ORGANIZATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN URFU: THE EXPERIENCE OF PROFESSIONAL PUBLIC ACCREDITATION OF PROGRAMS OF ADDITIONAL PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to identify the organizational and legal problems of professional and public accreditation of additional professional education programs in Russia and the development opportunities of this institution in modern conditions.

The scientific research problem was to justify the need for professional and public accreditation of additional professional education programs of modern universities on the basis of delegation of procedures for evaluating the quality of education by public authorities to the public expert organizations, which ensure the independence and objectivity of the decisions made by qualified experts using a standardized assessment tools and tech to meet the needs of all parties concerned for highly qualified professionals.

The practical significance of the results of the study is that the scientifically based knowledge of professional public accreditation and evaluation systems are the basis for the development of mechanisms to ensure objectivity, credibility and transparency of the evaluation procedures; defines guidelines for accreditation institutions, expert committees, education authorities, managers and employees of educational institutions implementing programs of additional professional education. Systematic experience in evaluation of additional professional education institutions is prepared for the use in the system of management development.

Keywords: additional professional education, professional public accreditation, consumers of educational services, labor market, education program

Undoubtedly, an important aspect in the system of higher education in Russia is additional professional education (APE). In a rapidly changing socio-economic environment of globalization and internationalization of the economy the possibility of obtaining additional education is of particular relevance to any specialist, it contributes to the development of human capital of the country, and, consequently, improve the competitiveness of its economy. The rapid change in the situation (production needs specialists) requires increasing the speed of response (leading and fast, accelerated training of specialists), which will be effective when there is objective forecast.

As it known, from a historical point of view the quality management system of education was based only on meeting the requirements of the state, which at the time was the customer, investor and the controlling authority. The first attempt to improve the objectivity and assess the quality of education was carried out in the 1980s. by the introduction of government order to their universities in the form of qualification characteristics, said V.V.Hripko [1], but the practice did not last long and was recognized as insolvent. In 1992, with the adoption of the law "On education" educational institutions have received some autonomy from the state and self-realization of educational services. Total state control has been replaced by the procedures of licensing, certification and state and public accreditation.

With the entry into force of the new law "On Education in the Russian Federation" came a difficult situation in the system of additional professional education: the law doesn’t provides the passage of additional professional education programs of state accreditation of educational institutions and issue state documents to his listeners.

However, one must admit that the modernization of vocational education in the agenda of legislative and executive authorities occupy a leading place. Federal target program of education development for
2011-2015 envisaged the completion of professional standards and the mechanism of their interaction with the educational standards, creating a system of professional accreditation of educational programs as an important tool of interaction of the labor market and the vocational education system. Its implementing will provide the labor market with highly qualified personnel that are competitive and in demand. These tasks are more relevant to the program, for which no set requirements of the federal state educational standards (FSES) and federal government requirements (FGT). [3] Significant changes in the legislation, governing the organization of additional vocational training, and the abandonment of the system of state accreditation of programs APE set ourselves the task of educational organizations as a confirmation of the quality of their programs of study in this format, and confirmation of the quality of the system of additional professional education by educational organization. It should be noted that the multidisciplinary universities face special difficulties in making decisions regarding the conduct of public professional accreditation in the sphere of additional professional education. For them it is a complex multi-level problem, which arose as a result of a large number of training areas, as well as various levels of programs APE (the duration of study, at the request of the target group of consumers of technology and forms of training). This is also mentioned in the works of Butko G.P., Lyapunova A.D. [2] Matveeva T.V., Mashkova N.V., Obukhov O.V. [4,5,6]. The provisions of the Federal Law №273-FZ of 29.11.2012 define two levels of recognition of quality in the sphere of additional vocational training: • Professional public accreditation of educational programs; • Public accreditation of organizations that implement professional training programs. [7] The main purposes of performing the procedure of vocational programs of social legislation defines accreditation are: 1. Providing appropriate recognition program as a high level of quality and professional standards confirmed by independent experts. 2. Identifying priorities for improvement of the program for the maximum satisfaction of requirements of the professional community. 3. Positioning of the program in the ranking with respect to the competitive programs of other educational institutions. [8] Programs APE in the professional sphere should be based, primarily, on professional standards (if any), or the requirements of employers, labor and the state. They are characterized by innovation, flexibility, adaptability, practical orientation, multi-level outcomes and realize the main participants in the educational process (educational institutions, employers, regional administrative structures). The basic concept of educational programs - focus on results. The question arises, what goals should put the university in the decision on the accreditation of programs of additional professional education: 1) Become a leader in training a certain direction. In fact, the leader in setting standards of training identified and developed through learning outcomes, program content and teaching techniques used. 2) To provide the best possible program coverage of the target audience of potential listeners by positioning program has accreditation as a quality assurance. As a consequence, the maximum profit from the program. The simultaneous staging of these two objectives. The market of paid educational services in the Urals region, as well as in Russia as a whole, is very highly competitive. In order to achieve a leading position, The Business School of the URFY in shaping their market supply is guided by the principles of an increasing number of high quality educational services for the average market price, providing comprehensive care active in the
successful training of students to their full potential. The widespread official recognition contributes to formation and maintenance of high-end brand of the institution. Therefore, the management of the school places great emphasis on achievement of the relevant provision through accreditation, obtaining official status, and so on. For example, today it is already a member of the Central and East European Management Development Association (CEEMAN), the Russian Association of Business Education (RABE) as well as among the 1000 best business schools in the world. The Business School is constantly expanding partnerships with many foreign universities, including Russian.

