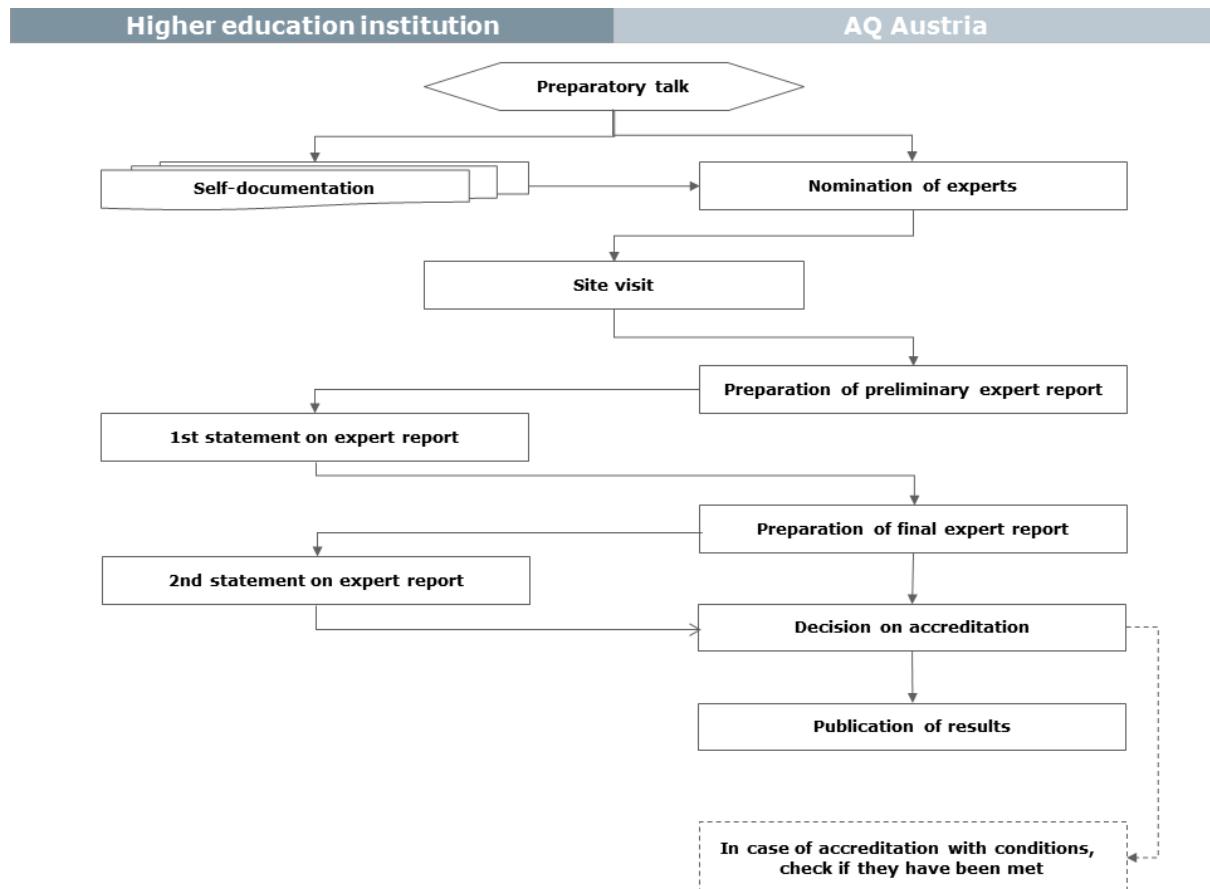
AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area, 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 of the programme
Standard 2	Content and design of the programme
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. the university's website:

Date of introduction:	August 2009
Regular study period:	3 semesters
Number of ECTS credit points:	90 ECTS
Degree awarded:	Master of International Law (LL.M.)

The goals of the LL.M. programme are to provide students with

- a thorough understanding of substantive Kazakhstani and international law, and of the role that national and international law play in the development of orderly and successful societies;
- an advanced level of research skills, which will enable them to identify relevant legislation, judicial decisions and commentary and to synthesize and apply that knowledge to solve legal problems, provide legal advice, and complete memoranda, papers and a research thesis; and
- preparation for ethical service to their society and the national, regional and international communities.

