



Internationalization of education as a key factor in the development of HEI

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One of the most important indicators of quality and effectiveness of the educational activities of HEI, determining its prestige on the international level, is the process of internationalization of education aimed at the realization of the following objectives:

- enlargement of the scope of HEIs' activity outside their national educational system;
- increment of financial benefits by involving to study foreign students and employing finances from international funds;
- quality improvement of education through the participation of students and teaching staff in the process of international mobility, opportunities of knowledge exchange;
- quality improvement of research activities through participation in joint scientific and research projects.

Complex processes that are currently arising in the sphere of European higher education, which are given careful attention of the international community, represent a great interest for the Republic of Belarus as well. Bologna process positive and strong impact on the development of higher education in the Republic of Belarus should be viewed as a long-term prospect.

The Bologna Process is a series of ministerial meetings and agreements between European countries designed to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher education qualifications.

The overarching aim of the Bologna Process is to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on the international cooperation and academic exchange that is attractive to European students and staff as well as to students and staff from other parts of the world.

The envisaged European Higher Education Area will:

- facilitate mobility of students, graduates and higher education staff;
- prepare students for their future careers and for life as active citizens in democratic societies, and support their personal development;
- offer broad access to high-quality higher education, based on democratic principles and academic freedom.

The process of internationalization of university educational area affects:

- students: admission of foreign students, organization of mobility programmes, as well as organization of individual student mobility;
- teaching staff: teaching staff mobility, conducting joint research programmes and internships, elaboration of joint training programmes, organizing intensive language courses and summer schools;
- the informative aspect of educational programs: the development of new programmes and courses, which take into account the elements of intercultural communication, foreign languages teaching and use of new technologies including distance learning;
- certification issues, recognition and quality evaluation of educational process: implementation of international standards system in education, recognition of educational certificates.

A special place in the process of internationalization is given to international academic mobility. First of all, it's training of foreign students on a regular basis, it is as well one of indicators of integral ranking of universities.

According to experts, the number of students studying outside their home countries will be over 3 million by 2014, and this number will increase to 4.9 million by 2025. Educational services today offer about 140 countries of the world. However, the main educational centers where the four-fifths of all foreign students is trained are: North American (the USA and Canada) - 600 thousand students; Europe - about 500 thousand (educational migration in EU is rather strong: one third to one half of foreign students are of European origin), Australia and New Zealand: 200 thousand students are trained there. Higher school in Russia today conducts training of about 70 thousand foreign citizens.

Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation has included the indicator of international activity, measured by proportion of number of foreign students who have completed mastering of educational programmes in the total graduation output of students (enumerated contingent). In order that HEI's activity is found effective, it must not be lower than 0.7%.

Currently advancement of the Republic of Belarus on the international market of educational services is carried out in the stiff competition among the leading universities in the international educational space. Contestation for potential students from the side of HEIs' representatives of the USA, Canada, the UK, Australia, South Korea and other countries leads to a necessity of improving the system of export of educational services for Belarusian HEIs.

Traditionally, export of educational services in the Republic of Belarus is accentuated to CIS countries (mainly Russian-speaking students) and non-CIS countries. Percentage of these regions in total exports is 42% and 58% respectively. Among the CIS countries the main percentage appertains to Turkmenistan - 74% and Russia - 18%. Among the students of non-CIS countries the leading position appertains to China - 34%, and stable and approximately equal percentage appertains to the next countries: Sri Lanka - 6%, Turkey - 5%, Lebanon - 4.7%, Syria - 4.5%, Iran - 4.5%.

At the current stage it is very important to maintain a balance between national and global interests and trends and in the process of transformation of our educational system, it is important to make it part of the world educational system on one hand, and on the other hand it is essential to keep our own unique positive features. An essential legal and regulatory framework was established in the Republic of Belarus to govern various aspects of admission and training of foreign citizens:

- Concept for the Development of export of educational services in the framework of cooperation between the Republic of Belarus and foreign countries was built up;
- Amendments to Admission Regulations to higher and vocational educational institutions in the section of admission period for foreign citizens were made;
- The joint Instruction of Ministry of Education and Ministry of Internal Affairs "On the order of coordination by Citizenship and Migration subdivisions of the internal affairs bodies the invitation

letters for study of foreign citizens and stateless persons in the Republic of Belarus" was built up and approved;

- Regulations for the National Center of expertise and recognition of documents/education qualifications were built up.

At present international activity in education and science sphere in the Republic of Belarus is carried out on the basis of 54 international agreements, including 28 intergovernmental and 26 interagency agreements, over 1,200 direct inter-institutional cooperation agreements.

At present, in the qualitative composition of the teaching staff, material and technical base, BTEU has ample opportunities for training qualified personnel for the national economics of foreign countries. Quality of education, moderate tuition and accommodation fees, security of residence are the main factors contributing the tendency of foreign citizens to study at our university.

