

es in organizations, compared to 26.0% in 2023. Thus, inflationary pressure shifted toward low-income population groups.

When analyzing the direction and structure of household final consumption expenditures over the period under review, it is necessary to take into account the problems accumulated over the past decade regarding the stagnation of living standards, which were addressed through the indexation of wages in the public sector, increases in the minimum wage, and social benefits.

The simultaneous expansion of social guarantees and targeted support for low-income groups, alongside wage growth, led to a reduction in the number of people with cash incomes below the poverty line/subsistence minimum from 12.2 million in 2023 to 9.8 million in 2025 and a decrease in their share of the total population from 8.3% to 6.7%, respectively. Poverty alleviation was attributed to both active social support for the population and the stimulation of entrepreneurial activity, high employment, and a steady decline in the overall unemployment rate, along with an expansion of employment opportunities.

4.3. Key trends in the development of higher education in 2025¹

Over recent years, the higher education system has seen a concentration of student enrollment, student numbers, academic staff, and financial resources in the universities in a limited number of oblasts of the Russian Federation. However, this process takes place amid ongoing attempts to redistribute student flows in favor of regional university systems trying to provide regional economies with higher-educated specialists, as it is declared. Moreover, this policy is supported by the desire to retain qualified young people by implementing the described measures in the RF oblasts in order to improve their demographic situation. In other words, it is an attempt to address not only personnel issues but also long-term development challenges in the oblasts through specific educational policies. However, the effectiveness of the declared measures is low, as people make decisions that contradict the stated policy. And, even more importantly, the federal budget's funding of oblastal higher education systems is also inconsistent with this policy.

4.3.1. Admission to Russian Universities in 2017–2025: Key trends

In 2017, 50% of the total (budget and fee-based) admission to bachelor and specialist programs at Russian universities was concentrated in 12 RF oblasts (*Table 9*).

1. Authors: *Klyachko T.L.*, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Director, Center of economy of continuous education (CENO IAES RANEPa); *Grigoriev V.G.*, Candidate of Technical Sciences, Leading Researcher, CENO IAES RANEPa.

Table 9

Oblasts of Russia, where total admission to the university bachelor's and specialist's programs in 2017 accounted for 50% of all admission to Russian universities

Oblast	Number of students, persons	Share, %
Moscow	150184	16.7
Saint Petersburg	66621	7.4
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg		24.1
Republic of Tatarstan	31425	3.5
Sverdlovsk oblast	27600	3.1
Rostov oblast	26089	2.9
Krasnodar krai	23452	2.6
Novosibirsk oblast	23123	2.6
Republic of Bashkortostan	21831	2.4
Samara oblast	21015	2.3
Chelyabinsk oblast	20805	2.3
Nizhny Novgorod oblast	19038	2.1
Voronezh oblast	17392	1.9
Total except Moscow + Saint Petersburg		25.9
Total 12 oblasts		50.0

Note. Oblasts are ranked by the share of total admission to universities in the respective oblast vs. total admission to Russian universities.

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-1¹ 2017.

Table 9 shows that in 2017 universities in Moscow and Saint Petersburg accounted for 24.1% of all admissions to Russian universities, while universities in 10 other oblasts with the highest overall admission rates accounted for 25.9%.

In 2020, the number of oblasts where universities' bachelor and specialist programs accounted for over 50% of total student admission dropped to 11, while the share of universities in Moscow and Saint Petersburg increased to 27.4%, i.e., 3.3 p.p. higher compared to 2017. Universities in the remaining 9 oblasts accounted for 23.5% of all students admitted to bachelor and specialist programs at Russian higher education institutions in 2020 (Table 10).

In 2025, number of oblasts where universities' bachelor's and specialist's programs accounted for over 50% of the total student admission dropped to 8, while the share of Moscow and Saint Petersburg universities increased to 34.6%, i.e., another 7.2 p.p. compared to 2020. Universities in the remaining 6 oblasts accounted for 16.5% of all students admitted in 2025 to bachelor's and specialist's programs at Russian higher education institutions (Table 11).

