

Regulatory Approach to Formation of Graduates Professional Competences

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ABSTRACT

The article considers the formation of specific models of professional competences of the specialist, based on the requirements of the professional community in the conditions of the modern market. An analysis of the normative and legal framework imposing the necessary requirements to the content of educational programs of the university was carried out. The features of the competency-based approach, which affects systemic changes in the educational sphere of Russia and affects all aspects of its activity: organization of the educational process, interaction of all allocated levels in the education system, development of a new system of evaluation funds according to the level of formation of the required competences, are identified.

Keywords: *competences, models of professional competences, regulatory and legal framework, educational process, competency-based approach, professional competences, monitoring indicators, professional education, higher education, strategic directions, Russian educational standards, education system, the Third Generation of SEP*

1. INTRODUCTION

The mission of the system of the university development strategic directions is to set the main objective of education development aimed at competences formation in demand.

A complex of the most important strategic directions is included in a well-balanced indicator system. The mission representing the strategy of the university and the outcome evaluation is a part of the strategic directions. They help to make managerial decisions or some adjustments, if necessary.

Moreover, it becomes relevant for universities and specialists to form specific models of professional competences to meet the requirements of professional societies. One the one hand, the graduates want to find an occupation connected with their qualification and to continue the professional development during their lives but, on the other hand, employers seek competent employees as the formers prefer long-term recruitments in order to accumulate capital [16]. Such interest of the both sides renders the problem relevant too. Scientists deal with staff capacity first of all to measure the quality of business environment, which means that winning strategies on competitiveness depend on employees' competences in a way [12].

Based on the above, formation of regulatory and legal framework helps to organize changes in the educational process. The main idea of education is to combine fundamental and practical knowledge of graduates, which is a part of the model of professional competences.

Competency-based approach of contemporary State educational standards, educational and intellectual needs, economic, social, and spiritual development of the society should be considered in university educational programs. As far as we are concerned, this factor may result in improvement of the level and quality of teaching, as well as in formation of creative specialists with competences demanded in labor market.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The problem of formation of students' professional competences is broadly discussed by Russian scientists. As according to N.Sh. Valeeva, F.F. Frolova [14], “Successfulness of competence formation of professional self-development depends directly on determination, choice and realization of pedagogical conditions contributing to the effective process and the improvement of knowledge”. T.V. Ledovskaya and N.E. Solynin consider that the logical stage of higher education development in Russia would be the transition of the modern education system to the formation of universal competences of students. The development process of educational standards of the second generation to the third one is due to the education in general and its outcomes in particular being systemic and sustainable. So, it can be asserted that pedagogical system of formation and evaluation of educational outcomes is coherent [22].

O. S. Andreeva, O. A. Selivanova, and I. V. Vasiliev emphasize the monitoring indicators of the practical component of the research competence that “have to include evaluation of skills of knowledge application in a

particular situation, evaluation of ability and readiness to act in difficult situations at work, evaluation of specific methods of doing research work, and also evaluation of professional and/or life experience connected with the sphere of occupation” [11].

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is worth mentioning that the development of the main university education programs relies on a legal and regulatory framework containing the necessary requirements to the programs.

Such a legal and regulatory framework on formation of graduates’ professional competences include the following key documents:

- the law on “Education in the Russian Federation”;
- strategy of innovative development of the Russian Federation until 2020;
- state educational standards;
- federal state educational standards(nowadays The Third Generation of SEP);
- requirements of the Bologna system.

Social relations in the sphere of education are regulated by the law on “Education in the Russian Federation”. It ensures state guarantees for rights and liberties in the sphere of education, as well as provides conditions for realization of such rights. The law establishes legal, organizational, and economic foundations of education in Russia (Article 1).

State Duma adopted the new law on “Education” № 273-Ф3 in December 2012, while most of the regulations came into force in September 2013 and the rest of them came into effect in January 2014. Sits of learning had to amend their charters until 2016 in order to implement new standards and adjust educational activities in accordance with the new law.

The law on “Education” № 273-Ф3 is a compilation of two previous laws – on “Education” of 1992 and on “Higher and Post-Graduate Education” of 1996 – and a number of regulatory and legal acts on education in force. 4

The conceptual framework of the law changed because of the introduction of several new terms such as educational organization, organization providing education, relations in the sphere of education etc.

The idea of “education during the whole life” is clearly seen in the new law as it describes interconnected and interrelated stages (steps) of educational system. The first stage is preschool education regulated by Federal SEP.

