Economic Education: Future Standards as a Main Reference Point for the Economics Specialist's Education

Olga Kvashina[a], Ekaterina Nikiforova[b] and Julia Streletskaya[c]
Federal State Budgetary Educational Institution of Higher Education «Velikie Luki State Agricultural Academy», Lenina Str., 2, Velikie Luki, Russia

Keywords: Educational Standard, Competence, Basic Professional Educational Program, Accelerated Learning, Advanced Education Model, Digital Economy Specialist.

Abstract: This paper presents the main aspects of the development of economic education in Russia, as well as the foreign higher education experience. The modern teaching practice in economic areas shows that the economist and manager, as profession, will not be needed in society in a few years. Business leaders want to see a specialist who has digital technologies knowledge, and is able to make competent and quick management decisions. Sustainable development requires an advanced model for training a comprehensively competent specialist for economic sectors in the shortest possible time. At the same time this specialist must highly qualified, for example, have a master`s degree.

1 INTRODUCTION

The consequence of the COVID-19 and new strains spread affects not only the country's economy, but also the higher education system, in particular the economic higher education.

The main document for the students higher education is the Federal State Educational Standard. Over the past decades, the State Standard of the 2nd generation (Since, 2005), the Federal State Educational Standard of the 3rd generation (FSES, or FGOS) (Since, 2009) have been in effect in higher education. In 2020, the FSES for higher education with a preamble 3++ was adopted in economic education areas.

The need for the development of the 3rd generation FSES for higher education (FSES HE) was associated with the ongoing processes of Russia's integration into the Bologna Process.

In our opinion, over the entire period of the European model of education implementation, the formation of specialist for work in the sectors of the national economy has not been brought to a common denominator. Is higher education, i.e. bachelor's degree, a priority? Or one needs a specialist level, or a master's degree, to perform the amount of work assigned to a modern young specialist.

The development of the 3rd generation standards was carried out in accordance with the experience noted in the framework of the TUNING project. The project is focused on the implementation of the graduate's competence model (Zakharova, Kuzenkov, 2016) and the regulatory requirements for both academic (general competence) and professional (professional competence) components of the future bachelors education. The distinctive features of the FSES 3rd generation, in addition to teaching students on a competency-based basis, were also the introduction of a credit-modular educational system and the measurement of the education complexity in credit units (c.u.).

However, it should be noted that this model has been being tested for already 10 years and has shown that in the realities of time it needs to be improved within the following aspects:

- introduction of methodological principles to form a list of competencies;
- revision and structuralization of professional competencies considering the type of activity;

[a] https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1171-9665
[b] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7061-4735
[c] https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8399-2794

Kvashina, O., Nikiforova, E. and Streletskaya, J.
Economic Education: Future Standards as a Main Reference Point for the Economics Specialist's Education.
DOI: 10.5220/0011112100003439
In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Scientific and Practical Conference "COVID-19: Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals" (RTCOV 2021)*, pages 143-148
ISBN: 978-989-758-617-0

- weak correlation of the formed list of competencies with sections of the main educational programs;
- horizontal structure of the main educational program, which limits the implement of the modular principle of structuring the educational content.

In the current FSES HE 3+ which has been now operating for more than 10 years, the key innovations were:

- division of bachelor's degree programs into the academic and applied parts;
- lack of study cycles and a list of studied subjects;
- formation of competencies in three groups – general cultural, general professional and professional in accordance with the types of activities that the main professional educational program (MPEP) is focused on;
- strengthening the role of using the information and educational environment with an indication of the requirements imposed on it, as well as the use of distance learning technologies and e-learning.

The positive aspects of the FSES HE 3+ implementation were: the expansion of the of universities freedom to independently form the MPEP, the opportunity to chose forms, methods and means of teaching (Bedny, B., Kuzenkov, O., 2017). Such flexibility in the formation of the MPEP, the content of teaching, and a set of competencies were aimed to maximaze integration of education and the labor market (Kuzenkov O., Zakharova I., 2018). However, the factor limiting the integration was the low correlation level between the results of mastering the MPEP , i.e. the list of formed competencies and the requirements of employers - generalized labor functions outlined in professional standards. This determined the need to modernize the FSES HE 3+ and switch to the new edition of the FSES HE 3++.

