



Agentur für  
Qualitätssicherung  
und Akkreditierung  
Austria

# Accreditation Report of the panel Cluster B

**Journalism (BA, MA, PhD)**

**Publishing (BA, MA)**

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

April 2014

# Index

<b>1</b>	<b>General information .....</b>	<b>3</b>
1.1	Basic principles of the procedure .....	3
1.2	Profile and concept of the study programmes and brief description of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University .....	5
1.3	Accreditation procedure at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University .....	8
<b>2</b>	<b>Assessment results .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1	Standard 1: Study programme and programme management.....	9
2.1.1	Journalism.....	9
2.1.2	Publishing .....	12
2.2	Standard 2: Staff .....	17
2.2.1	Journalism.....	17
2.2.2	Publishing .....	18
2.3	Standard 3: Quality assurance .....	20
2.4	Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure .....	22
2.5	Standard 5: Research and development and appreciation of the arts .....	24
2.5.1	Journalism.....	24
2.5.2	Publishing .....	25
2.6	Standard 6: National and international co-operations .....	29

# 1 General information

Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (hereinafter – al-Farabi KazNU) mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes in Journalism and the Bachelor and Master programmes in Publishing. These five study programmes are assessed in the present report. The report includes statements and assessments regarding the Bachelor, the Master and the PhD programmes respectively, where deviations require different descriptions.

## 1.1 Basic principles of the procedure

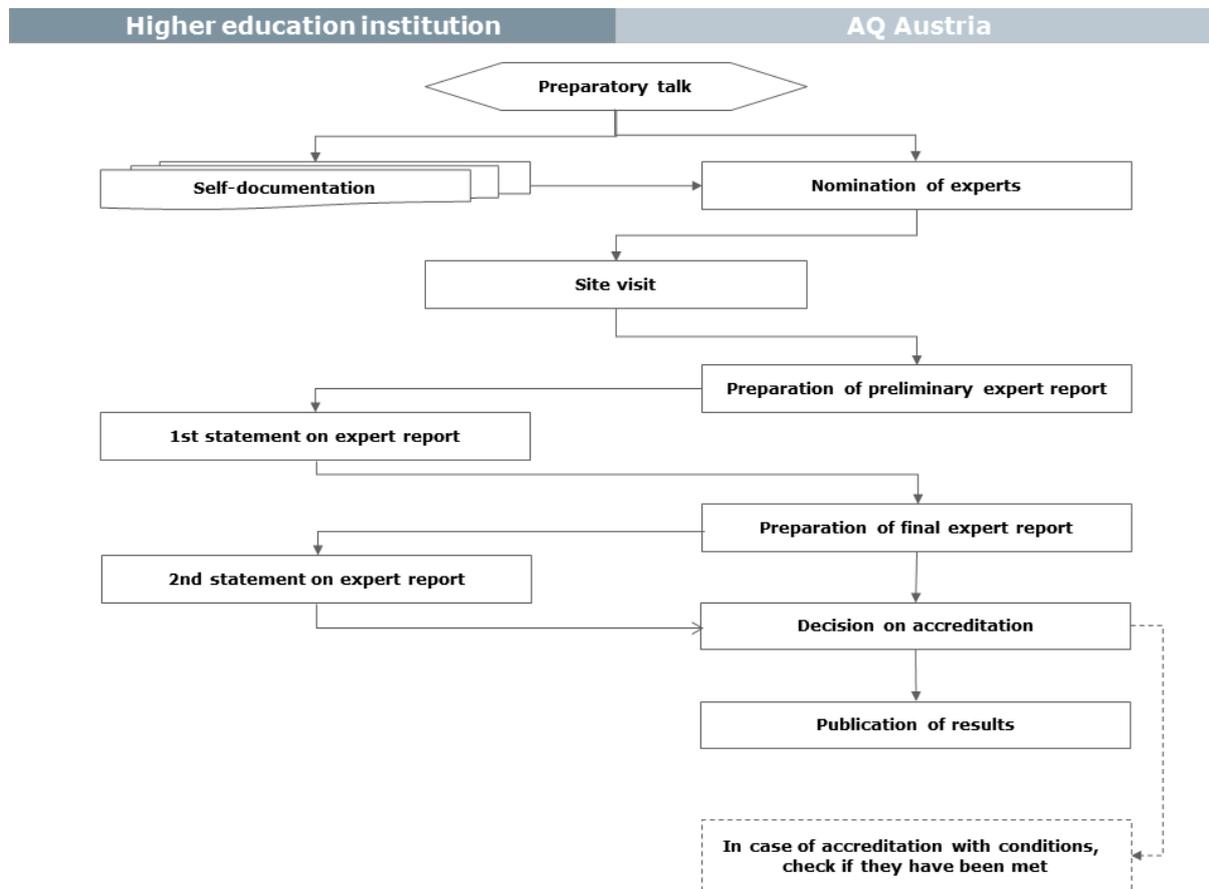
AQ Austria is the Austrian agency for quality assurance and accreditation in higher education. The agency is operating in Austria and other countries of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). It is committed to serving the common good and is based on the values of the European Higher Education Area,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

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 Profile and concept of the study programmes and brief description of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University

**The following information on the study programmes derive from the self-evaluation reports of al-Farabi KazNU.**

### **Bachelor in Journalism**

Academic degree awarded:	Bachelor of Social Sciences in Journalism
Date of introduction:	1934 *
Regular study period:	4 academic years
Number of ECTS credits: <sup>1</sup>	243
Number of Kazakh credits:	146

### **Master in Journalism**

Academic degree awarded:	Master of Social Sciences in Journalism
Date of introduction:	1996 *
Regular study period:	2 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	98
Number of Kazakh credits:	59

### **PhD in Journalism**

Academic degree awarded:	PhD in Journalism
Date of introduction:	2005 *
Regular study period:	3 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	125
Number of Kazakh credits:	75

### **Bachelor in Publishing**

Academic degree awarded:	Bachelor of Art in Publishing
Date of introduction:	1997 *
Regular study period:	4 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	253
Number of Kazakh credits:	152

\* Kazakhstan entered the Bologna process in 2010. The study programmes have consequently been adapted to the Bologna system. The process has not been finished yet.

<sup>1</sup> 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 hours for Professional Master degree programmes, 75 hours for Research and Teaching Master degree programmes, and 105 hours for PhD programmes. Al-Farabi KazNU equates one ECTS credit to 27 learning hours.

## Master in Publishing

Academic degree awarded:	Master of Art in Publishing
Date of introduction:	2000 *
Regular study period:	2 academic years
Number of ECTS credits:	105
Number of Kazakh credits:	63

\* Kazakhstan entered the Bologna process in 2010. The study programmes have consequently been adapted to the Bologna system. The process has not been finished yet.

## 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>, and 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 evidence provided by the university management during the on-site visit.

Al-Farabi Kazakh 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 and 25 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 people. The number of academic staff is over 2,500 people 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 the key areas of economy, science and public life of the country. In line with its mission, the University developed its vision and strategic goals.