### **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 to 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.

The following information is provided by the review team:

### **Requirements for working as a lawyer in Kazakhstan**

In Kazakhstan, a person may serve as a judge and/or as a notary public and/or as an advocate only if the person has higher (graduate) legal education, has served a certain period of probation and has passed qualification examination/attestation as well as obtained the license for private notaries and advocates. Only a Bachelor degree is regarded as a higher legal education. Note that the current education standards provide for two related Bachelor degrees, namely Bachelor in Jurisprudence and/or Bachelor in International Law. While not exactly set out by legislation, the general perception is that both degrees are qualified for the position of a judge, notary or advocate.

An in-house lawyer should have either higher legal education or postgraduate legal education in the respective field and certain work experience. An assistant to an in-house lawyer does not need to have work experience. Both requirements, i. e. education and work experience, may be waived if a prospective candidate has substantial practical experience and fulfils work duties in time and with sufficient quality. Please also note that the regulations do not clearly define the term "respective field" for postgraduate legal education. Accordingly, any postgraduate education more or less related to law may (but not necessarily would) be qualified for an in house lawyer position.

Kazakhstan legislation does not set out any specific requirements to a self-employed lawyer who provides legal consulting services to a public and represents interests in court (only advocates can represent in criminal cases though). Interestingly, there are no specific requirements to lawyers in law firms either. Here the situation may change with the recent creation of two legal professional organizations – Union of Lawyers of Kazakhstan and Panel of Commercial Lawyers (KazBar). Both organizations (KazBar more actively) have stated their intention to develop and implement qualification requirements for practicing lawyers, including foreign lawyers, and make those requirements obligatory. For the moment, membership in either organization is not obligatory.

### **1.3 Accreditation procedure at KIMEP**

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

#### **Timetable of the accreditation procedure**

<b>Procedural step</b>	<b>Date</b>
Delivery of self-evaluation report 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	30 April 2013
Site-visit at KIMEP by review team	20 - 21 May 2013
1 <sup>st</sup> draft of the report of the review team	18 June 2013
Formal statement by KIMEP	28 June 2013
Final report of the review team	12 July 2013
Statement on the final report by KIMEP	19 July 2013

**Members of the review team**

Name	Institution	Role
Ass. Prof.Dr.Sebastian Mock	University of Hamburg / University of Konstanz	Reviewer from academia
Rui César Costa Freitas de Carvalho	University of Coimbra	Student reviewer
Maksim Grekov	GRATA Law Firm	Reviewer with professional experience
Prof.Dr.Janez Kranjc	University of Ljubljana	Reviewer from academia, head of the review team

**AQ Austria Coordinator**

Dietlinde Kastelliz

## 2 Assessment results

The Kazakhstan Institute of Management, Economics, and Strategic Research (KIMEP) was founded in 1992 as a non-profit, American-style, credit-based Higher Education Institution. In 2012 it obtained the status of a University.

As its mission KIMEP maintains "to develop well-educated citizens and to improve the quality of life in Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region through teaching, learning, community service and the advancement of knowledge in the fields of business administration, law and social sciences". In order to fulfil this mission KIMEP offers graduate and undergraduate degree programmes in different disciplines.

KIMEP started its LL.M. programme in 2009 "to prepare professionals to take leadership roles in the legal practice community, business economy and civil society in Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and the rest of the world". For this reason it was conceived as an English language programme. According to its mission statement, KIMEP's aim is to "prepare its graduates for the world of work in the international community", both with international firms and institutions working in Kazakhstan and those operating abroad. In line with this objective the curriculum and teaching methods were designed to teach students the substantive law, as well as skills necessary to interpret and apply it in different working environments. After the initial year of its application the curriculum was modified to take into consideration comments of students and employers. The KIMEP Law School conducted a review of the program in 2011 and the school initiated a few additional changes to the program in the academic year 2012-13.

According to the self-evaluation report, LL.M. programme objectives are to provide students with:

- a thorough understanding of substantive Kazakhstani and international law, and of the role that national and international law play in the development of orderly and successful societies;
- an advanced level of research skills, which will enable them to identify relevant legislation, judicial decisions and commentary, and to synthesize and apply that knowledge to solve legal problems, provide legal advice, and complete memoranda, papers and a research theses; and
- the preparation for ethical service to their society and national, regional and international communities.

