

**Admission Policy and Procedures to the Graduate School of Public Policy PhD  
in Public Policy Program at the autonomous organization of education  
Nazarbayev University**

**Category:** Policy

**Approval Date:** 27.05.2022

**Effective Date:**27.05.2022

**Level of Access:** Open to Public

**Classification Number:** 2.1 ADMS

**Approving Authority:** Provost

**Registration Number:** 64-Н/К

**Owner:** Graduate School of Public Policy

**Revision Date:** 01.11.2022

**Applicability:** NU and NU Applicants

**Retired Documents:**

**Title:** The Admission Regulations to the PhD in Public Policy Program  
at the Autonomous Organization of Education «Nazarbayev University»

**Date:** 24.05.2021

**Registration Number:** 72-Н/К

**Approving Authority:** Provost



## Section 1. Purpose and Application

1.1 This Admission Policy and Procedures to the PhD in Public Policy Program at the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University (hereinafter – Policy and Procedures) establishes the policy and procedures for the management and compliance during the admission process.

1.2. This Policy and Procedures are applied to the PhD in Public Policy Program (hereinafter – School Program) at the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University (hereinafter – University) and its applicants applying to the Programs.

## Section 2. Definitions

2.1. Basic definitions and meanings of the abbreviations and capitalized terms used in this Policy and Procedures are:

2.1.1. **Admission Department** – the unit of the University designated to facilitate admission to the Foundation, undergraduate and graduate programs of the University;

2.1.2. **Admissions Committee** – an advisory and consultative body of the University established to implement arrangements for admission to the Program;

2.1.3. **Admission period** – a set of deadlines for applying to the University, which includes online application, documents review, evaluation processes and enrollment, which may consist of one or more admissions rounds;

2.1.4. **Applicant** – a citizen of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a foreign citizen or a stateless individual taking part in the selection process;

2.1.5. **Application form** – an application for admission to the Program posted in the Personal account;

2.1.6. **CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average)** - a calculation of the average of all of a student's grades contributing to the degree;

2.1.7. **Conditional enrollment** – a type of admission/enrollment of applicants to the PhD Programs, which is limited to final year Master's students or the applicants enrolled with Zero Year of Graduate Programs;

2.1.8. **Enrollment confirmation form** – a form filled and signed by applicants upon receipt of a letter of acceptance to the Program of the University, which is the reason for admission to, or exclusion from enrollment to the studies;

2.1.9. **External expert** – a representative of a Partner Institution under the relevant Agreement or faculty from another School of the University or an internationally recognized university or research institute, which has relevant resources (intellectual, scientific, methodological, educational, technological, technical, human) and implements its activities in one or several of the following spheres: scientific-research, modern methodology and education technology, development and implementation of educational programs, etc., that is involved in conducting reviews and evaluations of applicants, as well as serving as external readers or evaluators to assure quality assurance;

2.1.10. **GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test)** – a standardized test



for measuring aptitude to succeed academically in graduate business studies, developed by GMAC, the Graduate Management Admission Council (USA);

2.1.11. **GRE** (Graduate Record Examinations) – a standardized test used to measure verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning, analytical writing and critical thinking skills, developed by ETS, the Educational Testing Service (USA);

2.1.12. **IELTS** (International English Language Testing System, Academic version) – a standardized test to define the level of knowledge of the English language, jointly managed by the British Council, IDP Education, and Cambridge English Language Assessment;

2.1.13. **Personal account** – online service providing a personal space on the University website ([www.admissions.nu.edu.kz](http://www.admissions.nu.edu.kz)) upon application;

2.1.14. **Program** – PhD in Public Policy Program;

2.1.15. **School** – Graduate School of Public Policy of the University in which the PhD in Public Policy program is offered;

2.1.16. **Strategic Partner** – an organization approved by the authorized body of the University, having relevant resources (intellectual, scientific, methodological, educational, technological, technical, human) and implementing its activities in one or several of the following spheres: scientific-research, modern methodology and education technology, development and implementation of educational programs, etc., or other competent authority of the University as a Partner Institution to perform a basic or auxiliary advisory role in relation to the University, its Schools and/or subsidiaries in providing educational and/or research services under the relevant Agreement;

2.1.17. **TOEFL** (Test of English as a Foreign Language) – a standardized test to define the level of knowledge of the English language, developed by the Educational Testing Service (USA);

2.1.18. **University** – autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University;

2.1.19. **Zero Year of Graduate Programs** – a two-semester, non-credit bearing, full-time intensive English and refresher course of study for students accepted into an University graduate degree program but who lack the English requirement necessary for immediate entry into the Schools.

