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## СТУДЕНЧЕСКАЯ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКАЯ МОБИЛЬНОСТЬ В РОССИЙСКОЙ ОБРАЗОВАТЕЛЬНОЙ СРЕДЕ

А. М. Егорычев (Москва, Россия), С. П. Хорошилова, О. А. Склёмина, Е. С. Минакова,  
Е. А. Костина (Новосибирск, Россия)

*Статья освещает состояние академической мобильности студентов в Российской Федерации. Методы исследования вопроса включают анализ и сравнение. В соответствии с Болонской декларацией, студенческая академическая мобильность – один из ключевых критериев качества высшего образования. С присоединением России к Болонскому процессу ситуация в стране с возможностью обучаться в зарубежном вузе-партнере значительно улучшилась по сравнению с 1990-ми гг. Авторы представляют результаты сравнительного анализа студенческой академической мобильности в ряде университетов России. Исследователи также выделяют проблемы процесса организации академической мобильности российских студентов. Проанализирован успешный опыт реализации программ академической мобильности за рубежом, предложен ряд мер, которые необходимо предпринять для улучшения ситуации с академической мобильностью в Российской Федерации, обосновано значение создания инфраструктуры академической мобильности в России. В заключение авторы обозначают национальные вызовы, на которых России необходимо сфокусировать усилия и внимание, чтобы обеспечить интеграцию российских студентов в мировое образовательное пространство.*

**Ключевые слова:** студенческая академическая мобильность, глобальное образовательное пространство.

**Егорычев Александр Михайлович** – доктор философских наук, профессор кафедры социальной и семейной педагогики, Российский государственный социальный университет.

E-mail: [chelovekcap@mail.ru](mailto:chelovekcap@mail.ru)

**Хорошилова Светлана Петровна** – кандидат психологических наук, доцент кафедры английского языка, Новосибирский государственный педагогический университет.

E-mail: [cvx69@mail.ru](mailto:cvx69@mail.ru)

**Склёмина Олеся Андреевна** – аспирант кафедры английского языка, Новосибирский государственный педагогический университет.

E-mail: [osklyomina@yandex.ru](mailto:osklyomina@yandex.ru)

**Минакова Екатерина Сергеевна** – аспирант кафедры английского языка, Новосибирский государственный педагогический университет.

E-mail: [acorn8@yandex.ru](mailto:acorn8@yandex.ru)

**Костина Екатерина Алексеевна** – кандидат педагогических наук, доцент, профессор кафедры английского языка, декан факультета иностранных языков, Новосибирский государственный педагогический университет.

E-mail: [ea\\_kostina@mail.ru](mailto:ea_kostina@mail.ru)



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Aleksandr Mikhailovich Egorychev, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences,  
Professor of Social and Family Pedagogy Department, Russian State  
Social University, Moscow, Russian Federation  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7497-4508>  
E-mail: [chelovekcap@mail.ru](mailto:chelovekcap@mail.ru)

Svetlana Petrovna Khoroshilova, Candidate of Psychological Sciences,  
Assistant Professor of the English Language Department, Faculty of  
Foreign Languages, Novosibirsk State Pedagogical University,  
Novosibirsk, Russian Federation  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-5313-469X>  
E-mail: [cvx69@mail.ru](mailto:cvx69@mail.ru)

Olesya Andreevna Sklyomina, Postgraduate Student of the English  
Language Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Novosibirsk  
State Pedagogical University, Novosibirsk, Russian Federation  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9579-4736>  
E-mail: [osklyomina@yandex.ru](mailto:osklyomina@yandex.ru)

Ekaterina Sergeevna Minakova, Postgraduate Student of the English  
Language Department, Faculty of Foreign Languages, Novosibirsk  
State Pedagogical University, Novosibirsk, Russian Federation  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0370-7426>  
E-mail: [acorn8@yandex.ru](mailto:acorn8@yandex.ru)

Ekaterina Alekseevna Kostina, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences,  
Associate Professor, Professor of the English Language Department,  
Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Novosibirsk State  
Pedagogical University, Novosibirsk, Russian Federation  
ORCID ID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-1428-7095>  
E-mail: [ea\\_kostina@mail.ru](mailto:ea_kostina@mail.ru)

## STUDENTS' ACADEMIC MOBILITY IN THE RUSSIAN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

### Abstract

*The article highlights the situation with the academic mobility of students in the Russian Federation. The methods employed in the current research combine analysis and comparison. According to the Bologna declaration students' academic mobility is one of the key criteria of the quality of high education. Since Russia joined the Bologna process, the situation in the country with the opportunity to study in a foreign partner-organization has significantly improved, compared with the 1990s. The authors present the results of the comparative analysis of students' academic mobility at certain Universities of Russia. The researchers also point out the problems existing in the process of building academic mobility of Russian students. The successful experience of realizing academic mobility programmes abroad being analyzed, a number of steps to be taken in the Russian Federation to improve the situation with the academic mobility are offered, the significance of creating academic mobility infrastructure in Russia is described. In conclusion the authors emphasize the national*



*challenges for Russia to focus on to enable integration of Russian students into the global educational environment.*

**Keywords**

*Students' academic mobility, global educational environment.*

**Introduction**

The goal of high education institutions at the moment is modernization, which will increase accessibility, quality and effectiveness of education. To achieve this goal we should develop academic mobility of students.

