

REGULATIONS ON DOCTORAL STUDIES AT AL-FARABI KAZAKH NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**Approved
By the Academic Council
NJSC “al-Farabi Kazakh National
University”
(Minutes No. ____
dated “__” _____ 2025)**

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1. These Regulations on Doctoral Studies at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) have been developed in accordance with the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Science", the State Compulsory Standard for Postgraduate Education, approved by Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 604 dated 31 October 2018, the Rules for Awarding Degrees, approved by Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 127 dated 31 March 2011, and orders and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

1.2. The Regulations define the mandatory requirements and procedures for the implementation of doctoral programmes within the framework of credit-based learning at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

1.3. The Regulations are mandatory for all structural units (faculties, departments, financial and scientific units, etc.) involved in the life cycle of training specialists with postgraduate education.

1.4. The main organisational unit responsible for the implementation of postgraduate education programmes is the graduating department of the faculty. The coordination and control of the implementation of the doctoral education process at the university level is carried out by the Department of Academic Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the DAA), while the coordination and control of the implementation of the scientific component is carried out by the Department of Training and Certification of Academic Staff (hereinafter referred to as the DTCAS) of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

1.5. Doctoral programmes are implemented taking into account the research topics of the departments offering them.

1.6. Admission to doctoral studies is carried out in accordance with the Rules for Admission to Educational Institutions Implementing Higher Education and Postgraduate Education Programmes.

1.7. Doctoral students are trained within the framework of the state educational order and on the basis of contracts for the provision of paid educational services concluded between the university and the customers of educational services.

2. STRUCTURE AND CONTENT OF DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES

2.1. The educational process in the postgraduate education system is implemented in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework, professional standards, Dublin descriptors and the European Qualifications Framework.

2.2. Doctoral programmes are developed in scientific, pedagogical and specialised fields. Doctoral programmes are developed in specific fields of study in accordance with the Classifier of Fields of Study for Higher and Postgraduate Education based on the State Compulsory Standard for Postgraduate Education.

2.3. The educational programme for the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree has a scientific and pedagogical focus and involves fundamental educational, methodological and research training and in-depth study of disciplines in relevant fields of science for the higher and postgraduate education system and the scientific sphere.

2.4. The educational programme for training doctors in a specific field involves fundamental educational, methodological and research training and in-depth study of disciplines in the relevant fields of science for the national economy and social sphere: education, medicine, law, art, economics, business administration and in the field of national security and military affairs.

2.5. The development and implementation of doctoral programmes is carried out by the graduating department, which is responsible for ensuring that the educational process complies with the State Compulsory Standard for Postgraduate Education and the qualification requirements for the organisation of educational activities.

2.6. For each area of training, the graduating department develops a competency model for doctoral graduates (doctors).

2.7. The graduating department implementing doctoral programmes (hereinafter referred to as DP) must ensure:

- the conduct of classes by teachers with a degree of candidate of sciences, or doctor of sciences, or doctor of philosophy (PhD), or doctor in the field and/or academic title of “associate professor (docent)” or “professor”;

- the existence of valid scientific exchange agreements with accredited foreign higher education institutions (confirmed by a copy of the accreditation certificate for the relevant educational programmes of the foreign university); providing for standards regarding the status of the partner university in the relevant field of training, the involvement of foreign consultants and the implementation of joint scientific projects;

- the existence of existing agreements with organisations designated as training bases and agreements for foreign internships in accordance with the field of training;

- the existence of accredited laboratories or existing agreements with such laboratories (in the fields of training “Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics”, “Information and Communication Technologies”, “Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction”, “Agriculture and Bioresources”, “Healthcare and Social Welfare (Medicine)”);

- the existence of agreements with foreign scientists on the relevant educational programme;
- performance of funded research and development work with organisations and enterprises.

2.8. The doctoral programme includes educational and scientific/research components. Educational programmes are developed based on the principle of modular learning.

2.9. The doctoral dissertation is completed during the period of Doctoral Research Work (DRW) and Doctoral Experimental Research Work (DERW). The final result of the R&D is the doctoral dissertation.

2.10. The final assessment accounts for 12 academic credits of the total volume of the doctoral programme and takes the form of writing and defending a doctoral dissertation.

2.11. The doctoral dissertation is checked for plagiarism (checking the dissertation for plagiarism), which is carried out by the graduating department, the dissertation council and the National Centre for State Scientific and Technical Expertise.

