

## PRINCIPLES OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC MOBILITY ORGANIZATION

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**Abstract.** The relevance of the problem is caused by integration process in the sphere of higher education and growing flows of academic mobility of students. The aim of the article is to study the main principles that make the basis for students' academic mobility organization, particularly in the context of integration processes in the sphere of Higher Education, such as the Bologna Process. The main approach to the problem of the research is the systematic approach, which helps to study various sides of the problem under study. The article presents the basic principles of students' academic mobility organization – principle of freedom and equality, integration and lifelong learning. The materials of the article may present interest to the researchers studying the problems of Higher Education, Pedagogics and integration processes in the sphere of Higher Education. The results of the study may also be used in the courses of Pedagogics, Comparative Pedagogics and Foreign Pedagogics.

**Keywords:** education, academic mobility, principles, freedom, integration, lifelong learning.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Today knowledge is considered to be the “engine” of progress. “Sectors of knowledge” that bring profit and contribute to economic growth of a country provide development in various spheres in many countries (Chen, 2004).

The globalization process in the sphere of Higher Education is revealed in the integration processes, such as Bologna Process, creation of educational networks, programs of academic mobility of students, teachers and researchers.

International cooperation is one of the priority activities of a modern university. P.G. Altbach and J. Knight consider the educational market to follow the rules of the market, adding that World Trade Organization included higher education services in the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) (Altbach & Knight, 2006, p. 30). International departments of universities are interested in the university’s image improvement aiming at a large number of foreign students’ attraction. A similar opinion is presented by N.V. Varghese (Varghese, 2008, p. 10), who thinks that modern higher education doesn’t have boundaries and knowledge is a profitable good. Higher education institutions tend to attract foreign students and foreign capitals, which leads to strong competition, creation of various ratings and considerable financial gain.

One of the international activities of a university is students’ academic mobility development. This activity is profitable and provides intercultural dialogue and further collaboration. In this study by “academic mobility” we mean a temporary stay of a student in a foreign university with educational purposes and with further coming back to the university of his/her home country (1995).

By the year 2025 the number of international students should reach 7.2 mln. (Bohm, Davies, Meares & Pearce, 2002). In 2012 the USA, the UK, France, Australia and Germany were the leaders in foreign students’ attraction (Unipage.net, n. d). The idea of free movement between higher education institutions is presented in the Bologna communiqués. In the Yerevan communiqué the importance of academic mobility development is especially underlined because it provides inclusiveness of higher education systems of different countries (Yerevan communiqué, 2015).

## 2. METHODS

The theoretical basis of the research is the conceptual ideas of the scientific researches in the study of academic mobility. We used the comparative approach to compare the main notions under study. Systematic approach allowed us to study various approaches to the problem of the main principles of academic mobility organization and to identify their main features. We used the analytical method to study the scientific literature, government regulations and national reports on the subject under study. We synthesized the results of the research to make the conclusions and recommendations for the colleagues.

## 3. RESULTS

The main principles of academic mobility are based on the fundamental ideas of the Bologna agreements and the Bologna Declaration as the basic documents.

The central idea of such a phenomenon as academic mobility is the idea of *freedom and equality*. By “freedom” in this context we understand the freedom of choosing the way and place of getting education as well as the freedom of movement between educational institutions. The idea of free movement between universities can be found in Medieval Times, so academic mobility has its roots in the first Medieval universities (Shakirovaand & Valeeva, 2016, p. 1644).

The right to have free choice can be found in all the normative documents, regulating the organization of academic mobility of students. Bologna Declaration is aimed at free access of students to the educational resources of the countries participating in the Bologna process. The principle of freedom is the central idea of the Magna Charta Universitatum (1988) – long before the Bologna Declaration (Magna Charta Universitatum, 1988). The main aims of the Charta are independence of universities from politics and ideology, freedom of study and academic mobility stimulation.

Prague communiqué (2001): “they (ministers) confirmed their commitment to pursue the removal of all obstacles to the *free* movement of students...” (Prague communiqué, 2001).