1. HVE-1 form "Information about the organization implementing educational activities in higher education programs, i.e., bachelor's, specialist's programs, master's programs." URL: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/action/stat/highed/> (date of access 22.01.2026).

Table 10

Oblasts of Russia where overall admission to bachelor and specialist programs at universities in 2020 cumulatively accounted for more than 50% of all admission to Russian universities

Oblast	Number of students, persons	Share, %
Moscow	168 222	19.3
Saint Petersburg	70 584	8.1
Total: Moscow + Saint Petersburg		27.4
Republic of Tatarstan	30 294	3.5
Rostov oblast	26 629	3.1
Sverdlovsk oblast	25 666	2.9
Novosibirsk oblast	22 585	2.6
Samara oblast	21 559	2.5
Krasnodar krai	21 304	2.4
Republic of Bashkortostan	20 550	2.4
Nizhny Novgorod oblast	18 293	2.1
Voronezh oblast	18 093	2.1
Total except Moscow + Saint Petersburg		23.5
Total 11 oblasts		50.9

Note. Oblasts are ranked by the share of total admission to universities in the respective oblast vs. total admission to Russian universities.

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-1 2020.

Table 11

Oblasts of Russia where overall admission to bachelor's and specialist's programs at universities in 2025 cumulatively accounted for more than 50% of all admission to Russian universities

Oblast	Number of students, persons	Share, %
Moscow	379 874	26.8
Saint Petersburg	111 034	7.8
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg		34.6
Republic of Tatarstan	46 649	3.3
Sverdlovsk oblast	45 576	3.2
Rostov oblast	44 607	3.1
Krasnodar krai	35 124	2.5
Samara oblast	31 002	2.2
Novosibirsk oblast	30 719	2.2
Total except Moscow + Saint Petersburg		16.5
Total 8 oblasts		51.0

Note. Oblasts are ranked by the share of total admission to universities in the respective oblast vs. total admission to Russian universities.

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-1 2025.

Growth in the share of total (budget-funded and fee-paying) admission to bachelor's programs at universities in the two Russian capitals vs. total number of admissions to these programs at all Russian higher education institutions took place primarily due to its growth in the Moscow universities: over 9 years from 2017 to 2025, this indicator for the Moscow universities increased by 10.1 p.p. (from 2020 by 7.5 p.p.). The situation was different at Saint Petersburg universities: the share of total admission to bachelor's and specialist's programs at Saint Petersburg universities vs. total admission to these programs at Russian higher education institutions increased from 2017 to 2020 by 0.7 p.p. from 7.4 to 8.1%, but dropped to 7.8% in 2025. Thus, over the period under review, the change in this indicator for Saint Petersburg universities amounted to only +0.4 p.p. on the whole.

If we consider the admission funded by the federal budget rather than general admission, then in 2017, universities in 13 oblasts accounted for at least 50% of this admission, and in 2025 the number of such oblasts declined to 12 (*Table 12*).

Table 12

Oblasts of Russia where federal budget-funded admissions to bachelor's and specialist's programs at universities in 2017 and 2025 accounted for more than 50% of all federal budget-funded admissions to Russian universities

Oblast	2017		2025	
	Number of students, persons	Share, %	Number of students, persons	Share, %
Moscow	77 561	15.5	92 301	16.7
Saint Petersburg	42 428	8.5	48 818	8.8
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg		24.0		25.5
Rostov oblast	17 026	3.4	18 129	3.3
Republic of Tatarstan	15 916	3.2	22 852	4.1
Sverdlovsk oblast	15 471	3.1	18 778	3.4
Novosibirsk oblast	12 278	2.5	14 455	2.6
Krasnoyarsk krai	11 850	2.4		
Samara oblast	10 984	2.2	11 922	2.2
Chelyabinsk oblast	10 609	2.1		
Voronezh oblast	10 258	2.1	12 201	2.2
Republic of Bashkortostan	10 229	2.0	14 517	2.6
Tomsk oblast	9 907	2.0	12 330	2.2
Nizhny Novgorod	9 876	2.0	12 125	2.2
Total except Moscow + Saint Petersburg		26.9		24.8
Total		51.0		50.4

Note. In 2017, oblasts are ranked by the share of admission funded by federal budget to universities in the respective oblast vs. total admission to Russian universities funded by federal budget (bachelor and specialist programs).

