

КЕНЖЕҒАЛИ САҒАДИЕВ
АТЫНДАҒЫ
ХАЛЫҚАРАЛЫҚ БИЗНЕС
УНИВЕРСИТЕТИ



KENZHEGALI SAGADIYEV
UNIVERSITY OF
INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

APPROVED
Chairman of the Academic Council


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« 28 » March 2025

ENTRANCE EXAM PROGRAMME
FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES (ESSAY BLOCK, EXAM QUESTIONS BY
SPECIALIZATION)
IN THE "8D04103 FINANCE" EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Almaty, 2025

The entrance exam program for doctoral studies (essay block, exam questions by specialization) is developed on the basis of the Standard Rules for Admission to Educational Organizations Implementing Professional Educational Programs of Postgraduate Education, approved by the Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan dated October 31, 2018 (with amendments and additions), for conducting entrance examinations to doctoral studies under the educational program: 8D04103 "Finance".

The program was discussed and received a positive decision at a meeting of the Finance and Accounting Department (Minutes No. 8 dated March 20, 2025).

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1. General Provisions

This program has been developed for the entrance examination to the doctoral program 8D04103 "Finance". The purpose of the exam is to assess the level of theoretical and practical training of applicants, their ability to independently conduct research work, as well as their outlook in the field of modern financial problems at the national and global levels.

General requirements for applicants:

- Deep understanding of fundamental theories and concepts in the field of finance.
- Ability to critically analyze current problems and trends in the financial sector of Kazakhstan and the world.
- Skills in applying quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis.
- Ability to formulate research hypotheses and propose solutions.
- Mastery of the academic style of writing and citation.

2. Sample list of essay topics and exam questions

2.1 Sample Essay Topics

Section 1: ESG, Sustainable Development and Green Finance

The nature and principles of ESG investing, its evolution and role in the modern world. Methodologies for assessing ESG risks and opportunities. Green, social and sustainable bonds: principles of issue, verification, market. Impact of climate risks on financial stability: physical and transition risks. Corporate governance: mechanisms, impact on company efficiency. Regulation of sustainable finance in international practice and Kazakhstan.

Section 2: Digital Transformation, FinTech and Cybersecurity

FinTech concepts: digital payments, crowdfunding, InsurTech, RegTech, WealthTech. Distributed ledger technologies (DLT) and blockchain in the financial industry (excluding the speculative aspect of cryptocurrencies). Artificial intelligence and machine learning in finance: big data analysis, scoring, asset management. Central bank digital currencies (CBDC): principles, risks, prospects. Cybersecurity in the financial sector: threats, risks, protection strategies. Regulation of digital financial services and assets.

Section 3: Monetary Policy and Macro-financial Stability

Goals, instruments and mechanisms of monetary policy transmission (inflation targeting, base rates). The relationship between monetary policy, the exchange rate and economic growth. Macroprudential policy: goals, instruments, impact on financial stability. Management of gold and foreign exchange reserves and sovereign funds. Systemic risks in the financial sector, stress testing. Problems of high indebtedness of the population and its macroeconomic consequences.

Section 4: Corporate Finance and Capital Markets

Theories of capital structure and dividend policy. Evaluation of investment projects, business valuation. Sources of corporate financing: equity and debt capital, alternative sources. Securities markets: primary and secondary markets, instruments, infrastructure. Venture financing, private equity, angel investments. Behavioral finance: cognitive biases and their impact on investment decisions. Corporate governance and its role in forming a company's value.

Section 5: Banking Sector, Insurance and Financial Regulation

Functions and structure of the banking system. Risk management in banks (credit, market, operational risks). Basel Accords (Basel III, Basel IV): principles, implementation, impact on capitalization and liquidity. Islamic finance: principles, products, regulation. Insurance: types, principles, regulation of the insurance market. Problems and prospects of SME financing, mortgage lending. Management of non-performing assets (NPL).

Section 6: International Finance, Geopolitics and Economy of Kazakhstan

International financial markets: currency market, Eurobond market, international loans. Balance of payments and international investment position. Impact of global economic shocks and geopolitical factors on the national economy and financial system. International economic integration (EAEU): financial aspects. Attracting foreign direct investment. Pension system models and pension system reform. Financing of infrastructure projects, PPP.

Recommended essay length: 700–800 words.

Assessment criteria:

Depth and completeness of topic coverage.
Logical structure and sound argumentation.
Presence of critical analysis and original ideas.
Use of up-to-date literature and sources.
Adherence to academic style and formatting requirements.
Ability to defend one's viewpoint during the interview.

