

This is an Accepted Manuscript that has been published in:

Shenderova, S. (2018). Internationalisation of higher education in Russia: National policy and results at institutional level. In: Korhonen, V., & Alenius, P. (Eds.). *Internationalisation and Transnationalisation in Higher Education*. 69-100. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang AG.

<https://www.peterlang.com/view/9783034329675/chapter03.xhtml>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3726/b11212>

The series: Studies in Vocational and Continuing Education. Vol.17 edited by Philipp Golon & Anna Heikkinen. The original work can be found at: DOI <https://doi.org/10.3726/b11212>

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## **2. Internationalisation of Higher Education in Russia: National Policy and Results at Institutional Level**

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Internationalisation of higher education is a part of the Russian educational policy focused on competitiveness enhancement at the global stage. Both restructuring of higher education sector and special Governmental funding have provided conditions for development and support of internationalisation in the leading universities. Despite Russia joining the Bologna Process, there are barriers in three-cycle degree system implementation. Vague legislation and statistics hinder the understanding and development of internationalisation. Regulatory approach to internationalisation of higher education in Russia is characterised by unclear responsibility both at national policy and institutional implementation level. It results in irrelevant basic indicators of internationalisation in different world university rankings. The main part of external institutional environment is revealed from Russian legislation and the Bologna Process documents. With the information available on websites of Russian universities, world ranking agencies, Russian authorities and bodies my chapter first investigates the results of internationalisation in Russia at the level of national policy and university.

### **Introduction**

Internationalisation of higher education is currently considered as “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society” (de Wit et al., 2015, p. 281). This definition introduces significant supplements, first of all, the goal understood as the quality enhancement and intentional character of it. It expands the research area out of the boundaries, determined previously by Altbach & Knight. Both authors concentrate on integrating the

aforementioned dimensions as the processes *per se*. The latter are undertaken by individuals, administrated inside the higher education institutions (Knight, 2003; Knight, 2004) or are incorporated into the academic systems and national policies “to cope with the global academic environment” (Altbach & Knight, 2007, p. 290).

However, based on the definition of de Wit et al. given in 2015, I shift the focus towards the research of how higher education institutions understand and achieve “a meaningful contribution to society”. While quality assurance issues are in the centre of Juusola’s attention in the Chapter 4, I study how the role of internationalisation to enhance the quality of education and research is understood in Russia. I assume that the extent in which internationalisation achieves its goal depends both on the national education policy and its implementation in the context of different institutional cultures.

My hypothesis is that practices of internationalisation are formed under the influence of two institutional environments, which means inside and outside of higher education institutions (HEIs). An external institutional environment comprises of education and international policies, law and regulations as well as their traditions in the certain country, where higher education institutions have to define and operate. Meanwhile each HEI has its own internal institutional environment including organisational culture, traditions, formal and informal interactions with the national authorities and regulatory bodies; all of them influence on the practices of internationalisation.

The special interests of stakeholders involved into internationalisation inside and outside HEI may prevent the quality enhancement as a main goal at institutional level in spite of their formal commitment to achieve it. Formally declaring their adherence to contribute to society, the stakeholders pursue their own self-interests by providing, administrating and regulating development and support of internationalisation to their favor. For example, there may be attempts to assign responsibility for a certain State programme with funding to a certain organisation or a certain group of officials under the auspices of internationalisation.

Said attempts can distort the picture both inside HEI and for the responsible State authorities, make internationalisation unsustainable, create transaction costs of its implementation thus preventing its development and breeding corruption. These circumstances do not contribute, but deteriorate the quality of education and research both at institutional practice and national policy level.

Russian HEIs are the unique objects of study, because internationalisation is not as an initiative arising from inside the national academic system, but is proclaimed by the Presidential Decree (Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federacii ot 07.05.2012 No 599, 2012, Art. 1, p. 1v). Traditionally in Russia

it is the State (in the meaning of the tsar, president, federal government and its ministries) that defines goals for HEIs, and it does it in ultimate form.

