

**APPROVED**  
**at a meeting of the Academic Council**  
**of NJSC «KazNU named after al-Farabi»**  
**Protocol № 11 from 23.05.2025 y.**

**The program of the entrance exam for applicants to the PhD**  
**for the group of educational programs**

**D051 – «Religion and Theology»**

**I. General provisions**

1. The program was drawn up in accordance with the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 31, 2018 No. 600 «On Approval of the Model Rules for Admission to Education in Educational Organizations Implementing Educational Programs of Higher and Postgraduate Education» (hereinafter referred to as the Model Rules).

2. The entrance exam for doctoral studies consists of writing an essay, an exam in the profile of a group of educational programs and an interview.

Блок	Баллы
1. Interview	30
2. Essay	20
3. Exam according to the profile of the group of the educational program	50
Total admission score	100/75

3. The duration of the entrance exam is 3 hours 10 minutes, during which the applicant writes an essay and answers the electronic examination ticket. The interview is conducted at the university premises before the entrance exam.

**II. Procedure for the entrance examination**

1. Applicants for doctoral studies in the group of educational programs D051 – «Religion and Theology» write a problematic / thematic essay. The volume of the essay is at least 250 words.

The purpose of the essay is to determine the level of analytical and creative abilities, expressed in the ability to build one's own argumentation based on theoretical knowledge, social and personal experience.

Types of essays:

- motivational essay revealing the motivation for research activities;

- scientific-analytical essay justifying the relevance and methodology of the planned research;
- problem/thematic essay reflecting various aspects of scientific knowledge in the subject area.

3. The electronic examination ticket consists of 3 questions.

### **Topics for preparation for the exam on the profile of the group of the educational program group**

Discipline: «Methodology of Religious Studies»

#### **Topic 1. Features of the Formation of a Scientific Approach to the Explanation of Religion.**

Subtopics: Religious studies as an independent field of knowledge, as a science with its own subject and method: methodological foundations. The science of religion and the history of religion. Understanding and studying religion as an interrelation of historical methods with anthropological, ethnological, sociological, and other methods. Functions of the science of religion. The specificity of scientific knowledge about religion. Scientific approaches to the history of the evolution of religious consciousness (E.B. Tylor, J. Frazer).

#### **Topic 2. Methods of Religious Studies Cognition.**

Subtopics: The concept of the method in religious studies. Classification of methods in religious studies and their characteristics. General scientific approaches. The systems approach as a methodology for studying holistic objects. Specifically, religious studies approaches. Principles of exposition and their characteristics. The significance of understanding methods of religious studies for the modern researcher.

#### **Topic 3. Religious Studies on Religion.**

Subtopic: Definition of religion. Types of definitions: theological explanations (E. Treitsch, R. Otto, P.A. Florensky, P.L. Berger, T. Luckmann, etc.), philosophical (B. Spinoza, I. Kant, F. Hegel, L. Feuerbach, etc.), sociological (M. Weber, B. Malinowski, E. Durkheim, T. Parsons, etc.), biological and psychological (W. James, L. Lévy-Bruhl, Z. Freud, E. Fromm, C.G. Jung, etc.), ethnological approach. Religion in the history of socio-humanitarian thought: methodological aspects. Principles of scientific cognition of religion.

#### **Topic 4. Key Categories in Religious Studies Research.**

Subtopics: Religious studies employ general philosophical and socio-philosophical

categories such as “being,” consciousness, cognition, reflection, symbol, truth, error, fantasy, illusion, society, material and spiritual production, culture, alienation, and others. Concepts and terms borrowed from logic, ethics, aesthetics include: “sign, meaning, sense, conscience, responsibility, mercy, compassion, beauty,” etc. General scientific concepts such as “system, structure, function, role, law,” etc. Specialized scientific concepts: “epoch, law, illusion, faith, feeling, mood, suffering, communication, language, life, death,” etc. Specific religious studies terms and concepts include: “religion, theology, religious cult, church, confession, temple, prayer,” and others. Particular importance is given to concepts and terms such as “God, angel, hell, paradise, Bodhisattva, providence, karma,” which in science have meanings different from their religious ones and their religious significance. A class of concepts reflecting processes of religious change includes: “development and evolution, sacralization, secularization, de-theologization, demythologization, modernization,” and others.

