



Agency for
Quality Assurance
and Accreditation
Austria

Accreditation Report of the Panel Cluster D

Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD)

Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master)

Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master)

History (PhD)

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

March 2014

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1 General information

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the following study programmes: Archaeology and Ethnology (Bachelor, Master, PhD), Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments (Bachelor, Master), Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision (Master), and History (PhD). These study programmes are assessed in the present report.

Bachelor and Master programmes of the same discipline as well as PhD programmes (where applicable) are assessed in one report, but include different statements, which have to be assigned to the relevant programme. Where deviations require different statements and assessments, these are made.

The Panel notices that the self-evaluation reports submitted by the study programmes under review were poorly prepared: in fact, they were not true self-evaluation reports but predominantly lists of courses, often incompletely or poorly translated into English and with much information missing. The available documentation made the evaluation of the study programmes a rather tiresome task.

1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

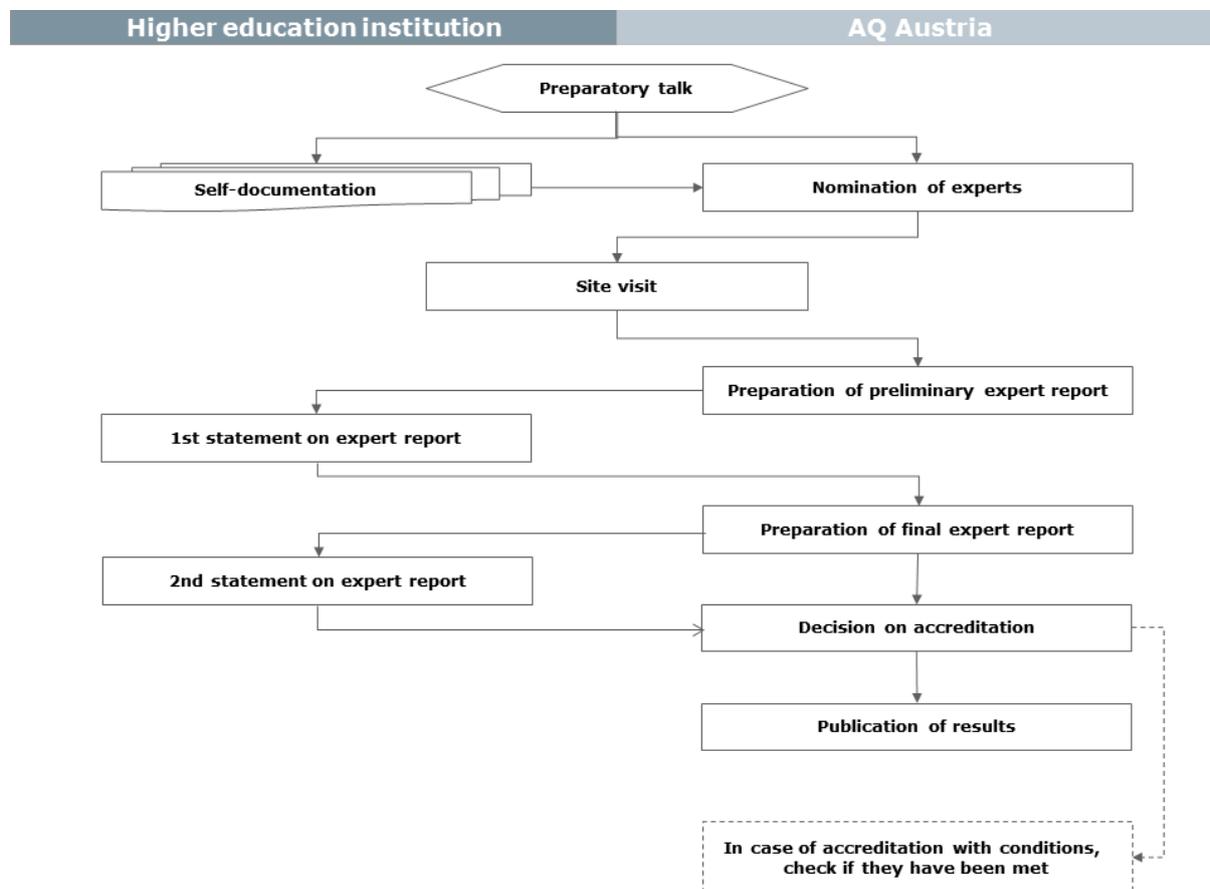
AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area, 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 out accreditation procedures of study programmes at higher education institutions in Kazakhstan.

By granting international accreditation to a study programme, AQ Austria confirms the compliance of the study programme 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	Study programme and programme management
Standard 2	Staff
Standard 3	Quality assurance
Standard 4	Funding and infrastructure
Standard 5	Research and development and appreciation of the arts
Standard 6	National and international cooperation

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



The accreditation report of the Panel 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 on the basis of expert opinion are supposed to help the higher education institution to continuously develop the study programme. The agency grants the accreditation for a period of six 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 Listing of study programmes and brief description of al-Farabi Kazakh National University

The following information on the study programmes derives from the self-documentation submitted by al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

Name of the programme :	Archaeology and Ethnology
Academic degree awarded:	Bachelor of Humanities in Archaeology and Ethnology
Year of introduction:	2004
Regular study period:	4 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	196
Number of Kazakh credits:	131
Name of the programme:	Archaeology and Ethnology
Academic degree awarded:	Master of Humanities in Archaeology and Ethnology
Year of introduction:	2004
Regular study period:	2 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	99
Number of Kazakh credits:	59
Name of the programme:	Archaeology and Ethnology
Academic degree awarded:	PhD in Archaeology and Ethnology
Year of introduction:	2010
Regular study period:	3 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	99
Number of Kazakh credits:	59
Name of the programme:	Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments
Academic degree awarded:	Bachelor of Art in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments
Year of introduction:	2003
Regular study period:	4 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	243
Number of Kazakh credits:	146
Name of the programme:	Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments
Academic degree awarded:	Master of Art in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments
Year of introduction:	2004
Regular study period:	2 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	99
Number of Kazakh credits:	59

Name of the programme: **Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision**
Academic degree awarded: Master of Social Sciences in Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision
Year of introduction: 2013
Regular study period: 2 academic years
Number of ECTS credits: 99
Number of Kazakh credits: 59

Name of the programme: **History**
Academic degree awarded: PhD in History
Year of introduction: 2013
Regular study period: 3 academic years
Number of ECTS credits: 98
Number of Kazakh credits: 59

Brief description of al-Farabi Kazakh National University

The following information derives from al-Farabi Kazakh National University website <http://www.kaznu.kz/en/>, the website of the Eurasian Universities Association (EAU) <http://www.eau-msu.ru/heis/view/34/education>, the website of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan <http://www.edu.gov.kz/en/>, as well as from the self-documentation and other evidence provided by the university before and during the site visit.

