

ASSESSMENT TOOLS DEVELOPMENT IN THE FRAMEWORK OF COMPLEX APPROACH TOWARDS QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Description of subjects and tools for independent assessment of education quality. Introduction of the system of activities on independent assessment of education quality. Description of criteria and tools for education quality assessment on the institutional and the program levels harmonized with international and national standards and requirements. Suggested complex approach towards education quality assessment providing for an assessment of education quality on the institutional, program and qualification levels.

Keywords

Education quality; education quality assessment; professional public accreditation of educational programs; public accreditation; certification of management systems; certification of qualifications; professional standards

Development of trade and economic, investment and scientific and engineering potential of a country is impossible without the main resource – highly professional staff. Modern tendencies of education and labor market development impose requirements for the quality enhancement and availability increase of professional education in educational institutions. In conditions of the increase of control level and requirements for educational organizations from the government, labor market and the customers and demographic decrease, the organizations in education sector have to continually prove their advantages. The RF legislation predetermines tendencies in independent education quality assessment - professional-public accreditation of educational programs, public accreditation of educational organizations, assessment and certification of qualifications.

Subjects of independent education quality assessment are competencies of graduates, educational organizations and educational programs. Tools which are used for assessment of these subjects may include:

- assessment and certification of qualifications: to assess competencies of graduates for conformity to professional standards or qualification requirements established by Federal laws and other regulatory enactments,
- public accreditation and/or certification of management systems: to assess educational organizations for conformity to the criteria and requirements of Russian, foreign and international organizations, requirements of national and international standards for management systems and education quality assurance systems,
- professional public accreditation: to assess educational programs, i.e. recognize quality and level of training of the graduates who completed such educational programs in a particular organization performing educational activities as conformant to the requirements of professional standards, labor market requirements imposed to professionals, workers and officers within the relevant field of expertise.

Employers are the target group, consumers of information obtained as a result of the assessment; they are interested in competitiveness of a graduate, his/her conformity to the requirements stated in professional standards.

Professional standards are also intended for application in educational sphere [1]. The Russian Ministry of Education and Science has set the task for federal academic methodological associations to update federal state educational standards of professional education, and bring them into conformity with professional standards.

In order to achieve conformity to the labor market requirements draft updated federal state educational standards for higher education training fields and professions are provided for approval to the National Professional Qualifications Council under the Russian Federation President

(NPQC). Activities of stakeholders are defined by the regulation of cooperation between participants of the process of development and updating of federal state educational standards for professional education in accordance with applicable professional standards.

Draft federal state educational standards also provide determination of an educational program quality within the systems of internal and external assessment (on the voluntary basis). External assessment of the educational program quality may be performed by employers, their associations, as well as organizations authorized by them, through professional public accreditation in order to recognize quality and level of training of the graduates which mastered such educational programs, as conformant to the requirements of professional standards, labor market requirements for professionals with relevant field of expertise.

The system of activities on independent assessment of education quality represents activity scopes which include assessment and certification of qualifications, assessment of education organization quality systems (QS) for the purpose of quality management system certification and public accreditation of educational organizations (EO), professional public accreditation of the main professional educational programs (MPEPs), as well as expert and methodology support of activities on implementation of education quality assurance mechanisms in educational organizations, represented in Fig. 1.

