

Market of Higher Education Services in Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article describes the development trends in the system of higher education in Uzbekistan. The article analyzes the current situation faced by the higher education system and the main tasks currently facing in reforming the higher education system.

Keywords: *higher education, concepts for the development of the higher education system, higher educational institutions, foreign experience, international cooperation.*

Introduction

In our country, from the first years of independence, the issue of developing the system of education and upbringing has been raised to the level of state policy. "Today, in the field of education and upbringing, in the life of our children, a new time is coming. Filling it with a new, even deeper meaning and content, achieving national progress depends only on ourselves, on the unity and cohesion of our people, on our tireless, hard work," emphasized the President of the country Shavkat Miromonovich Mirziyoyev.[1]

At present, large-scale reforms are being carried out in Uzbekistan, which radically changed the structure, essence and content of the education system, and covered all its levels, directions and components. In the shortest possible time, a legal framework for transformations was created, the priorities of which are the growth of investments and investments in human capital.

In the coming years, Uzbekistan plans to join the Bologna Declaration to increase the competitiveness of domestic personnel with higher education in the international market. According to experts, joining this declaration will serve the harmonious development of the national system of higher education with world practice, a cardinal improvement in the quality of training.

The basis for the transformations was laid by the Law "On Education" and a document of historical importance - the National Program for Personnel Training, approved in 1997. The training of personnel with higher education is carried out in higher educational organizations (universities, academies, institutes, higher schools). Higher education in our country is carried out in two ways: state grants and a contract basis. A complete transition to a two-level system was made: bachelor's and master's programs.

Main part. Close attention is paid to the development of higher education in the country in the conditions of the formation of the economy. This is evidenced by the adoption of a number of government documents adopted over the past 3 years, which contribute to raising the level of the higher education system. These legal acts define a number of tasks for the development of the social sphere, in particular, the sphere of education and science, provide for strengthening the material and technical base of educational institutions, building new ones, reconstructing and

overhauling existing ones, equipping them with modern educational and laboratory equipment, computer technique and teaching aids.

One of the key moments in reforming the higher education system was the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh.M. Mirziyoyev “On Approval of the Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030”, in which the government is determined to ensure the implementation of measures for the entry by 2030 of at least 10 Uzbek universities into the first 1,000 positions of the list of higher educational institutions in the ranking of internationally recognized organizations (Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings, Times Higher Education or Academic Ranking of World Universities).[3]

The goal of the ongoing reforms in our state is to increase the availability of quality education that meets the requirements of economic development, the needs of society as a whole and every citizen in particular.

In 2022, the population of Uzbekistan exceeded 35.3 million people. 29.9% of the population is aged 15 and under, and 33.5% is under the age of 18. The vast majority of the population are young people, in connection with this there is a high demand for higher education. As of February 2022, there are only 159 higher educational institutions in the republic, among them state universities - 105 (of which 26 branches), 3 academies, 1 conservatory, foreign universities and their branches - 30; non-state (private) universities - 24.

Table 1 The number of higher educational institutions in Uzbekistan in the period from 2016-2021 academic years

	2016 / 2017	2017 / 2018	2018 / 2019	2019 / 2020	2020 / 2021	2021/ 2022	Growth, %
Number of higher educational organizations, units	70	72	98	119	127	154	220%
including foreign higher educational organizations, units	7	7	10	18	20	25	357,1%

Source: compiled by the author based on materials from the website: stat.uz

According to the data, it can be concluded that in the 2016-2017 academic year, the number of higher educational institutions in Uzbekistan was 70 units, and in the 2021-2022 academic year this figure increased to 154 units. The increase was 220%. Including in 2016-2017 the number of foreign higher institutions was 7 units, by 2021-2022 this number increased to 25 units, which amounted to 357.1%.

The forge of personnel of a new formation - higher educational institutions have undergone both quantitative and qualitative changes. Recall that in the early 90s there were 42 universities in the country. Already in the first years of independence, fundamental changes were carried out. As part of structural reforms in 2000, Tashkent State University was given the status of the National University of Uzbekistan. In 2002, on the basis of the Tashkent Electro technical Institute of Communications, the Tashkent University of Information Technologies was established. In 2004, the Samarkand Cooperative Institute was transformed into the Samarkand Institute of Economics and Service. In 2005, two Tashkent Medical Institutes were merged and the Tashkent Medical Academy was established. In 2012, on the basis of the Tashkent Institute of Culture and the State Institute of Arts, the State Institute of Arts and Culture of Uzbekistan was established. In 2014, the Tashkent State Institute of Dentistry was established.

The capital of our country has become the place of opening and functioning of departments of a number of prestigious foreign universities. If until 2017 training was organized in the capital branches of 7 foreign universities, namely the Turin Polytechnic University, Moscow State University of Westminster International University, Singapore Institute for Management Development, Plekhanov Russian State University of Economics, Gubkin Russian Institute of Oil and Gas, Yuzhno -Korean University INHA, in 2018, 13 new universities began operating in Uzbekistan, in particular the International University of Tourism "Silk Road" in Samarkand, a branch of the National Research Technological University "MISiS" (Russia) in Almalyk and Bucheon University of South Korea in Tashkent. In 2018, the first private university in the republic, the Yeosu Technical Institute (TIYOT), opened in Tashkent.

In February 2019, an agreement was signed to open the first branch of an American university - Webster University. It will provide a full range of academic programs in business administration, marketing and entrepreneurship, computer science, journalism and media industry, healthcare management, STEAM education and innovation.

Amity University (India) was established by Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated January 7, 2019 No. PP-4097. The university will train specialists in the field of information and communication technologies, including software developers and specialists in artificial intelligence, marketing in IT, and others.[5]

On April 18, 2020, the Government Decree approved the creation of the first entrepreneurial university TEAM. The goal of the new university is to prepare students with a systemic entrepreneurial mindset, who are able to compete and have knowledge in technological developments.