Specialists single out the following basic terms and conditions that determine changes [25]:

- preschool education is the separate first stage in the educational system of the Russian Federation;
- the annual performance monitoring of public and private universities becomes mandatory;
- the results of the Unified State Examination are valid for 5 years which gives a chance to start higher

education for those who was not enrolled at university after school;

- university admission for beneficiaries is changed – the established quota for people with disabilities is up to 10%. As for the other categories, they may attend preparatory classes for free. This opportunity is given only once and offers advantages for the further application;
- municipalities are obliged to provide a place in the first-year class at school for each child;
- individual needs must be considered – inclusive education, education for gifted children etc.;
- the State Examination (State Final Certification) for the ninth-year students becomes mandatory. Regional authorities are responsible for organization of the examination, assignment materials for which are supplied by federal authorities.

It is important to emphasize that the special attention in the Russian legislation on higher education is paid to the need of development of graduates’ universal competences. Among the most important characteristics of an educated person described in the federal law on “Education” there is integration in modern society.

The federal law on “Higher and Post-Graduate Education” also added to the important characteristics “the ability to work and live in modern civilized and democratic world”, “citizenship”, as well as leadership, autonomy, and creativity.

As a result, the universities started to implement the educational programs based on the Federal SEP of Higher Professional Education in 2011-2012 and on the Federal SEP of Higher Education in 2016 in accordance with all the changes that include the competency-based approach in the form of competences development.

It should be noted that the contemporary Federal SEP of the Third Generation became the normative foundation for basic and professional competences formation of a modern individual [18, 21]. According to the Third Generation of Federal SEP of Higher Education, a Master has to know not only how to set professional goals, but also how to suggest creative ways to solve problems and take part in realization of such goals. It is what differentiate a Master – a specialist of the second educational stage – from a Bachelor – a specialist of the first educational stage. A Master usually works toward professional goals [18, 21, 28].

The basic principles of the Bologna Declaration that Russian standards of the new generation conform to are:

- modular system of the main educational programs;
- establishment of the system of credits for assessment;
- orientation to the results of the education that show professional competences;
- mobility for students and teachers in the educational system etc.

Employers’ associations taking part in the introduction of the new professional standards is a prerequisite for the development of future standards, formation of the models of graduates’ professional competences. It leads to the higher requirements for the professional training of

specialists mainly aimed at the development of such qualities as self-government, self-development, and creativity.

Russia joined the Bologna Process in 2003. Since that time, educational system reform is geared towards establishment of a system corresponding to those of the European countries. "Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement" is one of the main principles of the Bologna Declaration [20]. Establishment of the European area of higher education and promotion of the European system of higher education world-wide is another main principle.

The Bologna Declaration includes seven main principles which are [26]:

- Adoption of a system of comparable degrees to promote European citizens employability and the international competitiveness of the European system of education.

- Adoption of a system based on two main cycles – undergraduate and graduate. The first cycle shall last minimum three years, and the second one should lead to the master and/or doctorate degree.

- Establishment of a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system – as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility that gives students the right to choose disciplines.

- Promotion of mobility of students, teachers and administrative staff through recognition and valorization of periods spent in a European context working. Establishment of standards of transnational education.

- Promotion of European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies.

- Promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, interinstitutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programs of study, training and research.

- Introduction of interinstitutional systems of quality assurance and attraction of students and employers for external assessment of higher education institutions work.

In view of the above it should be stated that the Bolognian educational programs have three main characteristics [26]:

- competency-based approach (orientation to the results expressed in competences);

- modular based educational programs;

- placement of academic load according to the ECTS system.

It worth mentioning that all the three characteristics are interconnected and must be considered while establishing an educational program.

Thus, the implementation of the competency-based approach leads to significant changes in the system of education in Russia. It mostly affects higher education institutions, as it deals with organization of the educational process, interrelation of all the educational levels (continuous education), and establishment of new assessment system based on the required competences.

Scientists treat the professional competence as a quality standard for professional training [13, 23, 24]. It requires integration of competences to:

- the educational system (State Examination Committees (SEC), State Certification Commission, Uniform State Exam, SEP etc.);

- modes (for students, graduates of the following systems – Primary and Secondary Vocational Education and Higher Education);

- requirements for applicants;

- different competitions such as "The teacher of the year", "The best university professor" etc. [23, p.183].

The Board of Educational Methodological Association in close collaboration with employers (in forms of consultations, sociological surveys of employers and recent graduates) determine the main competences for educational programs of higher education including each specialization and degree [24,26]. Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation adopted the competences in the Federal SEP.

