

**SCTMG 2023****International Scientific Conference «Social and Cultural Transformations in the Context of  
Modern Globalism»****NEW GENERATION OF FSES ON JOURNALISM IN REGIONAL  
UNIVERSITIES**

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**Abstract**

The latest educational standard (FSES-3++) implemented by journalism faculties, while retaining the main provisions of the previous FSES, has been supplemented with a number of new requirements for the structure, learning outcomes and conditions of implementing a bachelor's programme. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the new requirements for the journalism education system developed in these standards. The article provides a comparative analysis of the content of the third-generation federal state educational standard for journalism, which has been updated twice in eight years (from 2009 to 2017). The authors examine in detail the changes introduced in Sections I, III and IV of the FSES-3++, which concern the scope and tasks of professional activity, general professional competences of graduates, and qualifications of university teaching staff. The article notes that the updated standard gives HEIs the right to independently choose the indicators of achievement of mandatory universal and general professional competences. The authors also emphasise that regional HEIs in Russia have certain difficulties in implementing certain provisions of the standard. The authors positively assess the current FSES as an instrument aimed at improving the system of professional training in the media sphere, but also express their views on the implementation of some of the requirements of this standard by the journalism departments of regional universities.

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## 1. Introduction

From 2009 to 2023, Russian universities had to conduct journalism education based on three state standards due to their frequent modernisation. FSES-3, oriented towards a competency-based approach to training, was developed and introduced in 2009, and in 2014 the country had already adopted the next-generation FSES-3+, which was approved in 2017 in an updated form as FSES-3++.

The improvement of federal state educational standards for journalism was prompted by a number of circumstances, including the growing need of the domestic media industry for universal and qualified specialists, which has been written about in detail in the works of domestic researchers (Dokuchayeva et al., 2024; Tang & Yang, 2024).

Four years have passed since the adoption of the new-generation FSES. Since 2019, the admission and training of students in the "Journalism" field of training has been conducted according to a new professional standard. In this connection, there is a need to analyse some of the requirements for the journalism education system developed in these standards (Lipich & Balahura, 2024; Regnerová et al., 2024; Shumilina & Antsiferova, 2024).

## 2. Problem Statement

As is well known, in 2014–2015, the updated educational standard (FSES-3+) became the object of close attention and was widely discussed in the media by the journalistic and academic communities, which is not the case with the previously adopted GOS VPO (2005) and FSES VPO (2009). Of the few works published before 2014 on this topic, we can single out I. A. Fateeva (2007) monograph that examined the differences between the bachelor's and specialist programmes of journalism standards, which, in the author's opinion, were noticeably overloaded with mandatory subjects.

Project works carried out in accordance with the third-generation FSES based on the FSES layout were presented in the 2007 edition of Lomonosov Moscow State University. Also in this book, innovative approaches to the design of the FSES in journalism were analysed and reflected in detail (Svitich & Shiryaeva, 2007). In the same year, UNESCO published the Model Curriculum for Journalism Education for Developing Countries (UNESCO, 2007).

After the adoption (in 2009) of FSES-3, N.V. Ushakova in her article draws attention of the academic community to the problem of developing journalism training programmes based on this standard (Ushakova, 2011). The problem of journalism education in connection with the modernisation of standards was raised in the work of S. S. Raspopova (2011).

V. V. Tulupov (2014) expressed a positive opinion about professional standards for journalistic activities, since, in his opinion, they "will make it possible to streamline the system of labour relations in the industry, contribute to maintaining culture and a general high level in the journalistic environment...". (p. 216).

How are subject matter competencies formed in the modular system of journalism education under the conditions of the Federal State Educational Standards implementation? This question has been the subject of a detailed study by T. I. Frolova (2016).

Another researcher, L. S. Makarova (2016, p. 27), comparing the two FSESs for journalism of 2009 and 2014, noted as a drawback the absence in FSES-3+ of OC and OCK-competences "where, for example, patriotism and love for the homeland as a value of the future journalist are mentioned" and emphasised the need to include this component in the educational process "in the context of forming OC and OCK-competences of the future journalist".

Continuing the work of our colleagues in this direction, in this article we will try to take a look at FSES-3, FSES-3+ and FSES-3++ for bachelor's degree training in order to find out the changes made concerning the sphere of professional activity of journalism graduates, their competences, as well as the requirements for the qualification of university teaching staff.

### 3. Research Questions

In fact, the structure and content of all FSES of the mentioned periods (2009, 2014, 2017) do not differ much. In FSES-3++ there are only four sections instead of eight, in contrast to the 2009 educational standard. It should be emphasised that in the sections of the updated standards some requirements were either excluded or changed with additions. For example, in Section III ("Characteristics of the Training Area") of the 2009 FSES-3, one of the requirements for admission to the 031300 Journalism training area was an entrance test of professional orientation, i.e. a creative examination. In the 2014 and 2017 FSES, this point is not mentioned and since then universities choose the form of the entrance test themselves. In some universities, instead of a creative essay, applicants began to take an oral examination called "competitive interview".