Publications related to internationalisation of higher education in Russia, are rare. Kuraev (2014) focuses on the conceptual research in historical perspective with investigation of Soviet (Communist) legacy. Smolentseva (2017) studies the evolution of understanding the role of higher education in the context of changing Soviet and post-Soviet society and economy. Oleksienko (2015) undertakes comparative analysis of policies, structures and cultures in some Post-Soviet countries. Pavlyutkin and Yudkevich (2016) concentrate on university cultures in the context of leadership and rankings as competitive environments. Shenderova (2011) studies the institutional arrangements in the Bologna Process implementation, during the development of multi-level degree system in Russia. Certain aspects of internationalisation of higher education activities, e.g. joint programmes development and their regulative context are investigated by Burquel, Shenderova and Tvorogova (2014a). Karpukhina explores the factors of success or failure of Russian-European double degree programmes inside a university (Karpukhina, 2013). However, there are no profound studies of internationalisation development in the light of education policy implementation in Russia at institutional level.

This chapter is intended to fill the gap in research of how the goals of internationalisation are implemented in leading Russian HEIs. In particular, I study how higher education policy, law and regulations in Russia determine the objectives of internationalisation, how they influence on its understanding, implementation and results inside Russian HEIs with different institutional cultures and special interests.

The main objectives of the chapter include the followings. Firstly, I study Russian higher education policy and landscape to investigate the opportunities and barriers for Russian HEIs to achieve the challenges of internationalisation set by the State. Further I select Russian HEIs, which have demonstrated potential to achieve the goals and objectives of internationalisation, as well as to outline the peculiarities and traditions of their organisational culture. On the basis on the obtained results under the foregoing paragraphs I reveal how the defects of policy implementation at the State level influence on the results of internationalisation at institutional level.

The above objectives have determined the task to investigate an external institutional environment of Russian HEIs internationalised. I consider it as higher education policy, law, regulations, measures to support of internationalisation in the Russian Federation and detection of special interests therein. In this sense my approach is close to trends for recent developments in internationalisation studies, reviewed by Korhonen and Alenius in the Introduction. I believe that the strategic documents at national and European level allow me to outline an external institutional environment for

internationalisation of Russian HEIs. However, I add this approach by the study of institutional history, traditions and statistics. The other task is to review of how Russian higher education landscape has been reshaped over 10 years of the sector restructuring. I study the most important elements of Russian HEIs institutional cultures. Then I select of Russian HEIs, where internationalisation of higher education has a chance to comply with goals prescribed by the Russian authorities. To reflect internal institutional environments of the selected Russian HEIs I undertake a comparative study of available data related to internationalisation including world university rankings, domestic reports, statistics and the other data at the university websites.

### **Russian Policy and Internationalisation of Higher Education: Goal, Objectives and Obstacles**

Internationalisation is declared as one of the key imperatives of higher education reform in Russia. It has been supported politically at the international stage, starting with joining the Bologna Process in 2003 (Communiqué of the Conference of Ministers responsible for Higher Education, 2003). On the part of legislation internationalisation was supported by partial implementation of three-cycle degree system in 2007 (Federal'niy zakon ot 24.10.2007 No 232-FZ). On the part of finance it has been funded by several national programmes for leading Russian HEIs selected in the course of the sector restructuring since 2006 (Shenderova, 2011, pp. 58-73; Shenderova & Karlik, 2011).

The general goal of internationalisation at higher education policy level was prescribed by the Presidential Decree (Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federacii ot 07.05.2012 No 599, 2012). It was set as at least five Russian HEIs in top-100 of “at least one world university ranking” by 2020. That is why the Project to support internationalisation of Russian HEIs was called 5-100-2020 (5-100 Russian Academic Excellence Project, 2017).

In addition, selection and support of leading Russian HEIs aims at increase in number of competitive world-class universities in Russia entered top-500 in one of the world university ranking. The State Programme “Development of Education 2013-2020” considers “rationale and confirmation of the Russian HEIs ability to provide the high growth rates of the ranking indicators” as an important factor in selection of 5-100 Project winners. By 2018, the year of Presidential Elections in Russia, the number of Russian HEIs at top-100 “according to a world ranking” is expected to grow twice from one in 2011-2017 and to achieve five in 2020 as well as the increase of Russian HEIs number in the “first half-thousand of the mostly mass recognisable rankings of world universities” (Rasporyazhenie Pravitel'stva 15.05.2013 No 792-r, 2013, p. 6, p. 103, p. 108; Annex 1, p. 5, p. 6).

