

EDUCATION AND PEDAGOGY

DOI <https://doi.org/10.51647/kelm.2020.4.1.1>

SYSTEMS AND METHODS FOR ASSESSMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: WORLD AND EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

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Abstract. The article analyzes the experience of the systems and methods of assessing higher education within the national and international experience; national and international experiences in the assessment of state universities and academic staff professional development are compared; identified differences in the assessment process.

Key words: assessment, higher education, academic staff professional development, national experience, international experience, state universities.

СИСТЕМИ ТА МЕТОДИ ОЦІНЮВАННЯ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ ТА ПІДВИЩЕННЯ КВАЛІФІКАЦІЇ НАУКОВО-ПЕДАГОГІЧНИХ ПРАЦІВНИКІВ: СВІТОВИЙ І ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИЙ ДОСВІД

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Анотація. У статті проаналізовані досвід проведення, системи та методи оцінювання вищої освіти в межах національного та світового досвіду; зіставлено національний і зарубіжний досвід проведення оцінювання діяльності державних ВНЗ та системи підвищення кваліфікації науково-педагогічних працівників; визначено відмінності у процесах оцінювання.

Ключові слова: система оцінювання, вища освіта, підвищення кваліфікації науково-педагогічних працівників, національний досвід, світовий досвід, державний ВНЗ.

SYSTEMY I METODY OCENY SZKOLNICTWA WYŻSZEGO I PODNOSZENIA KWALIFIKACJI PRACOWNIKÓW NAUKOWO-DYDAKTYCZNYCH. DOŚWIADCZENIA ŚWIATOWE I EUROPEJSKIE

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Adnotacja. W artykule przeanalizowano doświadczenie w przeprowadzaniu, systemy i metody oceny szkolnictwa wyższego w ramach doświadczenia krajowego i światowego; porównano krajowe i zagraniczne doświadczenia w przeprowadzaniu oceny działalności uczelni publicznych oraz systemu podnoszenia kwalifikacji pracowników naukowych i pedagogicznych; zidentyfikowano różnice w procesach oceniania.

Słowa kluczowe: system oceniania, wykształcenie wyższe, podnoszenie kwalifikacji pracowników naukowo-dydaktycznych, doświadczenie krajowe, doświadczenie światowe, uczelnia publiczna.

Introduction. Ensuring the quality of higher education and the system of academic staff professional development is one of the key issues for the education system in all the countries. The level of education and the system of academic staff professional development directly depends on the requirements (goals, standards and norms), sources (programs, staff and students potential, logistics, funds, etc.) and educational processes (scientific and educational activities, management, educational technologies), which ensure relevant training. It is closely linked to the process of evaluating higher education and the system of academic staff professional development.

Different approaches to assessing the quality of education, in general, and the system of academic staff professional development, in particular, are used in global practices. Studying the worldwide and European experiences is extremely important today. The thing is analyzing the dominant assessing systems and methods, as well as projecting received data to identify measures of the highest priority to modernize quality assessment of Ukrainian higher education and the system of academic staff professional development allows to significantly increase the level of national education quality in general.

Today there is a significant number of works in which various systems and methods of assessment of higher education as well as the system of academic staff professional development at the national and world levels are considered (A. Anchyskin, V. Viktorov, H. Ielnikova, Iu. Zinkovsky, S. Kryvosheiev, N. Kuzmin, M. Potashnyk, N. Selezniiov, V. Suprun, V. Turchenko, T. Shyryaiev, S. Shyshov).

The works of many specialists in the field of higher education management and academic staff professional development are devoted to analyzing the US education system, in particular the works by B. Wolfson, T. Heorgieva, H. Kels, V. Sieviertsev, B. Chashchykhin, L. Filippova, and others.

There are still discussions concerning systems and methods to be used to assess the quality of higher education and the analysis of existing works shows that comparing world and national experiences when it gets down to assessing university activities is urgent and relevant.

The aim of the article is to compare national and foreign experiences in assessing features of state universities and the system of academic staff professional development as well as to identify differences in assessing processes.

