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Kazakhstan


Principles and general objectives of education

According to Article 30 of the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan, approved in 1995, citizens have the right to free comprehensive secondary education in State educational institutions. Citizens also have the right to free higher education in State higher education institutions on a competitive basis.

The Law on Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, adopted in 1992, established the new principles and objectives of education. In accordance with Article 3, the basic principles of education in the country are the following: equality of citizens in their right to receive education; diversification of educational institutions in terms of ownership, direction of activities, forms of education and training; continuity in the process of education; scientific and secular character, and ecological orientation of education in State educational institutions; democracy in the management of the education system.

The Law of 1992 determines the common purposes and tasks of education as follows: “the main task of the education system is to create the necessary conditions for bringing up and developing individuals on the basis of national and common human values, and of scientific and practical achievements.” The main objectives of the education system are:

- to develop the mental and physical abilities of individuals, to lay solid foundations of morality and a healthy way of life, to cultivate their intellect providing conditions for their further development;
- to foster civic awareness and the understanding of individual rights and duties with regards to the family, the society and the State;
- to develop the creative abilities of individuals and their aesthetic education;
- to create the necessary conditions for the study of culture, customs and traditions of Kazakhstan;
- to provide all citizens with opportunities for general education and professional training.

Current educational priorities and concerns

In becoming an independent state, the Republic of Kazakhstan determined new priorities for development and started the implementation of profound social, political and economic reforms. The Constitution of 1995 lays down the bases of the new nationhood and specifies the main characteristics of the new political and economic system as follows: democracy, free choice, pluralism of ideas and openness.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
concerning the rights and freedom of individuals. A new legislative framework is being established, and new executive and legal bodies are being created.

The economy is being reoriented from a centrally-planned system to a free market system. The privatization of State enterprises is being carried out and many private joint ventures have been formed. On the other hand, since 1992 the country has entered a period of economic recession aggravated by the global financial crisis, which has had negative effects in the social sphere and in particular on the education system. For example, due to budget reductions the number of educational institutions, especially pre-school institutions, has decreased.

In order to overcome difficulties, the Ministry of Health, Education and Sports (now the Ministry of Education and Science) adopted a number of measures. The education system was restructured, the educational programmes were transformed, and the optimization of the network of higher, general secondary and technical-professional education institutions was launched. The basic general curriculum for comprehensive schools has been defined and adopted, and the training of staff in the different specialties at the higher and secondary education levels has been revised. New textbooks for comprehensive schools are being published. In addition, the Information Technology Programme for secondary schools has been approved and has been implemented. According to this Programme, all secondary schools of Kazakhstan had to be equipped with computers within the period 1997-2002. During the 1998/99 academic year, computers were provided to 1,562 schools, of which 917 were in rural areas. According to the Ministry of Education., by 2003 all schools had already been equipped with computers and on average there was one computer for 57 students. Moreover, in 2003, some 1,821 schools (of which 893 in rural areas), were connected to Internet. In 2001, the programme also started to develop electronic learning materials and multimedia programmes for the upper grades of secondary school. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

The on-going educational reform contains a number of measures with the purpose of changing the administrative, economic, legal, and structural and information components of the education system. Education reforms aim at: further orientating the education system to the demands of the free market economy, democratic society and individuals; preparing new educational standards, curricula and textbooks in accordance with international educational quality standards; decentralizing educational administration; introducing new information technologies in education and administration; developing different sources of educational funding.

The State Programme for Developing Education in the Republic of Kazakhstan 2005-2010 (Plan 2010, approved in October 2004) states that all children should have an equal start to education and stresses the importance of increasing access to preschool education by a gradual transition to compulsory preschool education starting from age 3+. One of the major aims of the Plan 2010 is to ensure universal access to and high quality of secondary education, as access is unequal and attendance is not universal at the (compulsory) basic and secondary levels. Another aim is the change of curriculum towards an outcomes-oriented model, which means that the new system will be based on a normative framework of expected outcomes, which substantially differs from the present content regulation, which is input-based. The competencies will be defined at three levels (general, subject-area, and subject-
based outcomes). Along with this change, content regulation will concentrate more on general competencies and nine areas of study (language and literature, human studies, social studies, mathematics, informatics, science, arts, technology, and physical education) rather than a much bigger number of subjects. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

**Laws and other basic regulations concerning education**

Since independence, the Republic of Kazakhstan is creating the new legal base of the education system. The two main laws regulating education in the country are the *Law on Education* of 7 July 1992 and the *Law on Higher Education* of 1993. These laws determine the State educational policy, the objectives and principles of education, the administrative structure, and the system of private schools. They also ratify the democratic character of the education system and the administrative and financial decentralization of educational institutions, and they guarantee the autonomy of academic institutions, colleges and secondary schools.