### **Topic 5. The Problem of the Typology of Religions.**

Subtopics: The problem of the typology of religions, developed as a result of comparative analysis based on various criteria. Polytheistic, monotheistic, dead, living, written, and oral religions. The typology of religions according to G.W.F. Hegel. Tribal, national, and world religions. The comparative-historical paradigm in religious studies. "Religious Rites and Ceremonies of All Peoples of the World" by P. Picard. Comparative religious studies in the 18th century. Comparative religious studies in the 19th century. Comparative religious studies in the 20th century.

### **Topic 6. History of Religion: Formation of Methodological Approaches.**

Subtopics: History of religion as a branch of religious studies. In the 18th century, issues of the history of religion in the works of the French Enlightenment and encyclopedist Ch. de Brosses, and the French scholar and philosopher Ch.F. Dupuis. In the 19th century, contributions to the development of the history of religion were made by German theologians and historians of the Tübingen School, F.C. Baur and D.F. Strauss. Also, the Swiss historian and jurist J. Bachofen, French historian F. de Coulanges, French writer, historian, and Orientalist philologist J.E. Renan, English historian and Orientalist W. Robertson Smith, English historians and ethnologists E.B. Tylor, J. Frazer, German historian J. Welhausen, German historian and philosopher A. Drews, Austrian theologian, ethnographer, and linguist W. Schmidt, Russian historians F.I. Shcherbatskoy, V.V. Bartold, A.B. Ranovich, R.Yu. Vipner, theologian and historian A.V. Kartashov, and many others.

### **Topic 7. Sociology of Religion: Formation of Methodological Approaches.**

Subtopics: Auguste Comte. Methodology of social philosophy, sociology, and understanding the role of religion in society, sources of religion (Émile Durkheim). Foundations of the sociology of religion: studying the influence of religion on the development of the economy, political systems, family, forms of institutionalization of

religion, typology; selection of research methods (Max Weber). Magic, thought, science, religion as anthropological constants and scientific approaches (Bronisław Malinowski). Substantive definition of religion: from ontology to research methodology (Edward Tylor, Émile Durkheim).

### **Topic 8. The Systems Approach as a Methodology for Understanding Holistic Objects.**

Subtopics: Specifics of the systems approach. The interdisciplinary nature of the systems approach. Holistic integrative model of the object. Object of study. Dissection of research. Logic of cognition. Methodological principles, categorical-conceptual apparatus, research procedure, methods, and techniques of the systems approach. Hard systems theory. Soft systems theory. Self-organization theory. Application of the systems approach to the study of religion.

### **Topic 9. The Significance of Understanding Methods of Religious Studies for the Specialist.**

Subtopics: The interrelation of the methodology of religious studies with other scientific disciplines. Formation of individual cognitive operations. Analysis. Synthesis. Generalization. Classification. Cognitive activity. Thinking. Creativity. Activity. Critique. Mutual understanding, interdisciplinary program.

### **Topic 10. Methodology of Theological Explanation of Religion.**

Subtopics: The concept of religion "from within," based on the corresponding religious experience. The supranaturalistic definition of religion. The historical school of theology. The "historical mode of consideration" of religion by E. Trelc; the experience of the sacred by R. Otto; "the life of God in us and us in God" by P.A. Florensky; ontological and phenomenological definitions of religion. The Invisible Religion by T. Luckmann. The experience of the transcendent-immanent, faith in a being higher than the human. Religion as the experience of the transcendent according to S.N. Bulgakov. The construction of the sacred Cosmos by P.L. Berger. F. Schleiermacher's "Speeches on Religion to Its Cultured Despisers."

### **Topic 11. The Influence of Science on Religious Worldview.**

Subtopics: The epistemological aspect of studying religion. Specifics of religious consciousness. Confession. The concept of doctrine. Theurgy and theodicy. The epistemological position of faith and the cognitive attitudes of rationalism. The problem of the relationship between faith and reason in the history of religion. Issues of dialogue between science and religion. The interconnection between the scientific and religious worldviews.

