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THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE: INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The main essence and role of quality assurance in high educational institutions and its internal assessment are overviewed. The main methods of internal quality assessment are analyzed. Basing on it, recommendations for its proper realization are provided. The accreditation by the leading international organizations in this sphere is proposed as a way of international recognizing achievement.

Keywords: quality assurance, high educational institutions, internal assessment, methods, accreditation.

Притульская Н., Антюшко Д., Воллер Д. Система обеспечения качества высшего образования: международный опыт. Рассмотрена суть системы обеспечения качества в высших учебных заведениях, ее роль и внутренняя оценка. Проанализированы основные методы внутренней оценки качества и разработаны рекомендации для ее надлежащей реализации. Аккредитация ведущими международными организациями в этой сфере предложена как способ достижения международного признания.

Ключевые слова: обеспечение качества, высшие учебные заведения, методы внутренней оценки, аккредитация.

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Background. Higher education (HE) establishments existed as respected institutions in the eyes of society and state both in Ukraine and abroad for a long time. The rapid growth in the demand for tertiary education, great diversity in type and kind of institutions, their competition for entrants and state funding make a need of higher school intuitions to be properly organized in their activity. For reaching it, the systems of HE quality assurance (QA) are widely implemented nowadays. The QA system is considered to be an instrument of maintaining the high level of teaching and research activity. According to the Law of Ukraine «On Higher Education» [1] the system of tertiary education quality assurance consists of 3 components. The basic one is the system of HE institutions QA of education activity and tertiary education (the system of internal quality assurance).

According to the internationally recognized standard ISO 9000:2015 «Quality management systems. Fundamentals and vocabulary» [2] the term «quality» is defined as a degree to which a set of inherent characteristics of an object fulfils requirements. The main norms, to which tertiary education institutions must comply with, concern licensing requirement and standards, formed by the state authorities, requests and interests of stakeholders (entrants, students, their parents, society, employers, academics, staff and other interested parties). The systematic process of identifying and controlling, how an HE organization manages with settled goals, objectives and task with a help of numerical, literal and/or descriptive data is defined as quality assessment [3–6]. In tertiary educational institutions, this activity can be seen in a form of monitoring, assessment and review the achieved results for identifying stakeholders confidence and their expectations fulfilment. An internal quality assessment can be provided for achievement of all these goals. An effective system of internal quality assessment must be provided for the implementation of a properly functioning internal QA system. This is especially important for those HE institutions, where the guidelines and practical recommendations for the organization of QA in all levels are still being developing. Therefore, a review and analysis of international experience in this field are important and will allow taking into account the specifics of the activity in the sphere of tertiary education institutes.

Analysis of recent research and publications. An important contribution to the development and improvement of existing methodological provisions and approaches to the internal quality assessment in higher education organizations has been done by foreign and domestic scientists: A. Otara, I. Haris, K. Trembley, D. Lalancette, D. Roseveare, J. Brenan, T. Shah, S. Brown, E. Sallis, O. Panych, V. Bahrushyn [5; 7–12].

The **aim** of work – detailed analysis of internal quality assessments in HE establishments essence, specifics, methods, the practice of their usage, the development of recommendations for holding this kind of activity and propositions for tertiary institutions, how to ensure the confidence of providing high-quality education.

Materials and methods. The study is based on the methods of scientific knowledge, systematic analysis, comparison, induction and deduction, systematization of methodological approaches to internal assessment of HE institutions QA systems, scientific synthesis.

The results of the research. Nowadays the principal mission of universities all around the world is the ensuring the quality level of their functioning for the competitiveness at national and global levels elevation. Moreover, tertiary institutions are united by the economic dynamics, globalization and liberalization of an educational system, additional duties to the community, increased attention of stakeholders, national, regional, international competition and enhanced students enlistment [5; 13–14]. According to generally accepted principles, the final aim of quality is complete competence development of human personality [4; 7]. All these factors became an agent for QA system's functioning. It must be mentioned, that nowadays the legislation base almost of all developed countries obligates tertiary establishments to implement the practice of QA and hold assessments [3].

Basing on the analysis of the nowadays situation, related to QA in HE institutions, it can be summarized, that its conduction levels are whole institutional, part of institution, an individual or combined one [3; 5; 7–8].

The implementation of quality management system in most cases includes a practice of internal quality assessment holding. In the majority of situations it is done at the initiative of HE establishment's top-management and appeals to all spheres, but also this procedure can be initiated by faculty senior management [3; 5]. It is especially important to evaluate both academic and organizational fields of activity.

