NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY

NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY

Annual Report 2025



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Nazarbayev University
Annual Report 2025[1]



Executive Summary

Vision:

To give Kazakhstan and the world the scientists, academics, managers, and entrepreneurs needed to prosper and develop.

Mission:

To be a model for higher education reform and modern research; to contribute to the establishment of Astana as an international knowledge, innovation, and medical hub; and to prepare students for a world of increased volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.

Strategic priorities:

1. Education reform leadership
2. Academic excellence
3. Research excellence
4. Creating a model for health care services
5. Innovation and translating research into production

[1] The 2025 Report is based on the NU Strategy 2018-2030, as the new Strategy for 2026-2031 is pending approval by the Supreme Board of Trustees. Statistical data on the student body, alumni, and staff are as of September 2025.

In 2025, Nazarbayev University (NU) advanced its mission of becoming a globally recognized research university, supporting Kazakhstan's human capital development, innovation ecosystem, and socio-economic modernization.

Key achievements during the year include:

The year was marked by significant milestones in the University's institutional development and global recognition. In the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings, NU made a remarkable leap of 100 positions, entering the 401-500 band. This achievement positions NU as #1 in Central Asia and #4 across the CIS region, reflecting its growing academic influence and global reputation.

Equally noteworthy was the awarding of institutional accreditation by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), a prestigious endorsement of the University's academic standards, governance, and institutional quality. This recognition not only underscores NU's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, and student experience, but also strengthens its credibility and attractiveness to international partners, faculty, and students.

A significant step in strengthening NU's innovation ecosystem was the launch of construction of the Science Park, which will provide integrated infrastructure for research commercialization, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurship. Complementing this development, NU startups collectively attracted more than USD 20 million in investment, demonstrating the growing market relevance and scalability of University-generated technologies.

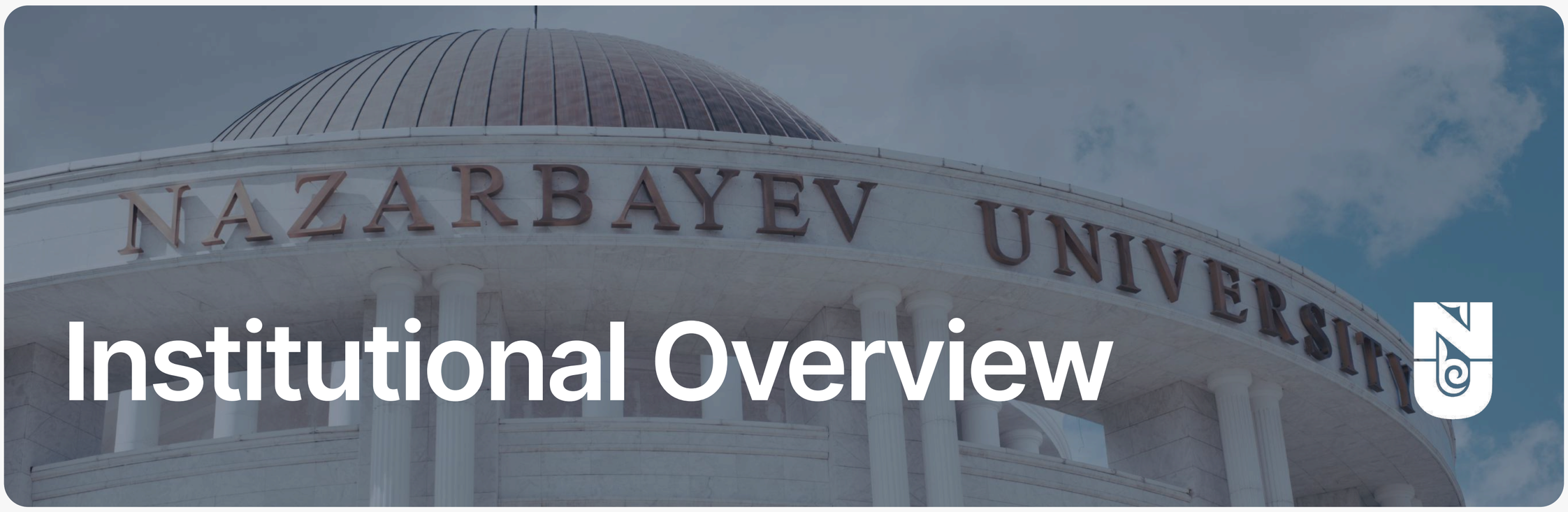
NU's research performance and global scholarly standing also continued to strengthen. The University produced over 11,000 publications, while 42 NU professors were ranked among the world's top 2% of researchers. These achievements reflect the depth, productivity, and global influence of NU's research across disciplines. As part of advancing its research infrastructure, the University launched the Biomedical Research Center, strengthening NU's capacity in translational and health-related research aligned with national priorities.

NU also expanded its academic partnerships and program portfolio through the introduction of joint degree programs with SOAS University of London and the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST), enhancing internationalization and enabling access for students to world-class academic environments.

To support its growing academic and research activities, NU commenced the implementation of a new Student Information System, modernizing academic administration, improving data integration, and enhancing the overall student and faculty experience.

These milestones highlight NU's strategic progress in elevating its global standing and reinforce its role as a leading research university in Kazakhstan and the wider region.





Institutional Overview

NU's structure comprises multiple schools, research centers, and administrative units, governed through robust academic and corporate structures. The University operates under a distinct legal and governance framework that ensures academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and accountability. NU's integrated structure supports its mission as a globally-oriented research university and underpins the delivery of high-quality education, impactful research, and innovation.

Organizational Structure

Figure 1. Schools

CENTER FOR PREPARATORY STUDIES

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

SCHOOL OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING AND DIGITAL SCIENCES

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

SCHOOL OF MINING AND GEOSCIENCES

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Table 1. Research Centers

Research Center	Areas Of Research
Center For Life Sciences	Biomedical Research
Center For Energy And Science Of New Materials	Energy Related Research
Institute For Smart Systems And Artificial Intelligence	AI Interdisciplinary Research And Applications
Energetic Cosmos Laboratory	Studies Of The Cosmos
Central Asian Research Center For Education Innovation And Transformation	Education Policy And Practice
Sustainable Development Solutions Network	Public Awareness And Policy Development
Nazarbayev University Research Center For Entrepreneurship	Business And Entrepreneurship

Team Composition

Academic and Professional Staff

The university’s academic community is composed of a diverse body of faculty, professional staff, and research personnel supporting teaching, research, and institutional operations.

Faculty Composition

Total Faculty: 517

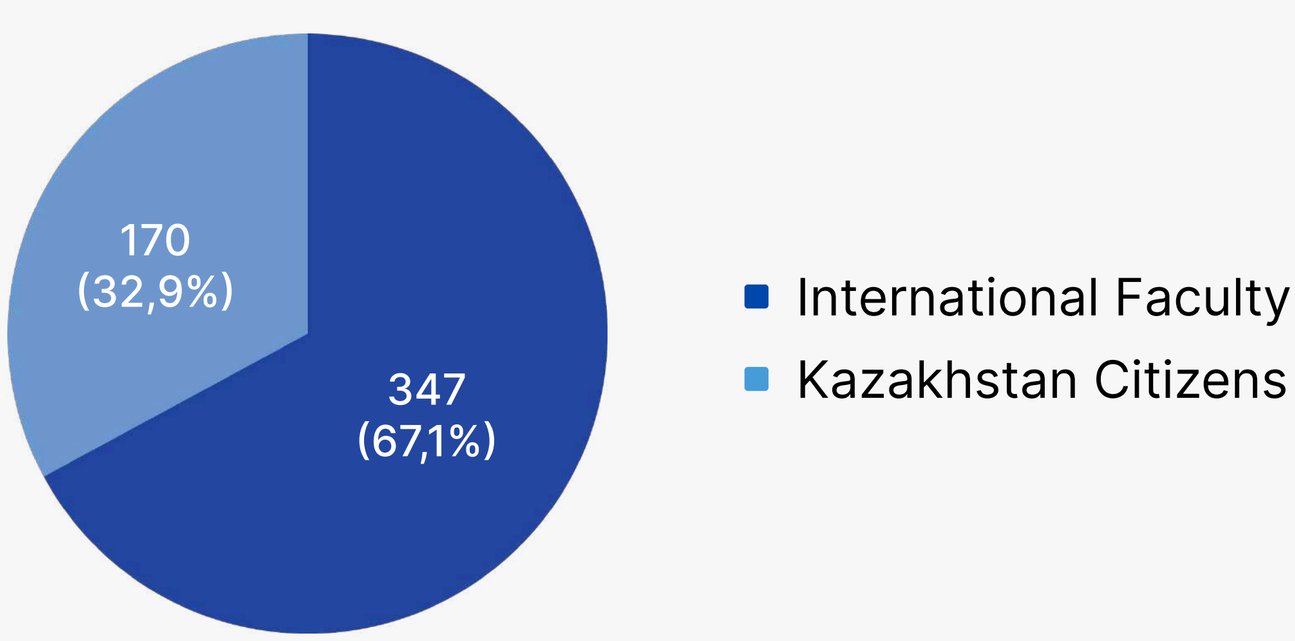
Table 2. by Academic Rank

Rank	Number
Professor	55
Associate Professor	127
Assistant Professor	152
Instructor	109
Teaching Fellow	50
Postdoctoral Scholars	21
Other	3

Figure 2. by Gender



Figure 3. by Citizenship



Professional and Research Staff

Table 5. Professional and Research Staff

Category	Number
Professional Staff	647
Research Staff & Teaching Assistants	76

Table 6. Total Staff by Gender and Citizenship

Category	Total	Female	International
Administrative And Professional Staff	647	413 (63.8%)	26 (4%)
Research Staff & Teaching Assistants	76	37 (48.7%)	3 (3,9%)
Total Staff (Excluding Faculty)	723	450 (62.2%)	29 (4%)

Student Profile

Total Enrollment

Total Students: 7, 931

Table 7. Students by Level

Study Level	Number	Share
Undergraduate	5216	65.8%
Graduate (Total)	2046	25.8%
NU Foundation Year Program (NUFYP)	669	8.4%

Figure 4. Student Enrollment by Level

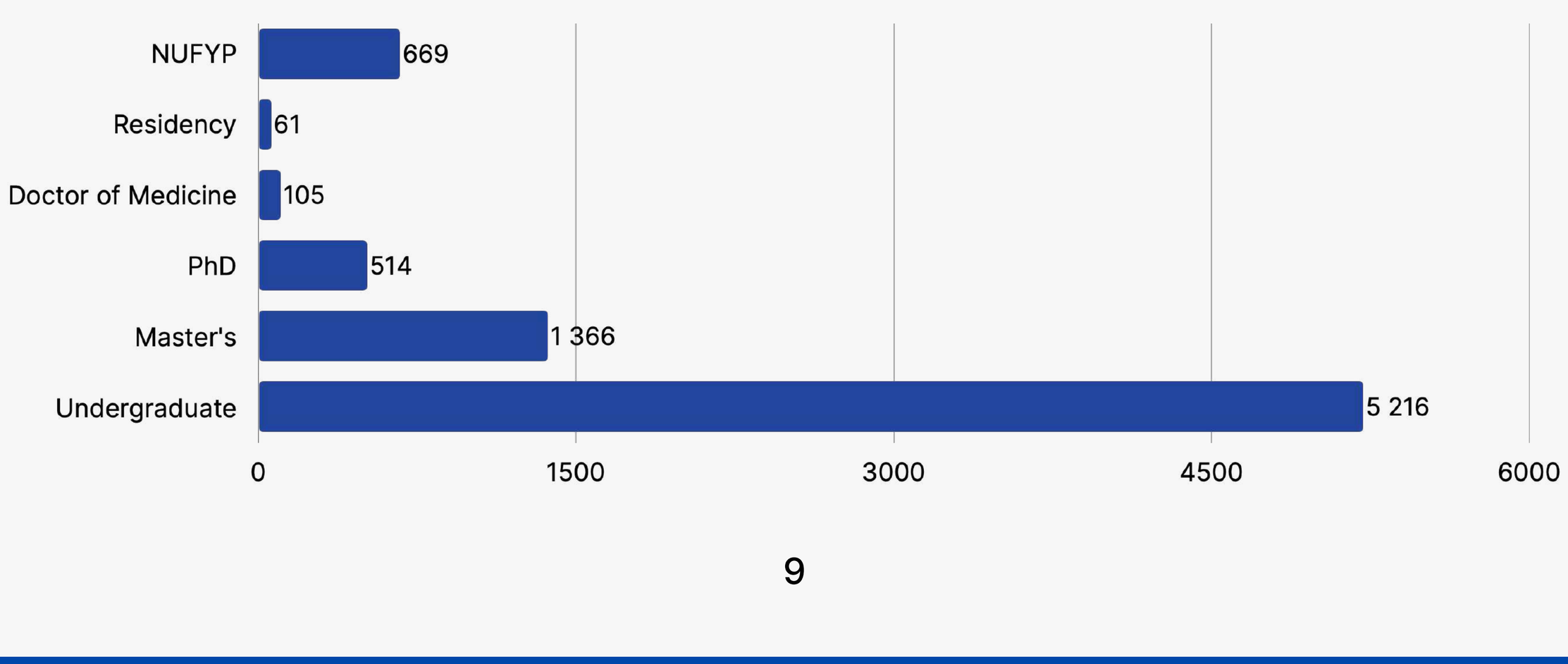
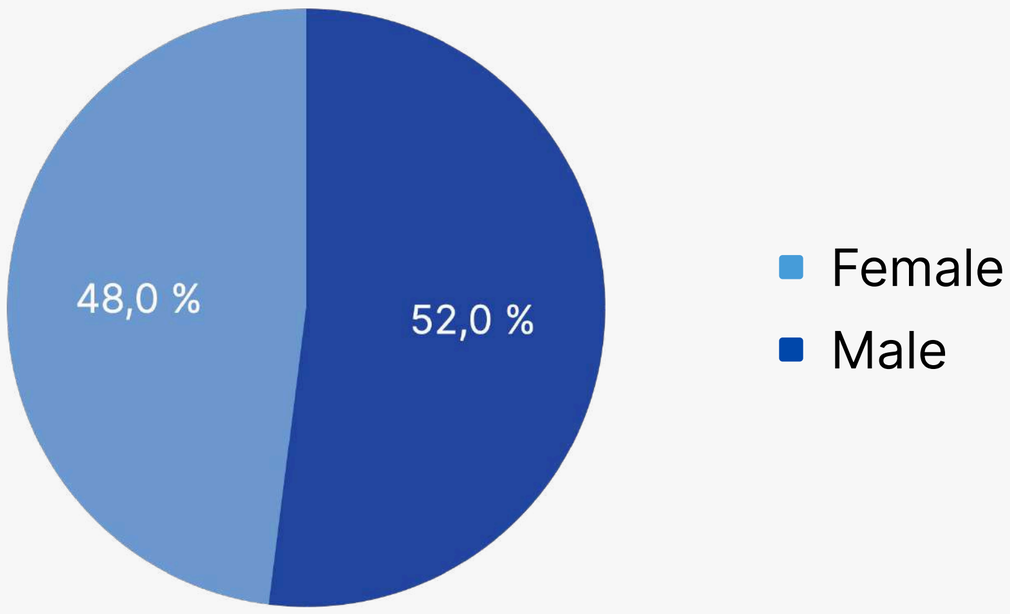


