

Artículo de investigación

Improving the Procedure of Monitoring the Higher Education Quality in Ukraine

Удосконалення процедури моніторингу якості вищої освіти в Україні

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Written by:

Viacheslav Vasiliievich Abroskin¹¹¹

ORCID: 0000-0002-4062-8105

Olga Ivanivna Demenko¹¹²

ORCID: 0000-0003-0244-9218

Olena Mykolayivna Mykolenko¹¹³

ORCID: 0000-0003-2080-413X

Yurij Mykolaiovych Frolov¹¹⁴

ORCID: 0000-0001-8737-6091

Abstract

The purpose of the article is to study the monitoring of higher education quality in Ukraine and to develop certain directions for improving its procedure. The authors have used the following scientific methods: dialectical, logical-legal, structural-functional, formal-logical modeling, analysis and synthesis. Based on research results, the main directions for improvement of monitoring procedure of higher education quality are outlined. The concept and features of monitoring as an administrative procedure in the field of higher education are defined. The general principles, main tasks and functions of monitoring the higher education quality are highlighted. The selected provisions of legal regulatory acts which declare the need to promote an adequate level of higher education quality, its monitoring and evaluation are presented. It is asserted that nowadays there is actually no system of monitoring higher education quality in Ukraine. Regarding the analysis of current legislation provisions of Ukraine in the field of higher education, as well as accepted scientific approaches to determining the implementation structure of monitoring procedure of higher education quality, three of its general phases are distinguished. These phases are as follows. I. Preparatory phase, which involves the implementation of a series of appropriate actions,

Анотація

Метою статті стало дослідження моніторингу якості вищої освіти в Україні та формування певних напрямів удосконалення його процедури.

Авторами використано такі методи наукового пізнання: діалектичний, логіко-юридичний, структурно-функціональний, формально-логічний, моделювання, аналізу й синтезу.

За результатами проведеного дослідження окреслено основні напрямки вдосконалення процедури моніторингу якості вищої освіти. Визначено поняття та особливості моніторингу як адміністративної процедури у сфері вищої освіти. Виділені загальні принципи, основні завдання та функції моніторингу якості вищої освіти. Наведені положення нормативно-правових актів, у яких задекларована необхідність подальшого забезпечення належного рівня якості вищої освіти, проведення її моніторингу та оцінювання. Констатовано той факт, що на сьогодні в Україні фактично відсутня система моніторингу якості вищої освіти. З урахуванням аналізу норм чинного законодавства України у сфері вищої освіти, а також існуючих наукових підходів до визначення структури реалізації процедури моніторингу якості вищої освіти виділено три її загальні стадії. До таких стадій віднесені

¹¹¹ PhD in Law, Rector of Odessa State University of Internal Affairs

¹¹² PhD in Law, Associate Professor, Associate Professor at the Department of Pedagogy and Foreign Philology of Semen Kuznets Kharkiv National University of Economics.

¹¹³ Doctor of Jurisprudence, Assistant professor, Professor of the Department of Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure and Criminalistics of Odessa I. I. Mechnikov National University

¹¹⁴ Doctor of Jurisprudence, Professor, Professor of Department of Jurisprudence of the Berdyansk State Pedagogical University

combined into the following main stages: initiating the monitoring procedure; monitoring planning; development of monitoring technology. II. Practical phase, which includes the following main stages: preparation of selected research participants; conducting research. III. Analytical phase, consisting of the following stages: information processing; recommendations development; adjustment and control; research results publishing. It is indicated that each of these phases is a relatively independent and complete part of the procedure, which in turn consists of certain stages, each of which fulfills the corresponding intermediate purposes directed at solving the tasks of this administrative procedure phase.

Key words: monitoring, education quality, administrative procedure, legal framework, higher education.

наступні. I. Підготовча, що передбачає виконання відповідних дій, об'єднаних у такі основні етапи: ініціювання процедури моніторингу; планування моніторингу; розробка технології здійснення моніторингу. II. Практична, яка містить в собі такі основні етапи: проведення підготовки обраних учасників дослідження; проведення дослідження. III. Аналітична, що складається з таких етапів: обробка інформації; підготовка рекомендацій; коригування та контроль; оприлюднення результатів дослідження. Відмічається, що кожна із наведених стадій являє собою відносно самостійні та завершені частини процедури, які, в свою чергу, складаються з певних етапів, кожен з яких реалізує відповідні проміжні цілі, спрямовані на вирішення завдань даної стадії адміністративної процедури.

