

Accreditation Granted to UCA in Tajikistan



Dr. Kholiknazar Kuchashoev, Associate Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences (SAS) in Khorog, briefing the Accreditation Committee members in one of the laboratories on campus. The Dean of SAS, Dr. Maxim Khomyakov, is third from left.

The University of Central Asia in Khorog, Tajikistan, has been officially accredited by the Ministry of Education and Science, marking another major milestone in its history as a private, not for profit, secular university, serving the needs of mountain communities in Central Asia.

The Agency responsible for accreditation in Tajikistan, in a unanimous vote on 20th March 2021, granted attestation

and accreditation to UCA's undergraduate programme at the School of Arts and Sciences. The accreditation status is for a five-year period until March 2026, when a routine reappraisal will be conducted. Preparations for the national attestation and accreditation process began in April 2020, when the Khorog Campus team gathered and organized documents demonstrating its adherence to Tajikistan's higher education standards. The

attestation and accreditation committee appointed by the Agency started its review on 1st March 2021 and completed it by 14th March 2021.

In December 2020, a similar accreditation process for recognizing UCA's degrees was granted to UCA's undergraduate programme at the School of Arts and Sciences in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan.

SPCE to Provide Training for Tajikistan's Energy Sector



Amrikhon Rahimov, General Director of Pamir Energy (left) and Farrukhsho Fraidonov, Head of SPCE in Tajikistan, at the signing ceremony.

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Tajikistan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Pamir Energy Company and Badakhshan Energy Company, in which all parties agreed to engage the energy sector through training and professional development of electricians. The MOU, signed on 18th March 2021, is within the Local Impact project: A Transformative New Partnership in Asia and Africa under the Energy Plus component.

The project is being implemented by the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies, with support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF). SPCE is celebrating 15 years (2006-2021) of its founding this year.

UCA Students Author Books on Care for the Environment



L to R: "Keep the Environment Clean", "Plastic Everywhere", "Human's Impact on the Environment".

Three students from the University of Central Asia (UCA) are now authors of children's books approved by Tajikistan's Ministry of Education (MOE).

They are Anisa Abibulloeva (Class of 2021, Economics), author of "Keep the Environment Clean;" Nitasha Aslam (Class of 2023, Earth and Environmental Sciences), "Plastic Everywhere," and Sabrina Muzafari (Class of 2023, Earth and Environmental

Sciences), "Human's Impact on the Environment." Muzafari's book has been chosen for further development into Braille.

Their books are part of the "Read with Me Project" funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) mission in Tajikistan, with support from Chemonics International, a private international development firm. The students will receive remuneration for their work. One of

the goals of the project is to improve the reading skills of students in grades 1-4 by providing them with culturally appropriate reading materials.

The project supports the MOE of Tajikistan's aim reform its education sector as outlined in the 2012-2020 National Strategy for Education and Development, and the 2016-2020 Mid-Term Development Strategy of Tajikistan.

Call for Sessions and Papers: 7th Annual 'Life in Kyrgyzstan' Conference

UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA), the Leibniz Institute of Vegetable and Ornamental Crops (IGZ), and ISDC - International Security and Development Center have issued a call for proposals for sessions and individual research papers for the 7th Annual "Life in Kyrgyzstan" Conference, scheduled online October 26th to 28th 2021.



Proposals can be for entire sessions (comprising three to four papers) or individual research papers studying various aspects of socio-economic development in Kyrgyzstan or Central Asia. Researchers are also encouraged to present other micro and macroeconomic studies with relevant topics of research.

Empirical papers using panel micro data, especially panel data from the "Life in Kyrgyzstan Study," which is openly accessible at <http://idsc.iza.org/lik>, are welcome.

