

**Manarbek G.<sup>1</sup>, Kondybaeva S.<sup>2</sup>, Dr. David Celetti<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PhD student, al-Farabi Kazakh National University,  
Kazakhstan, Almaty, e-mail: gulden.manarbekovna@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>PhD, associate professor in Economics, Higher School of Economics and Business,  
al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Kazakhstan, Almaty, e-mail: saltanatkondybayeva@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>University of Padua (IT), Department of Historical, Geographical and Antiquity Sciences,  
Via del Santo 26 – 35123 Padova (IT)

**THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION  
IN QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

Quality management of education is an innovative path to progress. Effectively operating system of quality management of education makes the university competitive in the education and labour markets. During the years of independence, Kazakhstani higher school demonstrated flexibility and the ability to adapt in the most difficult conditions of the transition period. Despite the crisis, it was possible to preserve its intellectual potential, to ensure the accessibility of higher education. The most important innovative change in higher education system was the entry of Kazakhstan in 2010 into the Bologna process, and accreditation has become an important and necessary resource to ensure the international character of higher education according to European standards. The autonomy of universities within the framework of the Bologna process was realized in the Kazakhstani higher school by refusing in 2012 from the State Education Programme Standard and forming educational programs with a high level of academic freedom. In the contemporary world, accreditation plays a significant role in the internationalization of education, since successful accreditation is a proof that accredited degree programme meets the European standards. Kazakhstan as a developing Central Asian country is on the way of integrating the processes of accreditation into the system of education. Hence, this paper discusses the current state of international accreditation in the country in the case of al-Farabi Kazakh National University and outlines the improvements and developments made in the context of accreditation process.

**Key words:** Bologna process, programme accreditation, higher education, quality assurance, European standards.

Манарбек Г.<sup>1</sup>, Кондыбаева С.<sup>2</sup>, Д-р Дэвид Селетти<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университетінің докторанты,  
Қазақстан, Алматы қ., e-mail: gulden.manarbekovna@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>PhD докторы, Экономика және Бизнес Жоғары мектебінің доценті, әл-Фараби атындағы  
Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Қазақстан, Алматы қ., e-mail: saltanatkondybayeva@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>Падуа университеті (ИТ), тарихи, географиялық және ежелгі ғылымдар кафедрасы,  
Via del Santo 26 – 35123 Padova (ИТ)

**Жоғары білім сапасын қамтамасыз етудегі  
халықаралық аккредитацияның рөлі**

Білім сапасын басқару – бұл прогрестің инновациялық жолы. Білім сапасын басқарудың тиімді жүйесі білім беру және еңбек нарығында университетті бәсекеге қабілетті етеді. Тәуелсіздік жылдарында қазақстандық жоғары оқу орны икемділік пен өтпелі кезеңнің ең қиын жағдайларына бейімделу қабілетін көрсетті. Дағдарысқа қарамастан, жоғары білімнің қолжетімділігін қамтамасыз ету үшін өзінің интеллектуалды әлеуетін сақтап қалды. Қазақстанның жоғары білім беру жүйесіндегі ең маңызды инновациялық өзгерістер 2010 жылы Болон процесіне енуі болды, ал аккредитация еуропалық стандарттарға сәйкес жоғары білімнің халықаралық сипатын қамтамасыз ету үшін маңызды және қажетті ресурс болды. Болон процесі шеңберінде Қазақстанның білім беру жүйесі 2012 жылы Мемлекеттік білім беру стандартынан

бас тартып, жоғары оқу орындарына академиялық еркіндікті ұсынды. Қазіргі әлемде аккредиттеу білім беруді интернационализациялауда маңызды рөл атқарады, өйткені табысты аккредиттеу – аккредиттелген дипломдық бағдарламаның еуропалық стандарттарға сәйкес келетінін дәлелдейді. Қазақстан дамушы Орталық Азия елі ретінде білім беру жүйесіне аккредиттеу процестерін біріктіру жолында. Осыған байланысты, осы мақалада әл-Фараби атындағы ҚазҰУ тәжірибесі негізінде мемлекеттегі халықаралық аккредиттеудің ағымдағы жағдайы талқыланып, аккредиттеу процесінде қарастырылған жетілдірулер мен әзірлемелер баяндалады.

