

**Academic Policies and Procedures for the Zero Year of Graduate Programs of
the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University**

Category: Policy

Approval Date: 13.11.2023

Effective Date: 13.11.2023

Level of Access: Staff and Students Only

Classification Number: 2.10 CPS

Approving Authority: Provost

Registration Number: 112-Н/К

Owner: Center for Preparatory Studies

Revision Date: 28.08.2026

Applicability: Nazarbayev University

Retired Documents:

Title: Academic Policies and Procedures for the Zero Year of Masters' Programs of
the autonomous organization of education "Nazarbayev University"

Date: 14.01.2022

Registration Number: 03-Н/К

Approving Authority: Provost



Section 1. Purpose and Application

1.1. This Policy establishes the Academic Policies and Procedures for the Zero Year of Graduate Programs of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

1.2. This Policy applies to the Center for Preparatory Studies of NU.

Section 2. Terms / Definitions

2.1. Basic definitions and abbreviations used in these Rules are:

1) **University / NU** – autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University;

2) **CPS** – Center for Preparatory Studies, an academic division of the University in which the Zero Year of Graduate Programs is offered;

3) **Zero Year of Graduate Programs (ZYGp)** – a two-semester, non-credit bearing, full-time intensive English and refresher course of study for students accepted into an NU master's or doctoral degree program but who lack the English requirement necessary for immediate entry into the Schools;

4) **Schools (School)** – Nazarbayev University Schools that offer graduate degree programs;

5) **IELTS** (International English Language Testing System, Academic version) – a standardized test that describes an individual's English language ability; IELTS is jointly managed by the British Council, IDP Education, and Cambridge Assessment English;

6) **OR** – Office of the Registrar;

7) **HOD** – Head of Discipline.

2.2 Terms and definitions not used in these Rules shall be defined by the internal documents of the University.

2.3 CPS is responsible for the record and storage of the documents, control of their condition and safekeeping prior to transferring them to the University archives.

Section 3. Main Provisions

3.1. Admission to the Zero Year of Graduate Programs

3.1.1. Admission to the Zero Year will be in accordance with the capacity of CPS and the Admission Regulations of Master's or Doctoral Programs. Changes in admission standards shall not apply retroactively.

3.1.2. Students are admitted to the Zero Year based on their acceptance into a School's graduate degree program; therefore, no transfers in program or School will be permitted during the Zero Year.



3.2. First and Second Semester Curricula

3.2.1. The Zero Year in CPS operates on the basis of an academic year divided into two periods: Fall and Spring Semesters. An Induction/Orientation period takes place at the beginning of the Fall Semester to assist students in adapting to the University and the curricula requirements. Dates of both semesters, final examinations, and other key dates are indicated in the Zero Year Academic Calendar.

3.2.2. In the Fall Semester, all students will focus on developing their academic English and critical thinking skills; students will also receive a refresher introduction to basic statistics.

3.2.3. In the Spring Semester, students will continue developing their academic English and critical thinking skills, but in addition, students will generally take a refresher course related to their field of study determined by their Program or School.

3.3. Grading Standards and Records

3.3.1. Letter Grades, Grade Points, Percentage Ranges, and the corresponding explanations are outlined below. These will be communicated to Zero Year students by CPS staff and included in the course syllabi.

Letter Grade	Grade Points	Percentage	Explanation
A	4.00	95–100%	Excellent; exceeds the highest standards of the assignment or course
A-	3.67	90–94%	Excellent; meets the highest standards of the assignment or course
B+	3.33	85–89%	Very good; meets high standards for the assignment or course
B	3.00	80–84%	Good; meets most of the standards for the assignment or course
B-	2.67	75–79%	Near Pass; meets many of the standards for the assignment or course, but is insufficient for a passing mark
C+	2.33	70–74%	Near Pass; meets several of the standards for the assignment or course, but is insufficient for a passing mark
C	2.00	65–69%	Insufficient; may meet some of the basic standards for the assignment or course
C-	1.67	60–64%	Insufficient; falls short of meeting essential standards
F	0.0	0–59%	Failing; indicates almost no understanding of or effort in the assignment or course



