



THE RELEVANCE OF EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AS AN INDICATOR OF THE QUALITY OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

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Abstract

The demand for educational programs is measured by several indicators, one of which is the quality of professional training. In turn, the indicator of the quality of specialist training in this context is the demand in the labor market. All these opportunities are provided by the educational programs of the Department of General and Applied Psychology of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. The review of the department's educational programs demonstrates a high practice orientation in their implementation, a wide range of activities offered to students, an excellent base for training highly qualified psychologists of various profiles and levels (from bachelor to Doctor of Sciences).

Keywords: *educational program, practice orientation, demand competitiveness, quality of professional training, monitoring the demand for graduates*

Introduction

Global competition implies strengthening the practical orientation of vocational education to "meet the requirements of the labor market." One of the real competitive advantages in this struggle is undoubtedly the provision of high-quality education.

The quality of education (specifically in the field of higher professional education) is determined by the quality of educational programs, teaching methods, the competitiveness of graduates in the labor market, the level of competence of a teacher, as well as his need and ability to engage in teaching, fame, research activity, and the presence of a scientific school.

At the same time, educational programs themselves can guarantee the quality of professional training if they meet the modern requirements of a competence-based approach, are compiled taking into account the latest trends in the field of program direction, are practice-oriented, provide for the inclusion of leading specialists in the industry in the teaching process, etc.

An analysis of European approaches to assessing the quality of educational programs has revealed the importance of achieving the set goals at all stages of the educational process, in particular: compliance with the goals of the programs with the institutional strategy and the availability of strictly defined expected learning outcomes; integrated development of the teaching staff, transparency of procedures governing the educational process and quality assessment procedures; as well as student-centricity through educational, scientific, extracurricular opportunities for students, active learning (Framework Standards and Guideline, 2021; Standards and Guidelines, 2015).

The Department of General and Applied Psychology of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University has been carrying out three-level training "Bachelor's–master's - doctoral studies" in the field of Psychology for many years. At the same time, the training programs are so

unique that they can allow students to find a profession according to their taste and interests (Tokbai, 2023).

Psychology is a unique science that finds its application in virtually all areas of human activity – from the development of children to the organization of trainings and support for the training of athletes (Kassen, 2019). If psychology is represented by one or two educational programs in most universities of the country, then the Psychology direction at al-Farabi Kazakh National University represents a wide range of such specializations and qualifications that an uninformed reader will need a whole excursion into the proposed educational programs.

Overview of Educational Programs

The bachelor's degree program "6B03107-Psychology" was developed in 2006 jointly with the main partners - the National Scientific and Practical Center for Correctional Pedagogy, the Republican Scientific and Practical Center for Mental Health and the Kazakh Psychological Society.

The EP has passed the international accreditation of the ACQUIN agency. The program has a wide profile of professions:

- practical psychologist at enterprises and in banking structures
 - psychologist in medical institutions
 - practical psychologist in military structures
 - psychologist in general education institutions (schools, gymnasiums, lyceums, colleges)
 - teaching psychology as a general education discipline in secondary schools
 - organizational and managerial activities in organizations (as an employee of HR departments, recruiting agencies, consulting agencies specializing in working with human resources)
 - psychologist-consultant or psychologist-trainer in psychological and educational centers
- professional activity in expert, government organizations engaged in the analysis of human activity in various sectors of life (for example, work as an expert in forensic or military expert organizations).



Figure 1

Bachelors and Undergraduates at an Online Meeting with Practical Employees in the Field of HR

Figure 2

Undergraduates at the Educational Classes on the Prevention of Radicalization



The Master's degree in various educational programs provides training for work in the fields of education, science, business, healthcare, industry, services, public service, as well as for military and law enforcement agencies, specialized services.

According to the content and learning outcomes, the Master's degree programs meet the requirements for the preparation of masters in psychology at such leading foreign universities as the University of Leipzig, Stichting Euregio University, University of Florida, University of Guelph, University of Cincinnati, The University of North Carolina, The University of Edinburgh, Berkeley University, University of Amsterdam.

All Master's degree programs are practice-oriented. Strengthening the practical training of specialists, mastering the specifics of the future place of work in the learning process – this is the motto of the department in relation to the professional training of students (Kasen & Abdullaeva, 2020). Therefore, all educational programs have, in addition to practice bases, a training base (teaching of certain applied disciplines is conducted in specialized institutions and organizations).

The Department of General and Applied Psychology offers its students a base of practices that allow them to form the ability to provide educational services of an appropriate level in various spheres of public life:

- Republican psychological, medical and pedagogical consultation at the National Scientific and Practical Center for Correctional Pedagogy.
- Republican Scientific and Practical Center for Mental Health.
- Professional League of Psychologists and specialists in helping professions.
- Kazakh Psychological Society.
- The Zhandy Nur Public Foundation.
- Institute of the Family of Kazakhstan and Central Asia.
- The Center for Psychological and Social Assistance at the Kazakh Research Institute of Oncology and Radiology.
- «Perspektiva» Personality Development Center and others.