In an institutional level, it is aimed at finding some system's problems, success securing and preparation for external one. Another causes for carrying out internal quality assessment can be the necessity of the existing situation's monitoring and improvement before external assessment, broader organizational changes (merging and incorporation), the desire to raise reputation in society and status, the need to evaluate the results of reform, new projects and to ensure teaching and researching development of academic staff [5; 8–10; 14].

Sometimes definite structural part of HE institution (for instance, faculty, school) can request an internal and external assessment. At this level, it can be initiated for solving local problems and as a preparatory stage for achieving and showing the comparative advantages in a competition for entrants and students [4–5]. In the recent decade a great attention was paid for internal quality assessment of individuals. Especially often it is done while evaluating candidates for promotion and appointment procedures, refereeing of research [3; 5].

The appropriate methodological base must be provided for the implementation and conducting of an internal quality assessment in HE. During last time a lot of profile organizations and institutions have generated

significant experience in this sphere [3–5; 7–10; 13]. In a complex with traditional experience, it gives an opportunity to hold internal assessments with accordance to the activity specifics and quite productive results. These methodological approaches give an opportunity to establish guidelines for systematic data gathering, the analysis of all collected information about an institution with the aim of further quite careful report forming. The last one makes a necessary base for future development activities, based on using PDCA or Deming's cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act). In many tertiary establishments special departments or chapters, which organize, conduct internal assessments, make relevant conclusions for QA, are specially set up [4–5; 13].

The analysis of international experience in the field of HE institutions QA systems internal assessment [3–5; 7–10; 13–14] gave an opportunity to separate the methods, which are used most often. They are the following: institution-wide assessment processes – self- and peer assessment methods, which are held in the institution's structural departments (including faculties), aimed at the evaluation of qualitative and quantitative activity results for comparison with set tasks, established QA mechanisms, conditions of students teaching, research effectiveness [5; 13].

Internal quality assessment team for department's evaluation usually consists of a head this structural unit, at least 1 of its members and 3 representatives of the department, which is responsible for QA. The head of the team is appointed from the number of these 3 persons by the head of institution's QA system. Before starting the department's assessment representatives of team receive profile information about it, get acquainted with this data during 1–3 days. After the assessment visit to the department the report, which includes information about unit's strengths and weaknesses, evaluation results of objectives fulfilment, recommendations for further work improvement, should be composed. The department receives the report and is asked to provide progress report about the implemented activities for work improvement. Finally, 1 of 3 team representatives is appointed to contact with assessed department for consulting on questions, related with QA [3; 5]; institution-wide surveys and monitoring – method for level's of academics staff pedagogical (teaching and training) activity evaluation and students educational progress stocktaking and monitoring [4–5].

The results of provided research give an opportunity to confirm, that main indicator of this method implementation is students' fact-finding questionnaire survey. It is widely used for making a dialogue with students on the questions, connected with their vision of educational process quality, in an anonymous form. Some universities provide a whole educational cycle of questionnaire survey practice, which shows, how students conceive the received process of teaching and training. It provides the necessity of educational process improvement and gives an opportunity to organize the practice of pedagogical experience exchanging by the best teachers. Some universities have a practice of monitoring internal cohorts. It is done by all

period evaluation with a help of using following indexes: drop-out rate, the quantity of students, which were transferred to another program, completion rate and so on. This data is usually reported to the university council members and, in a case of good results, presented for entries. This activity gives an opportunity to monitor developments, manage them. Also, received information is used for academic staff management: giving additional payment and bonuses, provision of best candidates on senior position and further rise. This method helps to identify and promote the best practices of teaching and training, to stimulate academics professionalism development and, as a final result, to rise the reputation of HE institution. The specific of this method is in orientation on academic activity development [4–5; 13].

Multiple assessment for multiple purposes – method, which, because of universities activity diversity, sets a basis for common cross functional evaluation of work in many spheres (students teaching, selection, accomplishing and funding of researches, recruitment of staff, development of academic, administrative, technical staff’s skills, post university activity, etc.) with taking into account its specifics [3; 5].

The conducted research of literature sources [3; 5; 15] and practical experience of providing internal assessments give an opportunity to confirm, that this method’s implementation includes taking in order particular problems solving (for instance, with first-year students progress, students drop-outs), recognition and evaluation of negative academics appraisals from students side and process of reacting to it, legislative innovations implementations and so on. As usual, it includes 3 main stages: 1) information collection, its detailed analysis and submission to the specially created assessment team; 2) general analysis of received information, creating of assessment draft; 3) holding evaluation activity, report execution. Usually created report is given to representatives of university’s top-management and has some recommendations for further improvements.