Figure 5. Gender Distribution



International Student Representation

Table 8. International Student Representation

Category	Students	Share
International Students	326	4.1%
Kazakhstan Citizens	7,605	95.9%





Key Achievements

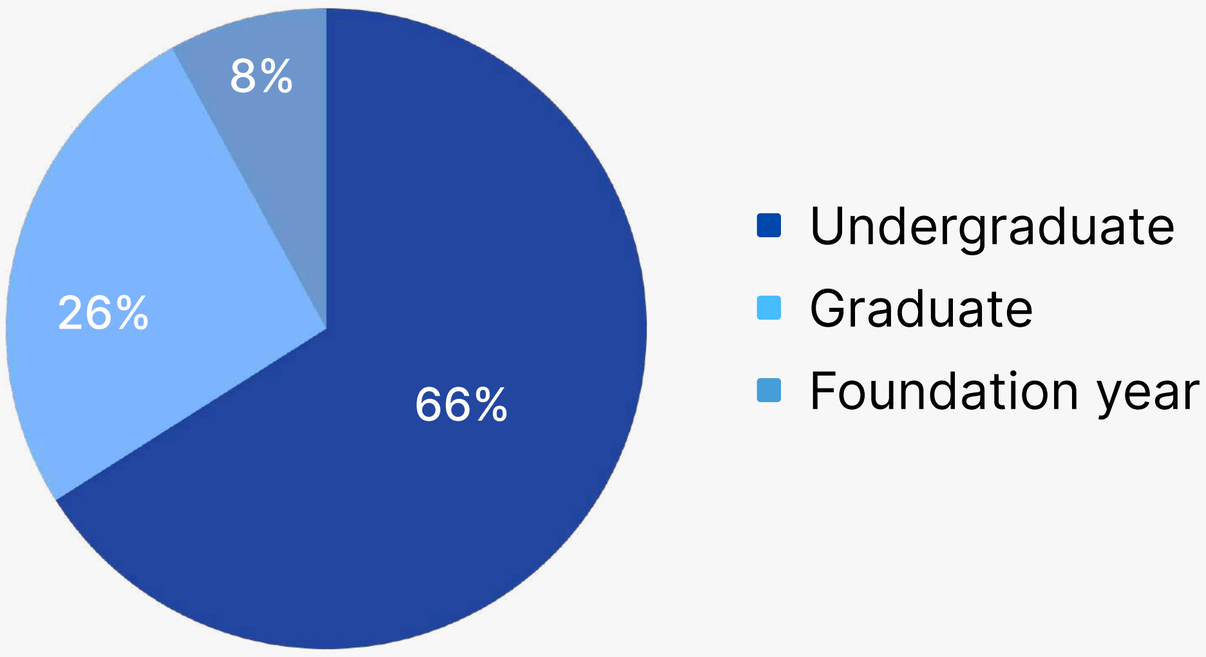
Academic Excellence

Advancements in academic excellence illustrate NU's continued progress in delivering high-quality, internationally benchmarked education aimed to prepare nationally and globally competitive graduates able to reach their full academic and career potential.

Enrollment Data and Comparative Analysis

Total student enrollment at NU reached 7,931 students in September 2025. This includes 5,216 undergraduates, 2,046 graduate students, and 669 foundation-year (preparatory) students.

Figure 6. Student Enrollment by Level



The largest share of students are enrolled in the School of Sciences and Humanities (35.6%) and the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences (35%), which together account for over 70% of the University's student population. Enrollment across the remaining Schools reflects the University's strong focus on STEM disciplines, alongside the continued development of programs in the social sciences, public policy, education, and business, including the School of Medicine (9.6%), School of Mining and Geosciences (4.1%), Graduate School of Education (2.6%), Graduate School of Public Policy (2.5%), and the Graduate School of Business (2.2%).

Table 9. Enrolled Students by School.

School	Students	Share Of Total
School Of Sciences And Humanities	2,820	35.6 %
School Of Engineering And Digital Sciences	2,779	35 %
School Of Medicine	764	9.6 %
School Of Mining And Geosciences	324	4.1 %
Graduate School Of Education	205	2.6 %
Graduate School Of Public Policy	195	2.5 %
Graduate School Of Business	175	2.2 %

New Programs and Joint Degree Initiatives

NU continued to diversify its academic offer by launching two new programs – a Bachelor of Business Administration in the Graduate School of Business, and a Master of Science in Geosciences in the School of Mining and Geosciences. In addition, as part of its strategy to expand partnerships with the world's leading universities, NU also designed and approved two joint degree programs that will be launched in 2026. These are:

- **BBA in Eurasian Business** (with HKUST) - This undergraduate program is offered jointly by the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology and NU. Students spend the first two years at NU and the final two years at HKUST, earning degrees from both institutions and benefiting from a cross-campus learning experience.

- **MA in Global Affairs and Eurasian Studies** – this joint master's program offered by NU and SOAS University of London explores how global and regional forces interact - from diplomacy and security to environment, energy, and culture - while training students to think critically, challenge assumptions, and navigate disinformation. The program begins at SOAS, where students complete a core module on Central Asia and the Caucasus and choose three optional modules. Subsequently, students move to NU's Department of Political Science and International Relations.

International Rankings

In 2025, NU continued to strengthen its academic standing in major international university rankings. In October 2025, NU rose by 100 places in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, entering the 401-500 band. NU also achieved subject-level recognition in the Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS), with three subjects included. Across these influential rankings, NU remains the leading university in Central Asia and the Caucasus region.

NU also maintained its position as the leading institution in Kazakhstan and the Central Asia in the Leiden University Ranking 2025, which evaluates universities exclusively on research performance and scientific impact. In the Open Edition of the Leiden Ranking, NU's Biomedical and Health Sciences subject area was ranked in the 39-44 range globally, alongside leading world institutions. This ranking is based on the proportion of publications among the top 10% most cited worldwide, reflecting the University's strong scientific impact. NU demonstrated solid performance across multiple disciplines in the Leiden Ranking Traditional Edition, ranking 199 globally in Social Sciences and Humanities and 483 in Mathematics and Computer Science, with Physical Sciences and Engineering also represented.

NU further improved its performance in the 2025 Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects (GRAS), marking the University's third appearance in this ranking. NU achieved its highest-ever placements in three disciplines:

- Civil Engineering - 301-400 band (first-time entry)
- Telecommunication Engineering - 301-400 band
- Education - 401-500 band (first-time entry)

Across all three subjects, NU is the only institution from Central Asia included in the GRAS. The ranking evaluates subject leadership based on world-class faculty, high-impact research output, research quality, research impact, and international collaboration.

NU's continued presence and improvement in major global rankings reflect the University's long-term strategic commitment to advancing world-class research and contributing to scientific, technological, and educational development at both national and global levels.

Accreditation Achievements

In 2025, NU made further progress in both institutional and program-level accreditation as part of its long-term strategy to strengthen global competitiveness, reputation and recognition. Accreditation remains a key mechanism for ensuring that the University's governance, teaching, and research practices align with internationally recognized standards.

34,8

One of the major achievements of 2025 was the receipt of institutional accreditation following a rigorous International Quality Review conducted by the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). This signifies that NU adheres to the highest international standards for quality in higher education. The accreditation is valid for a period of five years.

At the program level, an additional four programs successfully obtained accreditation from recognized international accreditation bodies. In December 2025, the Master of Public Health (MPH) program was accredited by the Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation (APHEA) for six years. In addition, three programs of the Graduate School of Education (MA in Multilingual Education; MSc in Educational Leadership; PhD in Education) were awarded International Program Accreditation by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education.

Figure 7. International Accreditations of NU Academic Programs

2019	European Association for Public Administration Accreditation EAPAA ACCREDITED www.eapaa.org	Master in Public Policy and Master in Public Administration	2024	ECAQA Eurasian Centre for Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education and Health Care	Doctor of Medicine
2023	NASPAA The Global Standard in Public Service Education		2025	APHEA Agency for Public Health Education Accreditation	Master of Public Health
2020	Course Accredited by BALEAP The global forum for EAP professionals	English for Academic Purposes: Modules FEAP 010 and 020 (re-accredited in 2024)	2025	QAA	MA in Multilingual Education MSc in Educational Leadership PhD in Education
2023	Association of MBAs Business Graduates Association	Full-Time MBA and Executive MBA			

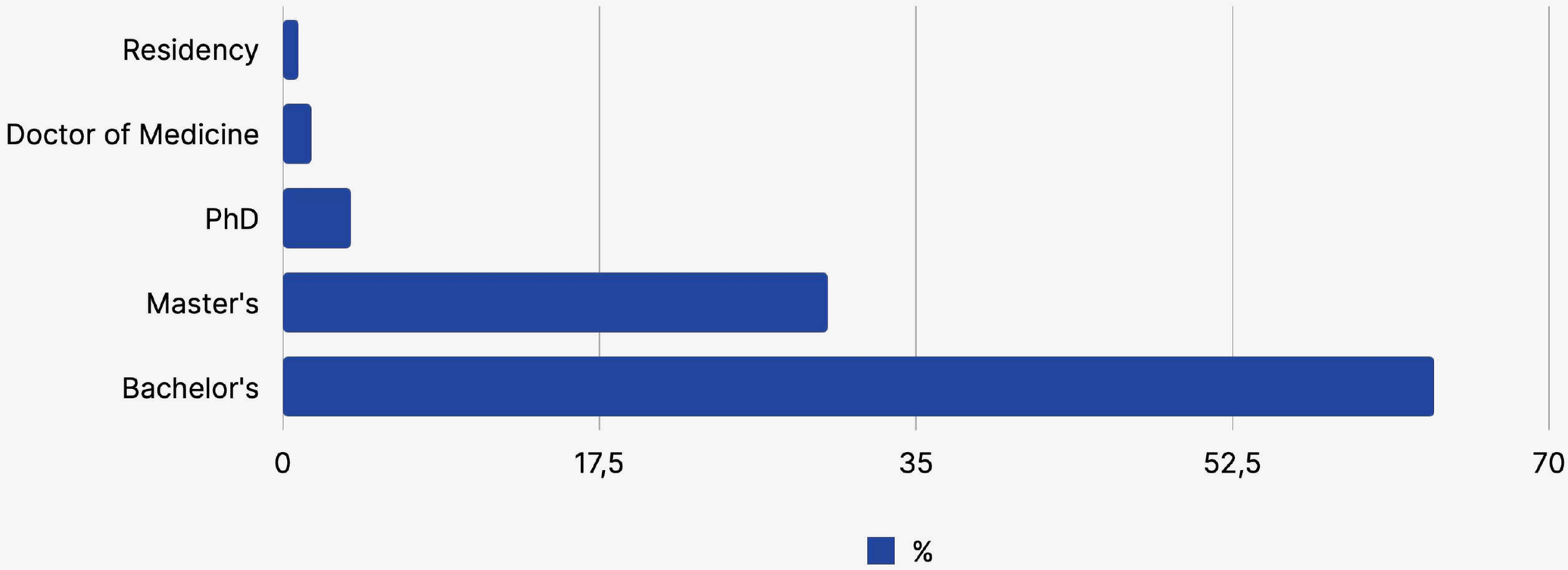
Graduation Outcomes

Nazarbayev University graduates continue to achieve strong outcomes in employment and further education, reflecting the relevance and quality of the University's academic programs. The majority of NU alumni secure employment within a short period after graduation across a wide range of sectors, including industry, government, research, and international organizations. A significant proportion also pursue postgraduate studies at leading universities around the world. These outcomes demonstrate the University's success in preparing highly skilled graduates who contribute to economic development, innovation, and the advancement of knowledge in Kazakhstan and beyond.

