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Practical Application of Total Quality Management System to Education of International Students

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Abstract

This paper deals with the acute question of education of international students. The main principles of the Total Quality Management System (TQM) were implemented in the planning and organization of educational and other processes which are important to education. The development of new forms and methods of educational activity, the establishment of new links between different issues, and understanding effective management of all processes are vital to achieving successful results. The elements of the TQM connected with the cycle “Plan-Do-Check-Action” (PDCA) define the policy of organization in the educational process for international students. Innovative services, techniques and forms of education, information technologies, and professional development improve the outcomes of teaching goals and the educational system as a whole.

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1. Introduction

Education of international students is accompanied by specific activities at any institution of higher education. This is determined by the scope of educational, methodological and resource features, as well as the necessity of socio-cultural and everyday support and enrollment activity.

International students who come for higher education to foreign universities rather differ from Russian students by their status, and educational and living standards because of other personal and educational needs. International

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students who apply to foreign universities have diverse educational background and expectations coming from the educational and supporting systems of their countries. Diverse educational models are accompanied by ethnic, national, and cross-cultural differences.

Moreover, the international market of educational services is constantly developing (new degree programs and new support services are rapidly being designed). The demand for degree programs offered today does not ensure the success of these programs tomorrow. Under these conditions, the conventional concept of educational activity management (following strict standards and offering a few educational programmes and services) is unviable.

2. Total Quality Management (TQM) system as an instrument of international education management

In the new era of education, the teaching of international students should be based on specific approaches to management. All approaches to the updated development strategy should be based on modern conceptual solutions. Under competitive conditions among universities, success in education is achieved through process-based management. Lately, much attention has been paid to issues of quality management at higher education institutions. Some key issues of TQM implementation in the U.S. and Europe are presented in the paper by Gary Rhoades and Barbara Sporn (2002). The instruments of the TQM system provide new opportunities in the field of management. During rather a short period of time, this approach has expanded from theoretical basics into a practical instrument of planning, implementation, management and improvement of all processes.

The system of components management should correspond to a flexible structure, adaptable to students' needs and a changing environment, which organizes and maintains the processes' functioning and creates a medium for their existence. The quality management system is an integrated instrument of management for all processes. It is necessary, however, to form not only the quality system as a priority, but also the integrated management system as a whole.

3. Specific characteristics of the educational process for international students

Educational activity is a top-priority process, targeted at training specialists who will be competitive in the national labor markets. Therefore, the implementation of the TQM system in the educational process is the most crucial issue.

The unquestionable advantage of any university dealing with international students is its ability to predict the individual demands of international students in the future and suggest a wide range of advanced educational services at reasonable fees.

The range of planning activities and teaching monitoring should be based on a individual approach which considers the student as a participant in the process and equal in rights, as an active and self-contained person. Within this approach a student is given the ability to develop his individual curriculum that is followed by the greater responsibility for outcomes of his training.

The development of new forms and methods of organizing educational activity, the establishment of links between different activities, and understanding effective management instruments are vital to achieving successful results.

The quality of the educational process is determined by several factors: the quality of management in organization and planning (academic programmes and curriculum); the quality of teaching and implementation of offered services (educational techniques, classrooms and labs, equipment); the quality of resource support: methodological and personnel (academic staff, academic books; teaching aids; task-books, etc.). The discussed components and the implemented instruments are presented in Fig.1.

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