The Law on Education provides for the following levels of education: pre-school, secondary, vocational and technical secondary, higher and post-graduate education. Secondary education consists of three stages: elementary (four-year programme), basic secondary (five years) and senior secondary (two years). This law regulates the public relations in the sphere of education, defines the basic principles of national policy-making in this area and aims at ensuring protection of the constitutional right of citizens to education. According to Article 23, “pre-school education for 5(6)-year-olds shall be mandatory and it shall be provided in the family, preschool organizations or schools under a general educational programme. In state educational organizations, such education shall be free”. The Law also introduced a new model of higher professional education, consisting of three levels: basic higher education (four-year bachelor’s degree programmes), four-year specialized higher education courses, and higher scientific education (two-year master's degree programmes).

New regulations have been adopted in accordance with the two above-mentioned laws, including the State standards for higher education. The *Regulations for organizing the activities of pre-school organizations* (Order of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 708) were approved on 10 July 2000. Early childhood orphanages are subject to the *Rules for Early Childhood Orphanages’ Activities* and *Rules for Children’s Admission and Dismissal from Early Childhood Orphanages* of 2000.

On 7 July 1999 the *new Law on Education* was adopted. The *Resolution of the Government No. 1762* on the Issues of Children’s Compulsory Pre-primary Preparation states that one-year pre-primary education can be set up in general secondary schools (as pre-primary classes) or in pre-school organizations (as pre-primary groups).
Administration and management of the education system

The central executive body responsible for the management of the education system is the Ministry of Education and Science (MES). The Ministry defines and executes state policy in the field of education, culture and public health, tourism and sports. Strategic planning and funding of the education system, including the preparation of draft education budgets, are under the supervision of the Ministry.

In accordance with the Law on Education, the functions of the MES include: defining and executing the State educational policy; drafting regulations concerning State funding for education; drafting and adopting State educational standards, curricula and syllabi; preparing State orders concerning the training of specialists; providing assistance in the organization of the educational process in the Kazakh language; and establishing international agreements on educational issues.

The Ministry also supervises educational institutions funded from the regional budgets and private educational institutions in accordance with current legislation. Regional educational authorities are under the Ministry’s supervision.

The MES consists of several Committees and two Departments (Administration and Finance). The Committees are directly in charge of the corresponding branches. The Committee for Education is responsible for the management of the education system, the proposals on the financing of educational institutions from the State and the regional budgets, the educational standards and programmes, and the appointment of the heads of higher schools.

There are fourteen oblast (provinces) in Kazakhstan, further divided into a number of districts. In each oblast and district there is the Department of Education formed by the regional authorities functioning as a regional board of management in the sphere of education. These departments execute the national strategy in the field of education at the regional level and determine the amount of funds allocated to education from the regional budgets.

Regional education boards are responsible for: the establishment, organization and management of educational institutions (kindergartens, secondary schools, technical-professional schools, colleges) at the local level, and the provision of material and technical resources; the appointment of the heads of educational institutions; financing of educational institutions from the regional budget; enforcing compulsory secondary education; executing the Information Technology Programme of secondary schools.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is in charge of the rehabilitation of children with disabilities under the Law on Social Protection of Invalids. It also finances and administers support programmes for low-income families under the Law on State Targeted Social Support of 2001. The Ministry of Health develops a policy of basic health services to be provided to children and their mothers, undertakes initiatives for early detection of risk groups in cooperation with oblast education departments, and manages the system of early childhood orphanages.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
No coordination mechanism for early childhood exists at the national level. (Penn, 2004; UNESCO, 2005).

Article 36 of the 1992 Law on Education guarantees the principle of self-government of educational institutions. The supreme organ of educational establishments is the Council. The organization of the educational process in technical-professional schools and colleges is under the responsibility of the Academic Board.