The special National University status granted to al-Farabi KazNU by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2001 provides a higher level of administrative and academic freedom as compared to Kazakh higher education institutions (HEIs) 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/](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).

Distance learning opportunities at al-Farabi KazNU are provided for the students of the Law Faculty and the 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 credit system based on the extensive use of INTRANET technology. A corporate network UNIVER 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 co-operation with international research centres and laboratories.

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

Al-Farabi KazNU mandated AQ Austria with the accreditation of the programmes mentioned above in July 2013.

#### 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	9 January 2014
On-site visit to al-Farabi KazNU by the Panel	12-13 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. Christoph Bläsi	University of Mainz, Germany	Reviewer from academia, Publishing; head of the review team
FH-Prof. Dr. Reinhard Christl	University of Applied Sciences St. Pölten, Austria (until 12/2013)	Reviewer from academia and reviewer with professional experience, Journalism
Andrey Kukushkin	Infores Agency, Kazakhstan	Reviewer with professional experience
Suvi Eriksson	University of Oulu, Finland	Student peer

#### AQ Austria Coordinator

Barbara Birke

## 2 Assessment results

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

#### 2.1.1 Journalism

##### **(a) Statements**

The history of the Bachelor of Journalism at al-Farabi Kazakh National University dates back to the early Soviet era. The first "journalism" programme was established in 1934. After the country's independence in 1991 it was changed from a Marxist-leninist study programme including loads of communism-related ideological and philosophical topics to a more western-style Bachelor. The Master programme was established in 1996, the PhD programme in 2005<sup>2</sup>. This brief look on history is very important, because the goals and contents of the programmes (and some problems concerning their compatibility with European standards upcoming below) can only be understood by concerning the historical background.

The Bachelor programme includes 243 ECTS, the Master programme 98 ECTS, the PhD programme 125 ECTS. All programmes are full-time studies. In the faculty's vision statement the three programmes on the whole form "a leading center for journalism education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century".

The faculty provided a self evaluation report including 110 pages of module descriptions ("module handbook"). These descriptions include

- module designation,
- titles of courses,
- semester in which the course is taught,
- name of the person responsible for each module,
- names of lecturers teaching,
- teaching language (Kazakh, Russian or English),
- type of teaching and contact hours,
- students' workload,
- ECTS points,
- module objectives and intended learning outcomes,
- examination requirements and forms of examination,
- exam questions,
- media employed,
- a reading list.

In its 110 pages, the module handbook offers a lot of information and shows the intention to meet European standards:

The explanation of the examination system in the module handbook is short and basically substantial. It relies on written exams and tests; oral examination has been reduced in order to avoid corruption. The study programmes have been developed according to western

<sup>2</sup> Kazakhstan entered the Bologna process in 2010. The study programmes have consequently been adapted to the Bologna system. The process has not been finished yet.

programmes; Columbia University was mentioned as one of the examples (although Columbia does not have a Bachelor programme for journalism). The Kazakhstan calculation of credit points has been transferred into the ECTS System.

It is obvious that the English version of the module handbook the panel was handed out is the result of a difficult translation process from Kazakh into English. Reading the module descriptions one has to learn that the definition of the term "journalism" applied by the university, the faculty and the students is substantially different from its definition in Europe. This is not a surprise: The role of journalism in Kazakhstan society is different from its role in Europe.

The curriculum is highly dedicated to the communication of government agenda and to contents that journalists and communication experts in Europe would call advertising or public relations instead of journalism. It includes, for example, courses like "advertising campaigns in the media", "advertising on radio and television", or "modern technology of public relations". The watchdog role of journalism, a core topic in European journalism teaching programmes, is not part of the curriculum. Core competences of journalists (investigative reporting, critical commentary) are not given emphasis. The students even of higher level do not distinct strictly between fact-based reporting and commentary.

Many courses of the curriculum are dedicated to subjects that one would not assume to be part of a journalism programme, such as history, geography, the political system of Kazakhstan, problems of globalisation and international politics. According to the self documentation, there are for example courses about "General and Applied Sociology", "Human Life Safety", "Ecology and Sustainable Development", "Culture and Religion", "Ethics of Personal and Social Success". Most of these courses are compulsory and, according to interviews with students and teachers, play an important part during the study programmes.

In addition to these non-journalistic topics, the curriculum provides a range of content in the fields of media, public relations, history, TV and radio. Most of them are organised in "vocational modules". Looking at the curricula from a European perspective, the study programmes contain many elements of media management, public relations and media studies.

There is a good mix of obligatory and elective courses; two courses per semester are obligatory, four to five are elective. The groups comprise approximately 15 students per course, and the students can choose between courses in Kazakh, Russian and English. In some courses English speaking teachers are translated into Kazakh. Presence in the courses is obligatory and grades depend strictly on presence.

Theory and practice are balanced in an appropriate way; the practical aspect is also emphasised by an internship in the second semester. According to interviews with media company representatives, the faculty is in close contact with local media companies. For many of them the al-Farabi KazNU Journalism programmes are the main source for recruiting staff.

Finally, after having studied all the material provided, it has to be stated that the issuance of a diploma supplement is not guaranteed neither for the Master nor for the Bachelor.

The PhD programme is relatively new; the first PhD programmes at al-Farabi KazNU were introduced 7 years ago. PhD students need to have two supervisors, one local and one well-known academic from abroad. According to general al-Farabi KazNU rules, PhD students need

to spend several months at the research organisation of the foreign supervisor, there are special financial resources for that.

## **(b) Assessments**

To evaluate the contents of the programmes the panel had to take a close look at the module handbook provided. On the whole it has to be stated that the module descriptions lack accuracy and logical consistence. In many cases the contents of the modules and qualification objectives are not described in an adequate way. The reading lists contain many old and non-relevant volumes, they lack international literature.

The problems of inconsistency and inaccuracy often seem to be due to translation problems from Kazakh into English, which obviously led to a lot of mistakes in the texts of the module handbook. During the on-site visit, the panel learned that English language competences of faculty, teachers and students are often poor. Without improving them, the faculty will not be able to develop their study programmes and curricula in an appropriate way according to the massive and rapid changes of the international media. In addition it turned out to be a problem that English language competences are not an admission criteria for students.

In some cases the module descriptions are in a way unspecific, that it is impossible to evaluate seriously, if contents and structure of teaching methods are suited to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The structure of the study programmes is not defined clearly enough. In many cases, the content of the modules is not defined appropriately and not described understandably. It remains a matter of guessing what is meant by content descriptions. Some module descriptions are logically inconsistent. There is no clear definition of elective and obligatory courses.