The programme is aimed at preparing full-time and part-time graduate students to undertake careers in law, businesses and in civil society or to undertake further postgraduate study.

To achieve these goals the Law School is performing different teaching activities, such as lectures combined with Socratic dialogues, discussion, analysis and problem-solving, guided and self-initiated reading, Moot Court exercises, supervised master's thesis and legal research.

During the visit of the KIMEP Law School the members of the Review Team saw the premises and talked to the KIMEP management, to the Dean of the Law School, to the teaching faculty, to the representatives of Students' Association, to the Alumni of the Law School, to students, to representatives of the companies employing graduates of the Law School as well as to the librarians of the University library comprising the library of the Law School.

Taking into consideration the documents submitted by the management of the Law School, especially the self-evaluation report, the information the Review team gathered during its site

visit, and the AQ Austria quality requirements and standards, the Review Team came to following conclusions and recommendations:

## 2.1 Standard 1: Learning outcomes of the programme

The Review Team endeavoured to identify specific qualification objectives of the programme, to assess to what extent the programme and its execution ensure professional and academic competencies, and to what extent the programme contributes to the personal development of students and to the civil society.

According to the mission statement of the faculty, its main purpose in launching the LL.M. programme was to educate lawyers in the field of international commercial law. For the future, the Law School foresees the introduction of a further module in international criminal law. According to what the Review Team was able to see during its visit, the study programme is modelled on qualification objectives.

A particular feature of the LL.M. programme in the Law School is the fact that a majority of students are working and have jobs. Students told the Review Team that the education they got in the framework of the LL.M. programme helped them in their everyday work and fully met their professional expectations. They also told the Review Team that the competencies and expertise they obtained during the study process were directly usable and helped them to perform their professional tasks. The same quality of the KIMEP LL.M. programme was also stressed by the employers the Review Team had the opportunity to talk to.

The Law School has two interesting practice-oriented programmes which, apart from teaching purposes, significantly help students to get the feeling of legal practice, namely the legal clinic and the tax research centre. Especially the legal clinic invites practitioners from law firms to supervise cases from time to time. Tax research centre regularly invites practitioners to give lectures on specific tax topics.

The KIMEP LL.M. programme graduates have classes in English, plus courses in Company Law and other courses demonstrating how advanced legal systems deal with commercial legal issues. Furthermore, when the requirement of the authorities that only persons having Bachelors in Law may take LL.M. is implemented, future LL.M. students would already possess a more solid basic legal background. Having said so, the KIMEP LL.M. graduates have all the chances to succeed in the local legal market dealing with cross border transactions (and attract more students to the programme as the result), if cooperation with practitioners is expanded and becomes a tradition.

The programme contributes significantly to the civil society and to the democratic standards, especially since it is executed with integrity. This characteristic of KIMEP was repeatedly stressed by students and alumni alike. Some of them even went so far as to say that bribes, which allegedly occur elsewhere, were out of question at the KIMEP Law School.

The non-corrupt functioning of KIMEP is apparently made possible not only because the international teaching faculty is implementing European and American academic standards and interactive approach but also because initiatives of the Students' Association are taken seriously by the University and the Faculty administration. They regard students as partners and try to follow their ideas and initiatives. This creates an atmosphere of confidence and openness in which students do not hesitate to propose initiatives and to criticize what they regard as inadequate and needing change.

Together with skills and competencies the KIMEP Law School provides, the corruption-free study is, according to the students and alumni of the Law School, the main asset of KIMEP University and its main comparative advantage.

As far as the learning outcomes are concerned, the Review Team came to the conclusion that they fully correspond to the AQ Austria quality requirements.

The programme complies with the standard.

## 2.2 Standard 2: Content and design of the programme

The master programme of International Law constitutes a special post-graduate legal education programme and is therefore not directly relevant to the existing national legal qualification framework of Kazakhstan (for more detail see Section 1.2). However, interviews with alumni and employers of graduates from the KIMEP Law programme showed that the current Kazakhstani market for lawyers and legal advisors with qualification being taught in the programme is still growing. Consequently, graduates of the programme have an advantage in the national job market. The courses offered in the programme meet the requirements set in Standard 2. Adequate forms of teaching and learning are also provided. It has to be noted that, compared to the other legal programmes offered by Kazakh universities, the programme offers a completely different way of teaching. This is especially true since the entire programme is taught in English. These differences from other programmes in the field of legal education in Kazakhstan are very much appreciated by the students.

