



# PRE-DEPARTURE GUIDE & CHECKLIST



# WELCOME TO NAZARBAYEV UNIVERSITY!

On behalf of the entire Nazarbayev University community, the Office of International Scholars and Students Services are pleased to welcome you to NU. We hope to make your transition to a new environment as smooth as possible, so that you will be able to enjoy your studies at NU.

We are sure you have a lot of questions about next steps and how to prepare for your move to Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, so we have compiled the key information about life at NU, Astana city, and the country to get you started on your journey to NU. This Pre-departure guide is meant to serve you as a guide to help you prepare for the upcoming journey and contains some valuable recommendations on everything from applying for your visa to packing your bags, so make sure you read through each subject carefully.

We hope that this guidebook will be of help to you and please be assured that we are always standing ready to support and assist you in any way possible.

**OISSS Team**

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# ARRIVAL

Please check that you have the correct travel documents with you and just to be on the safe side make a copy of all travel documents! If you lose them you can be helped more quickly if you have copies with you!

## Visa-free entry

International students who are citizens of the countries indicated below can enter the Republic of Kazakhstan on the visa-free basis:

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Russian Federation         | 5. The Republic of Tajikistan |
| 2. The Kyrgyz Republic        | 6. The Republic of Uzbekistan |
| 3. The Republic of Armenia    | 7. The Republic of Belarus    |
| 4. The Republic of Azerbaijan |                               |

## Visa Obtainment

International students with a country of citizenship that is not listed above need a **Student visa (C9)** to come to Kazakhstan. This type of visa is given for the period of one year and allows you to make multiple entries to Kazakhstan. Visa shall be renewed each year.

## How to apply for Letter of Invitation

### Step 1

The Office of International Scholars and Students Services (OISSS) will be assisting you to issue the Letter of Invitation (LOI) for your Visa. Once the LOI is ready, its copy will be emailed to you.

To obtain Letter of Invitation (LOI) the following documents should be submitted by the international students to the OISSS:

- NU Visa Support Invitation Form;
- Copy of passport (first page);
- Apostilled/Legalized Marriage and Birth Certificates (if applicable)

### Step 2

Upon receiving the invitation letter, the applicant must personally submit all required documentation to the Kazakh Embassy/Consulate where the visa will be obtained in person.

Ensure that all personal information is accurate. If there are any discrepancies between the information on the letter of invitation and the passport, or if you identify any other inaccuracies, please notify Maulen Yergaziyev at [maulen.yergaziyev@nu.edu.kz](mailto:maulen.yergaziyev@nu.edu.kz). We advise double-checking the list of required



documents posted on the official website of the respective Kazakh Embassy/Consulate.

The following documents are normally required for the visa application:

- Copy of the visa invitation letter
- Passport (valid for at least six months beyond the visa validity and containing a minimum of two blank pages for visa stamping)
- Copy of the main page of the national passport
- [Completed visa application form](#)
- One color photo (3.5cm x 4.5cm)
- Multiple visa fee (200 USD per person)

The processing time for visa issuance is estimated to be five (5) business days. Please note that additional documents may be requested at the discretion of the Consulate.

## IMPORTANT:

- ✓ Once you have received your KZ visas, please send scanned copies of your passport and visa to [maulen.yergazyev@nu.edu.kz](mailto:maulen.yergazyev@nu.edu.kz)
- ✓ Upon your arrival in Kazakhstan, please visit our office in Block 1, room 1.207, 2nd floor, **within three (3) days** to complete the registration process with the Migration Police.

## TRANSFER

Please make sure to inform OISSS about your arrival details at least one week prior to your arrival. Please send your arrival details (including your flight number, airline, arrival time and your departure airport) to [oiss@nu.edu.kz](mailto:oiss@nu.edu.kz).

OISS team will be there to meet you in the arrival hall: please look out for a sign with your name and/or our Nazarbayev University logo after you have gone through customs. We will then accompany you to the University Campus and help you to check-in.

## WE WISH YOU A SAFE TRIP TO ASTANA



## ACCOMMODATION

For any questions regarding the accommodation please contact Department of Student Services: [student\\_housing@nu.edu.kz](mailto:student_housing@nu.edu.kz)

Accommodation on campus is provided for all international students on a paid basis once they have received their acceptance letter and submitted their application for the Dormitory accommodation by the following links:

1. Undergraduate (UG) and Graduate Masters (GrM): <https://forms.gle/RmbfVaAzp2iz1yqy7>
2. PhD: <https://forms.gle/AxjpURTjL54MV8Zr5>

The choices of accommodation for international students are the following:

### For single students:

- Bachelor and Master program students: Double occupancy in a dormitory room with two beds.
- PhD and Residency program students: Triple occupancy in a dormitory apartment.

### For married students:

- Family students (conformed by a student and a spouse) can apply for single occupancy in a dormitory room with two beds.
- Family students with children can apply for accommodation in one-bedroom or studio apartments on a competitive basis. Therefore, if you are interested in this type of accommodation, we strongly suggest you notify [student\\_housing@nu.edu.kz](mailto:student_housing@nu.edu.kz) in advance before your arrival to Kazakhstan to be informed about the application procedure, and check the availability of apartments during the fall semester.

