

International experience and Russian peculiarities of ensuring the quality of higher education

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Abstract. The development of trends in modern society (with its rapid development of cloud, communication technologies, technological innovations in education, scientific and technological progress) requires education to increase the dynamism and efficiency in training highly qualified specialists. The issue of providing quality educational services in order to meet the requirements and needs of the constantly changing demand for specialists, the labor market becomes urgent. The article identifies the factors influencing the quality of educational services at the modern university, describes the importance and functions of institutions of different levels in ensuring the quality of higher education, the purpose of higher education by students and audience, the level of their satisfaction with educational quality and educational process in higher education institution was found out. The analysis of assessment of educational services received by students and university audience is presented. Particular attention is paid to European institutions of assessment and quality assurance in higher education.

1 Introduction

Higher education of the twenty-first century is a dynamic, innovation-oriented, humanized sphere of community activities. It is characterized by rapid internationalization, the development of digital, cloud and communication technologies and models of educational products, which actualizes the problem of ensuring their quality. The system of quality assurance of higher education implies the availability of resources and means of automation, technological innovation in education necessary for productive educational activities; organization of educational process, taking into account modern requirements, standards and trends in the national and global socio-economic system; control of universities and the quality of training at all educational stages. At the same time, not only universities are socially responsible for the quality of education, but also institutions of the state and international level, designed to guarantee and control the quality of higher education. The presence of a wide stakeholders network often complicates the process of building a quality

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educational system, requires the harmonization of national interests with the requirements of world standards [1], [2].

In the development of modern higher education, the following global trends are observed: increasing the autonomy of universities both in determining the educational content and in the management of university activities; transition from the paternalistic model of state control over universities to the practice of independent expert evaluation of their activities and management of financial incentives to ensure quality; finding ways to diversify financial sources and develop an entrepreneurial mentality under the influence of competition in the educational services market; increasing public expectations regarding the social responsibility of universities. [3]

Universities are called to be partners in the creation of the most competitive, dynamic, digital, cloud-based, communications and knowledge-based economy in the world. [16.]. They should help society achieve stability in its economic growth, improve the availability of jobs, and promote high automation, social cohesion, and technological innovation in education and science. The criteria for evaluating the performance of universities are changing, with a focus on their ability to train specialists who can respond quickly to the constantly changing labor market and adapt flexibly to the changing conditions of dynamic economies.

The quality of education as a management object is one of the most important indicators by which in international practice it is accepted to determine the effectiveness of education system of any state and the effectiveness of its management [4]. The problem of quality assurance in universities has gained relevance in many developed countries for several reasons, chief among them: beginning of transition from industrial society to knowledge society. The transition to mass and then to universal higher education and the need to train large numbers of people to master classical academic programs at an acceptable level; saturation of the labor market with university graduates and competition between them for jobs; emergence of international competition in education of foreign students and beginning of formation of a global market of educational services; mobility of students, teachers and scientists, formation of a labor market of diplomats. In this case, an important tool for monitoring the quality of higher education is a sociological survey of students, which allows you to quickly get estimates and suggestions for educational services from their direct consumer. [5]

2 Study methods

The survey method was used in the study. A survey of 210 students and students of the university was conducted.

3 Results and discussion

During the survey, students and audience of the university were asked to determine what exactly a quality education means for them. Most of them believe that high-quality education is primarily high-quality professional competencies, i.e., knowledge and skills that can be applied in the future (75% of respondents). Another part of the respondents notes that a high-quality education for them is an opportunity to find an entry-level, good and fancy job in the future (17%), and for some respondents, a highly qualified teaching staff that conducts classes in groups is important (5%).

The main goals of obtaining higher education for the respondents are also relevant (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: “Please tell, what is your goal of obtaining higher education?” (in % to all respondents).