The successful development of the school is based on several factors:

First, a high level of training of students, which is achieved through the use of innovative technologies of teaching, based on a combination of e-learning and traditional forms of learning. This makes it possible to carry out in the sphere of online communication technology teacher with students. Such a system allows teachers to pay more attention to the most difficult for students questions which require special consideration. The widespread use in recent years have also received electronic educational and methodical complexes (EEMC). All electronic aids have passed state registration in Informregistr (Moscow). As a result of the survey 228 respondents, every second student business education program noted that the main didactic principles EEMC system are: accessibility, visibility, consistency and scientific. All respondents confirmed that the training system EEMC contributes to the disclosure of individual ability to learn as a student in a virtual dialogue with the teacher is revealed not only as a professional but also as a person. It should be noted that when using EEMC improved the quality of education students and GPA increased from 4.1 to 4.6.

In addition, the Business School is widely used modern methods of teaching: classes are held in small study groups, the organization of training are widely used Internet communications, video conferencing and so on.

Secondly, it is the careful selection and attract highly qualified specialists from different countries to conduct exercises. A good tradition was holding business practice of students abroad. Last year, our students went to the Czech Republic (Prague), this year - in the Netherlands (Amsterdam). Systematic work to empower students passing professional practice and temporary employment on a specialty, close cooperation with employers, makes it possible to further guaranteed job placement.

Third, we annually conduct a survey of students in order to identify their opinion about the work of our teachers, trying to make learning interesting, not dull and fruitful, and also carried out regular monitoring of employers' satisfaction with the level of training of our graduates.

Unique is our experience on protection of final qualifying works: students graduate protect the real business projects and implement them in their future life in practice, and more than 90% of our graduates occupy senior positions in all spheres of economic activity.

In our opinion, one of the most effective ways to promote educational services is a career success of graduates. Therefore the Business School of the UrFU actively keep in touch with its graduates, carefully monitors their progress, telling them through the media to the general public, attracting successful graduates to teaching, conducting master classes, seminars, etc.

Constantly at the Center for Business Education of the Business School conducted internal and external audit quality educational activities. A system of quality management, which served as the basis for a quality management system APEof the university. So, in 2012, the university requested the leading organization in Russia to assess the quality of education - the Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development (AKKORK) with a proposal to conduct an external audit of our educational programs. The agency is a leader in the field of external independent evaluation of the quality of education, educational consulting and auditing in Russia.

Auditors during the week assessed the quality of the implementation of educational programs, research activities, the effectiveness of educational technology, professional development of teachers, competitiveness on regional and international markets more than 170 products. Particular attention was paid to the aspects related to the interaction with the labor market and employers, including the involvement of employers in the formation of the final competencies of graduates.
As a result of the audit, together with experts AKKORK it confirmed our main competitive advantage - the quality of the educational services of the Center of Business Education.