Universities, colleges and schools can define their own curriculum within the framework of State educational standards. With the approval of the Committee for Education, universities may also define the programme for students’ admission.

The Kazakh Academy of Education is the leading research organization in the field of pedagogy, methodology and assessment of the educational process. There are two institutes within the Academy: the Institute of Higher Education and the Institute of Secondary Education.

Other relevant bodies include the Republican Scientific and Methodological Centre for State Educational Standards and Pedagogical Tests, the Republican Scientific and Methodological Centre for the Computerization of Education, and the Republican Institute for Further Qualification of Educational Staff.
**Structure and organization of the education system**

**Kazakhstan: structure of the education system**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Postgraduate education</th>
<th>Higher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Doctoral courses: Universities, academies, scientific and research institutions (3-year course)</td>
<td>Master’s degree: Universities, academies (2-year programmes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate Courses: Universities, academies, scientific and research institutions (3-year course)</td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bachelor's degree: Universities (4-year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>17-18</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma of specialist: Universities, academies, institutes (4-5 year programmes)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Pre-school education**

Children attend kindergarten between the ages of 1 and 6. Until 1993, pre-school education in kindergartens run by municipal education departments and employers (State enterprises and agencies) was provided free of charge. According to Article 23 of Law on Education, pre-school education for 5(6)-year-olds shall be mandatory.

**Primary education**

Elementary education lasts four years and is the first stage of compulsory education. It is possible to enter school at the age of 6 by passing entrance tests, but the majority of children enrol at the age of 7.
**Secondary education**

Secondary education consists of two levels: basic (five years’ duration) and senior secondary (two years’ duration). Pupils can enter vocational schools after completing basic secondary (three years of study) or complete secondary (from six months to one and a half years of study). Secondary (basic) education is compulsory.

After completing (full) secondary education, students may continue their education in higher education institutes and universities, or in colleges offering specialized secondary education (two- to three-year courses). Four years of study are normally required to receive a bachelor’s degree (first level), and a master’s degree requires one to two years of additional study (second level). Technical universities, academies and institutes normally offer four- or five-year courses leading to the Diploma of Specialist, and in medical universities the duration of studies is five years or more. Postgraduate studies leading to the qualification of Candidate of Science normally last three years. The diploma of Doctor of Science is awarded after completion of a thesis concerned with original research.

The school year begins in September and ends in May at the primary level (thirty-three working weeks), and in June at the secondary level (thirty-four working weeks).

**The financing of education**

Education is financed by the government, regional authorities and private sponsors. In 1997, funds allocated to education represented 3.44% of GDP.

State higher education institutions are financed from the State budget, while the majority of colleges, technical training institutions and kindergartens are funded by regional authorities. According to the World Bank, total public expenditure in education represented 2.3% of GDP in 2005.

A bulk of the financing is provided by regional (oblast) budgets, which are considered part of state financing for education. In 2000, 86.5% of the financing of secondary education was from regional budgets, and this level has been largely sustained in the following years, e.g. 83.3% in 2001; 88% in 2002; and 86% in 2003. The dynamics of regional financing for education from 2000 to 2003 is characterized by growing percentages in most regions. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

**The educational process**

**Pre-primary education**

Pre-school education caters to children aged 1-7. The main objectives at this level as defined by the Ministry of Education in 2003 are to: develop mental and physical abilities; strengthen children’s health and promote the values of a healthy lifestyle; ensure harmonious personality development and prepare children for school. Teaching activities are mainly focused on reading, writing, numeracy, drawing and
music. Many kindergartens also offer early exposure to foreign languages. Pre-school education is mainly funded by the local authorities.

At independence in 1991, Kazakhstan had the best preschool provision of any Central Asian Republic, covering approximately 50% of children under the age of 7. There were 8,743 kindergartens, over half of which were in rural areas. Much of this provision was workplace based. As factories and collective farms closed, so did the services they provided. The pre-school institutions network run by State enterprises and agencies has been practically destroyed, and the number of pre-schools abruptly decreased because of the economic crisis. Seven out of eight kindergartens closed, the majority in rural areas. The proportion of children covered fell to 11% per cent in 1998. In recent years, the country’s pre-school network is being restored. At beginning of the 1999/2000 school year there were 1,158 pre-school institutions in the Republic with a total enrolment of 124,800 children. According to the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, in 2004 there were 268,596 children enrolled in pre-primary education with 25,229 teachers (mainly women); the gross enrolment ratio was 31%. In 1997, the national programmes for kindergartens Balbobek and Bringing up and educating pre-school children in the family and in kindergartens were launched.