Al-Farabi National University (al-Farabi KazNU) was founded on 5 January 1934 as Kazakh State University. In 2001 the University obtained the special status of a national university and was renamed into its current name.

Al-Farabi KazNU is the largest academic and research centre of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The university structure includes 14 faculties, 62 departments, 9 research institutes, 25 research centres, and a TechnoPark. The university currently offers more than 180 majors at the Bachelor, Master and PhD levels. The courses are run in Kazakh, Russian and English language. The total student population exceeds 20,000. The number of academic staff is over 2,500 including 400 doctors of sciences, more than 800 candidates of sciences, and 200 holders of PhD degrees.

Al-Farabi KazNU mission is to form, through provision of relevant, elite quality higher education, a corps of competitive professionals prepared for solving problems associated with the intensive development of key areas of economy, science and public life of the country.

In line with its mission, the University developed its vision and strategic goals (<http://www.kaznu.kz/en/5108/page>).

The special National University status granted to al-Farabi KazNU by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2001 provides considerable autonomy for the university's administrative and financial governance, and higher academic freedom as compared to Kazakh higher education institutions of other types.

According to the State Programme of Education Development in The Republic of Kazakhstan for 2011–2020, approved by the decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 7 December 2010, a staged process of granting autonomy in academic, financial and management activities to higher education institutions of Kazakhstan will start in 2015. Since 2015 autonomy will be granted to the national research universities, since 2016 to higher education institutions with the *national* status, and since 2018 to HEIs of other types.

(http://www.edu.gov.kz/en/zakonodatelstvo/gosudarstvennaja_programma_razvitija_obrazovaniya/).

The University's governance structure comprises the Academic Council, a consultative advisory body bearing responsibility for institutional decision-making and strategic planning, Rector, Rector's Office, and the University Administrative Department. The Board of Trustees and the Council of Seniors are advisory bodies that also participate in the university strategic planning and bring external perspectives on issues related to institutional governance.

Al-Farabi KazNU was the first university in Kazakhstan and Central Asia to join the Magna Charta Universitatum (2003, Bologna) and to adopt the three-cycle system of higher education. The University launched its first PhD programmes in 2005.

Al-Farabi KazNU is currently the largest provider of PhD programmes in Kazakhstan; since 2005 more than 200 faculty members of foreign universities have been engaged as external co-advisors in the preparation of al-Farabi KazNU PhD students.

Since 2009 al-Farabi KazNU delivers double degree programmes with universities of France, Russia, and Spain. Since the academic year 2010/11 al-Farabi KazNU Master students can enrol in double degree programmes offered by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Network University (SCO Network University) and by the Commonwealth of Independent States Network University (CIS Network University).

Al-Farabi KazNU uses the Kazakh credit system, different from the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). According to the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan On the Organisation of Educational Process on the Basis of Credit Technology of Training (2011), one Kazakh credit corresponds to 45 learning hours for Bachelor degree programmes; 60 learning hours for Professional Master degree programmes, 75 learning hours for Research and Teaching Master degree programmes, and 105 learning hours for PhD programmes. Al-Farabi KazNU equates one ECTS credit to 27 learning hours.

Distance learning opportunities at al-Farabi KazNU are provided for the students of the Law Faculty and Higher School of Economics and Business, for continuing education, and for students doing their internships or exchange programmes abroad. Moodle is used as a basis for distance learning.

The University has implemented a corporate intranet system UNIVER which is used by all faculty and students as a tool for daily monitoring of the academic process.

Al-Farabi KazNU has established close relationships with the business community; the University's Board of Employers includes representatives of the largest national companies such as Kazatomprom, National space agency, KazMunaiGaz, Eurasian bank etc. Employability of the university's graduates is reported to exceed 95 per cent.

Al-Farabi KazNU has partner relationships with 418 foreign HEIs and with a number of international organisations including the UN, the NATO, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the British Council, Alliance Française, Confucius Institutes, USAID. Joint research projects are conducted in cooperation with international research centres and laboratories. (<http://www.kaznu.kz/en/13589/page>)

Al-Farabi KazNU is a member of the International Association of Universities (IAU), Eurasian Association of Universities (EAU), European Society for Engineering Education (SEFI), International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE), International Federation of Engineering Education Societies (IFEES).

1.3 Accreditation procedure at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

Timetable of the accreditation procedure

Procedural step	Date
Delivery of self-evaluation reports by al-Farabi KazNU	22 November 2013, later submittals on 19 December 2013 and 5 February 2014
Decision on Panel members by the Board of AQ Austria	30 October 2013
Preparatory Skype meeting of the Panel	14 January 2014
Site-visit to al-Farabi KazNU by the Panel	18-19 February 2014
Draft report of the Panel	28 March 2014
Formal statement by al-Farabi KazNU	none
Final report of the Panel	7 April 2014
Statement on the final report by al-Farabi KazNU	9 April 2014
Accreditation decision by the Board of AQ Austria	13 May 2014

Members of the Panel

Name	Institution	Role
Prof. Dr. Peter Akkermans	Leiden University	Peer from academia (Archaeology and Ethnology)
Prof. Dr. Karl Stocker	FH Joanneum University of Applied Sciences, Graz	Peer from academia (Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments), head of the Panel
Prof. Dr. Ursula Georgy	Cologne University of Applied Sciences	Peer from academia (Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision)
Dr. Nikolay Mitrokhin	University of Bremen	Peer from academia (History)
Prof. Dr. Zuleikha Mardanova	S. Toraihyrov Pavlodar State University	Peer from Kazakhstan (History)
Tanel Sits	University of Tallinn University of Tartu	Student peer (History; Sociology and social work)

AQ Austria coordinator

Zhanna Kuzminykh

2 Assessment results

2.1 Standard 1: Study programme and programme management

The higher education system of Kazakhstan heavily relies on international criteria and rankings. The number of state standards and regulations in the field of educational content is very high. Constant updating of these documents makes the management complicated and ineffective. Faculty members have no time to process the flow of documentation issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (*hereinafter* - MES RK). The changes are often accompanied by adding new requirements (often misinterpreted and not correctly adapted from international standards) to the existing requirements, not yet cancelled. It partly causes the contradictory character of the 4-year construction of the Bologna Process.

Four strategic areas are identified in the Development Strategy of al-Farabi Kazakh National University: training of competitive specialists; shaping al-Farabi KazNU as a modern research university, based on the integration of science, education and business; strengthening of educational and social work; developing infrastructure and introducing new information technologies.