Answer	%
No answer	1
Other	2
Desire of parents and relatives	0
Obtain a diploma of higher education	5
For personal and intellectual development	11
Get a high-paying job after training	31
Get high-quality professional knowledge and skills	50

According to the respondents, the main goal of obtaining higher education is: obtaining high-quality professional knowledge and skills (50% of respondents), obtaining a high-paying job after training (31%), personal and intellectual development (11%). Obtaining a higher education diploma is not the goal of education for the respondents. Only 5% of respondents noted this answer option. The factor of self-determination is also important in obtaining a quality education. None of the surveyed students and university students receive an education at the request of their parents and family (0%).

According to the majority of the respondents, the quality of educational services at the university is influenced by the following factors: the ability of students to apply theoretical knowledge in practice (75% of respondents), the desire to receive quality education with the use of innovative methods of teaching at the university (42%) and the level of experience exchange with the best universities in the world (50%). The respondents noted that such factors as the level of training of graduates of secondary schools (6%), the mismatch of teaching content with the requirements of the labor market (5%), as well as the formation and publication of ratings of higher education applicants and teachers (4%) have the least influence on the quality of educational services in the university (Table 2). It is interesting that, according to respondents, corruption has little impact on the quality of educational services in the university. This factor was noted by only 7% of the respondents.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: “In your opinion, what factors affect the quality of educational services in a higher education institution?” (in %; the sum of the answers exceeds 100%, because it was possible to choose several answer options).

Answer	%
No answer	1
Other	2
Formation and publication of ratings of applicants for higher education and teachers	4
Non-compliance of teaching content with the requirements of the labor market	5
Level of preparation of general academic schools	6
Corruption	7
Teachers' salaries	13
Teaching should be more applied	18
Material and technical support	26
Attracting students to scientific activities	26
Modern high-quality educational literature	37
<i>Using innovative teaching methods at the university</i>	42
Level of experience exchange with the best universities in the world	50
Teaching staff (staffing)	67
Desire to get a quality education	67
Possibility of applying students' theoretical knowledge in practice	75

The positive fact is that almost all the students and trainees surveyed are satisfied with the quality of educational services at the university (93% of the respondents) (Figure 1).

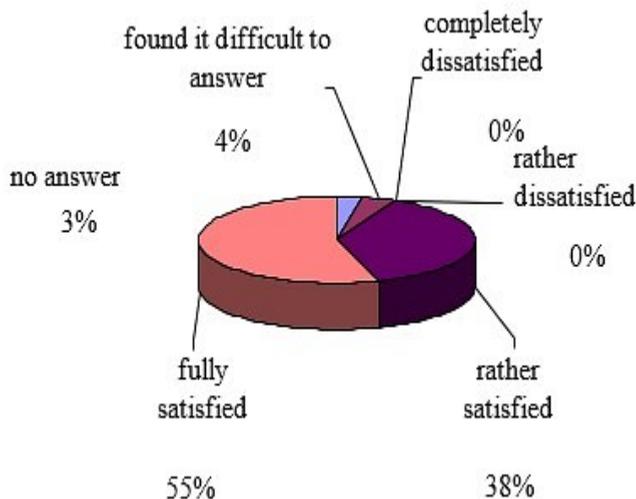


Fig. 1. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: "Are you satisfied with the quality of educational services at the university?" (in % to all respondents).

One of the main goals of obtaining higher education among respondents is to get a high-paying job after studying. What do you need to find a good job after graduation? According to the results of the survey, for this, first of all, it is necessary to have a good, modern, innovative quality education, a high level of knowledge, skills and abilities. This was noted by 85% of the respondents. Also, according to the respondents, it is necessary to be purposeful (46%). At the same time, a quarter of the respondents (25%) mentioned the desirability of having the necessary acquaintances and connections. 10% of respondents noted the need to have a degree from a prestigious university.

The vast majority of respondents are confident that after graduation they will be able to find the desired job (81% of the respondents). It is important that none of the respondents indicated that it was impossible to find the desired job after graduation (0%).

Respondents noted that while studying at the university, they receive the knowledge necessary for further activities (90% of the respondents) (Figure 2).