2.2. Terms and definitions not used in this Policy and Procedures shall be defined by the internal documents of the University.

## **Section 3. Main Provisions**

### **3.1 Admission Requirements**

3.1.1. Admission to the Program shall be on a competitive basis and based on merit.

3.1.2. In order to be eligible for inclusion in the selection process for admission to the Program, all applicants must meet the provisions of this Policy and Procedures.

3.1.3. Test certificates are considered valid if their results do not expire by the date of application submission by applicants.



3.1.4. Applicants applying to the Program are expected to have:

- 1) first or upper class second honours degree (or equivalent: Cum Laude; Magna Cum Laude; and Summa Cum Laude) or a Master's degree in a cognate discipline;
- 2) strong reading, analytical and mathematical skills as demonstrated by GRE or GMAT test (optional). Although an official GRE or GMAT score is not an essential requirement, an applicant can enhance her/his application with a competitive GRE or GMAT score;
- 3) the required level of English proficiency as indicated in Clause 3.1.6;
- 4) 2 (two) letters of recommendation;
- 5) at least 3 (three) years of relevant work experience. Based on the School's Admissions Committee discretion applicants with work experience less than 3 (three) years may also be considered if the applicant can demonstrate high academic performance as decided by the Admissions Committee.

3.1.5. The relevance of the academic and experiential background, and the equivalency and appropriateness of earlier degrees, will be determined by the Admissions Committee.

3.1.6. The required level of English proficiency:

- 1) the absolute minimum requirement for English language proficiency test reports for admission to the Program is an overall IELTS test score of 6.5 with sub-score requirements no less than 6.0, or the equivalent TOEFL (except Home Edition) score as posted on the ETS website;
- 2) the absolute minimum requirement for English language proficiency test report for conditional admission to Zero Year of Graduate Programs is an overall IELTS test score of 5.5, with no more than one sub-score of 5.0, or the equivalent TOEFL (except Home Edition) scores as posted on the ETS website.
- 3) applicants to the Program, at the discretion of the Admissions Committee, can be exempted from submitting the language proficiency test report if:
  - one of their earlier academic degrees was earned in a country with English as the language of official communication, academic instruction and daily life;
  - an undergraduate or graduate degree was earned in a program, which was officially taught in English. The applicants must provide an official document confirming English as the language of instruction;
  - the applicant is a graduate of the University.

## 3.2. Application Process

3.2.1. By the indicated deadline applicants applying to the Program in the Personal account ([www.admissions.nu.edu.kz](http://www.admissions.nu.edu.kz)) are required to:

- 1) accept the consent for personal data processing and complete and upload an online application form.
- 2) upload scanned copies of the required documents indicated in Appendix to this Policy and Procedures before the indicated deadline.
- 3) verify results of valid IELTS or TOEFL certificate scores from the Test Administrator's system and submit its scanned copy before the indicated deadline.



4) pay the non-refundable registration fee unless exempted by the Managing Council of the University. The amount of registration fee shall be approved by Managing Council of the University.

3.2.2. The Admissions Committee and/or Admissions Department may request additional documents when necessary.

3.2.3. Documents of enrolled students required by this Policy and Procedures and submitted to applicant's Personal account during the admission period are available to the Office of the Registrar in electronic format and used for formation of student's personal folder.

3.2.4. The number of admission rounds and all deadlines related to admission to the Program are set by the Dean of the School or his/her designated person upon consultation with the Admissions Department and are published on the website of the University.

3.2.5. All submitted documents shall be in English or with notarized English translation.

3.2.6. Providing false and/or incomplete information will result in exclusion from the admission or enrollment process.

3.2.7. The admission decision is not subject to appeal.

3.2.8. Applicants recommended for admission must provide scanned electronic copies of documents indicated in the Appendix to this Policy and Procedures as requested by the Admissions Department.

3.2.9. Applicants who obtained their degree diplomas/certificates from foreign education institutions must request their official transcripts to be sent directly to the Admissions Department of the University. In the exceptional case that a foreign educational institution does not provide such service, the transcript can be submitted to the Admissions Department directly by an applicant upon confirmation by the foreign education institution via corporate electronic mail or digital credential services.

3.2.10. When applicants provide a certificate of nostrification of a diploma issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan or an apostille document by a foreign educational institution, sending an official transcript directly to the University Admissions Department is not mandatory.