The Ministry of Education is the main provider of formal early childhood services. A small but growing number of private early childhood services are in operation. They are either formal (e.g., full-time and part-time nurseries, centres for children aged 1+ to 3+, preschool groups for children aged 1+ to 6+/7+ in kindergarten schools, pre-primary education classes in secondary schools for children aged 5+ to 6+) or informal (e.g., babysitters, nanny services). The MOES monitors the former but does not finance them.

One-year pre-primary education for children aged 5+/6+ became free and compulsory in November 1999 through the Resolution of the Government on the Issues of Children’s Compulsory Pre-primary Preparation (No. 1762). The Resolution states that one-year pre-primary education can be set up in general secondary schools (as pre-primary classes or “PPE Classes”) or in pre-school organizations (as pre-primary groups or “PPE Groups”). Both PPE Classes and PPE Groups are free. The half-day PPE Classes were devised to target rural children who did not go to kindergartens and did not have the opportunity to prepare for formal schooling. The enrolment rate of rural children in PPE Classes grew steadily from 48.4% in 2001 to 56.7% in 2004. (Penn, 2004; UNESCO, 2005).

### Primary education

Primary education is compulsory and lasts four years. The main objectives of primary education are to teach children to read and write, to develop basic skills in numeracy and simple arithmetical operations, and to teach the elementary basis of social and natural disciplines.

The basic subjects at the primary level are the following: Kazakh (for Kazakh schools) or Russian language, mathematics, nature and society, physical training, music and fine arts. The lesson timetable for primary education is shown in the table below:
Schools have the right to define their own programmes as far as additional and optional lessons are concerned.

Upon completion of primary education, pupils are admitted to Grade V. In some schools there are examinations in Kazakh or Russian language and mathematics.

**Secondary education**

The main purposes of secondary education are: to lay down a common cultural and scientific basis through the compulsory general education programmes; to facilitate the social adaptation of students to life in the community; to develop the sense of citizenship and love of Motherland; and to provide the national community with qualified workers and specialists.

Secondary education consists of two stages: basic (Grades V-IX) and senior secondary (Grades X-XI). Secondary (basic) education is compulsory.

All secondary schools follow the Basic Education Plan approved by the Ministry of Education and Science with a few modifications. The lesson timetable for general secondary education is shown below:

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**Primary education: weekly lesson timetable (1998)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of weekly periods in each grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First language (Kazakh or Russian)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second language (Russian or Kazakh)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature and society</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine arts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical training</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicraft</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional lessons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total weekly periods</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Optional lessons</strong></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Basic education plan and its variants for day-time secondary schools. Each teaching period lasts 45 minutes.
New State educational standards have been adopted in 2002. In their overall approach, they still follow the former prescriptive model of content regulation, which defines items of knowledge, skills, and capacities to be obtained in a large number of scientific domains (13-23 study subjects, depending on the level of secondary education).

In 2004/05 there were 8,221 schools in Kazakhstan, of which 6,080 (74%) were in rural areas. The rural schools were attended by 47% of the overall number of students. Among the rural schools, there were 1,158 primary schools (14% of the overall number of schools), 1,154 basic schools (Grades I-IX, 7% of the total number of schools) and 3,741 secondary schools (45.5% of the total). There were only 12 schools for children with special needs and 24 schools with curricular emphasis on learning certain subjects in rural areas. Secondary education is provided in five main languages of instruction: Kazakh, Russian, Uigur, Uzbek, and Tajik. As the schools with Kazakh and Russian as languages of instruction are spread evenly throughout the country, schools with Uigur, Uzbek, and Tajik as languages of instruction are situated in the regions where these languages are mother tongues of a considerable percentage of students. The number of schools with Kazakh as the language of instruction has increased from 44.3% in 2000 to 45.9% in 2003, while the number of schools where Russian is the only language of instruction has decreased from 29.4% to 26.8%. This is connected to the policies supporting the development of Kazakh as the state language. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).
The higher stage of secondary education also includes vocational schools (VC), where students besides academic secondary education can obtain a professional diploma in different specialties. Graduates from basic and secondary schools are accepted in VCs. The number of VCs in 1997 was 307, with more than 112,000 students enrolled. The training of qualified workers is carried out in more than 300 professions. Graduates from basic secondary schools (Grade IX) normally follow a three-year programme of training, while those who completed (full) secondary education (Grade XI) follow a programme lasting six months to one and a half years.