Main material. The greatest experience in assessing higher education has been gained in the United States. There, the system of self-assessment at higher educational institutions has mostly developed. In general, the entire education system in the United States is more decentralized than in Ukraine, for example. The regulatory role is largely realised by the society, not the state. The real administrative and financial power in American universities belongs to the Boards of Trustees (in private universities, the funds are provided by the state). It is to these Boards of Trustees that the state administration (where the university is located) instructs to oversee the university work. Although the administration of many US states has strengthened its control over universities in the 1990s, especially with regard to the licensing of private schools and educational programs, the basis for assessing and monitoring higher education in America remains self-regulation.

Accreditation of higher education institutions is a form of self-control and state management of American higher education activities. Theoretically, accreditation in the United States exists in the form of a formal but non-governmental, private, voluntary, and formally optional system that is self-funded. In fact, the situation is different. The results of activities by accreditation agencies are considered a basis when various funds, entrepreneurs, councils, not to mention applicants make decisions.

Under the United States laws, federal funds are allocated to accredited universities only. Therefore, the systematic confirmation of the quality level for each university is a matter of prestige. Accreditation originated in the United States. This system first appeared in the early twentieth century, but the process of establishing an organization to monitor education quality, accreditation mechanism and its implementation nationwide in the United States is a little over fifty years old. "Accreditation in the United States serves as a way for the state to assure the society that educational institutions meet direct purposes and allocated funds are used effectively and ensure formation of deep knowledge" (Георгиева, 1989: 16).

Along with accredited universities, there are also non-accredited universities. But it is almost impossible to get a good job with a diploma from an unaccredited university.

Another way of assessing universities in the United States is through specialized professional accreditation, which operates in the same way as the programs within an educational institution, but is organized by a trade union. There is another way of assessing higher education – through educational programs, which is entirely organized by the university and aimed at improving its activities, a possibility to redistribute funds and educational priorities.

According to H. Kels, assessment systems organized by universities themselves are the most progressive forms of self-regulation, and therefore in general they are the most reliable and mature systems of self-regulation in higher education (Келс, 1999: 22).

In contrast to the Ukrainian accreditation system, in the United States, in the period between accreditations, universities report annually to accreditation bodies. Thus, accreditation bodies support educational institutions under their control, programs in a state of constant responsibility to higher bodies of education system, to students and staff, to the community. This process itself has several stages: university self-examination, assessment by visiting expert commissions, conclusions of the accreditation body. When checking university activities, attention is paid to the level of educational programs, long-term labor market forecasts in the area of training, library and laboratory equipment, academic staff qualifications and professional development (publications, research works), etc.

Accreditation functions in the United States are performed by both professional and territorial associations of educational institutions. Considering one of their main tasks to maintain profession prestige and competence

of representatives, the associations strictly assess and compare the performance of higher education institutions (Вульфсон, 1999: 114–115).

Every American university that plans to have assessment and accreditation must develop its own conceptual scheme, its own strategy and program of assessment, its own methodology and plan its implementation in accordance with its own mission, goals and university funds.

Today in the United States and in the world, systems of education quality assessment use mostly expert (qualitative) methods. During the first years of the assessment system establishment, quantitative indicators were used quite widely. At the first stage, they played a positive role: they helped to bring order to the spontaneous process of founding new educational institutions (Шадриков, 2000: 22). For countries where the accreditation system is just undergoing development, the use of quantitative indicators is inevitable.

Many American universities have concluded that long-term multidimensional research is more impressive than one-time one-dimensional research. Therefore, surveys of academic staff and students, interviews, evaluation of staff and student performance based on tests, periodic reviews of curricula, analyzing the activities of graduates – all these are important means of obtaining useful information and feedback.

The development of European higher education over the past few years has been characterized by processes resulting in the establishment of mutual understanding and blurring borders between European countries. According to the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) declarations (Смирнова, 2002), during the 2010s the process of creating a single European higher education area and enhancing the prestige of the European higher education system will pursue, *inter alia*, European cooperation in quality assessment. The Prague Communiqué (2001) reiterated the importance of establishing and ensuring smooth operation of adequate quality assurance, accreditation and certification mechanisms. In the 1970's and 1980's, a number of national higher education systems underwent significant changes (Никандров, 1989). A significant reduction in state influence and transition from state control to university self-government were common to all countries. Public funding, usually not limited by any pre-defined conditions, has been replaced by different mechanisms for calculating funds depending on certain university performance indicators. As a result of the changes, the need for an objective assessment of higher education has increased. The most significant are assessment systems set up in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and France. Other Western European countries have organized their activities following their example. The European Organization for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) has played a leading role in creating a pan-European platform for spreading useful experiences of various accreditation bodies.

