

## INTERACTION OF PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION WITH THE LABOUR MARKET AND THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

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**Summary:** *The effective system of interaction between the government, educational institutions of higher, secondary and continuing professional education, society, business circles, the individual in the quality assessment of the system of continuing professional education is presented. This system helps to improve continuing professional education making it more effective and relevant. Based on the current domestic and foreign institutional and methodological approaches to quality assurance of programmes of continuing professional education by means of interaction of continuing professional education with the labour market and the social partners, the system of interaction between the continuing professional education and the labour market and the social partners is proposed. The guidelines to improve that system within quality assurance programmes are given. The rationale of interaction between the continuing professional education, the labour market and the social partners within those programmes is scientifically founded. The advances to improve the quality of continuing professional education programmes are made.*

**Keywords:** *additional professional education; supplementary professional programmes; social partners, labour market, CPE quality assessment*

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The strategy for Russia's modernization, the country's inclusion in the global political, economic, public space spot the necessity to reform the system of continuing professional education in the field of quality assurance, to bring the system into line with the requirements of the labour market, employers, educational and professional demands of citizens and to ensure the effectiveness of organizations implementing supplementary professional programmes [1], [2].

As part of the innovative development of the RF continuing professional education (hereinafter CPE) system, one of the key renewal is creation of transparent and objective assessment of the quality of educational services with the participation of consumers who are the most interested party in improving the quality of education [3].

How do we create an effective system of interaction between the state, higher, secondary educational institutions, continuing professional education, society, business circles and individuals in the system of education quality assurance? How do we make it effective and relevant? Who and what tools can and should be used to evaluate the quality of the content and implementation of those programmes [4]?

The mechanisms to assure the quality and the training standards conformity to the requirements of professional standards, industry trends and labour market requirements, standards and indicators of the accrediting institution are being developed in the procedures of

public accreditation of educational programmes. The Ministry of Education and Science commissioned the Commerce and Industry Chamber of the Russian Federation to create the system of professional and public accreditation [5].

In that way, the professional and public accreditation, from the viewpoint of the representatives of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation shall reflect only the interests of the industry employers being consumers of educational institutions outcomes. The representatives of professional and industrial associations lack acute shortage of qualified personnel and in this connection they are highly interested in training and actively involved in the development of approaches to elaborate institutional mechanisms of professional education quality assurance including professional and public, sectoral accreditation of educational programmes, qualifications assessment and certification, public accreditation of educational institutions [6].

The representatives of professional communities start accepting the expertise of educational programmes as an object of their activities, develop mechanisms, instruments and procedures for the expertise implementation, they now understand the essence of educational activities and approaches to the its quality evaluation [7]. Today ROSATOM State Corporation, ROSNANO JSC, the Association of Lawyers of Russia, the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RUIE), the National Association of Builders (NOSTROY), the Federation of Restaurateurs and Hoteliers of Russia, etc. are actively developing models of public accreditation of professional education programmes in the educational institutions training specialists for the respective sectors of the Russian economy.

The objective of the paper is to build up a unified view of the interaction of continuing professional education and the labour market and the social partners. This view should be aimed at bringing it into line with the labour market needs, employers' requirements, educational and professional demands of the population and at backing the effectiveness of institutions implementing supplementary professional programmes.

## 2 METHODS

Dialectical-materialist theory of knowledge was the methodological basis of the research at the philosophical level; the basic provisions of the systems approach were applied at the scientific level (V.P. Bespalko, E.F. Zeer and others); technological approach (V.P. Bespalko, N.V. Bordovskaya, V.M. Bukatov, T.A. Ilyina, and others); competency approach (A.A. Verbitsky, V.G. Ivanov, V.A. Komelin, T.V. Masharova, A.P. Tryapitsina, and others), acmeological approach (B.G. Ananyev, A.A. Dergach, K.A. Abulkhanova, and others), environmental approach (T.V. Meng, V.I. Slobodchikov, V.A. Yasvin, and others), interdisciplinary approach (S.Yu. Semenov, D.I. Feldstein, and others), cluster one in professional education (E.A. Korchagin, A.V. Leontyev, G.V. Mukhametzyanova, N.B. Pugacheva, E.R. Khairullina. and others), value-motivational approach (L.S. Vygotsky, S.L. Rubinstein, D.A. Leontyev, and others); studies of management theory in education (M.M. Potashnik, V.M. Lizinsky, T.I. Shamova, and others); methodology of evaluation (D.A. Novikov, A.I. Orlov, P. Lempinen, R. Arnold, A. Correa, A. Schelten, D. Stufflebeam and others); at the specific scientific level the methodology and theory of pedagogical research (V.A. Bolotov, V.A. Slastenin, V.D. Shadrikov and others) was applied.