There is a developed system of specialized secondary schools, including colleges. The primary goal of specialized secondary education is the training of skilled workers. In 1998, the number of specialized secondary schools and colleges was 243, of which 172 were State-owned. The training of specialists was carried out in 160 fields.

Colleges offer two- to three-year programmes mainly for Grade XI graduates and train specialists according to the new State standards and educational plans, prepared on the basis of the new Classification of secondary specialized education specialties introduced in 1996. This Classification stipulates the training of specialists of broad profile in 261 specialties.

Students’ assessment is carried out according to the following marks: 5 (excellent), 4 (good), 3 (satisfactory), and 2 (unsatisfactory). Along with the traditional assessment methods, standardized tests are being introduced. State examinations include four to five subjects, both compulsory and of the student’s choice. The list of compulsory subjects is adopted by the Committee for Education and includes mother tongue (Russian and Kazakh) and mathematics.

State standards for specialized secondary education and new educational plans are prepared taking into account current demands. The duration of courses is being reduced, and up-to-date subjects are being introduced. Subject content and practical training are being reconsidered, and measures are being taken in order to satisfy the growing need for textbooks, especially in the Kazakh language. A network of a new type of general education institutions (gymnasia and lyceums) is being developed: 178 gymnasia and 142 lyceums have already been established.

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Individual schools are authorized to hold State examinations and exams to promote pupils from one class to another. The introduction of a nationwide test programme to be applied at the higher education level is being considered. The organization of this programme is under the responsibility of the Republican Scientific and Methodological Centre for State Educational Standards and Pedagogical Tests.

The first national assessment of learning achievement in the Republic of Kazakhstan was conducted over a sample of 3,500 Grade IV pupils within the framework of the EFA 2000 programme in May 1999. The average success rate in the literacy test was 77.9%, in numeracy 80.5%, and in life skills 75%. Overall, girls performed better than boys, pupils of urban schools performed better than those of
rural schools, and pupils attending Russian-language schools performed better than those attending Kazakh-language schools.

According to the results of the Unified National Testing, introduced in 2004 and piloted in 2003, the achievement of graduates of rural schools and schools with Kazakh as the language of instruction was comparatively lower than the results of graduates of urban schools and schools with Russian as the language of instruction. The new National System of Evaluation of the Quality of Education, which is under development for all levels of education, foresees heavy reliance on external assessment. The State Programme for Developing Education 2005-2010 (Plan 2010) includes a provision for sample-based monitoring of learning outcomes at the end of the fourth grade. The tests are to be administered in mathematics and the mother tongue. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

**Higher education**

The purpose of the system of higher education is to train highly qualified manpower for the different sectors (manufacturing, farming, public and state service, science and education). The network of higher education institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan includes 145 universities, academies and institutes, of which fifty-one are State-owned. Approximately 246,000 students attend public universities. The faculty staff amounts to 21,834, including 1,191 professors with the qualification of Doctor of Science and 7,529 holders of the degree of Candidate of Science.

Along with State-supported educational programmes, public universities also admit students who pay for their higher education (about 24% of the total enrolment). Since the network of public universities has been restructured during the recent years, their number has decreased from seventy in 1991 to fifty-one in 1998. In 1998, public universities offered 226 professional programmes.

Students with complete secondary education may apply for admission to institutes and universities. In order to be admitted to the first year of study, students have to pass an exam in four subjects, including a test on Kazakh history and a test on their mother language (Kazakh or Russian). The list of the remaining tests was standardized and published in 1998.

Foreign citizens are admitted to universities in accordance with international agreements or on an individual contract basis. Tuition cost for foreign students amounts to around US$1,000-1,500 per year.