The amount to pay for the dormitory accommodation is divided into two different modalities:

- **Standard tariff** applies to Undergraduate and Graduate students staying during the summer, fall and spring semesters who have registered courses via the Office of the Registrar system, who have internship approved by their schools, Career and Advising Center or who have research (thesis projects).
- **Commercial tariff** applies when the students decide to stay in the dormitory for the winter break. Regarding this tariff details please contact [student\\_housing@nu.edu.kz](mailto:student_housing@nu.edu.kz)

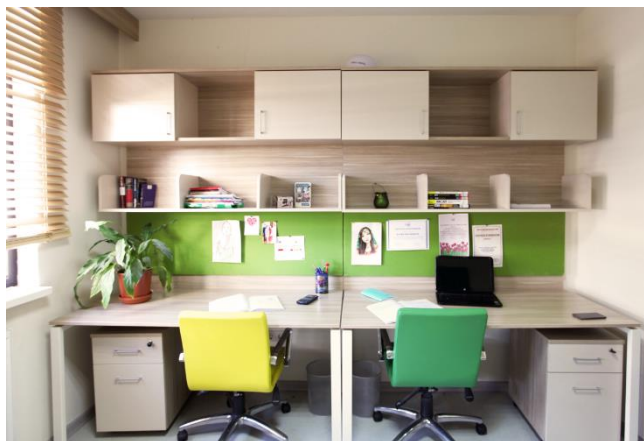
Below, we provide the breakdown of the dormitory standard tariffs per semester calculated in KZT:

Type of accommodation	Standard tariff (per semester)
For single students of Bachelor and Master's degree: Double occupancy in a dormitory room with two beds	~70 000 KZT
For single students of PhD and Residency: Triple occupancy in a dormitory apartment	~ 50 000 KZT

\* **Note:** The exchange rate for 1 USD is about 450 KZT (July, 2023).

Students with families can apply for one-bedroom apartments or studios on campus. The average cost per month is ~115 00 KZT + a deposit of a two-month rent cost in amount of ~230 000 KZT.

Dormitory rooms are equipped with beds, desks and chairs, wardrobes. However, you will need to bring or buy your linen and towels and other personal items you think would be necessary for you.



## Cooking

Each floor in your dormitory is equipped with a kitchen that can be accessed by the residents living on that specific floor. Each kitchen is equipped with two fridges, two freezers, two cookers, two ovens, cupboards and drawers where you can leave your food and dishes.

For cooking, please note that students should buy their own kitchen appliances upon arrival. If you would like to receive recommendations in where to buy them in the city at affordable prices, don't hesitate to contact our Members of Buddy program, international students, who will provide you with tips and show you around the stores or markets in the city upon request during the weekends.

## Laundry Facilities

At the beginning of the semester students have to pay for the laundry services for the term in advance. Each block has its own schedule of receiving and passing the bed inventories. The Department of Student Services (DSS) will inform students about the schedules.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Climate:** Kazakhstan is a country with a continental expanse and is characterised by huge climatic differences. Astana has a sharply continental climate with cold, long winters and hot and moderately dry summers featuring occasional brief rain showers. In fact,  $-35^{\circ}\text{C}$  is usual for winter in Astana. However, due to dryness and wind it feels like  $-45^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  $+35^{\circ}\text{C}$  is usual for summer in Astana. The highest temperature ever observed in Astana is  $+45^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Astana has the following average day-time temperatures:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
-17.6	-10.1	-2.2	11.2	19.4	24.8	25.6	24.8	18	8.8	-3	-10

**Clothing:** A variety of seasonal clothing is required to live comfortably in Astana year-round. Light clothing, including sweaters and rainwear **for spring, summer, and autumn**, will be needed. For **winter** warm inner clothing and heavy outerwear are necessary. All that you need for winter is available for purchase here in Kazakhstan, but it may be far more expensive than you can find in your home country, and it may not be available in your sizes (anything larger than medium can be hard to find):

- Very warm, preferably down filled winter jacket with a hood
- Winter boots
- Scarf
- Mittens/gloves
- Long underwear/Long johns/Undershirts
- Earmuffs/winter hat



**Electricity:** The electricity voltage is 220 Volts in Kazakhstan. If your electronics are of another types, you may want to consider bringing converters or adaptors.

**Internet:** Wi-Fi is available in most public places. In addition to this, Nazarbayev University students can use free Wi-Fi throughout the campus.

**Mobile services:** the SIM card itself is quite inexpensive and a small balance is almost always included in the price. Then you switch to the tariff you need. Tariffs are different, information about them will be provided to you at the points of sale of SIM cards, and they will also help you switch from one option to another. Normally, all the tariffs include: 25-30 GB internet, unlimited on-net calls, 300-500 minutes other operators (inside country), 20-50 minutes international calls.

