

ECQEMC 2021**The Fourth Annual International Symposium “Education and City: Quality Education for Modern Cities”****ACCREDITATION AND TEACHER EDUCATION: A CROSS-NATIONAL CASE STUDY**

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ivn@ivnikitin.xyz**Abstract**

Development of special procedures for teacher training accreditation forms a way of ensuring high quality teacher training that is common among countries to varying degrees. The article describes particularities of national models of such accreditation based on experience of five developed English-speaking countries. The research is designed as an exploratory comparative case study of national approaches to accreditation. One of the important common features of the countries, though not strictly related to program or institutional accreditation, is related to availability of special qualification conditions for obtaining a licence to practice as teacher. Stated requirements are implemented mainly in the form of an examination for admission, most often aimed at identifying the teacher candidate's literacy and numeracy degree. All countries chosen for analysis provide some form of program accreditation in the field of higher education, and most countries implement separate accreditation procedures for teacher education. Among the reviewed countries only Hong Kong applies the approach in which all powers in the field of accreditation of universities and programs are concentrated in a single agency - in other countries the "market approach" to accreditation of universities and programs, i.e. participation of various organizations, including foreign ones, in this activity is widespread to a greater or lesser extent. In addition, it is common for leading universities to be granted with the right to implement numerous self-accreditation programs.

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1. Introduction

Educational studies feature many thorny issues and questions of charged debates. One of such is undoubtedly the matter of quality of teachers training with its well-known cliché about those who can't teach teaching teachers. A cliché so rooted in subject matter, in fact, that it can be found among the opening statements in a textbook on adult education, suggesting also that this is how the things have been for the last 40 or 50 years (Corder, 2008). In the last decade, however, societal demands on the quality of teacher education have caused an open conflict in some countries, widely discussed in literature (following the mass media) in terms of a so-called war on teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2017; MacBeath, 2012). The recent wave of scrutiny against teacher education is related to the new role of international monitoring (PISA, TIMSS, PIRLS, TALIS) and its confirmation of hypotheses about the existing relationship between teacher characteristics and quality of educational outcomes of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

Considering the increasing importance of international monitoring and the growing number of participants, the acuteness and geography of the "war on teachers" is also likely to grow. It is noteworthy, however, that in Russia, with its long history of participation in stated monitorings, the criticism of teacher education is still based on somewhat different grounds. The Russian literature is dominated by the idea of a "double negative selection" of teachers which was actualized in the 1990s and still persists to some extent today, in which teacher training institutions gather the weakest students (first selection) and the weakest graduates of these institutions work at schools (second selection) (Lyubimov, 2005; Nagovitsyn et al., 2020). We can assume that, similar to other countries, we have yet to experience a wave of public criticism of teacher preparation quality when the data received from PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS, in which Russia participates, will be widely discussed in public, not only in scientific and professional terms.

Returning to the cliché mentioned at the beginning of the article, it should be noted that negative public or academic perception of teacher training and objective assessment of teacher training quality represent two different issues. There is no unequivocal answer in Western scholarly discourse as to which factors caused the "academic erosion" of 20th century teacher training and how deep it was (Murray, 2000). One of the measures taken to combat this erosion and to enhance the general image of teacher training among academics and lay public has been related to development of accreditation systems for higher education in general and teacher education in particular (Murray, 2000).

2. Problem Statement

The problem addressed by the study is twofold. On one level, there is a clear evidence that implementing specific accreditation procedures improves both quality of teacher education and its public and professional outlook (Jalal et al., 2020; Makhoul, 2019; Murray, 2000; Qin, 2021; Solbrette & Sugrue, 2014). The general image of teaching as a profession in Russia is believed to be quite bleak (Lyubimov, 2005), though it is yet unchallenged on the grounds of quality of teacher training. On the other one, there are virtually no accreditation procedures specific to teacher education in Russia beyond general state-regulated accreditation unitary for all university programs. Moreover, there have been some

tentative sights of political will to challenge current approach to accreditation in this country by implementing peer-accreditation (Volkov & Melnik, 2018) or levelled accreditation (Agranovich, 2018), to name a few. Thus, now is an opportunity to discuss the future of accreditation of teacher education in Russia, firstly by providing a case study of national accreditation approaches, which is the scope of this paper.

3. Research Questions

Pursuing the aforementioned scope, the study addresses two research questions:

- What are the peculiarities of national models of implementing accreditation at a higher education level?
- What are the peculiarities of national models (additional procedures, mechanisms, tools) intended for accreditation and applied in relation to teacher education?

