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HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ASSURANCE: FINLAND'S EXPERIENCE

The article discusses the main approaches to quality assurance in higher education in Finland. The relevance of studying the experience for Ukraine is determined. Quality assurance in higher education is governed by the legal framework of the country. External evaluation is carried out by the Finnish Education Evaluation Center (FINEEC). The objectives of the FINEEC are: evaluation of education, teaching, teachers and activities of higher education institutions; development of educational evaluation; evaluation of the results of training in basic education, higher secondary education and training, basic education in the arts. Finnish higher education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of education. Self-esteem is accomplished through a digital platform. Program accreditation aims to increase international recognition. The author notes that Higher Education Institutions are actively involved in external evaluations. The quality assurance mechanism of education is constantly being improved. The results of the external evaluation are used as a benchmark for internal evaluation. Higher education institutions select a national or international team to audit.

Particular attention is paid to the accreditation of programs. The analysis of the quality assurance system of higher education gives grounds to claim that it is an effective organization, which provides the necessary resources (academic and administrative staff, students, scientific and administrative leaders, financial, material, information, scientific, educational resources, etc.); effective activity of relevant bodies that ensure the quality of higher education of the country; designation of audit teams; identifying audit objectives; undergoing appropriate procedure; defining clear evaluation criteria that demonstrate the effectiveness and quality of the evaluation. The outlined approaches and methods of quality assurance of education serve as an example of imitation for quality assurance of higher education of Ukraine and a guideline for its development.

Key words: accreditation; effectiveness and quality of assessment; evaluation groups; external evaluation; internal evaluation; quality assurance of education.

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Introduction. Today, the world community faces with the identical problem of higher education quality assurance in response to modern challenges (aging populations, using modern technologies, ensuring gender equality, availability of quality higher education, transforming of societies, falling funding because of the economic crisis).

This problem is especially urgent for Ukraine, which is reforming higher education in difficult conditions. The need for quality education has intensified the study of the experience of different countries by Ukrainian scientists, including conducting international comparative studies. Countries in the European Education Area have undertaken a set of measures for the effectiveness of higher education development. In this regard, it is important to study the experience of these countries for Ukraine and its implementation. According to international studies, Finland is the first to ensure the quality of education among European countries. The

experience of Finland is interesting and important for its understanding and Ukrainian educators and politicians.

The purpose of the article is to analyse the system of quality assurance of education in Finland and to determine the ways of its use in the system of internal and external quality assurance in Ukraine.

Modern experience in quality assurance of education. The training of experts in the field of education is considered by S. Sysoieva (2015) (Erasmus + project), I. Trygub (2019), (Eastern European countries experience), N. Ponomarenko (2015) (Germany, Austria). K. Kotun (2014) examines the state of pedagogical education in Finland in the context of the European dimension. However, an analysis of the quality assurance of education in pedagogical theory has shown that it is not widely studied in Ukraine.

Consider Finland's higher education system and its quality assurance. Organizationally, the Finnish higher education system is not very different from other European systems, but some fundamental

things determine its peculiarity and success. It is an awareness of the value of education in society, respect and trust in teachers (International Department of the Trade Union Central Committee, 2017).

Today, the country has one of the most developed networks of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Europe. Finland's authority in higher education is widely recognized worldwide. Universities and institutes of Finland have not only achieved, but also constantly supported, the high quality of higher education. This applies to both teaching and research (Kotun, 2014).

Finland's higher education system consists of two parallel sectors: the universities (and its equivalent), and the professional organization (Organization of the Education System and of its Structure, 2020). The main function of such HEIs is to carry out scientific research and to carry out training on the basis of these achievements. The activities of the universities are based on the requirements of science and autonomy of the HEIs. Universities organize their activities in such a way that in the research work and educational process a high world level is reached with observance of the principles of ethics and standard scientific practice (Zhernoklyeyev & Pushkarev, 2006).

Finnish higher education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of the education they provide. This is provided for by the Universities Act and the Universities of Applied Sciences Act. HEIs are also responsible for evaluating their educational, research and artistic activities.

The Acts also stated that HEIs should regularly participate in external evaluations. External evaluation is carried out by the Finnish Education Evaluation Center (FINEEC). The results of the evaluation are published.

External evaluation in higher education is advisory. It aims to engage staff, students and stakeholders (stakeholders) in recognizing the strengths, best practices and areas of development. The aim is also to support the HEI in achieving its own goals and thus to support the continued development of higher education.

Responsible authorities. FINEEC has been the responsible body for external quality assurance in higher education since 2015. It operates within the Government branch of the Ministry of Education and Culture, as a separate unit within the Finnish National Agency for Education (EDUFI).

Before 2014, an external evaluation was conducted by the *Finnish Higher Education Assessment Board* (FINHEEC). FINEEC was formed by combining FINHEEC's assessment activities with those of the Finnish Education Assessment Board and the National Education Council of Finland.

The Principle on the tasks and organization of the Finnish Higher Education Assessment Board (FINEEC) are contained in the Law and Government

Decree on the Finnish Education Assessment Center.