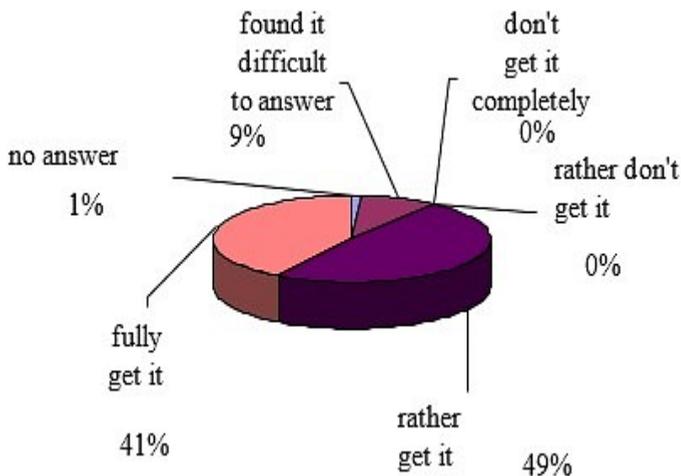


Fig. 2. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: “Do you get the knowledge you need in your future activities while studying at the university?” (in % to all respondents).

Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: “What, in your opinion, could improve the effectiveness of teaching at the university?” is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: “What, in your opinion, could improve the effectiveness of teaching at the university?”

Answer	%
Don't know about that	0
Sufficient provision of the necessary scientific literature	1
Strengthening the control of knowledge of university students/audience	4
Introduction of strict administrative measures against violators of academic discipline	5
More active students' participation in research work of the university	6
Sufficient provision of the necessary educational literature	7
Sufficient provision of the necessary methodological/handout materials	13
Increasing the number of practical classes	25
Individual-oriented approach to learning	25
Introduction of dual education	30
Use of various interactive forms of training (lecture-conference, lecture-round table)	31
Involvement of practical teachers in conducting seminars and practical classes	31
<i>Constant updating of the used technological innovations, information and communication technologies in training</i>	36
More opportunities for internships abroad	46
Practical training in existing organizations, enterprises	58

Distribution of respondents' answers to the question: “What, in your opinion, could improve the effectiveness of studying at the university?” (in %; the sum of the answers exceeds 100%, because it was possible to choose several answer options).

According to the survey results, in the respondents' opinion, to increase the effectiveness of education at the university, first of all, can improve the practice in existing organizations, enterprises (58% of respondents), providing more opportunities for internships abroad (46%). It is also important to constantly update the used technological innovations, information and

communication technologies in training (36%). A third of the respondents preferred such factors as the involvement of teachers-practitioners in seminars and practical classes and the use of various interactive forms of learning (lecture-conference, lecture-round table, debate, seminar-debates, business games, etc.) (31% of the respondents). In the modern system of higher education such form of education as dual education (a combination of training in educational institutions with on-the-job training at enterprises, institutions and organizations to acquire certain qualifications) is gaining popularity. It was this form of education that 30% of the respondents mentioned as an opportunity to improve the efficiency of learning at university. The possibility of guaranteed employment of graduates, according to the respondents, can also increase the training effectiveness.

Such factors as the introduction of strict administrative measures against violators of academic discipline (reprimand a student from the university administration, expulsion from university, etc.) (5%), increased control of knowledge of students/university audience (4%) and sufficient provision of necessary scientific literature (1%) in the opinion of respondents have almost no effect on the effectiveness of teaching at the university.

Thus, according to the sociological survey results, it can be concluded that getting a good high-paying job after training, secured future of listeners and students largely depend on modern, quality education, using digital, cloud and communication technologies in education and science high level of knowledge, skills and abilities.

Speaking about the international experience of assessment and quality assurance in higher education, it should be noted that the organization of analytical and other functions in this aspect involves the presence of appropriate technologically equipped institutional, automated, innovative environment. Such an environment is formed at two key levels: national and supranational.