Information on tuition fees for students and trainees of HEIs in Gomel

№	Name of HEI	Offer certain specialties (the 1 st stage of education) equivalent to BTEU	Students (not citizens of the Republic of Belarus)		Foreign students of the preparatory department, USD
			Full-time (day-time) course, USD	Correspon-dence course, USD	
1	2	3	4	5	6
1	HEI Belarusian Trade and Economics University of Consumer Cooperatives	+	2 280	1 380	1 790
2	Pavel Sukhoi State Technical University of Gomel	+	from 2 250 to 3 000	from 1 300 to 2 000	-
3	Francisc Scorina Gomel State University	+	2 220	1 080	1 800
4	Belarusian State University of Transport	+	2 350	1200	Foreign language - 1 850 Russian language - 1 500
5	Gomel branch of International University MITSO	+	from 1 400 to 1 450	from 800 to 850	-

BTEU sets the objective to expand export services, keeping on maintenance of traditional export markets of educational services (CIS countries (Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Russia, Moldova), Middle East region) on one hand and to take active steps in entering European academic area, in adaptation educational process to European standards on the other hand.

Policy of export of educational services in BTEU is characterized by:

- active entry into new regional markets (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Nigeria);

- bringing the quality of education and university management in accordance with international standards;
- conducting adequate pricing policy;
- active informative and advertising work;
- participation in international educational exhibitions;
- expanding the range of educational services;
- accurate planning and organization of work on involvement of foreign citizens to study;
- diversification of channels for promotion of educational services (network expansion of intermediaries;
- target training of foreign citizens, admission with individual course of training etc.).

One of the basic vectors of the university development strategy is to improve the quality of educational services and to upgrade training of foreign citizens, which includes meeting the major challenges:

- creating image of BTEU, status value of obtaining a diploma of the university;
- improvement of the educational process, revision of curricula and educational programmes in accordance with life demands and ever-changing needs of consumers - foreign citizens;
- usage of modern techniques, working out a modular system of teaching Russian as a foreign language, methodological support of new generation;
- qualification improvement of teaching personnel and staff of the University in the field of speech communication, educational psychology, information technology, foreign languages, quality management in education, international trainings, scientific activity monitoring of teachers;
- on-going monitoring of educational services quality by major consumers – foreign citizens;
- setting up an environment for the implementation of innovative technologies, adding special subdivisions for the organization of research and advisory activities.

An important factor in the appeal of the university in the world educational area is an "insertion" in its ratings of the best higher education institutions of the world. Rating system determines education quality and at the same time it represents one of the channels of public control and evaluation. Webometrics is one of authoritative ratings which analyzes presence of the university as a research center in the Internet space.

According to the developers of the rating, the indicators used allow to create a fairly complete picture of teaching and research activity of universities. As of 02.08.2013 BTEU occupies 12,202 position out of 21,451 universities (in 2012 - 12 243 position).

Universities of Belarus in the ratings. There are 58 HEIs from Belarus included in the rating: BTEU takes the 37th position, Vitebsk State Medical University takes the 36th position, Academy of Ministry of Internal Affairs takes 38th position. BSU takes the 1st position in the rating of universities in the Republic of Belarus. Involvement to study of foreign students, masters and doctorates provides an opportunity for improving the training of specialists taking into account the requirements of the international labour market. Participation of the University in international educational projects helps to the enhance quality of educational programmes, expand opportunities for academic mobility of students and teachers in accordance with international and interuniversity agreements.

An example of effective programmes of such a kind is the program Tempus, aimed at the modernization of higher education in the partner universities and based on European educational standards.

An important role in the study of international experience and the development of mutually beneficial partnerships with international institutions for BTEU plays participation in the project "Leading and managing Change in Higher education (La Manche)". The project's overall objective is to promote the

modernization of PCs' higher education by building governance and management capacities at PC HEIs and initiating sustainable dialog on HEI reform among relevant interest groups. The project's specific objectives are:

- to map out existing leadership skills and governance models at PC HEIs in view of identifying training needs;
- to analyze locally developed good practices of dealing with modernization-related change at the institutional level;
- to transfer good governance and change management practices from EU HEIs to PC HEIs;
- to build the transformational leadership capacity of senior managers at PC HEIs;
- to promote transnational networking and joint problem solving among experts, managers of PC HEIs and other key stakeholders in HE, as well as to stimulate students grassroots leadership initiatives;
- to develop and uphold a context-sensitive strategy for managing modernization-related change in HE in the Pcs.

Participation in the project allows to analyze international experience in the internationalization of education on one hand and to promote the development of effective tools for implementation of own internationalization strategy in the context of BTEU Strategic Development Plan on the other hand. The project results in:

- sharing experience on the organization of international cooperation and the internationalization of education in higher education institutions according to the requirements of national and international standards;
- organization of qualification improvement of university staff with the aim of studying the experience of teaching economic subjects in English;
- improvement of the university infrastructure, providing the process of internationalization of education and replenishment of material and technical facilities (purchase of equipment);
- implementation of instruments and procedures of quality assurance process management of internationalization of education at the university.

Thus, the study, implementation and dissemination of positive international practices in the process of international cooperation promotes the internationalization of the institution, its inclusion in the global and European integration processes in higher education.

Particularly international cooperation is one of the most important and promising areas of work on the internationalization of education, which gives impulse to the development of many other activities of the university: the improvement of the state educational standards, curricula and programs, quality improvement of training and qualifications of teaching and administrative staff, the introduction of new technologies of professional training, building up a positive image of the university in the country and abroad.