In August 2020, the FSES HE 3++ were approved in economic education areas.

The standards analysis showed that the new edition is focused on participating in the formation of the employers' MPEP. General cultural competencies have been replaced with universal ones. There is a need for constant monitoring of the labor market, the range of practices has been expanded in some economic areas, there is no division into academic and applied bachelor's degrees.

The innovations are made just on time, but we believe that the question of getting a high-quality education in 4 years remains open, as well as the possibility of shortening the period of study for students who have completed the secondary vocational stage of education, continuing to pursue higher education under the bachelor's degree programs.

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of this research is the scientific works of Russian and foreign specialists in the field of formation of modern higher education systems, preparation of regulatory documents for the implementation of educational activities within the requirements of the employers. We also consider the possibility of introducing elements of studying in specialized classes created on the basis of schools that actively interact with the universities. In this study we use methods of system analysis, generalization and comparison of data, monographic and others methods.

The scientific novelty of our research consists in the development of a model of an economic education system in the field of organizing reduced studying in related programs of secondary vocational education, bachelor's and master's degree programs. The current trends of entering the arket of a specialist with in-depth knowledge of the digital economy aspects were also taken into account.

We believe that on summarizing the results obtained, it is possible:

- to attract a wider target audience for higher economic education on a paid basis;
- to transform economic education in a way that will allow regional universities, in particular, agricultural universities, to develop standards themselves and approve them on the basis of an educational organization for the most popular professions in which the employer is interested;
- to work more closely with students of 8th — 9th grades, and also to use the employer's base for organizing and conducting practical training;
- to facilitate the early identification of students who are able to success in science and study under additional professional programs, using distance learning formats with the help of the methodology for assessing the quality of educational services.

We also believe that Russian education in the 20s of the third millennium is in a pronounced bifurcation phase – at a radical turning point of its development. The future forms, paradigms and models of education will be influenced by the civilization evolution. Education, as its important global component, should contribute to those forms of development that will implement the survival strategy of humanity to the greatest extent, not only with the use of IT technologies, but also preserving the biosphere.

The ways of improving higher education and its sustainable development within the framework of new standards, the emergence of qualitatively new professions should include:

- unified systems of electronic educational websites for obtaining information (their accessibility from any student's location);
- use of information technologies thanks to the development of mobile means of transmitting and processing information within the walls of the university and at its expense;
- shortening of studying periods for those categories of students who work in the specialty, or have been taught in related programs of secondary vocational education.

3 RESEARCH RESULTS

Currently, most of the field of studies in economic specializations are not provided with on-budget places. They are implemented on paid educational services basis. In addition, the Unified State Exam (USE) system shows over the past few years that most school graduates choose those subjects that are not for admission to economic educational areas: social studies, mathematics (major level). It becomes quite difficult to pass the threshold level. Many 9th year graduates enter secondary vocational educational institutions (SVE).

The obtained SVE degree allows one to pass the entrance tests on the university base without passing the Unified State Exam. However, there are other disadvantages that graduates with a SVE degree might encounter:

- on average, vocational education takes 3 years and 10 months, while an ordinary school graduate spends 2 years to receive a secondary general education;
- young men are not granted with a deferral from the army. That is a compulsory service in the armed forces, after which a small percentage goes to higher school on a full-time basis;
- according to the FSES HE 3++, the student credit units, that does not allow to retest the studied discipline. Thus, it is not always possible to shorten the period of study by one calendar year, only if the curricula with the same names of the subjects studied is formed;
- acceleration of studies is possible only in a related field and with reimbursement of tuition costs (in the absence of on-budget places);
- additional costs, teaching according to an individual curriculum are acceptable only for a certain target audience.

According to the standard scheme (Fig.1), a graduate student spends 9 years and 10 months before receiving a higher education diploma if they studies according to the 3-level education system: SVE - Bachelor's degree - Master's degree. If an educational institution develops and approves an internal educational standard, taking into account the comparison of all the features that restrain the reduction of the education time, then in this case the student can save 1.5 years (Fig.2). It should be noted that in Russia only about 20 universities can independently develop their standards. More than 800 universities in Russia work strictly according to the FSES!