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-1 2017, 2025.

Thus, concentration of admission to Russian universities funded by the federal budget was less visible in terms of the number of oblasts compared to general admission, and the share of student admission funded by the federal budget to universities in Moscow and Saint Petersburg increased in 2017–2025 by only 1.5 p.p., while the overall admission to higher education institutions in the country’s two largest cities increased, as already mentioned, by 7.2 p.p. However, despite the declared transfer of admission target figures (ATF) to the oblasts, the number of main oblasts where budgetary admission has decreased, while the role of universities in the two Russian capitals has increased, albeit slightly.

Moreover, universities in some leading oblasts of 2017, such as the Republics of Tatarstan and Bashkortostan, and the Sverdlovsk, Novosibirsk, Tomsk, Nizhny Novgorod, and Voronezh oblasts, have also strengthened their positions. Only the Chelyabinsk oblast and the Krasnoyarsk krai squandered their lead.

If it is about fee-based admission to universities funded by households in 2017 and 2025, it was of a particular nature (*Table 13*).

Table 13

Oblasts of Russia where households funded admission to the university bachelor’s and specialist’s programs in 2017 and 2025 cumulatively accounted for more than 50% of all households’ funded admission to Russian universities

Oblast	2017		2025	
	Number of students, persons	Share, %	Number of students, persons	Share, %
Moscow	117 803	18.8	284 497	33.4
Saint Petersburg	45 463	7.3	61 184	7.2
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg		26.1		40.6
Republic of Tatarstan	24 786	4.0	23 551	2.8
Krasnodar krai	20 493	3.3	24 872	2.9
Sverdlovsk oblast	18 922	3.0	26 731	3.1
Rostov oblast	18 703	3.0	26 478	3.1
Republic of Bashkortostan	17 876	2.9		
Novosibirsk oblast	15 606	2.5		
Samara oblast	14 958	2.4		
Chelyabinsk oblast	15 083	2.4		
Nizhny Novgorod oblast	13 734	2.2		
Total except Moscow + Saint Petersburg		25.6		11.9
Total		51.6		52.5

Note. In 2017, oblasts are ranked by the share of the university admission funded by households in the respective oblast vs. total paid admission to Russian universities (bachelor’s and specialist’s programs).

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-1 2017, 2025.

In 2017, universities in 11 oblasts of the Russian Federation accounted for at least 50% of fee-paying admissions; in 2025, the number of such oblasts dropped to 6. Moreover, while in 2017, fee-paying students enrolled in Moscow's higher education institutions accounted for slightly less than 20% vs. all fee-paying bachelor and specialist admissions at Russian universities, in 2025, this figure had already increased by more than 1/3. Moscow is primarily "responsible" for such a high regional concentration of fee-paying admissions to Russian universities.

As from 2026, fee-based admission to universities will be regulated. In 2025, universities limited it, responding to a request from the Ministry of Education and Science. This resulted in setting a maximum fee for each program and specialty before the start of fee-based admission, while significantly raising tuition.¹ Thus, higher education institutions hedged in advance against financial losses associated with the subsequent reduction of the fee-paying contingent.

The need to regulate the number of fee-paying students is explained by two main reasons: an excess of relevant specialists (economists, managers, advertisers, etc.) on the labor market, as well as a change in the structure of studies, which involve stimulating the entry of young people to universities for engineering and technical specialties. Both these arguments do not stand up to reality. According to Rosstat and the Ministry of Labor,² university graduates specializing in economics, management, and humanities find employment no worse than engineers and IT specialists, working in their respective fields or in related professions. However, according to the NRU HSE study,³ 41% of the university graduates, receiving the engineer diploma, are not employed in their profession.