In 2025, NU graduated 1,700 students, including 1,082 undergraduates, 512 master's students, 64 PhD graduates, 27 MD graduates, and 15 residency students, bringing the total number of University alumni to 12,039.



Figure 8. Degrees Conferred by Level



More than half of the graduating Bachelor students (524) came from the School of Sciences and Humanities, followed by the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences with 469 graduates. Among the 512 master's graduates, the largest share (153) came from the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences. The Graduate Schools of Business, Education, and Public Policy were represented by comparable numbers of graduates (74, 78, and 72 respectively), while the remaining master's graduates came from the Schools of Medicine, Mining and Geosciences, and Sciences and Humanities.

The majority of PhD graduates (92) came from the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences. The second-largest cohort (57) graduated from the Graduate School of Education. The remaining PhD graduates came from the Graduate School of Public Policy (23), the School of Sciences and Humanities (21), the School of Mining and Geosciences (6), and the School of Medicine (5).

In 2025, 94.16% of NU's 12,039 alumni were professionally; the vast majority - around 90% - are employed in Kazakhstan, where they contribute to national development across a wide range of sectors, including engineering and technology, public administration, education, healthcare, finance, consulting, research, and entrepreneurship. Many NU alumni are engaged in initiatives that support innovation, institutional development, and economic diversification. Their growing presence in key industries and public sector institutions highlights the University's contribution to building a highly skilled workforce and advancing Kazakhstan's transition toward a knowledge-based economy.

Figure 9. Graduate Employment Outcomes



Faculty Recognition by Advance HE

Over the reporting period, University faculty received international professional recognition through Advance HE. In total, twelve faculty members were awarded Advance HE fellowships, including ten Senior Fellowships and two Fellowships. These recognitions are awarded to individuals who demonstrate sustained effectiveness in teaching and learning support, leadership in higher education, and a commitment to enhancing the student learning experience, reflecting the NU's ongoing commitment to excellence in teaching and learning.

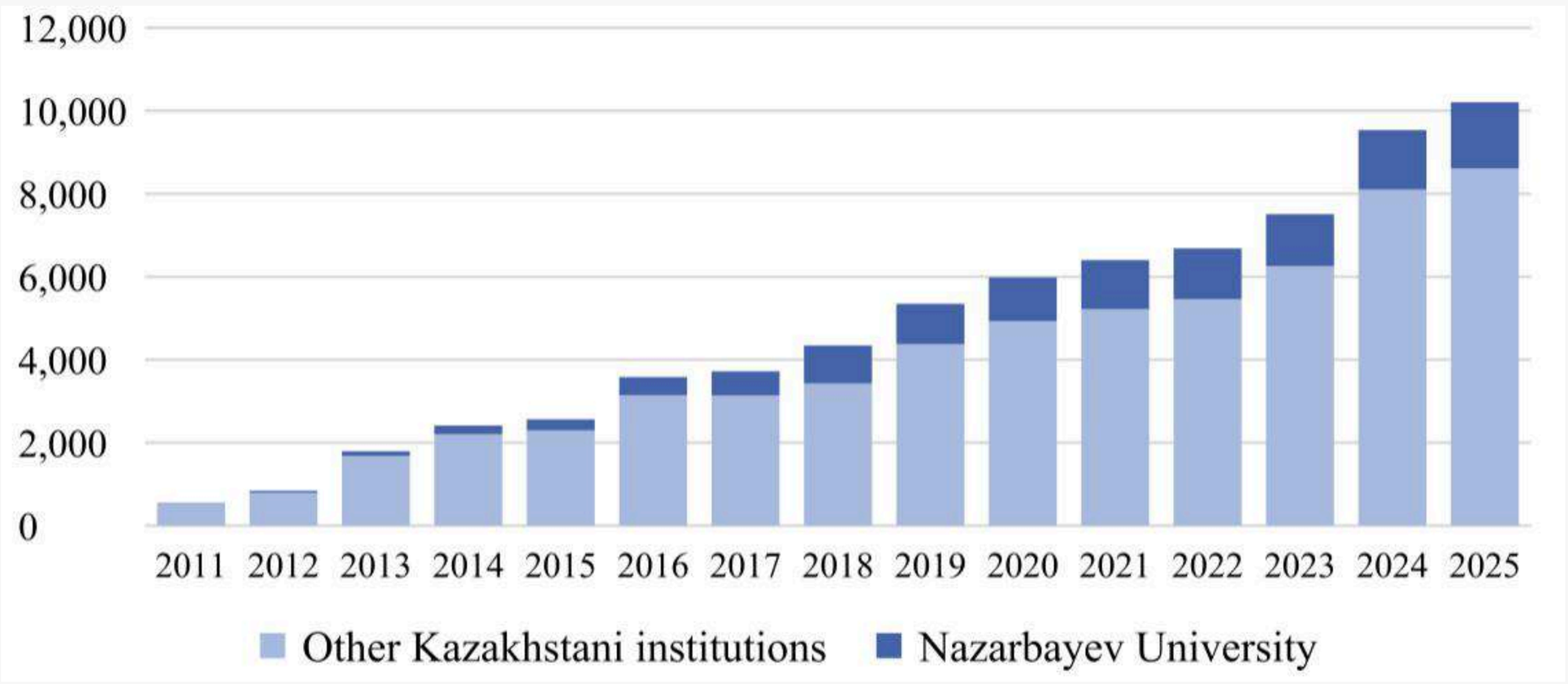
Research Excellence

The University continued to strengthen its research productivity and quality, further consolidating its position as a leading research institution in Kazakhstan and the wider Central Asian region. Through sustained investment in research infrastructure, support for faculty, and the expansion of international collaborations, the University fostered an environment conducive to high-impact research. NU demonstrated a steady growth in research outputs, enhanced visibility in international research communities, and increased contributions to addressing regional and global challenges.

Publication Trends

The University pursues excellence in research and seeks to ensure that its research contributes meaningfully to the socio-economic development of Kazakhstan and the Central Asian region. Since 2011, NU has generated 11,317[2] peer-reviewed research publications that have been indexed by the Scopus database.

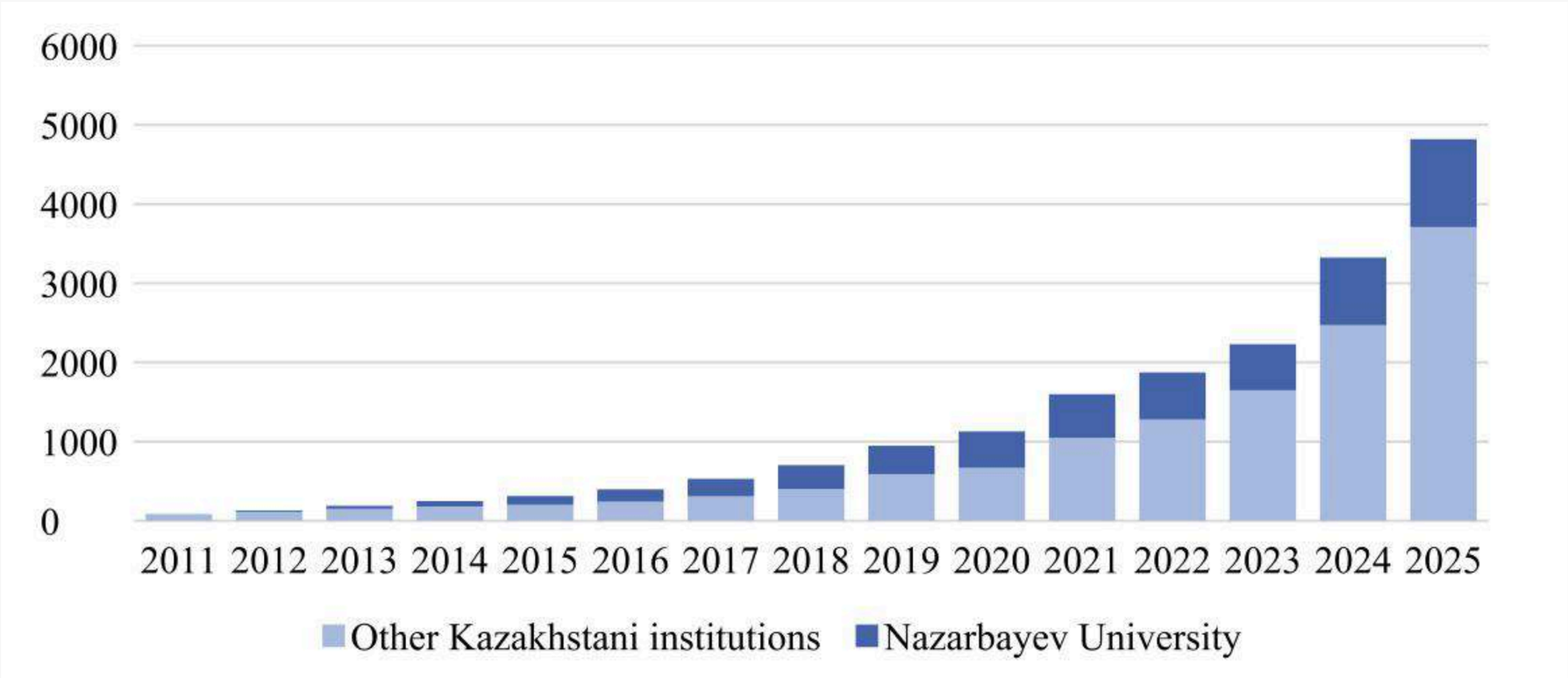
Figure 10. Number of Publications: Nazarbayev University vs Other Kazakhstani Institutions



[2] Scopus data for 2025 are preliminary and will be updated during the first half of 2026

NU has demonstrated a consistent upward trajectory in its scholarly contributions in high-impact journals. This is evident in the institution's publications in Q1 journals - the top 25% of prestigious journals as ranked by Scopus. As of the current date, NU has amassed a substantial total of 5,432 papers in Q1 journals. Significantly, this volume represents 29.3% of all Q1 research papers published by Kazakhstani institutions between 2011 and 2025, a period that saw 18,521 such publications nationwide. This achievement underscores NU's pivotal role in elevating the quality and volume of advanced scholarly output within Kazakhstan.

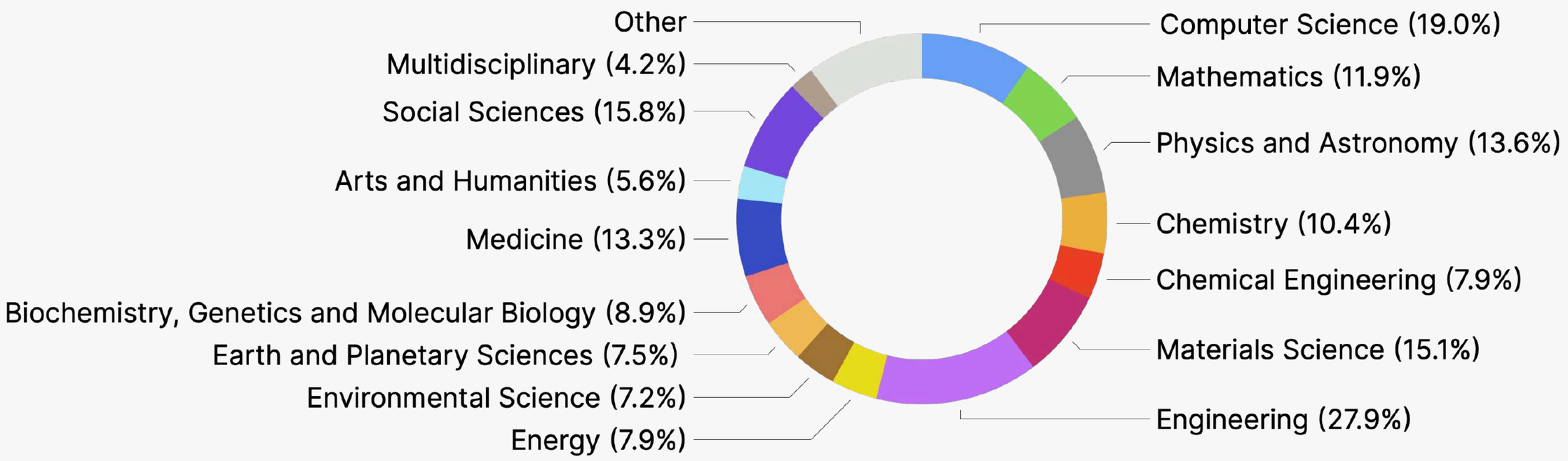
Figure 11. Q1 Publications: Nazarbayev University vs Other Kazakhstani Institutions



NU's research portfolio encompasses both fundamental and applied disciplines and reflects Kazakhstan's national development priorities focusing on the following research areas:

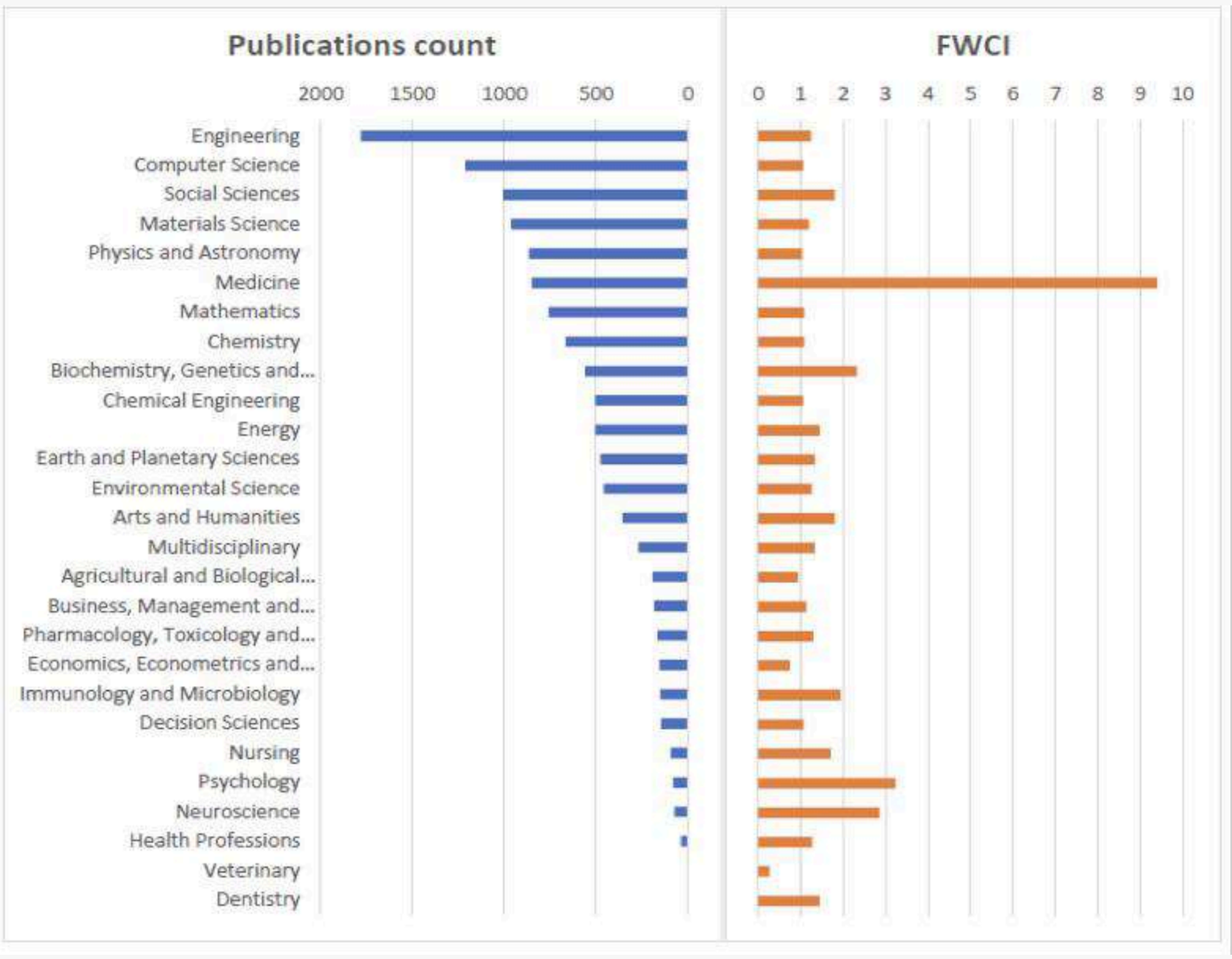
- Socio-economic transformation;
- Artificial Intelligence;
- Health and Well-being;
- Advanced Materials and New Technologies;
- Energy and Environment.

Figure 12. Research Publications by Field



The university's Field-Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) reached 2.26 (as of 3 February 2026), the highest among all Kazakhstani institutions. This impact metric is also higher than that of several leading regional institutions across Asia and Central Asia. This demonstrates a significant level of influence and citation recognition for its research output.
Figure 13 illustrates the distribution of publications for 2021-2025 by subject area, along with their FWCI. This indicator measures how frequently publications in a given field are cited relative to the global average, where a value above 1 indicates higher-than-average citation impact. In many subject areas, NU's FWCI exceeds 1, demonstrating citation performance above the global benchmark.

Figure 13. Research Output and Impact by Discipline



The highest FWCI values are observed in Medicine, Biochemistry, Genetics and Molecular Biology, which is consistent with global trends, where these disciplines typically exhibit the highest citation intensity. FWCI values above 1 are also recorded in the Humanities and Social Sciences, reflecting the University's capacity to produce highly cited research in these fields. Moreover, relatively high FWCI values are observed in Engineering, Environmental Science, Earth Sciences, and Computer Science. This pattern underscores the University's strategic orientation toward research areas with strong potential for scientific advancement and international collaboration.

Kazakhstan's National H-Index Ranking

Nazarbayev University secured first place among Kazakhstani institutions in the updated National H-Index Ranking of Kazakhstan for the second half of 2025. The National H-Index Ranking (NHR) is an independent international assessment based on the consolidated Hirsch index, designed to measure the research productivity of individual researchers, research groups, and organizations in the country.

Figure 14. Top 10 Universities in Kazakhstan by H-index Metrics

Top 10 universities in Kazakhstan

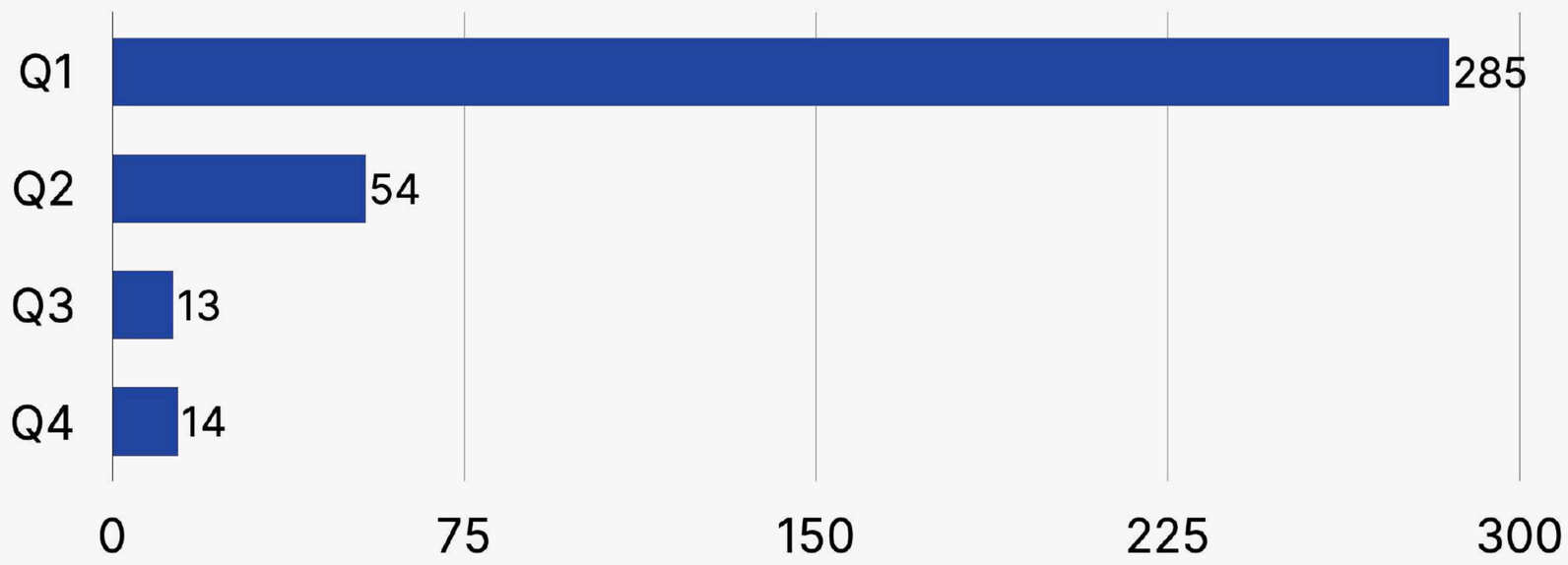
Name of higher education institution	Place in the top 10	National H-index	H-index (Scopus)	H-index (WoS)	H-index (Google Scholar)
Nazarbayev University	1	127	128	116	272
Al Farabi Kazakh National University	2	86	95	89	145
L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University	3	78	80	80	146
Satbayev University	4	56	70	42	112
Kazakh National Medical University	5	55	64	60	80
Kazakh-British Technical University	6	39	49	43	49
KIMEP University	7	36	45	36	53
Nazarbayev University School of Medicine	8	32	54	6	70
Suleyman Demirel University, Kaskelen	9	29	33	36	36
Kazakh National Agrarian Research University	10	27	38	22	41

The ranking uses data from leading scientometric databases and platforms such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The NHR calculates a consolidated indicator and assigns a rank to institutions.

Students' Research Engagement

In 2025, approximately one third of the University's total research output was published in co-authorship with students of Nazarbayev University, according to Scopus data (as of 25 November 2025). Of these publications, 77.9% appeared in Q1 journals (top 25% by CiteScore), indicating the high quality of the research. An additional 14.8% of articles were published in Q2 journals (top 26-50% by CiteScore), also representing a significant achievement.

Figure 15. Distribution of Student Co-authored Publications by Journal Quartile



An analysis of student participation in research publishing shows that the largest share of early-career authors (42.6%) were PhD students. The next substantial group (32.1%) comprised master's students, followed by undergraduate students (19.5. This trend reflects the final stages of NU academic programs during which students prepare and defend their theses, dissertations and projects. Figures 16 and 17 shows the distribution of publishing students by School.

Figure 16. Distribution of Student Authors by Level of Study

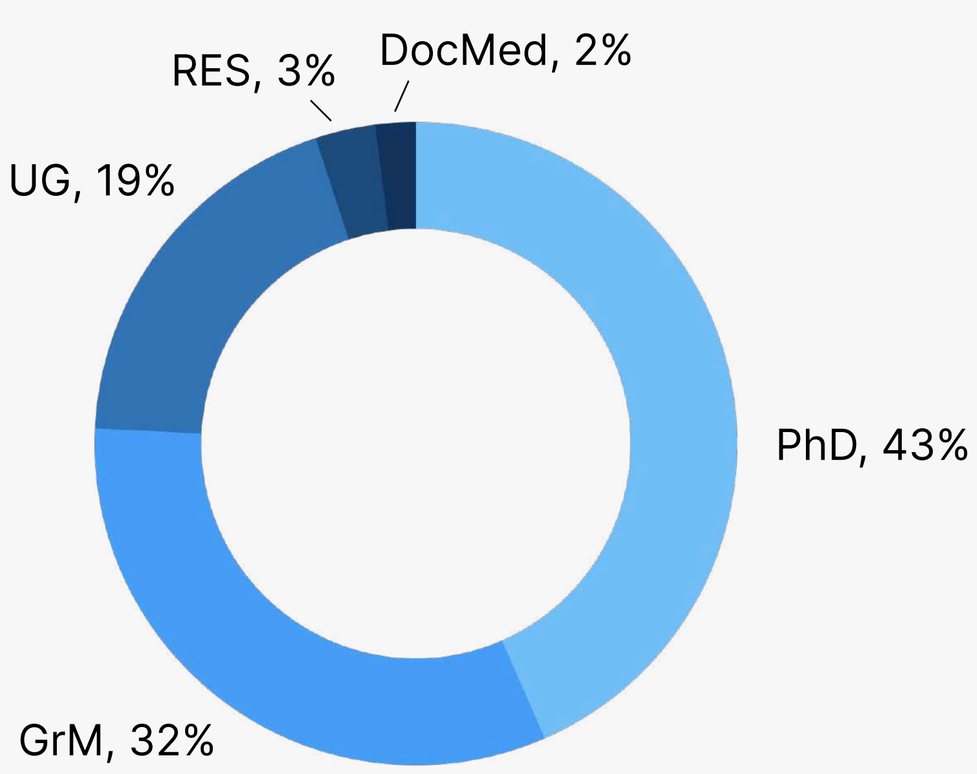
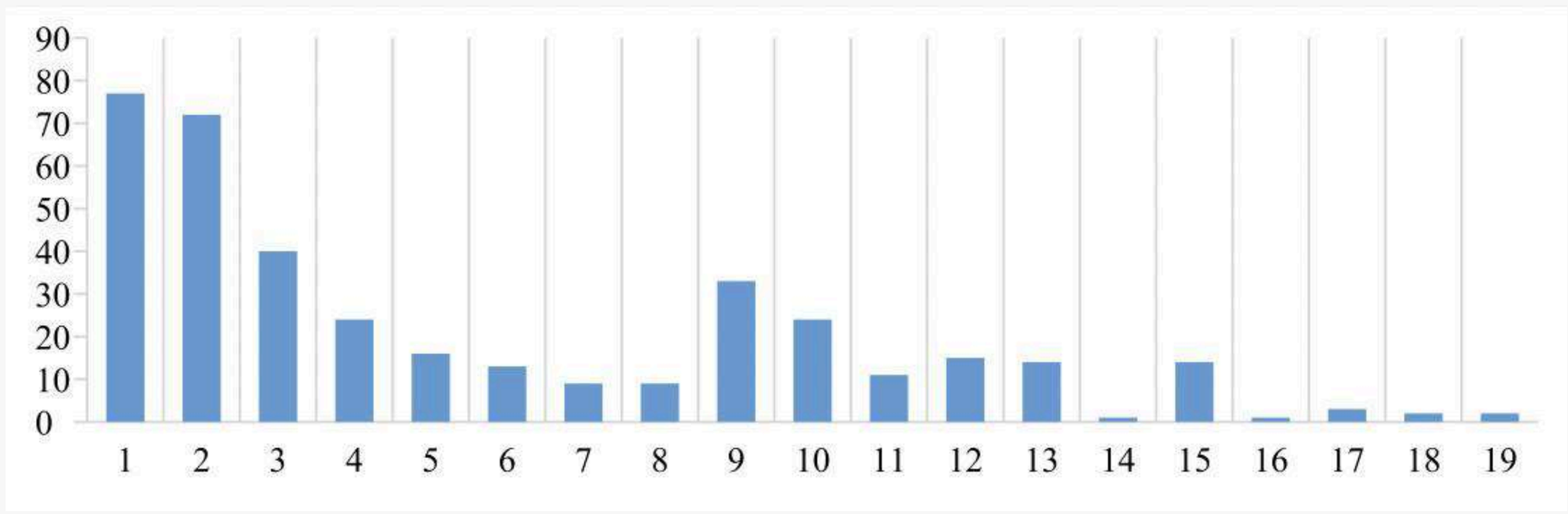


Figure 17. Student Co-authors by School and Level of Study



International Collaborations

International collaboration is widely recognized in the research community as one of the fundamental factors contributing to higher citation rates and the greater impact of publications. NU's international collaboration percentage of 61.2% for 2025, places it among institutions with a strong focus on global cooperation like University of Cambridge and NUS. This highlights its efforts to foster international research networks and partnerships. The FWCI of these collaborative publications is 2.93 - nearly three times than the global average for similar research. This highlights the success of the University's strategy in fostering international research partnerships.