Ключові слова: моніторинг, якість освіти, адміністративна процедура, правове забезпечення, вища освіта.

Introduction

A key aspect of national higher education system modernization process in the context of public relations democratization and state power decentralization is the improvement and high quality assurance of educational process. Primarily, such an assertion is based on the fact that nowadays it is quality higher education is a necessary condition and foundation to ensure sustainable democratic development of society, consolidation of all its institutions, humanization of social and economic relations, development of new personal core values in life (Decree of the President of Ukraine, 25.06.2013). Additionally, improving higher education quality is one of the main tasks of integrating Ukraine's higher education system into Pan-European educational structure. The overall task of ensuring the proper quality educational activity requires the State to optimize and improve present-day mechanisms for implementing appropriate administrative procedures in the field of higher education. Therefore, national system modernization of higher education quality assurance requires implementation of a number of urgent measures and, above all, bringing the legal regulatory framework in field of higher education in line with modern European standards, improvement and optimization of the existing mechanisms for realization of administrative procedures, etc.

Thus, the need to improve the efficiency of monitoring higher education quality, the lack of scientific developments on this issue, the imperfection of legal regulation of monitoring procedure of higher education quality determine the urgency of this article and the topic raised in general.

The purpose of this article is to study the main directions of improvement of monitoring procedure of higher education quality in Ukraine, which involves defining the concept and features of monitoring as an administrative procedure, identifying the existing shortcomings of its implementation at the current stage of the development of administrative and procedural relations in the field of higher education. In view of this, the authors will attempt to outline certain ways to improve monitoring procedure of higher education quality in Ukraine.

The concepts and conclusions of the article are based on scholars' scientific positions and analysis of statutory legal acts regulating the activity on monitoring the higher education quality in Ukraine, and also determine its procedural grounds.

Theoretical framework

A number of famous scientists of various branches of law, in particular: I. P. Annenkova., Yu. A. Atamanuk, I. I. Babin, L. M. Grinevich, Yu. O. Doroshenko, H. I. Korotkiy, I. L. Likarchuk, T. O. Lukina, A. I. Lyashenko, A. N. Mayorov, O. A. Nelovkina Bernal, N. O. Pasichnik, I. P. Prikhodko, L. O. Shchoholieva and others have devoted their scholarly works to consideration and analysis of administrative monitoring procedures of Ukraine's higher education quality in contemporary academic literature. At the same time, changes that are taking place today in national higher education system, as well as the general tendencies of public relations democratization and state power decentralization in Ukraine, require a comprehensive approach to studying such an important component of higher education quality assurance scheme as monitoring.

Methodology

When choosing scientific research methods, the authors relied on the identified purpose and the need to ensure the scientific objectivity of the results obtained. Methodological basis is composed of general scientific and special research methods, the use of which allowed for scientifically grounded conclusions. Dialectical and logical-legal methods are the basis for studying the essence of the definition of "monitoring" as an administrative and legal category. General principles, main tasks and functions of monitoring the quality of higher education are defined by structural-functional method. Formal-logical method of interpretation of legal rules was used for analysis of statutory legal acts, which regulate procedural framework for monitoring the higher education quality. Methods of modeling, analysis and synthesis were used while developing the ways to improve the process of monitoring the of higher education quality. The integrated application of the above methods made it possible to achieve the goal.

Results and discussion

In general, monitoring means the continuous observation of a process (phenomenon) in order to identify its compliance with certain standards, forecasts, desirable consequences, etc. (Schogoleva, 2014, p. 39). In contemporary national science, monitoring is defined as purposeful and organized in a certain way and for a certain time observation of objects or processes with registration of the selected parameters of

their condition at specified moments of time, systematic analysis of their functioning according to the observation data, study of the real state of affairs in order to elaborate the necessary managerial actions or administrative decisions (Korotkiy, Atamanuk, Doroshenko, 2010, p. 78). A. Mayorov defines monitoring as a system of collecting, processing, storing and disseminating information about a certain system (or its individual elements), aimed at information support of system control, which allows making conclusions about its condition and predicting its development (Mayorov, 2005, p. 12). Thus, the essence of monitoring consists in constant tracking of the object of control, analysis of its condition and its comparison with set standards or purposes, forecasting of possible changes of the object condition in order to provide managerial actions focused on improving the object quality (Annenkova, 2010, p. 404).