Meanwhile, monitoring of the concentration of paid admission to universities in a very small number of Russian oblasts suggests that a more serious, but undeclared reason is an attempt to limit the migration of young people to higher education institutions in the aforementioned 6 RF oblasts. Moreover, the outflow of those with effective demand for higher education from many oblasts, primarily to Moscow universities, as a rule, means a loss of income for local universities, despite the redistribution of admission target figures, i. e., budget funds in favor of these regional higher education systems.

Accordingly, universities in these oblasts lose their financial stability, the quality of education is declining, and young people are migrating even more intensively to oblasts that are more advanced from their point of view both in terms

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1. For example, cost of education in the MIPT for the program "Applied mathematics and computer science" increased to Rb767,000 in the 2025/2026 academic year compared to Rb467,000 in the 2024/2025 academic year, i. e. by 64%. The cost of a similar program in the Bauman MSTU increased by 20%: from Rb449,000 in 2024/2025 academic year to Rb549,000 in 2025/2026 academic year.
 2. Ministry of labor. URL: <https://www.rbc.ru/society/15/06/2025/68497f5e9a79475930adc6d6?ysclid=ml9o0xqbb4502901639>
 3. Engineering graduates in the Russia labor market. Analytical report. 2025 // NSU HSE. URL: https://www.hse.ru/data/2025/04/15/1951597714/Report_20250415.pdf

of quality (prestige) of higher education and in terms of prospects for further employment.¹

4.3.2. Income (financing) of universities from different sources: main trends

In recent years, a concentration of financial resources has been observed in universities in a very small number of Russian oblasts. Data on university revenues (based on funding from various sources) for 2025 is currently unavailable, but the dynamics of changes in the financial indicators of higher education institutions over recent years (2019–2024) are quite illustrative.

If it is about all university revenues (funding) from all sources in 2024, the combined share of revenues from all sources for universities in 7 Russian oblasts exceeded 60% of all Russian university revenues, while the combined share of funding (revenues) for universities in 3 oblasts, the highest in 2024 by this indicator, exceeded 50% (*Table 14*). In 2019, this required revenues of all universities in 5 oblasts: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, the Republic of Tatarstan, and the Rostov and Sverdlovsk oblasts.

Thus, the concentration of university income in certain oblasts of Russia is clearly increasing: in the previous 6 years, the total share of university income from all sources in the two Russian capitals has grown by 3.9 p.p., but the main growth is attributed to Moscow higher education institutions, i.e., 4.0 p.p. (universities in St. Petersburg reduced their share in the total income of all Russian universities in 2024 compared to 2019 by 0.1 p.p.). The remaining 5 oblasts either added 0.2–0.4 p.p. or remained at the same level (the Rostov and Sverdlovsk oblasts). However, universities in 74 oblasts² not included in the list of oblasts whose share of university income in 2024 amounted to at least 2.0% of the total income of all Russian universities from all sources, accounted for only 39.8% of the income in that year (in 2019 — 44.6%).

Meanwhile, it should be noted that concentration of financial resources in the universities of the two Russian capitals exceeds the concentration of total admission (*Table 11*) and the total number of students (result of the concentration of total admission). This situation is largely explained by concentration of revenue from academic science in leading Moscow universities. Thus, in 2024, revenues of Moscow and Saint Petersburg universities from R&D accounted for 58.0% of the total revenue of all Russian higher education institutions. This has to be taken into account when assessing data on funding of Russian higher education from the federal budget (*Table 15*).

1. This is shown by sociological studies of senior students and university graduates conducted in 2023 and 2024 // CENO IAES RANEPa.

2. Excluding new territories, as well as Nenets Autonomous National Area and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous National Area, in which there are no universities.

Table 14

Oblasts where share of all revenues of the regional higher education system vs. total revenues of all Russian universities amounted to at least 2.0% in 2024, %

Oblast	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Moscow	36.0	35.6	34.9	34.7	34.2	32.0
Saint Petersburg	11.7	11.5	11.9	11.8	11.9	11.8
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg	47.7	47.1	46.8	46.5	46.1	43.8
Republic of Tatarstan	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.3
Rostov oblast	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Sverdlovsk oblast	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.2	2.2	2.3
Tomsk oblast	2.2	2.4	2.2	2.2	1.9	2.0
Republic of Bashkortostan	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.7
Total 5 oblasts	12.5	12.5	12.1	11.9	11.3	11.6
Total 7 oblasts	60.2	59.6	58.9	58.4	57.4	55.4

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-2¹ 2019–2024.