**Түйін сөздер:** Болон процесі, бағдарламаларды аккредиттеу, жоғары білім, сапаны қамтамасыз ету, еуропалық стандарттар.

Манарбек Г.<sup>1</sup>, Кондыбаева С.<sup>2</sup>, Дэвид Селетти<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD докторант Казахского национального университета им. аль-Фараби, Казахстан, г. Алматы, e-mail: gulden.manarbekovna@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>доктор PhD, и.о. доцента, Высшая школа экономики и бизнеса, Казахский национальный университет им. аль-Фараби, Казахстан, г. Алматы, e-mail: saltanatkonadybayeva@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>Университет Падуи (ИТ), отдел исторических, географических и античных наук, Via del Santo 26 – 35123 Padova (ИТ)

### Роль международной аккредитации в обеспечении качества высшего образования

Управление качеством образования – это инновационный путь к прогрессу. Эффективно действующая система управления качеством образования делает высшее учебное заведение конкурентоспособным на рынке образования и труда. За годы независимости Казахстанская высшая школа продемонстрировала гибкость и способность адаптироваться в самых сложных условиях переходного периода. Несмотря на кризис, удалось сохранить свой интеллектуальный потенциал, обеспечить доступность высшего образования. Важнейшими инновационными изменениями в системе высшего образования стало вступление Казахстана в 2010 году в Болонский процесс, а аккредитация стала важным и необходимым ресурсом для обеспечения международного характера высшего образования в соответствии с европейскими стандартами. Автономия университетов в рамках Болонского процесса была реализована в казахстанской высшей школе путем отказа в 2012 году от ГОСО (государственный общеобязательный стандарт) и формирования образовательных программ с высоким уровнем академической свободы. В современном мире аккредитация играет важную роль в интернационализации образования, поскольку успешная аккредитация является доказательством того, что аккредитованная программа соответствует европейским стандартам. Казахстан как развивающаяся центральноазиатская страна находится на пути интеграции процессов аккредитации в систему образования. Следовательно, в настоящей статье обсуждается текущее состояние международной аккредитации в стране, на примере Казахского национального университета имени аль-Фараби излагаются улучшения и изменения, происходящие в контексте процесса аккредитации.

**Ключевые слова:** Болонский процесс, аккредитация программ, высшее образование, обеспечение качества, европейские стандарты.

## Introduction

After the creation of the European Higher Education Area<sup>1</sup>, quality assurance and accreditation of education have become important issues, as accreditation provides an evaluation of quality. Accreditation is becoming a main mechanism in the steering of higher education all over the countries involved in the Bologna process (Joint Declaration of the Ministers of Education 1999).

<sup>1</sup> The European Higher Education Area (EHEA) was launched along with the Bologna Process' decade anniversary, in March 2010. the EHEA was meant to ensure more comparable, compatible and coherent systems of higher education in Europe. [[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European\\_Higher\\_Education\\_Area](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Higher_Education_Area)].

In the wake of the Bologna declaration, the Kazakhstani higher education system has been undergoing significant reforms to comply with European standards in relation to degree structure and accreditation process. In March 2010 Kazakhstan officially joined the Bologna Declaration and became the 47th conference range of higher education and the first Central Asian state recognized as a full member of the European educational space (Sagintaeva A. 2011). Joining to Bologna Process has been an innovative approach of Kazakhstani Higher Education System in improving the quality of higher education. Thus, integration of Kazakhstan into the international education area has led to reforms in the national system of education and formed the basis for the State programme in

Education for 2011-2020. In response to global competitiveness in higher education, the government has encouraged the HEIs to seek international accreditation, as it is an important method of an innovative approach for external quality assurance of education.

Now in the Law on Education, separate article 9-1 (The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Education 2017) is devoted to accreditation as one of the most important tools for improving the quality of educational services. National and international accreditation bodies can accredit on the basis of the standards developed by them. The Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan forms a register of accreditation agencies recognized in Kazakhstan (Meeting of the Republican Accreditation Council 2017).

### Methodology

Information base of the research: annual report of the Rector of al-Farabi Kazakh National University, data of official statistics of Kazakh National University, data from FIBAA, ASIIN, ACQUIN assessment reports, internet sources, as well as data collected from the database of Springer, Google Academy and e-library of dissertations.

