



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

Dear Applicant!

The Office of Enrollment Management and Admissions Department have prepared a guide to help you with your applications to NU graduate programs. NU offers the following programs at a graduate level:

- **Zero Year of Graduate Programs** is a two-semester, non-credit bearing, full-time intensive English and content course program for applicants who lack the English proficiency required for direct entry into the Master's and PhD programs.
- **Master's** is an academic qualification granted at the graduate level to individuals who have successfully undergone study demonstrating a high level of expertise in a specific field of study or area of professional practice. NU offers master's programs in the following areas: Sciences, Humanities, Public Policy, Business, STEM, Medicine and Education.
- **Ph.D.** is a doctoral research degree and the highest level of academic qualification you can achieve. NU offers PhD programs in the following areas: Sciences, Humanities, Public Policy, Business, STEM, Medicine and Education.
- **M.D.** is a professional doctorate degree which provides the competencies to practice medicine and the foundation to continue postgraduate medical training. ● **Residency** takes place in a working hospital or a clinic and provides in-depth, hands-on training within a specialized field of medicine. NU offers the following Residency programs: General Surgery, Internal Medicine, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Anesthesiology and Critical Care, Orthopedics and Traumatology, Radiology, Urology, Family medicine, Anatomic pathology.

Table of contents

Am I eligible? 2 How does the selection process work? 2 What are the Minimum Entry requirements? 3 How to fill an application form? 3 How are the recommendation letters provided? 4 How should I submit my IELTS/TOEFL results? 5 What should I know about Undergraduate/Graduate Diploma submission? 7 What are the differences between Motivation letter, Essay and Statement of Purpose? 7 How can I confirm my Work experience? 8 What is the structure of a Research proposal? 8 What is ALEKS? 9 What is GRE? 9 What is GMAT? 10 What is MCAT? 10 What is USMLE? 11 What is IFOM? 11 How to prepare myself for the Interview? 12 What else do I need to know? 13

Office of Enrollment Management & Admissions Department 1



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

AM I ELIGIBLE?

All the applicants who hold an undergraduate (for master's) and/or a master's diploma (for PhD) are eligible to apply. Those who have already obtained a master's degree on a scholarship basis

in Kazakhstan (State grant or Bolashak) and applied again will be offered fee-paying education only.

HOW DOES THE SELECTION PROCESS WORK?

The selection consists of several stages:

- Stage I - Online application.
 - For citizens of Kazakhstan:
 - Master's Degree: November - April
 - Doctoral Degree: December - April
 - For foreign nationals:
 - Master's Degree: November - February
 - Doctoral Degree: December - February
- Stage II - Interview.
 - For citizens of Kazakhstan: April - May
 - For foreign citizens: March - April.
- Stage III - Results of competition - May - June;
- Stage IV - Sending notifications on admission - May - July. Applicants from the waiting list may receive an admission offer as vacant places become available (due to other applicants' refusals) until the start of the classes;
- Stage V - acceptance of documents (at the request of the NU) - June - July.

Notes:

- Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee admission to Nazarbayev University;
- Applicants who were shortlisted, but did not receive an offer due to limited number of grants, can be placed on a waiting list.
- Applicants on the waiting list may be given an opportunity to study on a fee-paying basis.

You can familiarize yourself with the list of majors by following the links: [Master's](#) and [Ph.D.](#). Requirements differ depending on a program, but most are common, use the table of contents below in order to familiarize yourself:

WHAT ARE THE MINIMUM ENTRY REQUIREMENTS?

Entry requirements differ by the programs and school. First, please visit the [website](#) and choose the program you are interested in and then create a personal account and fill out your Application.

HOW TO FILL AN APPLICATION FORM?