Monitoring in education can be presented as a comprehensive system for observing the education system status and changes taking place in it and its individual elements, assessing the situation and making forecasts about the quality of education and its possible development (Prikhodko, 2013).

The Education Encyclopedia defines monitoring as a special system for collecting, storing and distributing information on the state of education, predicting the dynamics and the main trends of its development based on objective data as well as working out scientifically grounded recommendations for making administrative decisions related to raising efficiency of the education sphere (Lukina, 2008, p. 519). The general principles of the higher education monitoring should include: a) objectivity, timeliness and comprehensiveness in investigating various aspects of the education activities, processing and analyzing the results obtained; b) correspondence of the proposed control tasks to the content of the investigated material, consistency of the regulatory-legal, organizational and scientific-methodological support of the monitoring components; c) openness and promptness of bringing the research results to the administrative bodies, the public, the interested international institutions; d) systematic approach (conducting monitoring in certain order – by corresponding phases and stages); e) humanistic character (Lukina, 2008, p. 520; Schogoleva, 2014, p. 39).

The main tasks of monitoring the higher education quality are: 1) development of a set of indicators which provide holistic idea of the state of educational process, its qualitative and

quantitative changes; 2) systematization of the information on the state and progress of the educational activities in higher educational establishments; 3) ensuring regular and obvious provision of information on the developments at the higher educational establishments; 4) informational support for analyzing and forecasting the state and development of the educational process, and making administrative decisions (Annenkova, 2010, p. 410).

Among the main functions of monitoring the higher education quality, which proceed from the general aim of raising the effectiveness of educational activities, we should mention the following: informational, research and investigative, diagnostic, correctional, prognostic ones (Schogoleva, 2014, p. 39).

Analysis of the existing legal regulatory acts in the sphere of higher education allows us to argue that at present the system of monitoring the quality of the national higher education system in Ukraine is practically non-existent. The majority of experts note that the existing policy and regulatory documents in the given sphere are limited to proclaiming declarations like "improving the quality" instead of determining its concrete indicators, which have to be reached, and can be measured. This situation doesn't allow to move from mere intentions to provide the quality of higher education to concrete actions for its real provision (Babin, Grinevich, Likarchuk, 2011, p. 92). The necessity to develop the national system of educational monitoring has been noted in a number of policy documents. For example, the National doctrine of education development envisages as a priority task of the state education policy the necessity to introduce the monitoring of educational process and the monitoring of education quality (Decree of the President of Ukraine, 2002). Moreover, decrees of the president of Ukraine "On urgent measures to ensure education functioning and development in Ukraine", "On additional measures to improve the quality of education in Ukraine", and "On measures to ensure the priority development of education in Ukraine" envisaged creation of the national system of monitoring the education quality on the basis of the criteria of the European Union member-states as well as participation of Ukraine in international comparative studies of education quality (Decree of the President of Ukraine, 2005; 2008; 2010). In the Program of economic reforms for 2010-2014 "Wealthy society, competitive economy, effective state" the steps necessary to improve the higher education quality included development of the national system for evaluating the education

quality; creation of independent qualifying centers; fostering creation of independent national ratings of higher educational establishments etc. (Program from 2010). In this respect, it is also worth mentioning the intentions of the state set out in the National strategy of education development in Ukraine for the period up to 2021. In order to ensure the proper level of the higher education quality the Strategy envisaged both preparation of a number of new legislative and legal regulating acts and improvement of the existing ones, in particular those dealing with the problems of higher education administration and conducting monitoring and evaluation of the higher education quality (Decree of the President of Ukraine, 2013). However, virtually the only legal regulatory act, which consolidates and regulates the implementation procedure for monitoring higher education quality in Ukraine, is the Procedure of conducting independent external evaluation and monitoring the education quality approved by the decree of the Cabinet of ministers of Ukraine (Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, 2004). At the same time, in our view, provisions of the above Procedure do not correspond to the existing law of Ukraine "On higher education" and do not take into account those promising avenues for provision of education quality monitoring which were set out in the National strategy of education development and other policy documents in this sphere. Experts also point out that approval of this document testified to the fact that monitoring is designated to have only control functions (Babin, Grinevich, Likarchuk, 2011, p. 22).