The topics of individual submissions or entire sessions may include, but are not



limited to: Living with Covid-19, employment, entrepreneurship and informality; migration and remittances; poverty and inequality; social protection and social safety nets; gender, children and intra-household decision making; education and health outcomes; nutrition and food security; demography, population dynamics; rural livelihoods and agricultural markets; Impacts of trade and integration reforms; public services and decentralization; social capital and social cohesion; peace-building, trust and expectations;

climate change and its impact; sustainable development goals; micro-level data, survey methodology and panel data collection; and methods of rigorous impact evaluation.

Please send your submission by June 12th 2021 to likconference2021@gmail.com.

For more information on the Life in Kyrgyzstan Study, please see www.li-feinkyrgyzstan.org or send a message to likconference2021@gmail.com.

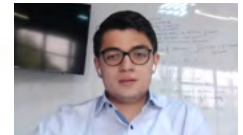
UCA Co-hosts Conference on Tajikistan's Path to Digital Transformation

The University of Central Asia is committed to playing its role in providing access to digital training and education to help Tajikistan fast track its digital transformation, said Prof. Dr. S. Sohail Naqvi, Rector of UCA, at an online conference on the Digital Economy in the Republic of Tajikistan held on April 23rd 2021. Representatives of the World Bank and the European Union also pledged to help Tajikistan in this area, even as they urged the government to enact reforms that would allow the country to move forward and become a more modern, sustainable, digitized economy.

“Digital transformation is becoming an essential catalyst for development in all sectors. It’s not just infrastructure investment, but much more about reforms to prioritize and push a digital agenda and create a vibrant startup ecosystem,” said Stefano Ellero, Head of Cooperation at the European Union in Tajikistan, in his opening remarks. Jan Peter Olters, Country Manager of the World Bank in Tajikistan, said in order to leapfrog into the digital future, Tajikistan must focus on an “institutional infrastructure environment,” including access to affordable high-speed Internet, which the Covid-pandemic has shown, plays a critical role in preventing service interruptions, online education,



Искусственный интеллект
& Leapfrog-развитие в
Таджикистане



Azizjon Azimi, founder and chair of the NGO, Tajrup, shares his organization's success in working with commercial banks to produce more accessible microloan products and services using AI technology.

and health services. He stressed the need to “level the playing field” and remove the regulatory environment.

Tajikistan’s Minister of Industry and New Technologies, Sherali Kabir, in his message said that Tajikistan is one of the countries in a “state of emergence” and has already taken some steps to develop its digital economy. He noted that the state and private sectors have implemented digital technologies in their activities, citing electronic payment of passenger services

in Dushanbe, and new financial services offered by commercial banks that are “accessible, convenient, safe and less costly.”

The conference was hosted by the University of Central Asia in collaboration with the World Bank, European Union, and StrategEast, in cooperation with the Ministry of Industry and New Technologies of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Watch the Online Conference here: <https://youtu.be/2opJHE3PAIc>

New Research Calls for an Increase in Public Funds for Education in Kyrgyzstan

The Kyrgyz government needs to increase its public spending on education and use funds efficiently and appropriately to meet goals of its strategic development plans. This was one of the recommendations of Education for the 21st Century in Kyrgyzstan: Current Realities and Roadmap for Systemic Reform, a research report presented by the University of Central Asia’s Education Improvement Programme (UCA-EIP) on April 6th 2021 (in English) and April 8th 2021 (in Russian).

The report found, among other shortcomings, that Kyrgyzstan’s secondary schools do not have enough teaching staff, lack adequate ICT infrastructure and resources, and even textbooks for students. While schools are housed in buildings with adequate heating and lighting, there are not enough classrooms, requiring classes to operate in two, sometimes three shifts.

The severe inadequacy of resources and infrastructure hinders instruction and student achievements, said the report.

The Education Improvement Programme engages 60 government secondary schools (grades 7-11) and a few selected private schools in the three Founding States of UCA: Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. The programme is designed to enhance students' academic achievements and opportunities for entry to high-quality universities nationally, regionally, and internationally, and to be work ready and equipped for responsible citizenship.