3.4. Administrative Grades

3.4.1. In the Zero Year, a number of special administrative grades are used on transcripts. These administrative notations, which are listed below, do not affect the calculation of GPA:

Grades	Comments
AW	Administrative Withdrawal. AW indicates that a student has been ordered withdrawn from a course based on: 1) Disciplinary grounds, following procedures and standards specified in the NU Student Code of Conduct, or 2) Non-payment of tuition following the procedures and standards specified in the internal regulations of NU
I	Incomplete. When a student has completed a substantial portion of the requirements for a course but, due to extenuating circumstances, is unable to complete all requirements, the HOD may assign a temporary grade of Incomplete
W	Withdrawal. A withdrawal indicates a student has withdrawn from the course and has not completed the course requirements. The HOD/teaching fellow cannot assign any other grade. A student who takes a Leave of Absence during a semester will automatically receive a W for all courses

3.4.2. In practice, because the Zero Year is a two-semester course of study, an Incomplete grade is possible only in the first semester, and generally given only for a student who has missed the final exam due to extenuating circumstances.

1) An Incomplete grade can be given only on the basis of a written prior agreement between the student and the HOD and approved by the General Director. The agreement will describe the additional work that is expected and the terms under which it is to be completed. The date for completion of work is to be determined by the HOD.

2) All work must be completed no later than the third week of the second semester. When the work that is required under an "Incomplete" agreement is completed, the HOD shall request a change of the "I" grade to the appropriate grade for the course, at which time the grade "I" will be removed from the student's transcript. A grade of "I" that is not completed by the agreed date automatically reverts to the grade indicated in the agreement between the HOD and the student. If no grade is indicated in the agreement and the HOD does not submit the change of grade request, the grade of "I" will revert to an "F".

The grade of "I" is assigned 0 (zero) credits, has no grade points, and is not included in the calculation of the GPA.

3.5. Cause for Concern Reports

3.5.1. Throughout the year, teaching fellows and instructors will inform the CPS Senior Teaching Fellow for Student Advising of any student with whom there is



a “Cause for Concern” based on academic performance, attendance, or behavioral issues.

3.5.2. The template for identifying students with Cause for Concern is provided in Appendix 1 of these Rules.

3.6. Final Course Grades

3.6.1. Final semester grades are assigned to students at the end of the first semester in each course taken.

3.6.2. The final, second semester grade is also the final course grade over both semesters.

3.6.3. The Head of Discipline submits grades for all students in all classes via My Registrar database by 5:00 p.m. (17:00) on the date specified in the Academic Calendar. The OR will make all final grades available to students on the date stated in the Academic Calendar.

3.7. Change of Grade

3.7.1. The final grade assigned to a student by the course instructor or designated faculty member at the end of the term is the student’s final grade for that course. For Zero Year English courses, the grade considered for changing their status from “deferred conditional” to “unconditional” is the second semester course grade which is a weighted average that includes the first semester grade.

3.7.2. Resit of a final course examination is not permitted.

3.7.3. Procedures for a course grade change:

1) If a student’s grade has been assigned incorrectly due to miscalculation or a technical or procedural error, the HOD must complete a *Change of Grade* form from the OR website. The *Change of Grade* form must be signed by the HOD and the General Director of CPS.

2) The request is reviewed by the OR. If any questions or concerns occur, they will be directed to the Head of Discipline or General Director.

3) Once the grade change is approved the new grade is entered into the student’s academic record.

3.7.4. Procedures for final course grade change:

1) No grades can be changed after the first day of the next semester or after the final decision on appeal.

2) The grade assigned to a student by his or her course instructors and approved by the HOD is the student’s final grade for that course. Final grades for individual courses can only be changed in cases of miscalculation or a technical or procedural error.

3) In the event of an error, the General Director may change a submitted final grade within ten days of the grade being submitted to OR in the semester in which the course was taken.



3.8. Attendance and Change of Status

3.8.1. A student who violates the attendance policy may be dismissed from the program. The ZYGP attendance policy requires that a student attend a minimum of 90% of all scheduled classes in each course. This is continually emphasized and monitored by all instructors and staff.

1) A student, who is not a citizen of Kazakhstan and who is absent from any class for any reason, must immediately contact the teaching fellow and HOD of that course.