The management system of the university is highly centralized despite the First Vice-Rector's statement about decentralisation and transfer of certain authority to Faculties and Departments. According to the structure of the university website, the faculties and department are dominated by complicated vertical hierarchy. It should also be stated that the study programmes under review are totally dependent on government subsidies. Thus, academic freedom has a formal character.

Despite the fact that the leadership of the university demonstrates their commitment to internationalisation, including double-diploma education, the content of the study programmes under review reveals predominant orientation at the local and regional issues in the research and training processes.

The higher management (Vice-rector, Dean) emphasizes the importance of the Faculty and its study programmes from Bachelor to PhD level: history in the widest sense of the word, it is claimed, is of crucial importance for a young nation such as Kazakhstan. There are currently many changes set into motion, in order to transform al-Farabi University from a predominantly educational institute into a research university.

Whereas the higher management underlines the importance of the Faculty and its study programmes, the lower management echelons signal a limited overall university interest in the humanities vis-à-vis the natural sciences. The current renewed interest in the humanities is primarily due to government initiatives, such as the programme "The nation in the flow of history". There are other discrepancies between the higher and lower echelons of management, for example with regard to the Bologna agreements: while the higher echelons commonly and routinely refer to the Bologna agreements, the lower management levels appear to be hardly or not aware of the true details and practicalities of the Bologna agreements.

The Panel is aware of the current efforts of al-Farabi University towards a shift from a predominantly education-oriented university towards a research-driven university, although the committee feels that "research" is equalled to a very large extent with "commercial activities" and the "tendering of research projects". The Panel strongly warns against simple expectations of profits, the more so when taking into account that (a) the different fields of study and research currently under evaluation are difficult to exploit financially, and that (b) the government, and not the "free market", is the main source of funding until now. In this respect, it is important to realize that the currently evaluated programmes were cancelled at other regional universities due to a steadily decreasing number of students. The committee signals a mismatch between the demands of the higher management and the actual performance of the staff at the work floor. However, al-Farabi University may emphasize the humanities as a unique and indispensable strength not represented at any other university or higher education institution in Kazakhstan.

Since 2010 al-Farabi University has been making great effort changing the content and the structure of the study programmes to adapt them to the Bologna process standards. The Panel pays tribute to that circumstance in the evaluation of the study programmes and supports the university in their policy of continuing the intended path towards improving the study programmes under review.

The content of the study programmes has been experimentally developed since 2010. The experiment was conducted to meet the requirements of the leading foreign universities to increase interdisciplinarity and electiveness. This gives faculty members more freedom in the organization of education.

There is no clear correlation between the European (ECTS) and Kazakh credit transfer systems, which is also evident from the description of the study programmes profiles in Chapter One of the present report. The ECTS system is not used as a basis for calculating the students' workload; the principles of credit allocation for different kinds of educational activities (examinations, coursework, internships etc.) are not clear.

No standardized Diploma Supplement is issued to the university graduates.

The Faculty does not provide e-learning or blended learning.

The admission requirements to all the study programmes under review are clearly stated, written down and open to public.

All programmes are delivered in full-time format; classes are each limited to one hour (50 min.) per week. Master programmes are offered in the afternoon which allows students to balance their study and part-time work schedules. Both the students themselves and the Panel applaud this approach as good practice.

The modules of the study programmes are very heterogeneous in scope. The documents provided to the Panel do not specify the ratio of the basic disciplines to specific modules.

Virtually each course is offered with long reading lists.

On the Bachelor and Master levels a small number of credits is assigned for writing qualification works: 2 Kazakh credits for the preparation and presentation of the Bachelor's

qualification work; 7-8 credits for the Master's, which is insufficient for the purposes of international compatibility of the study programmes.

Writing a coursework is part of the Master programmes, but it is not included into the Bachelor programmes.

Although examinations may legally have three forms (written, oral, and testing), examinations take place in the form of written exams, each of which is based on merely three questions (which is the legal minimum). Presentations are not part of the examinations, social skills are outside the focus of assessment. The assessment system (100-scale scoring, use of coefficients) is more mathematical than logical. Moreover, the exam questions are very general (judging from exam questions in the field of *Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents provision*), and any answer to them would be good. In this respect it comes as no surprise that (a) none of the students present at the onsite interviews complained about the exams in general or the difficulties they pose or their grading, and that (b) the number of students finishing their Bachelor or Master programmes within the formally allocated time (4 years for Bachelor programmes, 2 years for Master programmes) is virtually 100%. The Panel emphasises that a much more diverse and challenging system of examination and grading is required.

The PhD study course lasts three years; in case students do not graduate on time, they may prolong their study and pay for their education. Otherwise, education fees of all PhD students in Kazakhstan are fully covered by the Government.

Every PhD student has two academic advisors: a local professor and an academic or researcher from a foreign university/research centre. The foreign co-advisor is assigned by the special al-Farabi University committee on the basis of a set of criteria.

All PhD students get a scholarship of about \$ 400, which is relatively enough for living if a student does not have a family to support. Besides, the Government fully covers the expenses of PhD students' visits to foreign universities where they work with their foreign co-advisors and do research. Such visits are obligatory for all PhD students and take place twice during PhD studies, each visits lasting up to three months.

2.1.1 Archaeology and Ethnology

(a) Statements

The study programmes are highly diverse (many different classes) and very general in nature, as are their aims and goals. The learning outcomes are very generally stated as well. The primary aim is to educate students as specialists in a specific discipline, for museums, archives and universities.

PhD programmes comprise three years, with government grants for selected students. PhD theses are written in either Russian or Kazakh language. Each student has one local academic supervisor and one foreign advisor (from a university or research centre abroad). Each PhD student has the right for two internships at the university/research centre of his/her academic advisor (each up to three months) during the study period. Graduation requirement for PhD students: at least one academic paper published in Thompson-Reuters or Scopus journals.

(b) Assessments

The Panel finds the current study programmes as well as their aims and goals very general in nature. The learning outcomes are very generally stated as well. Classes of one hour (50 min) per week are hardly or not sufficient for any in-depth study. There is no difference between the types of lessons and modules, and there is no laboratory work.

Students consider the workload associated with their study programmes as reasonable and certainly not as heavy.

With regard to the PhD programme: in the discussions during the site visit it became clear that there usually is rather intensive, close contact between the students and their supervisors/advisors. The accreditation panel considers this to be a laudable, good practice. The practice, however, requires that not only the local supervisor but also the foreign advisor is fluent in Russian and/or Kazakh (during the site visit it became clear that foreign advisors not fluent in any of these languages rely for their judgement upon a restricted, translated portion (summary) of the final PhD thesis). In the latter case, the Panel voices its doubts about the depth and value of the advisor's judgements.

