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MECHANISM OF ENSURING QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS' WORK

The article substantiates the peculiarities of the functioning of the mechanism of ensuring the quality of higher educational institutions' work. At the present stage, the process of integration of the national system of higher education into the European and world educational space is actively taking place in Ukraine, the modernization of educational activities in the context of European requirements is being carried out. Consequently, the assurance of the quality of educational activities is now on the top of the agenda of higher educational institutions and is one of the criteria of the effectiveness of its management. The purpose of the article is to substantiate the theoretical and technological direction of improving the quality of educational activities of higher educational institutions in the context of the formation of the corresponding mechanism. The objectives of the article are to develop scientific and methodological provisions on the functioning of the mechanism of managing the quality assurance system of educational activities of higher educational institutions and conducting an experimental research that will identify the directions of improving the quality of higher education in Ukraine. In carrying out the research, the expert methods, in particular the questionnaire method, were used. The conceptual scheme of the mechanism of ensuring the quality of educational activities of higher educational institutions is proposed and it is determined that the factors affecting the external and internal environment influence the effectiveness of its functioning. The technology of raising the quality of higher education with the participation of the National Agency, based on a powerful methodological basis in the form of a quadratic approach: human-centered, systemic, competence and synergetic, has been grounded. The state-public administration can become the newest mechanism of ensuring the quality of higher education. The measures of effective functioning of the mechanism of quality assurance of educational activities in higher educational institutions have been determined.

Keywords: *higher education, educational process, competitiveness of education, quality of education, educational activities, mechanism.*

Introduction

It is obvious that the main characteristic feature of the activities of a modern higher educational institution in the market conditions should be the focus on the constant development of its innovation orientation, on the quality of scientific and educational activities. Among the most relevant shortcomings of the Ukrainian market of educational services, it is necessary to indicate the mismatch of specialization of students to present-day norms; incomplete satisfaction of the demand for the quality of education, taking into account high contests for certain specialties; quantitative overloading by the disciplines with a relatively basic nature of knowledge; duplication of educational disciplines; the absence of relevant teaching methods and more.

The issue of defining “the quality of education” and “the quality of higher education” concepts has always been relevant and rather complicated. For example,

Y. Korotkov noted that the quality of education was not only the result of educational activity, but also the opportunities for its achievement, which should be represented by the factors that influenced and formed the educational result depending on the goals of education, methodologies, content, organization and the technology of education (Korotkov, 2014).

G. G. Azgoldov and A. V. Kostin, on the contrary, state that the quality of higher education is a complex characteristic of the process of education and training of a person (or its result) in the system of higher education, which is a combination of only their own characteristics got as a result of obtaining an academic degree. But at the same time, these characteristics should not include the resource costs associated with obtaining the result of education (Azgoldov & Kostin, 2012).

A. O. Chemerys notes that the quality of education should be understood in both broad and narrow senses. In

broad terms, the quality of education is characterized by the quality of the system in accordance with the process, the result and the educational system itself, the purpose, needs and social norms (standards) of education; in the narrow sense, the quality of education relates only to the person himself/herself (Chemerys, 1997).

At the same time, there are studies that raise doubts as for the reality of improving the quality of the domestic educational system in this format. ‘To hope to systematically improve higher education, to put it on civilized rails and integrate into the European space of higher education in a socially sick society is a naive, utopian way ...’ (Ryabchenko, 2015). And this is true, if we understand that the social institution of higher education does not function in isolation, but is an organic part of the society, in which social relations are very far from civilized ones.

But one needs to draw attention to the fact that philosophical and managerial sciences are already making the first steps towards the improvement of the society in terms of substantiation of the ideology of human-centered development of Ukraine and the strategy of modernizing public administration in the context of this ideology. Therefore, without expecting for real changes in the society, it is possible to start the process of substantiation of the technology of raising the quality of higher education in Ukraine in order to implement the Law of Ukraine ‘‘On Higher Education’’ according to the trajectory of the ideology of human-centeredness. The achievement of this goal is possible by raising the quality of educational activities of higher education institutions and activities of the National Agency of the Quality Assurance of Higher Education (jointly with other independent assessment institutions) as systems, respectively, of internal and external assurance of the quality of higher education.

Aim and Tasks

The purpose of the article is to substantiate the theoretical and technological direction of improving the quality of higher educational institutions’ work in the context of the formation of the corresponding mechanism.