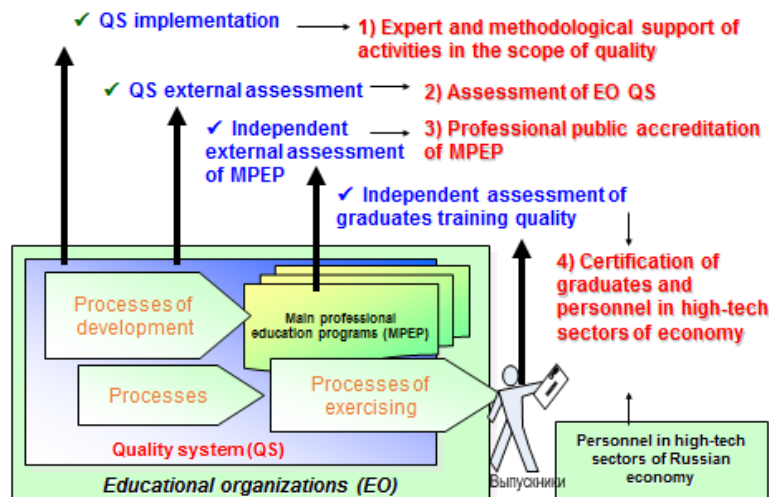


Figure 1 – System of activities on independent assessment of education quality

Certification association “Russian Register”, as an internationally recognized Russian certification and expert organization, performs activities on assessment of education quality conformity to the requirements of international management system standards, European standards and guidelines on education quality assurance ENQA, legislative requirements in respect of education quality assurance, professional standards, employer associations, customers both at institutional and at program and qualification levels. Methodological approaches of Russian Register towards independent assessment of education quality are comparable with ENQA standards and guidelines, requirements of international management system standards, national requirements for education quality assurance [2].

For institutional assessment of education quality, i.e. assessment of an educational organization management system or quality assurance, the following are used as the assessment criteria:

1) Criteria for assessment of conformity to management system standards, which are defined in the requirements of relevant standards, including the international quality management system standard ISO 9001.

2) Criteria for assessment of conformity to the requirements for internal education quality assurance systems which are defined in ENQA standards and guidelines, part 1.

3) Criteria for education quality (education quality assurance system) expert assessment defined in the requirements of Certification Association "Russian Register" standard; it provides for assessment of quality assurance system maturity [3] and is developed with consideration of:

- European standards and guidelines ENQA,
- Principles of process approach and terminology of ISO 9000 series standards for quality management systems,
- Best Russian and foreign practices in the scope of education quality assurance,
- Concepts of maturity of an educational institution processes which define the maturity level of an education quality assurance system.

Due to the fact that the Russian Register criteria for expert assessment of education quality (education quality assurance system) are based on the model which integrates requirements of European standards ENQA and the international standard ISO 9001, it becomes easier for educational organizations to implement internal education quality assurance systems in accordance with ENQA standards into existing quality management systems conformant to the requirements of ISO 9001, and vice versa.

Assessment of education quality on the program level implies conduction of the accreditation expert evaluation of educational programs for the purpose of professional public accreditation in accordance with the requirements of Federal Law FZ-273 "On education in the Russian Federation" art. 96.

Criteria for evaluation of educational programs defined within the requirements of Certification Association "Russian Register" standard provide for assessment of educational program maturity and are developed with consideration of:

- European standards and guidelines ENQA,
- Principles of process approach and ISO 9000 series standards for quality management systems,
- Documents of the National Professional Qualifications Council under the Russian Federation President (NPQC),
- Concepts of maturity of the educational program processes.

The following six standards for educational program evaluation [4] are suggested:

- Conformity of competences of the persons who mastered educational programs to the requirements of FSES, professional standards, other Russian qualification requirements or requirements of the labor market;
- Demand of the labor market for graduates who mastered educational programs;
- Quality of material and technical, information and communication, personnel and other resources effecting on quality of graduates education;
- Management of the main professional educational program;
- Objectives, strategy and development of the main professional educational program;
- Communication system and information openness.

Each standard provides insight into the requirements differentiated by three levels of maturity: basic, medium and high.

Due to the fact that the Russian Register criteria for evaluation of educational programs are based on the model which integrates requirements of European standards ENQA and the international standard ISO 9001, it is easier for educational organizations to implement internal mechanisms for educational program quality assurance in accordance with ENQA standards into existing quality management systems conformant to the requirements of ISO 9001, and vice versa.

In addition, correlation between ENQA standards in respect of internal quality assurance and the requirements for quality management systems of ISO 9001, as well as development and use of the model integrating requirements of ENQA standards and ISO 9001 by Russian Register, enable educational organizations to undergo a combined procedure of quality management system certification and professional public accreditation of educational programs, which allows educational organizations obtain independent evaluation of education quality on the institutional and program levels, and reduce costs (human, time, financial) for expert assessment.