Considering that a lot of the problems regarding the modules and contents are due to translation problems, other elements of the module handbook definitely meet European standards:

- Its basic structure is appropriate, the credit point calculation and its transfer into the ECTS systems seems reasonable and plausible.
- Lecturers and people responsible for the modules are clearly defined.
- The students' workload required for the study programmes is defined clearly. According to the self evaluation report as well as to the interviews with students and alumni, workload is appropriate to allow the students to reach the aspired qualification objectives in the study period defined. Work in the class, in the laboratories and at home are well balanced. The students are not overloaded with work, they have many individual choices during the curriculum, many elective courses are provided.
- The examination system is clear from what we heard in the interviews in combination with the self documentation. It seems to make sense to the panel that it relies on written exams and that oral examination has been reduced in order to avoid corruption and "buying" academic honours. Exam assignments are defined in an appropriate way. Students are able to know what they are required to do and to know. There is also continuous assessment throughout the semesters, which supports continuous studying.
- According to on-site-interviews with deans, teachers, students and alumni, admission requirements to the study programmes are appropriately defined. They meet the requirements and contribute to achieving the educational goals of the study programmes.

- For the PhD programme, the number of permanent scientific staff possessing the relevant formal qualifications is sufficient. Many of the staff have carried out research in Kazakh language; the number of research papers in English is growing, but still on low level. Many of the staff are experts in non-media-related fields like history, philosophy or language studies. Their qualifications allow serious academic teaching required for the PhD programme, although it has to be stated that for the future there is a lack of media and especially new media know-how.
- At present, the permanent scientific staff is able to handle the teaching and tutoring responsibilities within the scope of the PhD programme.

Giving a general evaluation of the Journalism programmes of al-Farabi KazNU, one fundamental issue of all three programmes (BA, MA, PhD) is the definition of "Journalism": journalism as it is understood by the students, the faculty and the university is not compatible with the definition of journalism in western society and in Europe. As a result of these different definitions, the contents of the study programmes do not meet the professional standards of journalism in Europe.

The importance of an independent and government-critical journalism for democracy is not reflected in the curriculum and is not a goal of the university. The statements of the faculty given during the on-site visit are as clear as possible: "We do not teach the students to control the government."

In the curriculums there is no clear difference between journalism and public relations, although they have different functions in media and society: journalism has to investigate carefully and critically, should put politically relevant topics on the agenda and control the authorities and the government. Public relations is, explained in a simplified way, a communication strategy that follows the interest of the communicator, in the Kazakhstan case often the interests of the government.

There is no guarantee and no tradition of press freedom in Kazakhstan, as it is understood in western society and as it is a basic and constitutive element of western democracy.

Saying all that and stating that the shown understanding of the term "journalism" does not correspond with its European definition, does not mean that the programmes do not meet general modern standards of media education in general. It only means that it is based on a different understanding of the role of journalism and of journalists in society in Kazakhstan on the one hand and in Europe on the other hand. There are a lot of media related study programmes in Europe that feature similar topics as the reviewed programmes, but none of them is called "Journalism".

Summarising all the data and facts from the module handbook and from the interviews the panel comes to the conclusion that the programmes do not correspond with the current title 'Journalism'.

## 2.1.2 Publishing

### **(a) Statements**

Building on a long tradition of a Journalism programme dating back to the early Soviet era (1934), the Bachelor (4 years) and the Master (2 years) programmes in Publishing were

introduced at what is now known as the al-Farabi KazNU in 2010. At the time of this evaluation, there is no PhD programme in Publishing; the degrees awarded are a "Bachelor of Art" as well as a "Master of Art"<sup>3</sup>. The Bachelor degree requires 152 (Kazakh) credit points (equivalent to 253 ECTS points), the Master 63 credit points (equivalent to 105 ECTS credit points); both programmes are full-time programmes.

The Bachelor programme consists mainly of a state compulsory module, a social-communicative module (both of them cover general studies or soft skills, respectively aspects), the central "vocational" modules (amounting to about 2/3 of the credit points, including modules of individual educational trajectories [elective subjects]), an interdisciplinary module, as well as a practical.

The Master programme consists of a state compulsory module, compulsory professional modules and – central (amounting to about 1/3 of the credit points) – modules of individual educational trajectories (elective subjects), as well as a practical.

Most of the courses in the Bachelor as well as in the Master programme are provided in a Kazakh as well as in a Russian language version, to be chosen individually by the students. In both programmes, there is a good mix of obligatory and elective courses. Presence in courses, for which a student has registered, is obligatory in any case (this in cases causes conflicts with professional activities etc. on the side of the students). Research-orientation will be dwelled on in the assessment; it is interesting to see, however, that with respect to the past of the programmes, alumni confirmed that compared to other Kazakhstan universities al-Farabi KazNU had covered less theoretical topics during their time of study.

Detailed module descriptions are provided in the "Self Evaluation Report Bachelor / Master Degree Program in Publishing", p. 33 – p. 57.

The written documentation was – apart from conversations with groups of different programme stakeholders during the on-site visit – the key source for evaluating, a few words about this documentation, especially the central "Self Evaluation Report ...", as such are therefore in order here: This documentation is probably the result of a, one can imagine, complex process of coordination between different branches and interests in the university, as well as between the languages Kazakh, Russian, and English. In spite of the result being appropriate on the whole, there are shortcomings which made evaluating rather hard in places – and not only due to linguistic problems in the wake of translation processes: Some module descriptions lack accuracy and logical consistence. In some cases, it has to be said, the module descriptions are in a way unspecific, that it was impossible to evaluate seriously, if contents, structure, etc. are appropriate, since they are not described appropriately and understandably; some are outright inconsistent, even contradictory. Please note that these remarks are, in the first instance, no statements about the programmes themselves, but about their documentation; the impressions on the basis of the conversation were in many cases remarkably different.

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In the self documentation report it says that a BSc and an MS are awarded. After the on-site visit the review team was informed by the university that the current degrees are Bachelor of Art and Master of Art.

## **(b) Assessments**

The problems of the inconsistencies and inaccuracies in the documentation have been mentioned above. As mentioned, they often seem to be not least effects of not fully successful translation processes from Kazakh (or Russian) to English. Fortunately, most problems caused by this could be put into perspective on the basis of the conversations during the on-site visit. However, this language issue is not merely a 'beauty contest' matter: During the on-site visit, the panel learned that English language competences of teachers and students are partly poor. In its majority not being able to speak Russian or Kazakh, there is no reason for the panel to be self-righteous in any way, but: without improving these competences it will be hard to be an integral part of the European Higher Education Area sustainably and to ensure an appropriate exchange with foreign higher education institutions as well as to monitor international developments in publishing and to take part in international scholarly discourses (see below Standard 5 for more detail on the latter). As a further logical step, making English language competences an admission criterion for students and raise the share of English language courses in the programmes would be a recommendable move indeed.

