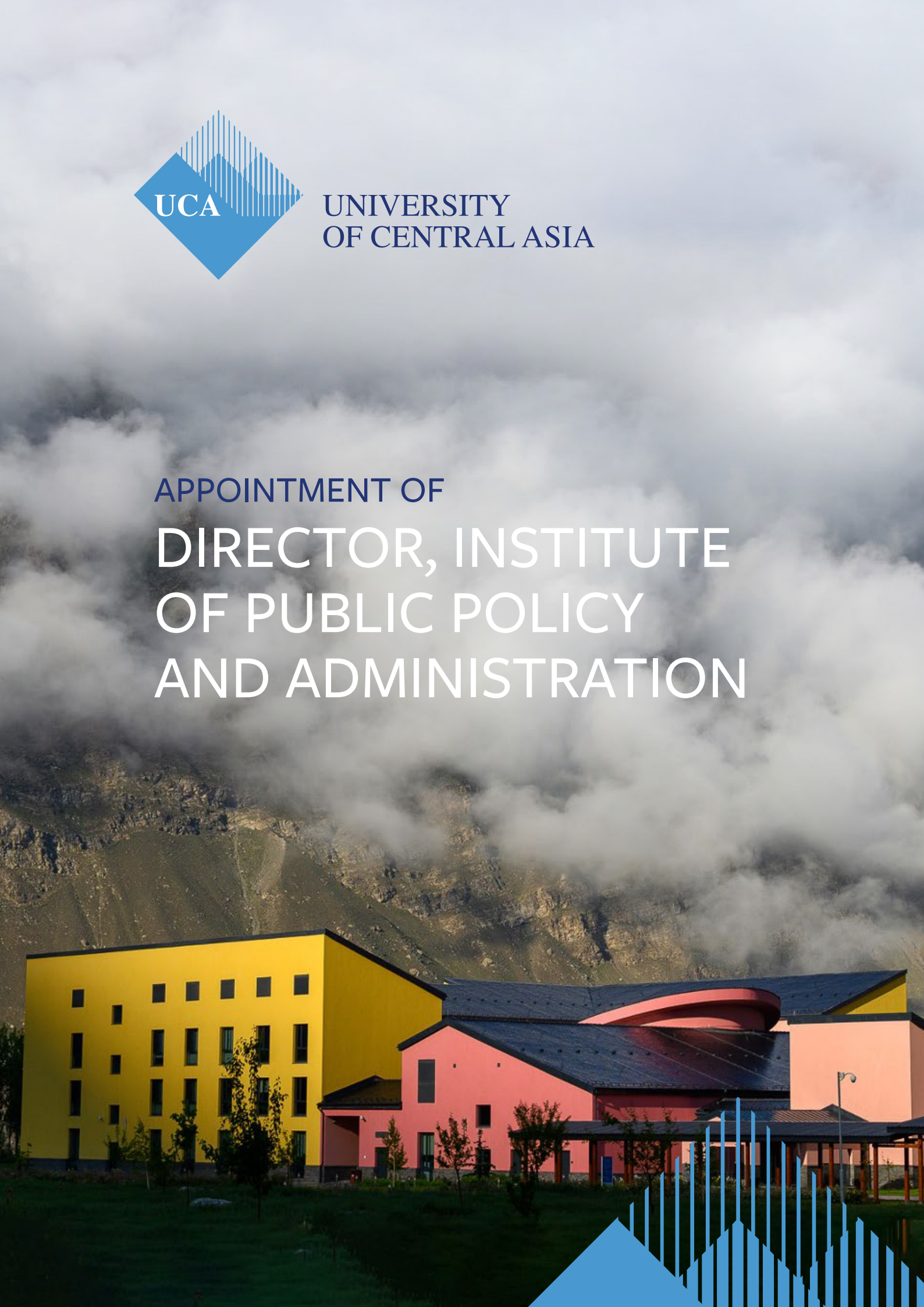




UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA

APPOINTMENT OF
DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE
OF PUBLIC POLICY
AND ADMINISTRATION





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000 as a private, not-for-profit, secular university through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan; ratified by their respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations.

The Presidents are the Patrons of the University and His Highness is the Chancellor. UCA's mission is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain communities, by offering an internationally recognized standard of higher education, and enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future.