Institutional preparation for and follow-up assessment – method, which is undertaken by universities (or their departments) with developed systems of QA, implemented for preparation of all external assessment holding variants, taking the recommendations after it into consideration and finding options of identified problems solution (if they are). The main aim of this method’s usage is to achieve standard’s correspondence of provided teaching and research activity, confirmed by independent evaluation and validation. The responsibility for the results of this method usage lies on universities top-management representative, who is responsible for QA, profile department, deans assistants in this field [4–5].

The conducted analysis shows, that after the solution about using this method is made, responsible persons make a meeting. During it they identify the range of further assessment, a list of all activities needed for modeling of external assessment. As a result, an eventual draft of further evaluation is made. Then the representatives of the responsible team start to evaluate institution activity using this document, trying to find and correct eventual

discrepancies. After the external assessment was appointed and conducted, the members of this team ensure its results in a form of follow up corrective actions [5; 8].

Internal and external assessment, organized by a HE institution – method, with a help of which QA situation both on faculty and on institutional level is evaluated. It is held for controlling and monitoring the activity in the teaching, research and organizational spheres. Its aim is an enhancement of quality development at the university activity, while each faculty can specify general objectives, priorities, evaluation of curricula, discipline programs, etc. up to its needs.

With a help of literature [3; 5; 9] analysis it is identified, that according to the practice of this method's usage each faculty annually conducts internal quality assessment. Basing on its results, the reports are provided, copies of which must be sent to the department, responsible for QA at the institution level. Later its representatives conduct a selective external assessment activity of faculties and all university departments' activity globally. The results of final assessment are formed in a form of report and are presented to Vice-chancellor (Rector), his office members and Council Board. The deans, whose faculties have shown good results, are apprised. This information is being taken into consideration for dean's appointment for a new term.

Assessment at the level of faculty – method, which gives an opportunity to identify the current state of QA in the faculty or department, its management system's strengths and weaknesses, factors, which prevent its proper effective functioning or other tasks fulfilment. The main objectives of using this method can be the development of QA system, which must be implemented for faculty's needs, making curricula and studying programs more flexible in quickly changing conditions of labor market, ensuring competitiveness of graduates, the relevance of provided knowledge and skills, so on [3; 5].

The analysis of informational sources [5; 16] gives a possibility to state, that this method of assessment's implementation can be characterized by absence of criticism of inter institutional competition and is not so hard-hitting as external one. Using this method, first of all, is concentrated on ensuring the quality of educational and organizational activity. It provides readiness to accept innovations in studying programs, skills training, institutional governance, etc.

Basing on the results of internal quality assessment methods and their specifics analysis, some recommendations for the practice of its usage in HE were developed:

- the recommendations, concerning the unconformities elimination and the development of QA system, which are noted after internal quality assessment, must be identified by the institution as obligatory for execution;
- HE establishments should provide the development of internal QA systems, encourage the practices of internal quality assessment and draft the materials in this field;

➤ for personal's getting acquainted with the QA implementation methodology and practice institution's top-management should encourage the practice of holding different pieces of training, seminars and workshops about it.

The analysis of nowadays situation in the field of QA in HE institutions [5; 7–9; 13] provide an opportunity to identify, that many of them use the certification for the compliance with the standard ISO 9001 as a way of internal QA system's ensuring. The compliance of quality management systems in HE establishments with the requirements of this international standard provides an opportunity to improve their activities significantly and to ensure the confidence of stakeholders in work's results. But, at the same time, it must be taken into account, that the process of internal QA in education is not the same as the compliance with standard's ISO 9001 norms. It is so because the internal QA system's frame of idea, mission, objectives and criteria are greatly different from norms of named standard. This difference is connected with following provisions:

- one of main university system's of internal QA missions is improvement of document base while the norms of standard are not focused on it;
- ISO 9001 can be only a methodological instrument for the control of the internal QA policy, but not its analogue;
- the norms, according to which an internal quality assessment must be held, are settled by HE institution's vision, while the standard's norm can be used only as recommendations.

