

SOCIAL SPHERE

REFORMATION OF THE SYSTEM OF ENSURING AND CONTROL OF EDUCATION QUALITY IN KYRGYZSTAN

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Prerequisites for conducting reformation:

Evaluation of education quality is the integral part of Bologna Process. The objective quality of rating gives guarantee of providing with acceptable level of quality and it creates the basis for comparing of curricula and recognition of diplomas.

Mutual recognition of diplomas is impossible without confidence for education quality in the university and the country that issued diplomas. The recognition of diplomas is based on the quality assurance. Students' exchange, recognition and setting-off the passed disciplines in a Host University are possible only on condition of mutual trust between universities inside the country and between countries.

Free labor market, migration of high-qualified specialists and recognition of diplomas of one country by specialists of the other country is possible only on condition of trust and availability of quality guarantees for the education.

In the light of general developments of the world labor market and world trends of education developments (internationalization, high mobility level of labor force, transparency requirements, comparability and harmonization of professional community) require introduction of range of changes to the management system of education with the goal to create an integrated quality system.

Acting system of quality includes the following three basic components:

- Licensing of higher educational institutions and programs.
- State attestation of higher educational institutions and programs.
- Quality control in higher educational institutions.

Acting management system for quality control is based on state educational standards, has solving-punishment system, is forced, basically based on quantities parameters and concentrates its attention on the conditions of carrying out of educational activity. Current system of external quality evaluation through licensing and state attestation is carried out by one department. Such a situation provokes an objective criticism in terms of too much concentrated and centralized control for education quality and usurpation of this function by just one department.

Licensing and state attestation are not crossed parallel processes and results of attestations are not taken into consideration when a license is issued.

Proposals on the reformation:

Changes in education quality management system should be directed in the following trends:

1. Transition from statistic to dynamical quality model of education.
2. Reconsideration of quality criteria.
3. Reorientation of the quality system to achieve final results of educational process, as general and special professional competences, maximum satisfying of the labor market needs.
4. Harmonization with international quality standards.
5. Decentralization of external quality control;
6. Attracting of all interested parties to quality evaluation.
7. Defining all users of educational services.
8. Openness, transparency of processes and results of quality evaluation.

9. Development of competitive mechanisms in the control system and quality evaluation.

Proposed quality system consists of the following components:

- international (regional) accreditation;
- national system of accreditation and quality evaluation;
- quality management at the higher institution.

National accreditation and evaluation system in Kyrgyzstan will include the following components:

- licensing;
- accreditation.

Licensing is carried out by licensing department of the Ministry of education and represents the act of issuing the license – the document that gives the right for conducting the educational activity. License is issued on the basis of education quality evaluation. Licensing is the process of preliminary quality evaluation of the programs and education quality in newly organized institutions, conducted prior the program realization and functioning of the institutions.

Functions and goals of licensing:

- guarantee of the quality in a newly organized institutions;
- guarantee of the quality of newly created and introduced programs;
- guarantee of the quality of newly introduced bachelors' and masters' programs created when reorganizing of acting professional educational programs for specialists training;
- protection of students and employers.

Getting of licenses means approval of the programs quality from the Ministry of Education of Kyrgyzstan, it means that the program has approves educational processes in the institution and issuing a license as a quality mark.

It is determined in the course of the licensing using standard and objective procedures that the program corresponds to the minimum requirements regarding content of the special training and professional practical activity. The following program of licensing is proposed.

Licensing procedure

1. Institutions submit their application for licensing.
2. Institution creates the pack of necessary documents needed for prior evaluation of the quality.

3. An evaluation group of experts is created.

4. Evaluation group is studying the documents and conducts interviews with different groups, visiting the institution.

5. Evaluating group creates the report on evaluation.

6. Conclusion of expert committee (specialists).

7. A decision of licensing:
 - issue a license 3-5 years;
 - licensing with conditions;
 - postpone;
 - deny.

This process of licensing at the first licensing is organized and conducted by corresponding division of the Ministry of Education. In the future repeated issuing of the license for realization of professional educational programs will be carried out on the basis of accreditation results. The programs are the matter for repeated licensing. Higher educational institutions are not the subject for licensing in general.

Accreditation procedures

Accreditation is the process of evaluation of separately realized professional and educational programs (program accreditation) and the quality of education of the higher educational institution as a whole (institutional accreditation). Program accreditation is obligatory. Institutional accreditation is voluntary. Accreditation is a public recognition of the quality of the programs and educational processes of the institution, which as a result awarded with the quality mark. In order to conduct accreditation it is needed to create the National Accreditation Agency. The Agency is formed by three main institutions interested in providing and evaluation of quality of education:

- government;
- employers, their representatives from the association;
- higher educational institutions providing educational services in the person of their associated organizations.

The Agency is partially governmental organization financed from two main sources: state budget and the payment from the side of accredited institutions that pay for accreditation and consulting services. The Agency is partially self-financing organization. The Agency carries out program and institutional accreditation of all institutions and programs. It has in its structure specialized accreditation committees in various directions of the sciences and educational

levels. All accreditation committees are organized with the same principle: includes representatives of higher educational institutions, state organizations, representatives from professional organizations, students and international representatives. One of the main requirements made to the Agency is relative independence and autonomy from educational institutions that provides transparency of accreditation process.