4. Purpose of the Study

The study seeks to contribute to the national and international discourse of teacher education accreditation and provide future developments in this field with data on approaches employed by five nations with established accreditation systems.

5. Research Methods

The study employs a theoretical framework proposed by Murray (2000) who sees accreditation as an assessment of capacities of an institution to operate as higher education provider and as such to be called a university. The research is designed as an exploratory comparative case study of national approaches to accreditation. The study provides a general overlook on national accreditation systems in higher education, its objectives and governance, however it is mostly focused on identifying specific traits of teacher education accreditation

6. Findings

Below are the results of the study, which analyzed foreign experience of accreditation of higher education, including teacher education, in the context of five countries:

- United Kingdom
- United States of America
- Australia
- Canada
- Hong Kong

When conducting the research and answering the research questions outlined above, it was determined that an important feature of national teacher education quality assurance systems is represented by qualifying conditions for getting a licence to practice as teacher. Although such "individual" accreditation contrasts with the generally accepted domains of accreditation - program and institutional ones (Murray, 2000) - it can be found in some works on the issue of accreditation (Harvey,

2004). As a part of our research, we decided to consider an individual domain by conducting an additional country-by-country analysis of the issue.

6.1. United Kingdom

6.1.1. General characteristics of the accreditation system applied in the field of higher education

The primary regulator of higher education quality in the country is the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAAHE). QAAHE is an independent (not controlled by the government) publicly funded organization, the competence of which includes development of procedures for external control of educational programs applied in universities (QAAHE does not actually conduct any inspections). In order to implement higher education programs in Great Britain, the university shall develop an educational quality assurance policy, which meets general requirements imposed on the policy by QAAHE. Correspondingly, the subject of accreditation in the form of examination implemented by QAAHE is to determine how correctly (fully and systematically) this policy is fulfilled by the university in practice (Hanh, 2020).

The accreditation review procedure itself may differ from program to program, but in general it begins with self-assessment of an educational organization, in which the university prepares a report on the same sections and issues on which external experts will later work, identifying, among other things, areas for improvement of educational quality. After that QAAHE organizes selection and training of experts who will work in a particular university, determining compliance of the university policy and results of self-assessment procedures with the actual state of affairs. The outcome of the experts' work is a public report that includes, among other things, experts' assessment of confidence in individual judgments (complete, partial, minimal), best practices and recommendations for improving the system of education quality assurance (Kumar et al., 2020).

6.1.2. Features of accreditation in the field of teacher education

Accreditation of higher education programs leading to getting the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) follows the pattern described above. There is also a course available for entry into the profession through schools implementing various Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programs, and the UK Government (Department for Education) is responsible for accrediting such programs. Only schools rated "good" and "excellent" by the government agency Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) are allowed to participate in the program. Mandatory accreditation is carried out once at the stage of inclusion in the ITE program. In case of a positive decision a school receives two-year organizational and methodological support from the state (Ofsted, 2021). After the end of the two-year period, ITE implementation parameters are included in the list of indicators monitored by Ofsted as a part of periodic inspections (Staub, 2019).

6.1.3. Admission to the teaching profession

Before April 1, 2020, all teachers applying for QTS had been required to take the Professional Skills Test, which had included the Literacy, Numeracy, and ICT sections (Foster, 2019). Currently, it has been envisioned that tests of this nature should be administered independently by institutions of higher education at the admission to the curriculum or at some point in the curriculum. Awarding of QTS is possible through a professional examination implemented by various agencies (e.g., for teacher candidates with the credentials issued in another country), which is based on peer review of portfolios and demonstration lessons (Foster, 2019).

6.2. United States of America

6.2.1. General characteristics of the accreditation system applied in the field of higher education

It is common to distinguish three levels of accreditation in the country. Regional accreditation is institutional, mostly available to non-profit universities (i.e., organizations that run graduate and PhD programs). National accreditation - also institutional, available to both universities and colleges, but usually holds a single major area of study. Specialized accreditation is often programmed (or institutional at the department or school level within a university) (Kumar et al., 2020).

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation (n.d.) recognizes 19 and 60 organizations for institutional and program accreditation, respectively. Neither at the national nor at the state level are universities formally required to be accredited in order to operate, but they may consider necessary procedures (especially with respect to institutional accreditation) if they are seeking for federal transfers (Romanowski & Alkhateeb, 2020). The vast majority of the nation's higher education institutions and a significant number of higher education programs (8,200 and 44,000 respectively) have been accredited, rather often by more than one organization (Council for Higher Education Accreditation, n.d.).