National standards for professional programmes are developed by collegiate associations and approved by the Central Managerial (Monitoring) Body for Higher Education. National standards for higher education include the basic content of educational programmes, the maximum academic load for students, requirements for professional training of specialists, general requirements for admission to universities, and provisions for future employment of university graduates. The Classification or list of professional programmes at the higher education level includes over 300 programmes in forty-seven fields of study. Bachelor’s and master’s degree programmes have been introduced.
The duration of programmes depends on the level or degree that the university provides. Generally speaking, four years of study are required for a degree at the first level (bachelor’s degree), and an additional one to two years are required for a master’s degree. Technical universities, academies and institutes normally offer five-year courses leading to the Diploma of Specialist, and in medical universities the duration of studies is five years or more.

Academic achievement is evaluated through an extensive national examination and the presentation of diploma (degree) papers and projects. On-going evaluation is carried out through credit tests, exams and presentation of term papers. Successful students receive a diploma specifying the name of the institution (university), the period of study, the professional programme completed, and the degree awarded.

University activities are regulated by statutes or charters designed by the faculty and approved by the body supervising the work of the university. The Academic Council headed by the Rector is the highest administrative and managerial body of the university.

The Central Managerial (Monitoring) Body for Higher Education is responsible for the assessment and certification of universities. Assessment activities are carried out in order to better evaluate the quality of education provided by universities, the application of national standards, the utilization of budget allocations, and to stimulate creativity among university faculties and students’ bodies.

Systematic scientific training at the post-graduate (candidate of science) and doctoral levels is offered by higher educational establishments (HEEs). Leading HEEs (Al-Farabi National State University, Abai Almaty State University, Asfendiyarov Kazakh State Medical University and others) admit to post-graduate programmes both State-supported and fee-paying students. The average cost of tuition for postgraduate studies is around US$2,000 per year.

There are postgraduate programmes in 315 scientific specializations, and twenty-nine specializations at the doctoral level. Candidates to post-graduate studies must hold a master’s degree or a diploma of specialist. The duration of full-time studies is normally three years.

**Special education**

The State supports the education of children with special needs through a system of children’s homes and boarding schools.

By the end of the 1990s, about 498 special schools operated in Kazakhstan with over 50,000 children enrolled. These institutions included: (i) forty children’s homes (orphanages) and twenty-two boarding schools for orphans and abandoned children; (ii) forty-three children’s homes of a family type; (iii) eighty-four special schools for mentally handicapped children; (iv) fifty-nine boarding schools of general and sanatorium type; (v) one special school for children and teenagers with deviant behaviour; and (vi) 249 boarding schools connected with comprehensive schools.
Nevertheless, data shows that 74% of children who need assistance are not enrolled in special education institutions and do not receive any special social assistance.

In 2004/05, there were 101 different specialized correctional institutions for children with different special needs. The total number of students attending these institutions was 22,800. Still, the estimated number of school-age children with special needs was 120,000, and only one-third of them were learning in specialized institutions. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

**Private education**

In accordance with the Constitution, the Law on Education and the Law on Higher Education private educational institutions can operate in the country. Private institutions may provide educational services only after obtaining the license from Ministry of Health, Education, and Sports. The Ministry monitors the application of State educational standards and standards of quality of education in private schools.

Private universities were opened since 1991. Private universities enrol about 20% of all the students. In addition, there is a wide network of private colleges.

The number of private schools in the 1998/99 school year was 180, with more than 18,500 pupils enrolled.

**Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure**

Textbooks and other educational and methodological materials are basically prepared and published by the Ministry of Education. There are 333 different textbooks for comprehensive schools. One of the main tasks is to provide comprehensive schools with textbooks and teaching aids in connection with changes and modifications introduced in the system of secondary schools.

During the period 1992-1997, about 260 different textbooks and educational and methodological supplements have been published. Part of the education literature is translated from Russian. On the basis of the Governmental Decree "On targeting programmes, textbooks and other educational publications for secondary schools", it is the first time that the preparation and publication of teaching aids is considered on such a large scale, in terms both of number of titles and copies.

