

Rules on Admission to Master's Programmes for the 2026–2028 Academic Years PF “OSCE Academy in Bishkek”

These Regulations on admission were developed on the basis of the Law of the Kyrgyz Republic “On Education” dated August 11, 2023 No. 179; The procedure for admission to higher educational institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic, approved by Resolution of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic dated June 30, 2022 No. 355 (as amended by Resolutions of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic dated July 12, 2024 No. 382, and July 25, 2025 No. 444); The Charter of the PF "OSCE Academy in Bishkek" (hereinafter referred to as the "OSCE Academy"), valid licenses for conducting educational activities and determine the procedure for accepting documents, procedures for assessing the level of knowledge of applicants and the procedure for enrollment in the OSCE Academy in Bishkek.

1. Basic provisions

1.1. The OSCE Academy is a higher education institution established with the mandate to support the training of specialists for the countries of Central Asia. Admission is primarily open to applicants from the Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan). As part of the Academy’s mandate, admission is also open to citizens of Afghanistan and Mongolia, which have traditionally been included among the countries of the region. Citizens of other OSCE participating States may also be considered for admission only within a limited quota (up to three students per intake), and subject to successful completion of the competitive selection process.

1.2. Admission to the master’s degree programmes is carried out on a competitive basis in accordance with these OSCE Academy Admission Rules, which are approved by the Director of the OSCE Academy on an annual basis.

1.3. The admission plan of the OSCE Academy is established in accordance with the valid licenses for conducting educational activities. The admission structure is determined by the OSCE Academy, taking into account country, regional, and gender balance, subject to the availability of corresponding funding.

1.4. The number of places and their distribution among countries are determined by the OSCE Academy in accordance with its regional mandate and funding conditions. The Academy strives to ensure balanced participation of representatives from the countries of the region. This may mean that, when comparing candidates who have met the minimum threshold requirements, preference may be given to applicants from countries that are underrepresented in the current cohort. At the same time, the Academy does not establish strict quotas, and the principles of transparency, impartiality, and non-discrimination are upheld at all stages of the selection process.

1.5. Applicants to the master’s degree programmes must hold a higher education diploma conferring the qualification of “Bachelor” or “Master,” or a higher professional education diploma conferring the qualification of “Specialist.”

1.6. The main criteria for admission to the OSCE Academy are the level of knowledge and abilities demonstrated during the entrance examinations. Assessment is carried out in accordance with approved criteria and procedures that exclude subjectivity and ensure equal conditions for all applicants.

1.7. In selecting candidates for admission, the OSCE Academy is guided by the principles of impartiality, transparency, and non-discrimination on any grounds.

1.8. The Academy is committed to gender equality and to promoting equitable access for all qualified candidates. While admissions are strictly merit-based, we actively encourage applications from historically underrepresented groups, including women, in line with international standards on equality and non-discrimination.

2. Organization of admission to the OSCE Academy

2.1. To organize the admission process, an Admission Committee is established by order of the Director of the OSCE Academy. The Director serves as the Chairperson of the Admission Committee and bears overall responsibility for the organization and conduct of the admissions campaign. The Admission Committee includes faculty members of the OSCE Academy, as well as external experts and representatives of the OSCE and other international organizations, as required. In the event of a real or potential conflict of interest, members of the committee must declare it and refrain from evaluating the relevant applications.

2.2. The composition, powers, and procedures of the Admission Committee, as well as the rules governing entrance tests and enrollment in the master's programmes, are defined in the Regulation on the Admission Committee, approved by the Director of the OSCE Academy. The Committee's term of office is one year.

2.3. The Chairperson of the Admission Committee ensures compliance with the licensed student intake, adherence to relevant national regulations, assigns responsibilities among members of the Admission and Appeal Committees, and approves the procedures for their work.

2.4. The administrative and logistical work of the Admission Committee is carried out by the Executive Secretary, appointed by the Director of the OSCE Academy.

2.5. To organize and conduct entrance examinations, the Chairperson approves the composition of the Examination and Appeal Committees. Their powers and procedures are defined in separate regulations approved by the Director of the Academy. Examination Committees are composed of experienced faculty members, and at least 50% of their composition is renewed annually.

