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**PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITY AS A TOOL FOR IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY**

*Assurance of higher education quality is constantly maintaining within the framework of professional and scientific attention of public administration subjects and scientists. The issue of staff provision of educational activities as well as management of staff risks in this field is becoming a significant obstacle for improving the quality of higher education in Ukraine.*

*Individual professional certification of scientific and pedagogical activity can be considered as one of the mechanisms of personnel risk management. The institutionalization of the tools of professional certification of scientific and pedagogical activity, as well as its results, will contribute, on the one hand, the regulation of the content and practice of implementation of educational programs, and on the other - improvement of the procedures of the competition for the replacement of vacant posts of scientific and pedagogical workers. Using the instruments of certification, the state will have an opportunity to form a trajectory of the labour potential development both directly to scientific and pedagogical workers, and to the Institution of Higher Education and higher education system as a whole*

*Implementing norms of professional activity, obligatory presence of which is*

*expected by the procedures of certification, will allow the subjects of formation of state policy in the sphere of higher education to promptly adjust the direction of professional development of science and pedagogic workers.*

*Using by the state of tools of professional certification of science and pedagogic activity and its results in the final case will positively impact both, the effectiveness of public administration in the sphere of assurance of higher education quality in Ukraine and the quality of functioning of higher education system in general.*

**Key words:** *assuring of higher education quality, mechanism of public administration, higher education quality, institution of higher education, professional certification, scientific and pedagogic activity.*

**Introduction.** The problem of public management of the higher education quality is constantly within the range of professional and scientific attention of subjects of public administration and scientists. This fact is shown by the great attention of the state authorities to the programming and implementation of measures for reforming of the educational sector. Assurance of higher education quality was defined as the Strategy of development of higher education in Ukraine for 2022-2032 years. "This strategic document defines the main priorities of the higher education system at the current stage of development of society and economy of the country, as well as the main characteristics, which will be formed by 2032," said Minister of Education and Science Serhiy Shkarlet [1]. A significant obstacle for increasing the higher education quality in Ukraine is an issue of personnel support of educational activities. Using of the determined tasks needs more detailed concretization on the level of national and sectoral program-target documents. The preparation of such documents, as well as ensuring the implementation of the measures envisaged by them, provides for the formation of an information and analytical base concerning the object of direct attention, namely, the higher education quality.

**Analysis of literary data and problem statement.** The problem of certification of processes is not a fundamentally new direction in the organization of scientific searches,

and thus has already gained its certain development within the frames of scientific researches. For example, I.V. Strazhnikova considers professional certification of scientific and pedagogical workers through the prism, on the one hand, of a kind of finalization of the procedures of advance of qualification and internship, and on the other - procedures of providing higher education quality [2]. Identification of certification of science and pedagogic workers on the level of one of the key directions of development of education in Ukraine is actualized in the work of S.M. Kravchenko [3]. We find interesting opinion of the scientific team headed by H.O. Oborskyi, that in the context of the development of an issue of certification of the processes of obtaining higher education, namely ensuring the educational activity (process) quality. According to scientists' thoughts "improvement of process" in Institutions of Higher Education is one of the tools "to build a system of administration of education quality according to generally accepted international standards"[4]. Some questions of this problematics found its development in works of S.M. Dombrovskaya (generalized experience of public administration of assurance of higher education quality) [5], Y.S. Buka (identified importance of determinants of higher education quality in the context of students' expert evaluation) [6], V.M. Moroz (considered the possibilities to use the system of state monitoring of quality of higher education) [7].

The corresponding problem has been repeatedly chosen by us at the level of the subject of scientific search during the previous directions in the organization of scientific researches [8, 9].

**Purpose and tasks of the research.** Determine potentials of professional certification of scientific and pedagogic activities as a tool for increasing efficiency of public administration of assuring of higher education quality.

**Presentation of the main material of the study with a full justification of the obtained scientific results.** Development of public administration of assuring of higher education quality in the context of international quality standards are directly connected with standards of ISO 9000:2007, ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 21001:2018 [10]. The content of each of these quality standards in one or another way appeals to the problematics of

staff support of educational activities, as well as the risks it has actualized.

As one of the mechanisms of personnel risk management, the mechanism of certification of services in the system of higher education can be considered. In contrast to licensing [11], the subject of certification of professional activity of educational services can also be a non-governmental organization. Before generalizations about the potential of certification in the system of assurance of higher education quality, we shall pay attention to the difference that exists between the relevant mechanisms.