Table 15

Oblasts where the 2024 share of funding from the federal budget of the regional higher education system vs. the total amount of funding from the federal budget of all universities in Russia was at least 2.0%, %

Oblast	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Moscow	34.7	34.4	33.3	32.7	32.8	30.7
Saint Petersburg	11.0	11.0	11.1	11.4	11.9	11.6
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg	45.7	45.4	44.4	44.1	44.7	42.3
Republic of Tatarstan	3.3	3.0	3.3	3.0	2.8	3.0
Tomsk oblast	2.8	3.1	2.8	2.8	2.3	2.4
Rostov oblast	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4
Sverdlovsk oblast	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.1
Novosibirsk oblast	2.0	1.9	2.1	2.1	1.9	2.1
Total 5 oblasts	12.7	12.5	12.8	12.5	11.6	12.0
Total 7 oblasts	58.4	57.9	57.2	56.6	56.3	54.3

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-2 2019–2024.

Table 15 shows that changes in the share of funding for universities in 7 oblasts from the federal budget over 6 years was +4.1 p.p., and this change occurred mainly due to the Moscow and Saint Petersburg universities (their total indicator increased by 3.4 p.p.). The changes in the size of the indicated shares for remaining 5 oblasts

1. The form No.HVE-2 “Data on material, technical and information base, financial and economic activities of the higher education institution.” URL: <https://minobrnauki.gov.ru/action/stat/highed/> (date of access 22.01.2026).

were small: in 2025 +0.1–0.4 p.p. for the time period under review. In 2024, higher education institutions in 76 Russian oblasts¹ not included in *Table 15* accounted for a combined 41.6% of all funding for universities in the Russian Federation from the federal budget, i.e. only 0.9 p.p. more than funding from the federal budget for universities in Moscow and Saint Petersburg (in 2019, 3.4 p.p. more was spent compared to funding from the federal budget for universities in the RF two largest cities). Meanwhile, higher education institutions in Moscow and Saint Petersburg accounted for 61.1% of all federal budget expenditures on academic science in Russia in 2024. It should also be noted that Moscow universities received 52.7% of the total federal budget funding allocated to Russian higher education for R&D in 2024.

Thus, less than half of all funds spent on the implementation of scientific research and development in Russian higher education has been spent from the federal budget on science in the universities in other Russian oblasts, including Saint Petersburg, in the year under review.

People actively finance regional higher education systems and, consequently, the universities located in these oblasts. The primary revenue stream from the population comes from tuition fees at all levels of higher education, as well as in supplementary vocational education programs.

In 2024, there were 8 oblasts where households' share in the funding of regional higher education systems was at least 2.0% vs. the total volume of households' funding of all Russian universities (*Table 16*).

Table 16

Oblasts where households' funding of the regional higher education system in 2024 amounted to at least 2.0% of the total population funding of all Russian universities, %

Oblast	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Moscow	38.8	38.6	38.4	37.1	37.3	33.5
Saint Petersburg	11.5	11.3	11.6	10.7	10.2	10.2
Total Moscow + Saint Petersburg	50.3	49.9	50.0	47.8	47.5	43.7
Krasnodar krai	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.7
Republic of Tatarstan	2.6	2.7	2.7	3.1	2.9	3.2
Sverdlovsk oblast	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.6
Rostov oblast	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.1
Novosibirsk oblast	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.0	2.1
Samara oblast	2.0	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.9	1.8
Total 6 oblasts	14.3	14.1	13.7	14.4	14.1	14.5
Total 8 oblasts	64.6	64.0	63.7	62.2	61.6	58.2

Source: estimated using statistical observation form No.HVE-2 2019–2024.