Office of Enrollment Management & Admissions Department 2



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

After registering and creating your Personal Account, you will be able to apply for a maximum of 2 programs of any graduate level by filling out the Application forms and uploading all the required documents to your Personal Account. Please open the Application form. You have to fill it out in English by the deadline indicated in your Personal account. The Application form consists

of 7-10 (depending on program) tabs listed below:

- Personal information - here you will need to include all the details from your passport/national ID, your contact details etc;
- Academic background - here you will need to elaborate more about your educational background and exams;
- Testing information - here you will need to elaborate on your IELTS/TOEFL, GMAT, GRE, ALEKS, USMLE, IFOM, MCAT details (depending on your program);
- Employment information (if applicable) - in this section tell us about your working experience, that then you could confirm;
- References - here you will need to provide contact details of your referees and we will contact them;
- Essays (if applicable) - this section provides topics of the essay for some programs;
- Application details - here you will be asked to go through a quick checklist of survey questions:
- Feedback (if applicable) - here you can provide a feedback and help us to be better next time;
- Signature - by completing this page you are confirming that all information provided by you was true, in case of violation or provision of false information Admissions Committee could exclude you from the competition;



Consent form - it is a consent for processing your personal data, so NU can check and process your documents in the competition. All information submitted by the applicant is confidential and will not be shared with third parties.

Kindly note that highlighted lines in an application form are compulsory to complete. Please click the “SAVE” button in the bottom-right-corner of each application page. After completing

Office of Enrollment Management & Admissions Department 3



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

the application, press the “UPLOAD” button at the end of your Application form. Your saved application will appear in “MY APPLICATION FORM”. You can still edit or delete your application at this stage. After completing and uploading the Application form you can attach all required documents such as ID, copies of diploma, transcripts, motivation letters etc. in PDF/JPEG formats. The maximum file size should not exceed 5MB and should be readable. Documents that do not include all of the required pages will not be accepted. In order to submit, you have to upload your passport (3x4) sized photo and make a payment. The application fee varies depending on the program and is non-refundable, even if an application is rejected or not submitted. Please make sure that your card has access to online payments. To finalize the application process, please press the “SUBMIT APPLICATION” button. You can upload and delete your materials without any restrictions before submitting the application.

HOW ARE THE RECOMMENDATION LETTERS PROVIDED?

In the Application form, you will be asked to indicate the names and titles of the individuals you have asked to submit letters of reference on your behalf for your application. As soon as you press the ‘Submit application’ button on your personal account, the reference request with instructions will be automatically sent to the referees’ email addresses with 2 options:

- Option 1 - Referee is required to provide a reference letter by filling out the generated form within 7 (seven) after getting email from Admissions Department by using the link sent him/her from his/her corporate/institutional email address;
- Option 2 – is used when the referee does not have a corporate/institutional email address. In that case, a recommendation letter should be written on the letterhead of the organization that the referee represents, with the contact information, date and signature of the referee. If letterhead is not available then the letter should include the seal of the referee’s organization. Referees are required to upload the scanned copies of their letters within 7 (seven) days by using the link sent to him/her.

This document is required for all the Programs. Please note that reference letters should be provided by referees only.



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants



HOW SHOULD I SUBMIT MY IELTS/TOEFL RESULTS?

Send the electronic versions of a valid IELTS/TOEFL (except TOEFL iBT Home Edition, TOEFL PDT, IELTS Online and IELTS Indicator) through the Test Administrator directly to NU and upload its scanned copy to the **“Upload IELTS/TOEFL results”** section in your Personal Account

For uploading IELTS or TOEFL (except TOEFL iBT Home Edition, TOEFL PDT, IELTS Online and IELTS Indicator) results you have to order an official electronic report of a valid certificate from [British Council/InterPress](#) for IELTS or from [ETS](#) for TOEFL. If you have already ordered an official electronic report of your valid certificate from the Test center to NU, then you need to choose the academic program, test type and specify the TRF number for IELTS or Appointment number for TOEFL. Additionally, you have to attach the scan copy of your IELTS/TOEFL certificate and click on the «SAVE» button.