Uncertain phrase “leading world rankings” pays attention of this document’s reader. But page 4 in Annex 16 calls the name of a certain ranking. Russian Government prefers Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings as the target indicators of Russian HEIs progress. There are no explanations why Russian Government considered these rankings for Russian HEIs and what special interests stay behind this prescription.

While the “competitiveness enhancement” by itself is the main mantra of Russian documents, Haapakoski and Stein in the Chapter 2 highlight that Finland and Canada compete to build a strong market for international education as a part of knowledge economy. The goal to intervene into the first hundreds of the world university rankings binds Russian HEIs to comply with their quantitative indicators more than to the goals of sustainable economic growth and social inequality overcoming.

The objectives of 5-100-2020 Project are quantitative. It is expected that proportion of international students will achieve at least 15% in full time enrollment and 10% of academics will be international at each Russian HEI selected for 5-100 Project funding by 2020 (Expected results of the Project by 2020, 2017). I focus my further investigation on the number of students and international students only, because the number of international academics is not so obvious in reports and is not easily traced in Russian HEIs timetables.

Hereinafter below I review regulatory and legislative obstacles in an external institutional environment of internationalisation in Russian HEIs. In addition, I unveil how and defects prevent increase in the number of international students. Global political instability and financial volatility have complicated achievement of other objectives related to internationalisation in Russia. For example, the exchange rate of Russian Ruble and Euro has risen at least twice since the launch of 5-100 Project; therefore, a number of international contracts were depreciated.

Migration law, especially visa limitations are too strict for student internships and for work even inside the university research projects. Russian migration services demand the special permission to work in Russia for these activities. This long and complicated procedure hinders the curricula enhancement towards improvement of cooperation with business and labor market with participation of international academics and students.

Traditionally in Russia any curricula and the State Standard how to teach students are based on the significant number contact teaching hours. Additionally, the number of contact teaching hours is the principle to count both for academic positions number and for teaching and student workload calculation. This historical heritage has existed till now even in Master’s and PhD degree

programmes. It hinders development of independent student work, to which international students are used to.

A large proportion of contact hours and administrative procedures aggravate the lack of foreign language skills in Russian academia and administrative staff. Foreign languages are still a serious challenge for the major part of Russian HEIs. Even leading Russian HEIs provide information related to international students them in Russian language only (e.g. Centr ekspertizy inostrannykh documentov ob obrazovanii, 2017). Exams including entrance and graduation exams on Master's and doctoral degrees mostly include the oral part in Russian as the only language. Exams prevail over ECTS; the Diploma Supplement does not provide credit transfer of previous academic achievement. Even leading Russian HEIs charge their students for the European Diploma Supplement or include clauses on payment for it into the documents regulating relationships with students. Therefore, the European Diploma Supplement is invalid as the Bologna tool in Russia.

But incompleteness of three-cycle degree system implementation is the greatest barrier for internationalisation. As I prove it below, it absolutely distorts the key indicator of internationalisation in Russian higher education, i.e. the number full-time enrolled of students in each level of degree system including percentage of international students.

### **Incompleteness of Three-Cycle Degree System Implementation as Barrier for Internationalisation of Higher Education in Russia**

Non-compatibility between degree systems in Russia and the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) has been before and still remains one of the main barriers on internationalisation development after thirteen years of the Bologna Process. However, national higher education is declared as “significantly advanced towards the three-cycle degree system implementation” (Artamonova et al., 2015), despite the fact that the Specialist's degree is not clearly positioned and defined in relation to other degrees inside the national degree system and legislation related.

One of the reasons to attribute 5-year Specialist's degree to the first level of EHEA Qualification Frameworks (EHEA QF) is the possibility to enter these programmes after having successfully completed the 11-year secondary education. The opportunity to obtain Specialist's degree by various ways has been available for years despite decrease of the governmentally financed places for students to study.

However, the opportunities to continue higher education for Specialist's degree holders vary as well. On the one hand, they have the right to admit to Master's degree programmes both on self-paid and

on governmentally financed places. Therefore, Specialist's as the first cycle degree provides access to the second cycle degree programme in accordance with EHEA QF. But on the other hand, Specialist's degree provides access to the third-level cycle programmes (*aspirantura or PhD*) by skipping study at the second-cycle Master's degree programmes (Federal'niy zakon from 29.12.2012 No273, 2012, Article 69, pp. 3, 4). Besides there is an option to obtain PhD without any compulsory study in Master's and PhD degree programmes at all. This option is available for employees of research and higher education institutions (Postanovleniye Pravitel'stva RF ot 24.09.2013. No 842, 2013, p. 3, p. 5). For manhood PhD degree has additional value as it exempts its holder from compulsory military service liability in accordance with Russian legislation.