The following tasks are set to reach the goal: the development of scientific and methodological provisions and the mechanism of managing the quality assurance system of educational activities of higher educational institutions; carrying out an experimental research that will identify the directions of raising the quality of higher education in Ukraine.

Research Methods

A set of interrelated scientific research methods was used: idealization, formalization and modeling - in substantiating the conceptual approaches to the formation of a mechanism for ensuring the quality of educational activities of higher educational institutions. An empirical study was carried out using a methodology that combines the approaches of various methods of expert evaluation and provides a set of stages. The first stage involves the creation, through employers (through the State Employment Centers), of a passport of competencies in each profession, which includes three mandatory components: the

requirements to professional and personal qualifications, the requirements for relevant knowledge and the requirements for actual skills. The use of qualimetric indices allows these requirements to be interpreted quantitatively. It provides a passport of competencies with the tool function, which makes it possible to measure the relevance of each individual graduate to this competency passport. The second stage covers the identification of professional qualifications of university entrants who correspond to the chosen specialty. The third stage is related to the determination in higher educational institutions of those disciplines of the relevant knowledge and skills that students mostly study in order to obtain the knowledge and skills needed by the employers at present and tomorrow. The fourth stage is connected with the quality of conducting classes by lecturers in terms of finding the means of reflexive assimilation of theoretical and fundamental and relevant knowledge and skills by students (ie, with the gradual replacement of reproductive methods of teaching on active, including games). The fifth stage involves evaluating the final outcomes of a higher educational institution through comparing the achievements of each individual graduate with the parameters of a passport of competencies. An index method which is based on qualimetric measurements allows measuring the level of competitiveness of each graduate of a higher educational institution. In particular, to form a managerial competence passport with the help of the Chernihiv Regional Employment Center, 87 employers questionnaires were filled out in the questionnaires, which asked questions as for the level of requirements (quantitatively) to the professional qualities, relevant knowledge and skills (Mudra, 2010). It becomes realistic if we keep in mind that the parameters of the mock-up of the passport of competencies not only determine the target specific actions of the participants of the educational process, but also become a tool for assessing the level of competitiveness of graduates. Among the main professional and personal qualities are the basic and desirable ones to ensure success in work.

The experiment on using the passport of manager’s competencies was carried out at the Chernihiv National Technological University. Thus, the managers of master’s level were trained in two groups, one of which was experimental, that is, with the inclusion of new modules in the training. In other groups, the training was carried out in a traditional way. In both groups (60 students), the assessment was made both of the availability of professional and personal qualities for entrants, and the graduates’ compliance with the parameters of the passport of competencies.

Results and Discussion

Currently, the problem of developing and implementing a quality assurance system of educational activities is new and extremely relevant for domestic higher educational institutions. This is due to the change in the paradigm of higher education, which is based on the autonomy of educational institutions and a competent approach to educational activity. Ukraine still lags behind

the pan-European level in the field of quality assurance in higher education and is at the initial stage of formation of this extremely important part of the national education system. Stomping on the path of European integration, Ukraine has undertaken the duties to bring the quality of national education in line with the European standards. Educational institutions in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On Higher Education” should form a system of internal quality assurance in higher education, which should include a policy and appropriate procedures for guaranteeing this quality, as well as a strategy of its continuous improvement. The strategy, policy and procedures for improving the quality of educational activities must be approved by the educational institution, brought to the attention of students, teachers and the public.

At present, Ukraine has not yet created a comprehensive mechanism for ensuring the quality of higher educational institutions. The role of its temporary substitute is performed by the use of accreditation and licensing systems, external inspection of higher educational institutions and internal rector’s control. Unfortunately, the listed components neither alone nor in aggregate provide the systemic influence on the general processes of organization of the activities of institutions and their content, and the effect of constant improvement of the quality of education has not been created (Strielkowski&Gryshova, 2018).

The main elements of the mechanism of ensuring the quality of educational activities in higher educational institutions are a subject and an object. First of all, the subject is a managerial apparatus, but also scientific and pedagogical staff, as well as students themselves. They vary in their involvement in managing the quality of educational activities, affecting its individual aspects, but at the same time they are all interested in determining the quality of educational activities and searching for effective management decisions to improve it. The objects are the main components of educational activities: resources, educational processes and results.

