

UDC 37

<https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/53/45>

IMPLEMENTING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: PRACTICES AND ISSUES

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РЕАЛИЗАЦИЯ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА В ВЫСШЕМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ: ПРАКТИКА И ПРОБЛЕМЫ

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Abstract. This article highlights current issues of the organization of distance learning and its role in the educational policy of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The role of this form of education as a factor in improving the quality of education in higher education is considered. One of the factors for improving the quality of education in the system of higher professional education is the widespread adoption of modern information technologies, including multimedia and virtual. Modern information technologies in combination with pedagogical technologies can significantly increase the effectiveness of the educational process; to achieve a solution to the main problem: the development of cognitive skills of students, critical and creative thinking, the ability to independently construct their knowledge, navigate in the information space.

Аннотация. В статье освещаются актуальные вопросы организации дистанционного обучения и его роли в образовательной политике Республики Узбекистан. Рассматривается роль данной формы обучения как фактора повышения качества образования в высшей школе. Одним из факторов повышения качества образования в системе высшего профессионального образования является широкое внедрение современных информационных технологий, в том числе мультимедийных и виртуальных. Современные информационные технологии в сочетании с педагогическими технологиями могут значительно повысить эффективность образовательного процесса; добиться решения основной проблемы: развитие познавательных способностей учащихся, критического и творческого мышления, умение самостоятельно строить свои знания, ориентироваться в информационном пространстве.

Keywords: distant learning, higher educational institutions, new information technologies, foreign experience, effective learning environment.

Ключевые слова: дистанционное обучение, высшее образование, новые информационные технологии, зарубежный опыт, качественная образовательная среда.

The radical political, socio-economic, organizational transformations taking place in society at the turn of the XX-XXI centuries drastically affect the development of a new information society and, accordingly, a new innovative economy. The processes of globalization of scientific and pedagogical knowledge and the internationalization of education objectively require significant



changes in the system of higher professional education and impose increased demands on specialists of higher professional level. Modern society needs competitive, competent and professionally mobile specialists with creative potential, the ability to find innovative ways to solve problems, work in a team, who have specialized skills and key competencies demanded by the innovative economy (<http://www.lex.uz/docs/3119697>).

Education becomes the main strategic resource in the transition to a new stage in the development of society, the main source of increment of the financial, industrial and intellectual potential of the state. Modern state policy in the field of education is aimed at modernizing system of higher education in Uzbekistan, at solving one of its main tasks - improving the quality of education that meets the requirements of innovative development of the economy, the development needs of both society as a whole and the personality of each of its citizens.

Quality assurance in higher education includes all policies, measures, planned processes and actions through which the quality of higher education is maintained and developed. Quality of higher education can be described as the degree to which the education meets the client's needs and demands. In this respect higher education has two different clients: students and society.

One of the factors for improving the quality of education in the system of higher professional education is the widespread adoption of modern information technologies, including multimedia and virtual. Modern information technologies in combination with pedagogical technologies can significantly increase the effectiveness of the educational process; to achieve a solution to the main problem: the development of cognitive skills of students, critical and creative thinking, the ability to independently construct their knowledge, navigate in the information space.

The quality of education and higher education in particular, has been identified as one of the key factors which will allow our country to succeed in a global competition. Further, various policies and action lines have been developed to improve quality; among other initiatives, our educational degree structures have been revised, mobility of students and teachers is encouraged, and transparency and comparability of qualifications is promoted (<http://cis-legislation.com/document.fwx?RGN=109926>).

Distance learning should be understood as a type of training that presupposes primarily indirect interaction between the teacher and students with the active use of information and communication technologies, which is aimed at developing the learner's personality and mastering the standard of knowledge, skills agreed upon by the parties to the learning process. Distance learning has a positive impact on the quality of student learning, increasing his or her creative and intellectual potential due to self-organization, the pursuit of knowledge, the ability to interact with computer technology and make responsible decisions independently. Being one of the most promising and actively developing information educational technologies, distance learning is one of the most important educational technologies of the 21st century.

The analysis of the use of distance technologies in the educational process allows us to present the advantages of this form of education:

- equal educational opportunities regardless of place of residence, health status, material status of the student;
- the possibility of simultaneous access to many sources of educational information (electronic libraries, data banks, knowledge bases, etc.) of a large number of students;
- the possibility of constant access of students to educational material;
- students' opportunities in building an individual educational path;
- in the management of time spent on the study of disciplines in the framework of the school year;

–in managing the sequence of studying disciplines within the academic year in accordance with its internal logic and interests;

–formation of students' independence;

–their cognitive motivation, the development of skills to obtain information from a variety of sources, the development of skills in project activities, the quality of time-consuming research or creative work by expanding the time frame.