It is important for a university to determine the features of training programs for a specialization to suit the needs. That is why the regional labor market requirements should be studied.

It is desirable to set the main requirements on graduates' professional competences formation while establishing and promoting the main curriculum based on the Federal SEP of the Higher Education:

- the activity-based approach becomes to dominant one;

- competences is a complex psychological unity of knowledge and skills that helps to deal with difficult practical tasks;

- the opposition between the subject-based structure of educational programs and the activity-based approach of the education leads to problem of combination of the two principles in the educational programs;

- the competency-based approach presupposes significant changes in the educational system, technologies, content, interconnection between different levels in the system of Higher Education, modular-based structure of curriculums, as well as in formation of the credit system and a new competence assessment system.

The competency-based approach occupies an important place in the educational system, and it is especially important for the new Federal SEP establishment since 2009. Such an approach sets the requirements on general cultural, professional, and basic competences formation.

With regard to the above, models of professional competences become highly important for the educational process. In view of the new requirements of the developing knowledge economy, it would be relevant to analyze researches of Russian scientists on formation and implementation of models of professional competences based on the competency approach.

O.V. Smirnova provides a traditional model including: a) responsibilities of a professional, b) professional activities, c) qualities of a specialist, d) knowledge and skills of a professional. According to O.V. Smirnova, V.M. Sokolov,

and O.V. Lyubimova, the Federal SEP is the quality standard for the main educational programs that set requirements for competences.

I.V. Kalyagina introduces an integrative model of professional competences of a specialist based on the culturally oriented approach to education. It constitutes a system that may solve an important problem of interrelation and interconnection of the education and the culture. Among the main competences, the author highlights the creative competence that is significant for the educational process and for the future profession.

As the authors say, this model is supposed to reduce the time lag between technologies update (2-3 for some spheres) and the period of specialists' training (12-14 years to be a professional) [19].

As far as we are concerned, such model is relevant, but it has a drawback – research, gnostic, and creative competences are not separated. In our opinion, the scientists define the three competences as the ability of a specialist to creatively apply and interpret knowledge and skills. We have no comments on the rest of the definitions of the competences.

O.D. Golovina and O.A. Vorobyova introduce a model on competences formation of a professional for a modern manager, aimed at those who finished compulsory education and have a desire to improve their managerial competence to suit the requirements of modernized economics of the country.

Such model is relevant because it deals with one of the most important constituents of business success – high qualification of the managers and implementation of new technologies that are actively developing in Russia. The model is made since the European classification. Due to the fact that the Russian labor market needs highly qualified managers, the competences introduced in the model – cognitive, functional, personal, and ethic ones – need to be updated.

Thus, the parameters of the modern model of competences should reflect the main characteristics of a specialist that are demanded at a certain period in the business sphere.

There are not so many professionals with the developed competences in demand in the labor market nowadays, notwithstanding the fact that contemporary programs of higher education are aimed at formation of professional and personal competences necessary for a young specialist to become a demanded professional. There are already existing obstacles that should be overcome in order to reach the main goal of formation of the necessary competences of a graduate [17, 18, 26].

The “Modern model of education” oriented towards solving problems of innovative development of economy until 2020 [21] states that enterprises (employers, business) in the Ural economic region need competent professionals that would be able to work under changing market conditions. Therefore, the programs of the higher education must conform to demands of the regional.

4. PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This article is practically significant as the results obtained and the recommendations can help to improve the quality of students' training on relevant educational programs, as well as to be used to create models of professional competences of a specialist.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The measures discussed above may be used to adjust models of professional competences of a specialist.

Moreover, the policy framework of a university development must be focused on formation of the essential professional competences of graduates, considering the demands of the economic region such as innovative thinking, professional skills, ability to make strategic and operational decisions.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study comes to the following conclusions.

Firstly, strategies of university development must be conformed to the legal and regulatory framework on education that prioritize the formation of the models of professional competences of graduates.

Secondly, it is essential to form institutional forms of interaction between education, business, authorities and the State. Person's development and professional competences, such as knowledge and skills that is a precious human resource that constitute an important part of a person's capital, are treated not as a factor of the development, but as its aim. Education reforms conform to such an idea that is recognized by the State and authorities.

Thirdly, a collaborative work of a number of professors with domain-specific knowledge, of specialists in methodology of educational system development, of managers, and employers should be done to formulate the professional competences demanded by the business environment and to make a model of competences;

Fourthly, a most important task of the modern higher education in this country is to form a new approach to defining objectives, quality criteria of higher education, and receiving the findings. A most essential quality indicator of education at a university is the professional competence of a graduate.

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