HKUST and Nazarbayev University Launch New Route into Eurasian Business



New joint BBA program gives students two campuses, two degrees and exposure to one of the world's fastest-changing business regions

Professor Wang Shiheng, Program Director of the BBA in Eurasian Business at HKUST

As trade and investment links deepen across Chinese Mainland, Hong Kong and Central Asia, the HKUST Business School and Nazarbayev University Graduate School of Business (NUGSB) have jointly launched a new undergraduate program aimed at preparing students for the fast-evolving Eurasian business landscape.

The Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Eurasian Business, which welcomed its first cohort in August 2026, is the first undergraduate partnership of its kind in Hong Kong within the "One Belt One Road" region. The program follows a distinctive "2+2" model where students spend their first two years at NU in Astana and their final two years at HKUST in Hong Kong, earning degrees from both institutions.

Responding to a Changing Business Landscape

Professor WANG Shiheng, Director of the Program, says the degree was created in response to changing global trade and investment patterns driven by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). With demand growing for professionals who understand Eurasian markets and can work across economic and cultural contexts, the program is designed to give students both regional expertise and an international outlook.

Hong Kong's strengths as a global financial center and international education hub, combined with Kazakhstan's rising role in Central Asia and a gateway between Asia and Europe, give the partnership particular strategic relevance. Kazakhstan has attracted significant foreign direct investment into the region, while China has become its largest trading partner. Thousands of Chinese enterprises are now active in trade and investment in Kazakhstan, creating demand for graduates who can navigate business environments across China, Central Asia and Europe. "Against this backdrop, we believe the BBA in Eurasian Business is both timely and relevant," Professor Wang says.



The inaugural cohort of the joint BBA in Eurasian Business with the Dean of NUGSB and program teams from HKUST and NU

Two Campuses, Deeper Immersion

Unlike short-term exchange programs, the BBA offers sustained immersion in two very different markets. This structure is intended to help students understand not only business theories, but also local cultures, institutions, languages and ways of life. Professor Wang says the program stands out because it connects two leading universities in regions linked by the BRI. While many international partnerships focus on North America or Europe, collaborations between top Asian universities and institutions in high-growth emerging markets remain less common.

"To the best of our knowledge, this is the first joint undergraduate business program between a leading Asian university and a top institution in Central Asia," she says. Through the 2+2 model, students will have time to build regional knowledge, cross-cultural connections and additional language capabilities — qualities that are increasingly valuable for careers in an increasingly connected Eurasian economy.

A Curriculum Built for the Future

With a key focus on business education that boasts regional depth, the curriculum combines rigorous academic training with practical insights into the economic and cultural contexts of Eurasia, China and Hong Kong.

The development of the program also reflects new forces reshaping global business, including AI, sustainability, ESG and green technologies. Multilingual learning is another core feature. Even though English is the language of instruction at both institutions, students will be encouraged to develop proficiency in Putonghua, Kazakh or Russian. Professor Wang says the aim is for students to gain "more than just an English-language education" by engaging deeply with the communities and cultures in which they study.





A Close-knit International Cohort

The first cohort is kept intentionally small, with around 20 students. This will ensure close academic support and a strong cohort experience. The inaugural class comprises students from China and Kazakhstan. The program aims to expand its international reach by recruiting students from Europe and other Asian countries in the coming years.

Career development will also draw on the resources of both universities, including alumni networks, industry partnerships and career services. Students may pursue internships and projects in financial services, cross-border trade, investment, infrastructure, logistics, technology, sustainability and market-entry strategy in the regions. Potential projects could include assessing the feasibility of a Chinese company expanding into Central Asia, evaluating investment opportunities in a specific industry, or developing recommendations for strengthening cross-border commercial cooperation. "Our goal is to provide students with meaningful real-world exposure that complements their academic training," Professor Wang says.

For students seeking a business education with regional depth, international mobility and career relevance, the new BBA offers a distinctive proposition: two universities, two cities, multiple languages and direct exposure to opportunities across Eurasia.

Professor Wang says the program aims to produce graduates "uniquely prepared to bridge China, Central Asia and Europe" and ready to seize opportunities in the rapidly evolving Eurasian region.