Regarding the implementation of the ECTS system, the programme still needs to be improved since it does not completely comply with the ECTS credit point system. However, this can mainly be the consequence of the fact that the Kazakh education system just adopted the ECTS system and therefore hardly provides a sufficient legal framework at the moment.

As of now a bachelor degree, which does not necessarily need to be a Bachelor in Law or Bachelor with a minor in Law, is required for the admission to the programme. However, due to the requirements set by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in the future only Bachelors of Law will be admitted to the programme. A further requirement for the admission is the English language proficiency since the whole programme is taught in English. Besides these requirements the selection process is based on an individual selection. Since there are fewer applicants than the available places at the Law School, the selection process is understandably not yet very developed. Therefore, the selection criteria have to be developed further, especially since the just started LLB programme in law will probably produce a higher number of qualified students for the master programme. Also, at the moment there are no set rules for the recognition of foreign qualifications. Since the programme is supposed to also attract students from other countries of Central Asia, these rules have to be developed in the future. Although the programme has no rules regarding mobility of students these rules are not necessary, since a vast majority of students works part-time and the programme is not designed for an international exchange.

The programme complies with the standard to a sufficient extent.

## 2.3 Standard 3: Academic feasibility

The self-evaluation report states that a background in law studies is not needed for enrolment in the LL.M. programme. On the other hand, knowledge of English is a mandatory requirement for the admission to the LL.M. programme. It can also be seen through the reading of the self-evaluation report that the entrance requirements for the LL.M. programme are not static, since they are reviewed every year by the KIMEP's Academic Council and

published in the "KIMEP Catalogue". For students without prior legal education, KIMEP's law school has decided to make the enrolment in a foundational law course mandatory.

The present LL.M. programme is professionally-oriented. Thus, with regard to the design of the study programme, particular attention is paid to the practical dimension of legal education. As far as the coherency of the programme is concerned, and taking into consideration the fact that this a Master Programme in International Law, the Review Team came to the conclusion that all the main topics, areas and dimensions are covered by the present programme. But the Review Team was not able to find a convincing reason for the difference between the number of ECTS allocated for the Course of Public International Law (5 ECTS) compared to other required courses – except International Commercial Law that also has 5 ECTS, given the fact that the fundamentals of Public International Law are the basic starting point for many of the elective courses.

Even with a previous legal background not being mandatory for the LL.M. programme and with a substantial number of students that come from fields of studies other than law, the Review Team members found that substantial efforts have been undertaken by the Law School to help students overcome their learning difficulties and reach academic success. This is extremely important because the majority of classes take place after working hours, i. e. after the students have concluded their work in their workplaces.

Given the small number of students enrolled in the LL. M. programme, the Review Team regards ten as the minimal number of students for a course to be taught as too high, and recommends that the minimal number be lowered, notwithstanding the problems this may pose in financial terms. Because of the existing requirement of at least ten students, the chances of getting in a course of one's choice are smaller than they would be if this criterion were more flexible. This requirement probably prevents several courses to be held, thereby precluding students from enrolling in some of the courses that were initially announced in the programme and compelling them to enrol in courses that are not of their preference. The Review Team also sees no real need for separate courses on Legal Methods, Skills and Reasoning, and Methods of Legal Argument. Taking into consideration the description of both courses presented in the self-evaluation report and during the interviews the Review Team had during its visit, the Review Team is of the opinion that the two courses could be merged. In any case the Review Team could not find a compelling reason for their separate existence.

In the view of the Review Team the programme nevertheless entirely complies with the standard.

