

Astana, Kazakhstan



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Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, is a city where history and modernity meet in striking ways. Known for centuries as a crossroads of nomadic and settled cultures, Kazakhstan has grown into one of the world's most diverse and multicultural countries. Today, Astana reflects that heritage while also looking firmly to the future. With a population of over one million and its location along the Ishim River, the city offers both vibrant urban energy and calm spaces to unwind.

The name “Astana” simply means “capital” in Kazakh. For a time, the city was renamed Nur-Sultan in honor of the country's first president, but in 2022 it returned to its original name — though you may still hear both used. The climate is sharply continental, with snowy winters and warm, dry summers, so students should be ready for a real four-season experience.

Astana is known for its bold, futuristic architecture, much of it designed by international figures like Japanese architect Kurokawa Kishō and Britain's Sir Norman Foster. Iconic landmarks such as Bayterek Tower and the EXPO Sphere stand alongside parks, wide boulevards, and riverfront walks. Students can stroll the Nurzhol Boulevard, relax in the Park of Lovers, or explore lively recreational spots like Chess Players' Square. Whether you're seeking a quiet corner by the river or a taste of the city's dynamic entertainment, Astana offers both in equal measure.

Why Study Russian in Astana

Astana is an excellent place to study Russian because the language is deeply woven into everyday life in Kazakhstan. Alongside Kazakh, Russian is widely used in public and everyday life, and many people in Astana speak both languages. In Astana, you will hear Russian not only in classrooms, but also in cafés, shops, and on the streets — making it easy to practice in real situations every day.

At the same time, the city is proudly Kazakh and increasingly international, giving students the chance to see how Russian functions as a living bridge between cultures. It remains the main language of communication across Central Asia, and in Astana you can learn it while also

experiencing Kazakhstan's unique traditions and modern development. From striking architecture to the warmth of local hospitality, Astana offers a rich environment where Russian study is practical, relevant, and rewarding.

Accommodation

Students wishing to study in Astana are able to choose a range of accommodations options to meet their needs. These include hotels, private apartments, Airbnb accommodation and homestays (i.e., living with a host family). Language Link will arrange Homestay accommodation. Please see the Accommodation section on the RLUS website for approximate costs.

Visas

If you plan to study in Astana, Kazakhstan, you will need a C9 (education/student) visa. For Language Link students, this is normally issued as a multiple-entry visa valid for up to one year. As of September 2026, the fee for a one-year multiple-entry visa is £170..

In order to apply for a C-9 study visa in London, you must be a resident of the UK or hold settled status. If you do not, regardless of attending a UK university, you will need to apply for your visa in that country in which you are a resident.

You will need to make an appointment to drop off your completed application form and other supporting documents. Appointments can be scheduled at <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/mfa-london/online-booking?lang=en> and should only take about 15 minutes. The consulate in London is located at Kazakhstan House, 125 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EA, United Kingdom. The entrance to the Consular Section is at the rear part of the building on Warwick House Street.

The consular section receives submitted applications from 09:30 to 12:30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Document collections are typically permitted from 16:00 to 17:00 on those same days.

The consular section's schedule is from 9:30 to 12:30 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday for submission of documents. Once submitted standard visa processing time takes 5 business days. Documents can be collected from 16:00 to 17:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday. If you require visa assistance, you can contact the consulate during regular office hours by e-mail: consuluk@mfa.kz or by phone: +44 20 7925 7532.

Syllabus

Language Link follows its established syllabus model, combining the key areas of Russian language study:

1. Grammar – 4 academic hours per week

2. Translation – 4 academic hours per week
3. Reading, Vocabulary, Phonetics or Literature – 4 academic hours per week
4. Conversational Practice – 4 academic hours per week
5. Essay Writing – 2 academic hours per week
6. Integrative Language Experience (ILEx) Project – 4 academic hours every fourth teaching week

The programme follows a four-week cycle. During the first three weeks, students receive 18 hours of classroom tuition. In the fourth week, students receive 14 hours of classroom tuition together with four hours of structured independent study devoted to their ILEx Project.

The ILEx Project gives students the opportunity to pursue an individual area of interest while connecting classroom learning with authentic, real-world experience. Projects may involve research, interviews, visits, observation, engagement with Russian-language sources, or other forms of independent enquiry. While the syllabus provides a consistent framework, teachers may adjust the balance of classes slightly to reflect the needs and abilities of each group. All components contribute toward the overall course fulfilment requirements.

Course Dates and Reading Weeks

Autumn Semester (Programme Start Dates and End Dates)			
My RLUS programme starts in	My programme is	My programme starts on	My programme ends on
August 2027	13 weeks	23/08/2027	19/11/2027
	16 weeks	23/08/2027	10/12/2027
	33 weeks	23/08/2027	10/12/2027
Spring Semester (Programme Start Dates and Finish Dates)			
My RLUS programme Starts/ resumes in	My programme is	My programme starts on	My programme ends on
February 2028	13 weeks	07/02/2028	05/05/2028
	17 weeks	07/02/2028	02/06/2028
	33 weeks	07/02/2028	02/06/2028

Reading Weeks

Semester	Programme Length	Reading Week Dates
Autumn term	13-, 16-, and 33-week students	11/10/2027 – 15/10/2027 (one week)
Spring term	13-, 17-, 33-week students	13/03/2028 – 17/03/2028 (one week)
	17- and 33-week students	08/05/2028 – 12/05/2028 (one week)

School Address: Maqsut Narikbayev University (formerly KazGUU University): Korgalzhyn Highway 8, Astana, 010000 Kazakhstan