Having dwelled on this particular aspect, many elements of the programmes – this applies to the Bachelor as well as to the Master – do meet the required standards:

- The credit point calculation and its transfer into the ECTS systems seem reasonable and plausible.
- People responsible for the modules are clearly defined.
- The students' workload required for the programmes and the single courses are defined. According to the conversations with students and alumni, workloads seem appropriate to allow the students to reach the aspired qualification objectives in the timeframes defined.
- Work in classes, in laboratories and at home are well balanced. There is no indication that students are overloaded with work, they have many individual choices in the curriculum, elective courses are provided.
- The balance between modules with different basic subject orientation (e.g. history, technology, culture, economy, philology, etc.) seems generally appropriate; the economical orientation (e.g. 'marketing and management', as mentioned explicitly as a desideratum by students and teachers as well by employer representatives), however, is not strong enough, the philological / editorial too strong (see below module structure).
- The system of examinations is clear, if somewhat uniform over all modules: two interim controls and a final examination (with two theoretical questions, one practical). The interim controls are a form of continuous assessment and support continuous studying. Keywords of sample examination questions are also given. It is worth mentioning that there are no oral examinations to prevent irregularities.
- According to the conversations with teachers, students and alumni, the requirements and procedures of admission to the programmes do fulfil the objective of giving access to the right number of students with appropriate profiles.

There are, however, also a number of substantive shortcomings:

- Concerning central chapters of the introductory parts of the documentation in the "Self Evaluation Report", the top-level descriptions unfortunately do not make clear in

a concise enough manner what the overall rationales of the programmes (BA, p. 18, MA, p. 18/19) are.

- In the top-level programme descriptions, the different categories vision, mission, goals / objectives (for both programmes), and learning outcomes (BA, p. 22/23, MA, p. 24/25) are not used in a concise enough way and not related to outside sources at all to allow a birds-eye view picture of the programmes, either. There are, e.g., no clear descriptions of the fundamental ideas with respect to the methodological positioning of the programmes in the international academic universe, to the outside challenges in the field the programmes are meant to respond to, to the potential graduate job market, etc. – and what this means for overall (module) structure of the programmes. With respect to a desirable unique positioning in the academic universe, the identification of possible model programmes abroad could be very helpful – the answers to corresponding questions (Germany, e.g. Mainz [there are no Publishing programmes at German universities, only book studies, which is different], US / Columbia [they only have a continuing education programme in Publishing], Poland, ...) by members of the teaching staff were not satisfactory.

Specifically for the Bachelor programme:

- In the single modules, the module objectives / intended learning outcomes are not related to the top-level programme descriptions (and thus not explicitly related to outside sources for the criteria employed, either, which seems necessary).
- The selectivity between different modules is too low, e.g. are “Publishing business”, “World experience of the state support of national book publishing” and “Scales of modern world book industry” among the content of the “The history of publishing” module (where they quite clearly really belong to other modules), “Prime cost calculation, determination of face value, selling price and profitability ...” among the study and examination requirements of the same module (ditto).
- The reading lists of the modules are not specific enough – there is, e.g., no reason to include Marshal McLuhan as an author in the reading list for the “The history of publishing” module or “Printer’s Devil: Mark Twain and the American Publishing Revolution” in the “Law and management of books” module. Moreover, they contain irrelevant titles and are in general much too similar to each other. The reading list does not contain enough (key) international titles to connect to the international discourses (an example would be “Books in the Digital Age” [on academic publishing] and “Merchants of Culture” [on trade publishing], both by John B. Thompson).
- The module structure does not quite fit the requirements of a contemporary, internationally oriented Publishing programme any longer:
  - There is an unjustified relative predominance of editorial aspects (which probably goes back to the time, when the programme was called “Publishing and Editorial”) – to overcome this, *merge* “Proofreading and editing” and “Editorial and Publishing Processes” to “Publishing Processes”.
  - Printing technology does not ‘deserve’ a whole module (any longer) in a Publishing programme – to overcome this, *reorganise* “Printing technology” and “Media systems and technologies” to “Printing and Media Technologies” and “Document Structures, Content Management and Ebooks” (wording is just a proposal).
  - Modern times are not only about new technology in place of old technology, there are wide-ranging (mainly economical) transformations to the industry as a whole – to take this into account, *add* new module “Challenges to the Book Business by Digitization and Media Convergence” (wording is just a proposal).

- Comparing book markets with respect to their structures, processes, values, etc. and also with the help of statistics should be performed systematically on module level – to take this into account, *add* new module “Book Market(s): Distinctive Features and Figures” (wording is just a proposal).
- “Book culture and sociology” as a title does not tell that the module is also on reading and does not dwell on top-level cultural issues concerning the medium book – to take this into account, *modify* it to include book culture also in the sense of its relevance for the well-being of individuals and the development of society (as well as aspects like bibliophilia) and *rename* it “Reading and book culture”.
- Terminology can be dealt with in the corresponding subject areas in other modules, esp. in “Printing technology” / “Printing and media technologies” (see above), art criticism is much too philological for a Publishing programme – to take this into account, *remove* “Terminology and art criticism”.

Specifically for the Master programme:

- In the single modules, the module objectives / intended learning outcomes are not related to the top-level programme descriptions (and thus not explicitly related to outside sources concerning the criteria employed, either, which seems necessary).
- Somewhat related to the formal criticisms, but probably reaching out beyond this aspect, the content descriptions are often not concise enough and abundantly wordy (“Methods of management in conditions of transformation of structural features at implementation decisions”, “Bases of formation of a control system of publishing structures”, “Repertoire of book publishing houses in system of culturological bases of modern society”, ...). The substance of the module “New methods of study on the topic of science in the book publishing” does not get across sufficiently at all.
- The reading lists are not specific enough – there is, e.g., no reason to include “Printer’s Devil: Mark Twain and the American Publishing Revolution” in the “Management and innovation in publishing” module .... Moreover, they contain irrelevant titles and are in general much too similar to each other. The reading list does not contain enough (key) international titles to connect to the international discourses (an example would be “Books in the Digital Age” (on academic publishing) and “Merchants of Culture” (on trade publishing), both by John B. Thompson).
- Especially, since there is no PhD programme in Publishing at the moment, it would be important to have a more explicit research orientation in the Master – not least will the next generation of researchers in Publishing in Kazakhstan come out of this future programme. To achieve this, at least one (new) module (in exchange to one to be removed or with two others merged) should explicitly be dedicated to theories and methods in (international) publishing research.

Complementarily to the proclaimed consequent research orientation of university, department and programmes, it is interesting to see that company representatives as potential future employers of graduates specified – besides more analytic skills, this is true – especially marketing and management and other more or less directly applicable skills to be missing in the programmes ... (it is not obvious, why they say at the same time that a Publishing PhD programme is missing). This has to be balanced in an appropriate process.

Finally, it has to be stated that the issuance of a diploma supplement – very important for student mobility – is not guaranteed, neither for the Bachelor nor for the Master.

## 2.2 Standard 2: Staff

According to the interview with the management al-Farabi KazNU, it is a desirable place to work as it is constantly further developing the research environment. According to the documentation as well as the interviews, it was clear that there is no tenure system in Kazakhstan, but that this university is just now thinking of introducing such a system. The autonomy of the university is limited in such a way, that it does not have enough autonomy to award a title of professor or associate professor itself. This is done by the ministry. It is, however, the decision of the university to say if somebody has the abilities and achievements to advance in their career.