The effectiveness of functioning the mechanism of quality assurance of educational activities is influenced by the factors of the external and internal environment, among which there are requirements and needs of the state, customers, educators, employers and the society, which affect the quality and level of satisfaction of needs. In addition, the national and European standards for quality assurance in higher education have an impact on the effectiveness of the mechanism. The internal factors influencing the functioning of the mechanism of quality assurance of educational activities are the effectiveness of management, in particular planning, organization and control of the procedures of the provision of this quality. The subjective aspect of the attitude of the participants directly to the quality of education, and most importantly, their responsibility for its formation are important. There-

fore, the quality culture of educational activities at higher educational institutions and the level of self-examination and self-control play an important role (Naumov&Kovalenko&Savin, 2017; Gryshova&Zamlynskyi&Shestakovska, 2017).

We suggest a conceptual scheme of the mechanism of ensuring the quality of higher educational institutions’ work (Fig. 1).

The novelty of the proposed mechanism lies in the consumer-oriented approach to ensuring the quality of educational activities. The consumer is the main subject who forms the request, determines the requirements to the quality of educational services and evaluates the final result. Therefore, the process of ensuring the quality of educational activities should begin with the study of consumer inquiries, needs and requirements for educational services, and finish with the confirmation of the level of maximum satisfaction of consumer needs.

The internal factors also directly affect the quality of educational activities. They can be objective and subjective. The objective factors that determine the quality of educational processes and outcomes are the goals and objectives of higher educational institutions, internal regulations and instructions, a potential and possibilities of using them by an educational institution. First of all, the responsibility of those who carry out and control them is the responsibility of subjective influencers: the leadership of an educational institution at all levels, teachers, and, in addition, applicants as the educational process participants, whose learning outcomes also depend on their consciousness and self-organization.

The main elements of the mechanism of internal assurance of the quality of educational activities are as follows: the strategy of continuous improvement of the quality of a higher educational institution’s work, the policy in the field of quality and the procedures as for its provision, legal instruments and methods of a quality system.

It is a question of the technology of preparing competitive graduates according to a relatively new professional standard - a competence passport, which is formed with the help of employers, who can be used for fruitful cooperation by the State Employment Centers and the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy. At the same time, the National Agency for the Quality Assurance of Higher Education should organize the development of such standards with the participation of different subjects who have, one way or another, the interest in the training of qualified specialists at higher educational institutions.

The results of the experiment conducted in the framework of this study were determined by comparing all graduates without exception (more precisely, the actual indicators of their achievements) with the parameters of the layout of the passport of manager’s competencies (Fig. 2).