2.12. The main criterion for completion of the educational process for the preparation of doctors of philosophy (PhD) (doctors in the field) is the acquisition by the doctoral student of at least 180 academic credits, including all types of educational and scientific activities.

2.13. In cases of early completion of the doctoral programme and successful defence of the dissertation, the doctoral student is awarded a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) or Doctor of Science degree, regardless of the duration of study.

2.14. Persons who have completed the doctoral programme and defended their doctoral thesis, subject to a positive decision by the dissertation council formed at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, are awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Science degree and a diploma in accordance with Order No. 127 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated 31 March 2011 "On Approval of the Rules for Awarding Degrees" (registered in the Register of State Registration of Normative Legal Acts under No. 6951) and the supplement (supplement to diploma).

2.15. Persons who have obtained a PhD degree, in order to deepen their scientific knowledge and solve scientific and applied problems on a specialised topic, shall complete a postdoctoral programme or conduct scientific research under the guidance of a leading scientist.

2.16. Doctoral students who have completed the full course of theoretical training of the doctoral programme but have not completed the DRW (DERW) are given the opportunity to retake the academic credits for DRW (DERW) and defend their thesis in subsequent years on a paid basis.

2.17. Doctoral students who have completed the full course of theoretical training of the doctoral programme and completed the DRW (DERW) but have not defended their doctoral dissertation, shall be awarded the results of their training and academic credits and shall be given the opportunity to defend their dissertation within one year after graduation free of charge, and in subsequent years on a paid basis for a minimum of 4 academic credits.

2.18. Three years after graduation, a doctoral student who has not defended their thesis is allowed to defend it only after re-approval of the scientific justification of the thesis research (research proposal) on a paid basis.

3. ORGANISATION OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC WORK DOCTORAL STUDIES

3.1. Training in the PhD programme is based on master's degree programmes, in a specialised doctoral programme, including DBA programmes, based on a master's degree or higher specialised education equivalent to a specialised master's degree.

3.2. If the profile of the doctoral programme does not match that of the master's programme, prerequisites and deadlines for their completion are set for the doctoral student.

3.3. Upon admission of a master's degree holder in a relevant field to a PhD programme, an educational programme of postgraduate education in the field of pedagogy of scientific and pedagogical master's degree programmes shall be additionally established as prerequisites.

3.4. Doctoral students study on the basis of an individual work plan, which is drawn up under the guidance of academic advisors.

3.5. The doctoral student's individual work plan is drawn up for the entire period of study and includes the following sections:

- 1) Individual Educational Program (IEP) (may be revised annually if necessary);
- 2) scientific research, experimental research work (topic, research direction, deadlines and form of reporting);
- 3) practical training (programme, base, deadlines and form of reporting);
- 4) doctoral dissertation topic with justification and structure;
- 5) plan for completing the doctoral dissertation;
- 6) plan for scientific publications and internships, including those abroad.

3.6. Theoretical training accounts for 45 academic credits in the total volume of the doctoral programme and consists of cycles of basic and specialised disciplines, which include disciplines of the university component and the elective component, as well as practical training.

3.7. The full academic load for one academic year corresponds to 60 academic credits; during one semester, a doctoral student completes 30 academic credits.

3.8. The requirements for the level of training of a doctoral student are determined on the basis of the Dublin descriptors of the third level of higher education (doctoral studies) and reflect the acquired competences expressed in the achieved learning outcomes.

3.9. Learning outcomes are formulated both at the level of the entire doctoral programme and at the level of individual modules or academic disciplines.

3.10. Third-level descriptors within the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework (EQF) reflect learning outcomes that characterise the learner's ability to:

- 1) demonstrate a systematic understanding of the field of study and master the skills and research methods used in that field;
- 2) demonstrate the ability to think, design, implement and adapt a substantial research process with a scientific approach;
- 3) contribute to the expansion of the boundaries of the scientific field with their own original research, which deserves publication at the national or international level;
- 4) critically analyse, evaluate and synthesise new and complex ideas;
- 5) communicate their knowledge and achievements to colleagues, the scientific community and the general public;
- 6) promote the advancement of technological, social or cultural development of society based on knowledge in an academic and professional context.

3.11. Practical training for doctoral students is conducted with the aim of developing practical skills in research, teaching and professional activities.

3.12. The doctoral education programme includes:

- 1) teaching and research practice – for students enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy programme;
- 2) industrial practice – for students enrolled in specialised doctoral programmes.

3.13. During the teaching practice period, doctoral students are involved in teaching bachelor's and master's degree courses as necessary.

