

Damir Iskakov

19A Toraygyrova Street, Almaty, Kazakhstan • +7-(707)-404-00-55 • hi.iskakov@gmail.com • damirisk.com

Education

Nazarbayev University Foundation Year Program (Astana, Kazakhstan)	September 2024 - May 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Completed advanced coursework in Mathematics, Physics, Academic English, and Leadership.Voluntarily audited additional university-level courses (non-credit): MATH 161–162 (University Calculus I-II), CSCI 151–152 (Intro to Computer Science & Data Structures), PHYS 161–162 (University Physics I-II), and WCS 151 (Writing & Rhetoric).	
National School Of Physics & Math (Almaty, Kazakhstan)	September 2021 - May 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none">School Pride Award (top 5% of the class).Software Engineering Club founder; Isol Podcasts founder/interviewer; Mentor 300+ hours (Math, Physics, CS).	
Yandex Lyceum Python programming & Data Science	October 2021 - July 2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Passed a nationwide, three-stage selection – 45/1000 accepted.Honor Graduate (top 3%) of the class for two consecutive years.	

Professional Experience

Vetra AI	March 2024 – Present
<i>Co-Founder & CEO</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Built a full-stack personal AI secretary that turns everyday messages into organized plans and tasks, acting as the invisible layer inside Telegram, WhatsApp, Gmail, Outlook, Asana, and Slack.Recognized among Top 100 Startups in Central Asia by Digital Business Magazine (2025)Top 15/300+ startups at Astana Hub Startup Garage Accelerator Program (3-month International Accelerator, guided by mentors from YC and StartX alumni).Selected for international accelerators: Gwangju Technopark (South Korea) and Hero Training (Silicon Valley, Draper University collaboration).Established partnerships with the Institute of Smart Systems and Artificial Intelligence (ISSAI) and UK startup Runa (\$200M valuation) to advance AI pilots.Secured \$200K in tech credits (Google, OpenAI, Microsoft, Cloudflare) and a \$600K pre-seed investment offer from an international VC fund.Featured in national media (1M+ reach) [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8].	
Research	June 2025 – Present
<i>The Rise of the AI-Augmented Solo-Founder: Redefining Team Structures in Early-Stage Startups</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conducting study on how AI reshapes early-stage team dynamics and founder decision-making.Interviewed 100+ founders from YC, StartX, and unicorn startups; research guided by Prof. Poh Kam Wong (MIT PhD, NUS Business School, top 2% most-cited researcher).Held discussions with Geoffrey Moore (Stanford '67, author of Crossing the Chasm, 1M+ copies sold) and the Higgsfield AI founding team (15M+ users, Fastest growing startup globally, Kazakhstan's first unicorn).Joined nFactorial Solo – a global accelerator for solo founders (100+ graduates) – as a mentor to observe how AI tools enable single-person startup growth in practice.	
nFactorial	November 2025 – Present
<i>Mentor/ Speaker</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Led the nFactorial Solo track for solo founders in AI, guiding participants from early-stage idea validation to interviews, MVP design, go-to-market strategy, and first sales.Taught the Generative AI track, demonstrating automation and generative AI use cases: deep dives into ChatGPT/Claude/Gemini, image and video generation, and no-code workflows in n8n with integrations into core business tools.	
BlueBots (Duke & Yale student startup)	August 2025 – Present
<i>Growth & Innovation Lead</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launched early pilot programs that expanded product adoption and positioned the startup for VC fundraising, refining long-term growth strategy.Formed partnerships with investors and top-tier researchers, improving AI product reliability and academic validation across multiple testing cycles.	
OyLab – Accelerator & Startup Battles	August 2025 – Present
<i>Co-Founder / Strategic Advisor</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Scaled participants from 500 to 1,500+ across 4 new countries, elevating OyLab to an international level.Secured 10+ new partnerships with sponsors and organizations; increased prize pool 4x.	

Damir Iskakov

19A Toraygyrova Street, Almaty, Kazakhstan • +7-(707)-404-00-55 • hi.iskakov@gmail.com • damirisk.com

- Expanded media presence and visibility, positioning OyLab as a leading accelerator for school-aged entrepreneurs.

Research Assistant

October 2024 – April 2025

Nazarbayer University Foundation Program

- Conducted independent research on human trust in AI systems, examining how different AI explanations affect user perception and decision efficiency.
- Supervised by my English for Academic Purposes instructor; presented findings in a university-style research seminar and received peer feedback.
- Designed surveys and decision-making tasks; analyzed quantitative data using Python and Excel; synthesized academic literature on human–AI interaction and trust.

BCC Invest JSC

June 2024 - August 2024

Software Engineer Intern

- Selected as the first high-school intern at a leading investment firm and Top-3 Kazakhstan bank subsidiary serving 380K+ users.
- Built and deployed an analytics dashboard for a major app update, visualizing client trading activity and purchasing trends to support internal decision-making.
- Integrated an AI-powered chatbot module (intent classification + smart replies), improving response accuracy and support speed for customer inquiries.

Veritas AI (Deep Dive AI + Finances Cohort)

December 2023 - March 2024

Research Scholar & Coder

- Completed selective global AI research program (4–6% acceptance rate), awarded full financial aid.
- Developed machine learning model for credit card approval and fraud risk detection, analyzing bias and prevention methods in banking.
- Mentored by alumni and graduate students from Stanford and Harvard universities.

RatingKZ

October 2023 - February 2024

Co-Founder

- Developed a nationwide platform helping students and parents find, compare, and review educational centers across Kazakhstan.
- Built verified rating and review systems, integrated Google Maps search, and designed comparison dashboards for transparency and accessibility.
- Graduated from Jas Ventures AI Accelerator (Top 10 of 70 startups) and earned 2nd place out of 30 teams at the American Space & MakerSpace STEM Incubation Program, strengthening product and community reach.

Nobel Navigators

May - July 2023

Programming Mentor Intern

- Completed courses in Web Design, Leadership, Internet Troubleshooting, and Pitch Presentation.
- Mentored a Web Design course, teaching and guiding over 40 participants through hands-on projects and concepts.

Upraze

September 2021 - May 2023

Founder

- Developed a web platform providing mock exams and interactive preparation tools for applicants to competitive STEM high schools.
- Digitized 1,000+ official exam questions and built an automated testing system with instant feedback and analytics.
- The platform is used by 500+ students for self-paced, high-quality preparation.

Kazakh-British Technical University

June - August 2022

Admission Officer Assistant

- Reviewed over 6,000 applications, verifying official documents for accuracy and completeness.
- Managed daily operations by opening and closing the admissions office and addressing applicant inquiries.
- Trained new employees, ensuring they were well-versed in application processing and customer service protocols.