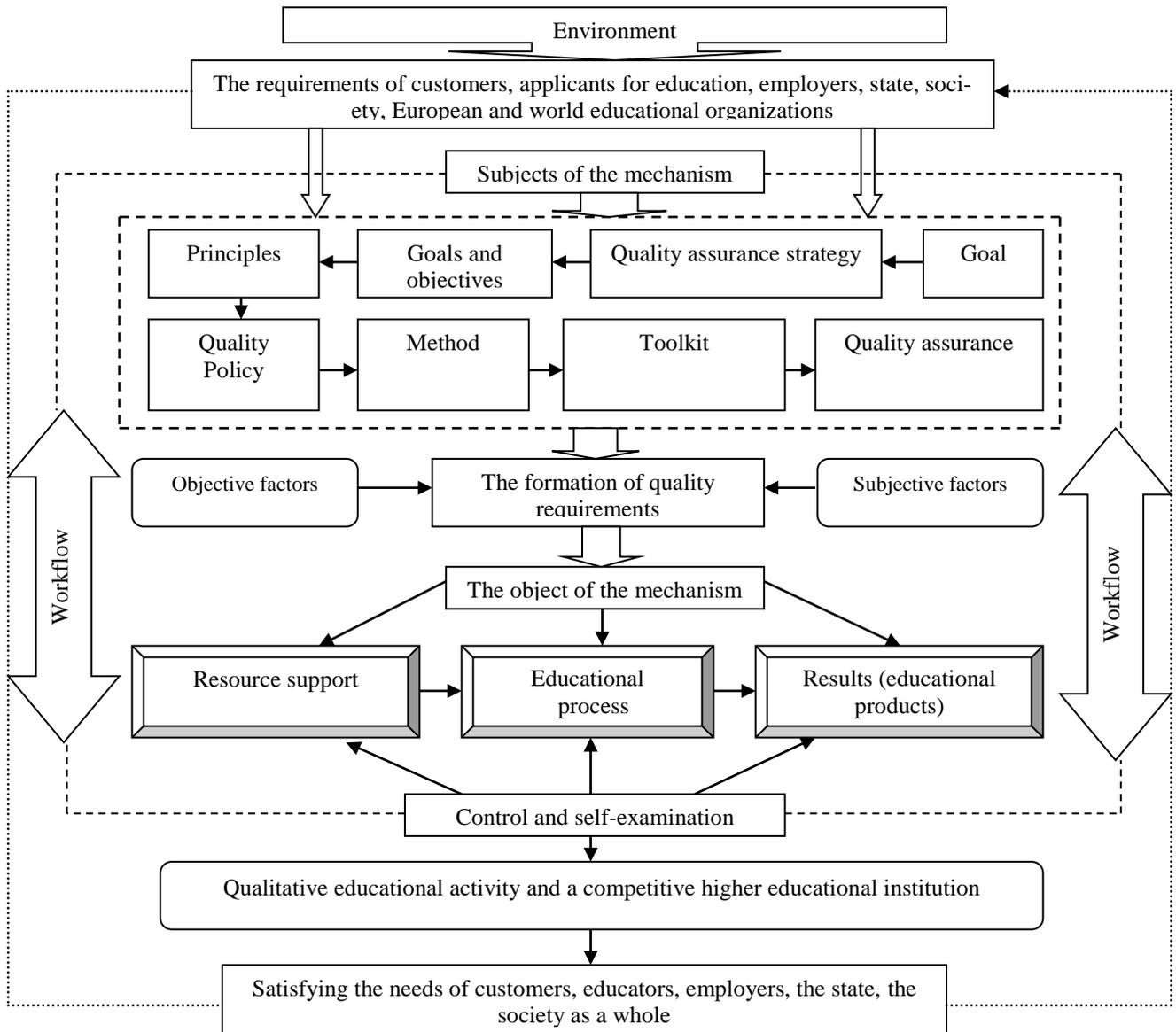


Fig. 1. The Conceptual Scheme of the Mechanism of Ensuring the Quality of Higher Educational Institutions' Work

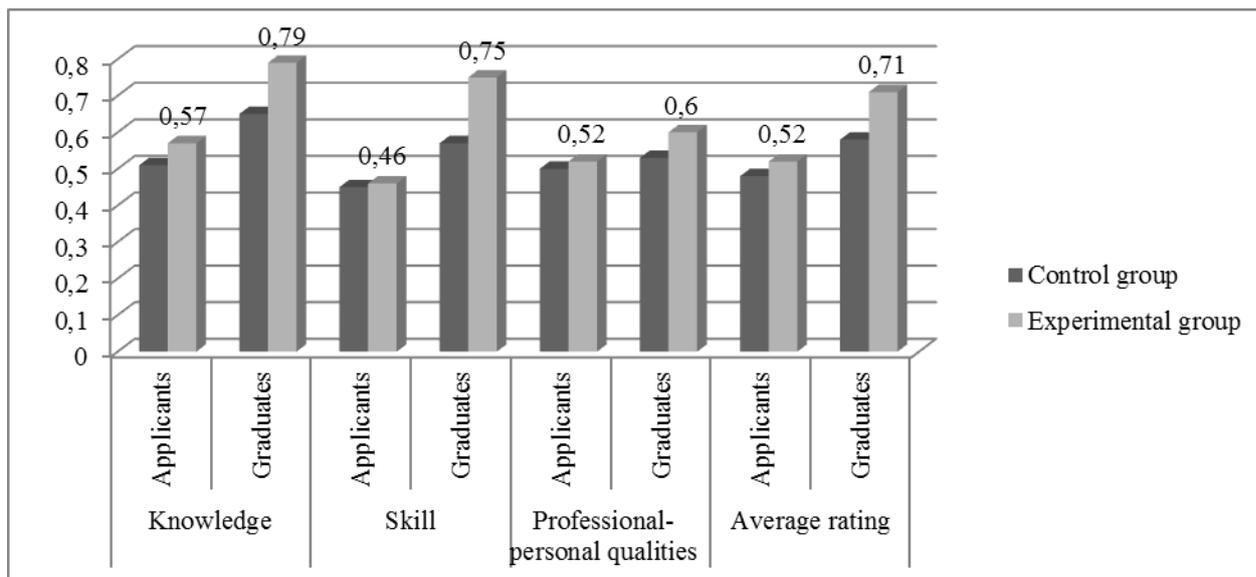


Fig. 2. The Quality of Training of Managers of Organizations (in qualimetric units)

