

**PROVIDING EDUCATION QUALITY AND COMPETENCE APPROACH
IN NEW GENERATION SES CONTEXT.
KAZAKHSTAN HIGHER SCHOOL EXPERIENCE**

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There are presented the reasons that brings up to date the problem of higher education quality provision in Kazakhstan. There are considered methodological features of the new generation SES. There is noted the necessity of the creative interaction between the higher school institutions and employers in forming competence-oriented educational programs, increasing higher school funding and increasing the higher school institution teacher's social status.

Keywords: quality provision, competence approach, state educational standard, Bologna process, bachelor's degree study program, teacher's role.

The public opinion poll [1] carried out by 700 experts in 24 countries of the world on the problem of higher education development, showed that by 2020:

- about 60 % of secondary school leavers will study at higher school institutions. At this the main emphasis will be made on graduates' competences and abilities, their functional ability to employment;
- about 20 % of the bachelors' class hours will be oriented to the general training, the remaining resource – to general vocational and special training;
- costs for scientific-research works will exceed 3 % of the GDP;
- over 50 % of scientific and academic journals will be issued in the electronic format;
- the students' academic mobility will increase till 40 %;
- the principle of “studying throughout the life” will become a vital need and reality;
- higher school training will develop dominantly in the pragmatic course.

In the conditions of globalization and mass character of higher education there increases the role of the social measurement. The share of budget students in the European social states is very high: over 90% in Germany, over 80% in France. On the contrary, in the United State and Great Britain there are but few such students (no more than one third), however, there exists a developed system of educational crediting permitting a citizen to pay for education after graduation and with very preferential terms [2].

Higher education internationalization, unfavorable demographic situation, insufficient budget funding of Kazakhstan higher school made topical the problem of education quality provision. Its mass character and the problems of quality came into contradiction with each other. The mass character development is accompanied by decreasing the level of social

base. At Kazakhstan higher school institutions only about 23% of students study on the budgetary basis. There appears the students' contingent with different starting educational levels and demands which aggravates the problem of comparable quality provision [3].

In European practice “quality provision” means the process of forming conditions assisting the education quality. The main indicators defining higher education quality can serve [4]:

- the level of competence and professional mastership of the staff;
- study programs and pedagogical training technologies and knowledge control quality;
- entrants' erudition level and their motivation to study;
- level and quality of the resource provision (academic-and-methodological, material-technical, information);
- administration's innovation activity and quality management system efficiency.

The problem of quality provision in the developed countries is solved using decentralized mechanisms and procedures of education quality assessment based on self-assessment, external control, accreditation by independent bodies. In Kazakhstan, opposite to the majority of the countries-members of the Bologna process, there are a lot of controlling-and-inspecting procedures burdened by bureaucratic elements (licensing, state certification, institutional accreditation, scheduled inspections for conformity with the license requirements, specialized accreditation, and now external assessment of the study achievements). There is, perhaps, no such a “developed” control system in any world country. It is appropriate to remember the proverb: **“Too many cooks spoil the broth”**.

Initially in the Bologna declaration the problem of quality was given rather a low profile: **“Assistance to the European cooperation in the field of the quality assessment by**

means of developing comparable criteria and methodologies”.

The effectiveness of the reforms in higher education in the context of the Bologna process depends strongly on the level of the institution public awareness and the society on the whole about the essence of this European project and the staff's readiness to realize it. Certain conservatism and advocacy of the successful before commonplaces prevent from adopting the Bologna process. A lot of higher school institutions demonstrate the semblance of the reforms but not real transformations [3].

The main reasons that make topical the problem of higher education quality provision in Kazakhstan are:

- systematic under-funding of Kazakhstan higher school (0.3-0.4% of the GDP for higher education is negligibly insufficient as compared to the general European 1.2-1.6%);
- inadequacy of higher education development mechanisms to the formed social-economic conditions;
- uncompetitive level of the staff wages, the staff ageing and absence of the talented youth inflow in the scientific-pedagogical sphere;
- weak scientific-methodological substantiation of the carried out reforms of higher education in the context of the Bologna process and the State program of the RK education development for 2011-2020.

Now we need not hollow claims of the education quality but practical actions to increase higher school funding and teachers' social status, culture of thinking and scientific character of education. Education is not so sphere of services but rather the main element of the public production – human capital reproduction. Costs for education are not a burden for the state budget that must be reduced but long-term investments in the man profitable for the state.