Ergonomics and profitability.

In connection with the improvement of new information technologies, distance learning is widely developed in our country. The real needs of distance education in Uzbekistan are forcing an increasing number of educational institutions in the field of higher education to introduce elements of distance learning. Leading universities of Republic of Uzbekistan offer this form of education both in various specialties and in individual disciplines. Distance education is becoming a means of interpenetration of knowledge, teaching technologies, approaches and methods — an instrument of struggle for the market of educational services. Consumers of this market choose an educational institution that offers a higher quality of education, more modern educational information technology and the best didactic product that meets the highest domestic and international standards.

Recognizing the significant effectiveness of using distance learning to improve the level and quality of education, it is necessary to point out serious problems in organizing this form of education. The introduction of distance learning will be associated with tremendous intellectual efforts and material costs. In fact, we are talking about replacing the pedagogical system with a new one that differs significantly from the current one:

–limited opportunities for constant personal, subject-subject interaction with the teacher, a serious limitation of the conditions for the teacher to create a special emotional atmosphere, a favorable psychological climate for learning;

–the need to provide sets of educational and methodological complexes developed by university teachers specifically for organizing distance learning. A special educational-methodical complex consists of a student's curriculum; curriculum or course programs; a textbook on the relevant discipline or training course; Workshop or practical guide; test materials to control the quality of assimilation of material, methodological recommendations for the study of the relevant academic discipline or training course; organization of self-control, current control; educational manuals and task books;

–the need to provide special requirements: the presence of leading, pedagogical workers and teaching support personnel having the appropriate level of training; specially equipped rooms with appropriate equipment, allowing to implement educational programs using remote technologies;

–the need to introduce Internet technologies based on the use of global and local computer networks to provide students with information of an organizational nature, information about current performance and to accelerate the process of obtaining educational and methodical complexes that are provided to students both in print and in electronic view in accordance with the working curriculum for the current year;

–Legitimacy only in combination with other forms of education.

–development and approval of educational standards, methodological support of the educational process, certification procedure for tutors, certification and accreditation of educational institutions that carry out activities in this field of education.

At present, distance learning is developing mainly in the field of technical education, which is associated, firstly, with the difficult formalized nature of the educational material of the humanities

and, secondly, with the greater competence of the scientific and pedagogical staff of technical educational institutions in the use of new information and communication tools and modern software. In the field of humanitarian education, only the first steps are being taken in the direction being studied. The main problem in the development of this direction is the mismatch between the possibilities of individualization of education in the modern information environment and the practical level of development of distance learning in the field of humanitarian education.

The higher education system is also undergoing a transformation, though more efforts are needed to improve quality and ensure that higher education institutions are serving the needs of Uzbekistan's economy. Given that Uzbekistan's labor market is evolving with the transformation of the economy, the need for a more diverse skills set is increasing. However, both access and quality of higher education remain key challenges in Uzbekistan. Limited access to higher education over time has created a shortage of higher education graduates, which now poses challenges to the needs of the labor market. Additionally, the fields of study have remained largely constant over time, failing to adjust to changes in the country's economic structure and labor market.

On January 24, 2020 the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev addressed the Senate and the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis with the next Message, in which he proposed to declare the year 2020 in Uzbekistan as the Year of Development of Science, Education and the Digital Economy. According to the President, a revision of the higher education system and simplification of admission terms are planned. Universities should provide "real-world knowledge". "We need innovation like air", the president said. — We have set a goal to join the ranks of the developed countries, and we will be able to join them only through rapid reforms and the development of science. To this end, we need personnel of the new formation. Therefore, we began reforming all links in education", he said. "We must deeply master new knowledge and innovative technologies. This will make it possible to follow the shortest path of progress", said Shavkat Mirziyoyev (<https://clck.ru/Myjzt>).

In order to support of our President proposal, distance learning is planned to be introduced as an experiment. The change will be implemented from the 2020/2021 academic year. A new form of training will be in the capital's University of Information Technology, Tashkent State Pedagogical University and Tashkent State Law University. The responsible departments were instructed by April 1 2020 to develop a mechanism for implementing the new form of training.