*The ways to obtain Specialist's degree in Russia* are manifold. The period of study varies from three to six years in full-time, part-time or extramural modes. Firstly, Specialist's degrees prevail in military and medical Russian HEIs in full-time mode of five or six years of study. I do not consider them in the following analysis due to the specific areas of studies, but it should be mentioned, that their graduates have the right to continue education in PhD programmes in any other field of study in any other Russian HEI, both military and civil. Secondly, few Russian HEIs are still providing Specialist's degrees for five, five and half or even six years of study, mostly in Nuclear Physics, Mathematics and Life Sciences, along with 4-year Bachelor's degree programmes in the similar areas of full-time studies (e.g., Education at SPbU, 2017; Moscow State University, Uchebniy Plan, 2016).

Thirdly, the significant number of Russian HEIs provides with opportunity to obtain Specialist's degrees mainly in Economics, Management and Public Administration for self-paid students only. Specialist's degree in these Russian HEIs is available in part-time and extramural forms including accelerated education for those who have already completed education in colleges or at least two years at any higher education institution at the similar area of study.

Thereby, due to different content and length of study Specialist's degree *per se* is getting more and more eroded. On the one hand, Specialist's degree may reflect the highest level of education at one of the best Russian HEI. For example, Specialist's degree diploma awarded by Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT) in 1997 after five and half years of study in Applied Mathematics and Physics, was recognised as Master's degree. Its holder Kostya Novoselov then obtained his PhD in University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, and become 2010 Nobel Prize winner in Physics (Professor Kostya Novoselov, FRS, 2017).

The other example how 5-year Specialist's degree programme can be perceived by a foreign partner, is the joint programme in Tourism and Hotel Management. Its graduates are awarded by Bachelor's degree of Cyprus College of Tourism and Management (3 years) and Specialist's degree of State University of Management (Moscow, 5 years). And in this particular case, the Russian partner has agreed and accepted it (Burquel, Shenderova & Tvorogova, 2014b, p. 32).

The only common feature for the aforementioned cases of Specialist's degrees is that their study programmes conform to Russian legislation. Thus, in practice, recognition of Russian Specialist's degrees abroad, which is very important for internationalisation of higher education perspectives of Russian HEIs in the world, depends greatly on reputation of a certain Russian HEI.

Specialist's diploma holder has an opportunity to continue higher education not only in different ways, but at different levels of national degree system as well. This proves the incompleteness of the degree system reform in Russia, deteriorates the value of Russian Master's and PhD degrees in international markets. And this will be obviously true until the possibility of Specialist's degree extramural obtaining within three years and its obtaining within five or six years of full-time studies in leading Russian HEIs exists.

Until nationwide Specialist's degree is not equated to Master's for a few leading Russian HEIs as the second cycle degree, or to Bachelor for all other Russian HEIs as the first cycle degree only, this unnatural coexistence will have disoriented as domestic, so international students and stand as a barrier for internationalisation of higher education.

### **Internationalisation of Higher Education in the Reformed Sector:**

#### **Landscape and Institutional Cultures of the Leading Segment**

The leading segment of Russian higher education sector includes Russian HEIs, which have mostly inherited their research potential from the Soviet time. The "premier-league" includes: two universities of special status (USS), 29 national research universities (NRU) and 10 Federal Universities (FU). But institutional cultures inside Russian HEIs vary a lot. It can be found even in their official titles and abbreviations, some of which are entitled "institution". That is an evidence of the heritage of the Soviet planned economy definitely influence on internationalisation.

*Two oldest universities of Russia*, St. Petersburg State University (SPbSU) and Moscow State University (MSU) have been the absolute leaders of Russian higher education system since their establishment in XVIII century. However, MSU only is able to report of the achievement of the goal,



prescribed by the President of RUssia, being rated 87<sup>th</sup> in ARWU. SPbSU stays in top 301-400 (Academic Ranking of World Universities, 2017).