Figure 18. International Collaboration vs Research Impact (FWCI): Nazarbayev University Benchmarking

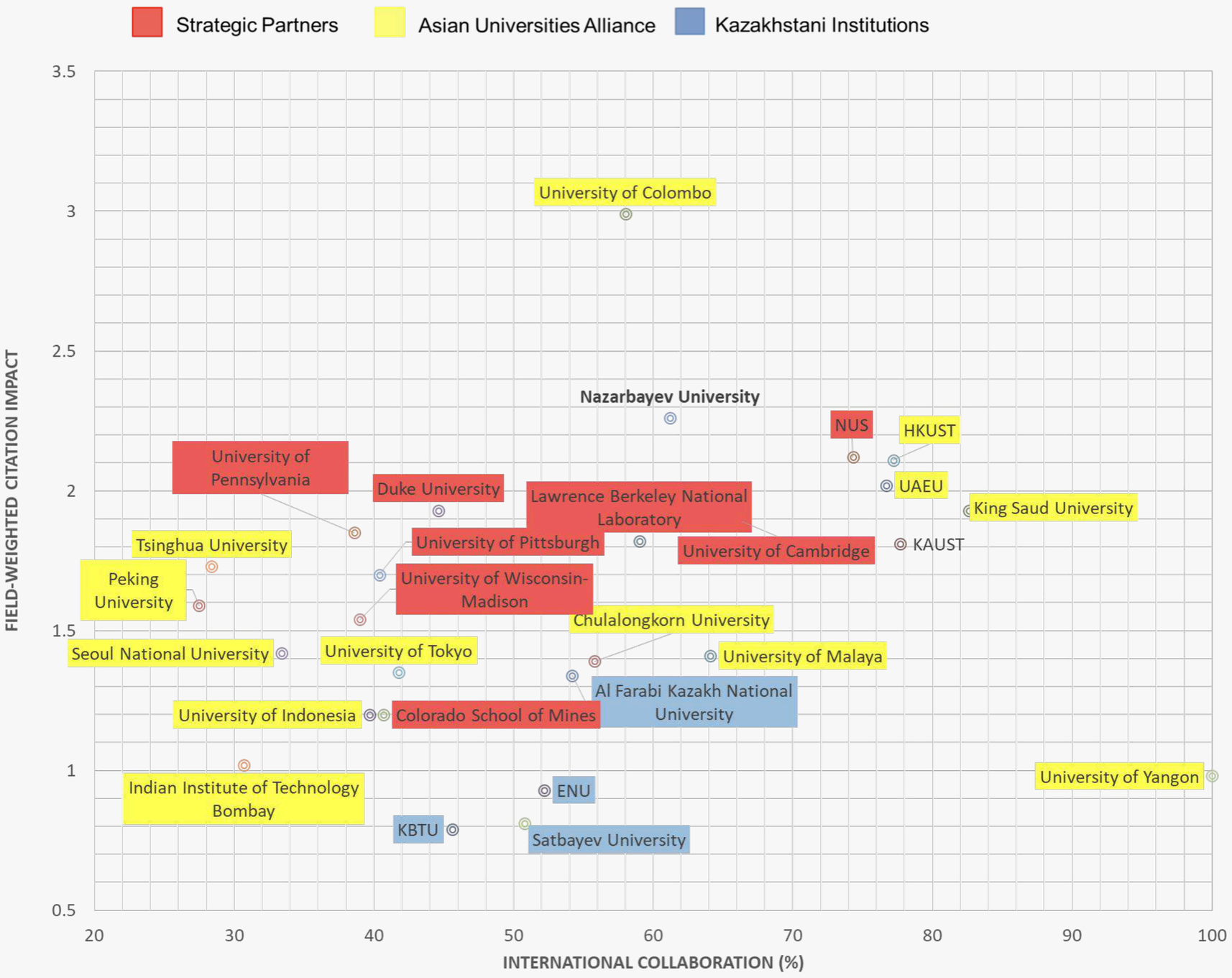


Figure 19 shows particularly strong collaboration in Europe (more than 2,000 joint publications) and the Asia-Pacific region (more than 3,000 joint publications), each involving more than 1,000 institutions. A significant share also comes from North America, with 571 institutions and 1,066 joint publications, and the Middle East, with 398 organizations and around 1,000 publications.

Figure 19. Global Research Collaboration Network of Nazarbayev University



Growth in International Recognition

In 2025, Nazarbayev University demonstrated significant growth in global research impact. A total of 42 NU researchers were included in the annual international ranking of the top 2% most-cited scientists worldwide, representing a 10% increase compared to the previous year. This ranking is compiled by Stanford University and is based on Scopus global bibliometric data.

Establishment of the Institute for New Materials and Energy Technologies (INMET)

In October 2025, Nazarbayev University and the National Academy of Sciences under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish the Institute for New Materials and Energy Technologies (INMET). The initiative aims to strengthen the country's scientific capacity in the fields of energy, materials science, and technological innovation.

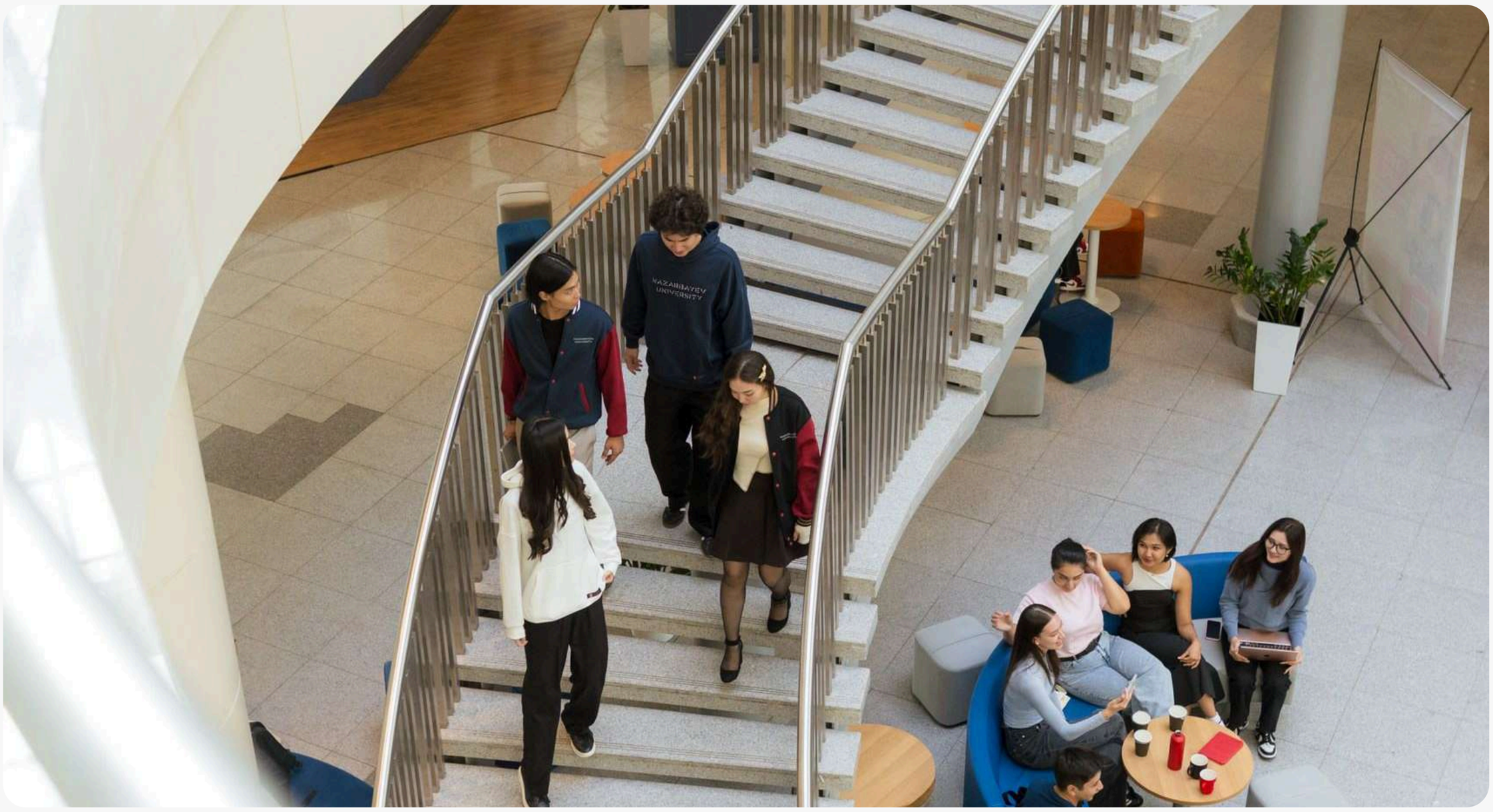
The new institute, to be hosted at Nazarbayev University and managed by the National Academy of Sciences, will bring together leading scientists and research groups to implement advanced projects related to the energy transition. Priority areas of activity will include energy systems, digitalization of energy infrastructure, energy storage technologies, and scientific expertise for projects supporting Kazakhstan's goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. INMET will also serve as a national coordinator for collaboration with international initiatives, including ITER, EuroFusion, and other global research platforms.

The establishment of the institute aligns with the strategic priorities outlined by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including the initiative to create a UN Regional Center for Sustainable Energy. The project was proposed by Professor Zhumabay Bakenov of Nazarbayev University and Academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, and has received strong support at the national level.

The establishment of INMET represents a strategic step toward strengthening Kazakhstan's national innovation ecosystem, expanding international scientific collaboration, and advancing the country's priorities in sustainable energy development.

Societal Impact

NU continued to play an active role in supporting Kazakhstan's national development through innovation, policy engagement, capacity building, and contributions to global development agendas. Leveraging its academic expertise, the University worked closely with government institutions, universities, schools, industry and broader stakeholders to promote evidence-based policymaking, strengthen institutional capacity, and advance sustainable development priorities.



Innovation

NU continued to strengthen its innovation ecosystem by advancing research commercialization, supporting entrepreneurship, and expanding innovation infrastructure. The University translated research outcomes into practical solutions addressing national priorities in healthcare, technology, education, and sustainable development.

Oylan Multimodal Model - the Nation's first Language-Audio-Vision model

The Institute of Smart Systems and Artificial Intelligence (ISSAI) achieved a significant breakthrough in artificial intelligence with the launch of its proprietary multimodal model, Oylan - Kazakhstan's first generative AI service, capable of processing text, audio, and images. The model operates in three languages - Kazakh, English, and Russian - ensuring broad applicability and creating strong potential to support the development of digital solutions across Kazakhstan.

To train the model, the ISSAI team developed the largest specialized dataset in Kazakhstan's history, comprising more than 10 million images and 50 million question–answer pairs. The dataset was adapted to reflect the country's linguistic, cultural, and socio-economic context, making Oylan particularly relevant for addressing national challenges and supporting locally-tailored AI applications. ISSAI researchers developed a number of efficient training optimization techniques, enabling them to produce a high-quality AI model while minimizing computational costs.

Oylan has potential applications across a wide range of sectors, including education, healthcare, industry, finance, and the public sector.

First “Made in Kazakhstan” Microchip

Scientists at Nazarbayev University reached a major technological milestone with the successful fabrication of the first domestically designed microchip. This achievement marks an important step in the development of Kazakhstan’s national semiconductor industry and contributes to strengthening the country’s technological sovereignty.

The project was conducted by researchers from the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences (SEDS) in collaboration with the University of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Beijing Open Source Chip Institute, as part of the international “One Student – One Chip” program. A significant contribution was also made by the Kazakhstani startup TEXER.AI, supported by a grant from QazInnovation, highlighting the growing role of the country’s local innovation ecosystem.

The creation of the first “Designed in Kazakhstan” microchip demonstrates the country’s potential in advanced hardware technologies, and opens new opportunities for research, educational programs, industrial collaboration, and the development of national competencies in microelectronics.

Research Commercialization and Project Financing

On 24 December 2025, the Supreme Scientific and Technical Commission under the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan approved three scientific and technical specifications and initiated preparations for a competitive funding call for 2026-2028, with a total funding volume of KZT 4.55 billion. The approved initiatives include:

- Pilot Production of a Cathode Material Precursor (materials for lithium-ion batteries);
- Establishment of an Innovative Production Base for Hydrocarbon Nanomaterials in Kazakhstan (carbon nanotube filament materials);
- Development of National Competencies in Microchip Design and Verification, including the Texer.AI solution for the design and verification of domestic microprocessors.

