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## Quality of Higher Education and State Educational Standards in Ukraine

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**Abstract.** Contradictions between the existing quality of massive higher education in post Soviet Ukraine where the number of universities exceeds 500, and the need of the developing Ukrainian society in highly qualified specialists form the background of this research. Quality of higher education and the level of state standards depends on many factors, which influence the sustainable development of Ukraine as an independent European state. Problems of the university system of education and the ways of their solutions according to the main principles of the Bologna process are under the author's consideration in the article.

**Keywords:** quality of education, state standard, European measuring, professional education.

Massive access to higher education in Ukraine is sometimes considered as a reaction of common people on the situation in the sphere of higher education in the former Soviet Union where the possibility of entering a university for a rural school leaver equaled practically zero. After gaining independence in 1991 Ukraine adopted some laws which cancelled the state monopoly on educational activity, and a great number of private universities came into being. On one hand, it was the advantage of the newly born country – all school leavers no matter how they studied at school got the chance of entering a university: state or private. Parents of those students who failed in getting free of charge higher education at state universities were ready to pay any money for their children's study. On the other hand, massive access to higher education lowered the quality of university graduates' knowledge and skills. Lack of professional lectures resulted in the fact that the same professors worked at two, three or even more universities, bearing responsibility for the quality of students' knowledge only at the state higher educational establishments; all the other universities were not interested in the quality of their graduates' knowledge. In the 90-es the country needed more lawyers, economists, ecologists and other specialists, and both state and private universities "produced" the whole army of semi-qualified young people with diplomas but without knowledge. As a result today Ukrainian business and political life lack effective managers, highly professional bankers, politicians. Graduates of Ukrainian universities are incompatible on the European labor market: they are not taught to survive in the conditions of a tough competition. The fact is that the quality of students' knowledge does not correspond to the world standards. Massive education eliminates the chances of gifted students to be cleared out, supported and given more attention for their personal progress and research activity. It also badly influences the quality the students' knowledge and skills in the chosen sphere.

The problems of the quality of higher education in Ukraine were researched by famous national scientists: V.P. Andruschenko, I.A.Ziaziun, V.G.Kremin, V.I.Lugovy, S.O.Sysoeva and others. They drew public attention to the necessity of changes in the existing educational system and worked out the mechanism of improving the quality of higher education which is connected with implementation of European educational standards in the activity of Ukrainian universities. Academicians V.P. Andruschenko, I.A.Ziaziun researched modern philosophical approaches to pedagogy as a science and proposed new person centered paradigm of education [1,3].

V.G.Kremin, V.I.Lugovy and Zh.V. Talanova worked out the National Frame of Qualifications which corresponds to European standards [5, 6]. S.O.Sysoeva researches the ways of practical implementation of the idea of life-long education in Ukraine [7]. Scientific publications of these and some other authors are directed at the solution of the problem of the educational policy in the country. But still the problem of the quality of higher education cannot be regarded as an exhausted one; its solution requires a lot of time, united efforts of the state and public, forming of new approaches to teaching and learning, implementation of European principles of university activities. So the aim of this article is to characterize Ukrainian higher education system from the viewpoint of European requirements to its quality. The main tasks of the article are:

- to give definition of the quality of higher education in the context of European requirements;
- to find out factors which provide high quality education in Ukraine;
- to characterize the state standards which are regarded as mechanisms of improving the quality of education.

The research is based on the data published in foreign and Ukrainian scientific editions, materials of conferences, seminars and forums, the author's own experience of practical work at the university lecturing on pedagogical disciplines. For the critical analyses of the situation in the system of higher education and generalization of the results the following methods were used:

- theoretical – research of the Bologna process materials, comparative analyses of higher educational systems in European countries and in Ukraine for finding out the basic principles of European cooperation in educational sphere;
- statistical – for the assessment of the current situation and dynamics of changes in the sphere of higher education;
- method of scientific identification - for providing the reliability of different sources of information.

Today, the Ukrainian policy and strategy vectors are aimed at further development of the national educational system, its tailoring to suit the socially-oriented economy environment, as well as transforming and integrating into the European and world community. The priorities for higher education development arise from Ukraine's joining the Bologna process. Our country shares the general understanding of objectives and commitments of the Process conceived in the Bologna Declaration and the subsequent communiques at the summits held by European education ministers in Prague, Berlin, and Bergen. Ukraine confirmed its commitment to co-ordinate the activities within the Bologna process in order to mould the European higher education environment.