In 2022, the Pharmaceutical Technical University was established as part of the innovative research and production pharmaceutical cluster "Tashkent Pharma Park", admission to the university is carried out on a grant, paid-contract basis from the 2022/2023 academic year.

In this regard, a number of governmental and interdepartmental agreements were signed, which are the basis for direct interuniversity cooperation with foreign partners.

Currently, the universities of Uzbekistan are actively involved in the educational and scientific and technical projects of the European Union Tempus and Erasmus Mundus, the British Council, the German Academic Exchange Service, the Goethe Institute, the German Technical Center, the Korean and Japanese International Cooperation Agencies, the French and Egyptian Cultural Center, Malaysian and Indian technical cooperation programs, and other development programs of the UN, UNE/SCO, ETF, ADB.

Reforms in the field of higher education in Uzbekistan are being implemented in cooperation with many international organizations, including Erasmus + (European Union program), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency). As a result of the joint programs being implemented, hundreds of teachers and students of Uzbekistan have the opportunity to get acquainted with the best international experience in the education system, acquire new knowledge and skills, improve their skills in the world's leading universities.

In September 2018, the El-Yurt Umidi Foundation was established in Uzbekistan, aimed at establishing close cooperation with compatriots with great scientific potential, scientists, specialists and talented youth living and conducting their professional activities abroad. The Fund is also intended to provide Uzbekistan with highly qualified and competitive specialists in the world labor market, necessary for the comprehensive and accelerated development of our country.

On March 23, 2019, as part of the Science 2020 agreement, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and Elsevier signed a strategic agreement to create a platform of peer-reviewed scientific journals of universities in Uzbekistan based on Digital Commons (Bepress). As part of this project, Elsevier will create a unique platform by bringing together 41 scientific journals using a double-blind peer review configuration.

The platform, used by the world's leading universities, will improve the quality of Uzbekistan's scientific journals, create a repository (digital archive) of Uzbek science, and go down in history as the first electronic resource developed in accordance with Scopus international standards.

The result of two years of cooperation between the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education and leading international organizations, such as Times Higher Education and QS, in order to increase the international prestige of higher educational institutions of the republic”, in 2020 the Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers was included in the rating for the first time in history of the best universities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia in 2020, which was compiled by the British company Quacquarelli Symonds. The university was in the ranking range of 301-350 in the QS ranking, having received positive marks on the indicators: academic reputation, reputation among employers and scientific potential.

Conclusion. To improve the system of higher education and develop human capital, a number of measures are proposed, in particular:

1. Increasing the coverage of higher education by increasing the number of universities, including branches of foreign and local universities and non-state universities.

In particular, the creation of private universities in our country is one of the prerequisites for the development of education. Here we need free competition, market orientation, global trends. Approximately 33% of all students in the world study in private educational institutions. The advantages of private universities can be the provision of in-demand specialties and the possibility of cooperation with real companies in the labor market in Uzbekistan. For students, an important factor in investing in a degree is employment opportunities after graduation, which will accelerate the return on investment made in training. The university itself is working out options for interacting with companies, this increases its rating and reputation in the market. As a chain of process, the university cannot fail to invest in a quality teaching staff, including perhaps by inviting professors from abroad who have proven themselves in their field.

2. Increasing the independence of universities in determining curricula, distributing financial resources, providing universities with the opportunity to independently determine quotas for student admission.

Fundamental improvement in the quality of education through the introduction of modern educational programs and the use of information technology, both in terms of expanding access, and in terms of using new teaching methods.

3. In the era of the development of information technology, a person does not need to have a university degree to gain knowledge; one can remotely access the materials of almost all courses in the world. For example, one of the most popular platforms, Coursera, has partnership agreements with more than 150 leading universities in the world, offering its students online courses from the world's leading universities. For many students, this is a very convenient and affordable mechanism for obtaining education, which is what makes them popular and in demand. In our country, about 600-700 thousand applicants do not enter universities every year,

it is possible to develop a mechanism by which young people could gain knowledge and skills using popular resources.[4]

4. The relevance of education can be improved by deepening the links of universities with industry, improving the learning environment through the provision of laboratories and library resources, and changing curricula and programs in a way that uses resources more efficiently, and effectively tracking graduates in the labor market.

Feedback from industry, students and civil society can be used to improve course offerings. The maximum approach of the business community to universities and students, as they are a source of demand for potential personnel among graduates, establishing a dialogue will help both parties.

5. Strengthening the relationship of universities and research institutes with foreign partners, participation in international internship programs for students and scientists, expanding the program of funds and scholarships for teaching students in foreign universities.
6. In our opinion, in order to improve the quality of the activities of domestic universities on the world stage, their own mechanism for increasing the competitiveness of universities should be proposed, in particular, through the introduction of changes in the methodology for determining university rankings, since the high positions of a university at the global level represent a serious contribution to the formation of the image of the country, and as the globalization of the educational services market ensures the growth of the level of human capital in the region, attracting investments. Getting into the world or national ranking in the leading places, the university dramatically increases its attractiveness not only for applicants, but also for employers, investors and the state, which can provide it with additional subsidies.

Thus, constant investments in the so-called "human capital" and education are the key to the formation of a developed democratic state, a constant engine of progress and an indispensable condition for the modernization orientation of the nationwide development. As the President noted, "... the achievement of the noble goals facing the people of Uzbekistan, the future of the country, its prosperity and well-being, what place it will take in the world community in the 21st century - all this depends, first of all, on the new generation, on what our children will grow up to be."

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