Academic mobility is one of the main sides of integration process of Russian institutions of high education and science into international educational environment. Besides, academic mobility is an extremely important process for personal and professional development, as each participant of this process encounters the necessity to solve various life situations and, at the same time, analyze them from the view point of his/her native or foreign culture.

The main objective of academic mobility is to assure the quality of education received under the condition of forming the world educational environment and to make sure that education meets the requirements of a personality, society and state.

The development of academic mobility of students should be carried out in accordance with the following principles distinguished by N. A. Kozlova<sup>1</sup>:

- 1) dynamism – creation of effective practice of free migration of students within the world educational environment including the recognition of periods of studies and scientific research in foreign high educational institutions;
- 2) scientificity – strengthening the scientific component of academic mobility and involving foreign students in scientific research;

3) humanization – psychological and pedagogical support of the process of academic mobility;

4) cultural conformity – dependence of education and upbringing of students on cultures: world, regional and national;

5) students' freedom to choose academic courses containing new and meaningful information, where modern methods and techniques are used and where it is possible to make adjustments of an educational route for academically mobile students;

6) functionality – coordination of administrative functions at all the stages of organizing students' academic mobility.

At present the migration of academically oriented youth has become a central element of the global educational environment. In Russia a big number of academically mobile students are intending teachers of the English language that is why one of the aims of academic mobility for them is to get to know other cultures better to be able to teach them later at Russian schools. According to Nguyen Duc Chinh [2], the new status of English as the international language has brought significant changes in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The stress has moved from the target culture of English speaking countries to cultural diversity for developing learners as intercultural speakers under the conditions of globalization. Suarez-Orosco M. believes that the globalized world makes people interconnected and interdependent [9]. In this context international education

<sup>1</sup> Kozlova N.A. *Academic Mobility: the Essence, Vectors and Development Strategies*. Saint-Petersburg, TEI, 2012, 88 p.



contributes to cultural awareness and better understanding of universal values by individuals [4, 13]. Those who have got the experience of studying at foreign institutions become more adaptive and tolerant of the realities of our fast changing digital world [3].

On the other hand, Acar E. believes that host universities also benefit from international students. It is not the financial question here which is meant, the researcher points out that mobility students are

- improving academic and disciplinary success of the educational institution;
- creating diversity in learning environment [1].

Besides, mobility students create polycultural environment at educational institutions, this helps to form a polycultural personality able to communicate and cooperate with people of different nationalities, races and cultures [17]. Thomas D. C. calls education taking place under such conditions polycultural education, which encourages together with the perception of a foreign culture to analyze the system of one's own culture [11].

So, one can say that internalization of education is two-sided: it is external and internal at the same time. Characterizing it as external, Knight J. implies cross-country education, cross-border education – the process of cross-border provision of educational products and services to foreign countries through a variety of educational technologies and through different administrative arrangements [5]. The term “internal” describes “an environment within an institution that promotes and supports international communication, cooperation and intercultural understanding” [14].

### Methodology

The peculiarities of organizing and realizing students' academic mobility have been

investigated by B. F. Freed [8], R. C. Sutton & D. L. Rubin [10], T. R. Williams [12], S. S. Magnan & M. Back [6], B. Savage & H. Hughes [7], etc. They have examined different aspects of academic mobility: foreign language acquisition (B. F. Freed), learning outcomes (R. C. Sutton & D. L. Rubin), building intercultural communications skills (T. R. Williams), social interaction (S. S. Magnan & M. Back), language learning stimulation (B. Savage & H. Hughes).

In Russia the problems of developing academic mobility have become especially vital in the latest decade. According to the National report of the Russian Federation, prepared for the summit of the Ministers of Education in London in 2007, more than 2000 Russian citizens (students, postgraduates, lecturers and scientists) are annually trained (retraining, internship, etc.) in more than 30 countries on the basis of the international agreements of Russia on partnership with educational institutions. According to expert rating Russian grant programmes enable some more 1700 Russian citizens to take part in mobility programs yearly. For the moment more and more students and lecturers take part in the process of academic mobility but it is obvious that this number is too small for such a country as Russia. Furthermore, geographically the level of mobility in Russia is unbalanced: in the regions it's lower than in the central part of the country. Such a state of academic mobility can be explained by the following factors: less willingness of regional institutions of high education to take part in mobility programmes; additional financial barriers in the form of travel expenses.

The specifics and problems of building and developing academic mobility of Russian students result from the unplanned nature of this activity, its undeveloped theoretical and methodological foundations, undeveloped special





mechanisms of its implementation, undeveloped provision of law, the absence of financial support, lack of qualified specialists in this field. Insufficient funding and poor knowledge of foreign languages are the major challenges to the process of developing academic mobility [18].