### **Topic 12. Philosophical and Scientific Analysis of Religious Studies.**

Subtopics: Religious studies as a form of rationality. Religious studies and methodology. Multilevel concept of methodological analysis. Methods of scientific research in religious studies. Problems of research methods in religion. Axiomatic method in religious studies. Formalization and its degree of applicability in religious studies. The method of ascending from the abstract to the concrete. Historical and logical method. The principle of historicism in religious studies. Structural-functional approach to religion. Modeling method in religious studies. Theoretical and empirical

religious studies. Construction of virtual objects in the problems of religious research. Computer modeling and its applicability in religious studies.

### **Topic 13. The Current State of Religious Studies.**

Subtopics: Contemporary Western schools of religious studies. Comparative approach to the study of religion. History and current state of domestic religious studies. The subject area of contemporary philosophy of religion, truthfulness and rationality of religious beliefs, features of religious language. Methodological problems in contemporary religious studies.

Historical evolutionary approaches in the history of religious studies. Comparative historical methods of religious research. Structural-functional method of research in religious studies.

### **Topic 14. Kazakhstan religious studies.**

Sub-themes: Kazakhstan religious studies: problems and prospects. Kazakhstan religious studies in search of its actualization: practical dimension. Kazakhstan religious studies in the light of modern epistemology. Toward a metatheory of religious studies. Realism as a methodological principle of Russian and Kazakhstani religious studies. To the history of Russian religious studies: the problem field of religious studies in the 1920s-1930s. The role of chairs of scientific atheism in the formation and development of religious studies in Kazakhstan. Divergent thinking in modern Kazakhstani religious studies: cognitive dimension. Issues of development of modern Kazakhstani religious studies. Development of religious psychology in modern Kazakhstan. About two paradigms of modern religious studies in Kazakhstan. Religion in the structure of everyday life in modern Kazakhstan. Problems of sociology of religion in Kazakhstani religious studies. Religious Studies without Borders. Islamic studies in Kazakhstan in the second half of XX - early XXI centuries. Development of methodology of religious studies as the ultimate actual task of Kazakhstani religious studies

Discipline: «Contemporary Issues in Religious Studies»

### **Topic 15. Formation of the religious studies paradigm.**

Subtopic: Prerequisites for the scientific study of religion. Accumulation of empirical and theoretical material on religion. Revision of the theological interpretation of religion. Theology and religious studies. The emergence of religious studies as a branch of scientific knowledge. Basic approaches to defining the concept of religion. Changes in religion as a cultural phenomenon. Religious studies: subject, range of issues, and their specifics.

### **Topic 16. Methodological problems of modern religious studies.**

Subtopics: Revision of early religious studies methods at the beginning of the 20th century. F. Max Müller on the most important methodological principles of religious studies. F. Max Müller on the comparative method in religious studies. From evolutionism to diffusionism and the theory of primal monotheism. Religious studies

analysis of the classification of religion. Methodology of classical phenomenology of religion. The emergence of the hermeneutic method in the study of religion.

**Topic 17.** Religious Studies in the Second Half of the 20th Century in Search of a New Paradigm. Subtopics: Main trends in religious studies in the second half of the 20th century. The crisis of classical phenomenology of religion. Neo-phenomenology of religion. Contemporary issues in the history of religion. Structuralism and religious studies. Ecology of religion.

**Topic 18.** Religious Studies Concepts on the Essential Characteristics of Religion. Subtopics: Philosophical concepts on the essential characteristics of religion. Pragmatism and radical empiricism of William James. R. Otto on the numinous essence of religion. M. Eliade on hierophany as a religious phenomenon. Psychoanalytic paradigm of the phenomenon of religion. Z. Freud on religion as sublimation of the unconscious and as a collective neurosis. C.G. Jung on the archetypal content of the psyche as the basis of religion. E. Fromm on the nature and essence of religion.

**Topic 19.** The Current State of Religious Studies. Subtopics: Problems and prospects for the development of contemporary religious studies. Stages of formation of religious studies. Definition of the subject and scientific status of religious studies. Meta-religious studies as the history and theory of religious studies. Cognitive religious studies. Comparative religious studies. The relationship between religious studies and theology. Confessional religious studies. Theoretical and empirical religious studies. Features of religious studies within the system of modern humanities. Theoretical problems of religious studies.