On the way from massive to high quality education Ukrainian universities should research, generalize and spread the experience of the best European colleges and universities in order to educate independently thinking, creative future leaders capable of changing our life for better.

In 2010 Ukraine reported about its full joining the Bologna process which requires cardinal changes of Ukrainian educational system. Consolidating democratic values and Ukraine's entering the European environment on the basis of educational, research and informational support of innovation-oriented economic development shall primarily be performed through upgrading the structure of education; optimizing its contents; monitoring and quality management of education.

According to the main positions of the Bologna process our national higher education system has to be transformed from reproductive approach to teaching in productive creating process which opens new perspectives for a personality's all round development and forming a new generation of creatively thinking independent European educated young people. The educational paradigm is to be changed from existing knowledge-centered where the main idea of teaching process is concentrated on increasing students' factual knowledge, to competence approach which combines knowledge with experience in certain spheres [2].

State documents such as the "National Doctrine of Ukrainian Educational System Development" (2002), the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (1996) and others underline the importance of a personality as the highest value of any society. European integration of Ukraine depends on the competence of high school graduates and their ability to adapt to constantly changing situations on the labor market. To train a new generation of competitive independently thinking and success oriented leaders it is necessary to improve the quality of higher education.

According to the definition given by the Soviet Encyclopaedic Dictionary the notion "quality" means "philosophic category which expresses the sense of a product thanks to which it is this and not other: This is objective and general characteristic of objects which is realized in the sum of their qualities" [8]. Quality of education is understood as "system and social characteristics which define the correspondence of education to adopted requirements, social norms and state standards" [3].

Quality of higher education in Ukraine is regulated by the state standards which are regarded as mechanisms of providing differentiating variety of teaching at any educational establishments no matter what form of property they are. The state has to adopt standards in education under the influence of a labor market which dictates the requirements to university graduates. Standards give guarantees to the state concerning necessary level of education; at the same time they give the right to every person to form his/her own needs and realize his/her possibilities. Standard is a compromise between an ideal and reality. State standard must be real and socially justified. Reality means reaching necessary results in the process of comprehension of academic programs. Social support is regarded in the context of the need in specialists from the viewpoint of the state and the labor market. The correspondence of students' specialization to the needs of

business for solution of short time tasks and the society as a whole for solution of long time tasks is meant.

Society should form the structure of the labor market in accordance with the perspective directions of science and industry development because the unity of the national markets of goods and services in one international market immediately sharpens the competition. From the viewpoint of the global processes in all spheres of our life Ukrainian educational system by the quality of its intellectual product has to not only correspond to the requirements of practice, science and social sphere but go ahead and outstrip it. Passing ahead character of Ukrainian education is guaranteed by the activity of the state standards and creation of independent structures which control the real quality of higher education.

State standards are the mechanisms of regulation of the educational services market from the position of the perspective society development and providing conditions for every person's self-realization. Among the main functions of a state standard we will mention the following:

- strategic – means dividing the quality of education according to different levels which of them has specific state requirements;
- normative – scientific and methodical providing and regulation of educational institutions' activity;
- coordinative – organization of activity of independent assessment structures, defining the perspective directions of further development, optimization of the standards implementation process;
- control – analyses of the current condition and tendencies of development of educational activity according to state requirements and the perspective of the society needs;
- synthetic – generalization of the experience of the leading universities, providing conditions for its spread, actualization of the state standards in education;
- informative – to inform the society concerning the effectiveness of universities' activity.

The need in increasing the quality of higher education in Ukraine requires the search of new effective forms and methods of teaching, research of Ukrainian and foreign experience in forming university graduates' professional competences in different spheres of activity.

Analyses of the theoretical background of the structural and functional model of future specialists' self-educational competence performed by Ukrainian scientists (S.Sysoeva, A.Onkovych, I. Zhukevych) proved that increasing the level of forming self-educational competence in chosen profession is impossible without improving practical skills of professional knowledge usage. That is why one of the tasks of modern high school is to form in students the necessity to independently improve their professional skills, widen their knowledge using the advantages of the Internet and dexterity in selection and structuring information taken from different sources. So we can generalize that the quality of students' educational successes depends on the level of their motivation to possessing of their future professional skills, constant systematic learning activity, independent self-improving work, and control. It also depends on the quality of the assessment materials.

Among the factors which provide the quality of higher education we underline the following:

- professional competence of tutors and their personal qualities;
- correspondence of curriculums to the modern requirements;
- qualitative educational and methodical providing of the learning process;

- implementation of new educational technologies;
- adequate system of control and assessment;
- necessary material and technical support;
- direction of the teaching process on forming of a future specialist's socially important qualities.