2) Students, who are not citizens of Kazakhstan, must have a minimum of 85% attendance or no more than 4 (four) unauthorized absences in each registered course to continue to follow visa requirements. In other cases, the University is obliged to report to the migration authorities which may result in cancellation of their visa (registration).

3) Students who are not citizens of Kazakhstan study at the University based on an approved C9 visa category or a Temporary Residence Permit (TRP - applicable to CIS countries) granted by the Republic of Kazakhstan. These documents give students the authority to reside in Kazakhstan exclusively for educational pursuits. Students cannot be employed except at the institution where they are enrolled; employment in any other location may result in visa or TRP revocation.

3.8.2. A student may voluntarily withdraw from the Zero Year in accordance with the internal documents of the University.

3.8.3. A Zero Year student is considered to be in a conditional status of the University Masters' or Doctoral Program to which they were accepted. In order to change from this status, a student must successfully complete the Zero Year by passing all English courses with a minimum final grade of B in all English courses if their Program requires 6.5 IELTS or the grade of B+ if their Program requires 7.0 IELTS. Students must also achieve a minimum grade of B in Foundational Statistics and Linear Algebra. Students in an School of Sciences and Humanities graduate program must achieve a grade of B in their required refresher course. In addition, students must achieve a minimum of 90% attendance with no excused absences. If the Zero Year student fails to achieve the required passing grades and/or the attendance requirement, he/she shall be dismissed from the program in accordance with the internal documents of the University. Students who do not achieve the required grades in the Zero Year or cannot continue with graduate studies may apply for direct admission to a graduate degree program in the following academic year.

3.8.4. Should a student meet all the requirements above, their status will automatically be changed from "deferred conditional" to "unconditional" by the OR who also notifies the appropriate Dean and the School of the student's change of status.

3.9. Course Assessment and Evaluation

3.9.1. "Course assessment and evaluation" refers to the formal and summative assessments of student learning regardless of the specific means used. Examinations,



including final examinations, may include in-class, online, take-home or oral examinations, or appropriate substitutes, such as, papers or projects or any combination thereof. The choice of the assessment type is guided by the material upon which the student is being assessed and the program and course learning outcomes.

3.9.2. In-semester examinations are normally held during regular teaching hours.

3.9.3. Examinations held outside of regular teaching hours on a Friday after 4:30 p.m. (16:30), or any time on Saturday or Sunday must be approved by the General Director unless the course is a regularly scheduled evening or weekend class. If an examination is administered outside of class time, CPS administration must announce the date and time at least two weeks prior to the examination date.

3.9.4. All scheduled final examinations are held during the Zero Year's official final examination period.

3.9.5. Course instructors are expected to return all assigned course work in a timely manner (typically within 15 days) or to provide equivalent feedback sufficient to prepare students for the final examination.

3.9.6. Students must arrive at the examination room a minimum of ten (10) minutes before the exam begins.

3.9.7. Specific examination rules and procedures, including those for online studies, will be made available to students in a separate document. In addition, all rules concerning the administration of examinations will be explained to the students before the start of an exam.

3.9.8. All examinations will be conducted in English.

3.9.9. Students with an unexcused absence from an examination will be given a mark of zero (0).

3.9.10. Students who are absent from other forms of assessment or do not submit coursework will be given a mark of zero (0).

3.9.11. If a medical or other emergency causes a student to miss an examination or other form of assessment, it is the student's responsibility to contact the HOD and/or Student Advisor regarding Mitigating Circumstances as soon as possible and must be prior to the assignment of final grades. The CPS Mitigating Circumstances form is provided in Appendix 2 hereto.

3.9.12. A final examination that is not returned to the students will be stored in a secure location for review purposes. These exams will be stored in accordance with the University's policies on exam storage.

3.10. Student Examination Conduct

3.10.1. Students will be required to present a current University student identity card when entering an examination hall, and to display this card on their desks during the entire examination period.

3.10.2. Students are required to observe all instructions given by examiners, supervisors, invigilators, or other officers responsible for the conduct of the examinations. The following rules apply to all examinations:



1) Talking to anyone other than the invigilator in the examination room is not permitted.