The national institutional environment for quality assurance in higher education is primarily state structures (national quality assurance agencies, accreditation commissions, methodological centers); public associations (employers' organizations, associations of universities, think tanks, educational associations); universities that develop internal quality assurance systems, and other entities.

In the context of globalization, the supranational level of regulation in higher education is becoming increasingly important. It is formed by international networks of quality assurance agencies, international associations, student unions, accreditation consortia, as well as structures that are providers of global education policy standards (UNESCO, OECD, World Bank) or serve as consulting organizations (International Union of Transnational Education).

At the global level, the main institution responsible for regulating the education system is the specialized agency of the United Nations - UNESCO. The structure of UNESCO has six institutes and two centers, whose activities are directly related to education [6].

The functional areas of UNESCO activities are related to the study of all levels of education; development of standards for the preparation and adoption of international legal instruments on education; monitoring the achievement of internationally agreed goals in the field of education (annual analytical publication "Global Education Monitoring Report").

Within the UNESCO institutional framework, the International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) is responsible for promoting the quality of education policy. IIEP has created a special learning portal (IIEP Learning Portal) to help educational policy makers evaluate the quality of programs and improve them, and to share experience in the field of educational management (case studies).

The international institution that, at the global level, forms the methodology for monitoring major trends in educational development is the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS). The Institute provides open access to a database characterizing national, regional and global educational systems, as well as their competitiveness based on rankings. The UIS

database is a unique tool for analysis and international comparisons of international student flows [7].

The OECD Committee on Educational Policies is the international institution that generates ideas for improving the quality of education and makes recommendations to governments around the world. OECD analytics on higher education and policy-making are presented in a wide range of journals, reports, reviews, and news reports.

At the initiative and with the support of OECD, international monitoring of the quality of higher education was introduced, and a methodology to analyze strategies for the internationalization of higher education was developed. A significant contribution of OECD was the “Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the field of transnational higher education” [8], developed jointly with UNESCO.

A public organization that provides methodological and organizational support for the development of the quality of higher education through ranking tools at the international level is the Academic Ranking and Educational Quality Observatory of the International Rating Group of Experts (IREG Observatory). IREG is the world coordinator of university rankings [9].

The institutional environment of the global higher education system is evolving by developing a network of professional organizations in quality assurance and monitoring the effectiveness of educational policies. Thus, the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) is steadily growing, with 265 members from 92 countries as of the end of 2018. The main INQAAHE's goals are to implement and disseminate the results of evaluation and analysis of quality management systems in higher education and their effectiveness, to provide advisory support to network members in defining the standards of universities across national borders and to inform on the recognition of international qualifications.

Recently, separate groups of researchers and experts have been uniting, forming new institutional structures at the supranational level. Among the most famous are the Society for Higher Education Research (SRHE), the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE), the Consortium of Higher Education Researchers (CHER), the Centre for Research in Higher Education Policies (CIPES), and the Center for International Higher Education (CIHE).

One powerful regional level of quality assurance and social responsibility in higher education is the European level. In the Lisbon Strategy “Europe 2020” [10], this region declared its intention to become the most dynamic and intelligent economy in the world. Improving the efficiency and international attractiveness of higher education has become one of the main objectives for achieving this goal.

Organizations that at different levels promote the competitiveness of the European educational space and its providers are the Council of Europe; EU education agencies; the International Association of University Presidents; the European Association of Universities, the European Union of Students; the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education and many others.

The Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) plays a leading role in the implementation of EU education programs. Through EACEA, the programs Erasmus +; Creative Europe; Europe for Citizens; European Voluntary; Eurydice are funded. As part of the Eurydice Network project, the Agency provides comparative data and analyzes the educational systems and policies of 38 European countries. Since 2011, EACEA has published thematic reports, special studies and reviews, and other materials related to higher education and related policies [11].

