

THE RF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM'S PERFORMANCE MONITORING

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A second round of monitoring the performance standards practiced by higher educational establishments has been completed in the Russian Federation. The very fact of such a monitoring having actually been launched is an indirect sign that licensing and accreditation procedures are applied inadequately, if at all. Thus, two control mechanisms are being formed, each requiring substantial budget funding.

The Russian Federation has completed a second round of monitoring the performance level of higher educational establishments. The first round took place in 2012 and caused a big scandal, because the list of inefficiently performing establishments was found to contain such well-known names as the Moscow Institute of Architecture (State Academy), the Moscow Aviation Institute (State University of Aerospace Technologies), and Russian State University for the Humanities. So, the RF Ministry of Education and Science had to explain that if certain higher educational establishments had been identified as 'displaying signs of ineffectiveness', this did not really mean that they had been inefficient, and then 'manually' adjusted the results of the monitoring.

In 2012, the following five major criteria were applied in the assessment of higher educational establishments' performance level:

- the average USE (Unified State Examination) score of newly enrolled students,
- the volume of funding, per faculty member, allocated to research and development (R&D) activities,
- share of foreign students in the total number of students at a given higher educational establishment,
- revenue per faculty member,
- total floor area of premises used for studies and research, per student.

In 2012, a lot of misunderstanding was associated with the index of 'share of foreign students in the total number of students at a given higher educational establishment', because many higher educational establishments did not list their students from the CIS as foreign. In 2013, this issue was carefully explained, and so all students from the CIS were registered in the monitoring forms as foreign students.

The logic applied in elaborating the monitoring criteria is quite understandable, if the following goals are taken into consideration: entry of Russian higher educational establishments in the world university ratings; development of scientific research on the basis of

higher educational establishments; increasing the remuneration level of academic staff; ensuring adequate tuition standards on the basis of state-of-the-art educational laboratory equipment, software and information technologies.

It is quite another matter that all these indices must be incorporated in the licensing and accreditation procedures of higher educational establishments. Thus, the fact that such a monitoring was actually necessary in order to assess their performance levels can be interpreted as an indirect sign that the other form of supervision (in the form of licensing and accreditation) is applied inadequately, if at all. So, instead of improving the functioning of the system of licensing and accreditation of higher educational establishments, it is supplied with 'crutches' in the form of monitoring, without actually interfering in its functioning. As a result, there emerge two control mechanisms, each requiring impressive budget spending.

Typically, the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Science and Education (*Rosobrnadzor*) has already requested some additional budget funding for conducting off-plan audits of those higher educational establishments that have failed to submit information concerning their performance in the framework of the monitoring.

In 2013, one more criterion was added to the five previously applied major ones: successful employment of the alumni – *the share, in the total number of alumni of a given higher educational establishment, of those who, having studied on a full-time basis, during the first year after their graduation did not sign up at an employment agency when searching for a job.*

For the 2013 monitoring, the floors for two indices were somewhat adjusted. The value of the first one – the share of foreign students in the total number of student at a given higher educational establishment – was now to be no less than 1 per cent, and for the capital's higher educational establishments – no less than 3 per cent. The other adjusted index – the total floor area of premises per student – was to be no less than 5 m², in the capital cities of Russia – no less than 13 m².

Table 1

FLOOR VALUES FOR THE EFFECTIVENESS INDICES SET FOR HIGHER EDUCATIONAL ESTABLISHMENTS

	Educational activity, score	Scientific research activity, thousand Rb	International activity, %	Financial and economic activity, thousand Rb	Infrastructure, m2	Employment, %	Additional indices
for educational establishments: without specific orientation of their activity	63	95	3.0	1,500	13.0	99.342	–
military and power structures							0.5
medical orientation							0.69
agricultural orientation							0.59
creative orientation							0.51
sports orientation							0.05
transport orientation							0.07

Source: http://miccedu.ru/monitoring/materials/reg_10301.htm

In order to be considered effective, a higher educational establishment was to comply with no less than three criteria out of six.

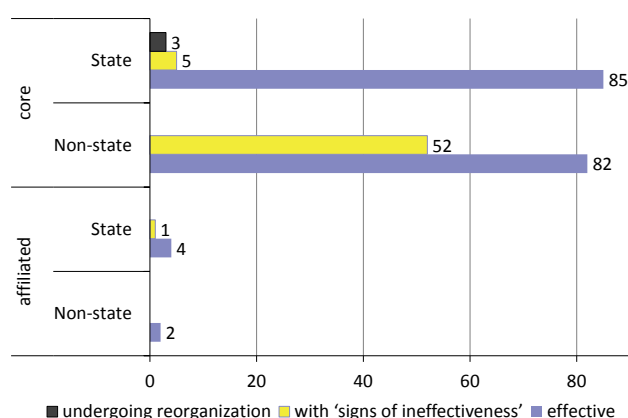
With due regard for the specificities of certain higher educational establishments, in 2013 these were also divided into special categories: military, medical, agricultural, creative, sports-oriented and transport-oriented higher educational establishments.