UCA is currently seeking a new Director of its Institute of Public Policy and Administration (IPPA). This role will be based in Bishkek, capital of the Kyrgyz Republic, though will involve travel regionally and internationally. IPPA provides training for public officials, undertakes applied and scholarly research, and runs a major regional conference. It sits within UCA's Graduate School of Development (GSD) alongside the Mountain Societies Research Institute, the Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit, the Civil Society Initiative, and the Aga Khan Humanities Project.

Reporting to the Dean of GSD, Professor Christopher Gerry, the new Director will lead the further expansion and advancement of IPPA. This exciting role will provide strategic leadership, research mentorship and operational direction for the Institute, which sits at the forefront of addressing the unique social, economic and environmental challenges confronting the mountainous, low-income countries of the Central Asian region.

Candidates will be expected to possess compelling scholarly expertise in a relevant subject area (eg. Economics, Public Policy, Public Health, Public Administration, Urban Development, Development Studies), insight into best practice around academic leadership, and a strong skill set with regards to capacity building, networking, and postgraduate education.

Applications can be made online, via the website of the executive search firm Society. The deadline for receipt of applications is midday (GMT) on Monday 16th October 2023.



EDUCATION THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

“By creating intellectual space and resources, this University (UCA) will help turn the mountains that divide the nations and territories of Central Asia, into links that unite its peoples and economies in a shared endeavor to improve their future well-being.”

His Highness the Aga Khan, Chancellor, University of Central Asia, Astana, Kazakhstan, 31 August 2000.

The University of Central Asia (UCA) is a leading centre for knowledge and learning, connecting isolated rural communities with the global community and building human capital needed for modern economies and stable governance.

The mission of UCA is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain communities, by offering an internationally recognized standard of higher education and enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future.

UCA's Central Administration Office is located in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, which is where the Director of the Institute of Public Policy and Administration will be based, Bishkek also acts as a hub for some of the research activity of the University. Its undergraduate programmes are located in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan, and Khorog, Tajikistan, near the Tien Shan and Pamir mountains. The Tekeli campus, in the mountain ranges of Kazakhstan, is in the planning stage. In response to the needs of rural mountain communities, UCA has established its three Campuses away from major urban centres.

They are on the historic Silk Road, and UCA hopes to be at the heart of the economic and intellectual transformation taking place in the region. UCA is also exploring the use of online learning in order to extend its reach still further.

A private, not-for-profit, secular university, UCA was founded in 2000 through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan, ratified by their respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. In addition, UCA brings with it the broader commitment and partnership of the AKDN, one of the largest private development agencies in the world.

Bishkek is a pleasant, cosmopolitan, and hospitable city. Its busy urban environment offers a high standard of living at relatively low cost. There are a wide range of lifestyle and cultural activities on offer, including modern retail and dining facilities and access to world-class sports and recreation in ‘the Switzerland of Asia’.