*MSU and SPbSU* are regulated by special Federal Law as the universities with “special status of Russian national heritage objects and the unique research-educational complexes” (Federal’niy zakon ot 10.11.2009 No 259, 2009). That is why they are called “*the Universities of Special Status (USS)*”. In 2012 their uniqueness was additionally secured and strengthened by Federal Law “On Education” (Federal’niy zakon from 29.12.2012 No 273, 2012, Art. 24). SPbSU and MSU are directly subordinated and accountable to the Government of the Russian Federation, unlike the vast majority of Russian HEIs, which are in subordination to the Ministry of Education and Science.

As for financial support, both universities were awarded with their first billion of rubles in 2006 and further billions have been flowing to the universities budgets since that time to fund their Development Programmes including issues related internationalisation of higher education. The Rectors of both universities are appointed by special Decrees of the President of Russia without internal university elections and may be reappointed even after reaching the age limits at least for two terms. I assume, the facts that the Rector of MSU has been holding its position since 1992 and the Rector of SPbSU has been occupying the office since 2008, are the meaningful characteristics of the university management ability to be renewed, and therefore, to refresh its leadership strategy including internationalisation issues.

In addition, MSU, SPbSU, which have called “university” since their establishment, are known in Russia as “classical universities” with traditional multidisciplinary structure of faculties. International recognition of the quality of education and research in SPbSU and MSU lies in the system of internal scientific-research institutions, which substantially influences institutional cultures. During the Soviet times these institutions inside the universities had additional funding from at least one Federal Governmental Committee or a Ministry in addition to the USSR State Committee on Higher Education funding. Typically the Governmental Committee on Science and Technologies distributed this additional funding for special projects. However, the other Ministries, often closely connected with the military and space sector, could also provided funding for scientific-research institutions independently of the USSR State Committee of Higher Education. Therefore, different State Committees were responsible for funding research and teaching. Thus, MSU and SPbSU were provided with funding from a number of channels due to the system of scientific-research institutions inside them.

Academics inside institutions devoted the most part of their workload to research, involving their supervised PhD students, while the workload of their colleagues at faculties was concentrated mostly

on teaching of students, studied on Specialist's degrees. Managerially the vice-rector for academic affairs was responsible for management of Specialist's, Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes funded by the USSR State Committee of Higher Education. Meanwhile the vice-rector for research was responsible for funding and management of research, PhD programmes (*aspirantura*) and doctoral studies (*doctorantura*) which finalised by the defense of dissertation on Doctor of Science degree, Russian analogue of Dr. habil. in Germany.

Historically being financed much more than any other higher education institution in Russia, MSU and SPbSU have had a unique opportunity to diminish the teaching workload of the academia and to allow some academics to concentrate on research only. This maneuver created and maintained comfortable environment conditions at institutional level for productive research activities. It provided the high quality of research and development of new multidisciplinary areas of study at these universities. However, at the same time it froze the deep organisational and financial split between education and research as well as generated the additional administrative barriers during transition to the Bologna multi-level degree structure.

Thus, any international activity at the universities since its beginning was also split between research and education or was focused on one of them only. Therefore, internationalisation of research could be high, but not corresponding to any study programme. There was no new knowledge reproduced amongst students studied on first and second level degree programmes. To finalise, the organisational split between education and research, inherited from the Soviet times, is the barrier for internationalisation of higher education inside institutional culture of the oldest leading Russian universities.

In spite of the sound funding for more than ten years, internationalisation of higher education in the oldest universities of Russia has become problematic due to the traditions of double standards for academics (faculty) and researchers. It is enough to check the timetable of the leading Russian HEIs to make sure that the invited foreign academics are far from the teaching activities and contact hours (lectures and seminars) to which their Russian colleagues were used to.

For example, according to 2017/2018 study year timetable of SPbSU, a visiting professor spent at the university one month in spring semester to give 8 hours of lectures and 2 hours of seminars (SPbSU timetable, 2018a). There is no information of other activities (e.g. supervising student projects, PhD students, consultations etc.) of this academic at SPbSU website except for information on his membership in editorial board of SPbSU Journal. Meanwhile Russian professor at the same department has 68 contact hours during the same semester (SPbSU timetable, 2018b).