The approaches towards assessment of education quality described in the article, their consistency and complexity, long experience of work with educational organizations, cooperation with the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, Russian sectorial employer associations "Russian Engineering Union", "Federal Chamber of Culture", inclusion into the registrar of organiza-

tions providing accreditation expert assessment for professional public accreditation, membership in foreign networks on education quality assurance (INQAAHE, APQN), affiliated status in ENQA, availability of international, national and sectorial accreditations and notifications enable Russian Register to offer and conduct activities on independent assessment of education quality listed below and systematically represented in fig. 1 and 2:

- Certification of quality management system conformity to the requirements of ISO 9001 with international accreditation of RvA, a member of the International Accreditation Forum IAF, International certification body network IQNet;
- Professional public accreditation of educational programs in accordance with the requirements of Federal Law FZ-273 "On education in the Russian Federation" art. 96;
- Independent expert assessment of education quality in accordance with the requirements of the Certification Association "Russian Register" consistent with European standards for education quality assurance ENQA, requirements of ISO 9001, national and international professional standards, employer associations, customers;
- Conformity assessment of information security management, IT service management necessary for research and development activities;
- Certification of integrated management systems for conformity to the requirements of 2 or more standards, including ENQA, professional standards;
- Integration of the above stated procedures – opportunity to receive a complex service, including using the transfer procedure;
- Training of an educational organization personnel.

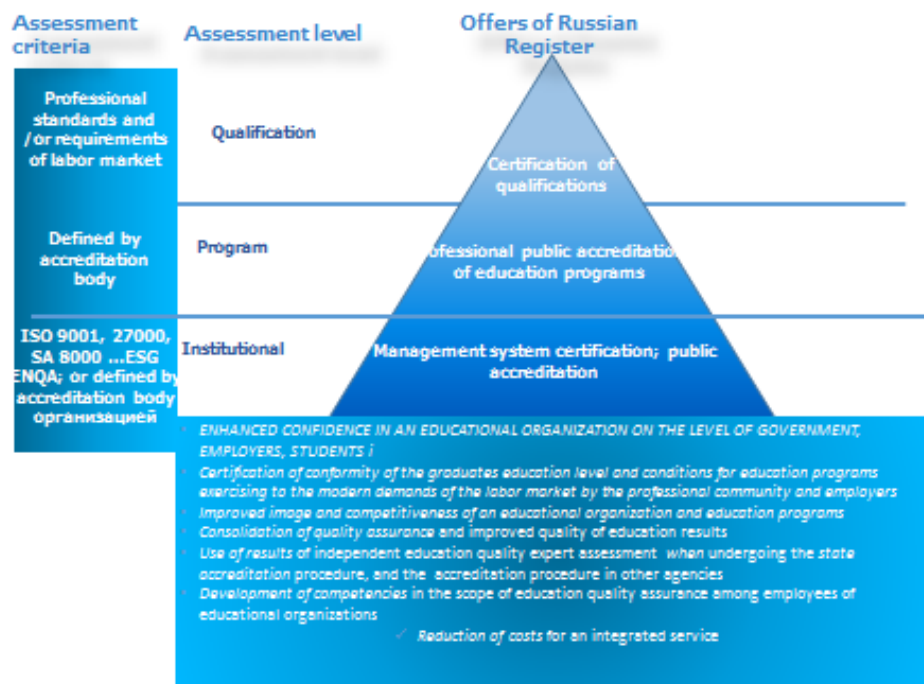


Figure 2 – Complex approach of Russian Register towards assessment of education quality

Independent education quality assessments allow educational organizations to consolidate their image on the market of educational and scientific research services, improve their competitiveness and competitiveness of the main exercised educational programs on the market of educational services, improve quality assurance and quality of education results; to receive certification of conformity of the graduates education level and conditions for educational programs exercising to the modern demands of the labor market by the professional community and employers.

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GUIDANCE FOR PERFORMING TEACHER SELF-EVALUATION IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONS

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Abstract

Adaptation to globalization and diversification in Higher Education opens new horizons and leads to re-engineering of the existing higher education (both teaching and learning) in order to cope with the expanding scope and differences. Consequently, Higher Educational Institutes (HEIs) will need to adopt new theories and practices to dissolve the boundaries of quality in HE. The Internal Quality Assurance subdivisions of HEIs play an important role in these processes and will need to focus on and guide the 'enhancement' of teaching and learning quality. This enhancement could be achieved by a variety of ways with the aim to develop quality in teachers. This is bound to result in the quality of the teaching process. When developing the quality in teachers', it is vitally important to have positive perceptions towards the changing needs. Thus, the Teacher Self Evaluation method (TSE) directly helps individuals improve their perceptions in the positive way and thereby achieve most of the characteristics of a quality teacher. Therefore the guidelines of good practices applicable to IQA units/evaluators for effective teacher evaluations/assessments, the characteristics of a quality teacher, the enhancement of the teaching quality at HEIs in the Asia-Pacific regions as well as the issues which disrupt the TSE have become vitally important for the teaching practice.