In the RK system of higher education the main instrument of quality control is the State Educational Standard (SES). Methodological features of the new generation SES adopted by the RK Government Decision No 1080 of 23.08.2012, are:

- leaving no alternative cycle of general educational majors (GEM);
- sharp reducing of the core subjects in the cycles of basis (BM) and profile (PM) majors;
- strengthening the role of students' autonomous learning and reducing the laboratory-contact workload;
- strengthening the role of practice;
- more contrasting definition of the competence approach.

There looks non-logical the cycle of GEM leaving no alternative. Without disputing as for the role of this cycle for general educational

and vision training it should be noted that such a labor intensive cycle does not leave place for special training that is especially important for science intensive technical courses. At foreign technical institutions the GEM cycle makes only 10-15% of the whole study program while in Kazakhstan this cycle takes a quarter of the program. Such an imbalance causes difficulties when forming joint educational programs and double-degree programs.

Within the frames of the new generation SES higher school institutions are given more autonomy when designing bachelor's degree programs. Sharp increase of the institutional component strengthens the significance of the regional component. Strong HEIs are able to legalize the study programs, weak HEIs can be in a difficulty to transform the abundance of credits (71 credits) of the institutional component in the needed list of training modules with the required competences. Between the HEI autonomy and its responsibility for academic quality there is observed but weak interconnection that sharpens the problem of quality provision.

It should be noted that in the new generation SES there are given only common competences: requirements to general education, requirements to social-ethic competences, to economic and organizational-managerial competences, etc. Professional competences HEIs are to develop for each course based on professional standards taking into account employers' demands and the society social demand. The absence of professional standards for a lot of training lines limits the designing of competence-oriented study programs.

In the State program of the RK education development for 2011-2020, for the purpose of providing the integration in the European area of higher education in accordance with the Bologna process parameters, there is marked the reducing of the general educational majors' share in the bachelor's degree programs from 25% to 15% [5]. Some institutional majors of the GEM cycle will be transferred to the school education programs. Unfortunately, such a transformation has not taken place. Moreover, all higher school institutions were recommended to enter an additional major “Religion science” in the GEM cycle. This does not assist in forming professional competences of the future bachelors of engineering and technologies.

In the SES projects for technical specialties developed in 2011 based on the graduate's competence model, there were for the first time defined professional competences by the kinds of professional activities. In this connection there was quite non-logical fast decision of refusal from state standards for the courses of higher and postgraduate education. Instead of

SES diversity in courses there were introduced adopted by the RK Government two normative documents: SES for a bachelor's degree and SES for postgraduate education. These two SES having a somewhat frame character, do not take into consideration the specificity connected with the differences between the humanities, technical and other trajectories of training. In addition to these two SES there are developed Typical curricula for the courses of higher and postgraduate education in which there is regulated the structure and volume of the study program for three cycles of majors with indication of the list and amount of credits of the core subjects and all types of practice, final certification. The institutional component (elective component) is not concretized, there is indicated only its total labor intensity.

A characteristic feature of the RK present day educational system development is growing mass character that bears mainly the function of socialization but not professionalization. Higher school budget funding deficit led to the fact that the state, as the main stockholder of the higher education system, happened to be unable to control HEIs activities neither from the point of view of the expediency of the rendered educational services (demand for personnel) nor from the point of view of their quality.

The Bologna process is actively developing, and its interim results are constantly monitored and fixed in the international documents: Prague (2001), Berlin (2003), Bergen (2005), London (2007), Leven (2009), Budapest-Vienne (2010), Bucharest (2012)).

In the communiqué of the Conference of the European countries education ministers in 2009 it was noted: **“We recognize the key role of higher education for the successful solution of the problems facing us and for the further social-and-cultural development of our societies. So we consider the state investment in higher education to be of the prior significance”** [3].

The main aim of the Bologna process is providing the transparency of national education systems based on the adopted recommendations and procedures by the way of maximum presenting the agreed information with pertaining characteristic features of each of members-countries education systems.

