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## PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NORMS OF INTERNATIONAL QUALITY STANDARDS: PRINCIPLE OF ORIENTATION TOWARDS THE CUSTOMER

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*The publication proves the possibility of using one of the principles of the international quality standard, namely the principle of customer orientation in the system of public administration of the quality of higher education. The article contains suggestions on how to improve the mechanism for the formation of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance by increasing the level of representation of those subjects which, by their status, can be attributed to customers of educational services in the field of higher education.*

**Keywords:** international quality standard; customer orientation; quality control of higher education; institutional conditions; governance; National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance; quality of graduates' training.

## ГОСУДАРСТВЕННОЕ УПРАВЛЕНИЕ КАЧЕСТВОМ ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ НОРМ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ СТАНДАРТОВ КАЧЕСТВА: ПРИНЦИП ОРИЕНТАЦИИ НА ЗАКАЗЧИКА

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*В публикации рассмотрена возможность использования одного из принципов международного стандарта качества, а именно принципа ориентации на заказчика в системе государственного управления качеством высшего образования. В контексте содержания норм международного стандарта качества ISO 9000:2007 в статье определены основные направления в реализации принципа «Ориентация на заказчика» на университетском уровне. Кроме того, в статье обоснована возможность применения норм международного стандарта качества на уровне одного из элементов нормативно-правового механизма государственного управления качеством высшего образования. Статья содержит предложения по совершенствованию механизма формирования Национального агентства по обеспечению качества высшего образования за счет усиления представительства тех из субъектов, которые по своему статусу могут быть отнесены к заказчикам образовательной услуги в сфере высшего образования.*

**Ключевые слова:** международный стандарт качества; ориентация на заказчика; контроль качества высшего образования; институциональные условия; государственное управление; Национальное агентство по обеспечению качества высшего образования; качество подготовки выпускников Вузов.

**Problem setting.** The issue of the quality of higher education, due to its remarkable socio-economic, cultural and humanitarian significance, is determined at the level of one of the main priorities of the government and its specialized institutions. Issues of quality assurance in higher education were discussed at one of the last communicative activities of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, which was conducted within the framework of the Medium-Term Plan of the Government's Priority Actions by 2020 with the participation of experts and the public. Among the priorities of development of the higher education system, the participants of the event drew attention to the place and role of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the National Agency for the Quality Assurance of Higher Education of Ukraine in formation and further development of the system of quality control of education at the university level.

**Recent research and publications analysis.** The issue of quality of higher education in the context of a particular manifestation of its complex and diverse content is always within the research focus of attention of researchers. Among the latest scientific developments, thematic focus of which

is devoted to the various aspects of the foregoing problems, we should pay attention to the works of L.A. Haievs'ka, O.V. Zhabenko, S.V. Majboroda [3] (the theoretical and historical aspects of state management of education were stated); S.K. Andrejchuk, S.M. Dombrovs'ka, V.M. Oharenko [4] (the content and the practice of using the mechanisms of state management on the system of higher education were researched); D.V. Bondar, O.V. Postupna, T.M. Tarasenko [9] (the institutional-legal and socio-economic conditions for the effective development of higher education were defined); T.I. Hladka, T.O. Lukina, A.V. Romin [8] (the peculiarities of state quality management of providing educational services in the system of higher education were determined); O.V. Dubrovka, R.A. Naumenko, L.I. Paraschenko [6] (organizational, methodological and practical aspects of the manifestation of state-management influence on the educational sphere were researched) and researches of other scientists. Despite the sufficient level of scientific study of the problems of quality of higher education, some areas of its positioning within the scientific knowledge remain open to further scientific research.

**Paper objective.** Consider the issues of the category of

higher education quality in the context of the norms of the international standard of quality of the series DSTU ISO 9000:2007. To formulate a conclusion on the directions for improving the mechanisms of public management of the quality of higher education.