2.1.2 Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments

(a) Statements

Since 2003 the Bachelor and Master programmes "Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments" try to "train highly qualified specialists in the field of museum work" (SER IV Introduction). The study programmes are connected with the "strategy of the department of Archaeology, Ethnology and Museology directly deterministic implementation of the objectives of the program: form and function successfully fundamental and elective courses related to the methodology of the study of theoretical and applied museum studies, current problems and specialized aspects of the protection of monuments and promising areas of the museum" (ibid).

The Bachelor programme "is aimed at training qualified specialists in the field of museums and protection the monuments with the knowledge and competencies in demand, especially for work in museums, galleries and exhibition centres. Also, the training of specialists in this field is aimed at meeting the needs of local and foreign museums, universities, research centres, expert organizations and institutions concerned with the protection of monuments and preservation of tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Kazakhstan and beyond (UNESCO, ICOM, and ICOMOS)" (SER V Programme Description).

The Master programme has a "focus on the three areas of information provision, evidence-based Internship and professional service" (SER V Programme Description). Subsequently, the aims and goals are articulated very generally. The text includes repetitions which look like a copy and paste problem.

(b) Assessments

The study programmes are linked to the objectives, strategies and goals of al-Farabi University. The study programmes are generally in line with the goals of the profession as they appreciate it in Almaty or generally in Kazakhstan: when the students finish their study they get jobs in museums as researchers in the fields of history or ethnology.

From the European point of view, the integration of museum and exhibition design skills into the intended learning outcomes of the study programmes is highly recommended. All

museologists at al-Farabi University are educated as ethnologists and historians rather than museum experts. One of the reasons for that is that the study programmes in Museum Studies are strongly connected with the study programmes in Ethnology and History.

The learning objectives of the study programmes should be defined more clearly and precisely.

The students' workload allows them to reach the aspired qualification objectives.

2.1.3 Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision

(a) Statements

Al-Farabi University is the only university in the Republic of Kazakhstan to offer study programmes in Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision.

The goals, objectives, and learning outcomes of the Master programme under review are articulated in a very general way and do not include any pronounced discipline-specific component.

The Master programme "Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision" is largely oriented towards the requirements of the national archives, not towards international market needs and standards. The "Documentation and Documents Provision" part of the study programme (*hereinafter* Documentation part) is considered a supplementary science to History, Archive studies, and Museum studies.

The university's own profile is not visible in the module handbook of the study programme. Current problems and key issues (e.g. long-time archiving) are rarely discussed and not a key focus of the study programme / Faculty.

The Panel notes that for a successful start into the international working life, it is essential for students to specialise during the studies already. Thus, the study programme should provide a profile to the professional career as early as practicable.

The equipment of teaching and learning rooms (fixed chairs and seat rows; no group work spaces) do not allow alternative teaching and learning forms (e.g. group finding, cooperative learning, group discussions, partner work, project work, learning at different stations), which focus on the improvement of access to offers, materials and relevant professional guidance.

International mobility in the Master programme is not particularly extensive but a few students move abroad (Russia, Bulgaria etc.).

Internship (practice) placements are organised by the university upon agreements with organisations (archives, libraries etc.)

(b) Assessments

The study programme of al-Faraby University is very classical and not very forward-looking. The programme tends to adapt (only) to the current and present needs of Kasakh archives but not enough facing the future of (international) archives and documentation centers. Some of the current topic are not treated as issues in the study programme.

The study programme should focus on current trends in archive and documentation. Graduates should support archives, museums and libraries in unlocking the potential of their collections. Therefore, the following skills are indispensable: collection care (conservation), using data and visualisation, using stored collections, data management (meta-data), data flow management, workflow management, economic value of archiving / conservation, risk management (disaster management). Such topics as financial planning, rights and restriction management, storage and backup (long-time archiving), access and use, and management (marketing) are also very important.

One of the problems with regard to the Documentation part of the study programme is that documentation is not considered as an area of primary concern but rather as an ancillary discipline by the Faculty.

What struck the Panel is that no other study programmes of library and information science (LIS) are offered by the university / Faculty, which is common international practice (e.g. <http://www.ifla.org/lamms>). It is therefore difficult to orient the study programme towards international standards in archiving / documentation within the discipline LIS (e.g. <http://www.icacds.org.uk/eng/standards.htm>; <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/archives21centuryrefreshed-final.pdf>, <http://www.ica.org/10207/standards/isadg-general-international-standard-archival-description-second-edition.html>; <http://www.conservation-us.org/publications-resources/periodicals#.Uxw1G17N5A0>). Indeed, an advanced standard of teaching is not attainable unless the lecturers / professors are involved in the international community in their field.

In the future it will be necessary to transfer knowledge, pedagogical innovations and examples of good practice inside the university in modular education and training and to develop the competencies of staff participating in these processes possibly through an e-learning platform, taking into account the European Qualification Framework in lifelong learning.

One of the strengths of the study programme's graduates is their ability to be successful on the local market of archive and documentation. At the same time it means, however, in de facto terms, that graduates are mainly shut out of the international labour market. This must not necessarily be negative, but increasing graduates' competitiveness on the international labour market must be part of the faculty's strategy.

2.1.4 History

(a) Statements

The information about the PhD programme in History was very poorly presented by the university and was limited to brief information specifically devoted to the study programme in question. It took the Panel three rounds of requests for additional information to get, by the middle of the second day of the site visit, brief annotations of PhD dissertations, two annotations in Russian (the peer reviewer-expert in History could read them since Russian is his native language) and two in Kazakh (the peer could not read the documents). Additionally, a few "Individual working plans" of PhD students were provided, one of them in Russian, the rest in Kazakh.

Three or four persons are enrolled into the study programme per year on the competitive basis: the number of state grants provided by MES RK is limited, and there are 20-30 candidates for each study vacancy.

Students do not know how to work with sources. The teaching staff said, that all sources relevant for studying the Kazakh history are translated into Kazakh in Russian transcription, and it was enough for education. It is very strange no full corpus of sources exists for historians.

History PhD students who participated in the meeting with the Panel demonstrated their awareness about some important international academic journals and confirmed the accessibility of the journals through the academic library computer system.

During the site visit lack of English language skills among PhD students became evident to the Panel: out of six archaeology and history PhD students present, three spoke English, two Kazakh, and one Russian.

(b) Assessments

The main problems of the study programme under review are determined by the overall system of PhD education which looks like a mix of Soviet-type model and some sciences-oriented model.

The PhD programme in History at al-Farabi University includes a very short period of theoretical and historiographical work (5 months), only 4 months for internship abroad and two years for individual research work. During the study time students have to be involved in two types of practice – teaching and research, as well as produce four academic publications in local (university-level) academic journal.