2.2 Content and Topics of Exam Questions

The examination corresponds to the main areas of financial science and practice, divided into three main blocks, which include the following topics and disciplines:

Unit 1: Fundamental concepts and theories of finance, money circulation, financial management and portfolio investment

Fundamentals of finance: The concept and essence of finance, its functions and role in the economy. Spheres and types of financial relations. Financial resources and their composition. The financial system and its spheres. The financial market as an instrument for mobilizing and distributing resources. Financial policy and its types.

Money and money circulation: The essence, functions and types of money. Cash and non-cash money circulation, their unity. The law of money circulation. Money supply, velocity of money circulation. The main types and elements of the monetary system. Inflation: types, types and essence.

Public finances: The main links and functions of public finances. The state budget, extra-budgetary funds, public credit as components. The socio-economic essence and role of the budget. Tasks in the field of public expenditure. Budget deficit and methods of its financing. Public credit management.

Credit and credit system: The essence, elements and role of credit in the economy. Credit as a form of loan capital movement, its features and sources. Structure of the loan capital market. The concept of loan interest and its significance. Classification of credit by basic features. Credit policy of commercial banks, organization and principles of lending.

Securities and the stock market: The concept and main types of securities (shares, bonds, derivative securities). Terms of issue and income from shares and bonds. The structure of the securities market. The goals and objectives of stock exchanges. Exchange trading and types of exchange transactions.

Currency and currency relations: Currency and currency relations. Exchange rate and instruments for its regulation. Currency transactions. Currency market.

Financial management and investment: The role and functions of the central bank, monetary policy instruments. Approaches to risk assessment in financial management (VaR, CVaR). Markowitz portfolio theory (assumptions and limitations). Behavioral finance (cognitive distortions, heuristics). Optimal capital structure. Methods of business valuation (discounted cash flows, comparative valuation). The role of derivatives in financial risk management. The nature and importance of financial inclusion. Types of fraud in financial markets. Principles of corporate governance. The role of microfinance.

Unit 2: Current issues of financial system development at the national level

Monetary and credit system of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Monetary system of the Republic of Kazakhstan and its elements. Features of the inflation process in Kazakhstan, its essence and forms

of manifestation. Tasks and functions of the National Bank of Kazakhstan and its role in regulating the monetary and credit system.

Budget system and public finances of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Principles of functioning of the budget system of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Socio-economic essence of extra-budgetary funds and ways of their creation. Pension fund of the Republic of Kazakhstan, its funds and their use.

Banking system of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Structure and functions of the banking system of the Republic of Kazakhstan, including the functions of second-tier banks. Bank credit as a common form of credit relations. Criteria for differentiation of interest rates. Commercial, consumer and government credit in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Stock market of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Requirements for the stock exchange. Conditions for the creation and operation of stock exchanges in the Republic of Kazakhstan, stages of their development. The essence of the stock exchange and its importance for the economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The nature of the activities and functions of professional participants in the securities market. Shares: terms of issue, types, rules for paying dividends. Stock indices and their place in stock trading. Investment activities and policies of commercial banks in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Currency regulation of the Republic of Kazakhstan: The currency system as a set of economic relations. Currency regulation and currency control in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Insurance in the Republic of Kazakhstan: Social and economic content of insurance. Participants in insurance relations. Types of insurance: social, property, liability insurance, business risk insurance.

Finances of the non-profit sector and households of the Republic of Kazakhstan: Finances of institutions and organizations engaged in non-profit activities; finances of public associations. Households as an economic entity. Functions of household finances.

Block 3: Current Trends in the Development of Global Financial Markets

International financial cooperation and institutions: International economic cooperation. Capital formation and types of IMF loans. Objectives of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), the International Development Association (IDA), the International Finance Corporation (IFC), and the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA). Objectives of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS). Regional monetary and credit organizations. The Paris and London Clubs and their role in solving the financial problems of the debtor country.

International monetary and credit systems: National, global, and international monetary systems. International credit and its classification.

Global financial trends and challenges: Explanation of the concept of cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology (potential applications and risks). The evolution of the international monetary system from Bretton Woods to modern realities, its problems and prospects. The role and functions of the IMF and the World Bank in global stability and development. The impact of globalization on financial markets (advantages/disadvantages). The nature and significance of global financial crises (Asian 1997-98, global 2008), their causes and consequences. The role of offshore financial centers. The main trends in the development of the international bond and Eurobond market. Mechanisms for functioning of cross-border capital flows and their impact. The role and significance of global rating agencies (S&P, Moody's, Fitch). The impact of changes in interest rates of leading central banks (US Federal Reserve, ECB) on global markets. Trends in the global derivatives market. The impact of digitalization and financial technologies (FinTech, RegTech, SupTech) on the global financial industry. The nature and significance of systematic risk at the global level, measures to minimize it. The role and significance of the G20 in coordinating global financial policy. Challenges in the fight against international money laundering and terrorist financing (the role of FATF). The impact of geopolitical risks on global markets. The concept of "green finance" and its development (tools, goals). The impact of climate change on the financial sector and investment strategies. Trends in the development of the foreign direct investment (FDI) market. Mechanisms and instruments of international financial regulation (Basel Accords). The concept of sustainable finance. Challenges and prospects for the development of the Islamic finance market at the global level. Trends in the development of the private capital market (Private Equity) and venture capital. The role and