**Topic 20.** The Current State of Religious Studies in Kazakhstan. Subtopics: Features of the formation of religious studies in Kazakhstani society. Main stages of development of religious studies in contemporary Kazakhstan. Main research directions in religious studies. Key trends in the development of contemporary Kazakhstani religious studies. Traditions of Kazakhstani religious studies. Religious studies at the present stage.

Discipline: «State Legislation on Religion»

**Topic 1. State Legislation on Religion.**

Subtopics: Religion and its influence on the origin of law and the state. Typology of legal systems. Issues of freedom of conscience and religion. The beginning of religious reforms in the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK) in 1985–1990. Socio-economic and socio-political situation in the USSR. Political reforms in the Soviet Union. The Communist Party's stance on religion, atheist education, freedom of conscience, and state-confessional relations. The Council on Religious Affairs under the Council of Ministers of the USSR and its bodies in the union republics. All-Union legislation on freedom of conscience and religious associations and the practice of its implementation in the republics of the Soviet Union. The “religious question” in the program goals and

objectives of perestroika and glasnost. The religious situation in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Republican normative-legal acts regulating the status and activities of religious associations. The system of organization and implementation of state control over the compliance of religious associations with legislation on freedom of conscience. The initial stage of forming an independent religious policy in the Republic of Kazakhstan during perestroika and glasnost. Religious life in Kazakhstan: difficulties, problems of revival. Statistical data on the dynamics of quantitative parameters of major confessions in Kazakhstan.

## **Topic 2. Political and Legal Aspects of Addressing the Religious Question in the Republic of Kazakhstan.**

Subtopics: Transformation of state policy in the field of religion. Constituent elements of state policy in the religious sphere. Stages of development of the political-legal aspect of resolving the religious question in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Law "On Freedom of Religion and Religious Associations," adopted on January 15, 1992. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The Law "On Public Associations" of 1996. State structure as the Secretariat of the Council for Relations with Religious Associations. The Center for Research on Islamic Law at the Kazakh State Academy of Law (2000). The Center of Islamic Studies at the R. B. Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies under the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (2003).

## **Topic 3. Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations.**

Subtopics: The Law "On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Associations" (1992) concerning the concept and components of Kazakh legislation on freedom of conscience, freedom of religion, and religious associations. The state and religion. The state and religious associations. Religious associations and citizens of the Republic of Kazakhstan, foreigners, and stateless persons are equal before the law regardless of their attitude to religion. State (local) government bodies and religious organizations. State supervision and control over compliance with legislation on freedom of conscience: legal foundations and mechanisms of implementation. Religious studies expertise. The authorized body ensures the conduct of religious studies expertise. Religious activity in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

## **Topic 4. The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan.**

Subtopic: The Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan (1995) on freedom of conscience and freedom of religion; constitutional development in the 1990s and the evolution of principles and provisions on freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. The secular nature of the state; separation of religious associations from the state. Equality of human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of religious affiliation. Equality of religions and religious associations before the law and the state. Human and civil rights in the area of freedom of conscience and religion: general and

specific aspects. The concept of secularity and secular state. Principles of secularity. Legal regulation of the issues of freedom of conscience and religion in modern secular foreign states. Main models of relations between the state and religious associations in European countries. The secular nature of the state education system and public service. The right to alternative service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Division of powers and areas of competence regarding freedom of conscience between government authorities.

### **Topic 5. Law "Legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Religious Activities and Religious Associations."**

Subtopics: The Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Religious Activities and Religious Associations: structure, main provisions, and practical implementation. Circumstances and conditions under which the law was developed. Discussions in Kazakhstani society and abroad regarding the conceptual foundations and key provisions and norms of the draft law. Discussion and adoption of the law by the Government. Objectives and scope of regulation of the Law "On Religious Activities and Religious Associations." Legal regulation of the issue of freedom of conscience and religion in the Republic of Kazakhstan. The state and religious associations: principles of interaction. Main content of the chapters of the law: "Religious Associations," "Rights and Conditions of Activity of Religious Organizations," "Supervision and Control over Compliance with Legislation on Freedom of Conscience, Freedom of Religion, and Religious Associations." Religious associations in Kazakhstan and the procedure for their registration. Main normative legal acts of the Government of Kazakhstan, Ministry of Justice of Kazakhstan, Akimats, and Departments for Religious Affairs ensuring the implementation of the law. Procedure and conditions for re-registration of religious associations in accordance with the requirements of the law.