**Laws in Kazakhstan:** may be different from those in your country. This especially applies to the use of alcohol and tobacco:

- It is prohibited to drink alcohol in public places except bars or public catering organizations where



it is allowed to sell alcohol. It is prohibited to appear drunk in public.

- Sale of alcoholic spirits in Kazakhstan by volume at 30% and stronger is prohibited between 9.00 p.m. and noon the next day. A similar ban on the sale of low-alcohol beverages (e.g., beer and wine) is from 11.00 pm to 8.00 am. However, you may still drink alcohol in restaurants, cafes and bars.
- It is not allowed to make noise and disturb your neighbors after 11 pm until 6 am in the morning. You may be fined for disturbing your neighbors during this period.
- It is prohibited to smoke in public places, except for designated areas.
- Gambling is illegal, except for specially designated locations: Burabay and Kapchagai.
- It is prohibited for individuals under 21 years of age to purchase alcohol.

**Route planner:** **2GIS** is the best map app for Kazakhstan and especially Astana; it has more accurate information on public transportation and shop business hours, reviews etc. compared to Google Maps.

**Taxi:** can be hailed using apps, most often in cities. You can pay by cash but only for short distances; you can also pay by credit/debit card through the app or by asking for the Kaspi number of the taxi driver. Ticket prices fluctuate, usually most expensive during rush hour and night time. Most common apps in Astana are **Яндекс Go** and **inDriver** (English available).

**Buses:** Public transport in Kazakhstan is reliable, inexpensive and safe. Operational hours of most buses are from 6.30 am to 11.00 pm.

**Food & Drinks:** Large grocery stores such as Galmart at Mega Silk Way can offer most of the products you are used in country. However, Indian, Thai, African, Latin American restaurants and ingredient stores are quite rare. Kazakhstan food is not very spicy. Vegetarian/vegan/gluten free foods ARE available, but not common and may be difficult to find in restaurants. Tea and coffee are the most common drinks in Kazakhstan. You can also buy soft drinks such as fizzy drinks, mineral water and beer. Tap water should not be drunk.

**Money:** The currency unit is the Kazakhstani tenge (KZT). The exchange rate for 1 USD is about 450 KZT (July, 2023). However, Kazakhstan is quite a cashless society. Most people have credit/debit cards and most places, including restaurants and stores, accept Kaspi App payments by phone number or QR codes. Because people do not use cash often, sometimes you might have trouble getting change back.

**Credit cards:** Kazakhstan's banking system complies with most international standards. Credit/debit cards are commonly used for transactions. You can pay with international credit cards (Visa, Mastercard or American Express) almost everywhere. Below you can see the process and necessary documents, to set up your bank account and get your card.

**Step 1:** Obtain valid student visa C-9

**Step 2:** Obtain Individual Identification Number (OISSS team will help you to arrange the document).

**Step 3:** Fill out the application form for setting up an account and wait for your card to be issued. It usually takes around 10 business days.

**Estimated monthly costs:** These are estimated lower and upper costs of living while being a student in Astana. The cost of living can vary greatly depending on your lifestyle, budget and spending habits.

Expenditure	Monthly Costs: Lower range (in KZT)	Monthly Costs: Upper range (in KZT)
Accommodation on campus	~10 000	~ 20 000
Food	~60 000	~150 000
Mobile phone	2 500	6 500
Laundry	2000	4000
Stationery, photocopying	1000	5000
Transportation	1000	10 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>76 500 KZT</b>	<b>195 000 KZT</b>

We recommend bringing between **400-500 USD** minimum to cover your personal expenses during The first two months (August-September) while you receive your first stipend in October. This amount will be enough to cover firsthand necessities such as getting kitchen appliances for cooking at the dormitories, buying winter clothes, covering daily food expenses, for buying a SIM and transportation card, laundry services, and internet services.

In case you are not receiving a stipend, we suggest a part of the extra 500 USD to cover firsthand necessities during the months of August and September, to have in your bank account minimum 300-400 USD every month for your living expenses.

### Other things to do before leaving home:

- **Medical:** We recommend you arrange a medical checkup to make sure you are fit and fine avoiding needing to take time off from your studies. You will be also asked to provide the [Health Background Form](#) to the University Healthcare Department to ensure you have all the required vaccination and tests.
- **Police Check:** It may also be helpful to get a check from any other country you are currently living in, as sometimes getting these after you leave can be problematic

# CHECKLIST BEFORE DEPARTURE

Things you want to think of when packing your luggage.

## Travel documents

- Passport
- Copies of the Passport and Visa
- Flight ticket



## Important travel items

- Passport
- Phone, laptop, electrical converter (or purchase one upon arrival)
- Sufficient clothing
- Cash or/and credit card
- Sufficient amount of finance (Average monthly cost of living from \$250 to \$500)
- Inform OISSS at [oiss@nu.edu.kz](mailto:oiss@nu.edu.kz) about arrival time

## Arrange your medical documents

- [Health Background Form](#)
- Health Insurance (if applicable)
- Testing for cholera (if applicable)