importance of international indices (MSCI, FTSE) for global investors. The role of international financial reporting standards (IFRS). The impact of international sanctions. Trends in the development of the alternative investment market (hedge funds, real estate). The impact of global inflation and deflation on global financial markets.

Evaluation criteria:

Completeness and depth of the answer: How fully the topic of the question is covered, knowledge of the main concepts, theories and models.

Logic and structured: Clarity of presentation, consistency of arguments, ability to systematize information.

Analytical skills: Ability to analyze the presented data, identify cause-and-effect relationships, make reasonable conclusions.

Application of knowledge: Ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical situations, including the specifics of the financial sector of Kazakhstan and global trends.

Erudition and critical thinking: Possession of additional information, ability to critically evaluate various approaches, operate with modern data and research.

Academic style of presentation: Correctness of terminology, absence of ambiguities.

3. Recommended Literature

This list is not exhaustive but covers the main areas necessary for exam preparation. Applicants are also encouraged to familiarize themselves with current scientific articles in leading financial journals and reports from international financial organizations.

3.1. Main literature:

1. Principles of corporate finance (10th edition) McGraw-Hill, R.Brealey, S.Myers, F. Allen., 2023
2. Corporate finance (3d edition), Jonathan Berk, Peter DeMarzo, 2022;
3. Sharpe W.F., Alexander G.J., Bailey J.W. Investments, 2022.
4. Fabozzi F.J. Investment Management, 2017.
5. Finance, 6th edition, Ehsan Nickbakht, A.A.Groppeli, 2019.
6. P. B. Isakhova, R. B. Sadykova, G. N. Dzhaksybekova, K. A. Madykhanova, Introduction to Finance, 2022.
7. Peter S. Rose, Sylvia Conway Hudgins, Bank Management & Financial Services, 2013.
8. Frederic S. Mishkin, The Economics of Money, Banking, and Financial Markets, 13th Edition, 2022.
9. Financial Markets and Institutions, 9th Edition, Frederic Mishkin, 2020;
10. Corporate Finance: Theory and Practice, Aswath Damodaran, 2020.

3.2. Additional Literature and Resources:

1. MONEY, BANKING, AND FINANCIAL MARKETS, Laurence M. Ball, 2020.
2. Options, futures, and other derivatives, John C. Hall, 2020.
3. Thaller R. Misbehaving: Creating a behavioral economics, 2018
4. Handbook of Government Budgeting, Roy T. Meyers, 2020.
5. Financial statement analyses: A practitioner's guide, Martin Fridson, Fernando Alvarez, 2018.
6. Investment and portfolio management, 9th edition, McGraw-Hill Irwin, Z. Bodie, A. Kane, Alan J. Markus, 2013.
7. Current Reports of the National Bank of the Republic of Kazakhstan: (<https://nationalbank.kz>) – Reports on monetary policy, financial stability, statistical data.

8. Reports of the Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan for Regulation and Development of the Financial Market: (<https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/ardfm>) – Regulatory acts, analytical reviews of the financial sector.

9. Publications of the Astana International Financial Center (AIFC): (<https://aifc.kz/>) – Reports, research, news on the development of the AIFC.

10. Publications of the International Monetary Fund (IMF): (<https://www.imf.org/>) – World Economic Outlook, Global Financial Stability Report, country reviews on Kazakhstan.

11. Publications of the World Bank: (<https://www.worldbank.org/>) – Development data, reports on regions.

12. Leading scientific journals on finance: Journal of Finance, Journal of Financial Economics, Review of Financial Studies, Journal of Banking & Finance, The Financial Review.

13. Bloomberg, Reuters: (For understanding current global financial news and analysis).

14. OECD (2021). OECD Business and Finance Outlook 2021: Climate and ESG Investing in Bonds.

15. BIS (Bank for International Settlements). Reports and working papers on central bank digital currencies and FinTech. See the BIS website.

16. FATF (Financial Action Task Force). Recommendations and reports on the regulation of virtual assets. See the FATF website.