In parallel, the Nazarbayev University Endowment Fund allocated USD 1 million to support commercialization initiatives aimed at accelerating pilot implementation, industrial testing, and market readiness. The University provided grant and venture financing for seven innovation projects, including:

- an AI-based flood risk monitoring system;
- a pharmaceutical production facility;
- AI-driven rehabilitation and motor disorder diagnostics technologies;
- APRIL, an AI-based robotic therapy solution for autism;
- carbon nanotube-based advanced materials production;
- Artisan Education, a robotics-based engineering learning platform;
- Texer.AI, a semiconductor design and verification solution.

Several projects also progressed toward commercialization and regulatory approval. The Astana Gait Exoskeleton for Advanced Rehabilitation received approval from the National Center for Expertise of Medicines and Medical Devices for medical device registration, with the final registration certificate currently pending. Two projects - Astana Gait Exoskeleton and the Robot for Automated Reduction of Long Bone Fractures - have been submitted for participation in the Science Fund’s 2026-2028 commercialization grant competition.

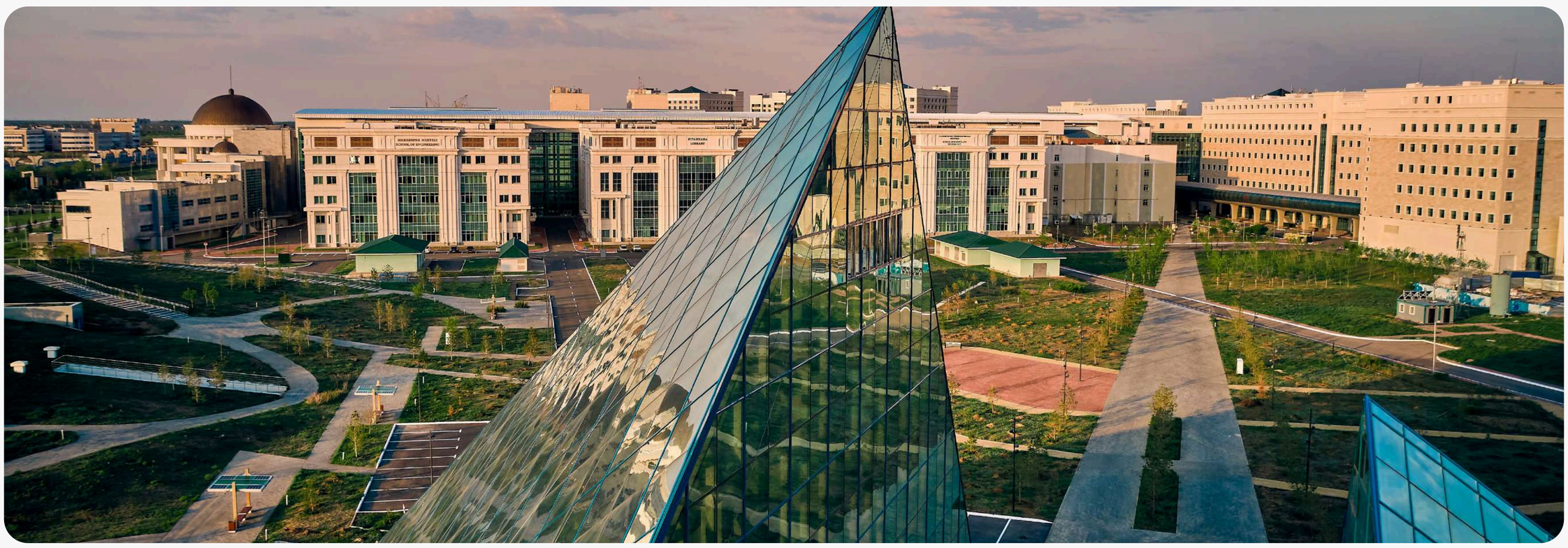
Additional projects advanced through partnership development and infrastructure expansion. The Donor Heart Preservation and Transportation System project is currently constructing a production facility in the industrial zone of Astana. The domestic anti-cancer drug development project, implemented under program-targeted funding from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (2024-2026), successfully completed the second phase of clinical trials assessing safety and treatment efficacy. Production of arsenic trioxide (ATO) is planned to begin in 2026 at the Antigen facility in Almaty.

Further progress was achieved in supporting domestic medical technology manufacturing through the IHT Central Asia project, which is working with the Ministry of Healthcare to establish regulatory mechanisms enabling long-term procurement contracts with SK-Pharmacia. Meanwhile, the Arlan BioTech project completed international product testing and is preparing a publication in a high-impact international scientific journal.

Educational technology initiatives also expanded nationally. The Codiplay and Artisan Education platforms have now been implemented in 283 and 96 schools across Kazakhstan, respectively.

The DeepTech startup Mirai Tech, founded by Prof. Gulnur Kalimuldina and Azamat Yeshmukhametov from the School of Engineering and Digital Sciences, is a notable example of transforming scientific research into commercially oriented technological solutions. The project originated from laboratory studies of materials capable of generating electricity through movement and evolved into a technology for “smart” nano-insoles that analyze athletes’ biomechanics and enable early detection of injury risks. This development is currently undergoing testing in Kazakhstani football clubs and has already attracted $90,000 in initial investment. Mirai Tech is among the Nazarbayev University startups advancing DeepTech innovation in Kazakhstan, demonstrating successful integration of university research with the needs of the sports industry, healthcare, and wearable technology sectors.

The development of artificial intelligence and strengthening of the country’s digital sovereignty remain key national priorities. In October 2025, the startups Mirai Tech and Defect AI, both created within the NU technological cluster, were presented to President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the international forum Digital Bridge 2025.



Social Innovation and Community Impact

The University also strengthened its role as a catalyst for social innovation. A comprehensive support system for university-led social projects was established, enabling students and researchers to develop solutions addressing pressing societal challenges. During the reporting period, more than 100 social startups completed the University's incubation program, and 10 projects received seed funding of up to KZT 10 million. These initiatives focus on issues such as food waste reduction, bio-based urban solutions, and accessibility technologies in the Kazakh language for visually impaired users.

Research and Creative Infrastructure

To support emerging technologies and interdisciplinary collaboration, the University expanded its innovation infrastructure. A blockchain laboratory was launched in partnership with industry stakeholders, accompanied by the development of a new course titled Blockchain and Cryptocurrencies.

The interdisciplinary innovation hub Ónergy further expanded its facilities and now operates Food Lab, Bio Lab, and Typography Lab, providing researchers, designers, and entrepreneurs with experimental environments to transform creative ideas into tangible prototypes and projects.

Campus and Urban Innovation Development

NU continued to develop physical infrastructure that supports innovation and collaboration between academia, industry, and the community. Construction began on the first building of the NU Science Park, a 12,000 m² facility scheduled to open in 2026, which will serve as a hub for researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, and students.

In parallel, the University is developing NU Park, a 45-hectare green innovation cluster designed as a shared space for the campus and the city. The park will include plant nurseries, experimental research zones, and outdoor art and innovation spaces, supporting interdisciplinary collaboration and sustainable urban development.

Medical Innovation and Research Partnerships

To strengthen medical technology development, the Nazarbayev University Foundation, in partnership with Salamat Group, supported the launch of a new research and development laboratory for medical device innovation. The facility enables Kazakhstani physicians and researchers to prototype, test, and commercialize medical technologies developed within the country.

Technological Entrepreneurship

NU also continued to promote deep technology entrepreneurship. The inaugural Deeptech Baige competition awarded a KZT 35 million prize fund to innovative teams including Game of Drones, Flection.AI, Granulo System, and Hemo Lab, reinforcing the University's leadership in advanced technology development.

International startup acceleration opportunities also expanded through the ongoing partnership with Stanford StartX. During the reporting year, four Central Asian startups joined the international accelerator, bringing the total number of participating ventures to ten, including several founded by NU alumni.



Alignment with Global Development Agendas

A significant focus of NU’s engagement with global agendas was its contribution to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Faculty research and community outreach were aligned with its targets, ensuring that the University's impact was not only locally- relevant but also globally conscious, embedding sustainable development principles.

Nazarbayev University actively supports the implementation of the SDGs through research and scholarly publications that contribute to knowledge dissemination and the development of solutions to global challenges. Between 2011 and 2025, 33.6% of all University publications addressed various aspects of the SDGs.

The top three research areas aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals include:

- SDG 3 – Good Health and Well-Being: the largest number of publications, 1,286, reflecting the University’s focus on medical and public health research.
- SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy: 963 publications, highlighting the University’s contribution to the development of technologies and solutions for the energy sector.
- SDG 9 – Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure: 584 publications, demonstrating the University’s commitment to advancing industrialization and technological innovation.

Capacity Building and Leadership Development

Beyond direct policy input, the University played a critical role in developing the nation's human capital. NU delivered specialized training programs, workshops, and high-level seminars specifically tailored for university leadership and administrative staff across Kazakhstan. These efforts were designed to disseminate best international practices in governance, research management, and academic excellence, thereby strengthening the institutional capacity of the wider national education system.

In alignment with its goal of higher education reform, NU has actively engaged with a broad range of stakeholders to enhance educational quality, promote equity and inclusion, and strengthen Kazakhstan’s research and innovation ecosystem.

These initiatives are part of NU’s strategic commitment to support national priorities in human capital development, educational modernization, and innovation-driven societal progress. They address critical areas such as research capacity, student well-being, professional leadership, and sustainable development, all while fostering collaboration among local and international partners.

Promoting Gender Equality, STEM, and Research Excellence

NU supported the development of an inclusive and globally competitive academic workforce, particularly in STEM fields, through activities including:

- A panel on promoting gender equality in STEM at Astana IT University to discuss strategies for creating equitable learning and research environments;
- Academic development in research methods for PhD students at Abai National University focused on advanced skills in research design and methodology;
- Workshops on Systematic Literature Review and bibliometric analysis for regional universities to enhance research productivity.

These activities directly support the higher education reform objective of improving teaching quality, fostering interdisciplinary research, and enhancing the global competitiveness of Kazakhstani universities.

Child and Youth Well-Being and Positive Peace Education

NU has actively promoted holistic education and youth development, strengthening well-being and social-emotional learning across schools and universities, through:

- Seminars and a national roundtable on child and youth well-being, which engaged the academic community and government representatives in evidence-based approaches to youth development;
- The Positive Peace Education initiative, which engaged educators, students and school leaders throughout Kazakhstan through national webinars, seminars, and presentations - a collaborative venture with the Altynsarin National Academy of Education and the Ustaz Alliance Community;

- Institutional workshops on early childhood well-being, organized with the Ministry of Education and the Supplementary Education and Well-Being Institute, fostered collaboration between policymakers, practitioners, and educational institutions.

By equipping educators and institutions with tools to enhance student well-being and social development, these initiatives contribute to the modernization of Kazakhstan's educational practices and promotion of inclusive, learner-centered environments.



Strengthening Regional Universities and Capacity-Building

NU has played a key role in enhancing institutional capacity, leadership, and innovation in higher education:

- The Strengthening Regional Universities project, implemented with the British Council Kazakhstan and QAA, supported university representatives in improving governance, research output, and teaching quality;
- NU-led doctoral and leadership development programs targeted senior leaders and administrators at regional universities, incorporating international modules with UNESCO-TEC and Shanghai Normal University, benefiting over 270 university leaders, faculty, and administrators;
- The 'University Bridge' doctoral webinar series facilitated collaboration among 18 universities, supporting PhD students and early-career researchers in building high-quality research skills.

These efforts strengthen regional higher education institutions, supporting systemic reform by improving academic governance, fostering interdisciplinary research, and aligning curricula with national development priorities.

Environmental Sustainability, Health, and Applied Professional Development

NU's societal impact extends to professional training and applied research, particularly in healthcare and sustainability:

- Launch and delivery of an online course on environmental sustainability in healthcare engaged 102 healthcare professionals and students, promoting evidence-based sustainable practices;

- Targeted professional development programs for medical university staff reached 160+ academic and administrative personnel, improving institutional capacity and workforce readiness.

By embedding sustainability and applied skills into education and professional training, these initiatives contribute to national goals for innovation, public health, and environmentally responsible practices.

Broad Outreach and National Engagement

NU has also prioritized national outreach to strengthen the entire education ecosystem:

- Contributions to regional pedagogical conferences in Astana and Aqmola reached aproximately 300 teachers and principals, sharing best practices in teaching, leadership, and curriculum development.
- Professional development and outreach programs across higher and secondary education engaged over 1,000 participants, promoting lifelong learning, social inclusion, and equitable access to quality education.

These programs are directly linked to NU's commitment to higher education reform, helping to modernize Kazakhstan's educational system, increase institutional competitiveness, and contribute to national socio-economic development.





Monitoring Results

Purpose:
Report on operational indicators, resource utilization and compliance with requirements.

Content:
Financial monitoring of income sources, expenditures, and surplus/deficit.

