

**AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION  
NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY**

**ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK OF THE  
AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION  
NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY**

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Approved by the resolution of the Academic Council of  
the autonomous organization of education “Nazarbayev University”  
Minutes # 82 of 05.03 2014



Astana  
2014

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## 1. Introduction

1. This Academic Quality Framework of the Autonomous Organization of Education “Nazarbayev University” (hereinafter – the “University”) focuses on the setting and maintenance of academic standards, and on the assurance and enhancement of academic quality.

Specifically, it is designed to:

- 1) maintain the standards and reputation of all the University’s academic awards;
- 2) provide institutional guidance for the development, delivery and review of academic programs;
- 3) promote an ethos of continuous improvement in learning and teaching, ensuring an effective learning experience for students;
- 4) deliver robust data to be used for the maintenance and improvement of standards of learning and teaching, ensuring that all feedback loops are closed;
- 5) promote a culture where all faculty engage in reflection, evaluation, development and enhancement of their work.

## 2. Relationship to the University Strategy

2. The academic quality framework aligns particularly with Goal II of the University’s strategic agenda, namely ‘to achieve Nazarbayev University’s mission by developing and maintaining academic excellence.’

Similarly, close attention will be paid to ensuring that the University Graduate Attributes are being delivered by all programs of study.

The framework reflects the Academic Council’s institutional responsibility for academic standards. The Council, through its Academic Quality Sub-Committee, has strategic oversight of the design, approval, annual monitoring and periodic review of taught programs including opportunities for enhancement, engagement with professional, statutory and regulatory bodies and external review.

## 3. Definitions and Principles

3. **Academic standards** refer to the skills and knowledge expected of students for a particular subject area at a particular level. Academic standards are established through the university’s entry and graduation requirements, program design and assessment regulations.

4. **Academic quality** is a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them to achieve their academic award. It

involves ensuring that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment and learning opportunities are provided for them.

5. **Quality assurance** processes ensure that there are systems both for support and maintenance of academic standards and quality of learning opportunities.

6. **Quality enhancement** can be defined as taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experience of students. The University is committed to systematic quality review to identify elements of current practice that can be enhanced. This implies looking ahead, considering 'where we want to be' and taking the necessary steps to ensure that we get there.

7. Key academic quality principles to be noted include:

- 1) the ownership of academic quality and standards rests with the university;
- 2) the University's faculty and support staff who deliver courses and learning support services carry primary responsibility for upholding academic standards and enhancing the quality of provision;
- 3) the University is committed to operating a comprehensive internal system of academic monitoring and review;
- 4) the University is committed to ensuring the effective involvement of students in quality management;
- 5) external reviewers ensure that the University's awards are consistent with international standards and provide constructive criticism of the content and methods of teaching, learning and assessment employed.

#### 4. Academic Standards

8. The University will secure and maintain its academic standards by:

- 1) assigning credit values and designing programs that align with the specifications of the relevant national and international credit frameworks;
- 2) establishing and consistently implementing processes for the approval of taught programs and research degrees that ensure that academic standards are set at an appropriate level;
- 3) awarding qualifications to mark the achievement of defined and internationally-benchmarked program learning outcomes;
- 4) maintaining definitive records of each program and qualification it approves (and of subsequent changes to it);
- 5) ensuring that credit and qualifications are awarded only where the achievement of relevant learning outcomes (at module and program levels) has been demonstrated through appropriate assessment, and that academic standards have been satisfied;

- 6) ensuring that processes for the monitoring and review of programs are implemented which explicitly address whether the University's academic standards are achieved;
- 7) using external, independent expertise at key stages of the setting and maintenance of academic standards.

## **5. Responsibilities for Academic Quality**

9. An overarching quality management structure will be established, which will encompass Academic Council, the Academic Quality Sub-Committee, School and Program Committees. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities will be identified and outlined for administrators and faculty with respect to the management and enhancement of academic quality. These will include:

- 1) Academic Council;
- 2) The Office of the Provost (Vice-Provost for Academic Affairs, Head of Academic Quality Enhancement) and the Academic Quality Sub-Committee;
- 3) Deans;
- 4) Vice Deans of Academic Affairs/School Academic Affairs Committees;
- 5) Program Committees/Program Leaders;
- 6) Course Teams/Course Leaders.

## **6. Components of the Quality Framework**

10. This quality framework focuses on five key components, namely:

- 1) program approval;
- 2) annual program monitoring;
- 3) student engagement;
- 4) external review;
- 5) periodic review.

These components are illustrated at Figure 1.

