Kazakhstan Study Abroad Education Market Update

**Highlights**
The presence of natural resources, gas and oil has brought a significant development to Kazakhstan. The stable economy and foreign investment is encouraging students to study abroad and strengthen their English. Bolashak International Scholarship of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan offers full support for the top 53% of undergraduate and 41% of master’s students. Since 1993, the Bolashak Program has supported over 10,000 students for studies abroad. This event is supported and sponsored by Bolashak.

Kazakh higher education is taught in 3 languages: Kazakh, Russian and English. Kazakhstan has taken part in Lisbon conference and signed a Convention of Council of Europe - UNESCO on recognition of qualifications, regarding the higher education. In March of 2010, Kazakhstan signed the Bologna Process which was initiated by the European Commission. According to Open Doors Statistics, in 2009/10, #of Kazakhstan students studying in the USA raised up 13% from 2008/2009.

This Kazakhstan fair offers an ideal opportunity for Educators, Kazakh students, parents, school representatives and media partners to meet and benefit at the same time.

As Kazakhstan’s overall economy has expanded in recent years, public expenditure in education has gradually increased to 3.5% of GDP in 2017. In 2014, 70% of Kazakhstan’s total expenditure on higher education came from private rather than public sources. By way of comparison, across all OECD countries in 2014, 30% of funding came from private sources. Public funds for higher education places are allocated to the student, rather than the institution; however, the majority of students (71% in 2017) fund their participation in higher education using their own or family funds, which can lead to inequity of access opportunities to higher education.

![Figure 7. Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP, by level of education (2015)](image)

General outlook
There is very high demand in Kazakhstan to study overseas at both undergraduate and graduate-levels. Unlike the rest of Central Asia, Kazakhstan’s per-capita GDP has increased significantly, creating a burgeoning middle and upper-class youth eager to travel and study abroad. In addition, government policy encourages this and has also dramatically increased English-language education nationwide over the past decade. The quality of the students has been improving and with the introduction of new reforms and highquality school technologies, student academic performance has improved by 15-20% since 2010. A recent reform initiative would introduce curriculum taught in English at senior high school classes, resembling education systems in Malaysia and Singapore.

The country’s 2050 Strategic Development Plan which includes the adaptation of the education system to the new socio-economic environment, creates opportunities for U.S. higher education institutions and education technology companies. The State Program of Education includes the adoption of the 12-year education model, construction of schools and kindergartens, modernization of vocational and technical education, e-learning education projects and professional development systems for teachers.

State financing of education in 2018 is taking around 5% of the whole country budget coming second after social security spending. The government has earmarked more than USD1.2 billion on education for 2018-2020, with USD2.7 billion allocated for 2015, USD3.3 billion for 2016, and USD3.4 billion for 2017.

Education quick facts
• Over 542,458 students in higher education institutions in Kazakhstan
• 147,023 high school students graduate on an annual basis on average
• Over 80,000 students study abroad and 1,865 studied in the United States (2017-18)
• Education technology; secondary, vocational and higher education are key priority areas
• The program for the Development of Education and Science budget is 1.2 billion U.S. dollars for 2018-2020 period

The education system

General education system
Primary education lasts for four years preceded by one year of pre-school education. Secondary education consists in three main educational phases: primary education (forms 1-4), basic general education (forms 5-9) and senior level education (forms 10-11 or 12) divided into continued general education and professional education. These three levels of education can be followed in one institution or in different ones (e.g. primary school, then secondary school). Recently, several secondary schools, specialized schools, magnet schools, gymnasiuums, lyceums, linguistic and technical gymnasiuums, have been founded. Secondary professional education is offered in special professional or technical schools, lyceums or colleges and vocational school

Kazakhstan Secondary Education
Secondary education in Kazakhstan is represented by general secondary schools, training schools, and lyceums that provide general secondary and initial vocational education, as well as by colleges providing secondary vocational education. There are in total 779 private and state-funded colleges in Kazakhstan that offer technical and intermediate vocational programs.
Kazakhstan Higher education system
At present, there are universities, academies, and institutes, conservatoires, higher schools and higher colleges. There are three main levels: basic higher education that provides the fundamentals of the chosen field of study and leads to the award of the Bachelor degree; specialized higher education after which students are awarded the Specialist's Diploma; and scientific-pedagogical higher education which leads to the Master's Degree. Postgraduate education leads to the Kandidat Nauk (Candidate of Sciences) and the Doctor of Sciences. With the adoption of the Laws on Education and on Higher Education, a private sector has been established and several private institutions have been licensed.

Kazakhstan Higher Education Market
Kazakhstan has taken part in Lisbon conference and signed a Convention of Council of Europe - UNESCO on recognition of qualifications, regarding the higher education. An average annual GDP growth of over 5% over last five or six years significantly raised creditworthiness and financial capacity of the population allowing parents to educate their children in commercial universities and colleges. As prices for higher education in Kazakhstan rapidly approach Western levels many parents begin to look overseas at educational destinations for their children.

There has been a growing interest in Kazakhstan for postgraduate, business, and economic programmes. Almaty traditionally is a good market for economics and business management programmes, whilst Astana attracts a different audience of students who have an interest in Law and Political programmes. Rapid economic and social development of Kazakhstan has resulted in an acute need for personnel with advanced western education. This is an important contributing factor to the popularisation of overseas education, particularly in the English-speaking countries.

Kazakhstan students studying abroad
In 2018 a total number of 89,505 students from Kazakhstan were studying abroad (for or as part of a degree in higher education) according to UNESCO Institute for Statistics. These are the most popular student abroad destinations among Kazakhstan students:

- Russia - 69,895
- Kyrgyzstan - 4,907
- Turkey - 1,986
- USA - 1,963
- UK - 1,545
- Czech - 1,515
- Malaysia - 1,002
- Poland - 753
- Korea - 546
- Canada - 480
- Germany - 405

Scholarships for students from Kazakhstan
The Bolashak Scholarship
The Bolashak is a national government scholarship established in 1993. It aims to assist talented young people in obtaining quality education abroad. The scholarship covers all costs related to education including tuition and fees, costs of travel, and a living stipend. The program requires all Bolashak recipients to
return to Kazakhstan upon completing their education and to work for five years in Kazakhstan. Since 1993 over 12,898 Kazakhstan students have received Bolashak Scholarship with a capacity of 1,000 scholarship recipients a year. From 2011, the program provides scholarships for masters and doctoral programs only. The most popular countries for study are the U.K., U.S., Germany and Russia. The Bolashak program currently has agreements with 33 countries and 83 educational institutions worldwide, of which 31 in the United States. Bolashak is considered a good partner by U.S. universities.