The result of the social and professional expertise was the acquisition of the accreditation certificate number F-163-1 of the independent Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance and Career Development programs of additional professional education "Economics and enterprise management" to match the quality of training of graduates of the program quality standards and quality assurance ENQA, issued 6 years. This is the first and so far only case in Russia, and a great chance to increase the competitiveness of URFU both in the domestic and international education markets which is what we do.

Deciding on a DPO program, held public and professional accreditation, it implies recognition of the educational community and the public, especially employers. In our opinion, based on the principle of necessity and sufficiency of quantitative and qualitative (expert) information for the implementation of such decisions must take into account:

- The relevance of the program, the evaluation criteria which are its relevance, appropriateness, practical orientation, adaptability and competitiveness;
- The effectiveness of the mechanism of implementation of the program;
- Feedback mechanisms (eg, the presence of monitoring learning outcomes and satisfaction of all stakeholders (students and employers in the first instance).

Analysis of the activities of the work of the Business School for the year that has elapsed since receipt of public accreditation shows that Business School strengthened its position in the educational market of the Ural region, as evidenced by the growth of the number of students enrolled in the program, and increased satisfaction of students receiving additional Professional Education (fig.1,2)

Fig.1. The number of students of the Center of Business Education Business School UrFU before and after public accreditation
Thus, we can safely conclude on the feasibility of such work in universities to improve the competitiveness of objects APE in the new economic paradigm.

In any case, to achieve the stated demand from the university the following tasks:

Development of internal requirements for the programs to be carried out through a system of professional public accreditation. As requirements may make coverage of the target group of students (current and projected), the presence of a confirmed request (confirmation on the basis of market analysis, customer letters, etc.), assessment of the methodological and human capacity building program, the presence of the team of the educational project, the duration of the program.

Determining the list of programs to be prepared and carried out through the system (process) professional - public accreditation. It should decide on the question of what the duration of the program it makes sense to pass through certification procedure. At the moment, according to the order of the Russian Ministry of July 1, 2013 N 499 "On approval of the organization and implementation of educational activities for additional professional programs" identified the following graduation programs DPP duration: training programs (at least 16 hours) and retraining programs (not less than 250 hours). We believe professional public accreditation of programs should be carried out in respect of programs of additional professional education of at least 250 hours, and to affect mainly program aimed at assigning a new qualification. The process of completing the procedure professional public accreditation fairly labor intensive and prolonged in time. Therefore, this procedure should take only those programs that have a fairly stable structure educational complex and possible changes in the structure of the program they should be no more than 20-25% (otherwise it will be not the same program that was accredited).

Formation of the list of accrediting agencies, to implement the procedures of professional - public accreditation. The requirements for such agents can be formulated as follows:

1. Compliance activities of the agency towards the selected programs.
2. Reputation weight selected agencies (the agency’s status and its experts, reputational story)
3. Membership in international alliances.
4. Optimal time and cost of the accreditation procedure.

Establishing contacts with selected accreditation agencies. The process of entering the interaction with some international agencies may take quite a long time period.

An internal audit program of additional professional education to meet the requirements of FSES, professional standards, the criteria for the program selected by the accreditation agency.

In the case of the decision to pass such accreditation university must decide:

1. In accordance with some standard requirements for the implementation of quality management processes should be carried out such an assessment,
2. Which organization can realize this kind accredited university.
3. Is there any economic or other usefulness of such accreditation.

The above objects of the university does not require immediate solutions and purposeful systematic work for the organization and implementation of these processes. It requires an assessment of the processes responsible for relating to both professional and public accreditation programs, and public accreditation system of additional professional education of the University, and to develop a work plan for the implementation of these tasks.
We believe that it is in the APE soon possible introduction of such a system of external audit quality of educational services from the society, as it APE is now the most mobile system of professional education and even now there is an urgent need and a reasonable opportunity of such reforms.

The results of the public and professional accreditation may have a significant impact on the renewal and improvement APE programs in accordance with the constantly changing requirements of the labor market, and to testify that this program is at the forefront among similar Russian program and its graduates have good prospects in the labor market, to give a guarantee future employment and career advancement.

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