The provisions concerning the implementation of the procedure of the education quality monitoring are too general in nature. The main components were referred to as: determining the aim, tasks, terms, methods of conducting the monitoring and the evaluation criteria; preparing guidance and methodological materials for conducting the monitoring; conducting the monitoring itself; analyzing of the monitoring results, collecting statistical and analytical information on the education quality; making this information public.

It should be noted that at present there is no consensus in the administrative law science on determining an optimal structure of the procedure of monitoring the higher education quality. For instance, A. I. Lyashenko singles out five stages of monitoring procedure, which, in her opinion, are closely connected with each other and in many cases overlap: initiation of monitoring; preparation of its conduct; data

collection and analysis; summary of findings and making the results public; writing a report and providing recommendations (change strategy) for development of the object under investigation (Lyashenko, 2007, p. 38).

According to N. O. Pasichnik, educational monitoring includes the following stages: determining the monitoring aim, content, structure, and criteria of education quality; working out the monitoring technique and tool; drawing up a monitoring plan, determining terms and responsible persons; collecting data using the chosen methodology; data processing and analysis; providing recommendations for further development of the object under research; correction and control; making the results public (Pasichnik, 2013, p. 54).

T. O. Lukina singles out the following stages of monitoring research in the sphere of education which include a number of appropriate actions:

- 1) planning the research (determining the research aim and tasks, defining the object under research, forming a sample, making up the research schedule, determining evaluation criteria and indicators, choosing research methods);
- 2) working out tools (tests and questionnaires, their approbation, preparing guidance and methodological materials for coordinators and participants of the research, choosing statistical and mathematical methods of processing the obtained research results);
- 3) conducting the research (preparing participants, providing instruction, conducting the main research);
- 4) collecting and processing the results;
- 5) analyzing and interpreting the research results (summarizing the statistical information, identifying influencing factors, preparing recommendations for correctional work, eliminating the negative factors, forming the educational policy etc.) (Lukina, 2008, p. 520-521).

O. A. Nelovkina Bernal suggests singling out the following stages of the higher education quality monitoring: 1) preparatory stage which includes determining the aim and tasks of the monitoring, the main indicators and criteria; choosing the ways to determine the real level of the monitoring object; 2) initial-diagnostic stage which contains collection of information using

the designated methods; processing the results obtained; evaluating the state of the object under research; 3) planning-prognostic stage which envisages forecasting the tendencies and possibilities of further development of the object being monitored in accordance with the results of the analysis of its state as well as devising the plan of correctional actions; 4) activity stage which is characterized by taking concrete correctional actions aimed at changing the state of the monitoring object in conformity with the devised plan; 5) analytical stage which envisages concretizing the tasks; assessing the output state of the monitoring object, comparing it with the initial state, drawing conclusions as to the correspondence between the aim and tasks of the monitoring and the research results, determining the effectiveness of the work done; 6) correctional-prospective stage which is directed towards correction of the activities of the monitoring subjects as well as determining further tendencies of development of the monitoring object, possible methods and means of intensification of the teaching and educational process (Nelovkina Bernal, 2009, p. 115-116).

Analysis of the current Ukrainian legislative norms in the sphere of higher education as well as the existing scientific approaches to determining the structure of implementing the procedure of the higher education quality monitoring allows to define its three general phases. Each of them is a relatively independent and completed part of the procedure consisting of separate stages. Each stage achieves an appropriate intermediate aim directed at coping with a task of the given phase of the administrative procedure. These phases are as follows.