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants



Possible mistakes with IELTS/TOEFL submission:

- If NU did not receive an official electronic report of a valid certificate, the notification will be displayed in your Personal Account. In this case, please contact the Test Center and order the required document urgently.
- If NU receives an official electronic report of a valid certificate, but you are unable to upload it, consequently, there is a mistake in your Application Form or certificate. Please check the data in your certificate, Application Form and your documents. If there is a mistake in your certificate, you should contact the Test Centre and independently request changes and upload an updated certificate. If there is a mistake in the data, you entered in your Application form, please write to the email indicated at the top right corner in your Application form and indicate the correct data. You will be able to upload your results and certificate when there is no mistake in your certificate and Application form. The applicant is responsible for the correct data entry to the Application form, so this will not be taken into account if the deadline for the provision of the certificate is violated. If you have successfully uploaded your results and certificate, they will be displayed in your Personal Account.



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

Applicants, at the discretion of the Admissions Committee, can be exempted from submitting the language proficiency test report if:

- they are NU graduates;
- previous degrees were earned in a country with English as the language of official communication, academic instruction, and daily life;
- an undergraduate and/or graduate degree was earned in a program that was officially taught in English.

NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL CODES:

- TOEFL – 6762
- IELTS – Nazarbayev University

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE DIPLOMA SUBMISSION?

As part of the Application form's "Academic Background" section, you will need to attach:

- During the online application period, final year students may submit the official current transcript for consideration;
- For Master's: Bachelor's Degree diploma with transcripts.
- For PhD: Degree diplomas (Bachelor's and Master's or equivalents) with transcripts.

Applicants must **verify** their final transcripts of a degree diploma based on one of the following options:

- Official hard copy sent directly to the Admissions Department via postmail by previous institution of study: Nazarbayev University, Admissions Department, 010000, Kabanbay Batyr Ave., 53, Astana, Kazakhstan;
- Official soft copy sent directly to the Admissions Department email address from corporate email address of the previous institution of study;
- Official final transcript provided to the Admissions Department or verified through official digital credential services;
- Diplomas and transcripts of Nazarbayev University graduates/final year students will be verified by the Admissions Department via the University system (some programs might require notarized versions of Diplomas and transcripts).

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MOTIVATION LETTER, ESSAY AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE?

In order to apply to NU's Master's and Ph.D. programs, applicants should submit motivation letters/personal statements/essays. Let's take a look at each document:

- **PERSONAL STATEMENT** (is more about who you are). The purpose of a personal statement is to get personal. Talk about who you are, your background, life-changing experiences, where you want to go in life, etc. It is more about promoting yourself, asking why you are the right candidate for a given program.



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

- **MOTIVATION LETTER** (is more about what you want to do). You need to spend more time talking about your plans for the future and your goals. Why do you want to pursue studies in a specific field? The motivation letter is usually forward-looking and longer.
- **PERSONAL ESSAY/ESSAY**. A structured piece of writing that deals with a particular subject. The audience for an essay will be readers looking for information on a certain topic. The goal of the essay is to show knowledge or expertise on a particular subject or deliver a convincing argument. In order to find the topics for the program go to the application's "Essays" page.

No matter which documents you will require to submit, please avoid plagiarism, as it could influence your application. Moreover, providing plagiarized documents and false information may exclude you from the competition. Please note that some programs might have specific questions stated that an applicant is expected to cover in the Personal statement.

These documents should be uploaded to the Application's "Statement of purpose" and/or "Essay" sections.

HOW CAN I CONFIRM MY WORK EXPERIENCE?

Some programs (at NUGSB, NUGSE, NUGSPP) require work experience. First, you will need to indicate it in the Application form, and then attach a CV and confirmation documents, such as:

- Employment record book;
- Employment certificate;
- Certificates of registration of IE/LLP;
- Certificate of pension contributions;
- Certificate of employment history.

One of these documents should be uploaded to the Application's "Documented proof of work experience" section.

WHAT IS THE STRUCTURE OF A RESEARCH PROPOSAL?

In order to apply to NU's Ph.D. programs, you will need to provide a research proposal. A research proposal is your preliminary research. There are many different ways to write a research proposal. The following guidelines provide one way of structuring your research proposal, and indicate the content normally expect to see:

- **Title:** This is a working title that can be changed later
- **Rationale:** Why do you want to research this topic? What are the research questions you are considering? Why is this topic important?
- **Literature review:** Show that you are familiar with relevant literature (academic books/journal articles) in this area. How will your research relate to existing research in this area?
- **Methodology:** What kind of methods will you use? Why? How will you collect data? How will you analyze data? What are the ethical considerations you need to take into account?