The methodological basis of the study are general scientific methods as analysis, classification, as well as statistical methods. In the research the study was conducted at the university level and used samples can be applied by other higher education institutions.

### Literature Review

Plenty of articles and works have been published about the importance and the role of accreditation process in providing the quality of higher education. Among them are the study carried out on the comparative base to widen the scope of the discussions on accreditation and evaluation activities in European higher education of twenty EU member states (Schwarz 2004:1). In addition, the issue of quality assurance of higher education in transition countries have been covered by Hendel D.D and Lewis, D.R. The focus was oriented on the changes that have affected the whole system of higher education and quality assurance mechanisms; mainly, the shift from centralized control to autonomy of HEIs, the growth of private institutions and opening of branches (Hendel 2005:239). A large number of research papers in economics has been devoted to the study

of accreditation procedure and the practice of its implementation in assuring the quality of the higher education. To illustrate, among them are the issue of accreditation in the field of business and engineering summarized from the perception of university teaching staff, university management, accreditation experts and agencies (Winter 2009:331). Apart from the impact of accreditation on the quality of higher education, its practical implementation in different countries of the European area has been reviewed (Batteau 2006:147, Kehm 2010: 227, Rosa 2011: 249, Bernardini 2006: 93). Equally important, the issue of local and political consequences of implementation of accreditation, as well as an innovation approach to accreditation has been put on the light of researchers (Cret 2011: 415, Previtali 2015: 35). There is also a study based on a historical analysis of how European Accreditation System has emerged in the field of management education (Hedmo, 2004). The role of accreditation in quality assurance of education in the framework of the Bologna process and its contribution to quality higher education in the European Higher Education Area has been discussed by several researchers (Rozsnyai 2003: 271, Serrano-Velarde 2010: 213).

The question of what accreditation is has been reviewed in the literature differently. One of them is defined as the process by which a (non-) governmental or private body evaluates the quality of a higher education institution as a whole or of a specific educational programme in order to formally recognize it as having met certain predetermined minimal criteria or standards. The result of this process is usually the awarding of a status (a yes/no decision), of recognition, and sometimes of a license to operate within a time-limited validity. The process can imply initial and periodic self-study and evaluation by external peers (Vlăsceanu 2004). As for the concept of «international accreditation», according to some scholars it can give a HEI external, European feedback with recommendations backed by a more extensive external experience than a regular national procedure. Moreover, a foreign accreditation agency may approach an institution or a programme in a more independent way as it is not involved in any national discussions. Actually, international accreditation brings a great experience to HEI and agencies to learn from each other and to open one's mind to new approaches and solutions (Viligaila A. 2012:70).

Logically, the question «what a quality of higher education is» arises, which stands as a backbone for accreditation process, that has become widely used in the area of higher education. There is no single

definition of quality. Various authors have tried to come to terms with the concept, offered different definitions. Van Damme states, that the concept of quality should be defined in the context of a discrete integration of the following elements and functions required from institutions or programmes: the guaranteed realization of standards, the ability to define objectives and to achieve them with the given output and variables; the capacity to satisfy the demands and expectations of direct and indirect stakeholders of the educational services and the desire to excellence (Van Damme, 2003). Whereas, another states the quality as multi-dimensional, multi-level and dynamic (Brockerhoff 2015: 3). It should be highlighted that different stakeholders can have differing views on the quality of higher education. To illustrate, teaching staff and students emphasize the quality of the student experience, employers particularly find employability important and governments focus on quality as a means of control (Harvey and Green 1993).

### Discussion and Results

Accreditation is realized through self-evaluation or self-assessment reports submitted by the university undergoing accreditation, after the submission of the reports, an accreditation agency organizes an external visit of independent experts and, finally after consideration of self-assessment reports and site-visit results, the Accreditation Committee together with panel team makes final decision. It is worth to say, that accreditation is a

specific procedure, where the quality is assessed not by the state authority, but by the expert group, which consists of representatives of academic community, employers, students and professional associations.

As the leading scientific university in Kazakhstan, al-Farabi Kazakh National University has demonstrated high professionalism in implementing an innovative approach of the Bologna Process – an accreditation. It has carried out external quality assessment procedures through international accreditation since 2014 to ensure the quality of educational programmes in accordance with European standards and recommendations on a regular basis.