Table 10. Research Centers of Nazarbayev University

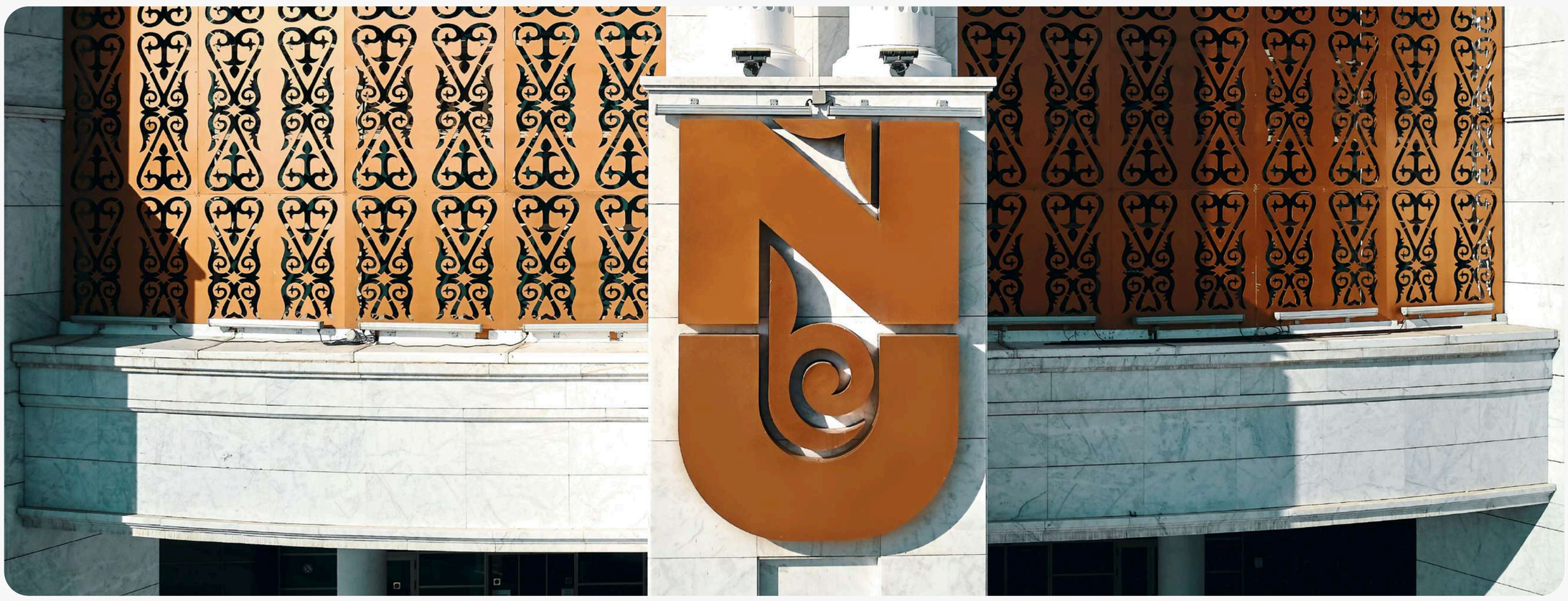
Category	Planned Budget (thousand tenge)	Actual (Thousand Tenge)	Variance (%)
Total Income	**87 791 684**	**87 041 490**	-1%
State Educational Order	36 064 094	35 503 098	-2%
Research Funding, Including:	13 134 728	13 891 028	6%
• *From The Republican Budget*	*4 096 134*	*5 583 263*	*36%*
• *From Other Sources*	*9 038 595*	*8 307 765*	*-8%*
Target Contribution	392 247	371 592	-2%
Budgetary Investments	.	.	.
Other Income	38 200 614	37 275 772	-2%

At the end of 2025, the University’s total income amounted to 87 041 490 thousand tenge, representing 99% of the planned indicators. The deviation of actual figures from the approved budget is not material and is attributable to adjustments to individual revenue items during the reporting period.

The largest share of income is derived from State educational order, which supports the university’s core educational activities. The variance between the planned amount and the actual execution of the State educational order is attributable to adjustments in the student numbers during the reporting period, including natural cohort turnover (withdrawals and academic leave), which affected the volume of funding for educational provision.

The second significant source is funding for research activities, which exceeded the target level by 6%, reflecting an increase in the volume of research projects and the attraction of additional funding sources. A significant proportion of revenue is also generated from other revenue streams, including sponsorship funds (primarily from the endowment fund), fee-paying educational services, external research projects, and partnership programs.

Overall, the revenue structure is characterized by a diversified funding model, contributing to the University’s financial sustainability.



Specific Features of Budget Funding Recognition

The main sources of budget funding in the reporting period were the following budget programs:

- State educational order (budget program 204);
- program-targeted and grant funding for research (Budget Program 217);
- a targeted contribution from the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Budget Program 024) for the transfer of healthcare management technologies to the medical clinics of the University Medical Center (UMC) Corporate Fund.

These funds are reflected in the university’s financial statements, reflecting their specific economic nature and accounting treatment, which may result in differences between the reported performance of budget programs and the data presented in the university’s financial statements.

1. Budget Program 204

According to the reporting data on the execution of budget program 204 “Provision of Personnel with Higher and Postgraduate Education” of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, under subprogram 102 related to the activities of AEO Nazarbayev University, in 2025 the actual utilization amounted to 43,261,510 thousand tenge, or 98.7% execution.

The structure of this funding includes:

1. tuition expenses – 35,504,396 thousand tenge; the difference of 1,296 thousand tenge arose due to the return of funds to the budget in accordance with Agreement No. 341 dated February 29, 2024.
2. funding for the research university development program (coefficient 1.05) – 1,775,220 thousand tenge;
3. student stipend support – 5,823,985 thousand tenge;
4. compensation for students’ subsidized travel – 157,909 thousand tenge.

At the same time, funds for stipend payments and compensation for subsidized travel are transferred to students’ bank accounts; therefore, these payments are not reflected in the university’s financial statements as income.

As a result, the total amount of funding from the Republican Budget reflected in the Ministry’s reports exceeds the amount of budget funds recorded as the University’s income. This difference is due to the specifics of the budget accounting methodology and does not affect the actual execution of the budget program.

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2. Budget Program 024

According to the reporting data on the execution of budget program 024 “Targeted Contribution to AEO Nazarbayev University” of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in 2025 the actual utilization amounted to 371,592 thousand tenge, or 95% execution.

The deviation from the planned indicator is due to savings resulting from the replacement of the master class “Reconstructive Surgical Correction of Disorders of Sex Development in Children,” involving specialists from the United States, with the master class “Amplitude-Integrated Electroencephalography,” involving a foreign specialist from the Russian Federation, as well as savings due to changes in mentorship areas - engaging specialists from India and Ukraine instead of the previously planned specialists from Germany and Finland.

Unused funds from the targeted contribution, formed as a result of savings under the program, in accordance with paragraph 4 of Article 13 of the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On the Status of Nazarbayev University, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools and the Nazarbayev Fund,” will be carried forward to subsequent periods.

3. Budget Program 217

According to the reporting data on the execution of budget program 217 “Science Development” of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Republic of Kazakhstan, in 2025 the actual utilization amounted to 3 808 044 thousand tenge, or 166% execution.

The over-fulfillment of the planned indicators is associated with the conclusion of additional contracts for the implementation of scientific projects following the results of competitive procedures, as well as the attraction of additional grant funding. It should be noted that there is a specific feature in the recognition of research grant transactions in the university’s financial statements. Income from grant funding is recognized in full in the reporting period, while operating expenses related to the implementation of scientific projects are also recorded as current expenses.

At the same time, part of the grant funding is allocated for the purchase of scientific equipment, which, in accordance with accounting requirements, is recorded as investments (capital expenditures) and recognized as fixed assets. Accordingly, expenses for such assets are recognized gradually through depreciation in subsequent reporting periods.

As a result, in the reporting period, a temporary excess of income over expenses for scientific projects may occur; this is accounting in nature and will be offset in subsequent periods as depreciation of the acquired equipment is accrued.

Table 11. Expenditure Structure and Variance Analysis

Category	Planned Budget (thousand tenge)	Actual (Thousand Tenge)	Variance (%)
Total Expenditure	**86 933 172**	**84 862 897**	**-2%**
Academic Activities	44 324 286	43 382 242	-2
Research Activities	8 496 688	8 336 393	-2
General And Administrative And Marketing Expenses	9 914 944	8 648 199	-13%
Depreciation Of Fixed Assets And Intangible Assets	15 296 769	13 113 379	-14%
Other Expenses (Including Non-Core Activities)	**8 900 485**	**11 382 683**	**28%**

Following the results of 2025, the total amount of the University’s operating expenses amounted to 84 862 897 thousand tenge, which corresponds to 98% of the planned indicators. This result was achieved through the revision of internal processes and the reduction of non-priority expenditure areas.

- A significant portion of expenses relates to academic activities, including the organization of student education, amounting to 43,382,242 thousand tenge. Following the results of 2025, cost savings in this area amounted to 2%.

- The execution level of expenses within research activities amounted to 8,336,393 thousand tenge, which is 2% below the planned level. Expenses under research activities reflect operating costs incurred in the implementation of research projects.

- General and administrative expenses and marketing expenses were 13% below the planned level and amounted to 8,648,199 thousand tenge. These savings were achieved through strict monitoring of operating expenses.

- Depreciation of fixed assets and intangible assets reflects the actual accrual of depreciation expenses for equipment acquired through targeted contributions and other funds, primarily due to the completion of the depreciation period for certain equipment, in accordance with the University’s accounting policy.

- Other expenses include costs of support units related to academic and research activities, as well as financing of subsidiary organizations and accounting entries. For example, other expenses include a negative foreign exchange difference for 2025 in the amount of 1,182,326 thousand tenge and impairment of assets in the amount of accumulated depreciation of long-term assets totaling 1 billion tenge.

The above factors are the main reasons for the over-execution of other expenses by 28%.

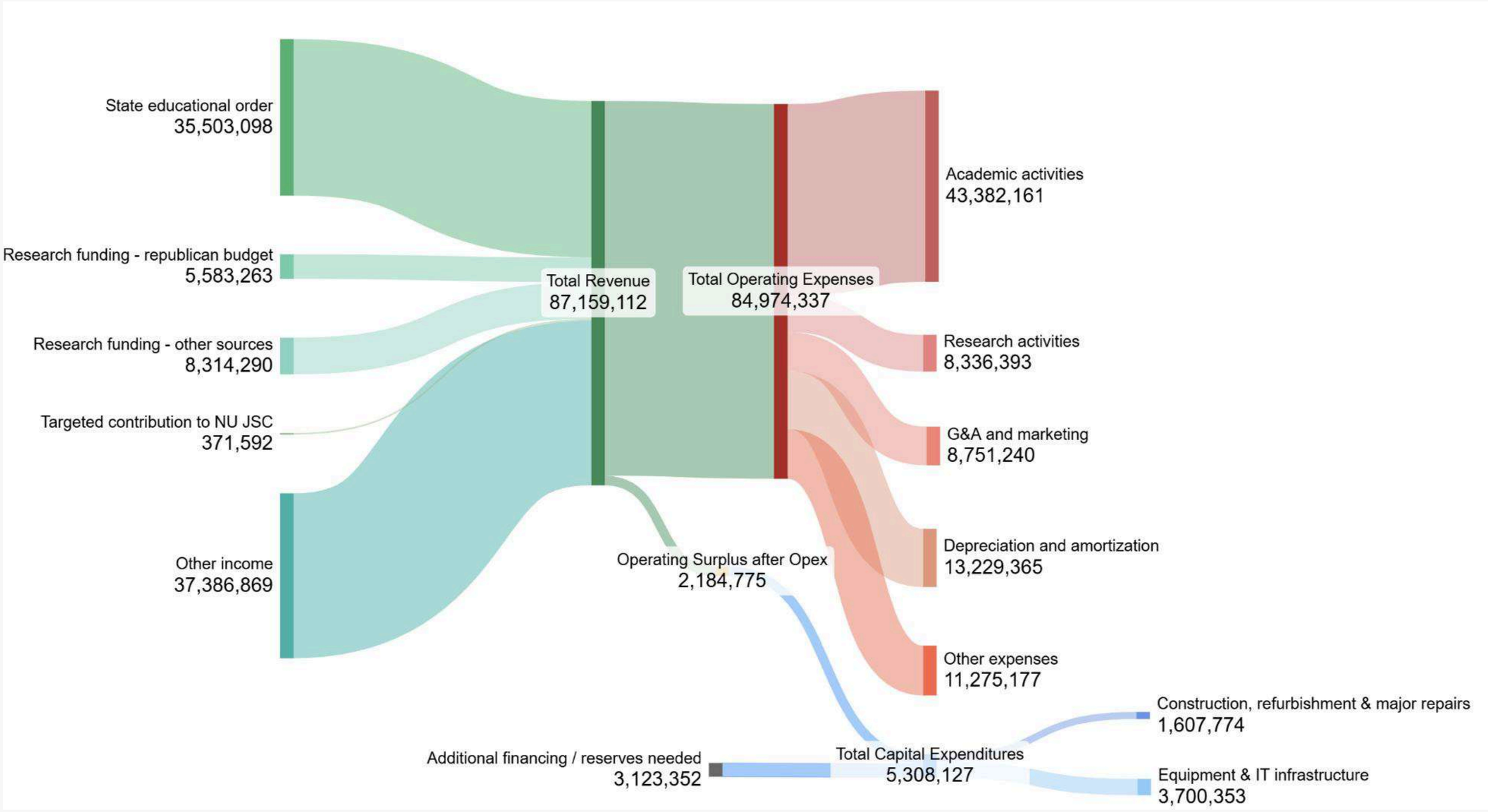
Table 12. Capital Expenditure Performance vs Budget

Category	Planned Budget (thousand tenge)	Actual (Thousand Tenge)	Variance (%)
Total Capital Expenditure	**6 831 752**	**5 308 127**	**-22%**
Construction, Reconstruction And Major Repairs	2 192 880	1 607 774	-27
Technical Equipments And Digitalization	4 638 872	3 700 353	-20

Following the results of 2025, the variance in the execution of the investment budget amounted to 22%, or 1,523,625 thousand tenge, which is mainly due to the early completion of part of the construction works in 2024, savings resulting from reduced volumes of completed construction and installation works, ongoing (carryover) projects, and the postponement of procurement and delivery of IT and scientific equipment to the next period.