In the last few years, the model shown in Figure 2 has been used in practice by educational organizations that represent all levels of education, but it became possible to shorten the duration of Master's programs within the FSES HE 3++.

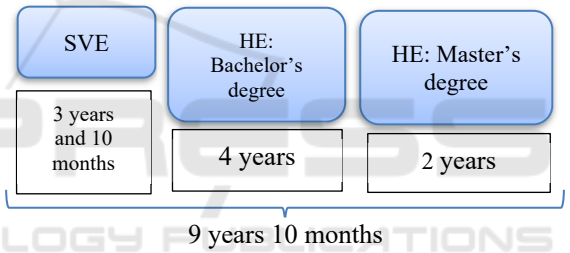

Figure 1: Standard 3-level educational system.

In the last few years, the model shown in Figure 2 has been used in practice by educational organizations that represent all levels of education, but it became possible to shorten the duration of Master's programs within the FSES HE 3++.

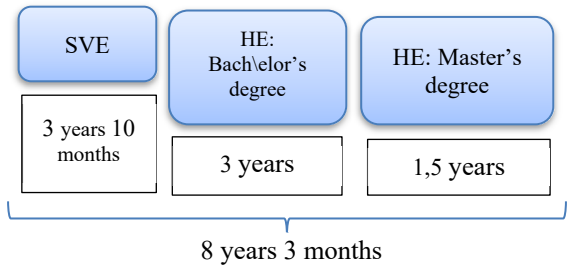

Figure 2: Express 3-level educational system.

Within the Master's degree in Economics the new standard was approved in August 2020. It is just on time to onboard undergraduates in 2022 and to develop programs with the duration reduced by 0.5 years.

As a part of the pilot project, we propose to consider a model (Fig.3) in which school education can also be involved.

For making students of 8th – 9th grades receive additional education there should be classes focused on Economics and ongoing 2-year education plan which includes such subjects as Management, Marketing, Economics, Introduction to the Specialization (Accounting), History of Economic Studies, Philosophy etc. Upon successful completion of final works (abstracts, reports, projects) students of 9th grade will be able to get an additional educational certificate. The received document can be equal to primary vocational education, then learning process will be reduced by another 1 year.

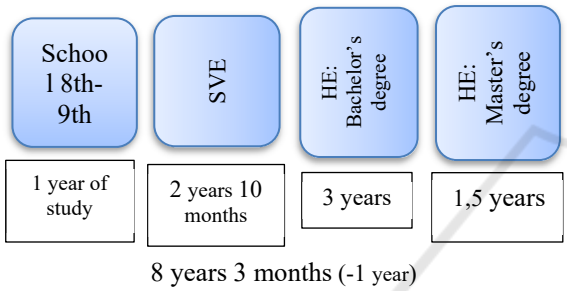

Figure 3: Express 4-level training system.

The model presented in Figure 3 aligns the learning time period of school student with a graduate student who has completed full-time learning at SVE level. It is clear that the duration of learning at the HE level will be reduced by 1.5 years.

There is a rational link in the proposed model: classes focused on Economics can be issued at a university. Students gain knowledge in the field of Economics and Management, get used to the classes organization within SVE and HE systems. In the future, studying under SVE helps to acquire practical skills and get acquainted with the specifics of the future profession.

To implement this model, modern educational platforms, qualified teachers who are able to work with teenagers, and the educational organizations interested in early career guidance among students are needed.

The main steps to the implementation of this model are preparation of documentation, licensing, specification of the MPEP, which is agreed with the employer. Taking into account the realities of the time and the advanced development of economic sectors, each educational institution should know the labor market, develop competitive advantages in the field of provided education, and also monitor professional trends.

The analysis carried out during the research on modern approaches in Russian education allowed us to identify a number of *triggers* that determine the trends for improving the system of economic education:

- the external *triggers* should be the global trends that operate in almost all areas of human activity and have a direct impact on the educational field;
- the derived *triggers* will be the consequences of "external *triggers*" that have independent significance and relevance for the development of the education system;
- system *triggers* will indicate trends and attitudes already established in the education system;
- possible trends and attitudes should be considered as promising *triggers* which can be profitably used for the development of education systems and their output to optimal scenarios for the selected pilot projects;
- internal system *triggers* and trends should reflect the specifics of education levels with general and particular problems for each level of education.