**Paper main body.** Understanding the content and the ways of manifestation of the phenomenon of quality of education, regardless of the level of organization of scientific research and the direct focus of the researcher's attention, is difficult to imagine without clarifying the requirements of the norms of international documents, since it is in the context of their standards (provisions) that they are not only practical consolidation of existing theoretical knowledge, but also peculiar programming of further development, both directly in the system of higher education and in the educational sector as a whole. Specification of the content of the category of education quality in the context of the norms of official documents and monitoring missions can be carried out through the prism of international standards of quality of the series DSTU ISO 9000:2007. The glossary of the terms of this document is considering the possibility of interpreting a quality category that is basic to the chosen for us to clarify the meaning of the definition as the degree, to which a set of own characteristics satisfies certain requirements. (characteristics and requirements are defined at the level of certain categories) [7, p. 12]. In addition, the document contains a list of basic principles of quality management, which also helps to understand the content of the category. The authors of the standard DSTU ISO 9000:2007 define the following principles of quality management: 1) customer orientation (organizations depend on their customers and therefore must understand current and future needs of customers, fulfill their requirements and strive to exceed their expectations); 2) leadership (managers establish the unity of purpose and direction of the organization, they must create and maintain an internal environment in which employees can be fully involved in achieving the goals set before the organization); 3) involvement of employees (employees at all levels form the basis of the organization, and their full involvement enables them to use their abilities in favor of the organization); 4) process approach (the desired result is more effective if the activity and related resources are managed as a process); 5) systematic approach to management (the definition and understanding of interrelated processes and their management as a system promotes the organization to effectively achieve the goals); 6) continuous improvement (continuous improvement of the overall performance of the organization should be considered the same goal of the organization); 7) making decisions on the basis of facts (effective decisions are made on the basis of data and information analysis); 8) mutually beneficial relations with suppliers (the organization and its suppliers are interdependent, and mutually beneficial relations increase the ability of both parties to create values) [7, p. 4-5].

Each of these principles can not only be, but should be interpreted through the prism of the category of higher education quality. Such a step, in due time, has been made by many researchers. Among the most interesting, in our opinion, is the study of R.A. Kubanov. The scientist suggests a logically complete and carefully elaborated concept of views on the perception of higher education quality issues in the context of the above principles [2]. Reconsidering the results of research by a scientist, we will try to consider the category of higher education quality, but in the context of the subject field of

public-administrative science.

The customer orientation was determined by the authors of the DSTU ISO 9000:2007 at the level of the first principle of quality management, which already shows that its significance within the relevant process is remarkable. It is clear that the competitiveness of higher educational institutions depends on the satisfaction of consumers with the level of knowledge, skills and abilities acquired and their use during their professional activities without time-consuming and expensive resources for adaptation. The complexity of using this principle is that the customer of the educational service is not identified at the level of one entity, and therefore the orientation of the system of higher education and its elements at the simultaneous satisfaction of expectations, for example, the person receiving higher education, the employer, the state and society in general, does not seem possible. Given the fact that the state order for the training of specialists with higher education in higher educational institutions (the number of budget places), as a rule (traditionally) is equal to half of the total number of eligible applicants for choice, we can assume that it is the state that should be determined at the level of the main customer of the educational service at the level of higher education, which allows it to be defined at the level of the entity that makes certain requirements and establishes standards for the quality of training of specialists with higher education. It should be understood here that it is precisely at this point of our study that we are considering the state not as an institution of power, which, in accordance with its functions, can set norms and formulate requirements, but as a regular customer. Therefore, if we are talking about quality in the context of the "customer orientation", the higher education system, as the executor of the order for the training of specialists with higher education, should not only satisfy the current needs of the state in the training of specialists with higher education, but also provide an opportunity surpassing the expectations of the state regarding the level of training of specialists. At the same time, the key role in controlling the quality of higher education (observance of the norms of practice and the results of higher education), in accordance with the norms of Article 12 of the World Declaration on Higher Education [1] and Article 34 (authority of the head of the university), Article 35 (powers of the head of the Department) of the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" [5], the university is assigned. In other words, the function of controlling the quality of the provision of educational services, although limited in scope, is transferred to the level of the performer, which is the basis for the emergence of contradictions at the level of perception of the state as the main customer of educational services and the positioning of higher education institutions at the level of the main subject of control over the higher quality education. It is obvious that the solution of this contradiction is possible only with the strengthening of the control function of the state as a customer. The existing norm on mandatory existence of the department for monitoring the quality of education in the structure of the higher educational institution does not ensure the effective functioning of the system of internal quality control of educational activities of the University. Our assumption is that the head of the relevant department is accountable and supervised by the administration of the university, and therefore it is not an independent expert. We consider it necessary to initiate a discussion with the National Agency for the Quality Assurance of Higher Education around the issue of subordination of the heads of university

departments for monitoring the quality of education. Of course, this proposal needs additional justification.

Returning to the issue of higher education quality, in the context of the content of the principle of quality management of DSTU ISO 9000: 2007 "Customer Orientation", we consider it necessary to pay attention to the following directions of its implementation at the university level:

- clarification of expectations of those employers, in accordance with orders of which, a state order for the training of specialists with higher education is formed;
- taking into account the revealed expectations and requirements put forward by employers regarding the professional knowledge of future specialists in the content of the curricula and the practice of their implementation;
- to work out the only syllabus of curricula for each of the specialties (we consider that the practice of studying educational programs at the university level did not meet the expectations of the customer (the employer as a representative of the state) regarding the content and quality of training;
- monitoring of the compliance of level of specialists with higher education training with the expectations of employers (monitoring should not be carried out immediately after the graduation from the university, but after its full adoption is completed, for example, one year after the beginning of a specialist in labor activity);
- Improvement of the contents of curricula and its implementation practices in accordance with the recommendations and wishes of employers that they have worked out within the framework of procedures for monitoring the compliance of the level of training of specialists with higher education with the expectations of employers, as well as existing norms and standards, etc.