In conditions of modern realities of educational system of Kyrgyzstan and in accordance with main principles of more suitable to all requirements for the organization for accreditation agency is the National Accreditation Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic. The basic goal of National Attestation Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic from the moment of its establishment was providing high quality of teaching staff by the means of attestation, testing and monitoring. National Attestation Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic has broad experience and significant potential in testing the quality of the teaching staff and scientific potential of higher institutions. Activity on licensing of higher institutions, awarding of scientific titles, work with scientific elite carried out by the National Attestation Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic supposes availability of close relations in the sphere of science and education and deep knowledge of the area. For many years teams of qualified scientific staff, teachers in different areas are working at National Attestation Commission, there are many methodics and materials are available. All above mentioned characteristics may suppose that National Attestation Commission of the Kyrgyz Republic can work effectively in the trend of development of the accreditation agency in our Republic and more than that has all necessary conditions: the status of state organization, autonomy staff resources, developed methodics and evaluation procedures, wide relations in educational and scientific spheres.

On the basis of experience available from the world practice of accreditation of educational institutions and on the available practice of accreditation in Kyrgyzstan we should note that accreditation procedure supposes several basis steps. In order to conduct an accreditation a basic group of experts is formed that evaluate the quality of the programs. The following pattern of accreditation is offered:

1. Higher educational institution submits a set of all necessary documentation needed for accreditation.

2. Higher educational institution carries out internal evaluation.

3. Institution carries out the report on self-analysis.

4. Accreditation agency forms the evaluation group of experts in agreement with the higher educational institution – group of academic audit.

5. Group of academic audit carried out external evaluation studying the report on self-analysis and attending the institution together with the audit.

6. The group of academic audit prepares the report that is submitted to the accreditation agency and agrees with the institution.

7. The group of academic audit gives conclusion and recommendations for the accreditation committee.

8. Accreditation committee makes a decision on accreditation:

to accredit;

accredit on condition;

postpone;

deny.

9. The quality certificate is awarded.

Institution submits this quality certificate to the Ministry of Education for issuing a new license.

We would like to point out that we need to change not only the procedures qualities of institutes but also the national standards itself that will be the basis for licensing and accreditation. These standards must be harmonized with international quality standards.

The experience of the Central-Asian Accreditation CAMEQ.

The experience of passing the institutional accreditation and receiving the quality mark CAMEQ – of the Central Asian accreditation agency in the sphere of economic and business education that works on the basis of International and European standards as well as studying the systems of quality of European countries in the course of different international projects gives us a chance to recommend the following quality criteria:

First of all it is development of the mission of the institution and *providing the quality management*. This criterion requires from the institution development of its own mission. All universities carry out activities in the sphere of education, but each of them has individual characteristics. What is the individuality of the institution, who does the institution prepares, what is the difference between the institutions? Does the

institution make its contribution to the development of the local community, does it have an influence on the educational system of Kyrgyzstan itself? All the management must focus its work on achieving the set goal. Further, on the basis of the mission the institution develops and presents the strategy of its development. Understanding of the strategic position is related to evaluating of strong and weak sides of the institution, identifying of limitations and possibilities caused by the market. It is important to link the mission with the results of the institution and give realistic evaluation of existing relations between the mission, resources and ambitions.

Program quality – what the institution does to strengthen the programs and their realization? The quality of education is evaluated from the point of view of selected set of disciplines, and educational technologies provide final achievement of educational programs. Under the term final results we understand total number of general and special competences that form qualifications and that form graduates' qualifications. Programs must take into consideration the requirements of labor market and be in close connection with international standards on the format and on the content. It is necessary as a mean of integration of the institution to the world educational area.

Development of the faculty of the institution. What does the institution do to attract and to develop the teachers? Evaluate their work in terms of how effectively they teach students, their professional level; it is important for evaluating of the management of the higher education. On the basis of the earlier realities it is pointed out that it is needed to broaden the understanding of scientific researches, intellectual development of teachers and innovations. In this sphere the institution should demonstrate its capability to build values of theoretical and practical knowledge, scientific and methodical work. Teachers must be involved in scientific work, writing of cases and development of scientific and methodical materials.

The quality of the students' knowledge. The qualitative education of the students based on preliminary evaluation of the students at the beginning stage. The main criteria should be the knowledge of the students. For gifted students fellowships and grants should be available, provided by the

government, institution and the business as an encouragement for a good studying. Increasing of entrance barriers will foster to establish stronger student groups, increasing the quality of preparation of specialists that in its turn will ease the process of their employment, there will be possibilities for equal exchange programs with foreign countries. Specific demand has the criteria as demand for the institution graduates and their employment. The institution in order to support and develop the careers of the students should do that. To support career development and employment, institutions may create career centers as structural subdivision of the institution. The institution should show how it helps in terms of personal and professional development of the students, and what conditions were created for this goal.

Connection with the corporate world. Evaluating of the criteria of the institution with the business world and professional community makes it possible to estimate whether the institution is the open system and if the institution is the part of the local community? If the institution works to satisfy needs of the economy or the civil society in this specific region? Do the representatives of business and the institution prepare the short-term programs to educate the company's staff, conduct a research or to provide consulting services? To what extent could we interest the company, so it will be interested in the institution? The experience that we have unfortunately shows us that business, private entrepreneurs do not have the need to cooperate with the higher institution, but we have some examples when they address to our institution with the order for educational services: seminars, short-term and medium-term courses.

Material and technical basis and financial stability.

On top of receiving of National Quality Mark Institutions may receive International Quality Marks by passing accreditation in international accreditation agencies. International accreditation is voluntary, public and represents high quality standards. Also, it is necessary to conduct a deep evaluation of the system of internal control of quality of the institution.