There is a university level staff development programme in place. For external training it is also possible to apply for example for the Bolashak programme which is open for university staff. Last year, 26 staff members were trained at UK universities via Bolashak grants in their disciplines.

The university has decided to actively employ top staff from the whole of Kazakhstan as well as internationally.

### 2.2.1 Journalism

#### **(a) Statements**

According to the self evaluation report the staff consists of 52 full time and 4 part time members. Their formal level of qualification is high. Many of them have their core competences and qualifications in non-media fields, e.g. sociology, social sciences, philology and philosophy. There are no staff members who teach journalism as it is understood in a Western tradition.

The teaching staff represents a mixture of people with a classical academic career and of people that had worked outside the university, e.g. in editorial departments of newspaper and magazine publishers. As mentioned above, the members of the teaching staff show rather impressive publishing activities. Many of the staff have carried out research in Kazakh language; the number of research papers in English is growing, but still on a low level.

The self evaluation report provides an impressive list of international lecturers and visiting professors. They mostly come for one or two weeks per semester. They are brought in from universities in the European Union, the USA, Russia and Turkey. Most of them teach in English and are translated into Kazakh and/or Russian.

There are efforts to increase the international mobility of teaching and researching staff. More than ten members of the faculty visited universities abroad, especially in the USA, the EU and Russia.

#### **(b) Assessments**

The number of permanent academic staff (52 full-time, 4 part-time) is impressive; especially in relation to the small number of students. Their formal qualifications are sufficient. At present, the academic staff is able to handle the teaching and tutoring responsibilities. It was

stated in the interviews that they are satisfied concerning the balance of research and teaching in their work.

During the on-site visit the panel learned that English language competences of faculty, teachers and students are often poor. Without improving them, the faculty will hardly be able to develop their study programmes and curricula in an appropriate way according to the massive and rapid changes of the international media. Better English language competences will furthermore be necessary for extending and developing international co-operations, student mobility and staff exchange.

It was stated by the staff members that even though the university has a plan and a system for personal development, the activity of staff in such training could be better. The university should find strong incentives for the staff members to take part in further training, especially in foreign languages.

When recruiting new members of the teaching staff, the faculty should try to find persons with experience in new media, digitalization, social media, media technologies and new business models. In this context experience from international media experts could be helpful.

Although many members of the staff are experts in non-media-related fields like history, philosophy or language studies, their qualifications allow serious academic teaching required for the PhD programme. Nevertheless it has to be stated, that for the future there is a lack of media and especially new media know-how.

## 2.2.2 Publishing

### **(a) Statements**

Teaching staff (16 full-time, no part-time staff) in Publishing represents a good mixture of people with a classical academic career (mostly philological) and of people that also had worked outside the university, mostly in editorial departments of newspaper and magazine publishers. As mentioned above, the members of the teaching staff show rather impressive publishing activities. The number of permanent scientific staff possessing the relevant formal qualifications is sufficient. Their qualifications allow serious academic teaching, although – as mentioned in other places of this document – it has to be stated, that for the future there is a certain lack of linguistic skills (mainly English), of international networking, and in digital / media convergence issues.

### **(b) Assessments**

At present, the permanent academic staff is able to handle the teaching and tutoring responsibilities. It was stated in the interviews that they are satisfied in the balance of research and teaching in their work.

During the visit the panel learned that English language competences of faculty, teachers and students are often poor. Without improving them, the faculty will not be able to develop their study programmes and curricula in an appropriate way according to the massive and rapid changes of the international media.

It was stated by the staff members, that even though the university has a system for further development, the activity of staff in such training could be better. The university should find strong incentives for the staff members to take part in further training, especially in foreign languages.

New members of the teaching staff could be both academically and with respect to work experiences completely also from the areas of technology and management / economics to accompany the changes regarding digitization, media convergence, new business models, etc.

## 2.3 Standard 3: Quality assurance

### (a) Statements

The quality assurance (QA) of the programmes offered by the university can be seen as a key element in driving the progress and competitiveness both in the national and the international context. The QA system was, however, not described clearly enough in the documentation with respect to the actual procedures of QA in the university.

It was somewhat challenging to get to know the big picture of the QA system during the on-site visit at al-Farabi KazNU, but it did, however, become clear that the university has in fact a QA system put in place. The team noticed numerous elements for the assurance of quality of the university and its programmes:

- The university monitors the output of the activities with the help of key performance indicators which are also used for the staff to set up and review plans for each academic year.
- There is a university ranking among the faculty, departments and staff to increase competitiveness.
- The university follows the performance of students very closely.
- The university uses international external evaluations to develop their activities further. This applies for both education and research.
- The students give systematic feedback, especially to teaching offers, with the help of a system securing anonymity. Students are represented in the corresponding academic councils.
- The university has launched a new support system for PhD students with two research advisers, one local and one international.
- The university co-operates closely with the society and the employers.

The QA system of the university is clearly reflected in the faculty and programme level. Both the staff members and the students stated several different QA mechanisms.

### (b) Assessments

The QA system of the university and of the programmes is very output-oriented. It is based on quite strict procedures, on objectives set at the beginning of each period and on the monitoring and evaluation of the performance with the help of key performance indicators. It was stated that the performance of the staff members is reflected also in their salaries. The panel shares the importance of monitoring the performance of the university. It is, however, also important to see the QA system as a tool to develop a quality culture of the whole university. The panel thinks that it would be beneficial to move towards a more enhancement-led QA system in a way that the requirements for the assessment of individuals should move more towards stimulation and improvement-orientation instead of punishment. Moreover, the panel would like to raise awareness with respect to the limited transferability of established key performance indicators to arts subjects.

It was stated by the students that they see their role as active parts in the procedures and they are mostly satisfied with the way their opinions are taken into account. The opinion of the students is valued, especially in the evaluation of the staff. The feedback is multiple-choice, and it was stated by some of the students that they would see it beneficial to have a

possibility to share their constructive ideas for the development somehow in an anonymous feedback system. This would not least reflect the good relationships between the students and the staff that the panel experienced during the on-site visit. The procedures, however, should assure that all the information that is gathered with the help of key performance indicators and feedback from the students and employers is analysed properly, discussed in the councils and made a base for decisions, e.g. with respect to desired changes in teaching. It should be clear for the students that the information they share is in fact made use of and they thus really can participate. It was not totally clear after the interviews that this is the case at the moment.

The panel would like to stress that the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with the faculty of each programme itself, because this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system. Additionally, the university should develop shared criteria and methodologies for decentralised quality assurance and a quality culture – the procedures should concentrate on minimising bureaucracy and cost, on avoiding over-regulation, and go for the active contribution of students and a continuous dialog between the students and the staff.