To improve the quality of educational programs, the university actively interacts with international and national accreditation agencies and organizations, plans and implements activities for the accreditation of educational programs.

A number of educational programs of the university has been awarded an European quality mark, which symbolizes the growth of international recognition of educational programmes of al-Farabi KazNU. Accreditation is limited to a maximum period of five years. After this period, a re-accreditation process should be carried out.

Currently the share of successfully accredited educational programs in international accreditation agencies such as ASIIN, ACQUIN, AQA, FIBAA, is over 90 percent. In addition, the educational programmes in engineering, informatics and chemistry have been awarded quality seals EUR-ACE-label, Euo-Inf-label, Eurobachelor and

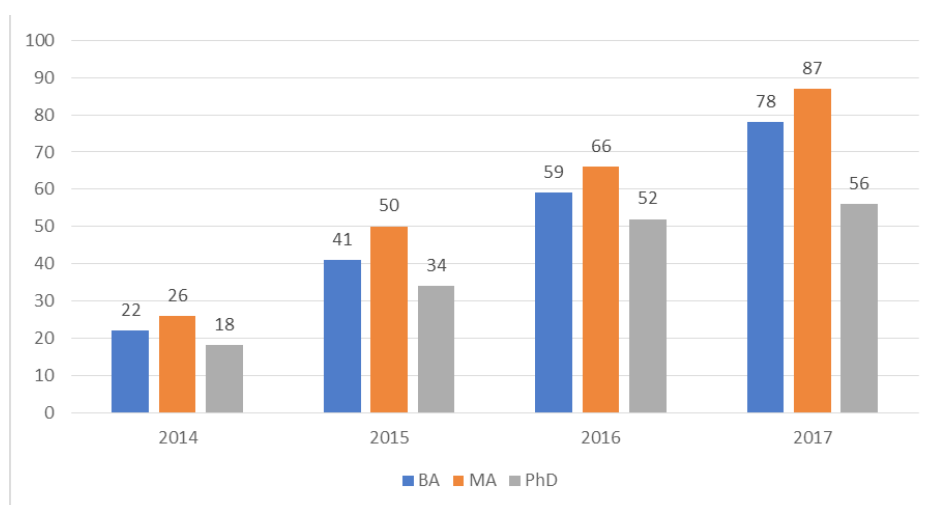
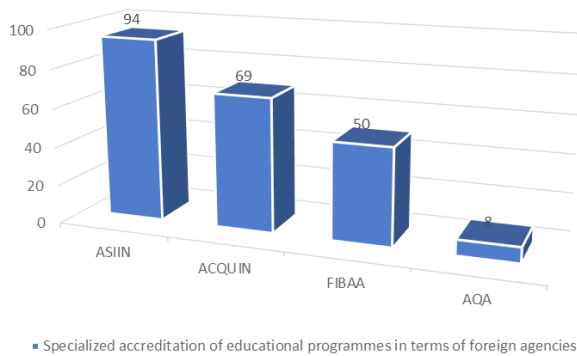


Figure 1 – Accredited educational programmes of al-Farabi KazNU

Euromaster-label<sup>2</sup>. The database of Kazakh National University reports more than 200 accredited study programs. Several degree programs are under the state of re-accreditation.

The main evaluation criteria of accreditation cover the university's quality concept in relation to logic and transparency of qualification objectives of the programme, positioning of study programme at the job market, admission requirements and examination system, content and structure of the degree programme, internationality, teaching methodology, academic environment, as well as quality assurance. Since 2014, a wide range of degree programmes of KazNU has obtained international accreditation from the European agencies ASIIN, AQA, ACQUIN and FIBAA<sup>3</sup>.



**Figure 2** – Specialized accreditation of educational programmes in terms of foreign agencies

Based on the Strategy for the development of al-Farabi KazNU for 2012-2020 in the light of State programmes for development [State Program for the Development of Education of the Republic of

<sup>2</sup> EUR-ACE – label of the European Network for the Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE) for degree programmes in engineering

Euro-Inf – label of the European Quality Assurance Network for Informatics Education e.V. (EQANIE) for Bachelor and Master degree programmes in the area of informatics

Eurobachelor and Euromaster – label of the European Chemistry Thematic Network (ECTN) for degree programmes in the areas of chemistry

<sup>3</sup> ACQUIN – Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute, Germany

AQ Austria – Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation, Austria

ASIIN – Accreditation Agency for Degree Programs in Engineering, Informatics/Computer Science, the Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Germany

FIBAA – Foundation for International Business Administration Accreditation, Germany

Kazakhstan for 2011-2020, the Strategy 2050 of the Republic of Kazakhstan], the main objective of the educational policy at KazNU is to ensure the high quality of education based on fundamental nature and focus on meeting the needs of the individuals, society and the state.