In the United Kingdom, there is currently a heated debate about the extent to which academic communities should be controlled and which groups in society should be involved. The process of assessing higher education is gradually shifting from government-funded organizations to what can be called self-assessment. However, this was not yet a process specifically organized by an educational institution to improve performance; self-assessment in this context is a preparation for confirming formal assessment to persuade outside observers and to attract additional funding.

External expertise of universities is carried out by the Higher Education Funding Council, which is not formally subordinate to the Ministry of Education. The experts go to universities at least once every five years, conduct surveys of students and academic staff, as well as analyze the specific results of educational and research work. At the same time the following are assessed: the demand for graduates, feedback on the quality of training by employers, research results, organization and conditions of educational process, organization and results of intermediate certification, social living conditions of academic staff and students, economic condition of universities, quality of university administration. "Another important aspect of assessing the quality of higher education is to obtain accreditation from the professional community or association in the areas of training. Obtaining university accreditation is a prerequisite for employment of its graduates" (Васильев, 1999: 52).

Another form of external expertise of universities in the UK is the employers' expert councils. In the UK, just like in the US, the role of traditional universities is increased by the fact that most employers recognize only diplomas from accredited universities, and accreditation bodies are established and controlled by associations of the largest old universities. At the same time, the importance of university self-assessment conducted by internal university structures specially organized for such purposes has also increased in the United Kingdom. Another way of assessing is the ranking of British universities, which is formed on the basis of a number of objective indicators. Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial College, Bath, London School of Economics and Warwick are consistently in the lead among British universities. The following main indicators are used: 1) assessment of teaching quality; 2) assessment of research work; 3) the average level of entrants' grades. When making the rating, the following are also considered: the ratio of the number of students to the number of academic staff (taking into account the different conditions of academic staff employment at different universities); costs of library maintenance and computer equipment; the level of employment of graduates; the number of graduates.

Each indicator is evaluated in points, in accordance with the task of the maximum possible grade. The rating indicator is calculated as the arithmetic sum of individual indicators (Васильев, 1999: 52). In addition, ratings are made by profession, academic staff, level of research, etc.

The Swedish system of higher education is very similar to systems in other European countries. In the 1970 in Sweden, efforts were also made to decentralize higher education. Gradually, traditional management practices changed, and universities gained considerable autonomy. But the problem of providing quality training for the modern labor market was relevant. The increase in the number of students required an increase in government allocations. In this situation, there was a need to certify university reliability. At the same time, students, as everywhere, demanded quality.

Accordingly, the following components of the quality assessment system were created: audits of training quality, not aimed at ranking; assessment of educational programs' quality; accreditation within the competence of the National Agency of Higher Education. Currently, there are three types of accreditation: accreditation of the right to award a master's degree, accreditation of university colleges for the right to award a doctorate and accreditation of university colleges to obtain university status (Арменголь, 2002).

Such methods of monitoring the activities of educational institutions play an important role in the practice of managing the entire system of training, but the list of areas, indicators, which are accredited, does not cover the full range of activities of Swedish universities. Thus, the system of university assessment in Sweden is still building as well as system of academic staff professional development.

In Germany, higher education is traditionally managed and funded by the state. The Ministry of Education, which regulates the activities of higher education institutions, has existed since the XIX century. The state controls higher education, holds responsible for training highly qualified specialists, at the same time academic staff are civil servants. Due to the intensification of competition in the market of educational services and in the labor market, caused by both internal and external factors, there is an increased need to assess the quality of training, to provide reliable information to consumers of educational services.

