

SCTCMG 2021
International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of
Modern Globalism»

SOME APPROACHES TO MANAGING THE QUALITY OF
EDUCATION AT UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The educational activity of higher educational institutions can be considered successful when educational programs are implemented with due regard to the trends in development of the labor market and the requirements of the main consumers of educational services and employers. The quality of education is the degree to which the nature, content, conditions and outcomes of the educational activity correspond to the needs and expectations of society and various social groups. The main priority and modern task of the policy in the field of education is the inclusion of consumers of educational services in the assessment of the educational activity and the analysis of consumers' satisfaction degree. To date, the quality of education has gained a great strategic importance in the context of determining the prospects for developing countries and ensuring their security. The need to improve the quality of medical care to the population of the Russian Federation, the optimal use of resources of the healthcare system, and the efficiency of medical care in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation require training of medical specialists. A professional educational program for training specialists, primarily doctors, must meet the requirements of the labor market and professional standards. The authors of the paper focused on the formation of a system for assessing the quality of educational services. The paper analyzes the results of study of the system of internal and external independent assessment of educational programs implemented at the Medical Institute of Chechen State University.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Educational program, external quality assessment, internal quality assessment



1. Introduction

The economic and social conditions of Russian society have changed significantly during the transition to a market economy, which triggered modernization of all sectors, including healthcare, based on the knowledge and high qualifications of specialists. This is evidenced by the decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 7, 2012 No. 598. The quality of medical care to the population of the country, the optimal use of the resources of the healthcare system, and the increased efficiency of health care in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation directly depend on the level of training of medical specialists who know advanced methods of diagnosing and treating, are able to apply the latest achievements of medical science, and can prophylactic measures (Sirotkina et al., 2016).

2. Problem Statement

During transformation of the form and structure of the educational institution, the content of the educational process changes: the third generation educational standards are introduced, the competence-based approach is realized, employers are actively involved, the quality control system of basic educational programs is improved in the conditions of expanding academic freedoms of higher educational institutions. The opportunities for educational mobility of both students and teachers are gradually expanding. As part of the implementation of priority national projects related to higher education, leading universities that use innovative educational programs were supported, a network of federal universities was created, the material and technical base of universities was updated, and talented youth was financially supported (Vishnevsky & Pevnaya, 2011). Determination of the social field of the subjects of the educational process can reveal the following participants: students and their parents, teaching staff, and the labor market represented by employers. A number of regulatory legal acts define the subjects of the educational process as those who are directly involved in training, that is teachers and students; however, in our opinion, the range of participants should be expanded to the above list (Titova, 2011).

3. Research Questions

The quality of educational services is a set of properties and characteristics of the educational process, which imparts it (the process) with the capability to meet the educational needs of specific consumers. In order to satisfy educational needs, the university must define the expected needs and assume unexpected needs of specific consumers (Gaidukova, 2012). No doubt, universities play a key role in the formation of a highly educated labor reserve of the country; however, a personal interest of students in knowledge assimilation, their motivation for mastering of the training program, comprehension of new knowledge, activity in practical classes and, in general, the level of their satisfaction with education services play a decisive role in obtaining high-quality professional training. Thus, the general level of consumers' satisfaction with educational services implies not only the volume and quality of services provided, but also students' satisfaction with their educational activity,

competitiveness and prospects for the implementation of professional knowledge, skills and abilities (Reshetnikov et al., 2015).

4. Purpose of the Study

The mission of the Medical Institute is to improve the quality of life of the population by increasing staffing of the healthcare system of the Chechen Republic through high-quality medical education based on the integration of domestic and foreign achievements in science and practice. Educational programs designed on the basis of a clearly defined mission with regard to the requirements of the federal state educational standard of higher education allow training competent specialists capable of many types of professional activities: medical; organizational and managerial; research, etc. This allows the graduate of the educational program to choose a direction for career growth. When a graduate is oriented towards medical activity, he can find a job in medical institutions after graduating, for example, as a general practitioner, or continue clinical studies and get in-depth training in the field chosen, or apply for administrative positions in healthcare institutions, or carry out research activities in postgraduate programs, prepare and defend a scientific work (dissertation for the degree of candidate, doctor of science). The Institute has all the resources necessary to form professional qualities and achieve the expected results in educational programs in accordance with national and international requirements and the needs of the health sector. The procedure for admission to medical activity in the Russian Federation is established by Federal Law No. 323-FZ On the basics of protecting the health of citizens in the Russian Federation, which establishes the right to carry out medical and pharmaceutical activities in the Russian Federation for persons who have received medical, pharmaceutical or other education in accordance with federal state educational standards and having a diploma of a specialist (Isaeva & Saidulaeva, 2020). To ensure the high quality of educational services and the effective management of the education system as a whole, it is necessary to study not only objective indicators, but also the opinions of interested parties and participants of the educational process. Therefore, the interest of the scientific community and representatives of the labor market in the methods for measuring the quality of educational services is growing (Tyurikov et al., 2019).

5. Research Methods

In this regard, the Medical Institute has a multi-level system for assessing educational programs, which includes an internal assessment of the quality of education and consists of:

- current control of the dean's office over the organization and implementation of the educational process (a monthly report of the departments on the current progress and attendance of students);
- periodic control of the educational and methodological management over the admission of academic groups and the implementation of the approved class schedule in the form of inspection;
- assessment of the quality of the educational process by the standardization and quality department in the form of an internal audit of educational departments and processes;

- participation in the procedures of intermediate assessment by independent experts;
- assessment of the quality of teaching by means of students' questionnaires;
- internal department assessment of the quality of teaching in the form of mutual visits of classes, etc.

