

**AUTONOMOUS ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATION  
«NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY»**

**NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY  
LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY  
Innovation, Integration and Inclusion  
2015-2020**

Approved by the resolution of the Academic Council of  
the autonomous organization of education “Nazarbayev University”

Minutes # 17 of 09.12 2015



Astana  
2015

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## 1. Overview of Learning and Teaching at NU

1. The Learning and Teaching Strategy for the autonomous organization of education “Nazarbayev University” (hereinafter - NU) incorporates:

- 1) The vision, mission and Academic Excellence mandate of NU;
- 2) NU graduate attributes;
- 3) International principles of learning and teaching;
- 4) Institutional support;
- 5) Learning and teaching governance and
- 6) Outcomes and indicators of performance.

2. As an academic community, we draw on intellectual traditions from our strategic partner universities and other international quality universities. Academic integrity is our hallmark. In our undergraduate and graduate programs, we aim to integrate research and teaching to create a scholarly learning environment for our students.

3. Consistent with the NU Strategy 2013-2020, by 2020, we will significantly extend our national, regional and international linkages to the world’s top universities, research centers and workplaces. We will attract increasing numbers of international and local students, who will benefit from access to global knowledge networks through technology-enhanced learning. We aspire to be recognized by our international peers for our intellectually challenging programs, clear learning outcomes and global orientation.

4. The Learning and Teaching Strategy is driven by our commitment an academic culture in which students are seen as co-producers of knowledge and possess a plethora of learning and research opportunities, authentic autonomy, and have the responsibility to shape their educational experience.

## 2. Vision, Mission and Mandate

5. Our vision, according to the NU Strategy 2013-2020, is to develop scientists, academics, managers and entrepreneurs for Republic of Kazakhstan (hereinafter - Kazakhstan) and the world.

6. Our mission, in accordance with the NU Strategy 2013-2020, is to be a model for higher education reform and modern research and to contribute to the establishment of Astana as an international hub for innovation and knowledge.

7. We have a mandate for Academic Excellence. This mandate requires working closely with all our stakeholders to ensure that our graduates have the capabilities to meet the expectations of *Kazakhstan 2050* – to join the world’s top 30 economies by 2050.

### 3. Principles of Learning and Teaching at NU

8. We will develop capable, confident and ethical graduates through the three principles of: innovation, integration and inclusion.

#### 3.1. Innovation

9. Our educational programs encourage innovation, experimentation, and entrepreneurship. Our students will “be intellectually agile, curious, creative and open-minded”, as noted in NU Graduate Attributes (2013), and they will “be entrepreneurial, self-propelling and able to create new opportunities.”

10. We strive to develop educational programs which seek to creatively solve regional and global concerns. A key priority for Kazakhstan is to develop a sustainable knowledge economy within a highly educated society. Citizens driven by an innovative spirit and equipped with creative skills are fundamental to achieving this ambition.

11. At NU, we will cultivate innovative minds and creative leaders. We will do this through student centered learning and ongoing reflection and continuous improvement based on feedback.

12. Educational technologies are central to our mission. NU encourages faculty to stay abreast of new technologies and to find new ways to incorporate them in their teaching. We promote sharing of good practice between and within universities, Schools and departments, drawing on resources to provide pedagogical and technical support for innovations. This cultivates a new generation of leaders who are competent in using proven and emerging learning technologies.

13. Our educational programs are created with an innovative spirit and so our faculty members are encouraged to implement new instructional techniques. Our research integrated teaching allows students to develop innovative and critical thinking.

14. To implement our Academic Excellence mandate, we will focus on innovative learning approaches. These are embedded in the curriculum and in the physical and online learning environments, extra-curricular activities, transdisciplinary programs, internships and opportunities to study abroad. These approaches to learning can be summarized as:

1) **Academic integrity:** Students will learn how to learn in an ethical and sustainable way. Students will help us to create a culture in which all cheating is unacceptable and will be punished appropriately.

2) **Research-integrated teaching:** The NU curriculum is informed by contemporary research and taught by active researchers. We support students’ research initiatives through our teaching methods, learning activities and curriculum design. Graduate students will be engaged in research projects. Whenever possible, we will invite undergraduate students to participate in active research projects. Both graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged to become authors or co-authors of international quality research publications.

3) **Enquiry-based learning:** Students are active agents in their own learning, not passive recipients. Through the formal and informal curricula, they have opportunities to identify complex issues, and to design and communicate their ideas and responses to a sophisticated audience.

4) **Collaborative learning:** Through collaborative learning, using group activities and projects, students will learn how to lead and work in a team.

5) **Technology-competent learning:** Students will be confident in using technology for learning, research and for their future careers.