The content of research and industrial practice is determined by the topic of the doctoral dissertation.

3.14. The research internship of a doctoral student is conducted with the aim of studying the latest theoretical, methodological and technological achievements of domestic and foreign science, as well as to consolidate practical skills, apply modern methods of scientific research, and process and interpret experimental data in dissertation research.

3.15. The doctoral student's industrial practice is conducted with the aim of consolidating the theoretical knowledge acquired during the training process and improving professional skills.

4. ORGANISATION OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH/EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH WORK OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS (DRW/DERW)

4.1. The volume of research (experimental research) work of a doctoral student is 123 academic credits in the total volume of the doctoral programme.

4.2. Requirements for DRW work by students enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programme:

- 1) compliance with the main subject area of the doctoral programme for which the doctoral dissertation is being defended;
- 2) be relevant and contain scientific novelty and practical significance;
- 3) based on modern theoretical, methodological and technological achievements in science and practice;

4) based on modern methods of data processing and interpretation using computer technologies;

5) is carried out using modern scientific research methods;

6) contains scientific research (methodological, practical) sections on the main provisions being defended.

4.3. Requirements for the student's DERW in the doctoral programme in the field:

1) compliance with the main issues of the doctoral programme on which the doctoral dissertation is defended;

2) be relevant and contain scientific novelty and practical significance;

3) based on modern achievements in science, technology and production and contain specific practical recommendations, independent solutions to complex, cross-functional management tasks;

4) is carried out using advanced information technologies;

5) contains experimental and research (methodological, practical) sections on the main provisions being defended.

5. ORGANISATION OF RESEARCH WORK

5.1. The organisation of research work by doctoral students is carried out at the graduating departments/research institutes, which are provided with highly qualified scientific and teaching staff, as well as the necessary laboratory, research and scientific and methodological facilities. Research work of an interdisciplinary nature may be carried out on the basis of two or more faculties, departments or research institutes.

5.2. Graduating departments/research institutes must ensure that the topics of doctoral students' dissertation research correspond to the areas of scientific research activity of the department and faculty, and involve PhD students in scientific projects carried out by graduating departments and research institutes.

5.3. The departments/research institutes that train doctoral students should organise the research work of students within the framework of larger theoretical and applied research programmes and provide opportunities for testing and implementing the results obtained.

5.4. Graduating departments/research institutes are responsible for providing doctoral students with the necessary laboratory, technical and information resources for their research work and for the continuous monitoring of the research work being carried out.

5.5. The doctoral student's individual work plan is developed and approved by the head of the department and the dean of the faculty during the first semester of study. If necessary, adjustments may be made to the individual work plan.

5.6. The planning of doctoral students' research work is carried out on a semester basis in accordance with the working curricula of educational programmes. At the end of each semester, during the interim assessment of research work, doctoral students submit a report on the implementation of their individual work plan at a meeting of the graduating department/research institute in the presence of academic advisors. At

the end of each academic year, doctoral students report on the completion of their research at a meeting of the Academic Council of the faculty/research institute.

5.7. The assessment of doctoral students' research results is carried out in strict accordance with the Research Procedure.

5.8. Requirements for the publication of the main scientific results of doctoral students' dissertations are regulated by the Rules for Awarding Degrees. Doctoral students report on the completion of publications during the interim assessment, and the results of the preparation of publications are taken into account in the assessment of the doctoral student's research work.

5.9. The final assessment of doctoral students' publications is carried out by the DTCAS.

5.10. After the final assessment of doctoral students, DTCAS sends recommendation scores to the graduating departments for grading.

6. APPOINTMENT OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS' SCIENTIFIC ADVISERS

6.1. Scientific supervision of doctoral students applying for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree is carried out by at least two advisors, one of whom is a scientist from a foreign university.

6.2. Academic advisors and doctoral dissertation topics are reviewed and approved by the Academic Councils of the faculties/research institutes, the Academic Council of the university, and by order of the rector of the university. Academic advisors are appointed within the first two months after enrolment, and doctoral dissertation topics are approved during the first semester of study.

6.3. The content of the dissertation research is aimed at implementing national priorities, state programmes, and fundamental or applied research programmes. The topic of the dissertation (as of the date of its approval) corresponds to the areas of scientific development that are formed by the Higher Scientific and Technical Commission under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan in accordance with paragraph 3 of Article 18 of the Law "On Science" and/or state programmes.