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

- **Research plan:** How will you organize your research? What are the main stages, and what is the timeline?
- **List of references:** References to academic work in Russian, Kazakh and English are fine.

Research Proposal should be uploaded to the Application's "Research Proposal"

section. **WHAT IS ALEKS?**

This exam is used for Full-Time [Master of Business Administration](#), [Master of Science in Finance program](#) and [Master of Engineering Management](#) programs.

[ALEKS](#) (Assessment and Learning in Knowledge Spaces) - is a web-based, artificially intelligent assessment and learning system. The exam determines the level of basic mathematical skills for business. The test costs 25 USD. For NU applicants the first try is free, and the second will cost 10 000 KZT.

Format: ALEKS does not use multiple-choice questions. In about 30 to 45 minutes (on a scale of 1 – 100 points), the test measures your current content knowledge by asking 20 to 30 questions. ALEKS is a Computer Adaptive (CA) assessment. It means that each question will be chosen on the basis of answers to all the previous questions. You cannot go back and change your answer. Therefore, each set of assessment questions is unique.

After completing the test, you will receive your scores. Admissions managers will upload your test scores to your Personal Account.

WHAT IS GRE?

This exam is required to NUGSB only and optional for other Schools.

[GRE](#) - Graduate Record Examinations. Prospective graduate and business school applicants from all around the world interested in pursuing a Master's, specialized Master's in business, MBA, J.D. or doctoral degree take the GRE Test. Usually, you can get your scores in 15 days. The cost could vary by country, but the approximate cost is from 205 USD to 213 USD.

Format: The GRE consists of 3 sections:

- **Verbal Reasoning:** (two sections) 20 questions, 30 minutes - 130–170, in 1-point increments;
- **Quantitative Reasoning:** (two sections) 20 questions per section, 35 minutes per section - 130–170, in 1-point increments;
- **Analytical Writing:** one section with two separately timed tasks, one "Analyze an Issue" and one "Analyze an Argument" task, 30 minutes per task - 0–6, in half-point increments).

GRE results should be uploaded to the Application's "GRE/GMAT"

section. NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY GRE INSTITUTION CODE: 6496



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

WHAT IS GMAT?

This exam is also required to NUGSB only and optional for other Schools.

GMAT - graduate management admission test. The GMAT is most commonly used as the primary exam reviewed by business schools to gain entrance into an MBA program. Usually, you can get your scores from 5 to 20 days. The cost of the exam is 275 USD.

Format: The GMAT consists of four sections:

- Analytical Writing Assessment (Analysis of an Argument, 0-6 (in 0.5-point increments));
- Integrated Reasoning (Graphics Interpretation, Table Analysis, Multi-source Reasoning, Two-part Analysis, 1-8 (in 1-point increments));
- Quantitative Reasoning (Data Sufficiency, Problem Solving, 6-51 (in 1-point increments));
- Verbal Reasoning (Reading Comprehension, Critical Reasoning, Sentence Correction, 6-51 (in 1-point increments)).

Master of Science in Finance candidates' average GMAT total score is 446. GMAT results should be uploaded to the Application's "GRE/GMAT" section.

NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY'S GMAT INSTITUTION CODE: - H6m-R7-93. **WHAT IS MCAT?**

This exam is required for the [Doctor of Medicine](#) program only.

MCAT - Medical College Admission Test. Usually, you can get your scores from 30 to 35 days after the test in the "Get Your Test Scores" section. The cost of the exam ranges from 305 to 355 USD, depending on whether you have registered in advance, or at the last moment. Materials for self-preparation for the MCAT test can be found [here](#). NU covers the cost for selected students.

Format: MCAT consists of four parts:

- Biological and biochemical foundations of living systems (1 to 15 points)
- Chemical and physical foundations of biological systems (1 to 15 points)
- Psychological, social and biological foundations of behavior (1 to 15 points)
- Critical analysis and reasoning (1 to 15 points)

MCAT results should be uploaded to the Application's "MCAT certificate" section. Office of



Application Guide for Graduate Applicants



WHAT IS USMLE?