In any case, historically based traditions of the research-oriented management and together with extra funding do not mean that two universities of special status are able to automatically operate as the world-class universities and to satisfy the criteria, prescribed by Russian authorities. For example, SPbSU reorganised the internal structure by incorporating scientific-research institutions into faculties by field related disciplines. However, anyway the university has lost its second position among Russian HEIs ranked by Times Higher Education World University Ranking (THE WUR) from 350-400 in 2012 to 401-500 (THE WUR, 2017) and in QS WUR from 233 in 2014 to 258 in 2016 (QS WUR, 2017). Moreover, as it is highlighted below the university failed to increase the share of foreign students despite its traditions, funding and unique advantages given by its location and time zone closely to Western Europe.

29 “*National research universities*” (NRU, *nacional’niye issledovatel’skiye universitety*) were introduced by the Russian Government in 2008-2010. 29 Russian HEIs were assigned this category and provided with special extra governmental funding for their Development Programmes for ten years (by 2018-2020). According to the Federal Law “On Education” (Art. 24), any Russian HEI may be deprived of this category at the discretion of the Russian Government or be assigned with NRU category. The pool of NRUs started forming in 2008, when two Russian HEIs (closely connected with the military and nuclear industries with the degree programmes in relevant areas) were assigned this category without any competition as “pilot Development Programmes”. Then the rest 27 winners were selected in the course of two special competitions organised by the Ministry in 2009 and 2010.

Russian HEIs with different background were selected as NRUs. Only six of them had been operating as multidisciplinary “classical” universities before 1991. The greater part of NRU category holders were entitled “institution” before 1991 and, in accordance with their position in planned economy, they were oriented on STEM areas of study corresponding to needs of the related Ministries and military industries. Their history, heritage and administrative staff kept and maintained close relations with those industries on which needs they were oriented for a long time. However, potential for internationalisation of higher education among this kind of NRUs has not been developed to the extent as it is among their “civilian” competitors due to traditions of institutional isolation and strong demands of security. The greater part of NRUs is making only first steps in the long way to internationalisation. As a rule NRUs are more successful in research international cooperation than in internationalisation of degree programmes. For example, Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT) and National Research Nuclear University (MEPhI) launched their international collaborative degree programmes in last two years only.

*A group of 10 federal universities (FUs, “federal’nye universitety”)* is the third part of leading segment in Russian higher education sector. Since 2006 FUs were created by mergers and acquisitions in the strategic cities of each Federal District of the Russian Federation; the 10th FU was made on Crimean peninsula in 2014. Financial support of their Development Programmes (except for Crimean FU) may be stopped at the Russian Government discretion. Unlike NRUs, FUs are more oriented on development of their regions and related applied research.

As to internationalisation despite of excessive governmental support for several years none of FUs has demonstrated the potential to enter global education market and take sustainable positions in the rankings at least top-500 in the beginning of 2017. Shenderova (2013) proves that permanent mergers and acquisitions inside FUs result in chaotic increase of the administrative apparatus, accompanied by the academic staff reductions to the detriment of quality of the university management, education and research.

In addition to two USSs, 29 NRUs and 10 FUs, there are some Russian HEIs in Russia, mainly concentrating their studies on social sciences and significantly influencing elaboration of national policies including internationalisation of higher education issues. They have enormous State financing and administrative support for a long time due to their strong lobbying potential (e.g., Financial University; Russian Presidential Academy of the National Economy and Public Administration) or support by key Ministries (MGIMO University of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Russian Federation). None of these Russian HEIs was a university before 1990, but each of them was closely related with the political elites of Communist Party and the Soviet and post-Soviet authorities. Due to these circumstances these Russian HEIs can take and use academic freedom to the greater extent than any other Russian HEI can, except for two oldest universities.

For further analysis I selected Russian HEIs demonstrated the ability to achieve the “first-half-thousand in at least one world-university ranking”, specified as one of the task to develop internationalisation in the first paragraph of the chapter. ARWU is excluded because there are only three universities there; two oldest and National Research Novosibirsk State University. I consider capability of Russian HEIs to provide data on at least one internationalisation indicator as their readiness to cooperate and provide with information for the ranking agencies and the world. Therefore, I excluded from the further analysis Russian HEIs failed to provide with internationalisation indicators for QS WUR. Table 1 shows Russian HEIs listed at least in THE WUR and QS WUR 2016/2017, their status/category, year of establishment and beginning of extra funding for internationalisation of higher education development.