It is worth noting that the last two standards gave universities more freedom in choosing regional components and disciplines, which allowed them to develop new educational programmes taking into account the existing human resources, national and regional specifics of the media market.

FSES-3++ more specifically defines the areas of professional activity with different profiles. According to this standard, graduates can now pursue professional activities in the following two areas.

1. Communication, information and communication technologies (in the field of promotion of mass media products, including printed publications, television and radio programmes, online resources) with two profiles:

- "Specialist in promotion and distribution of media products";
- "Information Resource Specialist."

2. "Mass media, publishing and printing":

- "Media Correspondent."
- "Television programme presenter";
- "Broadcast media production specialist";
- "Media Editor."
- "Media Director."
- "Photographer."
- "Graphic Designer."

Of course, this specification in specialisation meets the requirements of the media market, when media editorial offices need both narrow-profile and universal specialists. However, only large journalism

departments of Russian universities can fully implement educational programmes with narrow profiles. For example, it is difficult for regional universities to recruit the necessary group of students in one profile, since, according to the requirement of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, the maximum number of students in one group in one profile should be 30 people (Letter of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, Department of State Policy in Higher Education of 31 October 2019, No. 03/16361 "On the Procedure for Forming Study Groups of Students in HEIs"). Although the same document provides for the possibility, if necessary, to combine students in different areas of training into one study group. Regional HEIs are left to use this possibility by creating two groups of 15 students each. It is also not easy for journalism departments of regional universities to find media teachers who are not only willing but also able to professionally teach disciplines in such narrow profiles as "Mass Media Director," "Photographer," "Graphic Designer," or "Information Resource Specialist". Attracted teachers from among the current heads of media organisations and leading media journalists do not always agree to the requirements (preparation of working programmes, assessment funds, etc.) and payment terms of the university, and therefore the main burden of teaching, methodological and research activities falls on the shoulders of full-time faculty members.

The most significant changes were introduced in Section III of FSES-3++ ("Requirements to the learning outcomes"), where competences are defined. For all the above-mentioned nine (2+7) training profiles, the following competences are defined as competences: 8 universal competences (UC) and 7 general professional competences (GPC). For comparison, in the previous FSES of HE in the direction of training 42.03.02 Journalism there were 10 UC (general cultural competences), 22 GPC (general professional competences) and 7 PC (professional competences), and in the FSES of HE of the first generation in the direction of training 031300 Journalism, there were 19 UC and 58 PC.

The comparison of competences shows that general cultural competences (GC) in FSES-3++ have been replaced by universal competences (UC), and their number has decreased from 19 to 8 over the period of implementation of the three standards. The number of OPK (from 22 to 7) and PC (from 58 to 8) has also been reduced. Such significant reduction in the number of competences of two groups (OPC and PC) from 2009 to 2017 is due to their unification by certain categories, which, of course, simplifies the tasks of creating curricula and working programmes for disciplines.

In the 2014-2017 standards, the requirements for the conditions for the implementation of the Bachelor's programme have also undergone minor changes (Section VII, paragraph 7.2.2.: 2014; Section IV, paragraph 4.4.3.: 2017). According to these changes, not less than 70 per cent (in the first FSES 2009, not less than 50 per cent) of the teaching staff involved in the educational activities of the Organisation must have a degree. At the same time, it is now optional for HEIs to provide at least six per cent of the teaching staff with "the academic degree of Doctor of Sciences..... or the academic title of Professor" (Section VII, paragraph 7.16.: 2009).

Also, the 2017 standard has twice reduced the percentage (from 10 per cent to 5 per cent) of engaged teachers from among current media managers and leading journalists, as well as employees of other relevant organisations (Section IV, point 4.4.4.). Probably, the weakening of the requirement under this item is due to the sufficient number of teaching staff (70 per cent of them should be teaching) who

simultaneously conduct research, teaching and methodological and/or practical work. At the same time, it should be recognised that it is difficult to find a "three-in-one" teacher who is equally successful and constantly engaged in both research, teaching, methodological and (or) journalistic activities. As practice shows, academic teachers of journalism faculties rarely collaborate with media editorial boards, since for many of them such combination is a difficult task in the context of a shrinking number of employees in media organisations (many urban and youth publications have gone online, reducing the number of full-time journalists). In addition, the current university requirements to fulfil the terms of an effective contract and overload (one teacher in regional universities has to teach seven or eight subjects) do not leave teachers free time for purely journalistic practice.

