

Enhancement of Quality Education Models Through the Independent Professional Public Expertise

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The enhancement and dissemination of quality education models is to be ensured through the development of the independent professional public expertise in the sphere of education

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The necessity of a steady education quality enhancement is determined by the contemporary socioeconomic conditions, scientific achievements, regulatory requirements, as well as by the needs of educational institutions and their customers.

The review of scientific papers in the area of education system management has revealed that most quality education models are regulated by the accreditation and licensing requirements specified in the regulatory documentation. This can significantly contribute to the successful accreditation of educational programs. However, the main educational purpose, i.e. the readiness of graduates to the future professional activity, which demonstrates the real education results, could not be achieved.

It can be explained by the fact that in accordance with the state accreditation an educational institution should meet the state standard requirements for the quality of graduate training, i.e. to the definite minimum level. Therefore, the existing state accreditation system can hardly contribute to a steady development of educational institution, including a

thorough elaboration of scientifically-grounded educational programs, improvement of teaching technologies and learning process, formation of innovative learning and scientific environments.

Alongside with that, due to the approved accreditation system coercion and fear have beneted Russian educational institutions, while the level of corruption in the Ministry of Education has significantly increased [1]. For better understanding the seriousness of the whole situation with the Russian education system sunk in bureaucratic routine, V.S. Avanesov holds the USA as an example [2], where there are no State Certification, Federal Internet-Exam in Professional Education, State Control of Education, and State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles, as well as there are no universities operated under the Ministry of Education [3]. However, the list of world's top 100 universities includes 33 US universities and 15 UK universities. These countries are followed by Australia (7 universities) and France (5 universities). Altogether, the world's top 100 universities list

comprises 19 countries [4], excluding Russia.

In foreign countries, education quality expertise is conducted openly by non-commercial, nongovernmental, independent regional or professional organizations which have assumed this responsibility or have been deliberately established for this purpose.

In the Russian Federation, the international experience in professional public expertise was primarily supported by the higher education community. That's why a cooperation agreement in development of national system of professional public accreditation of the educational programs in engineering was initiated between the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation and Russian Association for Engineering Education (RAEE) in 2002. The latter has developed and approved the procedures and criteria of national public accreditation system and established Accreditation Center and Accreditation Board of RAEE.

The RAEE criteria which are used for professional public evaluation of the quality of educational programs in engineering and technology have been developed in accordance with the traditions of the Russian Higher Education System and the State Educational Standard of Higher Professional Education. At the same time they are based on the quality assurance experience of the following leading international accreditation organizations: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (USA), the Institution of Engineers Australia, Japan Accreditation Board for Engineering Education, Engineering Council of South Africa (Republic of South Africa) [5].

The first 12 educational programs in 6 leading Russian Technical Universities were accredited in 2003 by RAEE Accreditation Center in accordance with the developed criteria. The commissions hired an array of experts, distinguished specialists of Russian Higher Education Institutions, scientists and manufactures have been formed. These experts and specialists

have completed special training courses. The accreditation guidelines to assist experts in accreditation procedure have been developed. To participate in "pilot" professional public accreditation the representatives of accreditation organizations of Washington Accord member-countries (ABET) and the Ministry of Education of Russian Federation have been invited. In 2006 the RAEE Accreditation Center became an international organization, being authorized to award EUR-ACE label.

Based on the activity of the RAEE Accreditation Center, it has been proved that a true quality evaluation of educational programs and learning process can be ensured with the assistance of qualified experts who are the representatives not only of educational institutions but also of industrial enterprises, scientific communities and various professional organizations.

Being aware of the importance of professional expertise, the Federal Education and Science Supervision Agency analyses the possibilities of the application of professional public and expert evaluations in various state procedures and recognizes their viability due to the adequate illustration of the current state of education. On December 25, 2009 in the Year-End Press-Conference held in "Interfax" agency, Mrs Lubov N. Glebova, head of the Federal Education and Science Supervision Agency, commented that "audacity of the current education system lies in the fact that it supports the organizations which conduct independent evaluations. I hope that the number of such organizations will be constantly increasing" [6].