The development center of the e-government system in Uzbekistan, given the huge unmet demand for educational services, offers to introduce a new type of distance education. According to experts, in 2019, only 12% of applicants entered higher education institutions of the Republic of Uzbekistan, about 27 thousand students made their choice in favor of foreign universities.

To narrow the gap between supply and demand in the educational sector is hindered by a number of objective reasons:

Firstly, in Uzbekistan, with a growing population, there is a shortage of universities and teaching resources.

Secondly, the main institutions of higher education are concentrated in the capital and therefore residents of regions often do not have the opportunity to study there.

Thirdly, despite the fact that foreign universities have modern courses and specialist training programs, but that universities cost of training is too expensive for potential students.

To solve these problems, E-government offers to adopt the experience gained in implementing innovative technologies as an example of other countries. For instance, to use the capabilities of information and communication technologies in education in the form of e-learning and distance education [1].

Based on the foreign experience of using distance learning shows that the development of information technology creates fundamentally new opportunities for the formation of a high-quality educational environment. To this end, we have analyzed a number of review and special reports and articles for the period 2000-2019 relating to the problems of distance education in the USA and Asia were published over the years in the framework of international symposium, government and interstate initiatives, in the form of reports and publications of special educational professional associations. As a result of this study, the features and current trends in the development of distance education in Europe, the USA and Singapore were identified.

In the last 6–7 years, MOOC technologies have been widely used in foreign practice. A massive open online course is a learning system based on modern multimedia technologies that allow learners to gain knowledge remotely, actively using interactive: educational electronic publications, computer training systems, audio-video materials. This system offers a wider selection of programs and directions, which make it possible to conduct online seminars and take exams without a personal meeting with students.

In the Global Competitiveness Report, Singapore's education system is ranked as the highest quality in the world. By betting on a knowledge-based economy, Singapore is steadily developing and modernizing its education system. The development of distance education is aimed at creating a common favorable unified educational environment that, together with traditional educational institutions, provides a lifelong learning and retraining process for both Singaporeans and foreign students.

Due to the analysis of educational policy in Western Europe, Singapore and the USA, we can study the experience of foreign distance education has a rather high degree of application in the conditions of development and improvement of the quality of professional education of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The integration of education, the high-tech information and educational system of the Internet provides an opportunity for the creation and development of a unified distance learning system in Uzbekistan. Recognizing the large role of distance learning as a factor of improving the quality of education in the system of higher professional education, it must be borne in mind that the development and intensive use of this form of organization of the educational process should be considered as an effective means of forming the foundations of education in Uzbekistan in the 21st century [2].

It should be noted that during the years of development in Uzbekistan, purposeful work is being carried out to reform the entire system of higher education, create innovative ideas, develop and introduce new technologies, train qualified personnel meeting the goals of the country's socio-economic development:

–Firstly, higher education is a fundamental component of human capital; competitive education is directly connected with the reform processes ongoing in Uzbekistan. In this regard, the main focus is to stimulate research and innovation activities in the field of higher education that create conditions for the dynamic development of society and improve the quality of the process of competitive personnel training, wide involvement of talented youth in higher education institutions, strengthening the scientific potential of higher educational and scientific institutions, which is a major factor in the innovative development of the country.

–Secondly, high-quality higher education is directly related to productivity growth and economic development in general.

–Thirdly, in the context of training new personnel for the new economy, it is necessary to introduce innovative ideas into the educational research activities of universities, which will serve to further deepen targeted large-scale work to reform the entire system of higher education.

–Fourth, expansion of the country’s international cooperation, increase in export potential and production of competitive goods for the domestic and foreign markets strongly dictates the further improvement of the qualified bachelors and masters’ training. This process is directly related to the need to improve the international ranking of universities and scientific organizations of Uzbekistan.

–Fifth, the involvement of gifted university graduates in science requires revision. To create favorable conditions for attracting talented masters to scientific and pedagogical work, it is necessary to attract the possibilities of financial support to the private sector, government and international organizations.

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Работа поступила
в редакцию 08.03.2020 г.

Принята к публикации
11.03.2020 г.

Ссылка для цитирования:

Aliev I. Implementing Quality Assurance in Higher Education: Practices and Issues // Бюллетень науки и практики. 2020. Т. 6. №4. С. 405-410. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/53/45>

Cite as (APA):

Aliev, I. (2020). Implementing Quality Assurance in Higher Education. *Bulletin of Science and Practice*, 6(4), 405-410. <https://doi.org/10.33619/2414-2948/53/45>