The theoretical basis of the study rests on: the design and simulation of public accreditation systems theory (G.N. Motova, V.G. Navodnov, Yu.P. Pokholkov, V.D. Shadrikov and others) [8], [9], [10]; the theory of institutional methodology (S.B. Avdashev, I.A. Ashmarov, S.V. Istomin and others.); the research of quality assurance of supplementary professional programmes (N.N. Aniskina, V.G. Ivanov, E.V. Kazakova and others); general and specific scientific works on the characteristics of adult education (Yu.N. Barmin, S.G. Vershlovsky,

N.O. Verbitskaya, T.V. Masharova, V.I. Slobodchikov, G.I. Ignatyeva and others); papers on professional and continuing education and training (A.A. Verbitsky, F.N. Klyuyev G.M. Romantcev, I.P. Smirnov, E.V. Tkachenko, O.V. Tulupova and others); investigations of the formation of man as a subject of training process (V.V. Davydov, I.S. Kon, A.V. Mudrik and others).

The methodological basis of the model is formed by the systems approach as a general methodological principle of science; the conceptual foundations of professional public accreditation presented in the papers of V.G. Navodnov, G.N. Motova, V.D. Shadrikov, V.A. Bolotov, Yu.P. Pokholkov, R. Arnold, A. Correa, A. Schelten, D. Stufflebeam and others [11].

The autonomous non-profit institution National Center for Public Accreditation (Natsakkredtsentr) (Yoshkar-Ola) was the experimental basis of the research.

### **3 PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF THE OUTCOMES**

Compared with many European countries, the interaction of CPE with the labour market and the social partners in the system of professional education and training quality assurance in Russia is very low, therefore the CPE system has to find a partner being industrial, professional and public institutions aimed at conducting an independent assessment of the short programmes and thereby to produce an 'external' order.

Based on the analysis of theoretical and practical material on the quality assessment of supplementary professional programmes using the contrastive-comparative analysis of domestic and foreign practices of accreditation procedures, taking into account providers and consumers' views and all other CPE system parties concerned, the best practices in the system of CPE quality assessment and the evaluation technologies with due consideration of the Concept of Adult Continuing Education in the Russian Federation being developed, we will attempt to propose improvements to the quality of supplementary professional programmes (hereinafter SPP).

It is essential that the educational institution personnel who develop and implement the SPP, would have a common vision of SPP implementation through continuous further training in education quality evaluation and assessment technologies so that the staff will:

- be aware of the goals and objectives in the field of SPP quality evaluation stated in the legal acts;
- have an idea of the best domestic and foreign practices of continuing professional education SPP quality evaluation (Bologna and Copenhagen processes, the European instruments for evaluation of the professional education and training quality);
- be able to structure their knowledge of education quality evaluation (licensing, public accreditation, monitoring and control (supervision) of the quality of education);
- be able to apply the theoretical knowledge of regulatory and information-methodological documentation on SPP quality evaluation in practice;
- study and share practical experience on development of similar SPP and their implementation in other educational institutions of the region, country.

The employees of educational institution should be actively involved in strategic decision-making while developing and implementing the SPP; participate as members of working groups in preparation for the external quality examination of the SPP; undertake regular internship in the field of SPP quality evaluation; enhance informational support of the SPP, sufficiently apply the latest information and communication technologies for training.

It is necessary to build organisational, methodological, analytical and professional competencies with the educational institution staff for them to be prepared for CPE programmes

quality evaluation, including teachers' professional experience compliance with the specialist field:

- Buildup of organisational competency involves actualisation of objectives, mission and objectives of the educational institution in the system of educational services quality assurance, preparation of the educational institution for inspection of the quality of training, development of internal quality system and its stable functioning.
- Buildup of analytical competency includes systematisation of scientific and methodological, regulatory and professional information, preparation of analytical materials for the educational activities management in the educational establishment to improve the SPP evaluation quality.
- Buildup of methodological competency involves the application of existing regulatory documentation of training quality evaluation in the educational institution, development of methodological documentation, methodological support for the SPP quality evaluation.
- Buildup of professional competency involves knowledge of the rules and regulations, documentation, SPP quality evaluation documentation; the skill to apply theoretical knowledge for examination activity; forensic thinking, comprehensive skills for SPP examination procedure.