Monitoring and assessment of the institute's educational programs is carried out by all interested parties, including employers (representatives of clinical bases, the Ministry of Health of the Chechen Republic, etc.) and alumni. Chief doctors/heads of clinical departments, chief specialists of the Ministry of Health of the Chechen Republic, and representatives of practical medicine are included in the council of the institute and are involved in the development and assessment of educational programs. It should be noted that representatives of the practical sector are chairmen or members of the state examination board. The University focuses on the development of educational expertise and research skills.

The documents regulating the current, intermediate and final assessment of academic progress are available to the public, including supervisory and regulatory bodies, experts and expert communities of the faculty, students and external stakeholders. The state exam is held at an open meeting of the state examination commission, where students, teaching staff, representatives of employers, and expert communities are admitted.

Representatives of the teaching staff of the Institute are members or experts of various councils and commissions established by the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation, the Chechen Republic (expert council, specialized commissions, main commissions, certification commissions, etc.).

No doubt, the activity of clinical departments of medical universities is an attribute of an educational institution. The staff of the departments are mainly clinicians who carry out medical activities and introduce advanced methods of treatment and diagnostics into practice. More than 98 % of the teachers of clinical departments of the Medical Institute of the Chechen State University work in medical institutions of the Chechen Republic, which provides a close relationship of the educational programs with the practical health care and involves students in the work of specialists in the provision of various types of medical care. Thus, medical practitioners are actively engaged in assessing, updating and improving of the educational programs based on the priorities of the healthcare system (Isaeva & Arsaliev, 2020).

The clinical activities and research of the teaching staff are used in teaching and learning. Scientific research is carried out by the staff through participation in research projects funded from national and international sources. The university provides partial or full funding and covers expenses associated with the participation of the staff in various scientific forums. For the purpose of continuous professional development of the teaching staff, with the financial support of the university, the employee can travel abroad to participate in congresses, conferences, seminars and other scientific events. The research results, which are of particular importance for the health care system, are published in national and international scientific journals, or presented as patents for inventions and certificates for innovations, which are subsequently introduced into medical practice through development of national clinical protocols. These results are introduced into the educational process through publication of monographs, textbooks, practical guidelines, and methodological manuals.

Academic staff are involved in the development of teaching concepts at various levels, as well as in the development of curricula and academic disciplines taught in the departments. The responsibilities of the teaching staff are stipulated in job descriptions. Different interactive methods are employed in the educational process – clinical case analysis, evidence-based medicine, virtual programs, standardized patients, distance learning, etc.

The university has an access to expertise and, as required, provides peer review of processes, practices and problems in the field of medical education and involves experienced physicians, psychologists and educational sociologists from other regional, national and international institutions. For many years, the university has been collaborating with the Coordinating Council of the scientific and educational medical cluster of the North Caucasus Federal District, including North Caucasus and other universities, to improve the quality of educational programs. The University has an access to expertise by educational and medical professionals of both national and international levels. With the help of experts in the field of medical education, an exam based on the Standardized Patient program was developed and implemented.

In accordance with international trends, the university is constantly improving methods for teaching and assessing students' knowledge.

Clinical bases for student practice are selected in accordance with the Mission of the Institute; meet the criteria and objectives of practical training; are known in the medical services market; have the technical equipment that allows educational, medical activities and clinical training of students. At present, clinical bases cover the need for practical training of students. The university has signed an agreement with each base for educational and practical training.

6. Findings

In order to carry out the internal and external independent assessment of the quality of educational services, the Medical Institute regularly conducts comprehensive research to analyze the feedback from employers, heads of medical institutions, on the educational level of graduates of educational programs. The feedback is presented in the form of official letters from employers on satisfaction with the competencies of graduates of the educational program and surveys on the level of employers' satisfaction. Among the positive characteristics of graduates, employers mainly noted the desire of graduates to work (70.1 % of respondents); high level of theoretical knowledge (61.1 %); desire of graduates for self-development and self-education (44.6 %). Insufficient level of practical training (48.3 % of respondents) was among the main shortcomings. After that, in the 2019/2020 academic year, a survey was conducted on the satisfaction of students and staff with the university activities. A total of 808 students of the institute were surveyed. The analysis of the survey showed the satisfaction of students with the quality of teaching – 78 % (2 % higher than last year); organization of the educational process – 61.3 % (2.1 % higher than last year); sufficient educational and methodological equipment – 78.4 %; well-equipped classrooms – 77 % (the same figures as last year); clinical bases – 70.6 % (similar results); conditions for practical training – 73.2 % (an increase of 5.4 %); organization of exams and tests – 67.8 % (similar results). The prestige of the profession in society was noted by 85.7 % of students (similar results). The

interested parties are informed of the results of the study on the satisfaction of various categories of people involved in the educational process.

7. Conclusion

The analysis of the data obtained from the surveys revealed the strengths and weaknesses in terms of certain aspects of the university's activities. The systematization of these results allows the university to analyze the advantages of the provided educational services and their characteristics that are interesting to consumers, and to determine the direction of activity in order to increase the attractiveness and competitiveness of educational services.

Thus, the university has the opportunity to timely study the needs and requirements of stakeholders in order to manage the quality and competitiveness of educational services.

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