Consequently, during the studies in the experimental group, the self-improvement of students has become more extensive, which has contributed to raising their level of competitiveness and will promote their self-realization in work. With these indicators, we can draw the following conclusions: firstly, the indicators of the availability of professional and personal qualities for the entrants of all groups are approximately the same, that is, they differ little from each other; and secondly, they sometimes differ significantly from the layout of the passport of competencies (0.80); thirdly, during the years of study, the indicators of the presence of significant professional and personal qualities of the graduates in comparison with the entrants have increased, especially in the experimental group, but are still lagging significantly behind (-0.20) from the corresponding parameter of the layout of the passport of manager's competencies. The presented technology of improving the quality of higher education through the improvement of the quality of educational activities of a higher educational institution with the participation of the National Agency is based on a powerful methodological basis in the form of a quadratic approach: human-centered, systemic, competence and synergetic. Since the manocentric approach is fundamental and its core is the promotion of self-realization of the individual, it is very important in the higher educational institution to teach only those who according to their professional and personal qualities correspond to the chosen profession.

Taking into account the requirements of the society, the state must determine its position regarding the decentralization of higher education. It follows that by the modernization of the management of the quality of the educational sphere it is envisaged: the optimization of organizational and managerial structures; the change of technologies of implementation of management functions; the introduction of informative computer technologies; the effective redistribution of powers and functions between

local governments and central authorities; the introduction of new ethics in management - an equal partnership style of relationships, the refusal of petty care and declarative communication; the change of methods and forms of control, the focus on advanced, subsidiary control, raising its competence, the focus on the final result; the improvement of the procedure of accreditation, certification and licensing of educational institutions; the organization of regional and central systems of monitoring the quality of provided educational services; the democratization of the procedure of the appointment of the leadership of educational institutions; the retraining and training of managers of different levels; the involvement of talented youth in the management (Baimuratov, 2015).

Another modern mechanism for ensuring the quality of higher education can become the state and public administration. The implementation of such a mechanism is ensured by the functioning of specialized accreditation commissions - public organizations that develop tools and methods for assessing the quality and check the quality of education. The competence of these agencies should include the training and selection of the experts who will carry out inspections, and the publication of the results of inspections, performance analysis, the prospects and problems of the quality education systems. The application of such a mechanism for managing the quality of higher education is due to the fact that the evaluation will be conducted by independent organizations that will not represent someone's private interests and will primarily protect the consumer. Taking into account the current trends in the modernization of the state mechanisms of ensuring the quality of higher education, we can state that in Ukraine there is a need to implement such a type of managing the quality of higher education (Gryshova, Nikoljuk, Shestakovska, 2017).

We offer our own concept of ensuring the quality of higher education in Ukraine, according to which the cul-

ture of public control is based on the quality of education, which provides open reporting to the society of the participants of educational processes regarding their own scientific and academic achievements, verification of their reliability and assessment of the importance of these achievements by the society by their own criteria of values that may be somewhat different for particular interested groups or individuals depending on their educational needs, in a transparent distribution of resources among all participants in the sphere of higher education according to the results of assessment of their achievements, including pre-agreed criteria at the national level.

The most important measures as for the effective functioning of the mechanism of ensuring the quality of educational activities in higher educational institutions are as follows:

1. The definition of the national concept of quality on the basis of the best European achievements and the triangle of knowledge. Modern Ukrainian experts are not able to name either general requirements to the quality of education, or generally accepted definition that fully meets the modern needs of Ukraine. That is why it is urgently necessary to develop a model of the system of national and general properties that would characterize the quality of higher education. Such a model should be discussed and disseminated at the national level. Its adoption is important not only by the Ukrainian society, but especially by its academic part.

