



UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA

University of Central Asia in Kazakhstan



KAZAKHSTAN ♦ KYRGYZSTAN ♦ TAJIKISTAN

University Vision

The mission of the University of Central Asia (UCA) is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain communities, by offering an internationally recognised standard of higher education and enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future.

Building human capital, advancing knowledge, and shaping resilient futures. Kazakhstan is at a pivotal moment — navigating economic diversification, climate transition, and the demands of a rapidly evolving knowledge economy. The University, established through an international treaty and grounded in a mission to serve mountain societies, is uniquely positioned to support this transformation.

Through education, applied research, and strategic partnerships, UCA is strengthening Kazakhstan's human capital, contributing to national policy dialogue, and advancing solutions to regional challenges. As UCA expands its presence in the country, it is increasingly focused on scaling impact, deepening institutional partnerships, and supporting the next generation of leaders.

UCA School of Professional and Continuing Education

UCA has maintained a meaningful presence in Kazakhstan through its School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE), operating a learning centre in Tekeli since 2006. Over nearly two decades, cumulative enrolment in Kazakhstan has reached over 23,001 course participants representing 8% of SPCE's total network enrolment across four countries, with female participation at 73%.

In 2024, SPCE Tekeli expanded its course offerings, including a new Mobilography programme, and launched career planning sessions, teacher workshops, and gender equity events, reaching over 150 learners through new outreach initiatives.

In 2025, SPCE Tekeli developed Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Pedagogical Practice programme aligned with Kazakhstan's national AI development framework for 2024-2029. In total, 39 teachers from seven Tekeli schools learned AI fundamentals and practical

approaches to personalising learning, including the use of generative tools such as ChatGPT, MagicSchool, and TurboScribe. In addition, in collaboration with the Caravan of Knowledge a non-profit organisation, SPCE Tekeli delivered the course in online format to 100 schoolteachers from all over Kazakhstan. The centre also developed five new courses including Computer Essentials and National Testing preparation courses in History of Kazakhstan and Mathematical Literacy and signed an MOU with the Tekeli City Education Department to support local education improvement.

SPCE Tekeli is actively promoting the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) across Kazakhstan, as SPCE is currently the only authorised ICDL testing centre in the country. This is an important part of SPCE's contribution to advancing digital literacy and internationally recognised certification nationwide.



UCA undergraduate students

UCA Graduate School of Development

The **Graduate School of Development (GSD)** is UCA's hub for applied research, policy engagement, and community-oriented programming across Central Asia. Through five constituent units: the **Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA)**, the **Mountain Societies Research Institute (MSRI)**, the **Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (CHHU)**, and the **Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP)**, GSD addresses critical challenges in climate resilience, governance, cultural preservation, and civic engagement in Kazakhstan.

In 2025 alone, GSD units collectively produced more than 25 peer-reviewed publications, convened major regional and international forums, and deepened partnerships with the World Bank, United Nations Development Programme, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) the European Union, and leading universities worldwide.

Institute of Public Policy and Administration

IPPA has engaged Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian region through research, events, and partnerships. Its publications and activities have addressed topics including youth activism, historical narratives, energy transition, urban policy and the development of

mining towns, decarbonisation of transport, and urban resilience planning. Together with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development International Transport Forum, IPPA co-organised the SIPA Summer School in Astana, at the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to strengthen regional knowledge exchange on aligning infrastructure, energy, and industry investments with climate and sustainable development goals.

IPPA researchers presented at a wide range of the Nazarbayev University (NU) events. In April 2025, in partnership with the NU, IPPA co-organised the roundtable “Energy Transition in Kazakhstan: From Nation to Regional Policy Actions,” focused on just transition, economic diversification, and linking national energy transition strategies with regional policy action.

In partnership with the CERGE-EI Foundation, IPPA facilitates live-streamed courses aimed at strengthening economic knowledge. Since 2021, 11 learners from Kazakhstan passed 13 courses, including Behavioral Economics, Climate Change Economics, Development Economics, Economics of Energy, Education Economics, Environmental Economics, Financial Markets, Gender Economics, and Introduction to Data Science.

Mountain Societies Research Institute

MSRI has contributed to regional applied research with direct relevance to Kazakhstan's mountain and climate contexts. In 2024, UCA hosted an International Workshop on Glaciers of Central Asia, bringing together researchers from Kazakhstan, Russia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, China, and Tajikistan. In 2025, MSRI produced ten research outputs including eight peer-reviewed journal articles, and an MSRI researcher was featured in an international climate documentary examining glacier loss across the region.

Aga Khan Humanities Project

AKHP conducted workshops in Almaty as part of its regional rollout of the Teachers' Guide for the anthology Women in Central Asia, engaging students and educators from institutions across three countries.

Engagements and Events

UCA has been an active contributor to Kazakhstan's climate and sustainability agenda through research, convening, and institutional partnerships.

At COP29, hosted by the Kazakhstan Pavilion, UCA presented research on transport decarbonisation pathways in Central Asia, highlighted its role as

a regional knowledge hub under the Sustainable Infrastructure Programme in Asia, funded by the German government, and advocated for climate-resilient urban and infrastructure planning at national and sub-national levels.

In October 2025, UCA co-organised the conference "Climate Change: Forecasting Water, Warming, and Health" with the Center for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction and Green Academy, bringing together researchers and experts from leading Kazakhstani and international institutions. In March 2026, UCA participated in a scoping meeting on research priorities for the Water Tower Partnership, organised by Kazakhstan's Ministry of Science and Higher Education and the Central Asian Regional Glaciological Centre (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Category 2).

UCA has also deepened its academic partnerships in Kazakhstan, signing an Memorandum of Understanding with Zhetysu University and co-organising a roundtable with Nazarbayev University on public perceptions of the energy transition. At the local level, SPCE Tekeli hosted a workshop on Environmental, Social, and Governance and data analysis, while IPPA engaged 43 school students in a post-COP29 workshop on sustainability and resilience in Tekeli.

Central Asia Faculty Development Programme

Through its Central Asia Faculty Development Programme, UCA has supported nine kazakh scholars — eight of them women — in pursuing postgraduate degrees at leading universities including the University of Cambridge, Cornell University, Simon Fraser University, Carleton University, the University of Exeter, and the Free University of Berlin. Several have returned to contribute directly to UCA and the AKDN, while others hold senior academic and leadership positions at institutions including Nazarbayev University, the University of Cambridge, and Kazakh-

German University. Notable alumni include Anel Kulakhmetova (PhD in Development Studies), who now serves as Provost at inVision U in Kazakhstan; Diana Kudaibergenova (PhD in Sociology), who became a Lecturer in Political Sociology at the University of Cambridge; Madina Junussova (PhD in Public Policy), who serves as Senior Research Fellow at UCA's Institute of Public Policy and Administration, and Aigerim Askarova (MA from Cambridge) works as Research Associate at the Civil Societies Initiative.

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