The absence of a national body capable of solving a wide range of problems concerning the development of international academic mobility is regarded as critical deficiency in organizing academic mobility at the federal level. Thus, solving this problem is fully the responsibility of each high educational institution itself. In most cases mobility does not bring quick profit to universities, and also leads to extra costs. Any positive outcome from developing academic mobility is, as a rule, connected with improving the image and prestige of a university, which is sure to bring benefits in the long run but it requires systematic work and investments. N. A. Kozlova (2012) <sup>2</sup> assumes that the development of academic mobility is the priority at the institutions of high education with the developed system of strategic management.

### Discussion

The place occupied by Russia in the international market of educational services does not correspond to its significant educational potential. Incoming and outgoing streams of students in Russia are not even. In comparison with the period before the demise of the Soviet Union the number of foreign full-time students in Russian universities has decreased almost twice. Today the high education institutions with the largest number of foreign students are the following:

– Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, Moscow – over 8000 students;

- Lomonosov Moscow State University – over 5000 students;
- Saint-Petersburg State University – over 3000 students;
- Pushkin State Russian Language Institute, Moscow – over 2000 students;
- Tomsk Polytechnic University – over 1000 students;
- Moscow State University of Economics, Statistics, and Informatics – over 1000 students;
- Moscow State Institute of International Relations – over 1000 students;
- Tomsk State University – over 900 students;
- Herzen State Pedagogical University of Russia, Saint-Petersburg – over 900 students;
- Moscow Aviation Institute (National Research University) – over 900 students.

The list of the main countries, the citizens of which study at high educational institutions of the Russian Federation, looks like this: the Community of Independent States, China, Taiwan, India, Vietnam, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Mongolia, Syria, the USA, Ukraine, Moldova, Morocco, Nigeria, Germany, Turkey, Poland [15].

Russian students are much more actively involved in European programmes, while the number of European students in Russian universities is very limited. This can be caused by the high reputation of European universities (especially German, British and French ones) in the world market, on the one hand, and lack of information about the opportunities and advantages of education in Russia, on the other hand.

The analysis of international experience of realizing academic mobility programmes enables us to come to the conclusion that to improve the

<sup>2</sup> Kozlova N. A. Academic Mobility: the Essence, Vectors and Development Strategies. Saint-Petersburg, TEI, 2012, 88 p.



organizational base and mechanisms of academic mobility the following components are necessary:

1. Information support

1) a multi-level specialized information network, which serves as an integrator and distributor of full information for all participants of the process;

2) a normative-methodological base of commonly recognized periods of education and academic degrees: a) the documents facilitating comparability; b) the documents defining the status of students, lecturers, researchers during the period of their study/work at a host and home universities, including the norms of workload, salary, and credit transfer.

2. Effective institutional policy of mobility support

1) understanding the role of mobility in University development strategy/internationalization strategy;

2) determining the priorities of mobility to be realized (fields of study and research, target audience, incoming and outgoing mobility);

3) reflecting the mobility development strategy in certain university documents (faculties and university plans);

4) specifying the resource base for the realization of mobility development objectives (the sources and amount of funding allocated to support mobility);

5) organizing the process of administrative and information support (monitoring and overspreading information of mobility opportunities, travel arranging, visa support);

6) organizing monitoring process, control of the quality of mobility results and of their implementation;

7) assessment of mobility effectiveness.

3. Overspreading academic mobility results, ensuring the effectiveness of mobility support

programmes (scholarships, funding) and their development.

Building the infrastructure of academic mobility is significant for Russia at various levels:

1. State level – raising the standard and quality of education of the citizens; widening education services export, which is a profitable sector of economy in many countries, an important direction in policy and indicator of social and cultural development.

2. Regional level – significant increase of educational potential of high educational institutions; transformation of educational institutions into scientific-educational centers.

3. Institutional level – extending cooperation with the aim to join efforts with partners in the field of educational and research activities; elaborating educational programs and technologies focused on the highest results; increasing competitiveness in the Russian and international markets of educational services.

The factor influencing the building of academic mobility infrastructure is the international obligation of Russia applicable to the member countries of the Bologna process. In particular, it refers to the requirement to present statistical data on the academic mobility programmes, which is reliable and comparable with the information from other countries.

All in all, the country (Russia) should focus on major national challenges: 1) visa support of the participants of academic mobility process; 2) adequate implementation of specified procedures of recognizing mobility results; 3) encouraging individual and institutional mobility (for example, funding, employment guaranty) [16].

### Conclusion

The analysis above draws us to the conclusion that for the Russian Federation to develop academic mobility allowing the country





to integrate into the world educational environment, structural measures should be taken at all the levels – national, regional, municipal, and institutional ones. This will allow Russia broadening and qualitatively deepening the scale of student exchange programmes, dual diploma programmes, network education, and short-term courses. However, in the modern context of time shortage, when the period of studies of a student

is limited by the standard of the major professional educational programme, universities can't wait long for a national academic mobility system to be created and approbated at least within regional boundaries. That is why it is necessary for each high educational institution to design and bring into life its own system of academic mobility development, which will not be in conflict with the state law.

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