It should be noted that, within the revenues received from the republican budget under program-targeted and grant funding for science, scientific equipment in the amount of 786,434 thousand tenge was purchased in 2025.

Figure 20. Integrated Financial Flow (Actual vs Budget Execution)





Operational Monitoring

Events

During the 2024-2025 academic year, Nazarbayev University hosted a diverse portfolio of international conferences, workshops, and expert forums. These events spanned sectors including energy, biomedicine, humanities, public policy, and sustainable development, fostering a collaborative environment for researchers, policymakers, and industry leaders.

Driving Scientific and Technological Innovation

The 13th International Conference on Nanomaterials and Advanced Energy Storage Systems (INESS 2025) and the Belt and Road Initiative Conference on Sustainable Energy Materials positioned NU at the forefront of energy research, a strategic priority for Kazakhstan. Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence with life sciences was a key theme, evidenced by the International Conference on Nanozyme and the Belt and Road Expert Forum on AI for Precision BioMedicine. Organized in partnership with Shanghai Jiao Tong University, this forum highlighted the University's growing international partnerships and its capacity to drive innovation in machine learning and healthcare technologies.

Advancing Healthcare and Biomedicine

The University made substantial contributions to medical science by hosting specialized forums addressing both regional and global health challenges. The Life Sciences Today 2025 conference and the inaugural International Conference on Neuroscience and Neurology provided platforms for cutting-edge discourse on biomedicine and brain health. Additionally, the Transforming Diabetes Care and Planetary Health and Sustainable Healthcare conferences addressed pressing public health issues, bridging the gap between precision medicine and systemic health reforms.

Enriching Policy, Humanities, and Social Discourse

To address the complex socio-political landscape of Central Asia and beyond, NU hosted several high-profile events in the humanities and social sciences. The Central Asian Economics Association meeting and the 9th Annual GSPP Conference facilitated dialogue on policy complexities and economic growth. Concurrently, conferences such as Towards New Transnational/Transimperial Histories of Central Asia, Religious Traditions and Global Ethics, and Voices at the Margins enriched the academic discourse on cultural heritage, labor, and gender. These events underscored the University's commitment to preserving regional history while engaging with global ethical standards.

Fostering Regional Sustainability and Youth Development

Reflecting a commitment to national development goals, the Central Asia Water Conference 2025 brought together experts to tackle critical water security issues. The focus on future generations was highlighted through events like Empowering Innovation: Nurturing Kazakhstan's Next-Gen Researchers and the Student Experience Conference, which emphasized the importance of cultivating research talent and enhancing student engagement.

Collectively, these conferences served to amplify NU's research visibility and strengthen its international networks. These events not only contributed to the global scientific community but also reinforced NU's mission to act as a think tank for policy development and a driver of socio-economic progress in Kazakhstan.

Infrastructure and Construction

Major projects included:

- Science Park: Commencement of construction on the first building of the Science Park, a 12,000 m² facility scheduled for completion in 2026.
- NU Park: Development of a 45-hectare green innovation cluster featuring plant nurseries and experimental research zones.
- Advanced Research Centers: Launch of the Biomedical Research Center and the establishment of the Institute for New Materials and Energy Technologies (INMET).
- Innovation Labs: Opening of a blockchain laboratory and the expansion of the Ónergy hub, which now includes a Food Lab, Bio Lab, and Typography Lab.
- Medical Manufacturing: Construction of a production facility for the Donor Heart Preservation and Transportation System in the Astana industrial zone.



Risks and Challenges

The institutional risk assessment identified several strategic, operational, and academic challenges that may affect the university's long-term performance. These challenges include financial sustainability, recruitment and retention of high-quality faculty, operational efficiency, institutional reputation, research infrastructure/resources, student recruitment and wellbeing, increasing competition, and accreditation compliance. These risks were evaluated based on their impact and likelihood and are monitored through key risk indicators such as revenue diversification, faculty retention, student satisfaction, international rankings, research income, and accreditation progress.

To address these challenges, the university developed targeted mitigation strategies aimed at strengthening institutional resilience and performance. These mitigation strategies are discussed at the Risk Committee meetings for continuous enhancement. Financial risks are mitigated through revenue diversification initiatives, cost optimization measures, and endowment growth campaigns. Talent-related risks are addressed through competitive compensation benchmarking, global recruitment initiatives, and increased research support for faculty members. Operational challenges are tackled through process improvement initiatives and stronger feedback mechanisms. Reputation and ranking risks are mitigated through strategic media engagement, ranking-focused performance monitoring, and international academic partnerships. Research capacity risks are addressed through investments in infrastructure, improved facility utilization systems, and enhanced technology transfer and commercialization programs.

Additionally, student-related risks are mitigated through targeted recruitment campaigns, scholarship programs, expanded mental health services, and initiatives to enhance student satisfaction and retention. Accreditation risks are managed through dedicated accreditation focus, centralized documentation and internal compliance reviews prior to external evaluations.

Together, these mitigation measures provide a structured approach to reducing institutional risks while supporting sustainable growth, academic and research excellence, and improved stakeholder outcomes.



Assessment of Progress toward KPIs

Summary on Target Indicators

Table 13. Target indicators

Indicator	Target 2024/2025	Achieved	Evidence
Students	Foundation: 500 Undergrad.:5200 MA/MSc: 1900 Ph. D.: 450 **Total: 8050**	Foundation: 669 Undergrad.:5216 MA/MSc: 1532* Ph. D.: 514 **Total: 7931**	Data Digest 2025-2026
Research	**Citation Impact: >1.6**	**Citation Impact: 2.26**	Office of Research Policy and Analysis
Research budget: sources (% govt.)	**Not More Than 80%**	**58%**	Department of Group Economic Planning
Accreditation	**Program Level**	**10 Programs**	Strategy and Delivery Office
Global ranking	**Not to be ranked (too early)**	**401-500**	THE World University Ranking 2026
Innovation Commercialization	**Complete the ecosystem Testing and developing NU's commercialization support system**	Construction of the University's key innovation infrastructure, the Science Park, began in 2025 and is expected to be launched in 2026. Commercialization support systems and programs are fully operational (details provided above)	Astana Business Campus
Faculty	**620**	**517** Faculty headcount is below target following adjustments based on actual student enrolment and optimization efforts aimed at improving operational efficiency.	Data Digest 2025-2026
Students: Internalization	**Internationalization** Undergrad: 5% Graduates: 20% **Overall: 9–10%**	Undergrad: 1.2% Graduates: 12** % **Overall: 4.1%** It should be noted that the University is actively working to increase the number of international students – it increased from 2,9% in 2023 to 4,1% in 2025.	Data Digest 2025-2026

**Includes Master's, MD, and residency students*
*** Includes Master's, MD, and PhD students*

Qualitative Analysis

Figure 21. Target Achievement



In 2025, Nazarbayev University continued to advance its strategic priorities in teaching, research, and innovation, while further strengthening its global visibility and reputation.

The University grew its student body from 7,502 in the previous year to a total of 7,931 students across all levels, including 669 Foundation students, 5,216 undergraduates, 1,532 master's students, and 514 PhD students. This year-on-year increase of over 400 students reflects NU's continued commitment to developing both high-quality undergraduate education and research-intensive graduate programs. Graduate education remains a key driver of the University's research capacity and knowledge creation mission.

Internationalization outcomes demonstrated gradual progress, with the overall proportion of international students increasing from 3.6% in 2024 to 4.1% in the current period. While the year-over-year growth indicates positive momentum, the overall international student ratio remains below the 9-10% target, highlighting the need for continued efforts to expand global recruitment.

NU's research performance continued to demonstrate strong impact at the global level. The University achieved a citation impact score of 2.26 (as of February 3, 2026), rising from 1.98 in 2024 and substantially surpassing the target of 1.6. This result indicates that NU research outputs are cited more than twice the global average, reflecting the increasing international visibility, quality, and influence of research conducted by NU faculty and researchers. Additionally, the University expanded its academic quality assurance, increasing the number of accredited programs from 6 in 2024 to 10 in the current reporting period.

Significant progress was also made in strengthening the University's innovation and commercialization ecosystem. During the reporting period, NU transitioned from the planning phase to active execution, enhancing its commercialization support system to enhance pathways for translating research outcomes into practical applications and market-ready technologies, as well as strengthening industry collaboration.

Faculty development remains an important institutional priority. In 2025, the University employed 517 faculty members, compared to the planned target of 620. Recruitment efforts continue to focus on attracting high-caliber international scholars while aligning faculty expansion with the University's strategic academic and research priorities.



Future Outlook and Recommendations

Strategic Priorities

The year 2026 will mark the start of the implementation of Nazarbayev University's new Strategy for 2026-2031. This strategy was developed with careful reconsideration of NU's priorities in response to evolving internal dynamics and external changes, including global trends in higher education, national development goals, and technological advancements. Over the strategy period, NU will strengthen its position as a leading research university in Kazakhstan and the wider region while expanding its global influence and societal impact.

The University's future development will be guided by its three core mandates - Academic Excellence, Research Excellence, and Societal Impact - supported by cross-cutting priorities in People, Governance and Effective Administration, Sustainability, and Reputation, Internationalization and Communication. Key strategic priorities for the coming period include:

- **Academic Programs and the Student Experience**

NU will offer a high-quality, flexible, and innovative portfolio of programs, while providing a world-class student experience that supports learning, personal growth, and employability.

- **Research Excellence and Capacity Building**

The University will foster world-class research through a building a strong culture and infrastructure, developing faculty, growing doctoral provision and focusing on internationally significant research that contributes to national development.

- **Societal Impact and National Transformation**

NU will leverage its teaching, research, and innovation to drive transformation in education, healthcare, industry, and governance, and strengthen national impact through entrepreneurship, societal engagement, and commercialization of research.

- **Digital Transformation and Technological Advancement**

Investments in digital infrastructure, emerging technologies, and AI will optimize institutional operations, enhance teaching and research, and strengthen digital communication and visibility.

- **People, Culture, and Diversity**

NU will cultivate an organizational culture where staff can thrive, increasing the representation of women and Kazakhstani nationals in academic leadership and the faculty.

- **Sustainability and Financial Resilience**

Long-term institutional resilience will be supported by financial sustainability, revenue diversification, cost optimization, and embedding socio-economic and environmental sustainability across operations and academic programs.

- **Reputation and International Engagement**

NU will strengthen its national and global reputation through strategic communications, partnerships, joint programs, research collaborations, and international mobility.

Resource Needs

The successful implementation of Nazarbayev University's Strategy 2026-2031 will require sustained and targeted investments across several key areas aligned with the University's strategic priorities. Ensuring adequate resources will be critical to strengthening NU's academic excellence, expanding research capacity, and increasing the University's reputation and societal impact.

- **Human Capital and Talent Development**

A central requirement for achieving the goals of the new strategy is continued investment in attracting, developing, and retaining high-quality faculty, researchers, and professional staff. In parallel, NU will continue to invest in leadership development, pedagogical development and recognition, professional training, and initiatives that promote a supportive organizational culture. Particular attention will be given to increasing the representation of women and Kazakhstani nationals in faculty and academic leadership positions.

- **Research Infrastructure and Capacity**

Strengthening research excellence will require sustained investment in advanced laboratories and research equipment. Resources will also be needed to expand doctoral programs, provide competitive research funding, and support international research collaborations.

- Academic Programs and Student Experience

Maintaining a high-quality and innovative portfolio of academic programs will require investments in curriculum development, modern teaching and learning infrastructure, learning spaces, digital resources, and student support services.

- Internationalization and Global Partnerships

Expanding NU's international engagement will require resources to support strategic partnerships with leading global universities, joint research initiatives, and international academic mobility for students and faculty. Strengthening global recruitment and international collaboration will be essential to enhance NU's reputation and academic competitiveness.



Risks and Contingencies

As the University enters the next strategy period, it is expected to continue operating in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment. This will sustain a range of institutional risks across financial sustainability, human capital, operational efficiency, reputation, academic and research performance, and student experience.

Financial risks are envisaged to persist, including potential revenue volatility and the need for greater diversification of income streams. These challenges are expected to be compounded by continued competition for highly qualified faculty and the ongoing need to enhance the efficiency of internal business processes. Mitigation efforts will focus on strengthening revenue diversification, advancing process optimization and automation, and implementing competitive talent strategies.

Reputational and academic risks are also expected to remain prominent, especially in sustaining and enhancing the University's global standing and achieving ambitious international ranking targets. At the same time, the modernization of research infrastructure will continue to be critical to ensuring high-quality research output and impact. These risks will be addressed through proactive reputation management, strengthening research performance, expanding strategic partnerships, and sustained investment in infrastructure.

Finally, risks associated with student wellbeing, intensifying competition for talent, and evolving accreditation requirements are anticipated to require ongoing close attention. The University will continue to address these through enhanced student support services, proactive positioning in an increasingly competitive global education market, and robust compliance with accreditation frameworks.

Overall, these risks will be managed through a combination of targeted strategic initiatives, strengthened performance monitoring, and continuous institutional improvement to support long-term resilience and sustainability.