Working with education ministries, district education officers, school staff, and within the framework of the national curricula, EIP accents Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), Information Communication Technolo-



gy (ICT), and English. It aims to develop competencies such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration and communication, required for full participation in economic, social, and cultural life in the 21st Century.

View or download the report in [English](#), [Russian](#) and [Kyrgyz](#).

Executive Entrepreneurship Programme in Agribusiness Launched

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, launched its first Executive Entrepreneurship Programme in Agribusiness on April 19th 2021. Twenty-two small and medium enterprise (SME) agribusiness owners from Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are taking part in the advanced programme, which is being conducted over three cycles during the course of the year. The programme is designed to encourage business linkages, formal partnerships, and development of joint ventures, with a view to facilitating export promotion and access to new markets for SMEs in the region.



Prof. Dr. Sohail H. Naqvi, Rector of UCA, addressing the participants.

Prof. Dr. Sohail H. Naqvi, Rector of UCA welcomed participants at the opening of the programme and stressed the importance of entrepreneurship in developing the region's economy, as well as in creating international synergies for economy growth. He encouraged participants to keep on learning even while working to get better results and achieve their goals.

Quadratullah Dawood, from Khairullah Walizada Trading Company, Afghanistan,

an exporter of natural dry fruits, said he was looking forward to the training because it will help him network and learn about the business policies of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. "It would be a great experience for exchanging knowledge, learning new theories and tools for businesses and expanding our businesses to these countries in the future." The executive programme in Agribusiness is one of four sectors being implemented under the Ac-

celerate Prosperity (AP) Central and South Asia project, funded by the European Union. The sector was chosen for having the most potential for growth, increased exports, enhanced revenue streams, and job creation. Participating entrepreneurs will have access to AP's acceleration facilities across the region, and the networking opportunities that these provide to engage with other participants, as well as with external partners and stakeholders.

Consultations Refine Youth Empowerment Project in Naryn

Following consultations with Naryn stakeholders, a concept note for the "Youth's Economic Empowerment and Development in Naryn" project proposal prepared by the School for Professional and Continuing Education's Naryn Centre for Entrepreneurship (SPCE-NCE) and the Aga Khan Foundation-Kyrgyzstan (AKF-KG) has been refined, finalized, and submitted to the European Commission.

On March 9th 2021, representatives of SPCE-NCE, AKF-KG, and the Mountain Societies Development Support Program (MSDSP) held a series of meetings with local entrepreneurs, members of marginalized youth organizations, and the "Demilgeluu Jashtar" project about the grant application. The proposal seeks to empower youth in contributing to the development of Naryn Oblast's economy. Under the project, SPCE-NCE will launch a business startup program, while MSDSP will link short-term training and business development providers with established young



Local entrepreneurs from Naryn listen intently to a presentation about the proposed Youth Development project.

entrepreneurs and youth ages 18-28 who wish to reorient or grow their careers.

Meanwhile, Jomart Hudaibergenov, NCE manager, made a presentation about NCE activities, including its practical programs on Entrepreneurship and Business Incubation for aspiring entrepreneurs. NCE programs address the challenges and needs of rural entrepreneurship in local

communities, particularly youth, to support regional economic development and job creation. They help spur the National Development Strategy of the Kyrgyz Republic (2018-2040), Youth Economic Development Strategy of Naryn Oblast (2019-2023) and build on longstanding commitment of the UCA and Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) to support the development of Naryn Oblast.

Field Trip to Greenhouse Inspires SPCE Business Students

A year after the lockdown imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, SPCE in Naryn welcomed its first group of students for the Business Plan Development program for 2021.

On April 6th 2021, students visited Kalyikul Ysyraliev's greenhouse business, which includes a poultry farm, rabbits and other livestock. The greenhouse also grows several varieties of roses and other flowers, as well as different trees, grapes, cucumbers, and other vegetables.

While not all students are involved in farming, most of them said it was still good to learn about planning, organizing, and running a business. As he gave a tour of his farm, Mr. Ysyraliev shared his experiences and insights on risk-taking in business. He



Kalyikul Ysyraliev explaining the finer points of growing income producing products.

stressed the importance of hard work and dedication in growing a business. The students left the tour of the greenhouse feeling inspired.