Optimists believe that by 2030, people in developed countries will be mainly involved into the types of work robots and artificial intelligence will not be able to perform due to either tasks' "simplicity" (economically inefficient) or high complexity. A significant part of the working production activity will become creative. Other people, on the other hand, will work less with technical objects and more with other people.

The economy of the future will require not only a high-leveled "hard skills" for the production of mass goods and services, but also conditions for conscious consumption in order to create unique products. The hand made and uniqueness trend will become stronger. The future of specialists in Economics does not seem bright either.

In leading companies, the traditional "workplace" is gradually disappearing. The development of local and distributed production systems (3D printing, remotely-controlled robots and simulators) brings them closer to the end user.

Many things already have to be studied remotely, but not all students have high motivation within the distance education conditions, and in the modern world such a skill to study remotely acquires additional value.

The exclusion of people from the field of education due to digitalization and distance learning without the "presence effect" can lead to the disappearance of communicative and intercultural competencies and drop in the emotional intelligence level.

As a result of the economic imbalances expansion, the society differentiation by income increases. The reduction of old production technology chains combined with digitalization is already having a strong impact on wages and employment of the middle class representatives: they cannot afford prestigious education (hence, Russia will get a chance to develop education and educational tourism).

All over the world, children from rich families study in prestigious educational institutions, which also receive additional funding from private non-profit foundations in addition to government funding. Children in difficult life situations and children from poor families, end up in ordinary schools. In such educational institutions, a "cycle of social insolvency reproduction" is already formed. It generally leads to decrease in quality and effectiveness of the education system. In Russia, significant work has to be done to reverse this trend, otherwise, there is a risk of increased school segregation and institutionalized inequality of opportunities. And already at this stage, a model of civilized development of the education system is needed.

4 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The main outline of the new civilization development model and its most important subsystem – education - have already been formed abroad. However, Russian universities need at least 10 years to bring standards for the tool that would allow to form highly qualified specialists.

Sustainable development (SD) is not just one of the new global strategies, but an evolving worldwide movement that the future of all mankind and its fate depends on. This is a completely new form (model) of the the entire world development, that is now on the path of reducing existential risks and its own survival (Ilyin I., 2017).

The Sustainable Development Goals are a continuation of both the targets of all previous UN SD documents and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The MDGs identified eight international development goals as priorities, they were implemented by UN member states in 2000 and were mostly completed by 2015 (Ursul, A., Ursul, T., 2017).

We believe that it is necessary to revise the FSES HE 3++ as soon as possible (in particular, for both secondary and higher education), in order to eliminate those shortcomings that hinder progress, freeze the possibility of opening new specializations that are already in demand. A specialist in digital economy has to study for 2 years if they chooses a master's degree program. Yet there is no professional standard in this field. Hence, the labor functions recommended in the FSES HE 3++ for the formation of the graduate's necessary competence become odd.

The availability of higher education in Russia, the soft conditions applied when evaluating a student during exams or final certification have led to the emergence of pseudo-specialists who are not able to perform elementary tasks, or make administrative decisions. Even upon the strict selection of specialists among the candidates with higher education undertaken in state institutions, incompetent ignorant and not able to work graduates of universities, very often working not according to the profile of their education, carry out their work. Therefore, at the completion stage of education in the SVE programs, a strict selection for admission to higher education should be carried out. One needs practical experience, that is, in the last year of study, the vocational education curriculum must necessarily provide for work in production for 3-4 months.

Since 2021, instead of the practice concept of practice, practical training has appeared at all levels of education. Since "practical training in the implementation of academic subjects, courses, modules is organized by conducting practical classes, workshops, laboratory work and other similar types of educational activities involving the participation of students in the performance of certain elements of work related to future professional activities," then in the future, a close relationship with production organizations and enterprises should be established. If specialized classes are created at leading enterprises, then the teaching staff of the university will be partially unloaded, and the production teacher will be able to make a choice among students who are interested in their future profession.

