

MONITORING THE INTERNATIONALIZATION OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL PROCESS AS A MEANS OF ITS DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

One of the measures aimed at the development of university education Russia, is enhancement of its quality by means of supporting internationalization, as well as developing strategic plans of higher education institutions. Vast experience of the European Union higher education institutions, developing and implementing methods of assessing their internationalization taking into account current changes in internationalisation as well as the context of the university, is of great interest to Russian higher education institutions, where in recent decades more and more attention is being paid to the development of internal quality assurance systems.

The article presents the analysis of existing European methodologies aimed at assessing internationalization. The set of the most relevant indicators to assess internationalisation of regional universities are analyzed. Only comprehensive evaluation based on quantitative and qualitative indicators makes it possible to conduct efficient and meaningful assessment of such multicomponent and multifactor process as internationalisation of higher education. Research outcomes allow the regional universities use the information for development or improvement of their internationalisation strategies, development of their own indicators for monitoring the development of internationalisation.

Keywords: internationalization development strategy, internationalization assessment procedures, accreditation, certification, self-examination

1. INTRODUCTION

At the present stage of development of higher education in the countries participating in the Bologna process, including Russia, one of the key activities of universities is internationalization. The internationalization of higher education is a multicomponent and multifactorial process, the development of

which is largely determined by the context. As rightly noted by researchers in the field of internationalization, this process has economic, political, academic, cultural and social prerequisites. Despite the fact that in most cases the choice of the main activities for the development of internationalization of European universities is largely due to the policy of Bologna reforms, one of the key tasks of which is the development of the European higher education area and the European research space, in each case, the University has its own motives and ways of internationalization. In this regard, an increasing number of universities are beginning to develop and implement their own internationalization strategies. According to the results of a study conducted by the European Association of International Education, the main tasks within these strategies are to improve the quality of education, prepare students for life in a globalizing world, increase the number of foreign students, improve international reputation, and improve the quality of research activities [4]. According to H. de Wit, competent development of internationalization strategy allows universities to answer the questions - why, what and how to do in the framework of the strategy in each case (*De Wit H. (2015)*).

However, like any strategic direction, internationalization requires monitoring of its development. Periodic evaluation of internationalization allows universities to determine the effectiveness of the selected areas of activity, the adequacy of available resources, as well as to make the necessary changes and amendments to this process [1]. At present, there is a wide range of procedures and initiatives in the field of higher education in Europe to assess the internationalization of higher education. These procedures are carried out on the basis of a set of standards and /or indicators, the compliance of which is established in the course of external and / or internal audits. It should be noted that the assessment of the development of internationalization is becoming a task of the Russian universities, but the experience is currently poor. In particular, internationalization is one of the indicators of the annual monitoring of the effectiveness of Russian universities. In this context, of great interest is the theory and practice of monitoring the development of internationalization in the European Union.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Increased attention to improving the quality of higher education, where one of the mechanisms is the development of internationalization, puts on the agenda the responsibility of universities for the effectiveness of internationalization. Students, employers, teachers and University administrations, as well as national governments, are seeking information on the development of the internationalization process and its results. In line with the idea that the process of internationalization of higher education is closely linked to the process of regionalization, theorists and practitioners on internationalization talk about the need to develop methodologies for assessing internationalization, taking into account not only and not so much international and national contexts, but primarily taking into account the regional and institutional specifics of universities (*Krasilnikova N.V., Biryukova N.A., Kolesova T.V. et al. (2017)*). The foreign literature presents an analysis of the main procedures for assessing the internationalization of higher education, such as self-examination, accreditation, audit, benchmarking and ranking (A. Arden, W. Brandenburg, M. Weber, H. de Witt, M. Wolfe, and M. Green, J. Federkeil, etc.). Consideration of issues of quality assessment in higher education on the basis of assessment of internationalisation are devoted to the work and of the researchers (M. L. Agranovich, I. V. Arzhanova, V. A. Galichin, M. V. Larionova, O. V. Perfil'eva, D. V. Suslov, V. M. Filippov).

One of the conditions for the effective implementation of the internationalization strategy is, of course, to monitor the development of this process. Accreditation, certification, ranking, self-examination and benchmarking are common procedures for assessing the internationalization of higher education. These procedures are carried out both in relation to the University as a whole and in relation to individual educational programs. Despite the differences in the methodology, the establishment of compliance with the developed standards and indicators is most often based on the analysis of the following data:

- Inputs: resources available to promote internationalization (finance, people, politics);
- Output: number and types of activities undertaken with the support of the internationalization course;
- Results: impacts and outcomes (these are most often associated with the assessment of achievements) (*Hudzik J., Stohl M. (2009)*).

3. RESULTS

Consider the examples implemented in practice assessment procedures of internationalization. The subject of a large number of discussions now is University rankings. Despite the controversial, often negative attitude of the academic community to the rankings, due to their multifunctionality, the rankings of universities in many countries have become part of the state systems of accountability and quality assurance. It is noteworthy that in recent years there has been increased attention to the assessment of

internationalization in the framework of the overall assessment of the activities of universities in their ranking. Thus, internationalization is one of the eleven criteria for assigning a quality mark (stars) to universities within the QS Stars rating. The level of internationalization of the University is estimated in accordance with seven criteria, the highest weighting factor among which is the indicator of research cooperation of the University with 50 universities in the top 500 universities in the QS World University Rankings.