Naryn Librarians Share Ideas on Improving Service During Pandemic

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan, held a roundtable on April 20th 2021 with 10 librarians from four branches in town to exchange experiences and share ideas on how to improve the quality of service in libraries, especially during the pandemic.

Since most educational institutions have moved into lockdown to prevent the spread of Covid-19, many people are relying on libraries for resources and support. SPCE librarian Aigul Omuralieva, and Samarat Mambetajieva, Manager of Academic Affairs, gave a presentation on SPCE's 15th Anniversary academic activities, courses, programmes, and library projects. It was later agreed that SPCE and



Samarat Mambetajieva, top right, explaining SPCE's programmes to Naryn librarians.

town libraries would work on a plan for joint activities that would cater to university students, adults, and parents.

Kyrgyz Teachers Take Part in Media Literacy Course

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education is celebrating a new cohort of facilitators and teachers using the Media Literacy MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) curriculum. On April 20th 2021, English Language Coordinator, Benjamin Taylor, and Regional English Language Office (RELO) Coordinator, Assem Bekimova, joined 30 participants from Naryn, Karakol and Osh, in Kyrgyzstan at the inaugural event. The participants are secondary and post-secondary teachers who have been chosen by the University of Central Asia under a grant from RELO.

Weekly trainings with their Kazakh counterparts began April 26th 2021.

This is Phase II of the UCA-held Media Literacy MOOC project; the first phase focused on participants from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, and the surrounding areas. The third phase will involve facilitators and participants from Tajikistan.

Plans to Develop Strategic Tourism Program for Naryn



Representatives of the Kyrgyz Republic held the first meeting of the Regional Council for Tourism Development at UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education learning centre in Naryn on 8th April 2021 to discuss the challenges and opportunities of tourism development in Naryn Oblast.

Isabek Abdygaziev, head of Char Travel Resort, Usenbek Ismailov, head of Usenbak Resort, Bekten Kadyrov, representative of Distance Jungal Company, Talant Niyazbekov, head of Tourist Information Center, and Gulira Kenzhekaraeva, head of SBT Tourism Company participated in the event.

An Association and a special working group consisting of representatives from each district and the staff of the Governor's Office was established to develop a strategic tourism program.

SPCE Students Learn About Financial Literacy During Global Money Week

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) learning centres in Afghanistan and Tajikistan joined the Global Money Week (GMW) campaign March 22-28, 2021.

In Shughnan, SPCE in coordination with the Aga Khan Foundation-Afghanistan and the Shughnan Teacher Training College hosted a workshop on financial literacy. Trainers Syed Ilyas Shahir and Farida Sarwari raised awareness on the importance of savings and budgeting. More than 100 people (50% of girls) took part in the workshop. Similar SPCE workshops were held in Darwaz and Faizabad in Afghanistan, and Bokhtar in Tajikistan.

GMW is an annual global awareness-raising campaign to help youth and children become financially aware and acquire knowledge and behaviours necessary to make sound financial decisions in order to achieve financial well-being and financial resilience. This year's theme was "Take care of yourself, take care of your money."

The campaign started in 2012 and has reached over 40 million children and youth in 175 countries.



UCA Expands CATs Programme to Russia

The University of Central Asia has achieved a significant milestone with the expansion of the Cambridge Assessment Testing system (CATs) English Language Programme in Russia.

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Tajikistan launched the program in collaboration with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in Russia.

Recruitment for the course is carried out once a month, and currently 30 students are studying in Moscow. AKDN representative in Moscow, Shahlo Elnazarova, and volunteers administer the exam and assist applicants in the registration process.



An English language class in session.

GBAO Women Entrepreneurs Receive Financial Training at SPCE



Attendees proudly display their Certificates of Participation.

UCA's School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) in Khorog, Tajikistan recently conducted a two-day training on "Financial Planning and Analysis" for women entrepreneurs leading the Early Childhood Development Centres in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBAO).

