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DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF SOFT SKILLS AMPLIFICATION PROGRAMS FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS



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Abstract. The article deals with the approaches to the design of soft skills development programs for doctoral students in the context of postgraduate level of higher education modernization in Russian Federation. The peculiarities of postgraduate studies in Russia are revealed in comparison with the relevant levels of education in the CIS and European countries. Insufficient compliance of educational programs for the training of graduate students with the modern requirements of the labor market and professions is highlighted as the main factor determining the problems of training highly qualified personnel in postgraduate study. The approach to the design of course content using European practices is presented. Professional development perspectives of highly qualified personnel are discussed.

Keywords: higher education, educational programs for training highly qualified personnel, soft skills, professional development, European practices.

РАЗРАБОТКА И ВНЕДРЕНИЕ ПРОГРАММ РАЗВИТИЯ ГИБКИХ НАВЫКОВ ДЛЯ АСПИРАНТОВ

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Аннотация. Рассмотрены подходы к разработке программ развития гибких навыков для аспирантов в контексте модернизации аспирантуры как уровня высшего образования в Российской Федерации. Выделены особенности аспирантуры в РФ в сравнении с релевантными уровнями образования в странах СНГ и Европы. Недостаточная согласованность образовательных программ подготовки аспирантов с современными требованиями рынка труда и профессий выделена как основной

фактор, определяющий проблемы подготовки кадров высшей квалификации в аспирантуре. Представлен подход к дизайну содержания курса с использованием европейских практик. Рассмотрены перспективы профессионального развития кадров высшей квалификации.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование, образовательные программы подготовки кадров высшей квалификации, гибкие навыки, профессиональное развитие, европейские практики.

The change in technological structures determines the high rates of the modern education and professions market transformation. The participation of Russian science in global world processes and the willingness to work in the field of big challenges requires a sufficient number of highly qualified scientific personnel trained in the current areas of development of science and technology. Strategic directions of state policy in the field of science and technology development are reflected in the content of the National Technology Initiative (NTI) [10], the National Project “Science” [9], the National project “Education” [11] one of the directions of which is the development of human resources in the field of research and development.

Analysis of the peculiarities of educational programs revealed the presence of structural difficulties in comparing Russian and foreign programs of doctoral education. In the Russian Federation postgraduate programs belong to the third level of higher education and are implemented in accordance with the Federal State Educational Standard (FGOS), in some CIS countries (Belarus, Armenia) they represent a separate level of education. In foreign countries (Finland, Great Britain, Poland) there are no educational standards in this area and practices of individual universities in the preparation and support of graduate students have been developed.

Analysis of the main indicators of the activities of postgraduate studies on the scale of the Russian Federation indicates a decrease in the total number of graduate students, a decrease in the number of admission and release of graduate students, including those who graduate with a thesis defense.

The problem of highly qualified personnel education is due to many factors: social, economic, legal, infrastructural, technological, etc. At present, insufficient attention is paid to the issue of scientific personnel systematic training in the higher education system of the Russian Federation, taking into account modern challenges. In our opinion, one of the main factors determining the problems of training highly qualified personnel in postgraduate studies is the insufficient coordination of educational pro-

grams for training postgraduate students with the current requirements of the labor market and professions.

The analysis of the problem in the educational aspect allowed us to determine the following directions for the development of educational programs for training highly qualified personnel in graduate school.

1. Coordination of programs with the basic principles and trends of education development at the world and European levels, solving 4 basic tasks in accordance with the European Education Development Framework 2020 (ET 2020 framework) [5].

2. Soft Skills development approaches [1, 2, 12]. Actual pedagogical approaches to the development of soft skills amplification programs: project-based learning, E-learning, peer-to-peer learning, collaborative learning, blended learning. These approaches are most relevant for the development of courses for doctoral students.

3. Coordination of programs with trends in the development of the system of professional qualifications in the field of science. Currently, within the framework of the MODEST project, supported by ERASMUS +, methodological approaches, procedures and tools for modernizing postgraduate programs and advanced training of all participants in the educational process of training highly qualified personnel are being developed and tested.

4. Using the methodology and theoretical approaches to the development of learning outcomes (Cedefop, 2017; D. Kennedy, 2007, etc.) as the main component of the educational program [3, 6; 7; 8]. The following definition (ECTS Users' Guide [4]) of a learning outcome may be considered a good working definition: Learning outcomes are statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after completion of a process of learning. The learning outcome approach is, above all, a perspective and a mode of thinking in order to develop valid programs. While being an essential part of the implementation phase, writing learning outcomes is of course only the visible surface of this perspective, or a consequence of its implementation. The work of Benjamin Bloom (1913–1999) was one of the benchmarks for developing the concept of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes development is based on the analysis of qualifications to develop a relevant set of knowledge, hard and soft skills. Analysis of qualification has two stages. The first stage is the collection and

analysis of a set of documents containing qualification information. A set of documents containing qualification information: stakeholders survey results; evaluated effectiveness of educational program, SWOT analysis; standards overview (educational, occupational, industrial standards etc.). The output of this stage is the Hard & Soft skills mapping or Set of Skills. The second stage is the definition of learning outcomes for courses.

Basis for perspective areas of higher education in Russia will be the results of international project Modernization of Doctoral Education in Science and Improvement of Teaching Methodologies (MODEST), RSVPU undertakes now this Erasmus + project (Erasmus +, refn. 598549-EPP-1-2018-1-LV-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP). The aim of the MODEST project is to enhance cooperation capacities of higher educational institutions of Partner Countries (Russia, Belarus, Armenia) in the field of Doctoral Education within European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA). One of the goals of the project is to develop of soft skills amplification programs for PhD students and re-training courses for teaching staff involved in the implementation of educational programs for PhD students.

The analytical work carried out within the framework of the project showed the relevance and importance of creating programs aimed at personal development and the formation of soft skills of postgraduate students.

Currently, within the framework of the project, the following course has been developed, which is being implemented into educational programs for postgraduate students.

MODEST course “Communication and Cooperation Strand (C2)” – Personal Development – proposed by: Kazan National Research Technological University (Russia), Russian State Vocational Pedagogical University (Russia), Polotsk State University (Belarus), Brunel University (Great Britain).

The table shows the template of the content of the module of this course “Time Management”.

Course title	Personal Development
1	2
Module of course title	Time Management
Author of module	Shchipanova D. E., RSVPU, Russia
Target group	Doctoral students
Aim of the course module	To enable students to experience technologies of goal setting and time management

Continuation of the table

1	2
Learning outcomes	LO 1. List the criteria to be taken into account when setting goals LO 2. Apply time management tools
Course content	Goal setting and planning: concept and methods of goal setting, planning technologies Time Management basics: time management forms and tools
Planned learning activities and teaching methods	Lectures, seminars, workshops, trainings
Assessment methods and criteria	Case technologies, situation analysis, timing, tests

The implementation of this project will allow developing courses in accordance with European practices and values [5] and making them available to doctoral students.

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