2.6. During the admission process, the Chairperson of the Admission Committee ensures observance of applicants' rights as defined by the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic, transparency and openness of the committee's work, objectivity in assessing applicants' abilities and potential, and availability of the committee leadership throughout all stages of the admission process.

3. Organization of informing applicants

3.1. An applicant to the master's programme of the OSCE Academy has the right to familiarize itself with its Charter, licenses for the right to conduct educational activities and accreditation certificates, rules for admission to the OSCE Academy, as well as entrance examination programmes and other necessary information related to admission.

3.2. For the purpose of familiarizing the applicant, the OSCE Academy posts the information specified in paragraph 3.1. documents on its official website.

3.3. To inform applicants for master's studies at the OSCE Academy, the admission committee announces the following:

- annual rules for admission to the OSCE Academy;
- a list of master's training areas in accordance with the license for the right to conduct educational activities;
- list and forms of entrance examinations for master's programmes;
- the total number of places for admission to master's programmes in each field of study;
- rules for filing and considering appeals based on the results of entrance examinations;
- timing of entrance examinations for master's programmes;
- the deadlines for announcing the results of each round.

3.4. During the period of accepting documents, the admission committee of the OSCE Academy organizes the operation of telephone lines and e-mail ma-admission@osce-academy.net to answer all questions. The procedure for informing applicants to the OSCE Academy about the results of the competitive selection process is carried out via e-mail indicated in the application in accordance with the schedule established in the regulations on the admission committee. The applicant is responsible for the accuracy of the e-mail address provided.

4. Reception of documents

4.1. Electronic applications are submitted through the online platform "Embark" from October 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026. The electronic application includes the following sections: resume indicating personal data, information about education, work experience in the specialty, scientific work experience, relevant to the chosen programme of study, including publications; participation in conferences and other events related to the programme; a letter of interest (no more than 700 words) explaining the applicant's motivation for studying in the OSCE Academy's Master's programme and providing an explanation of future professional intentions. If necessary, the OSCE Academy may extend the application submission period through the Embark platform. In the event of an extension, the relevant information is published on the Academy's website and on its social media pages.

4.2. The selection of applications for participation in the competition and the conduct of entrance tests are carried out no later than May 30, 2026 in accordance with the schedule approved by the Chairperson of the Admission Committee. The names of the chairpersons of the examination committees and examiners are not indicated in the schedule of entrance examinations.

4.3. To participate in the competition, candidates must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Hold a higher professional education diploma with the qualification of *Bachelor*, *Master*, or *Specialist* (minimum 4-year Bachelor's degree or equivalent).
2. Demonstrate an advanced level of English. Candidates who hold a valid IELTS Academic score of at least 6.5 or TOEFL iBT score of at least 90 must upload a copy of the certificate to their application. Candidates who do not submit such a certificate will be required to take an English language test administered by the OSCE Academy.
3. Be a citizen of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, or Mongolia. Citizens of other OSCE participating States may also apply for a *limited number of seats* and must participate in the same competitive selection process.

4.4. When applying for admission to the OSCE Academy, the candidate shall present a document proving her/his identity and citizenship. The following are attached to the application:

- passport and its notarized translation into Russian language (for international passports);
- bachelor's/master's/specialist's diploma and its supplements, including original copy (for verification) and a notarized translation into Russian;
- medical certificate 086-U;

- digitized photograph 3x4 cm.

4.5 The Admission Office conducts an evaluation of diplomas to determine their equivalency to the admission requirements of higher education institutions of the Kyrgyz Republic prior to enrollment.

4.6. The evaluation of foreign citizens' previous education documents is carried out by the Ministry of Science, Higher Education, and Innovations of the Kyrgyz Republic. Foreign citizens cannot be admitted without providing a certificate of compliance with the level and content of education, issued by the Ministry of Science, Higher Education, and Innovations of the Kyrgyz Republic.

4.7. Electronic applications of candidates who were not admitted, submitted for participation in the competition, are kept at the OSCE Academy for one year from the start of the document submission period. After this storage period, the applications are subject to destruction (data is deleted from the Embark system and from local storage devices).

4.8. Applicants who have submitted deliberately false documents to the Academy's admission committee bear responsibility under the legislation of the Kyrgyz Republic.

