

ON THE ISSUE OF TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC PERSONNEL, PH.D. STUDENTS AND MASTER'S STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

The article attempts to resolve some problems of improving the quality of training and certification of scientific personnel for higher education, as well as master's students in the legal specialty. The objective preconditions of the process of improving the university practice are shown in conditions when the obvious contradictions of the

Bologna education system are becoming more acute, thus seriously worsening the qualification level of specialists, the continuity of the curricula and the transparency of the knowledge offered in the training process. The author pays special attention to means of formalizing the evaluation of the quality of scientific works, their originality and reliability.

Keywords: Bologna system, higher education, master's studies, bachelor's studies, certification of scientific personnel, Ph.D. studies, «Antiplagiat» system, preparation of theses on legal specialty.

Background. At the congress held on December 7–8, 2016 in Moscow State University «Innovative Practice: Science plus Business», the rector of Moscow State University, Academician V. A. Sadovnichy said that the transition of Russia to the Bologna education system (four years of bachelor's studies, plus two – master's studies) was a mistake. Higher education should, in his opinion, last for five, even six years¹. One cannot disagree with this point of view (which is also supported by many other scientists and practitioners of our country). However, it is difficult to imagine how much effort, money and, most importantly, time will now go to an at least partial return to the system of training specialists in higher education, where its main line would be, as it once was, specialist's studies.

Objective. The objective of the author is to consider main problems in today's organization of university study.

Methods. The author uses general scientific methods, comparative analysis, evaluation approach.

Results. I believe that the main form of training should be specialist's studies (due to significant transformation of bachelor's studies, primarily academic). Applied bachelor's studies have, of course, a right to exist, but to a lesser extent than now, and master's studies should be substantially reduced (depending on the extent to which the higher school needs future scientists and rotation of the faculty). The duration of training in the specialist's studies cannot be less than five years (and for individual specialties – primarily technical – six years).

It is difficult to imagine training of specialists with higher education in a transport university (and transport, as is well known, is of strategic importance, especially in our vast country) under the bachelor's program – graduates face serious tasks to be content with knowledge, which is deliberately truncated and without proper foundation. Of course, continuing to study in the master's programs, of course, brings its own benefits, but for various reasons, is not available for all, and, most importantly, it requires a lot of extra effort and expense, so only specialist's studies are a much more cost-effective way to get a full higher education.

The solution, proposed at Law Institute of MIIT, to establish final qualification papers (graduation theses for those who did not prepare them before) is expected to be absolutely correct, which significantly increases the responsibility of both the graduates themselves and the faculty. The introduction of an additional state exam in the direction of «Document Management and Archival Studies» (profile –

«Document Management and Documentation Management») aims at the same. The only thing that should be noted in this regard: graduates should be informed in advance of such a significant increase in the load and such a serious test. It seems that this decision (in case of its adoption) will be the first step towards transformation of part of bachelor's studies into specialist's studies.

As for master's studies, they should not in words, but in reality become a real step in the growth of staff for higher education (along with Ph.D. and doctoral studies). The master's thesis cannot remain an ordinary final qualifying work of a trainee (as it is currently happening massively), it is intended to be a scientific and qualifying work, the result of a scientific, applied theory research (like the theses for obtaining scientific degrees of Ph.D. and D. Sc.).

An important problem for the system of higher education is the absence of a ban on enrolling for persons with the qualification «Bachelor» or «Specialist» not in the profile specialty (i.e. without a corresponding basic education). The Law «On Education in the Russian Federation» [1] does not prevent such a variant, and thereby promotes the mass, I am not afraid of this word, disqualification of professionals trained in the university, profaning the already complicated process, which has been tested for centuries. And if the university initially trains specialists for the full cycle of «bachelor–master», this is still good, because most of those willing to become masters will be bachelors trained in this specialty. The situation is worse where only masters are trained, like many departmental universities of law enforcement agencies. In such educational institutions, the contingent of future masters is 100 % of those who do not have a basic specialized higher education.

Comments, as they say, are superfluous, although there are many objective reasons that give rise to the topic. Here, the experience of some of leading universities of the country (for example, MSU, MGIMO), where one-year preliminary legal training is organized for applicants for a master's degree – people without a basic higher legal education, could be useful here.

Let's now turn to the steps to improve the quality of training of master's students and one of the most important indicators of their work – the master's thesis.

In addition to a number of legal disciplines, their curricula provide for seminars, research and scientific and pedagogical internship, for which a significant number of hours of classroom work are assigned. However, since the idea of inseparability of theory and practice in training of lawyers, developed by the Soviet

¹ Rossiiskaya gazeta, 2016, December 8.



school of jurisprudence, is now largely lost, it seems necessary, firstly, to strengthen the practical component of training of future masters and master's theses, and secondly, to recall the experience of teaching such special disciplines to graduates of law schools courses, such as «Problems of Civil Law», «Problems of Criminal Law», «Problems of Administrative Law». In particular, objects of a private legal profile could be useful at the Department of Financial, Economic, Material and Technical and Medical Support of the Academy of Management of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia. However, these are only half measures, which in no way will replace the full course of training of specialists of higher qualification in the system of «bachelor-master». The training of master's students (even with a higher non-specialized education and working in the specialty) for two or two and a half years is not equivalent to gaining knowledge and competence during six university years.