6) **Internationally-connected learning:** Working with international faculty and strategic partners, including in student mobility and exchange programs, in an English-medium environment provides students with access to diverse, high-quality learning experiences and materials from many parts of the world, and enables them to develop intercultural competences that are essential for leadership.

7) **Context-sensitive learning:** Students will have opportunities to relate their learning to the context of Kazakhstan, Central Asia and globally, both within the university-based curriculum and through internships and other forms of social engagement.

8) **Inclusive learning:** NU provides an inclusive learning environment for all students, regardless of physical condition, and of social or cultural background.

9) **Responsible learning:** In their roles as future leaders, students take responsibility for their own learning and for the use and dissemination of their knowledge, skills and competencies to others after graduation. They are ethical learners who commit to the highest international levels of academic and professional integrity.

### 3.2. Integration

15. We plan to influence changes in policy and practice at all levels of education through integrating scholarly research into our programs.

16. NU students are in daily contact with active researchers.

17. We promote a multidisciplinary approach to tackle complex research problems. With help from our multicultural faculty in Research Centers, Laboratories, Schools and Subdivisions, NU students participate in multidisciplinary competitions and projects, and will aim contribute to national and international discourse.

18. By immersing our students in a multicultural environment, with an increasing number of international students and with the opportunities to study abroad, we are creating future leaders able to work, thrive and succeed globally in the 21st century. With a strong command of the English language, our students will be prepared for diverse careers in a global market.

19. Professional skills and competences are central to our learning process and to achieving the NU Graduate Attributes. We actively involve employers and potential employers in: participating on industrial advisory boards, hosting

internships, site visits, consultancies and partnerships. We strive to bridge the gap between academic studies and employment.

20. The NU community contributes to strategic and contemporary debates in Kazakhstani society. NU students and faculty are encouraged to participate in professional associations, to volunteer for charity events and non-profit organizations and to enthusiastically participate in building a culture of global citizenship within the university, the broader community and the nation.

### **3.3. Inclusion**

21. NU actively promotes principles and practices of inclusive education. We aim to create a welcoming and supportive environment for all members of the NU community, including students, staff, faculty and guests. We respect the diversity of students, staff, faculty and guests in terms of national origin, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, family status and special needs.

## **4. Institutional Support for Innovation, Integration and Inclusion**

22. We aim to develop institutional capabilities to recruit students on the basis of academic merit, with a focus on improving academic entry standards every year. This is consistent with our goal to continue to develop a culture of academic integrity and to link students and faculty to internationally recognised and innovative research centers, workplaces and universities.

23. We will assess learning in innovative ways which encourage creative thinking and problem solving. We also aim to provide an ongoing, rigorous program of professional development for academic faculty to assist them to create innovative and well-designed undergraduate and postgraduate programs. We will support faculty to integrate research and teaching.

24. Our goal is to systematically respond to student and stakeholder feedback to continuously improve the student experience. We aim to create opportunities for students with special needs to complete their studies with resources including: specific educational materials and assessments in alternative forms, appropriate physical infrastructure and assistance when required.

## **5. Learning and Teaching Governance**

25. Academic Council is the executive and policymaking body for NU's learning and teaching activities. Operational aspects are overseen by the Learning and Teaching Committee which makes and implements decisions on the quality and impact of learning and teaching initiatives, and on their local, regional and global relevance. It also ensures effective linkages between educational principles and their outcomes and indicators.

26. Each School will create a Learning and Teaching Committee, chaired by the Vice Dean of Academic Affairs, to clarify and implement School policies and procedures, consistent with NU Quality Systems.

27. To promote student-centered learning, we encourage student participation on academic decision-making bodies at all levels of the University. We see students as competent, constructive partners. They are encouraged to identify issues and lead positive changes in the learning experience.

## **6. Outcomes and Indicators of Performance**

28. We will track our progress against high-level outcomes and indicators of performance by:

- 1) Maintaining and improving academic standards with a focus on international benchmarking and research-integrated teaching.
- 2) Embedding the NU Academic Quality Framework in all programs to ensure timely program approval, monitoring and review.
- 3) Continuing to develop technology-enhanced classrooms.
- 4) Keeping faculty – student ratio at levels which allow for personalized learning.
- 5) Developing faculty skills in innovative pedagogical principles and practices.
- 6) Continuously improving academic information systems.
- 7) Continuing to create programs consistent with Bologna Principles and international accreditation standards.
- 8) Engaging in dialogue on learning and teaching with local and international universities.
- 9) Attracting, retaining and developing top local and international students and faculty.
- 10) Encouraging our graduates to aim for internationally regarded graduate programs and professional roles.

29. The Learning and Teaching Committee will regularly review this strategy and develop an implementation plan for these outcomes and indicators of performance. This Committee will also regularly report on progress to the Academic Council and will oversee the continuous improvement of learning and teaching at NU.