Within the framework of the domestic normative-legal field the category of certification is interpreted as a "the procedure by the help of which, the recognized in the established order authority documentary certifies the conformity of products, quality systems, systems of quality management, environmental management systems, personnel to the requirements established by the legislation" [12]. The key points of the mentioned definition are the focus of the lawmaker's attention on "procedure" (provides for the existence of established norms and regulations on obtaining a certain status by the interested person – the holder of the certificate) and "conformity ... of the personnel ... to the established requirements". In other words, certification involves the assessment by "the recognized in the established order authority" of the degree of conformity of certain characteristics of the object with the indicators established by the experts (comparison of the object of attention with the so-called reference or definition). Another of the certification's definitions, which is also used in domestic legal practice has the following interpretation – "certification – is a confirmation of conformity by a third party, which concerns products, processes, services, systems or personnel" [13]. Within the scope of such presentation the content of the relevant category contains the emphasis on "personnel", which is quite well correlated with our proposal on the necessity (possibility) of certification of scientific and pedagogical workers.

The problem of certification of staff involved in providing of educational services can be considered through the prism of the so-called professional certification. Professional certification is usually understood as the procedures for assessing the employee's ability to perform their professional duties in accordance with established

quality standards. In other words, professional certification is one of the main instruments of confirmation of a person's professional qualification, as well as the ability to fulfill the tasks provided by its professional obligations at a sufficient level of quality. Within the framework of the domestic legal and regulatory framework there is no interpretation of the phenomenon of professional certification, and therefore we cannot speak of the existence of a generally accepted definition of the relevant category. At the same time, within the framework of foreign literature the category of professional certification is in a fairly widespread scientific and professional circulation. For example, according to the studies of P. Barnhart, a professional certificate is a universal document on the principle of its operation, and so it does not depend on the ideas of this or another company (organization) concerning the necessary level of development of the specialist's professional competence. The professional certificate gives potential employers an "unbiased expert assessment of the third party regarding the level of development of professional knowledge and experience of professional work activity of a particular person" [14]. In our opinion, in the most general form the content of professional certification can be disclosed through the prism of the following interpretations:

- first of all, professional certification is a tool to prove the fact that a person has the necessary knowledge, experience and skills to perform certain professional tasks, i.e. has the necessary level of competence development on a specialty. The document (certificate) received on the results of independent evaluation confirms the conformity of its owner to professional standards;

- secondly, professional certification is a confirmation by the third party of the level of professional knowledge and skills of a particular person in a certain branch or profession.

As a rule, certificates have a limited time of validity. The practice of functioning of the institute of professional certification shows that it is usually 3 years, less - 5 years. The term of validity of a professional certificate is determined by the time of the conditional validity of the professional competences the person has in accordance with the requirements of the labour market and the time of their conditional compliance with the

existing professional standards. The use of the category "conditional" is connected with the fact that the requirements of the labour market, as well as professional standards, are constantly changing, and therefore any correspondence is conditional. In other words, the term of validity of the certificate is conditioned by the dynamics of changes in requirements to the level of professional competence development. In the system of so-called Western management, it is quite often possible to meet the practice of tying the procedures of professional certification to the results of advanced training or internship, which in our opinion is quite reasonable. It is expected that by the results of the professional development the person becomes able to perform additional professional tasks and duties within the framework of their specialty (for the professional development) or gain additional practical experience in the performance of professional tasks within the limits of his profession (internship), and consequently the level of its professional competence acquires additional development.

While considering this issue, we should pay attention to the experience of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in conducting of non-obligatory and informal certification of the scientific and pedagogical staff of Institutions of Higher Education. To the independent assessment of the level of compliance of scientific and pedagogical workers with the established requirements, as well as to determine the level of development of their labour opportunities, working on the state level Association of Universities is involved. This organization is the initiator of establishing the so-called basic standard of professional activity. According to the results of certification, the interested in its passing person, under the condition of successful passing of all procedures, receives the document with fixation of the level of didactic competence of the scientific and pedagogical employee. The certificate issued by the Association of Universities creates reputation advantages both for its owner, especially during participation in professional competitions, and for that Institution of Higher Education, in the structure of which the corresponding person carries out their work [15].

During considering of the issue of certification of studying processes and its results, as well as professional certification, it is necessary to realize the fact that some of its issues

are actualized within the framework of attestation of scientific and scientific and pedagogical personnel and certification of graduates of Institution of Higher Education. Despite the almost equal focus of attention within the certification and attestation procedures, the relevant processes are not relevant. This non-identity is caused primarily due to the difference between the subjects involved in the examination. For example, attestation subjects are usually directly related to the subject of the assessment by experts, while the subject of expert evaluation during certification is relatively independent subjects. Another difference between the relevant procedures is that attestation is obligatory, while certification is voluntary.