Basic principles of the quality assurance are the following:

- Main stakeholders (students and employers) make a key contribution to the formation of university policies and mechanisms in the field of quality assurance.

- University teaching staff individually and in groups take responsibility for improving the quality of teaching, while students as adult learners take responsibility for their own learning.

- External evaluation is vital for identifying potential areas for improvement, with the aim of enhancing cooperation and sharing best practices.

- Benchmarking of academic standards underlies university procedures.

- All policies and procedures related to quality and standards are subject to regular review to ensure their continued suitability for purposes in a rapidly changing external and internal environment.

The policy of al-Farabi KazNU for quality assurance is an integral element of university management and the basis for planning its educational activities. Acknowledging accreditation as an instrument of quality assurance, al-Farabi KazNU coordinates the work on organizational and methodological support of external procedures to ensure the quality of educational programs in accordance with European standards and recommendations on a regular basis and supports the teaching staff, departments, faculties and the university on improving the quality management of education.

According to European standards and rules, defined by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education [Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA 2015], as well as the standards of the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR), the accreditation process is made up of several stages and is based on the peer review principle: When a Higher Education Institution submits an application for the accreditation of a study programme to an agency that they have chosen, a project manager of an agency appoints a review panel, made up of representatives of Higher Education Institutions, professors and students, and of representatives of the profession. After submission of self-assessment reports on the basis of the Assessment guide for

programme accreditation, external visit of expert group takes place at the university, after that on the basis of the assessment report drawn up by the experts group and in accordance with the decision regulations provided by the Accreditation Council, the responsible Accreditation Commission from the agency decides either to grant an accreditation for the study programme, with no conditions, with conditions, to abandon the process or to reject the accreditation (Veiga 2015).

Depending on the profile of the study programmes, university applies for accreditation its programmes in different agencies. For instance, a European, internationally oriented agency for quality assurance and quality development in higher education, FIBAA, which focus on management

studies, law, social sciences and economics have successfully granted FIBAA quality seal for the study programmes of Law Faculty, Higher School of Economics and Business, as well as Faculty of International Relations. Accreditation of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD study programmes in the field of engineering, informatics, natural sciences and mathematics have been successfully carried out by ASIIN e.V., which is supported by universities of applied sciences, expert societies, profession-related organisations, industrial and business associations and unions. As for accreditation of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD study programmes in all fields of study, including humanitarian sciences, AQA and ACQUIN have granted quality seal, which confirm high quality of degree programmes.

**Table 1** – Faculties of al-Farabi KazNU – accreditation of programmes depending on the profile

AQA and ACQUIN	ASIIN	FIBAA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Faculty of Oriental Studies</li> <li>– Faculty of Philology and World Languages</li> <li>– Faculty of History, Archeology and Ethnology</li> <li>– Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Faculty of Biology and Biotechnology</li> <li>– Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics</li> <li>– Faculty of Geography and Environmental Sciences</li> <li>– Faculty of Medicine – Higher School of Public Health</li> <li>– Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology</li> <li>– Faculty of Physics and Technology</li> <li>– Faculty of Informatics and Information Systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– High School of Economics and Business</li> <li>– Faculty of International Relations</li> <li>– Faculty of Law</li> <li>– Faculty of Journalism</li> </ul>

Considering the provided self-assessment reports of the university, the results of the onsite-visit and additional information given by al-Farabi KazNU, the peers summarize their analysis and final assessment for the award of the seals with no conditions, under conditions or refusal for accreditation. Most requirements and recommendations in relation to specific curriculums and content of the degree programmes in terms of subject-specific compliance to the European qualification framework have been revised by the university. The methodical office of the university before developing a new curriculum for a new academic year considers offered recommendations of accreditation agencies, thus contents of degree programmes are updated in accordance with European standards and with demand of foreign and domestic labour market.