One of the main aims of the Bologna agreements is the creation of European Higher Education Area (EHEA) that means *freedom* of movement between

higher educational institutions of European countries.

Having studied the legal basis of the Russian higher education we noted that in paragraph 1, article 3 of the Federal Law "Education in the Russian Federation" (2012) the concept "freedom" may be found several times:

- "priority of human life and health, human rights and *freedom, free* personal improvement";
- "*free* choice of the way of getting education according to the human abilities and needs, creation the conditions for personal abilities improvement, including giving the right to choose forms of getting education and educational institution";
- "academic rights and *freedom* of pedagogical employees and students" (Federal Law, 2012).

In our research the concept *freedom* is closely connected with the concept of *equality*, which means equal access to higher education and absence of discrimination. This principle is stated in London communiqué (2007) (London communiqué, 2007). Equality in the context of academic mobility implies equal rights of students to be academically mobile. However, the financial aspect of academic mobility remains a relevant problem [22, p. 342]. According to the reports of different countries taking part in the Erasmus program and presented on the official websites of such organizations as Eurostat and Eurostudent, we may conclude that most of the students can't take part in the mobility programs due to financial reason.

Thus, the basic principle of academic mobility of students is the principle of freedom and equality.

In the last few decades we often come across such notions as internationalization, globalization, transnational education and network forms of educational institutions. These notions reflect integration processes that are happening in many spheres of human life including higher education. The principle of *integration* is one of the basic principles of academic mobility.

Bologna process may be considered as an example of an integration process in the sphere of higher education. Academic mobility as a basic instrument of the Bologna process implies students' movement to foreign countries, cultural and intellectual exchange and international collaboration

development. According to paragraph 1 article 3 of the Federal Law "Education in the Russian Federation", Russian education should have the conditions for *integration* with the education systems of other countries. This might be implemented under mutually beneficial conditions, thus making the basis for international cooperation.

Collaboration between universities might be implemented in the form of bilateral, multilateral or network agreements (projects). In the last few decades the term "network" has been used more and more often in the context of higher education and higher education institutions international integration. This term was firstly used in Pedagogics in the 70-80s of the previous century when the method of network planning was borrowed from Economics and transferred into the pedagogical practice (Shvecov & Dugarov, 2012, p. 34). Article 15 of the Federal Law "Education in the Russian Federation" (2012) and new federal educational standards are setting the network form of educational programs realization.

Having studied different approaches to the definition of the term "network cooperation" (Bugrova, 2009) (Parinov, 1999) (Vasilevskaya, 2007), we have come to the conclusion that the key features of the higher education institutions' network cooperation are the following:

- equality: there is no evident leader – all the participants are equal in their rights, there is a certain level of trust between the participants, the decisions are made in conference;
- interdependence: each participant makes its contribution on the network activity on the whole and by sharing its professional, scientific, research experience, realization of student and teaching staff mobility;
- mobility: network is mobile towards the environment as it quickly adapts to the changing outer conditions reacting to the changing market conditions. Moreover, the subjects of the network are mobile. Student and staff mobility within and between universities-members of the network implemented on the basis of long-term agreements plays a significant part in experience exchange and realization of these agreements.

Nowadays problems of national security, opposition to extremism and terrorism are relevant and therefore education should not just educate, but bring up a personality. We consider the principle of

*lifelong learning* to be one of the basic principles making the foundation of the processes ongoing in many countries, including Europe and Russia.

The right to be educated through the lifetime makes the basis of academic mobility. This right is presented in paragraph 1 article 3 of the Federal Law “Education in the Russian Federation” (2012): one of the main principles of the state politics in the sphere of education is ensuring the right for *lifelong* education according to personal needs, adaptation of the education system to one’s level of training, personal peculiarities, skills and interests.

The principle of lifelong learning is basic for Bologna process. Lisbon summit of European Union in March, 2000 issued a document – “A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning” (Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, 2000).