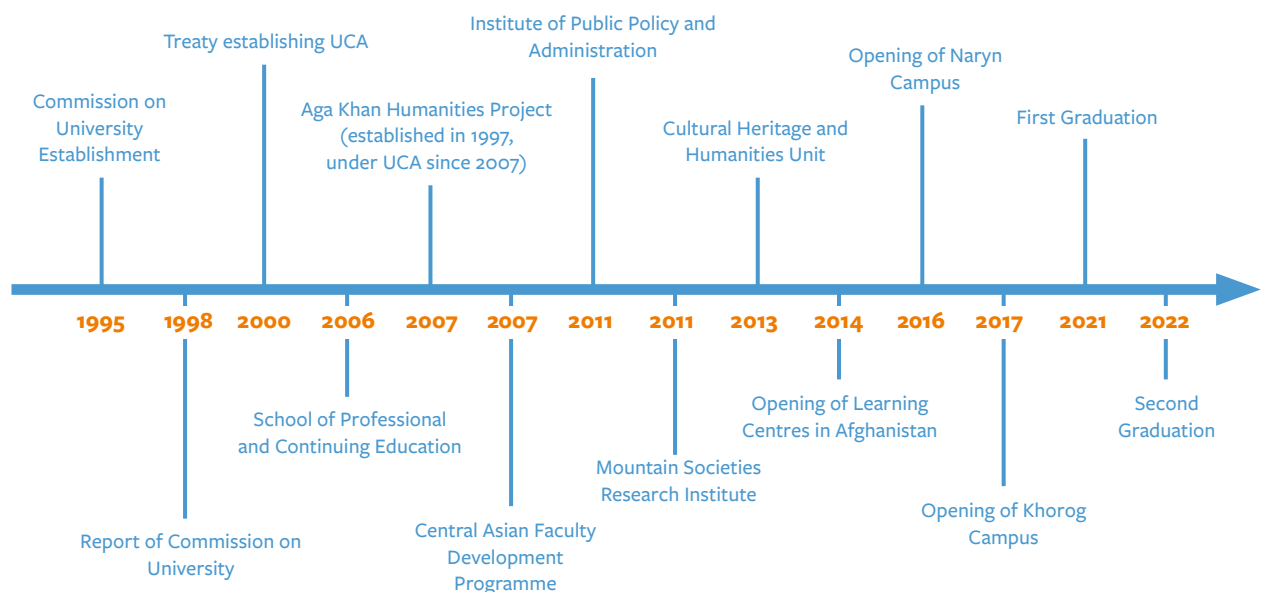


THE UNIVERSITY

UCA is Central Asia's first regional and fully residential university. UCA is organized into three schools: the School of Professional and Continuing Education, the School of Arts and Science, and the Graduate School of Development. Combined, they enable UCA to deliver a broad range of educational programmes and research initiatives in the three Central Asian Founding States, and Afghanistan.

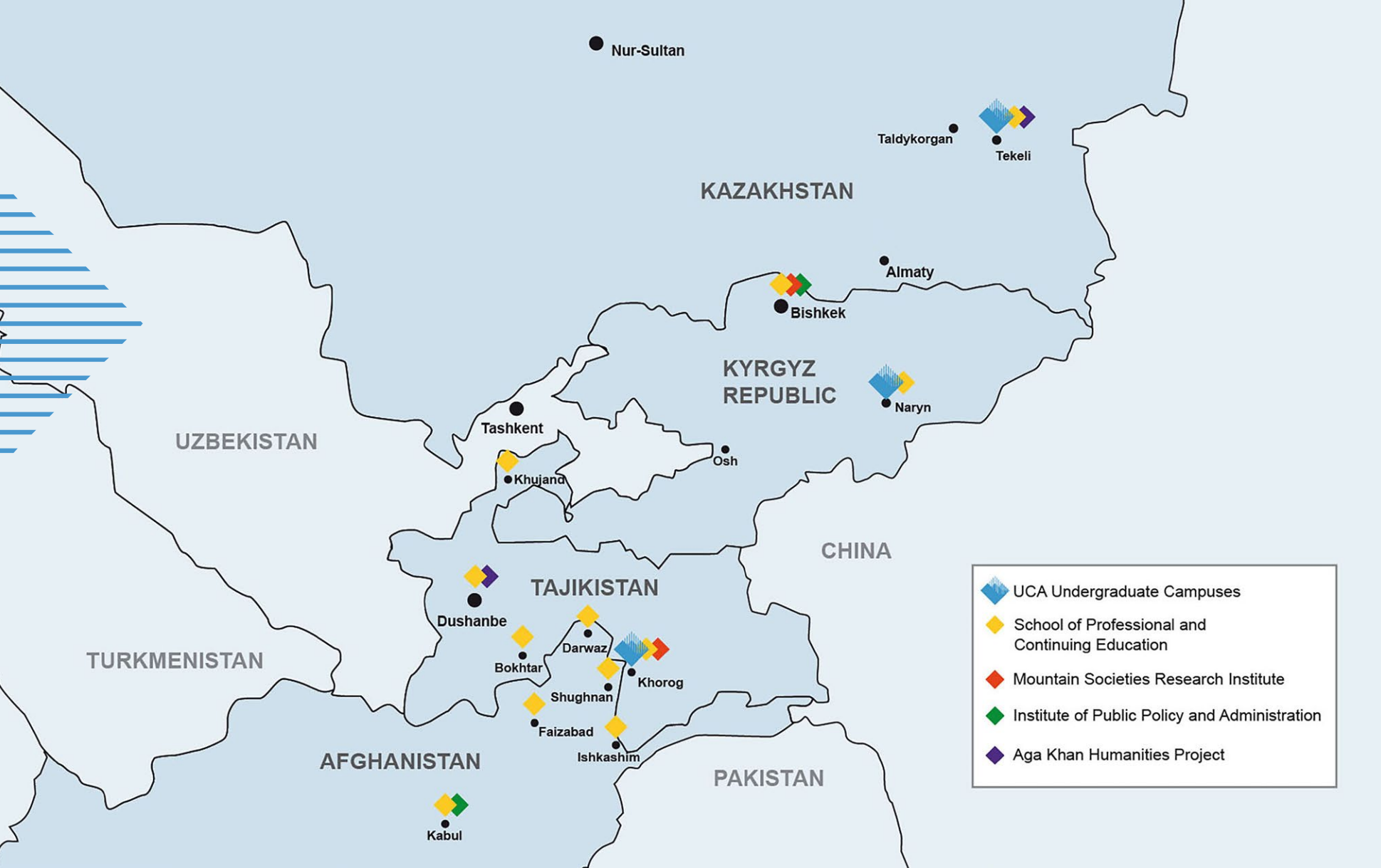
UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ASIA (UCA)