Despite the attempts of the rating developers to introduce indicators that allow a greater assessment of the quality of the considered aspect of the University's activities, most of the indicators are still related to the provision of quantitative information. Accreditation and certification are the procedures for assessing internationalization, allowing considering not only the quantitative results of internationalization, but also the quality of implemented activities. As it is known, national agencies operating in the territory of the Bologna process member countries carry out procedures of institutional and / or program accreditation and / or certification in accordance with the standards agreed with the ESG-ENQA standards. The assessment of internationalization is not a key aspect of the procedure in this case. However, in 2012, within the framework of the CeQulnt project, members and partners of the European Accreditation Consortium (ECA) began to develop a methodology for assessing the quality of internationalization of higher education. Universities / educational programs that have successfully passed the external evaluation procedure are issued a certificate of quality in the field of internationalization. Information about "good practices" is placed on the project platform.

Analysis of the criteria developed leads to the conclusion that, in assessing the internationalization of the educational program the great attention is paid to the context of the development of internationalization, the focus of this process, the presence of prescribed intercultural learning outcomes and implementation of the educational process aimed at the achievement of their students. In assessing the internationalization of the University, special importance is also attached to the assessment that the monitoring of the development of internationalization is carried out within the framework of the system of quality assurance of higher education developed at the University. The significance of such procedures lies in the fact that self-examination, as well as receiving recommendations developed by the external expert Commission on the results of the visit, allows universities to determine the effectiveness of the implemented activities for the development of internationalization and make the necessary amendments. Self-examination can also be an independent procedure within the framework of internal monitoring of the development of internationalization. In this case, universities that have developed strategies for internationalization can conduct self-examination, focusing on the indicators prescribed in them. It should be noted that there are already developed tools for assessing internationalization, allowing universities to choose their own set of indicators for self-examination.

One example of such tools is the methodology of the internationalization assessment developed by the German Center for higher education development (CHE) together with four German universities in 2006. The peculiarity of this methodology is that the developed indicators of internationalization have not only numerical but also qualitative (descriptive) values. The total number of indicators grouped is 186:

- Students, graduates: assessment of incoming / outgoing mobility of students in the framework of academic mobility programs, foreign practice, exchange in the framework of partnership agreements, training programs of joint / double diplomas;
- Teachers / young teachers (researchers): assessment of short-term incoming / outgoing mobility of teachers, the proportion of teachers who have received a degree abroad;
- Professors (researchers): evaluation of incoming short-term (minimum a week) / outbound (minimum term) mobility of researchers, the proportion of professors who received their doctoral degree abroad;
- International cooperation (partnerships), international research projects: their number, the amount of external funding, the number of teachers involved, the share of international patents;
- Educational programs: the share of disciplines taught in a foreign language, the share of credit units allocated to the discipline in a foreign language, in relation to the total number of credit units, the number of academic hours of a foreign language per week in relation to the total number of students;
- Resources: the University budget allocated for international cooperation, scholarships for foreign postgraduates and doctoral students, invitation of foreign teachers; the share of administration staff responsible for consulting on applications for international projects;
- University units responsible for international activities: the number of positions (full-time) in the University units responsible for international activities, the number of employees of international departments for which foreign language proficiency is a prerequisite for employment, the number and proportion of employees of

international departments with experience abroad (minimum 3 months) (Brandenburg U., Federkeil G. (2007).

The content of these groups reflects the resources and activities of the University for the development of internationalization, which are the main components of a comprehensive process of internationalization, allowing universities to prioritize in the selection and implementation of activities that meet their requirements. A separate group consists of indicators that assess the management of the internationalization process at the University (descriptive values): does the person responsible for international relations report directly to the management of the University? Is there a member of the University administration responsible for international relations? Is internationalization a permanent topic / issue on the agenda of the rectorate meetings? Is there an internationalization strategy containing a programme of measures to implement it? Is the internationalization strategy integrated into the University's strategy and does it produce results? (Biryukova N.A., Kondratenko E.V., Kolesova T.V. et al. (2019).

4. CONCLUSION

Analysis of the European assessment procedures of the University's internationalization leads to the conclusion that the condition of effective monitoring, of course, is the availability of strategies of internationalization of the particular HEI. However, since internationalization is a multi-component and multi-factorial process, the successful implementation of the strategy requires periodic evaluation of the results achieved, that is, its monitoring. Development of procedures for the assessment of internationalization allows universities to choose the tools that best meet their objectives in the field of internationalization and opportunities. Despite a number of differences in the methodology of the procedures, their overall goal is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the University / program in relation to the development of internationalization, as well as to support universities in improving this process, improving its efficiency. Changes in the content of the internationalization process in turn lead to the development of new and improved procedures for its evaluation. Thus, the analysis of these procedures by theorists and practitioners in the field of internationalization is one of the conditions for the successful development of the internationalization process, taking into account the institutional, national and international context.

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