5. Rules for conducting entrance tests

5.1. For admission to master's programmes at the OSCE Academy, entrance examinations are carried out in the form of written tests and examinations, and interviews.

5.2. The procedure and schedule of the entrance examinations are established by the Admission Committee, approved by its Chairperson, and published on the OSCE Academy website.

5.3. Test tasks and written exam assignments, along with their answers, are stored electronically by the responsible secretary of the admission committee in files and folders inaccessible to others, and in paper form in sealed envelopes, which are opened immediately before the entrance examination.

5.4. Admission to entrance examinations is carried out with a passport or other document proving the identity of the applicant.

5.5. Before the start of the entrance tests, members of the Admission Committee of the OSCE Academy are briefed on the rules of testing.

5.6. During the entrance exams, applicants are prohibited from:

- bring and use textbooks, notebooks, notes, mobile phones, electronic notebooks and other means of storing information;
- talk or change seats without the permission of the examiners;
- exchange tests, answer sheets and notes.

In case of repeated violation of the requirements for the procedure for conducting entrance examinations, the applicant is disqualified and is not allowed to take the next exam. Disqualification is formalized by an appropriate act, certified by the signatures of members of the examination committee.

5.7. When an applicant submits a completed test task, members of the committee check the compliance of the applicant's individual code with the code entered on the test form. All tests are completed with a ballpoint or helium pen. Works completed by pencil are not accepted.

5.8. The presence of unauthorized persons at the entrance exams is prohibited.

5.9. The secretary of the admission committee places the written work and answer sheets of each applicant in a separate envelope, seals it and affixes a stamp at the junction. Answer sheets sealed in envelopes are handed over to members of the examination committee for verification, and their verification is carried out at the OSCE Academy. Persons not related to this entrance test are not allowed to take the test.

5.10. When checking exam papers:

- multiple-choice tests have only one correct answer. If an applicant fills in two or more answer options, the answer to this question is not counted;
- answers filled in with a pencil are not assessed;
- test results and written work results (points received by the applicant) are entered in the prescribed form, which is certified by the signature of the examiner.

5.11. The written work of persons enrolled in the OSCE Academy is filed in their personal files. Written works of rejected competition participants are stored for six months, after which they are destroyed.

6. Entrance tests

For candidates from Central Asia, the Academy organizes entrance examinations in Astana, Bishkek, Dushanbe, and Tashkent. A schedule indicating the locations of admission tests is developed by the admission committee and approved by the chairperson of the admission committee. The format for conducting entrance tests is established by the admission committee. Entrance tests include three rounds.

6.1. First round

In the first round, candidates are assessed based on their electronic applications submitted through the Embark platform. The Admission Committee conducts a technical eligibility check to verify compliance with the admission requirements outlined in Section 4 (citizenship, educational qualification, English proficiency, and academic performance).

Applicants who meet the eligibility criteria proceed to the qualitative review of their documents, including academic background, relevant experience, and the motivation letter by faculty members, in accordance with the approved shortlisting procedure.

Data on compliance/non-compliance with the criteria is recorded in the prescribed form. Each candidate is assigned an identification number without indicating the last name and first name.

Qualified applications are reviewed and evaluated by members of the admission committee. Members of the admission committee evaluate candidates' documents in the prescribed form according to the following criteria:

- academic achievements at the previous university,
- presence of work experience/research in the relevant field,
- motivation letter of the candidate.

Based on the assessment results, a rating of candidates is compiled for admission to participation in the second round - testing.

6.2. Second round

The second round includes the participation of candidates in testing. Each type of test and assignment is assessed using a 100% system. Candidates undergo the following types of entrance tests:

- English grammar test (candidates are exempt from the English language test only if they provide a valid TOEFL iBT certificate with a minimum score of 90, or a valid IELTS Academic certificate with a minimum score of 6.5);
- a discipline-specific examination;
- English-language essays on assigned topics.

The development of tests and essay topics is carried out by members of the admission committee – faculty members of the relevant programme or attracted specialists in the relevant discipline. The developed tests and assignments are strictly confidential information, and persons who have access to them are obliged to maintain confidentiality.