1. Preparatory phase, which envisages taking a number of actions combined into the following main stages:
 - 1.1 Initiating the monitoring procedure. Customers of the monitoring investigation may be various parties of the education procedure who are interested in an objective evaluation of the education service provided by the higher educational establishments (the faculty of a higher educational establishment and its leadership, administrators in the sphere of higher education, employers, consumers of education service and others).
 - 1.2 Planning the monitoring. This stage envisages setting the tasks of the research, determining the research object, choosing the research methods,

determining the evaluation criteria and indicators. The main tasks of the monitoring should include: receiving objective information about the quality and state of the education system and also forecasting its development; evaluating the state of the education system according to the tasks of the state policy in the educational sphere; providing the state power bodies with statistical and analytical information about the education quality. Selection of the monitoring research object is carried out in accordance with the level of administration. The higher education monitoring objects might be: the higher education system; resources (the staff, material and technical resources); the processes (pedagogical process as a whole and its individual components); activities (administrative, labor, academic activities); phenomena (education, excellence of the pedagogue etc.) (Lukina, 2008, p. 520). In their turn, the objects of the higher education quality monitoring are: information about the parties of the educational procedure; processes that take place in the education system and characteristics of its state; the results of the educational activities; academic and methodological, material and technical, regulatory and legal, staffing support of the educational process. The methods of monitoring might include the following: interviewing various groups of respondents; testing; collecting statistical data on the state of the higher education system; examining documentation of the higher educational establishments, higher education administrative bodies. Determining the criteria, performance, indicators of measuring the higher education quality has to correspond to the aims of the higher institution functioning, they should be of minimum quantity, but sufficient to evaluate the most essential parameters (Gromova, 2006, p. 52).

- 1.3 Working out the monitoring technique. According to the tasks of the monitoring at the present stage the research tools are selected (choosing questionnaires, tests, methods, survey charts etc.), statistical and mathematical methods are selected for processing the results showing the higher education quality, guidance and methodological materials

are prepared for conducting the monitoring.

2. Practical phase which consists of the following stages:
 - 2.1 Preparing the selected participants of the research. The given stage deals with the organization of the research conduct, its concrete terms are set out and the use of tools is determined, the responsible persons are appointed, those persons are instructed.
 - 2.2 Conducting the research. According to the plan at the given stage the data necessary to analyze the higher education quality are collected (the results of the tests, the surveys using the selected methods etc.). The monitoring is conducted through collection and analysis of the information about the state of the higher education system; preparation of the statistical and analytical information about the higher education system.
3. Analytical phase, which consists of the following stages:
 - 3.1 Processing the information. The given stage is concerned with the elaboration of the accumulated information, its analysis, generalization and interpretation. The statistical and analytical information on the higher education quality is prepared with the aim of making an appropriate administrative decision.
 - 3.2 Developing the recommendations. Based on the interpretation of the obtained data, the report on higher education quality is made and recommendations are elaborated for further development of the object of study and the formation of educational policy.
 - 3.3 Updating and control. At this stage, on the basis of the developed recommendations, changes are made to the process of functioning of the higher educational establishment, as well as control over the proper implementation of the provided recommendations is exercised.
 - 3.4 Publishing the results of the research. The results of the research should be brought to the notice of customers of monitoring studies, education authorities and other participants

concerned with the educational process. The results of monitoring should be taken into account in further planning and programming of educational activities, in the formation and implementation of the public policy in the field of higher education.

Conclusions

Summarizing the performed research, it can be pointed out that the improvement of the higher education quality in Ukraine requires its clear definition and corresponding regulatory consolidation of the procedure for evaluation and monitoring of higher education quality. Currently, there is an urgent need to both optimize monitoring and evaluation of higher education quality, as well as work out new regulatory legal acts on higher education administration and monitoring higher education quality. First of all, this includes the following: a clear definition of the purpose and tasks of monitoring, methods of its conducting; identification and assignment of powers of the main subjects of implementation of this procedure; developing system of indicators of higher education quality and indicators of educational efficiency, introduction of international components into the national system of evaluation and monitoring in higher education; establishment and consolidation of the main phases and stages of the process of monitoring the higher education quality; fixing the mechanisms of transparency of monitoring procedures for the evaluation of higher education quality; involvement of independent agencies, employers, customers and consumers of educational services in monitoring the higher education quality; dissemination of the results of monitoring the educational process and higher education quality to public; development and appropriate legislative consolidation of the procedure for participation of Ukraine in international monitoring studies on the quality of higher education.

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