3.2.11. Applicants can apply only to a maximum of 2 (two) graduate level programs offered by the University in one academic year. In case of admission to both programs, the applicant must choose only 1 (one) program.

3.2.12. Submission of a complete application package does not guarantee admission to the Program.

### **3.3. Admissions Committee**

3.3.1. The Admissions Committee is authorized to review applications, evaluate applicants and make recommendations with respect to admissions decisions.

3.3.2. The Admissions Committee members are responsible for ensuring that the admission procedures comply with this Policy and Procedures and other internal



rules of the University.

3.3.3. The Admissions Committee for the Program is composed of the School's faculty, administrative staff of a suitable rank qualified to be a member/s of the Admission Committee and at least, one external expert or a representative of the Strategic Partner.

3.3.4. The total number of voting members of the Admissions Committee shall be not less than 4 (four) including at least 1 (one) member as an external expert or representative of the Strategic Partner.

3.3.5. The activities of the Admissions Committee are managed by the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee (hereinafter – the Chair). Members of the Admissions Committee, including the Chair, shall be appointed by the decision of the Provost of the University or his designated person.

3.3.6. The Admissions Committee may have a Vice Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee, the Vice Chairperson shall exercise his /her powers. The Vice Chairperson shall be appointed by the Decision of the Provost of the University or his/her designated person. In addition to voting members, the Admissions Committee may include non-voting representatives.

3.3.7. The Secretary of the Admissions Committee shall be appointed by the decision of the Provost of the University or his designated person based on the recommendations of the Dean of the School. The Secretary is a non-voting member.

In the absence of the Secretary of the Admission Committee, the Chairperson of the Admissions Committee or his/her designated person upon consultation with the Dean of the School appoints the replacement Secretary with indication of such replacement in the Admissions Committee meeting minutes.

3.3.8. The Secretary of the Admission Committee is responsible for:

- 1) coordination of activities of the Admissions Committee, and organization of the Admissions Committee meetings;
- 2) execution of the Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings;
- 3) accuracy of information containing Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings;
- 4) invitation of shortlisted applicants to the interview;
- 5) maintaining applicants' application packages and interview evaluation results (where applicable);
- 6) preparation of acceptance letters (offer-letters) and rejection letters;
- 7) close cooperation and interaction with the Admissions Department on admission issues;
- 8) forwarding Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings for registration and filing with the Admissions Department;
- 9) the implementation of other activities in accordance with the instructions of the Admissions Committee and its Chair.

3.3.9. The Admissions Committee has the right to request additional documents from applicants when necessary.

3.3.10. Each applicant for admission to the Program shall be evaluated individually, fairly, comprehensively and consistently by the members of the





Admissions Committee. In this regard, the Admissions Committee members shall develop and adopt the most effective methodology/process/selection criteria which will identify applicants whose life experiences, personal attributes, past academic achievement and career goals conform to those of the School and who are most likely to contribute to, and benefit from, the School's learning environment.

Methodology/process/selection criteria will be applied equitably during the interview and selection processes and should be attached to the Minutes of the first meeting of Admissions Committee for the correspondent academic year.

### **3.4. Admissions Committee Meetings**

3.4.1. Meetings of the Admissions Committee shall be held as needed during the admissions round with a quorum, defined as the majority of the Admissions Committee voting members present.

3.4.2. The Admissions Committee may take votes and make decisions in the meeting through video or audio conferences or in other interactive ways of communication. Such participation shall be recognized in determining the quorum. The means of interactive participation of a voting member of the Admissions Committee shall be indicated in the Minutes of the meeting.

3.4.3. Decisions of the Admissions Committee shall be taken by simple majority of the votes of those voting and present. The Chairperson has the deciding vote in cases of tied votes. In cases in which the Admissions Committee has Vice Chairperson, in the absence of the Chairperson, tied votes shall be resolved by the decision of the Vice Chairperson.

3.4.4. Decisions of the Admissions Committee are final and recorded in the Minutes of the meeting(s) according to the specified requirements for preparing Minutes of meeting of the University. The Minutes of the meeting(s) shall include a ranking of all recommended applicants, applicants placed on the waiting list, who accepted the admissions offer and voluntarily or involuntarily rejected list of applicants.

3.4.5. The working language of the Admissions Committee meetings is English. The Minutes in English and Kazakh shall be signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary of the Admissions Committee or their designee(s).