Key development milestones



Source: University of Central Asia

UCA IN THE REGION



LOCAL COMMUNITY

The campus towns of Khorog, Naryn and Tekeli are culturally and ecologically rich secondary cities located in the mountain ranges on the historic Silk Road. UCA's campuses provide access to quality education outside of capital cities, foster regional hubs of technology and innovation and offer a uniquely immersive residential experience that provides a perspective which extends beyond capital cities.

In these mountain communities UCA acts as an important driver of their educational, economic and social development. Almost 70% of students are from small towns or rural areas and the University provides full-time employment for over 600 people. Supported by AKDN agencies, new health facilities and parks were built in the town centres and UCA programmes on entrepreneurship have created scores of new businesses, some of which received loans from AKDN financial institutions. In addition, UCA launched an education improvement initiative focused on public secondary schools and spearheads efforts on tourism promotion.

With AKDN and international donor partners' support, UCA collaborates with town authorities on master planning and urban improvement projects that will turn these locations into resilient and vibrant university towns.

UCA's investments have a national impact. Through construction of our campuses alone we invested US\$85M in Kyrgyzstan (2017) and US\$90M in Tajikistan (2018). In comparison, total foreign direct investment in the economy of these countries then was US\$617M and US\$327M respectively. Apart from academic programmes and the deep connection and support UCA offers local communities in other areas of development, together with sister agencies of the AKDN it works with the governments of the Founding States in support of their national objectives and priorities, including digitisation, urban resilience, climate change, and enhancing the quality of education.





GRADUATE SCHOOL OF DEVELOPMENT

The Graduate School of Development (GSD) is the home for multidisciplinary research on social, economic, natural resource and environmental challenges facing Central Asia, as well as on cultural heritage and production, and on the understanding of civil society. GSD has achieved a significant presence in the Central Asian knowledge landscape.

Under the leadership of its new Dean, Professor Christopher Gerry, GSD is building considerable momentum, increasing its scholarly outputs, and reliably attracting research funding from the likes of the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Asian Development Bank.

GSD has created strong regional networks of institutions, researchers, and communities of practice, but is also expanding its international collaborations through partnership working with universities such as UCL, Humbolt, Oxford, York, Cambridge, and Vienna. The School is heavily invested in the provision of Executive Education, is currently developing a Masters programme - the first within UCA – and plans to build towards PhD provision over time.

GSD has five distinctive research units:

- Institute of Public Policy and Administration (public policy and economics)
- Mountain Societies Research Institute (environmental and social sciences)
- Civil Society Initiative (sociology and society)
- Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit (anthropology, history, and cultural studies)
- Aga Khan Humanities Project (history, culture, and languages).

INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC POLICY AND ADMINISTRATION

Established in 2011, and headquartered in Bishkek, the Graduate School's IPPA is at the forefront of addressing the unique social, economic and environmental challenges confronting the mountainous, low-income countries of the Central Asian region. It provides training for public officials, undertakes applied and scholarly research, and runs a major regional conference. The Institute currently has 12 permanent staff, including three Senior Research Fellows.

IPPA works closely with a variety of international funders and institutions, including the World Bank, the World Health Organisation, the University of Michigan, the University of Oxford, and Geissen University, as well as with regional partners such as Naryn State University and Khorog State University.