## 2.4 Standard 4: Examination system

The current examination system is course-based. The respective teaching professor can choose an adequate examination method. Usually professors apply American examination methods consisting of multiple-choice exams and essay questions where exams can be conducted in either in-class or take-home formats. Usually the professor announces the details of an exam in class in advance. There are no oral exams. So far the programme lacks detailed rules on the treatment of students in special situations. However, the interviews showed that students can usually approach the professor with their problems and concerns and that a suitable solution is always found. Furthermore, the programme provides some basic rules on the treatment of appeals against the grading of exams. Decisions in this appeal procedure are rendered by the *College Academic Integrity Committee*. In this context the interviews showed that students are aware of this possibility. However it has to be noted that

the current legal framework of the appeal procedures still needs some improvement since it hardly states the exact prerequisites for an appeal.

From the analysis of the self-evaluation report the Review Team can be sure about two things: first, that there is no imposition of any kind, either from KIMEP or from the Law School management, related to how the examination system is implemented in different courses; and second, that both KIMEP and Law School governance allow all relevant sources of student examination, where the decision of what examination system is adopted in each course is left to the instructor.

It has also become evident that there is a commitment from the responsible KIMEP and Law School staff to establish a correspondence between the intended learning outcomes for the courses and the respective assessment and examinations methods. In the self-evaluation report giving a description of suggested examination methods designed to meet the intended learning outcomes of the courses, in conducted interviews where professors told the Review Team that they had the freedom to design their own examination system in each course, and in interviews with students who referred to the examination system as being suitable for them assessing them realistically in courses taken – evidence was presented.

Interviews the Review Team had with students proved that there was a good coordination between examination modes of different courses. The Review Team believes that this is of high importance for the academic quality and success. Based on the interviews conducted and the documents provided by KIMEP University the Review Team is confident that the assessment methods are provided and explained to the students in advance (meaning that students know before they start the individual course how they are going to be assessed and what is intended by each assessment method).

The programme complies with the standard.

## 2.5 Standard 5: Resources

The Review Team visited the premises of the Law School. It has a recently built and modern building with several classrooms and seminar rooms. All classrooms and seminar rooms are equipped with computers and projectors enabling PowerPoint and other types of presentation. The Review Team had a chance to visit some of the classes taught by different professors. All of them used the available technology.

Classrooms and seminar rooms are spacious and equipped with modern ergonomic chairs and tables. The illumination is modern and sufficient. The premises are clean and well kept.

The Review Team also visited the library of KIMEP University that includes the Law Library and legal data bases. Although the Law Library is still in its early days, it already contains a decent collection of legal literature and a substantial collection of the most important electronic data bases and legal sources. The principal goal of the library is to provide students with both domestic and rather expensive foreign legal literature. For the moment it is primarily focused on providing teaching materials to students and to a lesser extent aimed at providing research literature. The Review Team, however, was told that the University is trying its best to also acquire research literature and to upgrade the library into a unit that would facilitate adequate research in different legal disciplines.

The library is very open to the needs of the students. It is open every day. In addition, following the students' wishes, the opening hours have been extended late into the night on

weekdays. A majority of students are staying on campus which makes the use of University facilities even easier and more efficient.

The Review Team came to the conclusion that the material conditions, i.e., the premises and equipment can be, both in quantitative and in qualitative aspect, regarded as above average and even, as far as classrooms and seminar rooms are concerned, as excellent.

The Law School has qualified teaching personnel. All professors were educated or trained abroad. They were described by students as dedicated and competent. Students stressed the high teaching commitment of the teaching staff of the Law School. Professors were said to be always ready to discuss practical problems brought up by students or to provide additional explanations. Students very much appreciated the promptness with which professors answered their emails or gave them feedback about submitted papers and theses.

Yet, the Review Team was taken aback by the small number of the teaching faculty. It is certainly too small to make an adequate long-term implementation of the study programme and an organic development of the institution feasible. Teaching faculty are overburdened by their teaching commitments. This makes any substantial and comprehensive research work nearly impossible. Furthermore, the study programme can be fully realized only if there is no absence or leave. This requires a multidisciplinary approach with every professor required to teach several subjects in different disciplines. As a consequence, the quality of teaching can suffer in the long run, despite the undisputed professional qualifications of all the teaching personnel. The worst consequence of the lack of teaching personnel is, however, the unlikelihood of a substantial research work which is necessarily pushed into the background. Although the Review Team was shown some of the publications by the teaching faculty demonstrating that both the will and the ability to do high quality research existed, there could be much more research if professors had more time for scientific work.