3.4.6. The Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings are confidential and are not the subject for dissemination to the third parties, except for employees of the University in the frame of their duties. All Minutes of the Admissions Committee meetings are duly stitched, numbered, scanned and bound by the Secretary of the Admissions Committee, registered and stored in the Admissions Department, which is responsible for their safety until transferred to the University archive.

### **3.5. Admissions Terms and Procedures**

3.5.1. The selection process for admissions to the Program consists of the following stages:



1) First Stage – the Admissions Department reviews application packages in the Personal account and checks the compliance with the minimum entry requirements for the Program and provides the Admissions Committees with information on applicants’ status on compliance with the entry requirements before an applicant can progress to the next stage of the selection process;

2) Second Stage – the members of the Admissions Committee review application packages that meet admissions requirements according to the methodology developed by the Admissions Committee and interview shortlisted applicants. The interview can be conducted either in person or via videoconference. The Admissions Committee may assign interviewers and readers, who are appropriately qualified members of the Schools faculty, alumni, external expert or representative of the Strategic Partner. The Admissions Committee determines the finalists based on the review of the admissions package, interview results and readers’ evaluations, where appropriate;

3) Third Stage – the Admissions Committee makes a final admission decision on all reviewed applicants. The admission decision is not subject to appeal.

The Admissions Committee may, at its discretion, add additional requirements to the admissions process.

3.5.2. Incomplete applications which comply with the admissions requirements indicated in Appendix to this Policy and Procedures can be progressed to the Second and Third stage upon the Admissions Committee’s request otherwise are declined by the Admissions Department and should be rejected by Admissions Committee.

3.5.3. Decisions on enrollment can only be made on complete applications. Applications not progressed will be rejected by the Admission Department.

3.5.4. After reviewing application materials and interview results the Admissions Committee ranks applicants and recommends successful applicants meeting criteria for enrollment to the Program.

3.5.5. Applicants recommended for admission to the Program and rejected applicants will be notified via electronic transmission by the Admissions Department within 10 (ten) working days of the Admissions Committee’s decision.

3.5.6. The Admissions Committee may place on a waiting list the applicants who fully meet admission requirements, but who were not admitted to the Program due to limits in number of places open in the program. Applicants on the waiting list will be ranked by the Admissions Committee. Should a place in the program become available before the end of enrollment term of the Program, it will be offered to the applicants, in order of rank on the waiting list, by notification letter on admission.

3.5.7. Upon receipt of the admission offer from the University, the applicants should notify the University of their acceptance or refusal in writing during the period indicated in the notification letter of admission.

3.5.8. In the event that an applicant recommended for admission does not accept the offer or does not reply within the stated time limits of the letter, the offer will be withdrawn and notification letter on admission shall be sent to next most





highly ranked applicant from the waiting list.

3.5.9. Enrollment of applicants will be formalized by the decision of the Provost of the University or his designated person.

3.5.10. The Decision on Enrollment shall specify the source of funding for each admitted applicant.

The sources of funding shall be determined as follows:

- 1) the state educational order;
- 2) a specific scholarship and/or sponsorship;
- 3) fee-paying basis – for self-funded applicants or applicants whose costs will be covered by their employer.

Awarding applicants University grants, scholarship or sponsorship and enrollment on a fee-paying basis shall be carried out according to the procedure established by the internal documents of the University.

3.5.11. Applicants who have already earned a doctoral degree under the state fund are not eligible for admission under the “state educational order” to a University’s PhD program with or without Zero Year of Graduate Program.

3.5.12. Zero Year of Graduate Programs students are considered as students of the Programs to which they were conditionally enrolled. In order to change from conditional status, students must successfully complete Zero Year of Graduate Programs by passing all English and content courses in accordance with Academic Policies and Procedures for the Zero Year of Graduate Programs of the University.

If the Zero Year of Graduate Programs student fails to achieve the required passing grades and/or the attendance requirement, he/she shall be dismissed from the Program in accordance with the internal rules of the University.

Zero Year of Graduate Programs students are accepted with the expectation that they will continue to the University PhD degree program to which they applied. Students will not be allowed to change their program of study during Zero Year of Graduate Programs studies. Zero Year of Graduate Programs students who wish to study in the University’s PhD program, which is different from the program for which they were accepted, may apply to another PhD program of the University and submit all the required documents. However, there is no guarantee of placement in their new PhD’s application even if they are successful in Zero Year of Graduate Programs.