The objectives of the Finnish Higher Education Assessment Board (FINEEC) are (Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2019):

- evaluation of education, teaching, teachers and activities of higher education institutions;
- development of educational evaluation;
- evaluation of the results of training in basic education, higher secondary education and training, basic education in the arts.

The Finnish Higher Education Assessment Board (FINEEC) is chaired by a director (appointed by the government). He is responsible for its effectiveness. The Government also appoints the FINEEC Evaluation Board. The Council develops proposals for the National Plan for Education Evaluations, which are approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The evaluation is carried out according to this plan.

The Ministry of Education and Culture appoints a higher education evaluation committee, which works in conjunction with the Finnish Higher Education Assessment Board (FINEEC). The Committee decides on the plans for the HEI assessment projects, the composition of the planning groups and the review of the final audit results.

Quality assurance approaches and methods. The results of the external evaluation can be used as a guide for internal evaluation. There are no national directives on internal evaluation methods.

There are three main types of external assessment of higher education conducted by FINEEC (Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2019):

- audit of quality assurance systems;
- thematic and systematic evaluations;
- program accreditation.

Audit of quality assurance systems. FINEEC has updated its audit model for the third round of HIA audits (2018–2024). He piloted for 2018 and 2019.

The new model offers:

- student-centered approach;
- greater accentuation on the social impact of universities;
- cooperation with other organizations;
- use of a digital platform;
- quality mark for excellence.

The audit model complies with the standards set out in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) (PDF). The audit process, objectives and audit criteria are described in the 2014–2018 Audit Manual.

The purpose of the 2014–2018 audit model is (Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2019):

- determining the conformity of EIA work with European quality assurance standards;
- assessing whether the quality system produces adequate information for the ongoing development

of operations and whether it leads to effective development measures;

- encouraging internationalization, experimentation and a creative atmosphere in HEA;
- accumulation of open and transparent information on quality work in the Finnish Defence Law.

Audit groups. Higher education institutions select a national or international team to audit. International audit teams include at least one Finnish member with experience in the Finnish higher education system.

The Higher Education Evaluation Committee appoints audit teams and their leaders. Usually teams have 4 members, including:

- 2 representatives of the higher education sector;
- 1 student representative;
- 1 non-HEI vocational training representative.

In addition, the project manager for FINEEC participates in the team as an audit expert.

The audit team is competent in quality systems and higher education. Team members have an understanding of the impact on society, quality of work or assessment, as well as experience in teaching and learning. In addition, at least one of the team members must also have experience in the field of assessment selected by the HEA (field of evaluation). The chair of the audit team should have experience in evaluating HEA activities and have a broad and in-depth knowledge of the higher education system (Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2019).

Audit objectives, procedure and evaluation criteria.

The areas of assessment are the following (Quality Assurance in Higher Education, 2019):

- development of higher education institution of competencies;
- II promoting the change and updating of the air defence system;
- III improvement of quality and well-being;
- IV training in ZVO (ZVO choose the topic of this field).

The areas are described in more detail in the Audit Manual of Institutions of Higher Education 2014–2018.

Grades of I–III groups of components are rated on a scale of «excellent» – «good» – «not enough». HEI is audited if the constituents from Group I to Group III reach at least «good» levels. The level of study area IV is undefined and is not essential for the resolution of the audit of higher education institutions.

In order to be awarded the Quality Mark for Excellence, the HEI must confirm its exceptional successful performance in the development of evaluation in a particular industry.

Higher education institution self-evaluates using a digital platform. It functions as a template for evaluating the audit team. After evaluating the I–V areas, the audit team submits a proposal to the

Higher Education Assessment Committee for passing the HEI audit, whether a re-audit is required. The final decision on the audit is taken by the Evaluation Committee. It identifies the need for re-auditing and areas for improvement. Audit evaluation areas should be developed at least to the level of «good».

Upon completion of the audit, HEI will receive an audit certificate and an electronic quality mark. The institution of higher education is entered in the register of audit of higher education institutions.

Evaluation efficiency and quality. FINEEC organizes regular follow-up seminars on the development of quality systems. The purpose of the event is to provide feedback on post-audit work on the development of HEIs, as well as to offer the whole higher education sector the opportunity to share experience and best practices on quality work.

The task of the Higher Education Evaluation Committee is to ensure the fairness and equity of audit decisions. In making its decisions, the Committee shall comply with the provisions of the Law on Administrative Procedure on Conflict of Interest of its Members.

Thematic and systematic assessments. Thematic assessments focus on a specific topic. In systemic assessments, the goal is to have the education system as a whole or part of it. Educational policy or the development of the education system may also be evaluated. Thematic and systemic assessments can only focus on higher education or at several levels of the education system at a time.

A team of external experts develops a project plan for evaluation. An individually assigned evaluation team conducts the evaluation, and an evaluation expert working at FINEEC coordinates it. Universities participate in evaluations, and FINEEC collects feedback from participants. Following the evaluation, FINEEC publishes a results report.