**Table 1. Russian HEIs in top-500 WURs (THE, QS)**

THE 2016, Rank	QS 2016/17, Rank	Title	Status / Category	Historical Research Profile	Est., Year	Internationalisation, Year of beginning to support
188	108	Moscow State University, MSU	USS	Classical	1755	2006
301-350	350	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, MIPT	NRU	STEM	1951	2009
401-500	258	Saint-Petersburg State University, SPbSU	USS	Classical	1724	2006
401-500	291	Novosibirsk State University, NSU	NRU	Classical	1959	2009
401-500	401-410	National Research Nuclear University, MEPhI	NRU, pilot	STEM	1942	2008
501-600	400	National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, TPU	NRU	STEM	1896	2009
501-600	377	Tomsk State University, TSU	NRU	Classical	1878	2010
601-800	411-420	Peter the Great Saint-Petersburg Polytechnic University, SPbPU	NRU	STEM	1899	2010

Sources: THE website, QS website, Russian HEIs official websites

To summarise the review of Russian higher education leading segment, I conclude that Russian HEIs with the highest research potential which is the most demanded in the world and fruitful for internationalisation of higher education development, are scattered between different ‘categories’ and ‘statuses’ with different principles of governmental regulations, funding and reporting. Their success in WURs is also varied. Meanwhile these differences enhanced by internal traditions and peculiarities of institutional cultures, determine different extents of academic freedom. This is crucial for content and design of international degree programmes as well as for drawing attention of international students and academics thereto.

### **Implementation of Internationalisation at National and Institutional Level:**

#### **Vague Responsibility and Indicator Manipulations**

In this paragraph I unveil the authority bodies responsible for the Project to support internationalisation and to enhance competitiveness of Russian HEIs and their links with the universities-winners of the governmental funding. In the course of the policy implementation including for internationalisation of higher education, the *Ministry of Education and Science* of Russia (the Ministry) organised in 2013-2016 competitive tender for state support receiving. *The Council* formed under the aegis of the Ministry carried out the selection of winners. As a result 21 Russian HEIs received the governmental funding for the total amount of 60.5 billion rubles. Financial

support aimed to enhance competitiveness of Russian HEIs at global research and education market (5-100 Russian Academic Excellence Project, 2017).

“*Sociocenter*”, State Autonomous Sociological Research Center was appointed as the 5-100 Project support body on behalf of the Ministry since 2013. “Sociocenter” is managed by the Director and Supervisory board consisting of six members in 2016, appointed by the Ministry (Prikaz Minobrnauki Rossii 19.04.2016 No 437, 2016, P.2). Four members at the moment of appointment served as the Heads of Research Centers in subordination of the Ministry. Two others served at the Ministry as a Head of a Unit and as a Head of Department respectively.

The interesting fact is that the latter at the time of the selection was working not only at the Ministry but also at one of the participants in the competitive tender for getting 5-100 Project funding, videlicet at NRU Higher School of Economics (since 2005). The same is true for the other member of the Sociocenter Supervisory board who was simultaneously the Director of centre at the Ministry (has been working at NRU Higher School of Economics since 2007), as well as for the Deputy Minister supervising the 5-100 Project (has been working at NRU Higher School of Economics since 2009). (National Research University Higher School of Economics. Personal page, 2017a, 2017 b, 2017c). In 2014 NRU Higher School of Economics initiated establishment of “*Global universities*” Association uniting 21 Russian HEIs participated of the 5-100 Project. NRU HSE Rector was elected Chairman of the Association; its Executive Director is HSE’s employee (Associacia “Global’niye Universitety”, 2017).

*Moscow Business School Skolkovo* (2017) is also responsible for administering the 5-100 project and “Global education” program with a total budget of 4233.6 mln rubles in 2014-2016. (Postanovleniye Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federacii No. 635 ot 26.07.2015, 2017). One of Skolkovo’s visiting experts is the Rector of NRU Higher School of Economics (SEdeC Experts, 2017). The Rector informed the President of Russia of 5-100 Project implementation and its progress in January 2017 (President Rossii, 2017). It is essential that there is no publicly available information about any decision of any Russian Federation authority aimed at providing any Russian HEI with any authorities for the development of 5-100 Project in general.