As is known, the master's thesis is the highest form of research written work performed in the process of studying at a university. It is final stage of training and it shows the professional level of the master's student, his ability to competently solve theoretical and practical problems. The first requirements for the author of the thesis: completeness of coverage and depth of the scientific analysis of the problem under study; the ability to come up with theoretical generalizations, draw practical conclusions, make reasoned recommendations and suggestions; logically consistent presentation of the material; validity of proposals for improving the legal regulation of the relations under consideration and the practice of implementing legal norms; use of reliable facts and regulations in force in the latest edition; possession of modern methods of searching, selecting, processing and using materials of information legal databases; skilful defense of his position on the issues of discussion of the topic of the master's thesis.

Moreover, it seems essential to normatively fix the basic requirements for the master's thesis and its execution (and for the faculty to clarify its main differences both from the theses of specialists and Ph.D. (Law) theses), content and depth of the study. Discussion is often caused by the measure of independence of the research activity of the master's student in the framework of the defended thesis, the criteria for evaluating its results, the nature of publications in scientific editions, speeches at scientific and practical seminars and conferences. Quite a few questions arise with regard to the signs of the scientific novelty of the study, its main provisions, brought to the defense.

It is indisputable that there is a need for stricter requirements for training of highly qualified specialists and for establishment of order in the process of awarding academic degrees and titles. But this does not give us grounds for breaking the entire Russian system of training scientific personnel (any reform should lead only to the improvement of the system). In the present conditions, the responsibility for awarding academic degrees naturally moves to the level of dissertational councils, as well as universities and research institutes under which they are created. And it is important to realize: the reputational responsibility of all persons involved in the defense of theses increases.

In our country so far, only every third or fourth graduate of Ph.D. studies goes to the defense of the thesis and is awarded, in case of its success, the scientific degree of Ph.D. The Federal Law «On Education in the Russian Federation» does not fix the defense of the thesis at the end of Ph.D. studies as an obligatory element. It is obvious that the state should stimulate universities and Ph.D. students to make every effort to achieve the desired goal – preparation and public completion of a qualitative scientific work. And for this, I think, it would be much more cost-effective to reduce the number of Ph.D. students, while increasing the scientific



effectiveness of Ph.D. studies. Improving the quality of scientific research could also be facilitated by introduction of an analogue of the accepted in the West academic degrees of DBA (Doctor of Business Administration) and DPA (Doctor of Public Administration). This would probably help relieve the scientific community of the excessive pressure of the current numerous applicants for academic degrees from the sphere of both large-scale entrepreneurship and public administration to dissertational councils.

Currently, all scientific articles, abstracts, course and final qualification works, graduation works and theses are subject to preliminary verification of the originality of their text by the network information systems «Antiplagiat». At the same time, it is necessary to speak, firstly, about limited possibilities for improving the quality of scientific research through such a system. Secondly, their generalized name «Antiplagiat» is unsuccessful and illegitimate, it is not based on copyright. They help to identify the identity, the originality of the texts being checked, the autonomy of the author's work, but not always the real plagiarism – for example, because these systems recognize texts as being not identical or not original if they contain quotations or their presentation in compliance with all citation rules, regulatory legal acts, as well as acts of the application of law, fragments of previously published or defended own works (texts on which the ultimate author's scientific idea is often based).

Meanwhile, let's not forget that any legal scientific work includes, among other things, analysis of normative legal acts and acts of application of law. And why does retelling and development of one's own thoughts deprive the researcher of «authorship», casts doubt on the originality, the ownership of the texts?

The main shortcoming of verification information systems is their imperfection, expressed primarily in purely mechanical identification of content of disunity, illegality of criteria for its evaluation. Which of these systems can be fully used and what is their own quality? Or, for example, what should be the minimum percentage of originality of the text of scientific work, loan words, citation and where is it defined, in which normative legal act? What is the degree of validity of monitored indicators?

In our universities, research institutes and publishing houses, the attitude towards these indicators is quite ambiguous, they use different systems for checking the identity of texts that are not certified in accordance with the procedure established by federal law. Under existing conditions, a formal evaluation of originality of scientific works often prevails over other, more significant (in my opinion) criteria for their quality. In addition, it is no secret that in order to achieve the set goal (for example, the successful defense of a graduation work or a thesis), applicants often go to immoral and illegal actions, namely, either they shamelessly write off all or a significant part of the data used, or purchase on a already widely developed market works written by «voluntary assistants». Moreover, the faculty of the

institutions participating in this cannot, and sometimes does not want (often self-centeredly) to effectively resist them.

Conclusions. Undoubtedly, the proposed measures to improve the verification of the results of all types of educational and research activities will help to establish proper order in the work of higher education, but this seems to be insufficient – first of all, a significant improvement in the moral and psychological climate is needed among both the students themselves and teaching staff.

As for the use of the information systems «Antiplagiat», they need to be tested as much as possible and fixed at the legislative level. It is necessary to determine what should be the minimum permissible percentage of originality, the identity of the text of the scientific work being checked, the level of loan words and quoting in them for a particular assessment of the quality of the research, taking into account the specific nature of the science to which it relates. These indicators should be reasonably justified, and here scientists and practitioners of the relevant field of knowledge are obliged to say their weighty word.

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