6.2.2. Features of accreditation in the field of teacher education

At the state level, there are accreditation requirements that individuals seeking to work in specific fields shall consider (Romanowski & Alkhateeb, 2020). In California, for example, a prerequisite for working as a teacher at school is provided by the Commission on Teachers Credentialing (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020). A prerequisite for admission, in turn, is that the candidate holds a degree provided by a university accredited by one of the seven regional accrediting agencies recognized by the Commission (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020).

6.2.3. Admission to the teaching profession

In most states, one of the requirements for teacher candidates is to take an external examination after graduation. More than 40 states approve the Praxis Series (Teach.com, n.d.), administered by the Educational Testing Service of America, the world's largest educational assessment organization, as the only or one of available options for passing an examination.

The Praxis series includes three categories of tests and states may provide different requirements for the set of tests which a person seeking admission to the teaching profession must complete (Larson & Vontz, 2018; Mikeska et al., 2018):

- *Praxis* Core Academic Skills for Educators. The test is administered in three sections (reading, writing and maths) that assess the test taker's literacy and numeracy.
- *Praxis* Subject Assessments. The series includes tests for future teachers in selected disciplines, as well as tests aimed to identify pedagogical skills (more information below).
- *Praxis*® Content Knowledge for Teaching Assessments (CKT). The tests focus on identifying subject knowledge with a particular focus on the knowledge which is applied to teaching in elementary schools.

In some states across the country, there is the choice between ETS products and assessment procedures administered by local organizations. In California, for example, teacher candidates can choose between *Praxis* Core and the California Basic Educational Skills Test (Teach.com, n.d.). The latter has an identical structure to *Praxis* Core and consists of Reading, Mathematics (50 multiple choice questions each) and Writing (2 short essays on suggested topics) sections (Darling-Hammond & Hyler, 2020).

6.3. Australia

6.3.1. General characteristics of the accreditation system applied in the field of higher education

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TESQA) is responsible for registration and accreditation of all higher education programs in the country. All universities in Australia (and some “higher education providers”) are self-accredited, which allows them to implement self-accreditation procedures in relation to all or some of their own educational programs. The status is awarded by TESQA for up to seven years (Kim et al., 2018).

6.3.2. Features of accreditation in the field of teacher education

A specific accreditation procedure for initial teacher education programs is developed by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (a university with public status) (2019). The procedure involves determining whether bachelor degree teacher education programs meet the following standards (Brett et al., 2018):

- Standard 1. Program outcomes
- Standard 2. Program development, design, and implementation
- Standard 3. Access to the program
- Standard 4. Structure and content of the program
- Standard 5. Gaining professional experience
- Standard 6. Evaluation, presentation, and improvement of program outcomes

The procedure is mandatory for application at the individual state level, subject to additional requirements provided by regional organizations responsible for accrediting teacher preparation programs (Bourke, 2019).

6.3.3. Admission to the teaching profession

All graduates of teacher education programs (bachelor degree and master's degree programs) shall take the external Literacy and Numeracy Test for Initial Teacher Education Students (LANTITE) administered by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) (2017) prior to graduation. The test seeks to assess literacy and numeracy of future educators due to the expectation that graduates of teacher preparation programs should be included in the top 30% of the appropriate age group of graduates in terms of literacy and numeracy. The accompanying documentation of the test notes that it is not intended to identify every possible aspect of literacy and numeracy that an educator requires for work; rather, it serves to assess those components that can be checked reliably, considering all limitations of the format of a test as well as for reasons of practicality and expediency (Bardon et al., 2018).

Considering the methodological documentation accompanying the test, an educator's personal reading literacy and numeracy is defined as the ability to understand, evaluate and use written texts for such purposes as participation in the learning community, achieving one's own goals, and developing one's own knowledge and pedagogical potential. Mathematical literacy and numeracy is viewed as the ability to interpret and discuss non-technical mathematical information and apply it in practical situations for the same purposes as reading literacy and numeracy (O'Sullivan, 2020).

6.4. Canada

6.4.1. General characteristics of the accreditation system applied in the field of higher education

At the higher education level, there is no unified national approach to educational quality, including accreditation of organizations and programs (Ramírez & Luu, 2018). Instead, each province provides its own quality assurance system, which may be led by universities, independent organizations, government agencies, or multiple agents included in different categories. However, new university programs are usually approved (accredited) by provincial councils in the field of higher education at least once (before their launch) (Ramírez & Luu, 2018). There is also the tendency of Canadian universities being accredited by U.S. agencies (Ramírez & Luu, 2018).

6.4.2. Features of accreditation in the field of teacher education

Requirements to teacher education program accreditation vary from province to province. At least 2 of the 13 provinces provide uniform regional program requirements and a single agency was determined for additional (professional) accreditation of teacher education programs - Ontario and British Columbia (Government of British Columbia, 2021).