Participants gained basic knowledge on costing, simple methods of managing cost, calculating prices of educational services, and the role of planning and managing costs.

The learning materials were developed by SPCE Instructor Sitora Mirzoeva, and included presentations, group discussions, case studies and practice. The training, held in March, was organised at the initiative of the Mountain Societies Development Support Programme (MSDSP), which sought to provide technical assistance based on the needs of ECDs. It is part of the "Local Impact: A Transformative New Partnership in Asia and Africa" project funded by the US Agency for International Development and the Aga Khan Foundation.

UCA Publication: Free Download



Characteristics and Profitability of Livestock-based Farming Systems in At-Bashy, Naryn Oblast

Farming in mountainous areas is practiced primarily by crop and livestock based small scale farmers. Prevailing agricultural production systems of these farms focus on animal husbandry, which depend on a mix of crop and pasture land around settlements and higher elevation summer pastures. Insufficient production of winter feed and the degradation of pastures around villages due to over-stocking, especially in early spring, results in low fattening, decreased health of livestock, and subsequent low profitability from animal husbandry. The publication is available for free download in [English](#) and [Kyrgyz](#) languages.

UCA Forges New Partnership with Tomsk State University

The University of Central Asia (UCA) and Tomsk State University (TSU) in Russia have signed a collaboration agreement that would send UCA's most talented bachelor's degree graduates to the 143-year-old classical university with a focus on innovation.

Prof. Dr. Syed Sohail Hussain Naqvi, Rector of UCA, said that with the first group of UCA undergraduate students graduating next month, many are looking for opportunities for further study. UCA students will likely enroll in graduate programs at the Faculty of Technology Innovation, and social and humanities specialties, and will also be interested in working on expeditions and research activities.

TSU Rector Eduard Galazhinsky noted that thousands of students from Central Asia have been educated at TSU. "We are glad that your university has brought a new culture, new international standards, and a highly professional attitude



to education in this region. For us, the development of international collaborations is a priority."

Tomsk State University has received many awards for its achievements in the establishment and development of science, education, and culture. In 1998, by Presidential decree, TSU was included in the State Code of Particularly Valuable Objects of Cultural Heritage of the Peoples of the Russian Federation.

UCA Helps Improve Faculty Skills at Khorog State University

Every Friday afternoon, at the end of his workday at the University of Central Asia's Department of Earth and Environment Sciences in Khorog, Tajikistan, Dr. Mohssen Moazzen doesn't just kick back and relax. Instead, he rushes over to Khorog State University (KSU), where he delivers workshop sessions for its Geology Department faculty and students as part of UCA's Mountain University Partnership (MUP).

The sessions for KSU's Geology Department faculty members include Upgrading Geology Laboratories, Faculty Capacity Development through Certificate programmes in Geology, Curriculum Development, Equipment Provision and improving Teaching Methods and Practical Experience.

With the aim of building professional competence by enhancing the faculty members' practical skills, UCA's Mountain University Partnership program has established four types of Geology laboratories at KSU – Laboratory of Petrography and Mineralogy, Grinding and Stone Processing Workshop, Innovative Laboratory of Geoinformatics, and Laboratory of Mineral deposits and Heavy Mineral Concentrate Analysis. In addition, MUP has donated over 400 books in Geology.

Dr. Moazzen has delivered 23 sessions, covering topics such as fundamentals of silicate mineralogy, classification of silicates, petrological aspects of formation of silicate minerals in igneous and metamorphic rocks, and distinguishing rock

textures and mineral species under the microscope.





Expressing his gratitude for Dr. Moazzen's sessions, Habib Nazriev, Head of KSU's Geology Department, said that Dr. Moazzen's sessions have helped fill faculty development gaps and other shortcomings of the microscopy and rock preparation laboratories.







Dr. Mohssen Moazzen, Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences at the School of Arts and Sciences, University of Central Asia.

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