## **III List of References**

### **Main:**

1. Radugin, A.A. Introduction to Religious Studies: Theory, History and Contemporary Religions: Lecture Course. Moscow: Center, 2000. 240 p.
2. Yablokov, I.N. Religious Studies as a Field of Knowledge // Bulletin of the Russian Society of Religious Studies Teachers. 1:12-25, 2008.
3. Yablokov, I.N. Religious Studies: Textbook for Universities / I.N. Yablokov; edited by I.N. Yablokov. 2nd ed., revised and supplemented. Moscow: Yurayt Publishing, 2019. 371 p.
4. Yablokov, I.N. Sociology of Religion: Theoretical Aspects: Monograph. Moscow: MAX Press, 2014. 260 p.
5. Yablokov, I.N. Philosophy of Religion. Current Issues: Monograph. Moscow: RAGS Publishing, 2007. 248 p.



6. Religious Studies. Encyclopedic Dictionary. Moscow: Academic Project, 2006. 1256 p.
7. Garadzha, V.I. Sociology of Religion. Moscow: INFRA-M, 2005. 348 p.
8. Pivovarov, D.V. Philosophy of Religion. Yekaterinburg: Business Book, 2006. 640 p.
9. Krasnikov, A.N. Methodological Problems of Religious Studies: Textbook. Moscow: Academic Project, 2007. 239 p.
10. Eriksen, Thomas Hylland. What is Anthropology? Textbook, translated from English. Moscow: HSE, 2014. 238 p.
11. Baytenova, N.Zh., Kurmanalieva, A.D., Rysbekova, Sh.S., Beysenov, B.K., et al. Religious Studies. Almaty: Kazakh University, 2019. 477 p.
12. Baytenova, N.Zh., Kurmanalieva, A.D., Rysbekova, Sh.S., Beysenov, B.K., et al. Religious Studies. Encyclopedic Dictionary. Vol. 1-2. Almaty: Kazakh University, 2018. 495 p., 439 p.
13. Khizmetli, S. Harmful Sects and Missionary Activity in Central Asian Turkic Republics. Almaty, 2006.
14. Baytenova, N.Zh., Syrgakbayeva, A.S., Abzhalov, S.O., Dzhekebaeva, M.A. Religious-Philosophical Reflection in the Context of Culture. Almaty: Kazakh University, 2020. 201 p.
15. Kurmanalieva, A.D., Utebayeva, D.S., Askenuly, E. Missionary Methods: Textbook. 2019. 178 p.
16. Baytenova, N.Zh., Demeuova, A.A. Religion as a Sociocultural Phenomenon: Religious Studies Discourse. Almaty, 2015.
17. Utebayeva, D.S., Kantarbayeva, Zh.O., Aldzhanova, N.K., Duysenbayeva, A.K., Nazarbek, K., Asanova, S., Karybaeva, A.N. Religion and Youth in the Internet Space: Collective Monograph. Almaty: Kazakh University, 2021. 146 p.

#### **Additional:**

1. Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated December 18, 1995.
2. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan "On Religious Activity and Religious Associations", October 11, 2011, No. 483-IV RKZ.
3. Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 11, 2011 No. 483-IV "On Religious Activity and Religious Associations" (with amendments as of December 11, 2016).
4. Volodina, N.V. Features of Relations Between the State and Religious Associations in European Countries for Overcoming Confessional Conflicts // Legal Initiative, 2013, No. 3.
5. Podoprigora, R.A. State and Religious Organizations (Administrative and Legal Issues). Almaty: Publishing House "Arkaim", 2002. Electronic version: [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=35392260#pos=1733;-45](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=35392260#pos=1733;-45)
6. Zelenkova, M.Yu. State-Confessional Relations: Legal Aspect. Moscow, 2004.

7. Baytenova, N.Zh., Kurmanalieva, A.D., Rysbekova, Sh.S., Beysenov, B.K., et al. Religious Studies in Modern Kazakhstan: Formation and Development Paths. Almaty: Kazakh University, 2014. 138 p