The names and a brief description of the proposed Master's degree programs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1*Master's Degree Educational Programs*

The cypher and the name of the Educational programs of the Department of General and Applied Psychology	Types of professional activities that the program prepares for
7M03125 - Psychology	Scientific, pedagogical, managerial, expert and psychological activities in higher educational institutions, research, psychological centers, public and non-governmental institutions, ministries and departments, industry sectors, military and law enforcement agencies, based on the application of psychological knowledge in the field of support, assessment, selection, management, counseling and personal development.
7M03117-Clinical Psychology	Professional psychological activity in clinical diagnostic, consultative psychocorrective, therapeutic and preventive, rehabilitation, scientific research, medical organizations, and public health institutions for the organization of psychological work with people of different ages who have disorders of mental activity, behavior and other psychopathological disorders.
7M03116-Child Psychology	Scientific and pedagogical, research and psychological activities with children, adolescents and their environment, including diagnosis, counseling, psychocorrection, psychotherapy, support and psychoprophylaxis in the field of child and adolescent psychology.
7M03118-Personality and Organizational Psychology (in English. language)	Psychological activity in the field of personal and organizational psychology, in various fields (business, education, services, healthcare, sports), providing psychological assistance to an individual and a group in organizations of various profiles, including psychological diagnostics, selection, training and development of personnel, counseling, consulting, psychocorrection, training, coaching, psychological support and supervision.
7M03119-Psychology in Healthcare	Psychodiagnostic, consultative, psychotherapeutic activities in the process of treatment, rehabilitation, and prevention of diseases, maintaining a healthy lifestyle among the population, when working with patients as part of the therapeutic and rehabilitation process and psychological and educational activities within the framework of preventive programs for a healthy population.
7M03122-Sports Psychology	Psychological support of the sports and training process; development of the athlete's personality and motivation of achievements based on psychological methods and techniques; creation of an educational and training environment conducive to the psychological health and professional growth of athletes.
7M03121- Psychology of extreme and emergency situations	Psychological support in emergency and extreme situations; psychological assistance to individuals (clients) in difficult life situations; advisory assistance to social services workers; prevention and psychological correction of negative social manifestations in the behavior of social groups and individuals.



You can learn more about the above-mentioned bachelor's and master's degree programs on the website of the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science of Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. Or on the sites: https://www.kaznu.kz/ru/education_programs/bachelor; https://www.kaznu.kz/ru/education_programs/magistracy .

The educational program of the doctoral program "8D03107-Psychology" (in English) has an urgent focus on neuroscience, due to the modernization of the field of psychological activity, the introduction of professional standards and the lack of educational programs in the Republic of Kazakhstan with the integration of psychological, managerial, and pedagogical aspects. This is a fundamental, practice-oriented program, which is an interdisciplinary complex covering topical issues of brain research, psychophysiology, neurocognitive science, and applied practical psychology.

To implement all these programs, the Faculty of Philosophy and Political Science has a CogNeuro Research Center, a Center for Psychological Technologies and Innovations, a Laboratory for Psychophysiological research (based on a polygraph), and a psychological counseling office.

For several years, the department has been cooperating with representatives of leading universities on the training of psychologists and psychological applied problems. Cooperation and meetings have been organized with such professors of leading foreign universities as Professor Meng Cheungchung (Zayed University, United Arab Emirates) on stress tolerance and coping behavior, Professor Saba Safdar (University of Guelph, Canada) on ethnic psychology; Professor Del Harnish, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, USA on Innovative Technologies in Education; Professor Alena Garber (Duisburg University, Germany) on the problems of modern technologies in counseling psychology, Professor Gerald Matthews (University of Cincinnati, USA) on problems of emotional intelligence, Professor James Parker (Trent University, Canada) on the main areas of modern world psychology, Professor Nigel Forman (Middlesex University, UK) on current problems of cognitive and Behavioral Psychology, Professor Zafer Bekirogullari (King'scollege University, London, England) on the problem of cognitive behavioral and family therapy, Professor Alexandrov A.A. (Institute of Psychology of the Russian Academy of Sciences) on the main problems of modern psychophysiology, etc. (Niyazova, 2016). In the direction of developing academic mobility, students undergo scientific internships at foreign universities and centers as part of their professional orientation.

In addition, the Department of General and Applied Psychology works in close cooperation with various practice-oriented organizations and communities: the Almaty Association of Transactional Analysis, the Center for Academic and Practical Psychology, which trains consulting psychologists in the field of symbol drama, etc. The results of cooperation are reflected in the joint holding of conferences, seminars and master classes, the involvement of specialists from these organizations in teaching at the master's and bachelor's degrees.

Figure 3

Meeting of the Working Group on Master's Degree Educational Programs



The most important resource for the implementation of these training programs is the highly rated potential of the faculty of the department, which is in demand by the psychological community in the country and in the world.

The Department of General and Applied Psychology carries out its own monitoring of the demand for graduates. The following data are taken as a basis: employment in the specialty, employment not in the specialty, self-employment, and continuing education at the next stage of education, maternity leave, non-employment.

The annual monitoring of the demand for graduates of the department at all levels shows that over 60% of students are already employed in the process of obtaining higher professional education, while 47% of them are already working within the framework of specialization. Upon graduation, almost 97% of graduates find a profession they like and a diploma.

Summing-up

Over the past decades, the labor market and diversified production have placed high demands not only on the quality of the labor product but also on the subject of professional activity, i.e., on a specialist. This position strengthens the responsibility of a professional educational organization both for the process of training a future specialist (employee) and for its result, which is characterized by a measure of compliance of the graduate's qualifications with the requirements of the employer.

Taking into account the analysis of employers' requests, the most common signs of the competitiveness of a specialist psychologist can be identified:

1. Knowledge of the methodology, theory, methodology, and practice of necessary and sufficient knowledge for successful work in this and related fields of psychology.



2. The availability of competencies and work experience that allow you to independently and responsibly make informed and effective decisions.
3. Willingness to master and use the most effective intellectual strategies, the ability to observe and analyze processes, and interpret the results necessary to perform psychological functions.
4. Communication skills: the ability to work in a team, adapt to changes in living conditions.
5. The development of the creative potential of the individual, the availability of vital resources that ensure readiness for self-development and self-expression.
6. The presence of an optimal combination of individual psychological characteristics of the personality (temperament, character, initiative).
7. Necessary and sufficient cultural and professional education.

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