Since legal studies should be research based and driven, the Review Team strongly recommends that the University management hire at least two additional professors. Without such an increase in the number of the teaching faculty, the academic standards required for a LL.M. programme meeting the AQ Austria quality standards cannot be kept. In order to make research-based teaching possible and to give the present teaching faculty more time for research, academic co-operation, exchanges and perfection, it is necessary to increase their number. The Review Team is of the opinion that the Law School of the KIMEP University is only partly in compliance with the Standard 5 of the AQ Austria's quality requirements and regards the increase in the number of teaching faculty as a condition for the accreditation.

It is worth mentioning that in the past, lawyers from local law firms were actively engaged as part-time teachers giving classes in various LL.M. programme courses, and that this is not common in Kazakhstan legal education. This practice was abolished due to financial reasons. As the current LL.M. programme is practice-oriented, the Review Team recommends reinstating the part-time teaching by practitioners (naturally those who have teaching skills).

As a final remark to this standard the Review Team wants to highlight the need professors articulated during the interviews. They said they had no effective didactic training designed to improve their teaching skills. It is known that good teaching skills involve skills on both how to catalyse student learning and how to conclude or assess if a student has or has not reached the required level of knowledge or skills. The Review Team recommends that KIMEP and the Law School make the efforts needed to provide its professors with training opportunities aimed at improving their teaching skills.

The programme partly complies with the standard.

## 2.6 Standard 6: Transparency and documentation

The Review Team found that the main information related to the study process and internal university rules is regularly published and easily accessible by students. Such information includes course descriptions, admission criteria, personal schedules – courses and exams, learning and supporting materials, internships, dual degrees and student exchange, survey questions, current and final grades, payments and financial aid. As previously mentioned, examination criteria are not published, not because they are hidden but because they are explained in person instead of being formalized. The same relates to the promotion of equal opportunities – there are a number of general statements in this regard in the KIMEP Catalogue but no other available information because KIMEP as a private university does not face many situations with students requiring specific attention.

KIMEP University information system is adequate to provide up-to-date and easily accessible information. IT infrastructure and software is not a constraint and the Law School has experienced IT support staff.

The Faculty of Law uses KIMEP University communication channels which comprise the KIMEP web site, the internal KIMEP e-mail system, the file server (the so-called "L-drive"), and the student portal (student personalized information application accessible through Internet upon registration as a student). Communication channels are integrated into the internal KIMEP information system which supports several access levels (various administration departments, faculty members, students). In addition, the Review Team noticed that boards in corridors and lobby halls are actively used for job-related and student-life announcements during the study period.

From discussions with students, the Review Team also understood that it is not difficult to get clarifications on any study-related issues from faculty members and administrative staff by either making appointment or sending an e-mail.

KIMEP web site provides rather detailed information on admission criteria, KIMEP University, and student activities and opportunities. It is worth noting that the KIMEP Catalogue, a comprehensive description of KIMEP structure and facilities, study guidelines and most of other questions a current or prospective student wants to know, is accessible by the general public on the KIMEP web site. Such a level of openness is not common in Kazakhstan.

The file server is mostly used by faculty members for publishing learning materials. However, students can also find there up-to-date information about their grades and class schedules.

The student portal is an internally developed information system (on the basis of a licensed content management system) which gives students access to various general study-related information as well as personalized student information.

It should be noted that both the file server and the student portal may be accessed remotely by authorized users (students and teachers).

The Department of Marketing and Communication provides most of the content on the web site and the student portal. Respective information is also published by the Office of the

Registrar, Institutional Research Department, the Accounting Department, etc. There is a certain overlap between places where one would expect certain types of information. The Review Team has not found formal guidelines on which department should publish what information and how quickly. However, this does not seem to be a big issue now as KIMEP is still a young university growing fast, but may become a problem later on.

The programme complies with the standard.

## 2.7 Standard 7: Quality assurance and development

The Review Team was informed that KIMEP regularly evaluates the quality of the teachers and of the courses with the help of the university's "Department for Institutional Research". The University and the Law School regularly perform surveys of student satisfaction. They also regularly assess the quality of teachers and of general staff, the academic performance of students and their workload, as well as the future employment of the graduates. Students participate in quality assurance measures as well as in discussions aiming at improving the quality of the existing programme and its execution. There are strong and fruitful links between the Law School and its alumni, contributing to permanent evaluation and improvements of the programme.