6.4. The heads of graduating departments/directors of research institutes that serve as training bases for PhD students are responsible for the timely submission of candidates for PhD student academic advisors who meet the approved qualification requirements for consideration by the Academic Council of the faculty.

6.5. The head of the graduating department is responsible for any inconsistency between the topic of the doctoral dissertation and the qualifications of the scientific advisor with the established requirements, which resulted in the replacement of the approved advisor and/or re-approval of the topic of the doctoral dissertation.

6.6. The decision to replace academic advisors is made by the Academic Council of the university upon the recommendation of the graduating department and the request of the Academic Council of the faculty. Replacement of an academic advisor without a valid reason is not permitted, except in cases of force majeure.

6.7. Other issues related to qualification requirements, appointment procedures, rights and obligations of scientific advisors not covered in these Regulations are governed by the Regulations “On Qualification Requirements for Scientific Advisors of PhD Doctoral Students at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University”.

7. RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

7.1. As part of the DRW (DERW) individual educational plan of a doctoral student, in order to familiarise themselves with innovative technologies and new types of production, it is mandatory to complete a scientific internship at scientific organisations and/or organisations in relevant industries or fields of activity, including abroad.

7.2. The place of internship corresponds to the scientific direction of the educational programme, the topic of the doctoral dissertation and the place of work of the foreign consultant.

7.3. The internship shall be carried out at leading foreign scientific organisations and HEIs ranked in the top 1,000 in international rankings or in the top 200 in the relevant field (by Subject).

7.4. The scientific internship of doctoral students is carried out within the framework of a jointly approved internship programme and weekly plan. The internship programme includes educational and scientific components.

7.5. The internship is carried out by doctoral students who have preliminary research results and/or publications on the research topic.

7.6. When completing an internship in a foreign language, doctoral students are required to have a language certificate:

- English: Test of English as a Foreign Language Institutional Testing Programme (TOEFL ITP), minimum score of 460 points,

- Test of English as a Foreign Language Institutional Testing Programme (TOEFL English as a Foreign Language Institutional Testing Program) Internet-based Test (TOEFL IBT), minimum score – at least 60,

- Test of English as a Foreign Language Paper-based testing (TOEFL PBT), minimum score – no less than 498

TOEFL PBT (Test of English as a Foreign Language Paper-based testing), minimum score – at least 498,

- Test of English as a Foreign Language Paper-delivered testing (TOEFL PDT), minimum score – 498

as a Foreign Language Paper-delivered testing) (TOEFL PDT), minimum score – at least 65,

- International English Language Tests System (IELTS), minimum score – at least 5.5.

7.7. The total duration of internships is usually: no less than 45 days in neighbouring and distant foreign countries; no less than 30 days in the USA, Canada, Mexico, Australia and Oceania, Japan, Great Britain, Switzerland (and other countries depending on visa requirements).

7.8. The acquisition of research credits for completing a foreign research internship is confirmed by a decision of the issuing department/research institute, at a meeting of which the doctoral student's report on the results of the internship is heard and approved.

7.9. The standards for financing foreign internships are established by the relevant regulatory documents of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Regulations on the procedure for sending students and teaching staff of the university abroad.

7.10. If the base for the research internship is a research centre/institute that is not a structural unit of the university, there must be at least 20 publications by the organisation's employees in the field of master's degree training in journals indexed in the Scopus and/or Web of Science databases for the previous year.

Requirements for Kazakhstani organisations:

- Organisations recommended for scientific internships include: Nazarbayev University JSC, research institutes and centres, scientific laboratories, national universities and higher education institutions with a different organisational and legal status, provided they have a research group and the necessary scientific infrastructure for the doctoral student's research topic, as well as other organisations relevant to the doctoral student's research profile.

7.11. When transitioning to a fully remote learning format, it is permissible to organise remote research internships for doctoral students.

7.12. Other issues related to the organisation of scientific internships for doctoral students are regulated by the Regulations on Academic Mobility of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

8. RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF DOCTORAL STUDENTS

8.1. Doctoral students at Al-Farabi KazNU have the rights and obligations defined by the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Education”, “On Science and Technology Policy”, regulatory acts of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Charter and Internal Regulations of Al-Farabi KazNU.

8.2. Doctoral students are obliged to perform all types of work specified in their individual work plans in a timely and high-quality manner.