The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) performs the functions of external quality assessment of higher education in Europe. One of the main results of ENQA's work is the approval of Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The second step in the practical implementation of the standards was the creation of the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR) of higher education to create a database of reliable quality assurance agencies operating in Europe, as well as to increase the credibility of higher education institutions.

The European University Association (EUA) is the largest organization that represents universities in Europe through a system of global partnerships. The organization has more than 850 members (universities and national chancellor's conferences) in 47 countries. EUA clearly articulates a vision for the future of European universities – academic institutions with a broad diversified profile and its own development strategy.

Increasing the competitive position of European universities in the global educational space is one of the objectives of the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE). The Association is an initiator/partner in many projects concerning university-business cooperation (WEXHE, SAPS, UBC, SEPHE), improving the quality of vocational education (EUproVET, BEEHIVES, PROCSEE), improving student performance (CALOHEE, AHELO).

In the system of institutional support for the competitiveness of European higher education, in addition to providers of educational products, their consumers are widely represented. In 1982, the European Students Union (ESU) was founded. The ESU's goal is to represent the social, economic and cultural interests of students at the European level [10].

National quality assurance systems for higher education encompass a network of stakeholders operating at the level of the states they represent, according to accepted norms of law, standards, culture and tradition. Each country in the European space has national features in ensuring the higher education quality, while adhering to the ESG standards.

By joining the Bologna Process in 2003, Russia undertook an obligation to bring the quality of Russia's higher education system in line with European standards.

Today, the national institutional environment of quality and competitiveness of the higher education system of Russia is represented by a wide network of public organizations. However, despite the rapid restructuring of the institutional environment of quality assurance and social responsibility in higher education, and the strengthening of international cooperation in this area, a number of experts believe that there is still a priority of state interests over public ones in Russia [13].

The system of requirements for the higher education quality of the Russian Federation is regulated by the requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards, as well as the requirements for licensing and state accreditation of higher education institutions, and the main quality agents in the higher education system are institutions of state power that formulate quality requirements, monitor and evaluate the activities of participants in the educational service market. Accordingly, the issues of material and technical equipment of universities remain a priority. Frequently there is a conflict of interest among stakeholders, because the decisive role in the design of the quality assurance system is played by the state administration, and the contribution of other participants is minimal. As a consequence, the key setting for higher education institutions is the success of formal quality reporting to state control.

Some researchers consider the introduction of the institution of independent educational auditors to be one of the conceptual foundations for improving the quality of higher education in Russia [14]. There are two ways to implement this idea. The first is evolutionary, when independent auditors will work in parallel with the state bodies, the other is revolutionary, when the state completely transfers the functions of licensing and accreditation of universities to a public organization of independent educational auditors. The main goal of both the evolutionary and the revolutionary way of introducing the institute of independent educational auditors should not be the creation of a social class of educational auditors and not even the fight against corruption, but the stimulation of internal educational audit [15].

Only the introduction and development of an internal system to ensure the quality of higher education automation and the use of modern digital, cloud, communication technologies and technological innovations will turn Russian universities into competitive centers of the global higher education space.

4 Conclusion

The study of assessing the educational service quality is essential to make informed and effective decisions on management, comparison and evaluation of the current state of the quality of training specialists. Therefore, in the future, we consider it necessary to continue research to assess the educational service quality in the institution of higher education by conducting sociological surveys, both applicants for education, and all participants in the educational process.

The discussion reveals that the institutional environment of quality assurance in higher education is a complex system of formal and informal institutions, primarily national and supranational organizations, each of which is representative of a particular community (political, academic, professional, scientific, student). These institutions work together to implement critical programs and projects to ensure the quality of higher education and the effectiveness of education policy in general. The result of their activities is the formation of a new global space of higher education and increased social responsibility of stakeholders for quality.

In the context of globalization, a country's use of the potential of the international institutional environment is one of the determining factors in improving its own system of higher education. However, as evidenced by international experience, its main driver is the development of an internal system of quality assurance of each higher education provider.

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