At the jubilee meeting of higher education ministers of the countries-participants of the Bologna process on March 11, 2010 in Budapest (Hungary), the new ENQA President Akim Hopbach (Germany) presented the basic principles of developing the systems of education quality guarantee:

- higher school institutions are responsible for higher education quality;

- all forms and procedures of quality guarantee are to be oriented to the further improvement of education quality;

- diversity of approaches is greeted if there are used unified for everybody principles of quality assessment and guarantee;

- all participants of the educational process, especially students, participate in the procedures and work of quality guaranteeing bodies;
- quality guaranteeing agencies are independent.

In the conditions of the postindustrial society with high dynamics of changes, the traditional knowledge-centered paradigm of education loses its effectiveness. There is obvious the deficit of competence-oriented specialists able, after graduating from higher school institutions, to work effectively in new conditions.

In Kazakhstan higher school in the context of the Bologna process, orientation to the 12-year cycle of training at comprehensive school and refusal from higher education course SES, there has been begun forming bachelor's degree programs with strengthening practice-oriented training and competence approach. This brings up to date the faster introduction of professional standards in which there must be specialists' qualification characteristic in the format of competences in relation to the National qualification frame [3].

Thus, the main efforts in higher education reforming are directed to approaching the positions of employers and academic community. However, here it must be kept in mind that **“the culture of a social dialogue between higher education and economy requires special HES's vigilance, sense of reality, high scalability. In this dialogue the last word is left for the academic public. On it there also lies responsibility for this culture forming... By establishing competences, we reveal the present day demands. But higher education is to work for the future...”** [6].

Apparently, the norm will become bachelor graduates' entering the world of professional activity and their return two years later in the world for the master's cycle, and this return will be deliberate and weighted from the point of view of the professional choice.

To reveal general and special competences, alongside with the academic community, there will be attracted employers and last-year alumni that will permit the education system to respond more operatively the demands of the labor market and will pay more attention to the prospects of employment of their graduate, their real career success.

The competence approach to building new curricula stipulates deep system transformations in all the components of higher education touching the content, teaching, organization of

the teaching process, forms of control, academic-methodological provision. Designing and realizing such training technologies that would develop the situations of involving the students in various activities of active and interactive character will become the main principles.

Freedom presented to HEIs with introducing the new generation SES, on one hand, gives the possibility to implement their innovation educational trajectories, on the other hand, it will be difficult to ensure the minimum basic level of training and comparability of educational programs of different HEIs claimed by the Bologna process requirements.

At the same time, with increasing the interaction between the labor market representatives claiming requirements to the final results of the HEI educational activity, increasing the educational programs openness for external assessment, and, as a consequence, strengthening competitiveness among HEIs, there is a possible positive effect manifested in increasing HEIs responsibility for graduates' training quality. This will require strengthening the role of chairs and every teacher in the consistency of actions to develop and realize educational programs. Special significance there acquires not only the content of the educational process but also forming and developing students' skills of self-learning. There is necessary the transition from the passive perception of knowledge given by the teacher, to the active one, when the knowledge are mainly developed by students themselves in the process of their independent work under the teacher's supervision.

In the postindustrial society of special significance there becomes not the amount of the acquired knowledge but the system of the key and professional competences, among which there is the ability to systemize and generate new information, to solve independently non-standard problems. So, the teacher's role also changes. It is necessary to differentiate the requirements and forms of interaction with the students, to ensure the designing of individual educational trajectories. The solution of this problem is complicated not only by its didactic novelty but also by higher education mass character, when the students there become those who adapt to the institution requirements with difficulty.

Forming necessary competence at the students supposes the development of corresponding professional competences at the teachers. This is a necessary condition for pedagogical activity quality and effectiveness increasing that supposes teacher's regular passing various forms of qualification improvement, their active participation in scientific research in the sphere of professional activity.

Professional competence increasing is an important condition for ensuring the pedagogical personnel's international competence that is a necessary condition for the Kazakhstan educational system integration in the international educational space.

The competence approach in higher education strengthens integrative tendencies in the educational process. Realizing competence-oriented programs will require the creative interaction between the teachers not only at the chair but at the inter-chair level. There are necessary the agreed actions of the staff aimed for the united team result.

Now it is important to understand that the increase of the higher education budget funding is a factor of the economic growth and labor productivity increase. There are needed urgent actions for the cardinal increasing of the level of the teachers' wages. Otherwise the steam will be spent for the beep, and the locomotive with innovations and quality will stay on the side track.

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