Lisbon summit revealed six principles of lifelong learning:

- new basic knowledge and skills for everybody;
- increase of investment in human resources;
- innovative methods of teaching and education;
- new system of education estimation;
- improvement of tutorship and consultancy;
- bringing education home.

We have considered these principles in the context of our research – in terms of academic mobility – and come to the following conclusions. The first principle of lifelong learning implying equal access to education and new basic knowledge, skills and competences means that modern world of high technologies and speed requires the same of the modern man. Academic mobility allows to improve these skills as it makes the participants of the mobility programs plunge into the foreign environment and active communication. The idea of equal access to the education resources of the countries is also one of the most important for academic mobility. There are a lot of negotiations about the ways to tackle the obstacles to academic mobility and to the idea of equal and free access to education. The most topical are financial, information, language and legal obstacles.

Increase of investment in human resources means aid in financing the mobility programs. Unfortunately, today academic mobility faces various problems and one of the most urgent ones is the financial problem (Shakirova & Valeeva, 2016), p. 343]. However, there is a steady growth of students taking part in mobility programs due to a number of factors – aid on the state level (funds, grants, scholarships), international level (Erasmus, DAAD) and institutional level (agreements between partnering higher education institutions). Associations, consortia and other forms of network organizations promote this growth.

The third principle of lifelong learning implies new content of education aimed at an active position of a student, at his high motivation and ability to create his own educational route. Academic mobility allows the student to choose the place, period and kind of education himself. Mobile students are highly motivated people who are absolutely sure of what they need at this very moment and what they want to have as a result of their work. This might be the reason that many researchers take academic mobility as a personal characteristic (Demin, 2012) (Odenbah, 2011).

The questions of recognition (periods and documents of education) have always been topical in terms of academic mobility. Though many countries ratified their wish to recognize diplomas and periods of education (Lisbon convention, mutual agreements between universities-partners), it cannot be stated that today diploma of one country will be definitely recognized by another country (Commission of the European communities, 2009).

The principle of tutorship and consultancy improvement in the context of academic mobility means providing information about education systems of different countries, terms of foreign students’ admission and peculiarities of the country by informational centers of the countries involved in the Bologna process and international departments of the universities and representatives of such organizations as DAAD.

The sixth principle of lifelong learning implies distant education with the usage of informational technologies. Virtual mobility is considered to be one of the academic mobility kinds by many scientists (Avksentyeva and Avksentyev, 2014) (Prihodko & Goncharuk, 2013), though a number of researchers contradict this idea. Nevertheless, an opportunity to get a diploma of two universities or

raising the level of skills without leaving home increases the competitiveness of the students.

Thus, the key principles of lifelong learning might be applied to academic mobility too, and we may conclude that the principle of lifelong learning makes the basis of academic mobility.

#### 4. DISCUSSION

A number of researchers devoted their works to the problem of principles of academic mobility organization. Marina Alexandrovna Stavruk presents the following ones: the principles of unity, integrity, dynamic and scientific principle, principle of free choice, principle of continuity, functional principle and principle of humanization (Stavruk, 2011). Irina Mitkovna Mikova, having studied the works of V.A. Galichin, V.I. Bogoslovskiy and A.P. Tryapicina, gives the following variant of the principles of student mobility organization (Mikova, 2013): student should study in the foreign university at least a semester or a year, study should be lead in English or the official language of the country, home university should recognize the credits of the foreign university and other principles. We consider that these principles should be taken as the main conditions or features of academic mobility organization.

#### 5. SUMMARY

Academic mobility is based on several main principles: principle of freedom and equality, principle of integration and principle of lifelong learning. These principles make the foundation of academic mobility, they are interacting with each other and transform due to global tendencies in the sphere of Higher Education and have a certain influence on the phenomenon of academic mobility.

#### 6. CONCLUSIONS

The problem of academic mobility and the main principles of its organization may present interest to the researchers studying the problems of Higher Education, Pedagogics and integration processes in the sphere of Higher Education. The results of the study may also be used in the courses of Pedagogics, Comparative Pedagogics and Foreign Pedagogics.

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