Considering the difference between certification and licensing, we should pay attention to the official position of the US Department of Education on the relevant issue, namely, "Licensure vs. Certification". According to the existing in the USA practice, the mechanism of "licensing", in relation to the regulation of professional activity in the field of education, is usually used to regulate the state (state authorities) of that or other professional activity at the central (state) level. Unlike this, the mechanism of "certification" is used by non-governmental organizations to recognize the professional competence of this or another person. The basics of such recognition is recognized by the professional community quality standards [16].

Above we paid attention to the fact that, the subject of certification, as a rule are non-governmental organizations. They can be employers' unions; professional associations and communities, etc. It is connected with the fact that these institutions are the most fully aware of both the change in demand in the labour market and the tendency of development of professional requirements within the relevant profession.

The problem of certification and licensing of professional activities, in the context of practice of their use of their tools, can be considered both at the level of separate, relatively unconnected phenomena and through the prism of their dialectical unity. In the scientific literature we can meet several quite logical approaches on mutual positioning of the respective categories, namely: certification and licensing of professional activity are independent by the system of use of tools, and therefore use of one of them is not a reason

for obligatory use of the other. Each of these instruments can be used by a subject of administration regardless of their plans for the future use of another. Licensing of professional activity, as a rule, precedes its certification, that means that the license for labour activity is obtained on the basis of person obtaining professional education. This opinion is based on a paradigm of causal relationships between professional education, licensing of professional activity and its certification. This sequence looks quite logical, because: to obtain a license for this or another professional activity, you must first obtain the appropriate education; to certify professional activity, you must first start it on the basis of a license available. Certification of professional activity, as a rule, precedes its licensing or is used simultaneously with it (it is assumed that the obtaining of license for professional activity occurs as a result of accumulation of certain competencies by the person. Usually, such accumulation is carried out as a result of advanced training or internship, which are actually certified by certificates). Each of these paradigms has the right to its actualization, although in our opinion, the first two of them, given to the practice of using licensing and certification instruments, look more justified.

Taking into account mentioned above we can formulate following generalizations:

- professional certification is a relatively independent tool of control of quality of the performance of the duties assigned to it by the representatives of this or another profession. Usually, such control is considered by the person interested in receiving the certificate voluntarily;

- professional certification can be considered on the level of final in context of period of validity within the framework of professional development of personal tools. As a rule, obtaining of the certificate is carried out basing on the results of professional experience gained by the person and passing of the stipulated by the rules examination;

- professional certification is a process of checking the level of compliance of professional competence of the person interested in receiving of the certificate of the person to the established requirements;

- the subject of professional certification is usually a non-governmental organization, professional association or community, which has authority among



representatives of professional community and provides it with services both in professional audit and professional development;

– the result of professional certification is: a document confirming the fact of its owner adhering to the standards established by a certain professional community; confirmation of the compliance of the professional competence of the certificate holder with the requirements established by the professional community;

– professional certification is both a procedure of objective and independent evaluation of professional competence and a tool of improvement of professional competence of the person interested in obtaining the certificate, since the procedure of professional certification is preceded by the systematic work of the candidate in updating his professional knowledge, abilities and skills;

– the objects of professional certification are usually the processes, as well as the systems and algorithms used within the framework of one or another professional activity to achieve the results it envisages. In case of using of obligatory certification, its object can be only products, in relation to the system of higher education – educational service;

– the subject of professional certification is analyzed through the quality of professional activities and quality of quality system

**Conclusions.** Taking into account all mentioned above we can formulate such conclusions.

The institutionalization of the tools of professional certification of scientific and pedagogical activity, as well as its results, will facilitate, on the one hand, the regulation of the content and practice of implementation of educational programs, and on the other - improvement of the procedures of the competition for the replacement of vacant posts of scientific and pedagogical workers. Using the instruments of certification, the society will have the opportunity to form a trajectory of development of labour potential both directly to scientific and pedagogical workers, as well as to the Institute of Higher Education and higher education system as a whole. Establishing the norms of professional activity, the obligatory presence of which is provided by the procedures of certification, will allow the subjects of formation of state policy in the sphere of higher education to promptly adjust

the directions of professional development of scientific and pedagogical workers.

Moreover, the results of certification can become indicators for stakeholders, first of all among people interested in obtaining of higher education and employers, as for the level of correspondence of people involved in the implementation of the educational program to the established standards, and so their ability to assure fulfilling of assumed obligations. The cyclic use by society of tools of professional certification of science and pedagogic activity and its results at the final case positively affect both, the effectiveness of public administration in the sphere of assuring of higher education quality in Ukraine, and the quality of functioning of higher education system as a whole.

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