## 2.4 Standard 4: Funding and infrastructure

### (a) Statements

The two main funding sources of al-Farabi KazNU are the state budget and tuition fees. The overall budget of al-Farabi KazNU is 17 million Kazakhstan tenge (kzt). In Euro this makes 3,400 Euro per students on average. Plans of the government and the university agree to extend these expenses in the future. Budgeting is a top-down process. There is no department budget. Profit centres or budgeting divisions on department level do not exist.

Tuition fees amount to 620,000 kzt (2,300 Euro) for the Bachelor and to 650,000 kzt for the Master programmes. For foreign students tuition fees are about 20 percent higher.

The campus of the University comprises 100 hectares and 14 academic buildings and accommodation for 5,000 students, a students' recreational and sports complex, a sports stadium seating 4,000 people and the "students' palace" with 1,500 seats. The central buildings are a heritage of the Soviet era. In the years since then the campus has been enlarged, a new library and new buildings for research, students and offices were designed and constructed according to western standards.

The seminar rooms and auditoriums of the faculty, where teaching for BA, MA and PhD takes place, are located in traditional buildings of the university. Some of them are equipped with laptops, flat screens, DVD players and sound systems, some with traditional equipment (overhead projectors, flip charts). A special room for video conferencing is available.

The library of al-Farabi KazNU holds two million volumes with, according to official data, 45,000 volumes annually added to the collection. An e-library provides over 2,000 academic papers and over 1,000 academic textbooks. The students of the faculty have full access to the library, the opening hours are from nine to minimum five o'clock. The library is equipped with new workstations for accessing online and e-literature.

There is a laboratory for print & publishing located near to the seminar rooms and a laboratory of photojournalism. 10 Workstations with state-of-the-art software (Adobe Indesign and Photoshop) are used for producing print and online media. The TV studio and the radio studio are located in a traditional building of the faculty. The TV studio is equipped with professional cameras (JVC). Three cameras are given to students for rent. Additional mobile equipment (microphones, recorders) is available for students' use outside the faculty. The students use the studios and laboratories for practicing as well as for working for the students' newspaper and the students' radio station. Production and post production facilities including state-of-the-art software are provided.

### (b) Assessments

Financial resources are sufficient and backed by the funding of the Kazakhstan state budget. The budgeting of the university is a straight top-down process that restricts the possibilities and autonomy of the faculty and does not give decisive incentives to attract private money. Research activities are funded predominantly by the overall university budget, research activities financed by private companies and organisations are not made attractive by the centralised budgeting process.

Auditoriums and seminar rooms meet the standards. The equipment for radio, TV and publishing is appropriate considering that the groups of students are small. The new library gives the students access to work stations and meet their needs for access to international journals. The library's opening hours are sufficient and meet the needs of the students. The possibilities for students' recreation and sports offered in the facilities of the university campus are appropriate, in some sports outstanding.

The panel concludes that financial resources and funding is guaranteed during the whole accreditation period. Adequate rooms and technical facilities required for the study programmes are available.

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

### 2.5.1 Journalism

#### **(a) Statements**

The basis of the following statements on the research and development situation in connection with the Journalism programmes of al-Farabi KazNU are conversations with members of the department management, with the teaching staff, BA and MA students, alumni and representatives of companies being possible or actual employers for graduates. Moreover, the "Staff Handbook" in the Self Evaluation as well as a selection of academic books published by teaching staff as presented to us during the on-site visit helped to get an impression of research activities at al-Farabi KazNU.

After having been a teaching university in the past, al-Farabi KazNU – this has been pointed out explicitly by 1<sup>st</sup> vice rector Burkitbayev during the on-site visit – now sees itself as a research university, which is aware of the fact that this means that it will be judged first and foremost by its research, e.g. publication output. According to staff members, this central aspect of the university strategy is mirrored by the developments in the department and its study programmes: Until only a few years ago, the focus was more on practical aspects, whereas now more theoretical issues are dealt with.

The research activities attached to the Journalism programmes we have identified are to a large extent related to Kazakhstan topics. They deal, for example, with the image of Kazakhstan and the Kazakhstan president abroad and with the impact of the changes of the media industry on Kazakhstan society and politics.

Given the specific historical situation after the independence of Kazakhstan it is understandable that the rather impressive range of monographs by members of the teaching staff consists mostly of books in Kazakh and in Russian.

It has been mentioned on several occasions during the on-site visit that students are in fact involved in at least some of the research work. This occurs, especially in the Master programme, in the form of a co-authorship with teaching staff members in writing papers or books, as employed student assistants contributing to research projects, or indeed in the form of own research projects. The Master theses of the students we talked to varied and were at least partly related to research areas of the teaching staff.

#### **(b) Assessments**

Looking at what actually happens in offices, workshops and labs, the state of the research situation related to the programmes of al-Farabi KazNU is quite remarkable. In spite of the top-level strategic transition to a research university and the principal dedication to support this on the side of the department, research aspects (including applied research), however, still do not seem to have high actual relevance compared with the vocational aspects. A main clue for this judgement is the missing link to contemporary research beyond the university and the country.

In some way, this seems to be in line with the overall concept of the programmes, where for the Bachelor less than 1/4 of the attributions are research-related.

Looking at the current research topics of the teaching staff members, it has to be said that they do not seem to be inspired sufficiently by the international discourses about future of the media industry, multimedia aspects, digitalisation and media convergence. Classical journalism research about the role of journalism in a democratic society is not given emphasize.

One of the reasons given for the fact that research activities concerning topics of the future of the media industry are not carried out in a great extent was that some of the changes in the media industry have not yet reached the Kazakhstan media market, which might well be the case. Moreover, teaching staff members said that they had now started looking at the corresponding developments in e.g. Germany, the USA or Japan. It cannot be repeated often enough that contact and exchange with the research scene abroad is absolutely essential.

Possibly as a consequence of the fact that we are looking at a university offering comparatively newly designed programmes following a new strategy, clear top-level focal points of the research by the various teaching staff members cannot be identified yet. (Such focal points would be helpful for attracting collaboration offers, research funds, students and fellows!)

Finally it has to be stated that no clear statements can be found on the positioning of the programmes in the multi-faceted (international) research universe. An important dimension for that is based on the main research methodology/methodologies used. This, of course, does not exclude interdisciplinary research work at all, but it would define a clear identity for the al-Farabi KazNU programmes: Are they social studies, are they (hermeneutical-) humanistic studies, are they engineering science? Aspects for all of these clues can be found in the module descriptions and the publications of the teaching staff members, but they do not give a clear picture.

## 2.5.2 Publishing

### **(a) Statements**

The basis of these statements on the research and development situation in connection with the Publishing programmes of the Journalism department of al-Farabi KazNU are conversations with members of the department management, the teaching staff, BA and MA students, alumni, and representatives of companies that are possible or actual employers for graduates of the programmes. Moreover, the „Self Evaluation Report – Bachelor / Master Degree Program in Publishing“, esp. its chapter “Staff Handbook” as well as a selection of academic books published by teaching staff of the Publishing programmes as presented to us during the on-site visit helped to get an impression of the Publishing research at al-Farabi KazNU.