2. Facilitating the development of their own paths of the evolution of higher educational institutions, taking as the basis the global concept of unique systems of the values that take into account the goals and specifics of their activities. Each higher educational institution must develop its own unique strategy of evolution with the obligatory consideration of the common national system of values with the basic demands of the society and the specifics of their work. The developed strategy will present a model of a new system of values, which will consist of a significant set of properties that reproduce the quality of higher education. The developed models for the transparency of education and the dissemination of best practices should be characterized by openness and full access for an external observer. In this way it should increase the level of confidence to the participants with a high level of efficiency based on their own value system and form the groups of participants of higher education with shared views on the quality and interests of education.

3. The development of transparent procedures for ensuring the quality of higher education in accordance with the chosen value system. For different institutions of higher education, especially varied types, procedures can be different. The process of monitoring the quality should be conducted with the participation of an independent agency that will assess the activities of a higher educational institution in accordance with the global

concept of national quality and the system of values of higher educational institutions. Indeed, the agency must be a member of the ENQA to confirm its independence and reliable status and to receive important services from the European Quality Assurance Association (Higher Education Quality Assurance Association). The involvement of the international experts in monitoring procedures is mandatory.

Conclusions

In order to improve the understanding of the process of ensuring the quality of educational activities, a mechanism of its provision has been developed that determines the interaction between the components of the system of internal and external environment. In particular, the attention is focused on the strategies of continuous improvement of quality; the policy of higher educational institutions; resource support; the organization of educational process; the control and analysis of the quality of educational activities at all stages and levels.

Since the key result of the quality of higher educational institutions' work is a competitive graduate, the main direction of the functioning of the National Agency for Assurance the Quality of Education is divided into two aspects. The first one is a comprehensive assistance to the graduates of higher educational institutions through the organization of adequate standards for each specialty; the second aspect is the control of educational activity of higher educational institutions namely in this direction and the responsibility for the level of competitiveness of graduates together with the higher educational institution. The first aspect is related to the organization for each specialty of the professional standards of a new format by the National Development Agency named the passports of competencies, which are formed with the help of employers through the state employment centers (the latter have departmental work with employers). The passport of the competence must be brief and meaningful and contain the following sections:

1. The level of requirements to professional personal qualities of a specialist.
2. The level of requirements to actual knowledge.
3. The level of requirements to actual skills.

The use of qualimetry makes it possible to measure the "level" quantitatively and present the components of a professional standard in the form of parameters. The comparison of the real achievements of graduates with the parameters of the passport of competencies itself provides information on the quality of educational activities of higher educational institutions, which will allow to manage the process of improving their work in the future effectively. The second aspect is related to the control of educational activities in this area through monitoring the implementation of professional standards, as well as through licensing and accreditation.

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МЕХАНІЗМ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ НАВЧАЛЬНОЇ ДІЯЛЬНОСТІ ЗАКЛАДІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

У статті обґрунтовано особливості функціонування механізму забезпечення якості освітньої діяльності вищих навчальних закладів. На сучасному етапі в Україні активно відбувається процес інтеграції вітчизняної системи вищої освіти в європейський і світовий освітній простір, здійснюється модернізація освітньої діяльності у контексті європейських вимог. А отже, забезпечення якості освітньої діяльності сьогодні виходить на перше місце серед завдань вищих навчальних закладів і є одним із критеріїв ефективності його управління. Метою статті є обґрунтування теоретико-технологічного напрямку підвищення якості освітньої діяльності вищих навчальних закладів у контексті формування відповідного механізму. Завданнями статті є розробка науково-методичних положень щодо функціонування механізму управління системою забезпечення якості освітньої діяльності вищих навчальних закладів та проведення експериментального дослідження, що дозволить ідентифікувати напрями підвищення якості вищої освіти в Україні. При виконанні дослідження використано експертні методи, зокрема метод анкетування. Запропоновано концептуальну схему механізму забезпечення якості освітньої діяльності вищих навчальних закладів та визначено, що на ефективність його функціонування впливають чинники зовнішнього і внутрішнього середовища. Обґрунтована технологія підвищення якості вищої освіти за участю Національного агентства, яка базується на потужній методологічній основі у вигляді квадрати підходів: людиноцентричного, системного, компетентнісного та синергетичного. Зазначено, що новітнім механізмом забезпечення якості вищої освіти може стати державно-громадське управління. Визначено заходи щодо ефективного функціонування механізму забезпечення якості освітньої діяльності у вищих навчальних закладах.

Ключові слова: вища освіта, навчальний процес, конкурентоспроможність освіти, якість освіти, освітня діяльність, механізм.

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