Program accreditation. The method is based on the European Accredited Engineer Framework (EUR-ACE) Framework Standards and Guidelines (PDF) developed by the European Network for Accreditation of Engineering Education (ENAE). ACE Label) and has been in place for six years and is accredited by the Standards and Procedures for Engineering Program Accreditation.

After evaluation, the program can be:

- not accredited;
- accredited without reservation;
- conditionally accredited, and accreditation is only valid if the conditions are met for a specified period of time.

Conclusions. Therefore, the general trend of higher education development in Finland is to ensure the quality of higher education. Quality assurance in higher education is governed by the legal framework of the country. Finnish higher education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of education.

They carry out self-assessment through a digital platform. Program accreditation aims to increase international recognition.

HEIs are actively involved in external evaluations. It is worth noting that the quality assurance mechanism of education is constantly being improved. The results of the external evaluation are used as a benchmark for internal evaluation. Higher education institutions select a national or international team to audit.

Higher education institution self-evaluates using a digital platform.

The analysis of the quality assurance system of higher education gives grounds to claim that it is an effective organization, which provides the necessary

resources (academic and administrative staff, students, scientific and administrative leaders, financial, material, information, scientific, educational resources, etc.); effective activity of relevant bodies that ensure the quality of higher education of the country; designation of audit teams; identifying audit objectives; undergoing appropriate procedure; defining clear evaluation criteria that demonstrate the effectiveness and quality of the evaluation. Particular attention is paid to the accreditation of programs. Outlined approaches and methods of quality assurance of education serve as an example of imitation for quality assurance of higher education of Ukraine and a guideline for its development.

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ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ: ДОСВІД ФІНЛЯНДІЇ

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В статті проаналізовано систему забезпечення якості освіти у Фінляндії. Розглянуто основні підходи щодо забезпечення якості вищої освіти у Фінляндії. Визначено актуальність вивчення досвіду для України. Забезпечення якості вищої освіти регулюється нормативно-правовою базою країни. Фінський центр оцінювання освіти (FINEEC) є органом, який відповідає за зовнішнє забезпечення якості вищої освіти. Окреслено основні типи зовнішнього оцінювання вищої освіти, що проводиться FINEEC: аудит систем забезпечення якості, тематичні та систематичні оцінки, програмна акредитація. Заклади вищої освіти Фінляндії несуть основну відповідальність за якість освіти. Вони також беруть активну участь у зовнішніх оцінюваннях. Здійснення самооцінки відбувається за допомогою цифрової платформи (a digital platform). Вона функціонує як шаблон для оцінки аудиторської групи.

Окрема увага в країні приділяється питанню акредитації програм. За основу взято Європейську акредитаційну програму. Акредитація програм спрямована на підвищення міжнародного визнання.

Механізм забезпечення якості освіти постійно вдосконалюється. Результати зовнішнього оцінювання використовуються в якості орієнтира для внутрішнього оцінювання. Для здійснення аудиту заклади вищої освіти обирають національну або міжнародну команду.

Визначено шляхи використання досвіду Фінляндії в системі внутрішнього та зовнішнього забезпечення якості вищої освіти в Україні. Якість вищої освіти забезпечують такі ресурси, як: науковий та адміністративний персонал, студенти, наукові та адміністративні керівники, фінансові, матеріальні, інформаційні, наукові,

освітні ресурси, тощо; ефективна діяльність відповідних органів, які забезпечують якість вищої освіти країни; призначення аудиторських груп; визначення цілей аудиту; пройти відповідну процедуру; визначення чітких критеріїв оцінки, які демонструють ефективність та якість оцінки.

Окреслені підходи та методи забезпечення якості освіти слугують прикладом наслідування для забезпечення якості вищої освіти України та орієнтиром для її розвитку.

Ключові слова: акредитація; внутрішнє оцінювання; ефективність та якість оцінювання; групи оцінювання; забезпечення якості освіти; зовнішнє оцінювання.

ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЕ КАЧЕСТВА ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: ОПЫТ ФИНЛЯНДИИ

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В статье рассматриваются основные подходы по обеспечению качества высшего образования в Финляндии. Определены актуальность изучения опыта для Украины. Обеспечение качества высшего образования регулируется нормативно-правовой базой страны. Высшие учебные заведения Финляндии несут основную ответственность за качество образования. Осуществление самооценки происходит с помощью цифровой платформы (a digital platform). Аккредитация программ направлена на повышение международного признания. Автор отмечает, что ВУЗы активно участвуют во внешнем оценивании. Механизм обеспечения качества образования постоянно совершенствуется. Результаты внешнего оценивания используются в качестве ориентира для внутреннего оценивания. Для осуществления аудита высшие учебные заведения выбирают национальную или международную команду.

Особое внимание уделяется вопросу аккредитации программ. Определённые подходы и методы обеспечения качества образования служат примером для обеспечения качества высшего образования Украины и ориентиром для ее развития.

Ключевые слова: аккредитация; внешнее оценивание; внутреннее оценивание; группы оценивания; обеспечение качества образования; эффективность и качество оценивания.

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