

APPROVED
at the meeting of the Academic
Council of NJSC Al-Farabi Kazakh
National University
Protocol №14 dated 16.06.2026

Entrance Examination Program
for Applicants to Doctoral Studies
Educational Program Group D061 – “Sociology”

I. General Provisions

1. This Program has been developed in accordance with the Order of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan No. 600 dated October 31, 2018, “On Approval of the Standard Rules for Admission to Educational Organizations Implementing Higher and Postgraduate Education Programs” (hereinafter referred to as the Standard Rules).

2. The entrance exam for doctoral studies consists of writing an essay, an exam in the profile of a group of educational programs and an interview.

Block	Scores
1. Interview	30
2. Essay	20
3. Exam according to the profile of the group of the educational program	50
Total admission score	100/75

3. The duration of the entrance exam is 3 hours 10 minutes, during which the applicant writes an essay and answers the electronic examination ticket. The interview is conducted at the university premises before the entrance exam.

II. Procedure for Conducting the Entrance Examination

1. Essay Writing

Applicants to doctoral studies in Educational Program Group D061 – “Sociology” are required to write a problem-oriented/thematic essay. The essay must contain at least 250–300 words.

The purpose of the essay is to assess the applicant’s analytical and creative abilities, demonstrated through the capacity to develop independent arguments based on theoretical knowledge, social experience, and personal experience.

Types of Essays

- Motivational essay revealing the motivations for engaging in research activities;
- Scientific-analytical essay substantiating the relevance and methodology of the proposed research;
- Problem-oriented/thematic essay reflecting various aspects of scientific knowledge within the subject field.

2. Electronic Examination Ticket

The electronic examination ticket consists of three questions.

Topics for Preparation for the Examination in the Profile of the Educational Program Group

Discipline: SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Main Directions in the Development of Sociological Theory

Theories of the classical stage in the development of sociology. Sociological analysis of the theories of classical sociologists: Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx, and Georg Simmel. Naturalism in sociology and its principal directions. The Chicago School of Sociology. Industrial sociology and the doctrines of “human relations.” Critical theory of society. Neo-Marxism. Pitirim Sorokin and the contemporary interpretation of social stratification and social mobility theory.

Macrosociological and Microsociological Paradigms

Structural functionalism of Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. Systems theory. System and social environment. Niklas Luhmann’s theory of autopoiesis. Conflict theory. Contemporary methodology for conflict research. Theories of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism: fundamental principles.

Exchange Theory, Network Theory, and Rational Choice Theory

George Homans’ and Peter Blau’s exchange theory. Max Weber’s theory of rationalization as a methodology for understanding contemporary sociocultural processes. James Coleman’s rational choice theory.

Major Directions of Contemporary Sociological Theory

Postmodern social theory. The theories of Alfred Schutz, Thomas Luckmann, Peter Berger, and Harold Garfinkel. Immanuel Wallerstein’s theory and the characteristics of globalization. Theories of the information society by Alvin Toffler and Franco Ferrarotti. Theory of social change. Analysis of Piotr Sztompka’s monograph *Sociology of Social Change*. Theories of globalization (Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, and Zygmunt Bauman).

Discipline: ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Science and Social Development

Science and its role in the development of society. Criteria of scientific knowledge. Structure of scientific knowledge. Scientific problem, hypothesis, and theory as forms of theoretical knowledge. Dynamics of science. The value of scientific rationality and its historical types.

Methodology of Science

Methodology of scientific cognition. Methodology and methods of the social sciences and humanities. Specific features of social cognition in the works of Wilhelm Dilthey, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Max Weber, Wilhelm Windelband, Heinrich Rickert, and others. The role of modeling and forecasting in sociology. Conceptual models. Problems of constructing new models. Sociological forecasting as a form of social forecasting.

Research Activity

Scientific research and its stages. Selection of a research direction. Ethics of scientific research. Scientific information: search, accumulation, and processing. Analysis of theoretical and experimental research and formulation of conclusions. Planning

scientific research. Structure of research work. Writing and formatting a scientific article.

Discipline: ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Sociological Research

The concept of sociological research. The design of sociological research: content and methods for developing the introductory section of the research program. The sociological research program: functions, structure, logic of construction, purpose, and general understanding of its main elements. Procedures for developing the theoretical component of a sociological research program. Procedures for developing the theoretical and methodological component of a sociological research program. Conceptualization of the object and subject of sociological research. Formulation of hypotheses in sociological research.

Main Stages of Sociological Research

Scientific organization of sociological research as a prerequisite for obtaining reliable social information. Sociological research as a form of cognitive activity. Implementation of the main modeling techniques within the structure of sociological research.

Classification of sociological research:

- Fundamental and applied research;
- Theoretical and empirical research.

Stages of sociological research:

- Preparatory stage;
- Main stage;
- Final stage.

Continuity between different research procedures and consecutive stages of sociological research. Theoretical and philosophical-worldview foundations of research. Methodology and research methods as interconnected and complementary components of a research program.

Planning Sociological Research

Strategic research planning.

Research plans:

- Exploratory research plan;
- Descriptive research plan;
- Experimental research plan.

Research strategies. Development of research instruments for conducting sociological studies. Selection of respondent sampling techniques. Construction of samples. Documentation in sociological research. Main stages in organizing and planning the fieldwork phase of sociological research.

Discipline: CONTEMPORARY METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of Quantitative Research

Quantitative methods in sociology, their classification, and their role in understanding social reality. Classical studies conducted using quantitative methods. The problem of quantitative measurement in sociology. Practical application of measuring social

characteristics. Measurement, validity, and reliability. Scaling procedures. Types of scales. Coding in sociology and its specific features.

Methodology of Qualitative Research and Data Analysis

Research strategies in the public sphere and social communications within qualitative methodology. Historical and comparative analysis in the social sciences. Interviewing as a qualitative method.

Types of interviews:

- Expert interview;
- In-depth interview;
- Interviews with “extreme” categories of respondents who possess either extensive or minimal knowledge about the research subject.

Practice of conducting interviews:

- Institutional frameworks;
- Organizational frameworks;
- Psychological frameworks.

Planning the interview process. Development of research instruments. Focus group methodology. The Delphi diary method. Brainstorming. Projection method. Associative method. Situation-completion method. Situation-construction methods. Experiment as a research method and its distinctive features. Content analysis. Ethnographic research. Ethics and validity in qualitative research.

Coding and Processing Sociological Information Using SPSS

Coding and processing sociological information in contemporary sociological research using the SPSS software package. Theoretical foundations of processing and analyzing sociological information and the capabilities of SPSS. Main features of the software and preparation for working in SPSS. Data entry in SPSS and management of data files. Data modification and transformation. Methods of descriptive statistics. Measures of central tendency and dispersion.

Application of Mathematical Methods for the Analysis and Interpretation of Empirical Data

Analysis of two-variable relationships. Contingency tables. Comparison of mean values between groups. Analysis of variance (ANOVA). Correlation analysis. Regression analysis. Factor analysis. Cluster analysis. SPSS syntax. Construction of indices in SPSS. Presentation and interpretation of analytical results in SPSS.

III. List of References

Core Literature

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Additional References

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