The discussions the Review Team had during its visit at KIMEP University showed that there was a vision for a further development of the Law School. This vision is both realistic and future-oriented and can be regarded as a solid base for a further development of legal studies at KIMEP University.

The Review Team came to the conclusion that the quality assurance and development system at the Law School of the KIMEP University is functioning well and that no particular improvements are necessary.

The programme complies with the standard.

## 2.8 Standard 8: Equal opportunities

KIMEP University as a whole – not just the Law School or the LL.M. programme – is a special case to be addressed when it comes to this standard and to what is intended with this standard. The self-evaluation report and the president of KIMEP University stressed that KIMEP is a private Higher Education Institution and all of its income comes merely from student tuition fees.

Both the self-evaluation report and statements by the president of KIMEP University show that no kind of discrimination exists in the LL.M. programme, and that the University tries to mend economic differences by offering several merit and needs-based scholarships. The merit-based scholarships cover the entire tuition fee and the Law School gives the scholarship recipients the opportunity to work part-time as a Teaching or Research Assistant. For those who qualify, the KIMEP University also provides financial aid and the local students in need can acquire financial assistance amounting up to 30% of the graduate tuition fee for one academic year.

During the interview with LL.M. students, whose delegation also included two recent student-parents, the Review Team learned that there was no regulation, procedure or internal policy in place to facilitate arrangements related to particular needs of student-parents. Nevertheless, the student-parents also said that they had no specific problems because

professors were always available to help them when they fell behind in a course due to parenting issues.

During the interviews, Review Team learned that all possible pedagogical support is provided to students in order to promote their academic success, something that is quite relevant to the equality of opportunities.

The main question in this standard, when talking about KIMEP, is to find the precise balance between the requirements of this standard and what can be asked from a private institution whose only income comes from the tuition fees charged to its students.

The programme complies with the standard.

## 2.9 Standard 9: Programme-related co-operation

The Law School is a very young institution. There has been a good start towards a co-operation with other law schools (in the LL.M. programme), student exchange, establishment of connections with local practitioners, and inviting visiting lecturers; however, all these areas require constant attention to become firmly established.

There is much less activity in research cooperation. This limited focus on research co-operation can mainly be attributed to the fact that the Law School is rather young and has a small number of teaching personnel having a limited opportunity to engage in research co-operation. However, interviews showed that this situation could improve in the future since the Law School intends to hire additional teaching personnel. Moreover, interviews also showed that several faculty members had concrete plans for the improvement of research co-operation in the future. For the moment, Law School only offers a practice oriented LL.M. and not research oriented one.

Students already established an ELSA chapter and are currently considering closer cooperation with ELSA in Turkey and, possibly, in Azerbaijan.

The Review Team understands that there are talks at an advanced stage on a dual LL.M. degree with Dundee University and that there are certain discussions with Humboldt University in Berlin. The Review Team was also told that there was a strong student exchange with Korea in the field of the law programme. The Review Team was not shown any specific numbers or met with students participating in such programmes. KIMEP University, however, has quite a number of active student exchange programmes in other disciplines than law. Consequently, the general KIMEP reputation, its experienced administrative staff and expertise of students studied abroad will probably help the law programme to become more included in the international co-operation.

The Law School (especially the LL.M. programme) has a good co-operation with local companies. Students do internships and there have been a number of lecturers from local law firms on pro bono basis. Both ways of co-operation require further development to become permanent.

As discussed in previous sections, the KIMEP LL.M. programme graduates have classes in English, plus good courses in Company Law and other courses demonstrating how more advanced legal systems deal with commercial legal issues. Further, when the requirement of the authorities that only persons having Bachelors in Law may take LL.M. is implemented, future LL.M. graduates would have more solid basic legal background. Having said so, the

KIMEP University LL.M. graduates have all chances to win (and attract more students to the programme as the result) local legal market dealing with cross border transactions, if cooperation with practitioners, as discussed above, is expanded and became a tradition.

The programme partly complies with the standard.