

FEEDBACK
on the IQAA thematic analysis
‘Distance Learning in Kazakhstan: Challenges and Prospects’

1. General description of the document

The IQAA thematic analysis on distance learning in Kazakhstani higher education institutions is a relevant and timely study. The document covers a wide range of issues: from the regulatory and legal framework and an analysis of the platforms in use to the prospects for the introduction of artificial intelligence, VR/AR and hybrid learning models. This scope makes it useful for both researchers and decision-makers in the field of higher education.

The structure of the document is logical and coherent: an analysis of the current situation precedes a discussion of the problems, and the document concludes with a section on prospects and recommendations. This enables the reader to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation and immediately relate the identified problems to possible solutions. The statistical data provided by UNESCO and references to the experience of specific Kazakhstani universities lend the analysis a sound evidence base.

2. Significance for faculty management

From the perspective of a faculty dean, this analysis is of interest primarily as a systematic overview of the state of distance learning in the country, enabling the situation within one's own faculty to be compared with broader trends. The document clearly shows that most higher education institutions are in a similar position: distance learning formats have been introduced, but their quality and consistency vary significantly even within a single organisation.

Of fundamental importance is the gap, highlighted in the document, between the technical readiness of higher education institutions and the pedagogical preparedness of their teaching staff. This is not merely a problem for individual departments; it is a managerial challenge at faculty level requiring a systematic response: the inclusion of digital pedagogy in staff professional development plans, the establishment of internal methodological support, and, in some cases, a review of approaches to teaching loads and staff incentives.

The finding regarding the uneven access students have to digital resources deserves special attention. For a faculty that may include programmes with students from regional areas or those combining work with study, this implies the need for a differentiated approach: uniform requirements for distance learning that fail to take into account differences in learning conditions reduce both engagement and academic outcomes.

3. Assessment of the analytical section

The comparative table of teaching formats (face-to-face, distance, online, hybrid) is one of the most practically useful elements of the document. It allows one to quickly navigate the existing limitations and potential of each format, which is important when making decisions regarding the structure of the faculty's educational programmes. Legislative

restrictions – no more than 20–50 per cent of modules may be delivered via distance learning, depending on the field of study – are presented here clearly and accessibly.

The section on future prospects covers a broad spectrum: from hybrid models and MOOCs to the application of AI and VR/AR technologies. For the Dean of the Faculty, it is important that the authors examine each of these areas not only in terms of opportunities, but also in relation to the real risks involved in implementation – whether infrastructural, staffing or regulatory. Such a balanced perspective helps to avoid excessive optimism when planning the digital transformation of programmes.

The section on academic mobility through online courses deserves particular attention. The possibility of recognising courses from external platforms as part of the curriculum is not only a matter of flexibility, but also one of quality and academic integrity. The document rightly highlights the need for regulatory oversight of this practice, which is particularly relevant when updating study plans at faculty level.

4. Overall assessment

The IQAA's thematic analysis 'Distance Learning in Kazakhstan: Challenges and Prospects' is a substantive document that provides an insight into the current state of digital transformation in higher education in the country. For faculty management, it serves as a useful starting point for strategic planning: to understand where the system as a whole stands, which solutions have already been tested in leading universities, and which challenges are common rather than specific to individual institutions.

At the same time, it would be advisable for future research to focus more closely on data regarding students' academic outcomes across different modes of learning – not only in terms of coverage and accessibility, but also from the perspective of the quality of competence acquisition. This will enable faculties to make more informed decisions regarding the allocation of subjects between face-to-face and distance learning formats.

The preparation of such thematic analyses by the IQAA agency demonstrates a commitment to establishing an evidence base for management decisions in the field of educational quality, which is highly commendable. The regularity of such publications and the expansion of their scope will contribute to the further development of a culture of quality in Kazakhstani higher education institutions.

**Dean of the Faculty
of 'Business and Management'**



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