2) Students must not bring cell phones, smart watches, cameras, or any other type of electronic device or any personal items into the exam room unless they are used as part of the examination process.

3) Students must stop working at the end of the time allowed for the exam. Continuing to work on the examination after the time has ended will be considered academic misconduct and will be subject to disciplinary actions and penalties as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct of the University.

4) Communicating answers or information to other students is serious academic misconduct. Students who assist others in an assessment of any kind are subject to disciplinary actions and penalties as outlined in the NU Student Code of Conduct.

5) Bottles of water without labels can be brought into the examination room. No other food or drink should be brought into the examination room. Medications that might be required during the exam need to be approved by the Head of Discipline or invigilator prior to the examination.

3.11. Dismissals and Voluntary Withdrawals

3.11.1. The Zero Year of Graduate Programs shall follow the internal documents of the University regarding dismissal and voluntary withdrawals of students.

3.12. Leave of Absence

3.12.1. A Zero Year student may request and be considered for a leave of absence only for medical reasons or an emergency of an immediate family member in accordance with the internal documents of the University.

3.13. Additional Issues and Coverage

3.13.1. Any issues not covered in this document shall be regulated by the internal documents of CPS and the University.

Section 4. Waiver

4.1. Not applicable.

Section 5. Temporary Provisions

5.1. Not applicable.



Section 6. Revision

6.1 This Policy shall be reviewed every year within three years after their approval and revised if necessary.

Section 7. Related Documents

7.1. The Admission Policy and Procedures to Master's programs at the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University and The Admission Policy and Procedures to the Ph.D. Programs of the Schools of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.2. Regulation on Leave of Absence, Dismissal and Voluntary Withdrawal for students of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.

7.3. Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures of the autonomous organization of education Nazarbayev University.



Appendix 1
to Academic Policies and
Procedures for the Zero Year of
Graduate Programs of the
University

Center for Preparatory Studies
Cause for Concern Report

Use this form to report concerns regarding a CPS student's academic performance or general physical/ mental health and well-being. Before the report is officially raised, the person who has noticed issues should discuss these concerns with the student privately. After sharing your concerns with the student, or if the student is unresponsive to outreach, a formal Cause for Concern should be raised. Once completed, this form should be shared with the Student Adviser.

Please make a copy of the file to complete so that the template can be used in the future.

Student Information

Student Type:

ZYGP

NUFYP

Student Name:

ID Number:

Name of Teacher(s) Raising Concern:

General Nature of the Cause for Concern

Academic Performance

Mental/Physical Well-being



<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Other (please describe below)
Was this referral shared with the student
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Description of Concern
Summary of Action Requested by
Suggested Referral Route (please tick)
<input type="checkbox"/> Student Advisor
<input type="checkbox"/> CPS General Director (in cases of extreme urgency when a student may be at risk to himself/herself or others)
Action taken



Updates from Teaching Fellows

Confidential: For office use only to be attached to student file
Report received by
Date
Follow-up actions (indicate the date, action taken and by whom) Attach additional sheets if necessary



Appendix 2
to Academic Policies and
Procedures for the Zero Year of
Graduate Programs of the
University

REQUEST FOR CONSIDERATION OF MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

Note: To be turned in to the Head of Discipline or STF for Student Advising

Student Information

Full Name		
ID		Phone
Email		

Assessment(s) To Be Considered (use another page if necessary)

Course(s)	Type of Assessment (e.g., exam, paper, viva)	Date Due	Percentage of Course Grade

Mitigating Circumstances For Consideration (use another page if necessary)

Describe in detail the circumstances that you believe have affected your academic performance.	
State the exact period affected by these circumstances.	
List the documents that you have attached in support of your request of mitigating circumstances.	
Student Affirmation: I confirm that the information provided is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge. (Note that a false or misleading statement is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.)	
Signature	Date
Head of Discipline's action or recommendation (Note that an assessment $\leq 5\%$ of the final grade may be decided solely by the HOD. Assessments $> 5\%$ are made in consultation with the STF for Student Advising and other HODs as needed.)	
HOD(s):	Date

Note: a student may appeal the decision to the General Director who, in consultation with all parties, will make a decision. This decision is final.