Qualitative education in European dimension depends on the quality of the teaching objectives, standards and norms; on the quality of the resources: staff, curriculums, composition of students' contingent; material and technical support; finance etc.; on the quality of teaching processes: scientific and research activity, learning technologies, management.

The most important criteria in European education are high quality of professional training, strengthening of trusty relationships among the subjects of education, correspondence to European labor market, mobility, approval of qualifications, enforcement of European educational system's competitiveness. European credit transfer system is looked upon as an instrument of bettering the quality of higher education. This system influences the objectives, content, methods, forms and subjects of teaching process.

Teaching objectives are defined as competences necessary for realization of the competence approach to teaching [10]. Content of professional training is supposed to be as close as possible to the latest scientific and practical achievements in the chosen sphere of the student's future activity. Methods of teaching should correspond to the requirements of a future specialist's qualification with the wide usage of modern technological devices, the Internet, other information systems. Selection of educational forms depends on many factors, but in any case they should satisfy the students' needs and be aimed at reaching the defined goals in the shortest possible way. As for the subjects of the teaching process both students and university professors should be highly motivated for reaching progress in educational process by means of united efforts.

European dimension of educational process quality is characterized by:

- the quality of the content of education (curriculums, syllabus design, module structure, teaching and methodological literature);
- quality of teaching and upbringing methods, methods of organization of students' cognitive activity; control over the organization of learning activity;
- quality of a person's education (personal knowledge, skills development, level of comprehension of moral norms).

At the same time quality of educational process organization in high school depends on the form of gaining education (class activity, individual work, self-learning); rational connection of reproductive and active methods of teaching; current, module and final control of a student's learning achievements; control of the teaching process on the part of the university administration [9].

Complex analyses of the labor market situation in the southern region of Ukraine, made by economists and

sociologists, proved that under the conditions of a market economy when the right to work guaranteed by the Constitution is realized not by means of social guaranties but by the laws of the market and personal initiative, the questions concerning professional training of future specialists are of paramount importance. "Overproduction" of future specialists in certain spheres of national economy results in impossibility to find job for graduates of law, economics and political sciences departments. They have to change qualification, obtain new knowledge and acquire new skills but the practice shows that most of them are not ready for changes either psychologically or mentally. The solution of the problem of life-long education is to help university graduates to find their right place on the labor market.

Life-long education means giving students instruments which will help university graduates find themselves in any sphere of activity no matter what profession they gained at the university. High quality education supposes teaching students to gain knowledge and develop necessary skills independently without outside help. Now with the practically unlimited possibilities of the Internet, communication in social networks it is easier to get new information, structure it and use for your personal benefit. The only problem for our students is to learn studying without any pressure on the part of other people but directed by the consciousness and awareness of the need to study.

High quality education supposes informational literacy of every student. It can help students continue self education after graduation from the university. Speaking about informational literacy we bear in mind a student's ability to use all available means of getting, selecting and structuring information in order to have access to the latest researches in their professional sphere, to feel comfortable and confident in cross-cultural communication. Among all available means of receiving information we rank books, the Internet, TV and other mass media, oral communication.

Educational standards in Ukraine are based on the main principles of the Bologna process. One of them – mobility – enables Ukrainian students to continue education at European universities. With the acceptance of the European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS) Ukrainian students can get education in any country-member of the Bologna process. Their academic achievements will be taken into account in the process of assessment of their knowledge and skills. Students' mobility in our research is considered as one's ability to be mobile not only physically but psychologically, socially and mentally as well. It supposes one's quick reaction towards the constantly changing reality and painless adaptation to the new conditions, the ability to effectively use the knowledge and practical skills gained at the university in new, non-traditional situations.

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#### Гришкова Р.А.

#### Качество высшего образования и государственные образовательные стандарты в Украине

**Аннотация.** Противоречия между существующим качеством массового высшего образования в постсоветской Украине, где количество университетов превышает 500, и потребностью развивающегося украинского общества в высококвалифицированных кадрах являются основой данного исследования. Качество высшего образования и уровень государственных стандартов зависит от многих факторов, влияющих на устойчивое развитие Украины как независимого европейского государства. Проблемы университетской системы образования и пути их решения в соответствии с основными принципами Болонского процесса находятся рассматриваются автором в статье.

**Ключевые слова:** качество образования, государственный стандарт, Европейское измерение, профессиональное образование.