In general, the existing system does not allow to achieve the level of PhD education compatible/comparable with EU standards. The theoretical basis is weak (which is clear from the brief annotations), the information about students' work in archives is insufficient (it was not possible to learn in which archives students work); the international academic networking is relatively weak though it is being improved through cooperation with foreign co-advisors. The students do not participate in professional and specialised academic conferences or professional or interdisciplinary summer schools that are relevant for their research topics. As a result, PhD students of the study programme may not finish their research (and thus start their academic carrier) with good publications in professional journals or with monographs in academic publishing houses.

The last serious problem of the study programme under review is the 'academic isolation' of students. The topics of their research projects are very diverse (from Turks in early Middle Ages to the problem of censorship in Soviet time), and the number of students is very small which does not allow to build 'a critical mass' which is very important for the discussions in classes and seminars. The students are not part of an adequate academic discourse community, either within the university or beyond.

However, the Panel believes that the study programme in History does provide PhD-level education to its students. It is one of very few PhD programmes in History in Kazakhstan. The collaboration between PhD students who specialise in Early Turks and Middle Ages regional history is relatively well organized. The major part of scientific research activities of the Faculty is carried out in the field of Archaeology. Support provided by international academic advisors can be useful for some PhD students.

2.2 Standard 2: Staff

The Panel notes the excessive teaching load of the faculty members of the study programmes: 30 credits per academic year (1500 hours) for Assistant Professors and Lecturers; 26-28 credits per academic year (1200-1250 hours) for Associate Professors; 22 credits per academic year (900-950 hours) for Full Professors. The teaching load of faculty members without scientific degrees looks especially discriminatory: 30 credits (1500 hours). Additionally, the faculty have a lot of other responsibilities: supervision, public and social duties as members of a state organization, educational work, research work. In Kazakh public universities teaching staff traditionally perform these activities as overtime work without payment.

The Panel also notes that the staff members' CVs were not available either in the self-evaluation documents or on the webpages of respective Departments (Chairs); only short information about the staff members' activities within the last three years was provided.

2.2.1 Archaeology and Ethnology

(a) Statements

The Faculty staff consists of about 80 persons. They are responsible for the education of approximately 360-380 students. In general, both the management at different levels and the students consider the staff for teaching and research as highly qualified and motivated, and as specialists in their professions.

(b) Assessments

According to the discussions with staff and students, the Panel ascertains that the staff members are very motivated and enthusiastic. However, the current shift from an education-based university to a research-driven university is difficult for many staff members, as it entails a simultaneous change at many different levels. Moreover, the change implies a serious increase in the overall workload: research obligations (including publications) add to the current teaching load. On the other hand, the committee considers the current staff - student ratio (in the order of 1:4 or 1:5, on the basis of ca. 80 staff members versus ca. 360-380 students) as exceptionally high and hardly financially sustainable in the long run. Staff members appear to teach in more than one programme (e.g. History of Kazakhstan, a compulsory module for all study programmes).

The sizeable staff partly results from very limited staff mobility: the opportunities for employment beyond the university are limited and retirements because of old age are substantially postponed (due to low pensions). Low staff mobility has its own difficulties for the educational and research programmes, as it hampers renewal of didactic principles, the introduction of new technologies, ideas and theoretical innovation, and the recruitment of new, promising staff. These difficulties are further enhanced by the fact that the university predominantly aims to recruit its staff from its own, locally educated reservoir of PhD candidates, which de facto implies a near zero work experience beyond the own institution.

The committee notices an absence of formal, objective procedures with regard to staff appointments and career opportunities and developments. Competition and selection on the basis of several potential candidates is lacking.

2.2.2 Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments

(a) Statements

The staff engaged in the delivery of the Bachelor and Master programmes includes 6 professors (3 full-time), 12 assistant professors (12 full-time) and 5 senior lecturers (3 full-time) together with 27 (27 full-time) non-academics. This is quite a lot of staff for 16 Bachelor students in 2011-12 and 20 Bachelor students in 2012-13 together with 10 Master students in 1011-12 and 8 Master students in 2012-13. It should be noted, however, that these staff members are not only working in the study programmes under review but also in other study programmes offered by the Faculty.

(b) Assessments

A very positive aspect about these particular study programmes is that the staff members as well as the students are totally motivated and enthusiastic. One can rarely find such a high motivation at a university.

An obvious weakness of the study programmes is very low engagement of museology and/or protection of monuments specialists in the programmes delivery. The majority of the teaching staff are professors and lecturers from the history and ethnology study programmes. Natalya Soikina is the only lecturer who is "Head of Museum of Palaeolithic of Kazakhstan".

2.2.3 Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision

(a) Statements

The staff members are not only working in the study programme under review but also in other study programmes offered by the Faculty.

Further education for professors and lecturers should be compulsory. The main focus of the training has to be on advanced specialist aspects of their own appointment area on one side. On the other side further education in e-learning, virtual and other modern teaching forms (collaboration, problem-solving, inter-professional team-working etc. must become an obligation. Conference visits must help the staff to keep pace with latest developments and technologies.

A comprehensive personnel concept is to be prepared to adjust the personnel to the future challenge of archiving and documentation.

(b) Assessments

The faculty has no concept of professional continuing vocational training programs for the professors / lecturers for the next five years in current and future-oriented topics and fields of e-learning.

There are no incentives created for professors, lecturers and staff in the short to long-term to render continuing education more appealing and attractive.

2.2.4 History

(a) Statements

The staff members are qualified; many of them have academic degrees. It is MES RK requirement for the Faculty to have at least 45 % of staff members with academic degrees.

During the site visit it was not possible for the Panel to meet with a lot of staff members of the History Departments. Three out of four faculty members representing the PhD programme in History during the onsite interview with the Panel, were women of about fifty who spoke quite good Russian, some of them spoke English as well.

They are well aware of the teaching process design and methods (possibly because some of them coordinate the teaching process at the department level), but they were not actively engaged in the discussion of their academic interests or progress in their research.

The staff members are very motivated and enthusiastic about their work. For many of them the transition of the university towards research university is a very difficult process: too many dimensions of work are changing simultaneously. The faculty members also said that due to the very high teaching workload they do not have enough/any time for research or other academic work (for example, preparing materials for updating the Department webpage).

The staff members are proud of their 'scientific schools' cultivated within the Faculty. They try to accumulate the new generation of PhD graduates within the university and 'keep them' at the Faculty. There are many cases of life-long academic careers at one and the same Department. The staff members have no 'external' work experience, which the Panel notes as an area of special concern.

During the onsite interviews the Panel got a lot of new information about the staff's academic activities and academic mobility, which had not been provided in the self-evaluation documentation.

They were not open answering questions about their salaries, but there is evidence that professors earn less than €1000 per month.

The staff members were not willing to discuss how they could improve the study programmes including teaching and academic research.