Based on Accreditation Reports provided by accreditation agencies, we have outlined the main common requirements and recommendations

made by review panel in relation to the degree programs and classified them in accordance with the responsibility body for their implementation.

At the level of the Faculty, degree programme:

- Specify the achieved learning outcomes of study programmes to ensure that they are programme-specific, so they describe academic, subject-specific and professional classification of the gained qualifications in the degree programme. Learning outcomes should correspond to levels 6 (bachelor's degree), 7 (master's degree) and 8 (PhD degree) of the European Qualifications Framework, and to establish the coherence between the study programmes' goals, objectives and learning outcomes.

- Module descriptions of all Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes must prove clearly the respective competence level. The benefit of the Bachelor, Master and PhD courses must be visible. In addition, the recommended literature must be appropriate for the Bachelor, Master and PhD level.

**Table 2** – Accreditation Report: Sample of condition fulfillment

Condition	Comment	Decision
Condition 1 The HEI revises the learning outcomes of all Bachelor, Master and PhD programmes in order to enhance the coherence between the study programme's goals, objectives and learning outcomes. The HEI defines the strategy and objectives of the programmes more closely so there is a clear differentiation between Bachelor and Master level to enable a clear means of progression.	The learning outcomes were further elaborated and specified according to the European quality framework, to clearly emphasize the level of the study programme (bachelor, master and PhD). The contents as well as the teaching and learning methods were presented and described in more detail.	Vote of the experts: Condition 1 fulfilled.
Condition 3 The HEI shows module descriptions for the Research Seminars of all Master and PhD programmes, which show that adequate research competences are acquired.	The HEI submitted in writing which learning results should be achieved in the research seminars.	Vote of the experts: Condition 3 fulfilled.
Condition 6 The HEI submits a detailed library development plan as well as recent purchase lists, showing that it has established an adequate and internationally compatible stock that meets its own requirements in terms of research orientation and internationalization.	The HEI demonstrated that it has expanded its range of electronic literature and database access. The experts recommend the HEI to constantly expand its database access.	Vote of the experts: Condition 6 fulfilled (FIBAA Assessment Report 2015).

At the level of University:

- The implementation of principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention<sup>4</sup> in the study and examination regulations.

- The recommendation in relation to the availability of laboratory equipment and an adequate and internationally compatible stock of the University that meets its own requirements in terms of research orientation and internationalisation. Recommendations to update the technical equipment and to adopt ISO quality standards in the laboratories.

- The recommendation regarding the quality of English-medium teaching in the programmes. Accreditation agencies strongly recommend enhancing the English proficiency of the teachers and students.

- Recommendations to establish academic cooperation with foreign universities to enhance academic mobility of not only students, but also teachers.

- Recommendation to increase the share of practical classes in educational programs.

<sup>4</sup> *The Lisbon Recognition Convention* is based on general recognition of study periods and gained qualifications abroad if no substantial differences can be proven by the institution. The Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region was developed by the Council of Europe and UNESCO and adopted by national representatives meeting in Lisbon on 8 – 11 April 1997 (Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications 1997).

At the level of Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan:

- Recommendation to reduce the amount of compulsory courses with no relation to the specific degree programme or to orientate them more intensively on field specific aspects using the existing autonomy of university in the development of educational programs.

- Implementation of only ECTS system<sup>5</sup> to represent the workload and defined learning outcomes of a given course or programme.

- Admission to PhD degree programs, according to experts, should not depend on citizenship; enrollment procedures should be guided only by the relevant qualities of students.

- PhD degree programs should be more research-oriented, less forms of control, more focus on the independent work of PhD students in their field of research. The proportion of research activities of students should be increased to ensure complex and extensive competencies.

- Recommendation to abolish the requirement for publication in an international journal for the successful completion of doctoral studies.

<sup>5</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS is the credit system for higher education used in the European Higher Education Area, involving all countries engaged in the Bologna Process. ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. ECTS credits are based on the workload students need to achieve expected learning outcomes. [ECTS Users' Guide 2015].