After having been a teaching university in the past, al-Farabi KazNU – this has also been pointed out explicitly by 1<sup>st</sup> vice rector Burkitbayev during the on-site visit – now sees itself as a research university, which is aware of the fact that this means that it will be judged first and foremost by its research, e.g. publication output. According to Publishing programmes staff, this central aspect of the university strategy is mirrored by the developments in the department and its programmes: until only a few years ago, the focus was more on practical

aspects, whereas now more theoretical issues are dealt with and research has become an integral part of the programmes.

The research activities attached to the Publishing programmes we have identified are to a large part related to the situation of publishing and related areas in Kazakhstan; according to the publication list of teaching staff members they mainly include topics like (Kazakh) book culture, printing / binding technology and pre-press processes, (Kazakh and turkic) book history, (Kazakh) book industry / business / institutions / regulation / logistics / management / legal aspects / standards, Kazakh printing, binding and publishing terminology, (Kazakh) book statistics / trends, a little ebook-related topics, as well as – a bit of typical publishing studies core areas – Kazakh (literary) studies, translation studies, (Kazakh) linguistics (language of newspapers [quantitative research], academic / literary language, etc.), and some communication studies / journalism topics. From the conversations with teaching staff members we can say that Kazakh terminology, aspects of translation (esp. of Russian literature), as well as the comparison of book industries (especially Kazakhstan and Russia) seem to be the most important research topics among these. Given the specific historical situation of Kazakhstan publishing in times of independence and the tasks the Publishing programmes have taken on as a result of this (developing a Kazakh terminology etc.), it is understandable that the rather impressive range of monographs published by members of the teaching staff consists mostly of books in Kazakh, partly also in Russian – for the necessary participation in international academic discourses this does not help. Finally, it has to be added, that (research) publications are not the only type of non-teaching results of the programmes; there is e.g. an aspect of craftsmanship in the restoration of rare books as conducted by one member of the teaching staff.

It was mentioned on several occasions during the on-site visit that students are in fact involved in at least some of the research work; this can, especially in the Master programme, be in the form of a co-authorship with teaching staff members in writing papers (or books), as employed student assistants contributing to research projects, or indeed in the form of own research projects; the Master theses of the students we talked to were varied, sounded adequately oriented to current challenges (e.g. “The introduction of electronic books to the educational system in Kazakhstan”) and were indeed at least partly related to research areas of the teaching staff.

It seems that the teaching staff is able to dedicate an appropriate amount of its time to the research work.

## **(b) Assessments**

Looking at what actually happens in offices, workshops, and laboratories, the research situation related to the Publishing programmes of al-Farabi KazNU is quite remarkable. Good examples for this are the monographs of the members of the teaching staff as well as the relevant Master theses. In spite of the top-level strategic transition to a research university and the principal dedication to support this on the side of the department, research aspects (including applied research, of course), however, still do not seem to have an adequate actual relevance compared to the vocational aspects. A main clue for this judgement is the missing link to contemporary research beyond the university and the country and also the lack of strong academic, especially methodological aspects in teaching.

In some way, this seems to be in line with the overall concept of the programmes, where in the introduction (cf. “Self Evaluation Report”, chapter IV) for the Bachelor less than 1/5 of the

attributions are research-related (one example: "exploring new scientific approaches in bibliography, history of publishing, the basic theory and techniques of literary editing ...", p.17) and for the Master research centres / research / scientific and experimental are mentioned only as three of a much larger number of possible future job perspectives for alumni (p. 18/19). As mentioned above, it is, on the other hand, certainly not sufficiently in line with the overall strategy of al-Farabi KazNU as a research university.

Acknowledging the specific tasks, a culture- and society-oriented research domain has to fulfil in a linguistic and cultural space and a nation springing to life (see above), an internationally distinguished research university is still bound to exchange thoughts on eye-level beyond that, at least on the medium to long run. Concerning the current research topics of the teaching staff members, it has to be said that they do not seem to be inspired sufficiently by the international publishing studies discourses and/or the current, very fundamental challenges to publishing (and to the book business as a whole), especially those directly or vicariously triggered by digitization and media convergence. One of the reasons given for the latter was that some of the challenges, e.g. the competition to booksellers by Amazon and other online booksellers, a widespread diffusion of digital books, self-publishing, etc. have not yet reached the Kazakhstan market (which might well be the case). Moreover, teaching staff members said that they had now started looking at the corresponding developments in e.g. Germany or Japan. With respect to the former (aspects of exchange), it cannot be repeated often enough that exchange – with respect to challenges, ideas, publications, etc. – with the publishing studies research scene abroad is absolutely essential. The current main orientation of the programmes to the Kazakhstan situation (a domain terminology for publishing in Kazakh has to be developed and this can in fact be seen as the task of a national university) does make sense, not least for a society in transition (cf. "Self Evaluation Report", chapter IV: "assist in the building of a democratic state, in the formation of the national idea" [p. 16], "formation of public opinion and raise literary taste" [p. 17], "improving inclusiveness, objectivity, relevance" [p. 17]), it should not stand in the way of an opening up to global developments on the medium run latest, though.

Possibly as a consequence of the fact that we are looking at a unit offering comparatively newly designed programmes following a new strategy, clear top-level focal points of the research by the various teaching staff members cannot be identified yet. (Such focal points are helpful for attracting collaboration offers, research funds, students, and fellows!) That some current research topics are rather on the margin of mainstream publishing studies, especially in its intersection set with philology, is not necessarily a problem – in the contrary, it could be developed a strength, has to be reflected and made explicit for that, though. One last remark on this aspect: the prevailing unfocusedness is not least reflected by the different names of the programmes over the years (and in parallel in the documentation!): "publishing and editorial", "publishing and design", "publishing (studies)" ...

Finally – and this is also true for the description of the modules (see Standard 1) – no statements can be found on the positioning of the programmes in the multi-faceted (international) research universe. An important dimension for that is based on the main research methodology / methodologies used. This, of course, does not exclude interdisciplinary research work at all, but it would describe the unique point of departure as part of an identity for the al-Farabi KazNU programmes: are they social studies, are they (hermeneutical-)humanistic studies, are they engineering science, ... – for all of these clues can be found in the module descriptions and the publications of the teaching staff members, but this does not give a clear picture.

Bringing that in connection with teaching according to Humboldt's ideal, the research positioning esp., but not exclusively of the Master programme (a student rather less specifically said, it would be 'more academic' than the Bachelor programme) could not be seen clearly enough; the exposure of students to serious academic thinking (also international) should be strengthened to prepare for a research orientation on grass-root level. Marshal McLuhan was mentioned as an author to be read, this is true – but the main period of his writing was in the 1970s; others apparently from the Russian research tradition could not be related to what the panel would expect in this are, unfortunately.