(b) Assessments

The teaching staff members who met with the Panel are mainly in their middle or late 50s. The Panel has the impression that they are all actively involved in teaching, as well as in academic activities.

At the same time, the staff members demonstrated (through the interviews, self-evaluation papers, publications) a low level of research activities and academic mobility, a disappointing level of awareness about contemporary academic journals. Their level of theoretical knowledge is not quite clear, as well as the extent to which it has changed since Soviet time.

2.3 Standard 3: Quality assurance

(a) Statements

According to the Structure of al-Farabi KazNU, the university has developed a cumbersome management system. Faculties and Department (Chairs) have the lowest position, lack of rights and are subordinate to almost all other university units. At the same time faculty members have the largest amount of work and responsibility. The University Structure looks like an inverted pyramid where the main burden of responsibility for the execution falls on the Faculties (See the structure of al-Farabi KazNU at al-Farabi KazNU website: <http://www.kaznu.kz/en/>).

There is an impressive internal flow of documents not related to the teaching and research, such as reporting and planning (mid-term, semi-annual, semester, annual) documentation, management letters, orders, confirmations, calendars, and weekly meetings of the Departments.

The university has a Center for Accreditation, Ranking and Quality Management, which reports to the First Vice-Rector. Thus, the University is making efforts developing its quality management system.

The university has been certified in accordance with ISO 9000 standards which mainly deal with the production processes, the academic process being considered part of them in the current context of al-Farabi KazNU's output orientation.

Some of the university's study programmes have been accredited by international quality assurance agencies (which include ASIIN - Accreditation Agency Specialized in Accrediting Degree Programmes in Engineering, Informatics, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics (Germany); ACQUIN - Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (Germany)). This reveals the University's commitment to international, in particular European, standards in quality assurance and quality development.

The Center for Accreditation, Ranking and Quality Management collects and processes the survey and faculty ranking results and provides reports to be further discussed at the meetings of the University Academic Council and at the Faculty level. Al-Farabi Kazakh National University introduced a regulatory system that uses summarized information from the reports and conclusions based on this information.

In terms of quality management the university is currently using two tools. On the collegiate level, annual faculty ranking, attestation (every 3-5 years depending on the staff member position), and peer review of teachers have been introduced. Faculty members attend relevant training courses, e.g. on e-learning, conducted by their colleagues and provide feedback. On the other hand, students evaluate faculty members' teaching performance via standardised online surveys.

The Faculty has its own basic quality assurance system, where students regularly express their opinions on the teachers' performance through anonymous online evaluations. Occasionally, a teacher joins another teacher's class for the purpose of evaluation and check. Specific teachers serve as student mentors and inform students about programmes, options, procedures, etc.; there are no formal study advisors responsible for individual courses.

The questionnaire "Evaluation of teacher by students" is conducted regularly, though there is not enough evidence whether student feedback (including negative feedback) produces any influence.

The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan is constantly increasing the responsibility of universities in regard to graduates' employment. According to the interviews with employers, al-Farabi KazNU has established contacts with the Employers' Council, Alumni Association, the Council of Elders of the University. The Faculty involves the representatives of the advisory bodies as members of the examination committees during the final examinations, as well as in the internship programmes, defences of theses and other kinds of qualification works.

The Panel notes that the webpages of the Faculty and its Departments are only available in Kazakh and Russian. The English version does not even contain the minimum information on the study programmes and degrees, research projects etc.

(b) Assessments

Most of the university departments are focused on the functions of management and control. At the same time, internal interconnections between the key structural units are very weak in the absence of electronic document interchange. For example, the Panel could not trace the relationships between the university Department of Academic Affairs, Department of International Cooperation, Information and communication technologies and Faculties. It is also not clear how feedback is provided by the Faculties to the Rector and who exactly is responsible for managing the financial flows within the university.

Faculty ranking can serve as an example of measures successfully taken on the basis of data collected from surveys and reports. Faculty members with the highest evaluations receive financial incentives. The data collected are reported to faculties, where internal conclusions are made regarding the quality of teaching performance.

However, the conventional professors' ranking cannot achieve the goal of improving the quality of educational provision. Results of faculty ranking are used by the management for the promotion of bonus. Negative evaluations may be used for punitive measures, effecting the teachers' salaries and rankings. The current approach is top-down and adds little to the creation of an inspiring environment for teaching and research. This instrument could become more effective if it was more connected with the individual approach to staff development, as well as more competence-oriented.

The online system of student surveys evaluates the teaching performance but not the content and structure of study courses.

The Panel notes that the student evaluations of teachers and faculty rankings are limited to formal and procedural criteria, while the primary objective of such evaluations is to provide feedback which is useful for teachers to improve their teaching quality. The number of questions concerning the relevance and content of the courses, forms of examinations, quality of training, student motivation and goal achievement is not sufficient. The survey results are processed on the Faculty level, but not discussed with students and not used to improve the quality.

Students are little aware how exactly their feedback is used, but they know that it influences the teachers' positions in the rankings.

Bachelor and Master theses are graded by a single supervisor, in contrast with the PhD thesis, which is graded by the supervisor plus a foreign advisor.

Taking into account that PhD theses are nearly always written in either Russian or Kazakh, the Panel conclude that foreign advisors without knowledge of these languages cannot serve as reliable judges about the content and quality of the theses (see also Standard 1). There are no formal arrangements concerning fraud and/or scientific integrity (plagiarism, etc.).

The involvement of external stakeholders is rather formal and is often limited to their mere presence of the examinations and meetings. According to the information published on al-Farabi KazNU website (<http://www.kaznu.kz/en/>), participation of stakeholders in the educational process is planned for the future: "Employing companies also will promote the adaption of the academic process to the requirements of the employers, development of joint educational programs on the training of specialists. Besides, the employers are ready to conduct employment market research with the aim of qualitative training of specialists, to analyse and to bring up suggestions on the improvement of curricula and programmes according to the consumers' real requirements".

There is a quality management system within the university, but it is often used formally, on paper for accountancy purposes; the quality loop is not always closed. The university quality management system does not actually focus on improving the quality; it is focused on improving the management and supervision.

The Panel emphasises the importance of improving the website/webpages of the Faculty and its Departments: the English versions of the respective webpages provide very limited information on the study programmes, their content and structure, as well as on staff, research, publications, teaching etc. provision of relevant and up-to-date information is very important for increasing the study programmes' visibility and attractiveness at the national and international levels.

2.4 Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure

(a) Statements

The number of students in the study programmes is not high; it is regulated by the number of scholarships granted by the government and thus differs from year to year. The share of students who study without public funding and thus pay tuition from their own funds is small. Generally, a small number of scholarships are allocated to historical specialties in Kazakhstan, and the majority of students- state grants holders study at al-Farabi University.