As soon as the University receives the conditions subject to fulfillment, the university administration activates all responsible bodies of the university and faculty to ensure the fulfillment of conditions and recommendations. In the course of accreditation procedure, al-Farabi Kazakh National University has demonstrated high professionalism in complying with international standards. Every note made by experts has contributed to the improvement of all degree programs undergoing accreditation. KazNU finds accreditation procedures as a guide or method, which ensures the quality improvement of teaching and learning. KazNU acknowledges the positive impact of accreditation on the recognition of the university at the domestic and international level as the university strives for high quality of education with an excellent reputation, which guarantees a favourable position of its programmes on the

education market, and its graduates on the job market.

It is worth to note, that after recognizing the entry to the Bologna process as an innovative approach in Kazakhstani higher education system, ensuring quality education, al-Farabi Kazakh National University has actively implemented all principles of the Bologna process and carried out accreditation procedure to assure high quality education to all stakeholders. As an evidence, we have summarized significant achievements of KazNU that have been realized in the framework of quality assurance of education. Since 2014, the Single European Diploma Supplement is being issued in the EU / GoE / UNESCO format within the framework of the Bologna process as evidence of high quality education. The degree of international recognition of university programmes abroad has been increased.

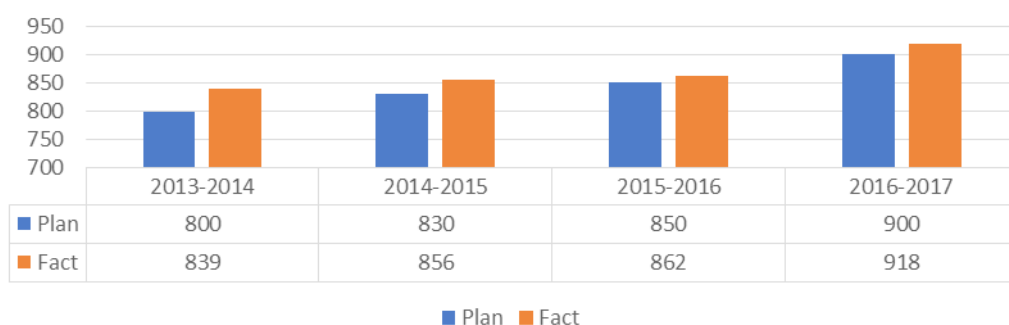


Figure 3 – Number of foreign students

Among the experts database of major international agencies in the field of accreditation are representatives of teaching staff of Kazakh National University.

The Accredited IGIP Center has retrained 13 teachers according to the program standards «the International Teacher of Engineering University» and granted the international certificate of the Institute.

The favorable conditions have been made for the commercialization of research results and technologies. Lots of innovative centers and modern laboratories have been created:

- Scientific-technological park
- Center for process innovation (Center for engineering and commercialization)

- Center of «Green» technology
- Plant Factory laboratory of microclonal reproduction in the framework of al-Farabi KazNU and the University of Dunkuk cooperation
- Ecosystem «Aquaponica» on the campus of KazNU.
- Laboratory of archiving and dissemination of information.
- Laboratory of nanomaterial science and technologies of new nanomaterials for the industry.
- Laboratory for the production of chemicals for industry and agrochemistry.
- Laboratory of green energy for the industry.

The number of programmes conducted in English language has been increased, which demonstrates internationalization of the university.



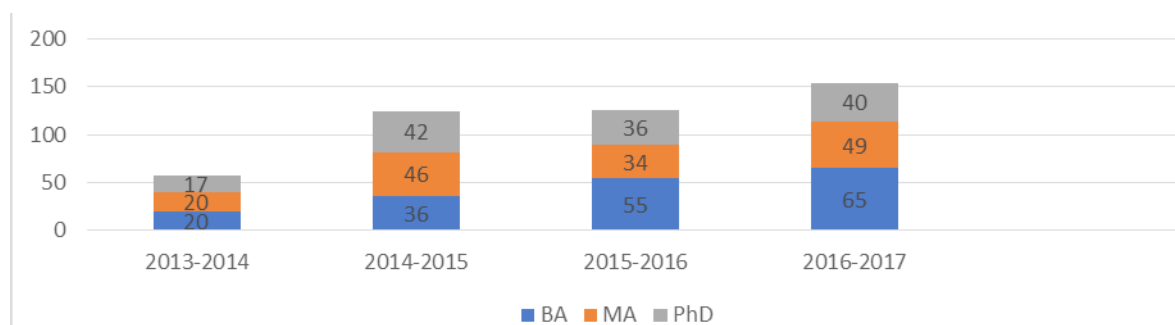


Figure 4 – Programmes with English language training

Thanks to the implementation of Lisbon Recognition Convention in the framework of the principles of the Bologna process, academic mobility of students has been actively developed. Students, young researchers and teachers have the opportunity to continue their studies at European universities.

