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# VDI-MEG KOLLOQUIUM LANDTECHNIK

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Verein Deutscher Ingenieure  
Universität Hohenheim  
Institut für Agrartechnik

Heft 41

## ARBEITSWISSENSCHAFTEN

20. Arbeitswissenschaftliches Kolloquium  
Hohenheim, 01./02. März 2016



Max-Eyth-Gesellschaft im VDI (VDI-MEG)

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# Russian and European universities cooperation in the framework of the Tempus Project "Development of public accreditation of agricultural programs in Russia (PACAgro)"

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## 1 Introduction

Improving the quality of educational programs in agrarian universities of the RF and European universities is essential for the development and improvement of agricultural production in modern conditions. University graduates coming to the agricultural industry must be well prepared and adapted to work in constantly changing requirements in accordance with the innovative development of environment, they are required to solve the challenges effectively the company and the industry are faced with. Employers make high demands for graduates, which suggests the following qualifications:

- Professional knowledge and practical skills for the professional activity of small, medium-sized and large companies;
- Long-term sustainable activities and initiatives (including overtime);
- Identifying and solving problems flexibility and stability;
- Satisfaction from activity;
- Lifelong learning;
- The ability of social interaction;
- Ability to communicate in a foreign language;
- Other competence arising in the corporate culture and business. [1]

St. Petersburg State Agrarian University is a partner of the international project "Development of professional public accreditation system of agrarian (agricultural) profile educational programs in the Russian Federation» (PACAgro). According to Law "On Education in the Russian Federation" (from 29.12.2012 № 273-FZ) in the

Russian system of education the concept of professional public accreditation of educational programs is introduced. It is assumed that the professional public accreditation will be carried out by employers, their associations or organizations authorized by them [2, 3].

Participants of the project are higher educational institutions from different regions of Russia (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Tatarstan, Kabardino-Balkar Republic, the Republic of Mari El). Foreign partners of the project are the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (Nitra, Slovakia), Aleksandras Stulginskis University (Kaunas, Lithuania), Estonian University of Life Sciences (Tartu, Estonia), of Lleida (Lleida, Spain), Catalan University Assurance Agency (Barcelona, Spain).

In today's competitive environment conditions, universities are interested in the quality of their work, the active participation of employers in improving the quality of educational programs.

The partners of the project "Tempus - PACAgro» are representatives of employers: Limited company "Rusmarketkonsalting" (Saint Petersburg, Russia), Federal State Budgetary Scientific Establishment "Institute of agroengineering and environmental problems of agricultural production" (Saint Petersburg, Russia), the Agricultural Industrial Cooperative "Pedigree Plant on black and white cattle breeding 'Detskoslensky "(Saint Petersburg, Russia).

## 2 Method

Russian participants of the project have studied the experience of European universities to improve the quality of educational programs of agrarian profile.

In accordance with European standards educational institutions must have their own policies and procedures for quality assurance and standards of their programs and awarded qualifications. Students and other stakeholders should also be involved in this process.

Standards and quality evaluating criteria of educational programs used by accreditation agency AQU Catalunya, are important for the Russian project partners.

At the Faculty of Economics and Management, Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra (SSAs) the faculty quality councils are working. The Faculty offers undergraduate and graduate programs in the Slovak and English languages. Preparation of educational programs of agricultural profile in English is an urgent task

for Russian universities. It should be noted that the Slovak Agricultural University is connected to the net "Trends of Graduate Barometer" consisting of more than 1,000 European universities through which it is possible to monitor education issues and career. On the website of the network, students can comment on these questions within the framework of the on-line study.

Studying the experience of the University of Alexander Stulginskis (Lithuania) showed that the organizational document of quality assurance is approved by the order of the rector of the University "Quality Assurance Manual". The university independently decides on the necessity for the development and registration of new educational programs. The main criteria for the decision are: the demand for specialists in the labor market; the attractiveness of the educational program for applicants; University scientific expertise in the area of the new program. New educational program could be initiated not only by the University and its faculties staff, but also by separate group of scientists, and even employers, social partners. Feedback in the process of the education quality improvement is ensured by the implementation of opinion polls for all participants in the learning process.

The Estonian University of Life Sciences has developed and implemented a system of survey, including all target groups. Estonian Employers participate in all procedures of quality assurance (external and internal), as well as part of an international group of experts [4].

A conducted within the project frames survey of employers in Russia showed their interest in graduates' quality. 81% of employers would meet with the students beforehand to find out their level of professional and theoretical knowledge and practical skills, get to know them as a person, to improve their skills and, in principle, in relation to this production (if a graduate comes to work) [6].

When clarifying exactly what knowledge and skills are absent for example, an engineer for the mechanization of agriculture, respondents noted: lack of knowledge of manufactural operation and equipment in the agricultural sector, poor knowledge of a foreign language.

57% of employers surveyed believe that the level of theoretical and practical training of graduates over the past 5-10 years has improved, 27% - that it has not changed, and 15.4% - it has worsened.

According to the survey 73% of respondents are familiar with the employers' training programs in agricultural universities.

To the question concerning the desire of employers to spend some time to participate in the procedures of professional public accreditation of programs in higher education only 64% of respondents agreed to participate in the procedures of professional public accreditation of programs in higher education, among them (respondent could give more than one answer):

- 41% are ready to participate in the survey of the educational program evaluation;
- 21% are willing to participate in the evaluation of educational programs;
- 12% are willing to participate in the external examination.

### 3 Results

Carried out in the framework of the project "Tempus" studies have shown the main directions of improving the quality of educational programs to improve the training and skills of graduates of Russian universities:

- 1) The organization of joint seminars, debates of the academic community and employers in order to clarify the relevance of existing programs and the necessity to develop new ones.
- 2) The inclusion of employers in the working groups (committees) responsible for the improvement of existing programs and development of new ones.
- 3) Inclusion of representatives of employers in the working groups, which conduct an internal evaluation of the programs quality.
- 4) Increased representation of employers in the governing bodies of faculties and universities.
- 5) Creation of "Alumni" (Alumni Club) in agricultural universities in Russia [5].

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