6.4.3. Admission to the teaching profession

The requirement of a separate examination for admission to the profession is uncommon rather than being the norm, but it is applied to educators in some provinces. For example, mathematics teachers in Ontario are required to take a professional exam administered by the Ontario College of Teachers (Ma

et al., 2020). The exam consists of a subject test (50 questions) and a test of the pedagogical theory and key pedagogical regulations (21 questions) (Ma et al., 2020).

6.5. Hong Kong

6.5.1. General characteristics of the accreditation system applied in the field of higher education

The Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ) serves as the accrediting agency in the country. HKCAAVQ accredits all higher education programmes except those taught at organizations on the Programme Area Accreditation (PAA) list (2021). Organizations possessing the PAA status are authorized to develop and implement programs in one or more fields of preparation without additional accreditation carried out by the Board. For organizations possessing the stated status, HKCAAVQ performs periodic institutional accreditation (Kim et al., 2018).

6.5.2. Features of accreditation in the field of teacher education

There are no specific requirements for accreditation of teacher education programs. There are no institutions that have been accredited for teacher education among institutions of higher education (Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications, 2021).

6.5.3. Admission to the teaching profession

There are special examinations available only for teachers of English and Chinese. The Language Proficiency Assessment for Teachers (English Language) exam for English language teachers consists of a test (Reading, Writing, and Listening sections), oral interview and assessment of speech competencies in an open classroom setting (Lam, 2019).

7. Conclusion

Most of the countries reviewed apply a program approach to accreditation. Such "pure" program accreditation exists only in Canada - in the rest of the countries, all or individual universities have the option of self-accreditation, for which they undergo institutional accreditation. Among the reviewed countries "pure" institutional accreditation exists only in Great Britain, where it is carried out in relation to the education quality assurance policy adopted by the university and does not directly affect the programs themselves. In terms of centralization, the most liberal models of accreditation are those adopted in the USA and Canada, where universities provide the greatest opportunity to choose accreditation standards. Hong Kong and Australia have the most unified accreditation system, in which the stated activity is carried out by a single accreditation agency (although in both countries universities possess the possibility to implement self-accreditation programs to a greater or lesser extent). The British model of accreditation can be called "mixed" in this respect, since here a unified agency administers

accreditation procedures, but in fact they are carried out by external experts with participation of universities themselves.

With regard to accreditation of higher teacher education we can conclude that this task is implemented as separate activities not in all countries. Thus, in Great Britain and Hong Kong teacher training programs are accredited according to common procedures with the rest of training areas. However, in each of the remaining three countries there are separate accreditation procedures provided in relation to such programs, and as a rule they are additional rather than substitute. In addition, in all of these countries such procedures are implemented at the regional rather than national level.

None of the reviewed countries found the practice of student assessment activities as part of applied accreditation procedures. Meanwhile, in all countries (with the exception of Great Britain since 2020) there is a practice of conducting an external (non-university) examination prior to taking a teaching position at school. The specified exam can cover the entire group of graduate pedagogues (Australia, USA), as well as specialists who teach individual subjects (Canada, Hong Kong). As a rule, the exam is implemented exclusively in the test format (only in Hong Kong it is supplemented with an oral interview and a practical task). The test specifications vary considerably, but usually cover some aspect of literacy and numeracy (Australia, USA), pedagogical competence (USA, Canada), or subject teacher competence (Canada, Hong Kong). Table 1 provided below summarizes the main areas of analysis by the countries examined.

Table 1. Summary of the analysis results

Country	Accreditation in the field of higher education	Accreditation in the field of teacher education	Admission to the profession
United Kingdom	Mandatory (by a government agency) in the form of a quality assurance policy review	Mandatory by the Department of Education (for school-based programs)	- (The test was abolished in 2020).
	Voluntary (by 60+ agencies)	Mandatory (institutional) applied in most states (teacher certification requirements)	Mandatory in most states: ETS Praxis or equivalent
USA	Mandatory (institutional) - only for getting federal aid	Mandatory (program) at the state level	Mandatory (Literacy and Numeracy Test)
Australia	Mandatory (by a state agency). For universities - self-accreditation (program)	Mandatory in 2 of 13 provinces	- (mandatory for Ontario maths teachers)
Canada	Mandatory - at the stage of new program launching (at the provincial level), subsequently - voluntary	-	Mandatory for teachers of English or Chinese languages
Hong Kong	Mandatory (by a state agency). For some universities - self-accreditation (program)		

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