For many years, production teachers were not motivated, there was no interest in organizing and conducting practical training. Only with financial support from the state and timely assistance from the university it is possible for students to work systematically in the workplace. And when assigning a student's salary during the training, they will have an interest and responsibility for performing the assigned work.

It should also be noted that quotas for targeted education are provided in universities. In general, this is 10% of the total number of on-budget places allocated for all educational programs. The range of enterprises with which it is possible to sign an agreement for targeted education is quite narrow. This

is another problem of higher education: specialists are needed, yet there are no resources, no mentors, no data on available vacancies in order to make efforts in their training, to raise a qualified employee who, after graduation, can be employed at this enterprise.

To develop a system of targeted training, it is necessary to clearly identify in the development strategy of the industry, educational institution or enterprise the importance of human resources, the creation of a personnel reserve for the future, the graduate's interest in working in the desired profession after graduation.

The availability of information resources, the reliability of the information provided, the ease of search and visual reproduction are important components for an applicant to enroll in one's university. And in order to want to study both under the SVE and under the HE programs, all conditions must be created – from the social environment to the career growth formation when hiring.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the acquired at the university experience, such as the formation and development of curricula in economic study fields, the development of MPEP, educational and methodological documentation on subjects, trainings, state final certification and other documentation, we have formulated a number of measures that must necessarily be carried out in the near future when finalizing the FSES HE 3++ in economic education areas:

- the increase the variety of educational programs (Senashenko, V., 2018): it is necessary to diversify the courses presented in the plans, dividing them into workshops, research subjects and subjects involving the use of special software products (1C, simulation modeling, robotics, business navigators, etc.);

- the implementation of an independent quality assessment system (testing, qualification exams) (Blinov, V., Yesenina, E., Klink, O., Kurteeva, L., Satdykov, A., Faktorovich, A. 2017);

- the new standards require at least 3-4 professional competences based on the education area in order to indicate the necessary and sufficient level of all implemented competences;

- the correct organization of the educational process, trainings directly at enterprises (the structure and amount of trainings within the bachelor's degree program consist of about 2000 hours in accordance with the FGOS HE 3+ and FGOS HE 3++. It is an order of magnitude more than the additional vocational education programs (AVE), and allows students to master any professional competence and labor functions, if the educational process is organized correctly, in terms of production conditions, and get the exact professional experience that the employer needs);

- to provide accelerated training in bachelor's and master's degree programs in related areas of education on the basis of internal local acts (or by developing standards on the university basis);

- education at all its levels "should not remain on the periphery of global development as a traditionally falling behind component of this process, but must become its particularly important advancing "catalyst" ..." (Ursul, A.., Ursul, T. 2017).

REFERENCES

Zakharova, I., Kuzenkov, O., 2016. Experience in implementing the requirements of the educationaland professional standarts in the field of ICT in Russian education. 11st 1thInternational Scientific-Practical Conference Modern Information Technologies and IT-education, SITITO.

Bedny, B., Kuzenkov, O., 2017. Integrated training programs for highly qualified scientific and pedagogical personnel. *Integration of education*, 4 (89). pages 637-650.

Kuzenkov O., Zakharova I., 2018. Mathematical programs modernization based on Russian and international standards. *Modern information technologies of the IT education market,* 1. pages 233-244.

Ilyin I., 2017. Education for sustainable development: global context. *Globalistics And Geopolitics,* 2.

Ursul, A., Ursul, T., 2017. New Goals of Sustainable Future. *The Journal Philosophy and Cosmology,* 18.

Questions and answers regarding the legal regulation of practical training of students, ATP Consultant Plus, MN-5/207304 (30.10.2020).

Senashenko, V., 2018. Levels of coupling of the higher education system and the sphere of work. *Higher education in Russia,* 3. pages 38–47.

Blinov, V., Yesenina, E., Klink, O., Kurteeva, L., Satdykov, A., Faktorovich, A. 2017. Professional standards: from idea to practice. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing RU.

Ursul, A., Ursul, T. 2017. The phenomenon of futurization in education for sustainable development. *Values and meanings*, 6 (52). pages 8–20.