The administration of the educational institution should carry out the ongoing work to develop the internal examination environment by means of:

- Creating the internal examination environment to positively motivate employees to introduce changes in the educational environment (the internal examination of the programme with regard to the sectoral focus, tracking industry specifics in the structure and content of the programme);
- Buildup the staff's motivation to accept the innovations improving the quality of educational services;
- Informational openness and transparency of programmes examination procedure (internal and external one) for the staff of the institution (the official website of the university, newsletters, the accredited programmes register, expert training courses at the university);
- Assessment of methods and tools of independent and voluntary examination/accreditation of the services rendered in the sphere of education and training;
- Cooperation of educational institution with employers recruiting staff trained in the corresponding field of study (target training, employers' participation in the educational process through theoretical and practical training, internships, employment, development of curricula and discipline steering documents, participation in the programmes examination and accreditation);
- Monitoring of demand for SPP graduates in the labour market;
- Development of institutional mechanisms in the system of SPP quality assurance jointly with the consumers;
- Creation of transparent, open system for informing citizens of the educational services, the information being complete, accessible, updated and accurate;

The accrediting organisation authorized by the employers and their associations should support its official recognition in this country and abroad; have strong business reputation and enjoy the public trust; have independent status and autonomous responsibility for examination activities; for the examination quality and outcomes; comply with the conditions under which no third party (government agencies, educational establishments, ministries and other parties

concerned) could assert influence over the procedure and examination results (recommendations, and report of external panel, etc.); ensure information transparency (regularly updated official website of the accrediting organisation, the media coverage, etc.); accessibility of information and guidance papers governing examination activities (SPP examination indicators and criteria of CPE, Regulations, Guidelines, Guidance Papers, expert training programmes, etc.); transparency of the examination procedure of CPE [12].

The organisation shall have adequate facilities, financial and human resources to provide for effective and efficient work of the accrediting organisation; the internal quality assurance policy; an independent body to take decisions on the recognition of the SPP quality (Accreditation Board, Experts' Board, etc.); provide the feedback system and the aftereffects on the procedure and the outcomes of examination with all the parties concerned; develop mechanisms for institutional cooperation between the authorities responsible for quality assurance.

Public accreditation of programmes implies using motivational mechanisms for employers and social partners' participation in SPP quality assessment [13], [14].

Public mechanisms include: joint development of regulations; employers' involvement in the social partnership; government subsidies to employers providing additional training opportunities for industrial training; establishing corporate universities; setting up specialised departments at enterprises; provision of loans for running refresher and retraining courses for highly skilled personnel; allocation of state subsidies for on-the-job training; tax incentives for the enterprises.

Social mechanisms include: employers' participation in programmes elaboration jointly with the working groups; employers' involvement in coordination and examination of programmes and curricula at the stage of their development and validation; employers' involvement in the training activities of the educational institution; membership in the certification and examination boards; employers' engagement in evaluation of graduates' professional and general cultural competencies; educational institution's surveys of employers using purposely designed questionnaires; creation of the specialised examination environment; selection, training and certification of employers; institutionalisation of expert employers' activity.

In addition, it is necessary to create the motivational mechanisms recognising both material and non-material (moral) employers' contribution to the training quality evaluation. The motivational mechanisms should be based on the labour market needs and the education services market and ensure their maximum alignment; combine material and non-material interests of the labour market representatives in the quality of training; promote competitiveness and demand for educational programmes in the labour market; encourage employers to finance continuing professional training programmes (further training programmes, professional training programmes, etc.); ensure employers' active participation in board of regents of educational institutions, etc. [15].

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

Involvement of employers and social partners in the evaluation of the quality of training enhances their prestige and respect in the labour market and in the community; it provides a unique opportunity to constantly improve and to be involved both in the business process and in the academic one; it provides opportunities for career advancement through training programmes for expert training and further certification. It is important to have psychic income from the professionally performed examination which is supported by appreciation and gratitude of the educational institution.

The programmes of continuing professional education developed and implemented in the interaction between educational institutions of higher, secondary and supplementary



professional training, corporate universities, employers and their associations and establishments engaged in independent quality assessment are in demand with the consumers.

It is important to improve the motivational mechanisms for employers' social partners' participation in evaluating the quality of training, to work towards the employers' and the social partners' sense of responsibility and desire to actively participate in the evaluation of the quality of training, build confidence in the fact that their involvement is helpful and relevant for both the labour market and the educational institution. The more active employers' and social partners' involvement in the development and evaluation of programmes at the stage of students' training, the better they are taught, the less employer's effort is required to finish training or retraining, and therefore, savings in time and the employer's funds are evident.

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