TRAINING FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

Low-income countries in Central Asia face social and economic challenges that are analytically complex, meaning that building regional capacity to tackle these challenges is a key priority. IPPA has therefore created a suite of ambitious Executive Education programs for civil servants and policy and research communities across the region, with the aim of enhancing evidence-based policy making. An example includes its 2020 Certificate and Executive Masters programmes on Economic Policy for staff within Afghanistan's Ministry of Finance and more recently, its Certificate Programme in Urban Resilience for high-potential government staff in Naryn and Khorog.

APPLIED AND SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

IPPA has published over 150 reports and publications, in both English and Russian, disseminating important findings in fields including health, agriculture and land use, climate change, gender, urban planning, economic performance, mining, industrial policy, and labour markets. Many of these outputs have been shared directly with policy makers and have helped to shape interventions and policy responses. IPPA is now focused on achieving a higher quantity of international peer-reviewed publications.

THE 'LIFE IN KYRGYZSTAN' CONFERENCE

Now in its 9th year, the well-known 'Life in Kyrgyzstan' conference is an annual event that brings together researchers and practitioners from across the region and beyond to discuss economic, social and environmental research and policies. This conference is rapidly emerging as the premier social sciences conference in Central Asia and there are plans to leverage this further in subsequent iterations.





RESEARCH

A commitment to development lies at the heart of UCA's mission and is reflected in the areas of research it conducts. The topics respond to the acute socio-economic issues of the region and provide an evidence base for effective decision-making processes. UCA aspires to become a research university over time.

"Only through the creation of new knowledge will we be able to address the multiple challenges that affect the quality of life of mountain societies. Over time, it is high quality and relevant research which will earn UCA a place among the renowned universities of the world."

His Highness the Aga Khan, November 2017

KEY THEMES:

- 1.1 Impact of Climate Change
- 1.2 Sustainable and inclusive economic and social development;
- 1.3 Sustainable natural resources and environmental management, and climate change;
- 1.4 Cultural values and social change;
- 1.5 Strengthening of civil society and philanthropy;
- 1.6 Inclusive, open governance;
- 1.7 Enhancement of people's capabilities – the freedom and ability of individuals and groups to function as members of society.

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Research and Development (ORD) serves as the link between external funding and the research and programmatic activities of UCA.

ORD assists, advises and guides UCA staff in support of the University's research output and its development interventions. Its role includes:

- Identifying funding and partnership opportunities
- Coordinating proposal development
- Grant Management

DEVELOPMENT

UCA's approach to tackling regional development draws on international resources, expertise, and best practice, ensuring that activities are innovative, relevant, and have a meaningful impact on the societies in which it works. The research findings, policy recommendations, and years of experience in the region serve to inform programming that addresses critical and complex issues within Central Asia and Afghanistan. Examples of work include capacity development in languages, entrepreneurship and business development, civic awareness, and technical and vocational training.



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

UCA is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which focuses on health, education, culture, rural development, institution-building, and the promotion of economic development. It is dedicated to improving the living conditions and opportunities of the poor, without regard to their faith, origin, or gender.

The agencies of the AKDN are private, international, and non-denominational development organizations. They work to improve the welfare and prospects of people in the developing world, particularly in Asia and Africa.

Founded and guided by His Highness the Aga Khan, AKDN brings together a number of development agencies, institutions, and programmes that work primarily in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa. A central feature of the AKDN's approach to development is to design and implement strategies in which its different agencies participate in particular settings to help those in need achieve a level of self-reliance and improve their quality of life.



THE ROLE OF DIRECTOR

UCA is now seeking a new Director to lead the further expansion and advancement of IPPA. This exciting role will provide strategic leadership, research mentorship and operational direction for the Institute.

It will seek to build collaborative work with the other four research units of the Graduate School of Development, as well as with other relevant departments of the University (eg. the Global Economics Department of the School of Arts and Sciences). The Director will prioritize strategic grant capture and research outputs that will have real impact and reach among local and regional policy makers, as well as making a mark within the international research environment. The role will also support the further extension of internal and external capacity building through Executive and Postgraduate Education.

The Director is expected to foster a collaborative and inclusive environment while advancing the objectives of the Institute and contributing to the mission of the Graduate School of Development to enhance the quality of life of those living in the mountain communities of Central Asia. The position is based in Bishkek, but the scope of work is focused on Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan, as well as being relevant to other countries in Central and South Asia. Increasing the footprint of IPPA in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan is among the strategic objectives for the School.