This exam is required for the [Residency](#) program only.

USMLE - United States Medical Licensing Examination. USMLE Step 1 is a one-day examination. It is divided into seven 60-minute blocks and administered in one 8-hour testing session. Usually, you can get your scores from 3 to 4 weeks. The cost of the exam is 965 USD.

Format: The number of questions per block on a given examination form may vary but will not exceed 40. The total number of items on the overall examination form will not exceed 280. USMLE evaluates a physician's ability to apply in practice the knowledge, concepts, and principles, as well as demonstrate basic patient care skills.

USMLE results should be uploaded to the Application's "USMLE certificate"

section. **WHAT IS IFOM?**

This exam is required for the [Residency](#) program only.

IFOM - International Foundations of Medicine. The IFOM exam assesses students' knowledge of the basic and clinical disciplines, which are key disciplines to the implementation of the basic functions of a physician during patient care. Usually, you can get your scores from 3 to 4 weeks and pass at the School of Medicine. The cost of the exam is 50 USD. For NU students NUSOM covers the cost of the exam.

Application Guide for Graduate Applicants

Format: 160 questions with several possible answers, most of which are presented in the style of clinical vignette to assess the ability of subjects not only to recall but also to apply basic knowledge of medical science in the following areas: Anatomy, Biochemistry, Histology, Cell Biology, Microbiology, Organ systems, Pathology, Pharmacology and Physiology.

IFOM results should be uploaded to the Application's "IFOM certificate" section.

HOW TO PREPARE MYSELF FOR THE INTERVIEW?

How is the interview performed? What questions are asked? What do you need to prepare for? Interviews are conducted online or offline, lasting 15 minutes or more.

Each Admissions Committee develops its own evaluation methodology, therefore the questions may vary depending on program. At the interview, members of the University Admissions Committee may ask questions to check the following:

- Your intellectual level. Whether you can successfully complete your program of study and handle the academic requirements of your chosen program of study. •
- Competitiveness. Admissions Committee members will assess your ability to compete with other applicants.
- Your priorities. Often applicants apply to more than one institution or program at a time. The Admissions Committee may ask which university or program you would like to choose. They may also ask about your subject area and any relevant disclosures you have made in your application.

- Whether you are able to make a contribution to the University. It is very essential that students take an active part in the life of the University and contribute as much as possible to its development.
- Potential. It is also important for Admissions Committee members to know whether you will be a good student in the future and stay interested in the chosen profession, and what motivates you to succeed in your studies.

As you can see, the topics in the interview correspond closely with your motivation letter.

WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

- All required documents indicated above (excluding letters of recommendation) must be uploaded by applicants to the Personal account before the indicated deadline.
- All submitted documents shall be in English or with a notarized English translation.
- Submission of a complete application package does not guarantee admission to the Program.
- Applicants recommended for admission must follow the Instructions and provide all documents as requested by the Admissions Department and other involved NU Divisions within an established period of time.
- Electronic results of the Standardized test reports should be sent by the official test administrator directly to the University.
- Please check the [website](#) for all updates in the admissions process.
- Please visit this [website](#) where we tried to collect the most valuable links to courses, webinars, interviews, books, and lectures. We hope it will help you with your preparation for NU.

It is okay to have questions and to be confused. In that case if you experience any difficulties with the application please do not hesitate to send an email to the following email addresses:

- Graduate School of Education - admissions.gse@nu.edu.kz
- Graduate School of Business - admissions.gsb@nu.edu.kz
- Graduate School of Public Policy - gspp_admissions@nu.edu.kz
- School of Sciences and Humanities - admissions.ssh@nu.edu.kz
- School of Engineering and Digital Sciences - admissions.seds@nu.edu.kz
- School of Medicine - admissions.nusom@nu.edu.kz
- School of Mining and Geosciences - admissions.smg@nu.edu.kz
- PhD - phd_admissions@nu.edu.kz

Hope to see you soon. We are always ready to help and assist you with your application to NU!