

Sustainable Development of Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Edited by:

Dr. Jagannath Patil, *India*

&

Ms. Malini Nair, *Fiji Islands*





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Assistant Editors:

Savitha D.J. & Umesh Kumar R.



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An Anthology of Selected papers presented at the APQN 2016 Conference

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Sub-theme 4

Assuring Standards and Quality of Higher Education: Teaching and Learning

A new tool for assessment of learning outcomes of Bachelor graduates: Russia's experience.

Dr Galina Motova¹ and Dr Vladimir Navodnov²

Abstract

The problem of the learning outcomes assessment is important as it is directly connected with the further education and/or the employment opportunities of the programme's graduates. Each study programme delivered by a HEI contains a list of expected learning outcomes and their assessment methods. But in order to compare learning outcomes for decision making in quality assurance it is necessary to develop unified measurement tools and unified methods of assessment for graduates of similar programmes delivered by different HEIs within one country.

The paper is focused on Russia's experience of the quality assessment of Bachelor graduates. Although there is a ten year experience of the quality assessment of students' training for interim attestation in separate subjects, for the assessment of the graduates' learning outcomes we need different terms of reference. The assessment of learning outcomes in one discipline is not sufficient. It is necessary to assess the competencies of a graduate who has completed a programme.

The paper further presents a new tool for assessment of learning outcomes of Bachelor graduates. The first stage of a new project of Internet testing for Bachelor graduates (FIEB) was launched in Russia in April 2015. The results of FIEB can be counted as part of the final state examination at the end of the Bachelor programme and also counted towards entrance exams to a Master's programme in the HEIs of the Russian Federation. The FIEB certificate can be included in the graduate's portfolio as annex to CV for the employer's reference.

Key Words: Assessment, learning outcomes

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Introduction

The learning outcomes assessment is the issue of great current interest and at the same time it is one of the most difficult tasks for education quality assurance. The problem is important because learning outcomes are one of the essential indicators of a HEI performance and the quality of a study programme. Learning outcomes assessment is directly connected with the employment opportunities of the programme's graduates, and their career development. But this task, for several reasons, is very difficult to implement: valid measurement methods, measurement tools, methods of assessment and analysis of obtained outcomes, support technology and infrastructure should be available.

In certain countries national testing systems have been in operation for decades. They are used for selecting prospective University students, including Master students, and for employment (certification). But these assessment methods (or learning outcomes) are not immediately used in quality assurance. On the other hand, each study programme delivered by a HEI contains a list of expected learning outcomes and their assessment methods. And every HEI in practice carries out formative and summative assessment of students and graduates, which are obligatory elements of internal quality assurance in a HEI.

In order to compare learning outcomes for decision making in quality assurance it is necessary to develop unified measurement tools and unified methods of assessment for graduates of similar programmes delivered by different HEIs within one country. The creation of such a system is possible if requirements (standards, descriptors) exist for the levels of education and training of an undergraduate or a graduate.

In Russia the state education standards in all study programmes have been developed and approved at the federal level. There is a ten year experience of the quality assessment of students' training for interim attestation in separate subjects. The system of assessment is based on modern information technologies and is implemented in the form of on-line internet testing. This is a voluntary system but 7 million testing sessions a year testify to the fact that this system is highly demanded by HEIs.

For the assessment of the graduates' learning outcomes we need different terms of reference. The assessment of learning outcomes in one discipline is not sufficient, even if a multidisciplinary approach is applied, when the tasks contain questions from several (separate) disciplines. It is necessary to assess the competencies of a graduate who has completed a programme.

In April 2015 in the Russian Federation the first stage of a new project of Internet testing for Bachelor graduates (FIEB) was launched. It was held in 72 HEIs of the country – authorized centers from 42 regions of the Russian Federation from

Vladivostok to Kaliningrad. Over 4000 students from 106 HEIs participated in the experiment.

FIEB was held in 10 directions of Bachelor training. The tasks were developed by the teachers of leading Russian HEIs. Examination sessions were organized in the HEIs – authorized centers at the same time according to the approved schedule and lasted 180 minutes. The transparency of the procedure was provided by on-line video broadcasting.

Upon completion of the exam every student-participant of FIEB got a personal electronic “gold”, “silver”, “bronze” certificate or a certificate of participation depending on the results of the exam.

The results of the experiment are available to students-participants in their personal accounts. They are also sent in a generalized form to the HEIs – authorized centers. Upon the decision of the Academic Council of a HEI the results of FIEB can be counted as part of the final state examination at the end of the Bachelor programme and also counted (fully or partially) towards entrance exams to a Master’s programme in the HEIs of the Russian Federation. The FIEB certificate can be included in the graduate’s portfolio as annex to CV for the employer’s reference. The certificate obtained on the results of an independent examination can serve as an additional employment advantage of the bachelor.

The exam is voluntary for HEIs and students. Students themselves take a decision on participation in and registration for the exam. They are motivated and are interested in getting high results. These results can serve as objective evaluation of the education received on educational programmes. However, it is still early to consider them as part of quality assurance as a relatively small number of students can’t testify to the objective evaluation of the education quality of all the graduates of the programme.

It is planned to conduct the examination every year. And with the increase of the participant number the sampling will increase, which will help to use the results in the quality assurance procedures. This year’s exam will be conducted already in 15 training directions. Extensive preparatory work on organizing the exam is being conducted at the moment.