The need to meet needs, including information needs, among students, their parents, employers and other stakeholders has become acute. The first stage of the assessment procedure in Germany is university self-examination, understanding the strengths and weaknesses. At the second stage, external experts join assessment. Accreditation involves the issuance of a certificate confirming compliance with certain quality standards. It is based on an assessment procedure applied to the curriculum or institute and is issued for a limited period (five years). The long-term financial implications of assessment are currently being actively discussed. The Accreditation Council with powers to cover the whole country, was established in 1999. The main task of the Council is not to grant accreditation as such, but to certify the bodies responsible for accreditation of new programs on behalf of the Council (Васильев, 1999: 122).

In Germany, a rating assessment of universities is conducted, which is formed on the basis of the following indicators: practice; level of education (quality); communications; theoretical level; research cooperation; research achievements; student activities; level of administrative management. For each indicator, universities are lined up in order, and the rating is calculated as the sum of ordinal numbers for individual indicators (Васильев, 1999: 122). Thus, Germany, which previously did not pay due attention to quality assessment issues, is ready to change its position largely thanks to new initiatives approved by the aforementioned European declarations and agreements.

In France, the Ministry of Education, Research and Technology is responsible for education policy. However, the activities of higher education institutions are assessed by the National Expert Committee, which was established by the Law on Higher Education in 1984. The Expert Committee submits reports directly to the President of the Republic and is completely independent of the Ministry of Higher Education. The committee independently plans activity programs and determines assessment methodology. The committee consists only of researchers and university professors. This makes it possible to achieve multidimensional and even comparative institutional assessment. In France, the National Assessment Committee uses an integrated approach to assessment. Its subject matter is everything related to the public mission of the university: teaching, research, integration into regional, national and international spheres, institute management, policy and management practice. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used in assessment, with qualitative methods preferred. The context in which the educational institution operates, its evolution and specific tasks are also taken into account. Each assessment consists of an internal evaluation (analysis of strengths and weaknesses, analysis of future development prospects) and external (expert visit). The basis for assessment is the cooperation between the National Expert Evaluation Committee and the Conference of University Presidents. During the assessment, the process is discussed between the university and those who assess it. The committee does not set norms, nor does it have decision-making power. Its task is to gather information, identify inconsistencies and try to understand the meaning of these inconsistencies and their possible consequences. This approach creates an atmosphere of trust.

The assessment result is a written report, the content of which, in contrast to the Ukrainian practice, is open to all stakeholders. The purpose of the reports is to inform the public, service users, partners, the state and funding agencies about the state of affairs in higher education (Князев, 2001: 419–429). This approach contributes to constructing an effective management system for training specialists in higher education institutions. In France, there is the so-called state quality mark, which has only those higher schools that are recognized by the state. Higher education institutions, where the Ministry of Public Education supervises education, can issue diplomas "endorsed" by the Ministry, which, according to European ideas, testifies to the quality of higher education. This "mark of quality" is especially important because only diplomas with such a state award are recognized in all European countries.

Today in France, there is a trend towards a transition from centralized assessment to a self-assessment process closely linked to an educational institution. Such trends are likely to shift the emphasis in the management of training from the state level to the level of the educational institution.

Conclusions. In line with the above, it has been found that in Europe, where the level of higher education is quite high, much attention is paid to assessing the functioning of higher education institutions. Analyzing the experiences of conducting assessments in foreign countries, it is evident that all countries (both the United States and developed European countries) share with Ukraine a willingness to have a quality system of higher education and effective functioning of educational institutions. Of course, US universities have more experience

in conducting accreditation. However, European countries, especially the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, using the American experience, supplement assessment systems with qualitatively new ideas. Practice proves that many of the indicators used for assessment and academic staff development are the same. These are, as a rule, structural indicators, indicators of academic success, publishing, research. However, in recent years, comprehensive assessment systems have emerged, which are more acceptable and objective.

Such systems take into account, for example, assessing the demand for graduates, the opinion of students, academic staff, employers on the quality of training, the level of organization of the educational process, assessing the social living conditions of staff and students, and so on. The main thing when developing new and improving existing approaches to assessment and academic staff professional development, is to avoid the formalities of the assessment system, to make it effective and objective. The results of such assessments, as in developed European countries and in the United States, should be available to the general public. Only with this approach, systematic and comprehensive assessments of higher education institutions can become an effective tool in managing specialists training.

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