Herewith, according to the opinion of some employers, public education expertise must be obligatory. Deputy Director General of State corporation "Rosnanotekh" Andrei G. Svinarenko said that the Russian Corporation of Nanotechnologies (Rusnano) had proposed the amendments to the articles 77, 81 and 84 of the Education Act according to which professional public expertise

of educational programs became an obligatory procedure [7].

In any cases while developing and applying the criteria for education quality evaluation, supervision agencies have to turn to the current achievements of the national science and apply for the help of the representatives of psychological, pedagogical communities, as well as industrial enterprises. The necessity of community involvement into the process of education quality assurance is proved by the modern trends of social development. True educational management cannot be achieved only on the basis of departmental arrangements excluding the role of public bodies.

The system of professional public expertise of educational institutions allows working out the path of their further development and thereby contribute to the education quality assurance. The independent professional public expertise in the sphere of education is a voluntary, self-regulating process aimed at improving of education and assuring its quality. It is proved to:

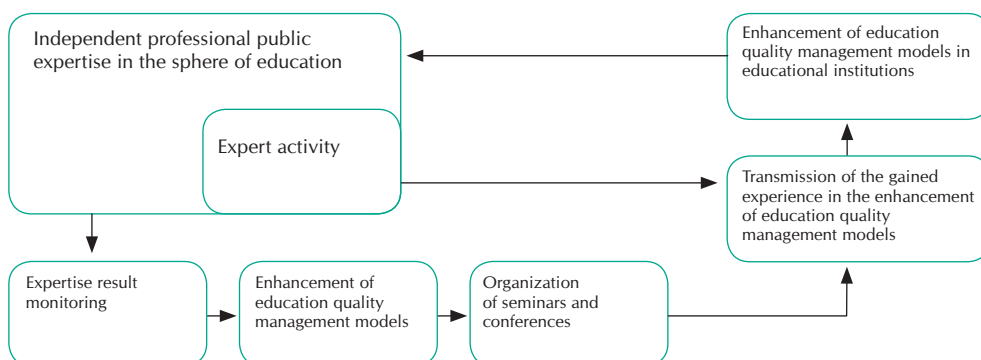
- inspire educational institutions for self-improvement and development;
- encourage educational institution responsibility for educational program quality;
- aim not only at the educational process itself (which provides knowledge) but also at the purpose of education, i.e. the readiness of graduates to the self-development (personal growth) based on the acquired knowledge;
- enhance educational system, including training and short courses for teachers and managers of educational institutions;
- increase competitive performance of educational institutions, which in its turn assures education quality;
- provide the public awareness, including the parties concerned and governmental bodies about learning process quality in educational institutions.

Above all, based on the experience of the RAEE Accreditation Center, independent professional public expertise in the area of education enables to accumulate, analyze and transmit the gained knowledge in the enhancement of education quality management (Figure1). This corresponds to the grants and activities enumerated in the Federal Special-Purpose Program on the Development of Education in 2011-2015, as well as “the dissemination of educational system models which can assure the quality of basic education all over the Russian Federation” [8].

Thus, a steady enhancement of educational system models which meet the quality requirements of modern education should be assured through the development of independent professional public expertise in the sphere of education, due to which it would be possible to:

- develop and implement extra expertise training courses intended to increase professional competence of teachers, managers of educational institutions and other people concerned;
- provide an effective training of experts in the sphere of education quality;
- transmit the gained experience, disseminate the current models of available and qualitative education through the activity of the experts of the independent professional public expertise in the sphere of education;
- hold seminars and conferences dedicated to the results of independent professional public expertise in the sphere of education. This contributes to the further development of the educational system models and modern education quality assurance.

Figure 1. Enhancement and Dissemination of Quality Education Models through Development of Independent Professional Public Expertise in the Sphere of Education



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