In order to ensure one of the stated strategic directions of the University, namely, "the infrastructure and the introduction of new information technologies» (First Vice-Rector), further support of the educational process with multimedia equipment is required.

With regard to quantitative data provided by the University on the study programmes, it should be pointed out that the statistical data on the Faculty of History were not clear or complete. The self-evaluation documents only provided statistical data on the number of first year students and graduates for the last five years. Therefore, their accurate evaluation by peers was not possible.

The current facilities for teaching and research are large and clean, although basic and considerable in age (ca. 80 years). Renewal and renovation of facilities take place, although on a restricted basis (depending on the available funds, provided by the government). Library and computer facilities are available to students; WiFi is not everywhere on campus and, if available, it is not free.

The Faculty of History is based on the fourth floor of the university building; the lift has been out of operation for more than 15 years now which is a challenge for students with disabilities who study at the Faculty, as well as for senior (in terms of age) staff members of the Faculty.

Government study grants are offered to selected, qualified students at the Bachelor, Master and PhD levels.

The Faculty and its Chairs are reasonably well-funded by the government to carry out their education and research tasks. The higher management (Vice-Rector, Dean), however, express their discontent with regard to the available university funds.

The equipment of teaching and learning rooms (fixed chairs and seat rows; no group work spaces) do not allow alternative teaching and learning forms (also see standard 1).

After a new university library was built, some Faculty reading rooms have been transformed into seminar rooms. However, students need working rooms / spaces not only at the library.

Internet access was not provided by time of the site visit in the new university library. The library staff expressed their hope to provide Internet access in March-April 2014. The university library must function as an active and flexible service provider and mediator for the comprehensive integration of all types of media in learning, teaching and research.

Relevant online databases are accessible for every academic and student, also from outside the university. As the library catalogue is completely accessible online research can also be conducted from outside at any time.

For some topics the National library's collection is more relevant and complete than the university library's collection.

(b) Assessments

Although the facilities definitely require an upgrade, the discussions during the site visit made clear that both staff and students are satisfied with the current circumstances. The students would appreciate an increase of smart screens in class rooms as well as an easier use of laptops (e.g. more charging points).

The study grants offered by the government differ in size from one level to another (lowest in the Bachelor, highest in the PhD programme). The students in the Bachelor and Master programmes are in general satisfied with the grants, whereas the PhDs are less content (due to the fact that they often have families of their own, with all related expenses).

None of the grants is sufficient to make a living; hence, most students appear to have a job next to their study. The combination of work and study is, however, considered to be a major plus by most of the students in the discussion panels (they do not consider their job as a burden). Another source of income are the government-funded or foreign-sponsored research projects, which pay students (and staff) for their participation. These projects also allow staff and students to visit conferences and to contribute to publications.

The students generally complain about (1) the limited number of available Bachelor, Master and PhD scholarships; (2) the relatively short duration of the PhD trajectory (3 years), which hampers any in-depth analyses; (3) the considerable bureaucracy in the case of internships acknowledges that most of these complaints are related to government policies and hence beyond the direct reach and influence of the university.

Students also need easier access to Western literature, global research resources, and libraries.

The Panel notes the large number of organisations providing professional internship placements for the students on the basis of bilateral agreements with the university. However, it should be stated that the organisations are limited to those located in the city of Almaty.

2.5 Standard 5: Research and development and appreciation of the arts

2.5.1 Archaeology and Ethnology

(a) Statements

The Faculty staff is expected by the Faculty management to carry out high-quality research and to publish about their research regularly in both national and international media. Strengths in this respect are a number of state-funded research projects and the associated creation of research centres at the university. Students are actively integrated in the research and earn money in these research projects (in addition to their scholarships). In the field of Archaeology, the research results are integrated into the teaching programme. Guest lecturers from abroad regularly visit the Faculty and provide lectures to both staff and students. PhD students carry out research in close cooperation with both national and international researchers and/or advisors.

(b) Assessments

Al-Farabi University has set into motion a change from a predominantly education-oriented institution towards a research-driven university. Research is considered as a key indicator for internal university ranking, but time and other resources for research are allocated on a minimal basis. Hence, it became clear in the discussions with the staff that the change implies a very high workload for the current personnel.

2.5.2 Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments

(a) Statements

There is no definition of research and development perspectives in the self-evaluation report, though Chapter "Staff" does contain some information about a few well-funded research projects which deal with the topics of museums and protection of monuments like "Saks elite monuments of Chilikty Valley", "Collection, organization and publication of traditional ethnographic heritage of the Kazakh people" (see bio of Professor Toleubayev Abdesh).

Students are involved in research activities mostly in field research projects.

During the site visit the Panel could take a look at the Faculty laboratories with exhibition environments for instructing students, and a Faculty museum arranged some years ago by staff members.

(b) Assessments

All the research of the staff and even Prof. Abdesh' projects deal more with the topics of history than museology and protection of monuments. As became clear during the site visit, in particular from the interview with employers, graduates in most cases work as researchers of Ethnology and History. Research of the study programmes should focus more on the topics of Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments.

The field research projects focus more on ethnographic or historical topics.

From the point of view of new Museology, the exhibition environments are in a quite "old fashioned" style. In Panel's opinion, they should not only be modernized or used as a static exhibition, but rather serve as an experimental space, where professors and students work together with designers to create creative museum spaces. As staff said about the Faculty museum, there is an urgent need for action here as well.

2.5.3 Archival Studies, Documentation and Documents Provision

(a) Statements

Research in archiving and documentation plays a less significant role than in other study programmes offered by the Faculty. However, the workload of the lecturers / professors is very high, so the scope for research remains largely closed for them.

No future-oriented strategy underlies research in archiving and documentation. The study programme has to focus on current trends and developments to be interesting for other (international) research universities / institutions. Digital archiving, repository management, application independent archiving, automatisisation of processes, file formatting, storage infrastructure etc. could be interesting topics.

Only a few international guest professors are teaching in the field of archiving / documentation. And, it may even be left to the guest lecturers themselves to decide what they teach. The topics are not or only to a minimum extend the compulsory part of the module handbooks.

(b) Assessments

The Faculty has no strategy to develop continuously the range of courses offered in archiving and documentation involving partnerships with other universities within the country and abroad.

In the field of archiving and documentation methodic research is not developed further; national and international networking does not exist. The study programme staff do not have intensified and improved research in modern core competencies of these topics.

Professors / lecturers are not part of (international) specialist scientific organizations, and they do not have active roles / functions within these.