Specific responsibilities will include:

LEADERSHIP AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Developing and implementing annual and longer-term plans for IPPA in alignment with GSD's goals and objectives, including with respect to grant capture.
- Providing leadership and guidance to research staff to foster a culture of excellence and innovation.
- Establishing and maintaining effective partnerships with relevant stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector across Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan.
- Facilitating and supporting the professional development of IPPA staff.
- Contributing to the strategic development of the Graduate School of Development and UCA more widely.

THE ROLE OF DIRECTOR

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH EXCELLENCE

- Promoting high-quality academic programs, research initiatives, and capacity building programmes in the field of public policy and administration, with a particular focus on the quality of life in Central Asia's mountain dominated communities.
- Fostering a supportive environment for academic staff to excel in their academic pursuits.
- Encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration and the pursuit of innovative approaches to address complex societal challenges relevant to the mountain societies of Central Asia.
- Working closely with the Office for Research and Development (ORD) in developing and implementing the IPPA and GSD plans for research and development.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Developing and managing IPPA's budget, ensuring the efficient allocation of resources to support teaching, research, and administrative activities.
- Working with ORD to effectively and strategically seek external funding through grants, sponsorships, and partnerships to enhance the financial sustainability of IPPA.
- Overseeing the recruitment, retention, and professional development of faculty and staff members.
- Preparing regular reports and updates on IPPA's activities, achievements, and challenges for senior management and stakeholders, including through social media and website channels.

COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING

- Cultivating relationships with national, regional and international organizations, policymakers, and practitioners to foster collaboration and knowledge exchange.
- Promoting IPPA's activities through participation in conferences, seminars, public events, and the hosting of public lectures in Bishkek.
- Engaging with and maintaining strong connections with the broader public policy and administration community in Central Asia and beyond.
- Contributing to the organization, development and successful marketing of the annual Life in Kyrgyzstan Conference.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will be expected to possess the following skills, experience, and attributes:

- Education to PhD level combined with scholarly expertise in a relevant subject area (eg. Economics, Public Policy, Public Health, Public Administration, Urban Development, Development Studies), demonstrated through a strong publication record in peer reviewed journals, success in grant capture, and some prior exposure to academic leadership.
- Insight into best practice around academic leadership, including issues of research ethics, workload allocation, conference organisation, navigating the international research landscape, and providing training and development.
- Proven ability to support, help, mentor, and develop junior academic colleagues, coupled with an eagerness to include others in participatory decision making, and to champion individuals from historically under-represented groups.
- Proven ability to network, foster collaborative partnerships, cultivate peer-to-peer academic links at other institutions, and build trust with potential funders.
- A dynamic, determined, and yet diplomatic personal style.
- Fluency in English and excellent communication skills, both verbal and written, with the ability to effectively represent IPPA internally and externally.
- A successful track record of raising external funding.
- A strong commitment to equality and inclusivity.
- Experience of living or working internationally and operating effectively across different contexts and cultures.
- An enthusiasm for living and working in Central Asia and travelling periodically to the more remote mountainous developing areas of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and beyond.

A working knowledge of Russian and/or another Central Asian language would be beneficial for this role, but not essential.

Similarly, prior experience of Central Asia, emerging economies, other mountainous regions, or other post-Soviet environments, would be beneficial, however this is not considered essential.



HOW TO APPLY

UCA is being assisted in this appointment process by the executive search firm Society.

Applications should consist of:

- 1 a concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in the Person Specification;
- 2 an up-to-date curriculum vitae;
- 3 names and contact details of three referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

General advice on how to write a **strong CV** and a **strong covering letter** can be found on Society's website.

Society is committed to ensuring that anyone can access our application processes. This includes people with hearing, sight, mobility, and cognitive impairments. Should you require access to this document in an alternative format, wish to apply in a different format, or need any other reasonable adjustments made for you (including at interview), please contact us at inclusion@society-search.com. We also welcome suggestions or comments about any more general access improvements we should consider.

For information about Society's approach to Data Protection and Privacy, and your rights, please visit: www.society-search.com/privacy.

To upload your documents via Society's website, click **here**.

The deadline for receipt of applications is **midday (GMT) on Monday 16th October 2023**.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to undertake initial video call conversations with senior stakeholders from within UCA and AKDN. A final shortlist of up to two individuals will then be invited to visit Bishkek in person. An appointment will ultimately be made subject to receipt of satisfactory references. The appointed candidate will be offered a salary that is commensurate with their experience and the seniority of their new role.



UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA



Society

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