The 2013 monitoring encompassed non-state higher educational establishments. On the basis of data obtained in the course of monitoring, the RF Ministry of Education and Science determined those higher educational establishments that displayed ‘signs of ineffectiveness’: among these, there were 18.4% of core higher educational establishments and 20.4% affiliated ones. Among non-state higher educational establishments, ‘signs of ineffectiveness’ were displayed by more than 35% entities, while among state-funded higher educational establishments such signs were displayed by 7.5% entities.

The floor values for determining effectiveness in the city of Moscow were as follows – see Table 1.

As a result, in Moscow, the following five state-funded higher educational establishments with ‘signs of ineffectiveness’ were identified: the Russian Academy of Justice, the State Academy of Slavic Culture, the Moscow State Humanities and Economics Institute, the Russian State University of Innovative Technologies and Entrepreneurship, and the Moscow Institute of Open Education.

Besides, another 48 non-state higher educational establishments situated in Moscow were found to have ‘signs of ineffectiveness’, while 70 Moscow-based higher educational establishments submitted no information in the framework of the monitoring.



Source: http://miccedu.ru/monitoring/materials/reg_10301.htm
 Fig. 1. The Monitoring Results for Moscow-based Core and Affiliated Higher Educational Establishments

In Moscow, a total of 227 core higher educational establishments and 7 affiliations took part in the monitoring (Fig. 1).

In St. Petersburg, ‘signs of ineffectiveness’ were found only in 2 state-funded higher educational establishments – the St. Petersburg State Technological University of Plant Polymers and the St. Petersburg State Institute of Psychology and Social Work, and also in 10 non-state higher educational establishments, while 14 higher educational establishments failed to submit relevant information to the RF Ministry of Education and Science.

In Moscow Oblast, four non-state higher educational establishments were found to have ‘signs of ineffectiveness’; these signs were also displayed by 24 affiliations, among which there were four affiliated state-funded higher educational establishments. In Leningrad Oblast, no state-funded core higher edu-

cational establishments with 'signs of ineffectiveness' were found, but these signs were displayed by nine affiliations, which included four affiliated state-funded higher educational establishments.

This year, a total of 1,054 core and affiliated higher educational establishments took part in the performance monitoring, including 480 non-state higher educational establishments. No information for the monitoring was submitted by 108 higher educational establishments, and 14 higher educational establishments provided no explanations for discrepancies in their submitted data.

Over the period between 18 and 23 November 2013, in the framework of the second phase of the performance monitoring of higher educational establishments, the task forces set up under the Interdepartmental Commission for the Assessment of Effectiveness of Educational Organizations in the Sphere of Higher Education held their meetings. These task forces included representatives of the bodies of executive authority of subjects of the Russian Federation, Plenipotentiary Representatives of the President of the Russian Federation, representatives of the Association of Russia's Leading Universities, the Regional Unions of Rectors, the Association of Russia's Non-state Higher Educational Establishments, the Federal Service for Supervision in the Sphere of Science and Education (*Rosobrnadzor*), and experts in the field of education.

The task forces considered the submitted materials for 38 state-funded higher educational establish-

ments, 123 non-state, and 254 affiliated higher educational establishments. On the basis of their conclusions, the proposals for the December meeting of the Interdepartmental Commission for Assessing the Effectiveness of Educational Organizations in the Sphere of Higher Education are to be prepared, for the Commission's final decisions.

The RF Ministry of Education and Science explained as follows: 'By the results of the Interdepartmental Commission's meeting, higher educational establishments or their affiliations may be recognized to be ineffective, or it may be recommended to them that they should elaborate and implement their activity optimization programs. Some of the higher educational establishments or affiliations with markedly specific orientation of their activity may be excluded from the group of higher educational establishments with signs of ineffectiveness'¹.

Thus, those higher educational establishments and their affiliations that have found themselves on the lists of institutions with 'signs of ineffectiveness' will be given two or three weeks to challenge this verdict and to 'defend their honor' – and, most likely, they will indeed take advantage of that opportunity. One may only guess as to what kind of mechanisms will be applied in such a 'defense'.

1 See <http://минобрнауки.рф/%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%BE%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8/3752>