2.5.4 History

(a) Statements

Lecturers and professors engaged in the study programme delivery are currently carrying out five scientific research projects totalling 62 million tenge. In addition, the staff are involved in the state project "People in the Flow of History" in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology and Ethnology. In 2013, according to the self-evaluation report, ten articles were published in international top-rated journals; faculty members took part in more than twenty international conferences, most of the events held at al-Farabi KazNU. The department operates the National Research Center of World History, a Center for the Study of Traditional Civilizations.

The most important topics of research in the area of the World History are related to various aspects of Kazakh studies. The research covers a wide range of topics from Early Middle Age of Turkic tribes (most of them), through the history of Kazakh ethnic group in the XIX century and their relations with the Tsar regime (second popular topic) to the problems of contemporary.

A few international visiting lecturers have taught at the university in the last three years, but nobody did it systematically. There is no strategy and plan of lectures to be taught by visiting professors and lecturers for the next years.

Some faculty members did international fellowships within the last few years, or participated in international conferences abroad, but this information was not given in the self-evaluation report of the study programme.

It is required that at least once in three years every academic researcher holding the academic rank of an Associate Professor (granted by MES RK) should publish a paper in an international academic journal registered in Thomson Reuters /Scopus database, which is critically important for the MES RK. Most papers – 17 for three years - of the Department staff were published in non-historical "Procedia-Social and Behavioral Journal» (Bucharest, Romania), and one in a non-historical journal in Amsterdam. All those Scopus publications are in English.

Most non-Scopus/Thomson-Reuters publications of the faculty are in Russian and Kazakh languages; they were published in weak academic journals published at al-Farabi University, as well as in the proceedings of conferences held at the university.

Only some representatives of the faculty spoke some English during the interviews with the Panel.

PhD students are not doing research in cooperation with their international co-advisors.

(b) Assessments

During the site visit the staff of the study programme reported about permanent problems with research activity as a result of excessive teaching load. At the same time number of students in department is not high (80 faculty at the department teach 360 students). This would offer the possibility to integrate students into research. It is still not clear enough how the staff members manage their working time. Part of them must have another job because the salary at the university is lower than €1000.

The Panel may not be fully aware of all academic publication of the Department staff due to the incomplete lists of publications presented by the study programme. However, only a couple of presented academic papers can be evaluated as really "academic" publications in journals and books. The other publications (about thirty of them) were quite specific: 4-6 pages uninformative papers in English, published in international journals with general (non-professional) titles, like "Oral history as a new way to collect new sources". The few journals were the same for all the publications presented. According to one of the interview participants, the main reason for such publications was entering the Scopus database, which is critically important for the university and MES RK.

In the course of the interview with the faculty of the study programme it became clear that the faculty members did not see much difference between publications in highly valued journals and those in non-discipline specific editions lacking international research reputation. Only one faculty member said that they had a publication in a professional journal but added that the publication was prepared it at weekends and vocation time.

In most of the presented publications the references/links to archive documents are missing, which is not acceptable for professional work in the discipline.

The low level of academic publications corresponds to the extremely low level of the faculty's participation in professional and thematic conferences. According to the self-evaluation report, only two or three such conferences have been attended by staff members from both historical Departments (World History and History of Kazakhstan) of the Faculty.

2.6 Standard 6: National and international co-operations

(a) Statements

National cooperation. The Faculty and its Chairs are national leaders in the study fields of History, Archaeology and Ethnology, Museum studies and Archival studies (except Documentation). The Faculty organises national and international conferences, and develops research and education programmes which serve as models for other Kazakh universities. Moreover, the Faculty closely cooperates with local museums, archives, and research institutes of the National Academy of Sciences, but also with local schools. There is lack of cooperation in the field of documentation.

The Faculty receives governmental support of its research and educational activities through programmes such as "The nation in the flow of history" and the establishment of three research centres. With the help of national grants, the Faculty is also responsible for the writing of school textbooks in history. An alumni association serves to reach out to local society and its demands and wishes in the fields under evaluation.

International cooperation. Efforts are being made towards integration into the global and European area of higher education and research, but so far internationalisation is not institutionalised. Although student and staff mobility is given attention, it is predominantly based upon personal contacts of the staff.

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES RK) promotes internationalisation of the national higher education system and expects the related efforts from the universities. In particular, al-Farabi Kazakh National University is actively involved in the process of internationalisation of education, working cooperatively with the leading universities around the world, highly evaluating itself in international comparison. To support universities' efforts towards internationalisation, MES RK provides state (public) universities with significant funds: alongside with the scholarship programme "Bolashak", academic mobility of students and faculty members is being developed.

According to the International Office, al-Farabi University currently has about 260 Memoranda of Understanding with foreign universities and higher education institutions, although the officer in charge was unable to say how many of these are relevant for the particular study programmes under review. Overall, the Faculty of History, Archaeology and Ethnology has signed 2 agreements with international universities: Gazi University and Hacettepe University, both from Turkey.

Staff and heads of study programmes organize international conferences and/or invite foreign researchers from e.g. Russia, Japan, USA and Germany in order to create an international research and education environment. Teaching is not international, although foreign researchers provide guest lectures with the help of local translators. Student mobility is low in the Bachelor programmes, but increases at Master's and PhD levels. Next to the local supervisor, PhD students compulsory have a foreign academic who serves as external advisor. PhD theses are produced in either Russian or Kazakh language, with a summary in English.

Regarding the study programmes in Museum studies, no international projects are being implemented. Since October 2010 six professors (one from the USA, the other five from Russia) have given lectures in the Bachelor and Master programmes. Only one Russian professor of all six visiting scholars delivered a series of lectures on "Museology and Arms of

Nomads"; the other 5 talked on archaeological topics. In October 2011 two al-Farabi University professors visited Ankara University and gave a lecture series on Ethnology.

The study programmes in Museum Studies and Protection of Monuments actively cooperate with five al-Farabi KazNU museums; students can do their practice in these institutions.

(b) Assessments

According to the documents presented and according to the discussions with the alumni and employees, the Faculty and its Chairs are, indeed, national leaders in their respective fields of expertise. There is obvious cooperation at the national level between the Faculty on the one hand and the archives, museums and privately-owned companies on the other hand. The archives, museums and companies clearly expressed their high opinion of the staff and expertise of the Faculty and its Chairs.

The openness and clear commitment of the university to further internationalisation can be noted as a positive trend of the university. There is evidence of faculty members' great desire to participate in professional development programmes abroad, though there is less aspiration for conducting research.

Al-Farabi University identifies existing challenges associated with research activities. These include lack of certified research laboratories that meet international quality standards, insufficient number of publications in international scientific journals with high impact factor, low level of research and innovation activities conducted jointly with international foundations and organizations, as well as a low proportion of the research budget in the total budget of the university.

Clear efforts are being made in the field of internationalisation, but internationalisation requires a strong push on the basis of a systematic and comprehensive, underlying strategy.