8.3. Doctoral students are obliged to:

– at the end of each stage of work provided for in their individual plans, submit all necessary written materials in a timely manner;

– keep records of comments and feedback received from their academic advisors;

– comply with the established deadlines for submitting reports (on completed educational and research/experimental research work, on overseas internships, etc.);

– inform the relevant administrative departments of the university in a timely manner about any changes in surname, residential address and contact details;

– discuss any issues that arise with academic advisors and supervisors in a timely manner and take the initiative in resolving them;

– complete the writing of the doctoral dissertation within the established deadlines.

8.4. Doctoral students enrolled for study under a state educational order as part of targeted personnel training are required to conclude a tripartite targeted training agreement in a timely manner and to comply with its terms and conditions.

8.5. Doctoral students have the right to contact the heads of the graduating departments for assistance in finding scientific advisors and for resolving other organisational issues.

8.6. In the event of conflicts between a doctoral student and his or her scientific supervisor, the doctoral programme has the right to refer the matter to a conciliation commission for resolution. If necessary, the Academic Council of the faculty may decide to remove the scientific advisor from supervision and appoint a new scientific advisor to the doctoral student.

8.7. Doctoral students have the right to work during their free time from studies, but no more than 0.5 of a full-time position.

8.8. Doctoral students enrolled in state-funded educational programmes are required to comply with the terms of employment in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

8.9. If there is a permanent job that meets the conditions of work experience (in higher and/or postgraduate education institutions or scientific organisations), doctoral students in their final year of study enrolled under a state educational order may, prior to the distribution of graduates, submit a certificate from their place of work to the Career and Professional Development Centre of KazNU and, after distribution, receive a referral to continue working at the specified organisation.

8.10. In the absence of a permanent job or if it does not meet the conditions of employment established by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, doctoral students in their final year are required to obtain a referral from the KazNU Career and Professional Development Centre for registration at the Employment Centre at their place of residence.

8.11. All disputes arising in the course of doctoral educational programmes shall be resolved in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

8.12. Other rights and obligations of doctoral students of Al-Farabi KazNU not provided for in these Rules are regulated by the regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

9. DEFENCE OF THE DISSERTATION FOR THE DEGREE OF PhD

9.1. A doctoral student shall be admitted to defend a dissertation for a PhD degree upon fulfilment of the following conditions:

- successful completion of all subjects in the individual study plan;
- completion of all types of practical training provided for in the doctoral programme;
- a positive conclusion from the scientific supervisor(s) and a recommendation from the department to defend the thesis;

- articles in accordance with the Rules for Awarding Academic Degrees, Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 127 of 31 March 2011;
- preliminary discussion of the dissertation at an extended department meeting with the participation of external experts;
- formatting of the dissertation in accordance with the requirements of the University and the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

9.2. Based on the results of the preliminary examination and discussion of the dissertation, the department decides whether to recommend the doctoral student for defence and sends the documents to the DTCAS.

9.3. Doctoral students from other educational institutions may defend their theses at the dissertation councils of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, in accordance with the established procedure and in accordance with the law of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

9.4. Doctoral students from other higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as HEIs) pay the approved amount at the time of the thesis defence to defend their thesis at the dissertation councils of Al-Farabi KazNU for the award of a PhD degree for an order of admission to the defence. The order for admission to the defence for doctoral students from other HEIs is issued by DTCAS after payment of the approved amount and signing of the application by the Vice-Rector for Scientific and Innovative Activities.

9.5. Of the funds received by the university, 35% of the amount is allocated to cover overhead costs and develop the university's infrastructure, up to 50% of the amount is allocated to pay the members of the dissertation councils (including all expenses provided for by the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan and tax obligations), and 15% of the amount is allocated to DTCAS employees (Appendix 1). If the remuneration of a member (or members) of the dissertation council is not paid at their initiative, the corresponding funds are transferred to the university's income.

9.6. The defence of the dissertation takes place in the Dissertation Council of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, operating in the relevant scientific field, in compliance with all procedures established by the regulatory legal acts of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

9.7 Foreign scientific advisors to doctoral students shall be paid 200,000 (two hundred thousand) tenge in the event of publication of an article (Article and/or Review) with an impact factor according to JCR (Journal Citation Reports) data and/or indexed in the Web of Science Core Collection database (Web of Science Core Collection) (sections Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Arts and Humanities Citation Index), Science Citation Index Expanded (Science Citation Index Expanded), Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)) or a CiteScore percentile of at least 35 (thirty-five) in the Scopus database (Appendix 2), and 300,000 (three hundred thousand) tenge in the case of successful defence of a doctoral dissertation under the supervision of a foreign consultant for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree (Appendix 2).