Everyone knows that the Russian Government Order of 2014 (Order of the Government of the Russian Federation of 30.04.2014 No. 722-r "On the action plan "Changes in the sectors of the social sphere aimed at improving the efficiency of education and science"" (Section V, paragraph 3) sets a target growth rate of the number of students enrolled in higher education programmes per one faculty member, according to which the ratio should be 12 students per 1 faculty member. One of the reasons for the overload of teaching staff is the implementation by higher educational establishments of the above-mentioned decree, which has been followed for several years in a row by the process of significant reduction of their number. The reduction becomes especially tangible against the background of the restriction of the control figures for admission (CfP - budgetary places) of students, which, in the end, affects the number of students and teachers of regional higher education institutions. In order to meet the mandatory FSES requirements for staff qualifications, universities have to organise the retraining of experienced journalism teachers. This need to improve the professional competence of the teachers themselves in the area of ICTs and new media was due to the lack of skills of experienced teachers of the older generation in using digital technologies in their teaching activities.

At the same time, it should be noted that, compared to the requirements of the previous FSES, less stringent requirements are imposed on higher education institutions in terms of ensuring the staffing of teaching staff to support the teaching process in the professional cycle. Now, representatives of related professions without a basic journalism education can be engaged in teaching by successfully completing a six-month professional retraining course in journalism.

In addition to the changes listed above, the latest (so far) generation of FSES for the first time describes in detail the procedure for universities to undergo state and professional-public accreditation (Section IV, paragraph 4.6.2-4.6.4), which will not be easy for journalism departments at regional universities.

It is appropriate to add that in light of the tightening of requirements for educational activities, the question of the continued existence of journalism faculties and departments in the regions will be linked primarily to the availability of vacancies in the media market, rather than to the availability of highly qualified teaching staff and all the necessary competences among university graduates. Meanwhile, the number of vacancies in the regional media market is not increasing due to the lower demand of media organizations for journalistic personnel;

Despite the increase in their number over the last twenty years, because in the first ten years after the collapse of the USSR, many (even non-core) universities opened journalism specialisations unnecessarily. This was one of the reasons for the increased enrolment of applicants, resulting in an overproduction of personnel and, as a consequence, an army of unemployed graduates. (Aliyeva, 2020, p. 7)

It seems to us that if the observed trend of falling demand for journalists and unemployment in the country continues, the employment rates of universities will not improve, and therefore the issue of reducing the number of journalism students admitted to budgetary places will arise. And this will force universities to admit students only on a commercial basis, which will make it impossible for gifted and motivated school graduates from low-income families to get a journalism education.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to identify the new requirements of the latest generation of the FSES in journalism in connection with the further prospect of its implementation in regional universities.

#### **5. Research Methods**

To analyse the issue under study, the methods of studying documents were used, which were the Orders of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Russian Federation. A comparative analysis of the structure and content of FSES-3, FSES-3+, FSES-3++ was carried out, research materials of domestic scientists on this topic were analysed.

#### **6. Findings**

An analysis of the content of the three FSESs in Journalism shows that, in general, education has been oriented towards the preparation of highly specialised and, at the same time, universal graduates, while maintaining the same traditions and requirements adopted earlier.

In the current FSES, the contents of Sections I, III, IV have been significantly amended. Section I (point 1.1) specifies the list of professional standards, which includes two areas of professional activity with nine profiles. The variety of Bachelor's degree profiles in this professional standard shows that it takes into account the requirements of media companies that need a highly specialised employee with universal competences.

The tasks of graduates' professional activity have been expanded with the introduction of marketing type, which ensures the formation of competences enabling them to assess the competitiveness of the media and promote content on the media market. Significant reduction of ASCs during three years (from 2014 to 2017) (14 instead of 29) facilitates the procedure for the development of educational programmes, curricula and, accordingly, the labour of teachers to develop work programmes. Compulsory UCs and OPCs corresponding to certain categories have been defined. The universities are given more freedom in choosing and developing educational programmes, in determining the indicators

of achievement of universal, general professional and professional competencies, based on the requirements of the regional labour market, human resources potential of the teaching staff and material and technical base.

## 7. Conclusion

It is clear that formal compliance with the requirements of the FSES will not lead to an increase in the quality of journalism education. The first stage of implementing the new standard - adapting curricula to the rapidly changing realities of the digitalisation of society - is still underway in higher education institutions, and it has shown that there are still many problems ahead that need to be solved.

Finally, we should not forget that the quality of education depends not only on the successful implementation by universities of all mandatory requirements of the Federal State Educational Standards, but also on the level of knowledge of entrants, whose preparation is the responsibility of general education institutions. The interaction between the "actors" in the "school-university-work" chain has yet to be strengthened. In this regard, the relevance of school media education becomes obvious. Unemployment of journalism graduates, commercialisation of studies, tough competition in the labour market - all this affects the way regional universities will implement the requirements of the FSES. In general, all the existing problems in the media sphere and media education show that it is not easy to improve the quality of journalism education without a comprehensive solution to the above-mentioned problems.

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