

Problems and Approaches to Monitoring of Employer Satisfaction with Quality of University Graduates

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Abstract—The article describes the experience of creation and introduction of the Kuban State University of Technology system of monitoring employers' satisfaction with the quality of training of graduates using the method of questionnaire survey of employers. Monitoring employers' requirements is systemic and involves identifying respondents' opinions about the suitability of the graduate to the requirements of employers, identifying the most problematic areas in the training of graduates in order to subsequently implement timely corrective actions. The authors note a number of problems related to the development and implementation of a system for monitoring the satisfaction of employers with the quality of graduate training: the lack of clear requirements for employers to train young professionals and the need for annual monitoring of the main employers of the regional labor market. There are also problems of the methodological plan, such as the need to develop a questionnaire consisting of invariant and variant blocks and the definition of criteria for the level of satisfaction of employers with the preparation of university graduates who meet basic competencies, taking into account the requirements of state educational standards. It is noted that the monitoring of employers' requirements allows to overcome the gap between the level of training of young specialists in higher education and the demands of the modern labor market, and to increase the competitiveness of university graduates.

Keywords—*quality monitoring system, Employer Satisfaction, vocational training of university graduates.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the quality of education is impossible without the implementation of continuous monitoring of stakeholders, including employers. So one of the main directions of modernization of the system of higher professional education is the maximum correspondence of the content of education with the needs of employers and the requirements of an innovative economy.

Interest in the requirements of employers regarding the quality of training graduates of higher education arose in connection with changes in the nature of the relationship between higher education institutions and enterprises. The main customer and consumer of graduates becomes not a state, as before, but a lot of independent companies. And they are increa-

singly determining the content and orientation of vocational training, formulating a clear request for specific competencies of the graduate of the university. Employers are gradually becoming not only customers who form these or other requests, but also active participants in the development of education.

In addition, the quality of graduate training is one of the main indicators determining the competitiveness of the university, therefore, the positioning of the university in the market of educational services depends crucially on the effectiveness of its interaction with employers. To do this, it is necessary to monitor the satisfaction of employers with the quality of vocational training of graduates. This monitoring is a system of observations specially organized in the university for the state of satisfaction of employers with the quality of graduate training and its ability to influence the quality assurance of the educational process of the university. The creation and implementation of a system for monitoring the satisfaction of employers with the quality of graduate training makes it possible to make managerial decisions based on the facts of analysis of information received from an external consumer. Aggregated monitoring information can help build a system of warning and corrective actions.

Monitoring in the strategic context is designed to analyze in a comprehensive manner the state of interaction between educational institutions and business structures (employers) in the field of labor market policies, methods of solving employment problems. In the context of identifying the current state and trends in the development of interaction between employers and universities, it becomes possible to predict the models of such interaction, to develop a system for collecting and processing information, and to build an effective system for managing this interaction in feedback mode.

Monitoring employers' requirements is a systemic and includes:

- identification of respondents' opinions on the results of the university educational services (on the compliance of the graduate's competence with the declared requirements);

- identification of the most problematic areas in the training of graduates in order to implement timely corrective actions.

Thus, a closed cycle of interaction between the university and the employer is formed: identification of the level of the employer's satisfaction with the final product (quality of graduate training) – identification of the main problem areas in the graduate training – making adjustments to the educational process – new research of the employer satisfaction.

Awareness of the importance of constant interaction with stakeholders (including employers) has led to the creation and implementation of a quality monitoring system in the Kuban State Technological University (KubSTU). The monitoring system is maximally focused on the solution of the main task of the university - providing and improving the quality of educational services. The objects of consumer monitoring are internal consumers (entrants, students, graduates, teachers and university staff), and external consumers (employers).

Providing feedback to consumers of educational services is carried out with the help of sociological research. For this purpose, KubSTU established the Sociological Research Center (CSI). The main goal of the CSI is the sociological analysis of the various activities of the university, the establishment of feedback between participants in the educational process, external consumers and the administration of the university. Since 2004, the CSI has established work on the following annual sociological research: «Teacher through the eyes of a student», «The entrant of KubSTU», «Satisfaction of KubSTU students with the process of studying at the university», «Evaluation of the quality and nature of training by graduates of KubSTU», «Evaluation of educational work at the university by students of KubSTU», «Satisfaction with the work in the university of the teaching staff, administrative and managerial staff and the staff of the providing services». A special place is occupied by the research «Degree of Employer's Satisfaction with the quality of training for graduates of KubSTU» (implemented from 2005 to the present time).

This study provides a link between employers and KubSTU, allows to implement constant monitoring of the training of specialists, bachelors and masters, as a result of which curricula are adjusted, the "pain points" of the quality of education are defined, and identifies those areas of training that are needed by employers. The correlation of theoretical and practical knowledge, the realization of the acquired competencies in practice is the problem that is in the sphere of constant attention of both the employer and the leadership of KubSTU. The special interest of employers is manifested as the conduct of various kinds of practices (production, information, familiarization practices), because it is in the system of practices that students show knowledge acquired during the learning process.

To study the opinions of employers in KubSTU used questionnaire method. The questionnaire includes blocks of questions on the knowledge of university graduates, their skills and personal qualities, and also includes an appeal to employers to make open proposals and comments on the quality of vocational training at the university. The questionnaire allows employers, in addition to standardized assessments, to express their opinion in a free form, which often reveals their attitude to

those aspects of graduate preparation that the developer of the questionnaire did not envisage in view of subjective circumstances. Due to this structure of the questionnaire it becomes possible to know the opinion of employers on the quality of training on criteria that are relevant for the university and to identify those quality criteria that employers themselves consider important

It is impossible to ignore a number of problems related to the development and implementation of a system for monitoring the satisfaction of employers with the quality of training graduates. Here are just some of them:

- 1) Not all employers can clearly articulate their expectations with regard to the training of future staff, and often do not participate in the development and updating of educational programs for specific areas of training.

- 2) Problems of the methodical plan: the need to develop a questionnaire of the employer, consisting of two parts: an invariant (uniform for all areas of training) and a variable one, including one set of indicators with specific content, depending on the direction of graduate training; determination of the list of satisfaction indicators for the training of graduates in the employer's questionnaire on the basis of the allocation of key competences (based on the newest GEF, and considering that there is no single classification of competencies for all educational standards, and the same competences in different standards are formulated differently).

- 3) The coverage of employers mainly in the regional labor market and receiving feedback from the same organizations annually.

However, these difficulties are quite manageable and do not detract from the importance of monitoring the satisfaction of employers with the quality of graduate training.

II. CONCLUSION

In general, monitoring the requirements of employers creates prerequisites for overcoming the gap between the level of training of personnel in higher education and the demands of the modern labor market, which makes it possible to increase the competitiveness of graduates of the university by forming their professional competence. All stakeholders have a real opportunity to actively influence the conditions of the organization of the educational process, the content and technology of vocational training, which fully meets the requirements of the federal state standard of higher education.

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