1. Excluding new territories, as well as Nenets Autonomous Okrug and YNAO.

In 2024, universities in Moscow and Saint Petersburg accounted for 50.3% of the total expenditure of the Russian people aimed on education at universities, including supplementary vocational education programs.

Thus, more than half of all households' funds received by Russian universities in 2024 were spent on tuition at higher education institutions in Russia's two capitals. In 2019, more than half of all funds spent by the population on tuition at Russian universities were accounted for by 5 oblasts, ranked by the share of households' investment in their universities: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, the Krasnodar krai, the Republic of Tatarstan, and the Sverdlovsk oblast (combined, they accounted for 52.2%). In 2024, universities in 8 oblasts received almost 2/3 of all households' funds spent on university education programs. In other words, the concentration of households' funds in 2024 was higher than the one of federal budget, but the number and composition of oblasts whose universities received predominantly federal and households' funding did not differ significantly.

In both cases, 5 oblasts: Moscow, Saint Petersburg, the Republic of Tatarstan, and the Rostov and Sverdlovsk oblasts formed the basis. These same oblasts are also among the oblasts with the largest shares of general, state-funded, and fee-paying admissions to universities in 2025.

* * *

Over recent years, Russia has seen a concentration of student enrollment, and consequently student numbers, in universities in a very small number of oblasts. Attempts to redistribute admission target figures (state-funded admission) to regional universities have resulted in growing fee-based admissions, primarily at Moscow universities.

At the same time, higher education's financial resources are also concentrating in oblasts with the largest influx of fee-paying students. As a result, higher education system has developed a core of oblasts attracting both student and financial flows.

There are only 5 of them: in addition to 2 Russian capitals, this core includes the Republic of Tatarstan, the Rostov oblast, and the Sverdlovsk oblast. The Tomsk oblast, a major university center, is primarily dependent on federal funding for its finances, but lags far behind the leading oblasts in terms of the influx of households' funds to its universities.

On the contrary, the Krasnodar krai is among oblasts that are leaders in attracting households' funds to local higher education institutions, while universities in this oblast receive less than 2.0% from the federal budget allocated for funding higher education.

However, in recent years, the Chelyabinsk oblast has lost its leading position in both student admission to universities and in the revenues of the regional higher education system, and universities in the Krasnoyarsk krai have given up their lea-

ding positions in student admission (this oblast has not been among the leaders in terms of university revenues over the last years).

Regulation of fee-based admissions could somewhat weaken the influx of young people from the oblasts into Moscow universities and reduce their share in both free and fee-based admissions.

However, as for the incomes of universities in the Russian capital (and possibly higher education institutions in Saint Petersburg), they will most likely not decrease, but rather increase, since the budget funding standards for engineering training are expected to increase, the budget admission to specialties related to artificial intelligence will be expanded, and, moreover, the cost of paid education will continue to rise, especially at leading universities.

4.4. Housing market in Russia and housing construction¹

In 2025, the Russian real estate market was in relative equilibrium, adapting to the realities that emerged following the phasing out of preferential mortgages in 2024. This state largely reflected the overall economic situation (GDP growth by 1%).

4.4.1. Market price indicators

Before analyzing the price trend in the housing market, it is worth noting that there are various sources of information on residential real estate price dynamics: on the one hand, there are official statistical reports, and on the other, data from real estate agencies.

As indicated on the Rosstat portal, price indices for the primary and secondary housing markets are calculated by the agency's specialists based on registered prices for newly built apartments and for apartments in the existing housing stock that are privately owned, provided they are the subject of market transactions. Price indices for the primary and secondary housing markets are compiled by apartment type across the constituent entities of the Russian Federation (regions), federal districts, and the Russian Federation as a whole. Data on the total area of a specific apartment type sold in the previous year for a given city within a region is used as a weighting factor. Monitoring is conducted among a sample of organizations engaged in real estate transactions in regional centers and individual cities of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. When recording apartment prices, their quantitative and qualitative characteristics are taken into account. Average prices across Russia are calculated based on the average prices established in the regions.

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