An invitation letter specifying the date, location, and time of the testing is sent to the applicant's e-mail address provided in the application at least 10 days prior to the test date.

During the testing, the candidate enters her/his identification number (without providing surname or first name) on the answer sheet. The identification number is sent to the applicant along with the invitation letter for the test. A candidate who is invited but does not appear for testing is eliminated from the competition.

The tests completed by candidates are checked by members of the committee – faculty members of the corresponding master's programme, and the test results in the prescribed form are submitted to programme staff for further processing.

Transportation and other expenses related to taking the test are not covered by the OSCE Academy.

6.3. Third round

Candidates who have scored at least 50% of the maximum possible 100% on the tests are eligible for the third round – the interview.

During the interview, admission committee members assess general knowledge and experience in the field relevant to the master's programme, interest in learning, communication skills, personal maturity, willingness to follow strict academic rules and level of spoken English.

The interview is conducted by three or more members of the admission committee. If necessary, the interview may be conducted online. The results of the interview are recorded in a special form and signed by the members of the admission committee who conducted the interview.

A candidate who passes the test but does not appear for the interview is eliminated from the competition.

7. Enrollment based on the results of entrance examinations

7.1. Upon admission to the master's programmes of the OSCE Academy, applicants must submit a notarized copy of their Bachelor's / Master's / Specialist diploma. Enrollment in the master's programme is carried out only upon presentation of the original education document.

7.2. The final admission protocol for enrollment is issued by June 10, 2026.

7.3. Individuals who fail to appear for the entrance examinations, as well as those who do not obtain the required threshold score, do not participate in the competition. Individuals recommended for admission must, no later than two weeks from the date the invitation letter is sent by the OSCE Academy, submit a confirmation letter indicating their acceptance of the offer to study in the master's programme. Failure to provide such confirmation within the established period is considered a refusal of admission, and the OSCE Academy reserves the right to offer the available place to a candidate from the reserve list.

7.4. Individuals admitted to the OSCE Academy's master's programmes in "Politics and Security (Central Asia)" and "Economic Governance and Development" are required to complete the one-month OSCE Academy Summer School. Individuals who fail to attend the Summer School are subject to dismissal from the OSCE Academy.

7.5. All vacant places arising as a result of refusals of admission are filled by candidates from the reserve list in the order and sequence established in the protocol of the international admission committee.

7.6. When making a decision on the admission of candidates and the formation of a reserve list, members of the international admission committee, in addition to the results of unified entrance tests, are guided by the principles of gender/regional balance, the principles of impartiality, transparency and non-discrimination on any grounds.

7.7. Admission of candidates to the master's programme of the OSCE Academy is formalized by an order of the director on the basis of the Minutes of the meeting of members of the international admission committee.

7.8. Final data on admission to master's programmes of the OSCE Academy is published on the official website of the OSCE Academy and report will be submitted to the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Innovations of the Kyrgyz Republic by December 10, 2026. The list of applicants admitted to the master's programmes is published in the form of individual identification codes, without indicating names and surnames.

7.9. Individuals enrolled in master's programmes at the OSCE Academy in Bishkek enter into an individual agreement to receive a training grant.

8. Appeal procedure

8.1. An applicant has the right to submit a written statement (hereinafter – an appeal) to the appeal committee if she/he disagrees with the results of the testing or written examinations.

8.2. Consideration of an appeal is not a retake of tests and exams. During the consideration of the appeal, only the correctness of the assessment of the results of the entrance examinations is checked.

8.3. The appeal is submitted by sending an e-mail to the Chairperson of the Appeal Committee of the OSCE Academy at appeal@osce-academy.net by June 10, 2026.

8.4. The applicant has the right to be present during the appeal hearing. The applicant must have with him a document proving his identity.

8.5. The appeal committee reviews the applicant's tests and examination papers to determine the objectivity of the scores awarded and issues a final decision which, in case of disagreement, is made by voting and approved by a majority of votes.

8.6. The decision of the appeal committee, documented in the protocol, certified by signatures of all members of the appeal committee is brought to the attention of the applicant via e-mail.

8.7. The decision of the appeal committee, documented in the protocol, is attached to the Minutes of the final meeting of the international admission committee.