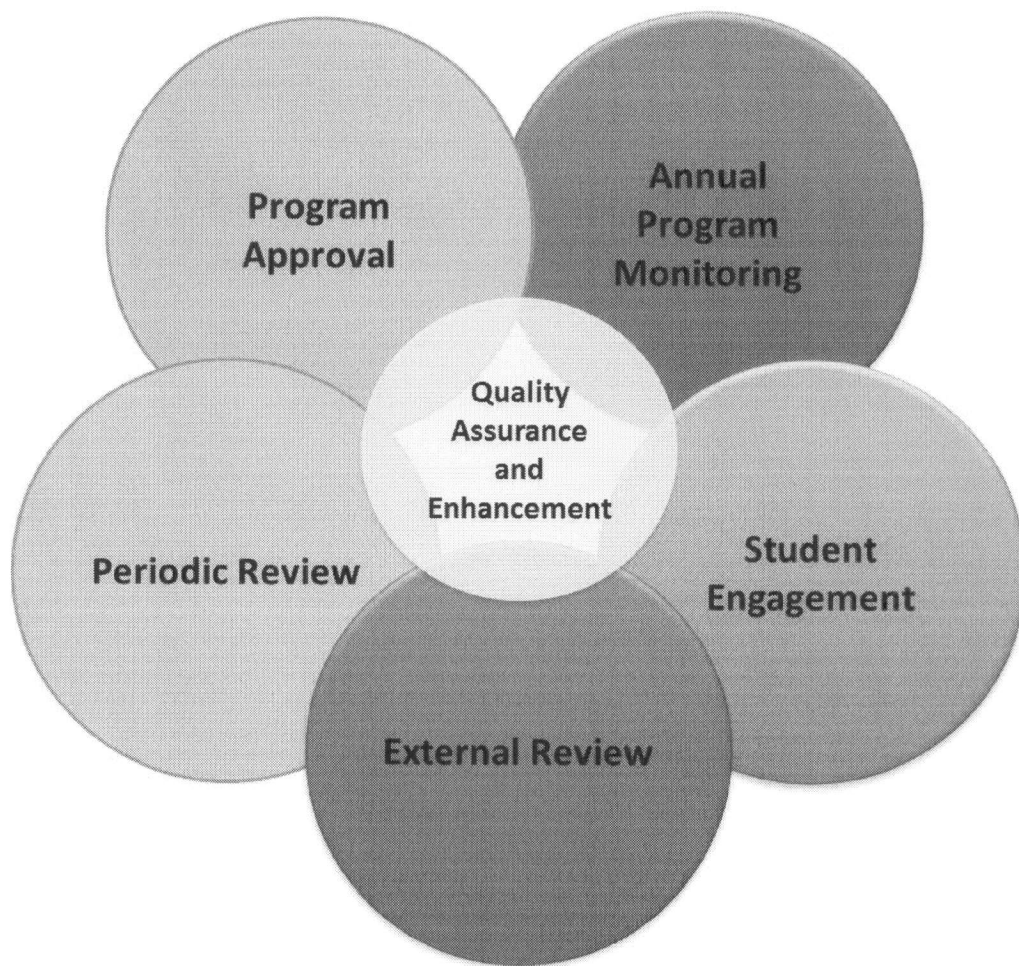


Figure 1. Components of the University Quality Framework

### 6.1. Program Approval

11. The University must ensure that it fulfils its responsibilities for standards and quality through its procedures for program approval. This includes confirming that program approval decisions are informed by full consideration of academic standards and the quality of the learning opportunities.

It should:

- 1) maintain institutional oversight of the processes for program design, development and approval, to ensure processes are applied and operated consistently;
- 2) provide explicit definitions and statements of what students have to know or do to gain entrance to specific programs of study;

- 3) ensure that the standards set are appropriate to the award and subject area, and are comparable with those expected within the subject area in other comparable universities, by utilizing external reference points and expertise in program design, development and approval;
- 4) ensure that curricula:
  - a. are current, coherent and responsive to the evolving needs of students and the national economy;
  - b. are informed by the research and other professional activities of faculty;
  - c. are detailed in program specifications that describe the program aims and intended learning outcomes of each award, and the knowledge, attributes and skills that graduating students will be expected to possess;
  - d. provide opportunities for students to achieve their full potential;
  - e. provide courses of the appropriate level for the award to which they lead;
  - f. employ an appropriate range of aligned, modern approaches to teaching and learning;
  - g. are supported by appropriate high quality material and physical resources.

## **6.2. Annual Monitoring**

12. The aim of annual monitoring is to encourage reflection on the operation of courses and programs with a view to maintaining academic standards and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching. The purposes of the Annual Program Monitoring process are to:

- 1) promote consistency in academic quality assurance and enhancement processes across the University and ensure that procedures are in place to identify and act upon any themes which emerge;
- 2) provide an opportunity for the identification of key issues at course, program, faculty and institutional levels, culminating in reports to Academic Council which enable appropriate action to be identified and implemented;
- 3) provide a crucial source of evidence that the University's internal academic quality processes are robust, efficient and effective;
- 4) enable the University to meet both internal and external requirements for an annual monitoring procedure which is sufficiently robust to withstand external scrutiny.