Mutual contracts and cooperation agreements with 525 universities and research centers in 47 countries have been made. KazNU is a strategic partner of the UN Civilization Alliance and a part of the Global

Hub of the UN Program «Academic Impact» on Sustainable Development and regional Hub for Sustainable Development within the framework of the UNESCO program – UNITWIN. As well as, the university has joint chemical laboratory in university G.Rostock (Germany), al-Farabi center in the Jordan university, KazNU laboratory of phytochemistry in the International center of Karachi (Pakistan), the Kazakhstan center at Beijing university of foreign languages and Eurasian research al-Farabi center in Istanbul university.

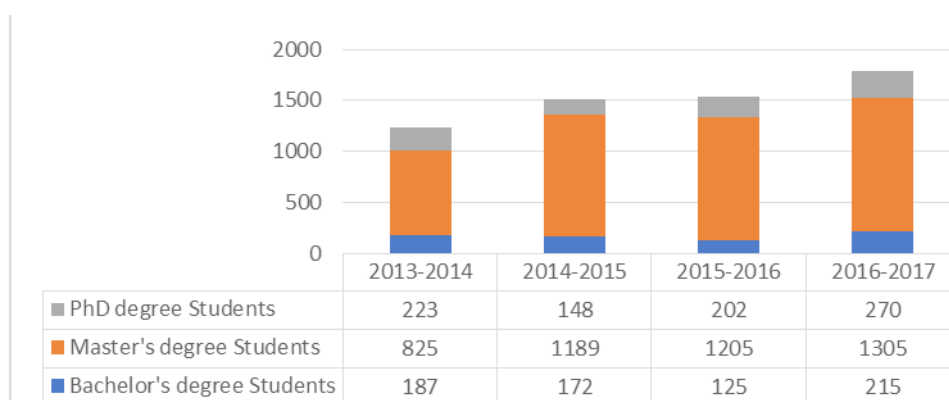


Figure 5 – Academic Mobility of students

KazNU is the first in Central Asia to be accepted to:

- International University Consortium (WUC) (2014);
- The Clinton Global Initiative University (CGI U) universities network (2015);
- The COMSATS organization, uniting 24 universities of the world (2015),
- Alliance of Universities of the New Silk Road Universities (PRC) and its Board of Directors (2015).

- The Silk Road Universities Network (South Korea)

### Conclusion

As we can see, international programme accreditation is the right instrument to accredit study programmes according to international quality standards and the principles of the Bologna Declaration. It is worth to say that accreditation offers excellent benefits for the university in

terms of international recognition of degree programmes.

In this article the development of accreditation processes in Kazakhstan has been examined, focusing on the case of al-Farabi Kazakh National University, which has demonstrated high professionalism in implementing an innovative approach of the Bologna Process – an accreditation.

To summarize, the need to introduce an accreditation procedure in the system of higher education in Kazakhstan was due to several reasons:

- implementation of agreements between the EurAsEC and CIS countries, according to which mutual recognition of diplomas of higher and secondary professional institutions is carried out only for graduates of accredited universities and colleges;

- integration of the system of higher and postgraduate education of Kazakhstan in the Bologna process;

- cooperation with international networks on the quality of education for the exchange of information and the development of comparable criteria and procedures. Kazakhstan participates

in international quality assurance networks: the International Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (INQAAHE), the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA), in the network of agencies for quality assurance in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe, the Eurasian Network for the Quality of Education (ECCE), in order to develop comparable criteria and methodology;

- to improve the quality of education – in the interests of the satisfaction of all stakeholders and to ensure the international competitiveness of the national education system;

- to stimulate the mobility of students and teachers.

The role of international programme accreditation is crucial in quality assurance of education. Most higher education institutions have realized the role of foreign or international accreditation in increasing their international reputation and partnership, as well as its impact on a stronger connection with the foreign labour market, benefits for students in terms of finding employment after graduation abroad (Szabo M. 2015: 639).

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