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

### (a) Statements

Programmes for national and international co-operations at al-Farabi KazNU are organized in identical manner for Journalism and Publishing, so all statements and assessments of the panel are of a current concern to both disciplines.

As the panel members learned from a number of meetings with al-Farabi KazNU management, professors, BA, MA and PhD students and alumni national and international co-operations are traditionally wide due to the nature of the university, which is the oldest and biggest in the country.

Al-Farabi KazNU teachers provide lectures and professional experience sharing to other HEIs in Kazakhstan. Students and teachers representing other kazakhstani HEIs are taking part at the educational and academic events organised by al-Farabi KazNU.

Al-Farabi KazNU has an International Relations Department standing for development of academic partnership with foreign HEIs, which is claimed one of the key directions of the university activity. Al-Farabi KazNU students and teachers have more international exposure potential than the majority of other HEIs in Kazakhstan. Being the biggest and the oldest university in Kazakhstan, al-Farabi KazNU has established formal partnership relations with more than 418 world universities and international organisations. Major foreign partner HEIs are listed on a KazNU website.

The panel has learned during the on-site visit that al-Farabi KazNU is offering BA and MA Faculty of Journalism students, as well as teachers a range of possibilities to participate in international exchange courses and programmes in order to internationalise the university's educational environment. Existing programme-related co-operation with other higher education institutions outside Kazakhstan is sufficiently organised. These collaborations entail student exchange programmes, dual degree programmes, joint international summer schools, faculty mobility programmes and joint research opportunities.

It is also important to state that al-Farabi KazNU offers workshops about the Bologna process and also help to other universities (to organise workshops or conferences etc.).

Co-operation with companies is well established mostly in the sphere of employment and internships, which is useful. The review team learned about a number of signed memoranda of understanding with international and local companies / employers. Boards with announcements for job and/or internship opportunities for al-Farabi KazNU students and graduates are attached to walls around the campus. Co-operation with other institutions, like international organisations and funds, is well developed as well. Al-Farabi KazNU used to have a number of joint projects with UNESCO office in Almaty, with the British Council, Alliance Française, Confucius Institutes, USAID and others.

As it is stated in the al-Farabi KazNU self-evaluation report, the university offers student exchange programmes and dual degree programmes for undergraduate and graduate students, joint forums and research opportunities, faculty visiting and exchange programmes, summer schools, and study abroad programmes. The review team found evidence in a number of meetings that student exchange programmes are organised. Many students have

participated in different exchange programmes and are satisfied with type and scope of these programmes as their feedbacks demonstrate.

Students have the opportunity to take their (mandatory) internship in Kazakhstan or abroad. Each student has his or her own internship coordinator, who is responsible for finding suitable professional internship opportunities. As the review team learned during the meetings with al-Farabi KazNU students and representatives of companies and organisations providing internship opportunities, this activity works well at al-Farabi KazNU. Many al-Farabi KazNU students have declared themselves well conducting their internships in professionally related organisations across Kazakhstan.

A description of the promotion and support of the international mobility of students and teachers is available on al-Farabi KazNU website. Applicants may get comprehensive information on the exchange programmes with foreign higher education institutions at KazNU International Department.

As the review team learned, the international mobility process is well organised, though there are no mandatory mobility windows in the study programmes. Al-Farabi KazNU is a member of consortia that won Erasmus Mundus grants from the European Commission to implement its mobility flows. The University also is partner of the Tempus project "QUADRIGA", which is aimed to provide background for modernisation of curricula, promote closer co-operation and understanding between universities and employers (enterprises, industries, public sector) what is finally aimed to be beneficial for graduates of the university. The project is implemented in the context of the Bologna Process.

Separately the review team would like to mention that PhD students have wide international exposure opportunities. This has been confirmed by a number of meetings with al-Farabi KazNU PhD students. Being the largest provider of PhD programmes in Kazakhstan, al-Farabi KazNU is engaging many faculty members of foreign universities as external co-advisors as well as providing opportunities for al-Farabi KazNU PhD students to take courses abroad. This has been made binding by a programme which provides for obligatory international / external co-supervisors for PhD students as well as for paid-for academic trips abroad (10 days for Master students, several months for PhD students).

## **(b) Assessments**

Paying a tribute to al-Farabi KazNU for its experience and efforts in developing national and international co-operations, the panel states that al-Farabi KazNU should pay attention to setting up a strategy and a concrete plan for these co-operations.

Regarding co-operation on the national level we may advise al-Farabi KazNU to provide its teachers an opportunity to share their experience with regional universities. At the same time teachers from regional universities should have more possibilities to gain a professional experience at al-Farabi KazNU, student exchange between al-Farabi KazNU and regional universities could be more intensive and effective.

Also the panel states that the research collaborations with local higher educational institutions are not well developed. The reason for this partially is that al-Farabi KazNU has been a learning-oriented institution for its whole history and that research programmes are not well developed in Kazakhstani HEIs in general, which derives from the status of universities in

Soviet times. At the same time, al-Farabi KazNU has a potential to act as a leader of this process in the country bringing modern research approach to local ground.

International co-operation: Despite the large number of international activities and co-operation agreements, a strategy for international co-operation which is laid down in a document highlighting the objectives for this co-operation and main directions of its development, is not evident. The number of partner HEIs (more than 400) implies that the University accepts all co-operation proposals from abroad. We suggest revising effectiveness of each co-operation agreement. We believe while it is difficult to manage such a big group, al-Farabi KazNU needs to concentrate its attention at a certain number of reliable partners. It is important to set up a partnership strategy and provide adequate information on possibilities that a concrete partnership potentially brings to students and teachers. Also we may add that not all documents about regulations for national and international co-operations are in place or publicly available. The list of partner HEIs is available at a website but there are no links to websites of these institutions. The panel also recommends al-Farabi KazNU to develop and publicise a strategy for international co-operation; options in this field include exchanges of teaching staff and students, joint research projects, internationally distributed course programmes, consortia for the common procurement and use of resources (e.g. procurement of digital library resources), etc.

As the review team has learned during the on-site visit, al-Farabi KazNU has been engaged in a number of joint projects with UNESCO office in Almaty, with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the British Council, Alliance Française, Confucius Institutes, USAID and others. But there is no detailed information on al-Farabi KazNU website on the programme of these co-operations and how students are involved and how they could benefit from these co-operations.

Al-Farabi KazNU website in general and the web-page of the Faculty of Journalism should contain more detailed information on national and international co-operations. For example students should be provided concrete information on international exchange places for the coming summer and autumn.

At the same time, co-operation with employers is well organised. Al-Farabi KazNU has established strong relationships with local business community; employability of the university's graduates as reported exceeds 90 percent. Meeting with representatives of employer companies have showed high satisfaction of employees by co-operation with al-Farabi KazNU.

The panel's recommendations are to set up a strategy for national and international co-operations, including research co-operation and make all related documents openly available.

The review team encourages al-Farabi KazNU to continue co-operation in offering workshops about the Bologna process and also help to other universities in the future.