Annual Program Monitoring will be conducted out for all taught programs and their constituent courses (including non-credit-bearing courses). It will assist Schools to enhance the quality of their provision by enabling reflection on issues arising in the

previous academic year, enabling feedback to be discussed and considered and by emphasizing action to be taken on issues arising. It will be conducted in a consistent, systematic and comparable way across the University by means of a clear, published procedure for its conduct, the use of a report proforma at each level of reporting and the central provision of statistical data to inform the process. It will be achieved through:

- 1) analysis of student performance and progression;
- 2) student feedback;
- 3) faculty feedback;
- 4) feedback from employers and graduates;
- 5) consideration of external academic input.

### **6.3. Student Engagement**

13. The effective involvement of students in quality management through a variety of mechanisms is a key component of the University's internal quality framework. Students can contribute insight into many areas of university provision including:

- 1) application and admission;
- 2) student orientation;
- 3) program and curriculum design, delivery and organization;
- 4) curriculum content;
- 5) teaching delivery;
- 6) learning opportunities;
- 7) learning resources;
- 8) student support and guidance;
- 9) assessment.

The University students will have the opportunity to be appropriately involved in academic quality enhancement and assurance processes. The University will develop a culture and environment where students are encouraged to contribute to academic quality processes and will:

- 1) foster active student participation in its academic quality system;
- 2) implement transparent mechanisms, agreed with students, for the nomination and election of student representatives;
- 3) monitor, review and enhance the effectiveness of their policies and processes for engaging students in their quality processes.

Specific mechanisms for involving students will include:

- 1) feedback questionnaires;
- 4) student representative structures;
- 5) input through focus groups;

- 6) student membership of committees;
- 7) student consultation events and dialogue with decision makers;
- 8) online discussion forums;
- 9) formal academic quality processes (e.g. annual and periodic program review).

#### **6.4. External Review**

14. A number of external review mechanisms will be employed across the University to provide objectivity which will assist in the establishment and maintenance of internationally-benchmarked academic standards.

These will include:

- 1) consideration of internal and external reference points in the setting of academic standards and curricula appropriate to the award. These can include subject benchmark statements, level benchmark statements, key elements of the Bologna Process (e.g. the Dublin Descriptors and the ECTS) and the requirements of accrediting bodies;
- 2) rigorous program and course approval with external participation (which might include partners, industry stakeholders and other academic and/or professional bodies);
- 3) accreditation by professional, statutory and regulatory bodies;
- 4) external review by established the University strategic partners;
- 5) the employment of external examiners.

#### **6.5. Periodic Review**

15. The periodic review of schools and subject areas is one of the main ways by which the University will assure itself of the quality of the student learning experience and identify opportunities for enhancement. Periodic Review will consider all taught provision either by School or by subject area and operate on a five-year cycle. It will provide a formal opportunity for a School or subject area to reflect on, and critically evaluate its provision and to benefit from constructive dialogue with senior academics external to the School. It will support administrators and faculty in the enhancement of their activities, and will evaluate and monitor the cumulative impact of incremental change over an extended review period.

16. Periodic Review will cover the following aspects of provision:

- 1) teaching, learning and assessment;
- 2) the student experience;
- 3) academic quality assurance and enhancement procedures;

- 4) academic management, research and other resources as they relate to teaching, learning and assessment;

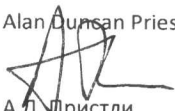

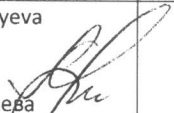
## **7. Enhancement Themes**

17. Enhancement themes selected by Academic Council and the wider university community will provide a specific focus for academic administrators, faculty, support staff and students to work together to enhance the student learning experience. Each theme will draw upon current international best practice, and actively promote the collective development of innovative approaches to learning and teaching. Potential themes include:

- 1) research-integrated teaching;
- 2) technology-enhanced learning;
- 3) learner-centred teaching and learning;
- 4) effective assessment.

## APPROVAL SHEET / КЕЛІСУ ПАРАҒЫ / ЛИСТ СОГЛАСОВАНИЯ

ACADEMIC QUALITY FRAMEWORK OF THE AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION "NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY" / «НАЗАРБАЕВ  
УНИВЕРСИТЕТІ» ДЕРБЕС БІЛІМ БЕРУ ҰЙЫМЫНЫҢ АКАДЕМИЯЛЫҚ САПА ТУРАЛЫ ТҰЖЫРЫМДАМАСЫ / КОНЦЕПЦИЯ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОГО  
КАЧЕСТВА АВТОНОМНОЙ ОРГАНИЗАЦИИ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ «НАЗАРБАЕВ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ»

Item/ Атауы/ Наименование	Structural subdivision/ Құрылымдық бөлімшенің атауы/ Наименование структурного подразделения	Name and signature of a responsible person, date of approval/ Т.А.Ж., жауапты тұлғаның қолы, визаның қойылған күні / Ф.И.О., подпись ответственного лица, дата визирования	Position, name and signature of a resp. person, date of approval / Лауазымы, Т.А.Ж., нақты орындаушының қолы, визаның қойылған күні / Должность, Ф.И.О., подпись конкретного исполнителя, дата визирования
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