At the beginning of 1997, the preparation of new independent Kazakh textbooks was started, taking into account existing demands and international standards. Textbooks for Grades I-IV of primary education have been published. The authors of textbooks are leading specialists of the Kazakh Academy of Education and of universities. It is planned in the near future to produce new textbooks for all grades. Since the 1997/98 academic year, all primary schools have been using new generation textbooks that are based on new educational contents.

The network of boarding houses does not meet appropriate conditions: 56% of pre-school boarding houses have non-standard facilities, 62% do not have dining-rooms or canteens, 61% have no water supply system, 69% have no sewerage system.
46% have no bathrooms or showers. More than 150 school buildings are in alarming shape, 1,568 need capital repair, and 43% are located in inadequately adjusted premises. (MES, 2003).

In 2002, more than 30,000 children had to travel 5 to 40 km to reach school. Access to education in rural areas is also restricted because of the poverty situation. At the same time, rural schools often operate in premises that need repairs, and the costs of inevitable improvements are to be covered by parents. Parents also buy school uniforms, textbooks, and other learning materials, which are hardly affordable for many low-income families. The Government is carrying out the medium-term programme “Rural School”, under which construction and repairs of schools in rural areas are being financed. On the other hand, many schools in cities and towns work in two to four shifts, which is a significant stress factor and can hinder learning. In the fast-growing capital city of Astana, 10% of schools work in four shifts, although the percentage of students in the third and fourth shifts is small. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

**Adult and non-formal education**

Information is not available.

**Teaching staff**

The reform of the education system within the framework of current socio-economic conditions presents special requirements for the teaching staff. Special attention is therefore paid to the training of teachers, conducted in accordance with State orders. Primary school teachers are trained in teacher colleges and specialist teachers in the different disciplines are trained in universities and higher education institutes. Entrance to teacher education at the university level is based on the results at Unified National Testing, which is narrowly based on school subjects. In 2004, there were 34 higher education institutions and pedagogical colleges offering accredited teacher education following 19 different curricula. In general, teacher training programmes are weakly connected to school practice, and the graduates have not been sufficiently introduced to their future job. As the need for new teachers is growing, the state policy is to offer more grants for free training to new entrants. From 2001 to 2004 the number of grants grew from 5,655 to 6,075. (Government of Kazakhstan, 2005).

The two routes to becoming a qualified pre-school teacher are either five years of pre-service training in a pedagogical institute or university, or two or three years of pre-service training in a pedagogical college. Graduates from the former can work in any pre-school or tier of secondary school, while those from the latter can work only in pre-schools or at primary level (i.e. Grades I-IV). From the current pre-school workforce 39% of the staff have higher education degrees (of which 14% have preschool specialist education), and 53% have college diplomas (of whom 41% have preschool specialist education). (Penn, 2004; UNESCO, 2005).

About half of the teachers in both urban and rural schools have higher education. At the same time, 32% of urban teachers and 7% of teachers in rural schools have college qualifications. This indicates that 18% of urban teachers and

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42% in rural areas are not properly qualified, which is a serious challenge with regard to ensuring quality education for all. Rural schools are very often small schools with multigrade teaching, for which the teachers do not have sufficient training and experience. The staffing of rural schools remains a problem as many teachers are forced to teach subjects for which they do not have the necessary educational background. *(Ibid.)*

Improving teacher pre-service training is a major task on the way to ensuring quality secondary education for all, as it is directly connected to the quality of learning and education. Especially considering the prospective changes in content regulation from subject knowledge-centered to development of competencies, it is paramount that the necessary thorough changes in teacher education curricula be made as soon as possible; new teachers entering schools in 2008 should already have skills in competency-oriented teaching.

In-service training is provided by regional in-service training institutes and, for educational administrators, at the central institute in Almaty. There is a requirement that every teacher has to pass regular in-service training every five years. However, the capacity of the institutes is not sufficient: in principle, each year 54,000 teachers should pass the courses, but in 2001 42,784 did so, and 48,157 passed in 2003.

**Educational research and information**

There are four scientific research institutes and a number of scientific industrial centres in Kazakhstan.

The Kazakh Academy of Education Y. Altynsarin is the leading scientific centre as far as education is concerned. There are two institutes within the Academy: the Institute of Higher Education and the Institute of Secondary Education.

One of the most important research tasks is the development of scientific and methodological bases for the reform of the education system.

**References**


**Web resources**