Also, basing on the results of provided research, it can be noted, that modern processes of world globalization encourage HE institutions to get internationally recognized accreditation. Nowadays, the most respectable organizations, which provide such activity, are Council for High Education Accreditation (CHEA), European Association for Quality Assurance in High Education (ENQA), European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA), Global Alliance for Transnational Education (GATE). The certificates, which are given by these leading organizations, provide high level of sustainability and confidence in education high quality all over the world. That's why internationally recognized accreditation becomes an important claim for HE institutions.

Conclusion. Nowadays the systems of HE quality assurance are widely implemented. These in most cases include the practice of internal assessments holding. The analysis of international experience in the field of internal assessment of HE institutions QA systems gives an opportunity to confirm, that a lot of methods of it are used. Analyzed methods of internal QA assessment in HE institutions are considered to be high-potential and advantageous in national (including Ukrainian and British) practice. It is noted, that for being successful and internationally recognized HE institution needs to ensure their services quality and get international accreditation.

The prospect for further researches is the analysis of criteria for internal and external quality assessment, which are used in different universities and countries of the world.

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Притульська Н., Антюшко Д., Воллер Д. Система забезпечення якості вищої освіти: міжнародний досвід.

Постановка проблеми. У наш час системи забезпечення якості (ЗЯ) широко застосовуються у вищих навчальних закладах (ВНЗ). Система ЗЯ вважається інструментом підтримки високого рівня викладання та дослідницької діяльності. Систематичний процес ідентифікації та контролю за тим, наскільки вищий навчальний заклад справляється з виконанням поставлених цілей, мети діяльності та завдань за допомогою числових, буквальних та/або описових даних, визначається

як оцінка якості. Внутрішня оцінка якості визначається як перший етап цієї діяльності й має бути забезпечена для імплементації належним чином функціонуючої внутрішньої системи контролю якості.

Мета роботи – детальний аналіз сутності, особливостей, методів, практики використання внутрішньої оцінки якості у вищих навчальних закладах, розробка рекомендацій щодо проведення цього виду діяльності та пропозицій для вищих навчальних закладів щодо забезпечення якості освіти.

Матеріали та методи. Дослідження базується на методах наукового пізнання, системного аналізу, порівняння, індукції та дедукції, систематизації методологічних підходів до внутрішньої оцінки систем ЗЯ в закладах вищої освіти, наукового синтезу.

Результати дослідження. Грунтуючись на аналізі сучасної ситуації в сфері ЗЯ у вищих навчальних закладах, можна резюмувати, що рівнями його реалізації є: загально- та частково інституційний, індивідуальний і комбінований.

Для імплементації та проведення внутрішньої оцінки у вищій освіті необхідним є забезпечення належною методологічною базою. Аналіз міжнародного досвіду в сфері внутрішньої оцінки систем ЗЯ у вищих навчальних закладах дає змогу виділити методи, що використовуються найбільш часто. Це загальноінституційні процеси оцінки, опитування та моніторинг у межах усієї організації, багаторазові оцінки з широким спектром цілей, підготовча та наглядова оцінка, ініційовані установою внутрішні та зовнішні оцінки, оцінка на рівні факультету. На основі результатів аналізу методів внутрішньої оцінки якості та їх специфіки розроблено рекомендації щодо практики її застосування у вищій освіті.

Аналіз сучасної ситуації у сфері ЗЯ у ВНЗ дає змогу зазначити, що багато з них використовують сертифікацію на відповідність стандарту ISO 9001 як спосіб гарантування систем внутрішнього ЗЯ. Проте треба також враховувати, що процес внутрішнього ЗЯ в освіті не ідентичний відповідності нормам стандарту ISO 9001.

Також проаналізовано, що сучасні процеси світової глобалізації стимулюють ВНЗ отримувати міжнародно визнану акредитацію.

Висновки. У наш час широко впроваджуються системи ЗЯ вищої освіти. У більшості випадків це включає практику проведення внутрішніх оцінок. Аналіз міжнародного досвіду в сфері внутрішньої оцінки систем ЗЯ у ВНЗ дає змогу стверджувати, що для цього використовуються багато методів. Досліджені методи внутрішньої оцінки ЗЯ у ВНЗ мають значний потенціал і є доцільними для використання в національній (включаючи українську та британську) практиці. Відзначено, що для того щоб бути успішним і міжнародно визнаним, вищий навчальний заклад має забезпечувати якість своїх послуг і бути міжнародно-акредитованим.

Ключові слова: забезпечення якості, вищі навчальні заклади, методи внутрішньої оцінки, акредитація.