3.5.13. The number of admitted students shall not exceed the number of places allocated to the Program.

3.5.14. Deferred admission may be granted for 1 (one) academic year by the Admissions Committee with the approval of the Dean of the School or his/her designated person. Deferred admission cannot be granted to the conditionally enrolled applicants. The awarding of grants or any financial support for deferred admission applicants is carried out in the framework of consideration of new pool applicants on a competitive basis. Deferred admission allows a student to be enrolled to a Program following year based on previous year application but does not retain earned funding (if any).

3.5.15. Conditional enrollment may be practiced in some exceptional cases upon approval of the Provost or his/her designated person. The Provost or his/her



designated person retains the right to deny the conditional enrollment. The Admissions Committee recommends to the Provost or his/her designated person for approval of the conditional enrollment in the following cases:

1) Applicants who are in the final year of higher education institutions including the students of the University recommended for admission may be enrolled conditionally based on evidence from a graduating university that the applicant has completed the educational program and the applicant expects formal issuance of the final transcript and/or diploma by a specified date. In that case, the decision on enrollment shall prescribe the period of time within which the applicant shall provide the necessary documents to the University.

2) Students of the University in their final summer semester of study may be considered for conditional admission to the Program without the diploma and/or official final transcript based on the memo from School of study of the University indicating that the applicant is eligible to graduate and fulfills the program requirements and will receive their diploma in the next degree conferral. These applicants can be considered for admission with the condition that they submit a final transcript and a diploma by the end of the first Fall semester according to the Academic calendar of the Program of the year of enrollment.

In the event that an applicant fails to provide the required documents to the University Program within the prescribed period of time, the applicant will be dismissed from the University.

3.5.16. All documents and other materials submitted by or for applicants in connection with their application for admission to the Program become the property of the University and are subject to the University's rules and regulations concerning confidentiality. If the documents of the enrolled applicant have not been transferred to the Office of the Registrar, they can be returned to the applicants in case of his refusal study.

3.5.17. All information related to the selection process of applicants is confidential.

3.5.18. Issues not covered by this Policy and Procedures shall be resolved by the Admissions Committee independently.

#### **Section 4. Waiver**

4.1 The Provost of the University is eligible to waive any provision of this Policy and Procedures.

#### **Section 5. Temporary Provision**

5.1. Not applicable.

#### **Section 6. Revision**

6.1. This Policy and Procedures to the Programs shall be reviewed within one year after approval and completion of the admission cycle and revised if necessary.



## Section 7. Related Documents

7.1. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Status of Nazarbayev University, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and Nazarbayev Fund,” the Charter of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University, and Rules for preparing some internal administrative documents on core activities and students contingent in the autonomous organization of education “Nazarbayev University”.



Appendix  
to the Admission Policy and  
Procedures to the PhD in Public  
Policy Program at the  
autonomous organization of  
education Nazarbayev  
University

### **Application package checklist for the Program**

1. Complete Application form for the Program;
2. Scanned copy of official degree diplomas/certificates with transcripts. Copies of diplomas/certificates with transcripts received from Kazakhstani educational institutions must be notarized. Applicants who obtained their degree diplomas/certificates from foreign educational institutions additionally refer to clause 3.2.9 of this Policy and Procedures;
3. Scanned copy of passport or national ID or stateless person certificate of identity;
4. 2 letters of recommendation (to be provided by referees via University system or in scanned copy);
5. CV/resume;
6. Scanned copy of Labor card with English translation or another documented proof of work experience (if applicable);
7. Cover letter explaining the motivation to enroll on the PhD program;
8. Preliminary research proposal (2,000 words);
9. Scan copy of official document confirming name change (if applicable);
10. Scanned copy of a document confirming English as the language of instruction (only for applicants, who earned their degree in a program, which was taught in English, and request an exemption from submitting IELTS or TOEFL);
11. verified score report of valid Academic IELTS or TOEFL (except Home Edition) test certificate downloaded from the Test Administrator system and its scanned copy. The last IELTS/TOEFL certificate submitted to Personal account will be considered in admission competition. IELTS or TOEFL certificate valid (no more than 2 years) as of date of online documents submission. An applicant must indicate the Nazarbayev University as a recipient when registering for the test. In case if the applicant passed the test earlier, he/she can contact the test center and indicate the University as a recipient;
12. verified score report of valid GMAT or GRE test certificate valid as of date of online documents submission and its scanned copy (optional). An applicant must indicate Nazarbayev University as a recipient when registering for the test. In case the applicant passed the test earlier, he/she can contact the test center and indicate the Nazarbayev University as a recipient.