Hence, the quality of graduates' training (the quality of knowledge, skills and value orientation systems) is considered at the level of one of the final products of the professional activity of the university. The main customer, and in accordance with the norms of DSTU ISO 9000:2007 (the "Customer Orientation" principle of quality management) and the main expert on the quality of training of specialists with higher education, is the state. Given this fact, our assumption is that the subject of monitoring the quality of higher education from the university level to the state should look quite logical. Within our position, we do not deny the need for the existence of an internal (university) level of control, but we only draw attention to the need to change the vectors of subject-object relations within the framework of professional activity (subordination and reporting) of the relevant department.

In addition, the quality issues of higher education, in the context of the content of the principle of quality management DSTU ISO 9000:2007 "Customer Orientation", not only can, but should be considered through the prism of the national (state) level of its manifestation. Above, we drew attention to the fact that the state itself is the customer of educational services. On the other hand, the state, in the face of the state higher educational institutions, is the executor of the state order for the training of specialists with higher education. There is an almost paradoxical situation where a customer and performer are positioned in the person of one subject. Taking into account the practice of management activity, the combination of powers (functions) of the customer (customer service) and the performer in the person of one entity is not always appropriate. In our opinion, the function of control (here we are not talking about the system

of internal control), will not provide the expected effect if its implementation will be organized within the authority of those entities whose activities actually serve as the object of appropriate evaluation. Most likely, the function of controlling the quality of higher education within the implementation of the principle of "Customer Orientation" should be placed on the institutions of society and the market. It should be understood that the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, created at the initiative of the state, is primarily a state institution, and therefore its effectiveness, especially in the context of the implementation of the principle of "Customer Orientation", is somewhat limited. According to Article 19 of the Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education", the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance is formed according to the established quotas, namely: two members are delegated by the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and one from each national branch academy of sciences; thirteen members are elected by congresses of representatives of higher educational institutions of Ukraine of state, communal and private ownership, including nine members from state higher educational institutions, one member from communal higher educational institutions, three members from private higher educational institutions educational institutions; three members are elected by a joint representative body of all-Ukrainian associations of employers' organizations; two members are elected by the congress of representatives of the bodies of student self-government of higher educational institutions from among the persons who receive higher education [5]. Taking into account the level of representation of individual entities within the relevant body, we can state that only 5 persons (3 – representatives of all-Ukrainian associations of employers' organizations, 2 – representatives of student self-government) are envisaged by the law 25, according to those of the sub Objects whose status in the context of the content of the principle of "Customer Orientation" can be defined at the level of the representatives of the customer of the education service. Consequently, there is a well-defined issue of the ability of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance to ensure compliance with the "Customer Orientation" principle.

**Conclusions.** Taking into account the above and taking into consideration the necessity of forming institutional conditions for implementation of the quality management principle established by the international standards of quality of the DSTU ISO 9000:2007 series, we believe it necessary to consider changing the principles of the formation of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance in the direction of enhancement of the level representations of those entities that, by their status, can be attributed to customers of educational services in the field of higher education. Such a change, on the one hand, will significantly increase the level of quality control of the provision of educational services by the domestic higher educational institutions on the part of the customers of the education service, and on the other hand, it will increase the efficiency of the functioning of the mechanisms of state quality management of higher education.

At the same time, we understand the fact that the paradigm above, and therefore the conclusions that were formulated in accordance with its content, are debatable. The object of discussion, on the one hand, can be the status of the state as the main customer and consumer of educational services in higher education, and on the other, the role of the state as the main subject of quality management of higher education. The reason

for such a discussion may become a contradiction between the content of the modern paradigm of public administration (state as the partner and the arbitrator) and the classical approach to public administration (the state – the organizer and the judge) that is aggravated in the article. Choosing a paradigm as a basis for discussion, the researcher can not only develop the principle of orientation towards the customer in the context of its impact on the quality of higher education, but also on the new disclosure of the content of unity and struggle of public and private, spiritual and material, social and individual. The author of the article invites interested subjects of the quality of higher education of individuals to discuss the issues raised in the article on the pages of this publication. In addition, the author of the article is interested in finding counterparts in the territories of different countries for joint participation in the non-commercial empirical study "Evaluation of higher education quality" (methods: questionnaire, comparative analysis).

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