Thus, open sources data, namely websites NRU Higher School of Economics, “Sociocentr” and 5-100 Project, prove close links of a certain university winner of 5-100 Project competition and civil servants responsible for the selection of HEIs, budget and administrating. It should be noted that Russian law allows combining public service with other paid work subject to no conflict of interest (Federal'niy zakon ot 27.07.2004 No 79-FZ, 2004, Art. 14, 15, 16, 17), (Federal'niy zakon ot 25.12.2008 No 273, red. ot 03.07.2016, 2008, Art. 9, 10, 11). Therefore, simultaneous work of the

same persons in structures organising competitive tender and at one of the university-winner is not regarded as a conflict of interest in Russia.

Vague responsibility for internationalisation dissimilated between multiple structures, as well as simultaneous influence and the same persons have a variety of negative effects. The first one is evident in the absence of any clear definitions what are internationalisation of higher education, its goals and objectives. As shown in the second section of this chapter, regulatory documents contain the name of the preferred world university ranking and quantitative indicators only. Official website of 5-100 Project telegraphically notes that “internationalization is one of the key components of the competitiveness of modern universities” (Professional development program "Internationalization in Higher Education for the 21st Century", 2017).

In my view, the lack of a clear definition is one of the reasons for permanent changes of quantitative indicators, on the basis of which the Russian Government assesses achievements of Russian HEIs supported. Consequently, universities have to include in their Development programs more and more new indicators and to report on their implementation. Meanwhile, the procedure for amending the Development programs of leading universities is far from simple. For example, Development programs of two oldest universities can be changed and supplemented only by a special Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation (Rasporyazheniye Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federacii ot 26.07.2014 No. 1156, 2014). Preparation of such decree, in turn, requires additional approvals in the Government that encroaches upon time and energy that could be spent on the actual internationalisation. The situation is aggravated by the constant reshuffling of officials inside the Ministry, hence by constant renewal of the guiding opinions on internationalisation.

Thus, quantitative indicators are the only benchmarks for the leading Russian universities. However, as they belong to different categories, have different statuses and sorts of funding, etc., each of them is forced to report in different way according to its category and one or another program of extra financial support. In addition, indicators of internationalisation in the 5-100 Project shall be linked to the indicators used by world university rankings (Rasporyazhenie Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federacii ot 15.05.2013 No 792-r, pp. 104-105). However, indicators and methodologies of rankings are also changing. Moreover, ranking indicators are dramatically different from the Ministry indicators, which each Russian HEI shall specify in annual of self-assessment report and many other domestic reports too.

For example, QS WUR requests Russian HEIs to provide with data on the number of full-time enrolled students (FTE students) for further differentiation by undergraduate and postgraduate students. Meanwhile the Ministry requires data on “total number of students (cadets), studied on

Bachelor's, Specialist's **and** Master's degree programmes including FTE students". This indicator number 1.1.1 in specified annual Self-Assessment Report (SAR) obviously combines undergraduate and postgraduate students. However, the number of PhD students attributed to graduate students is not included in this indicator at all by the Ministry. The number of PhD students is specified in individual indicator 1.2.1. But this number shall additionally include the "number of adjuncts, clinical residents, medical interns and assistants-interns" definitely do not belong to PhD students.

Thus, the Ministry approach does not consider international realities of undergraduate and graduate (including postgraduate) differentiation of degree programs and respective enrollments of students. In addition, the specified wordings of indicators 1.1.1 and 1.2.1. of SAR domestic university report reflect the follow problems of consistency within the Russian system of higher education degrees studied in the third paragraph of this chapter.

First, there is mixing of students and cadets (i.e., those who are studying on civilian and military educational programmes) in SAR 1.1.1 indicator. Adjuncts, clinical residents, medical interns and assistants-interns are mixed with PhD students in 1.2.1. This means that the Russian authorities are trying to extend the principles of the Bologna multilevel system of qualifications to medical and military higher education. However, these areas of knowledge are excluded from the European Qualification Framework, which in general provides for three or four years of study on degree programmes of the first cycle (undergraduate), two years of second-cycle degree programmes (graduate) and at least three years the third-cycle degree programmes (post-graduate). (A Framework for Qualification of the European Higher Education Area, 2005).

Another problem is integration in one indicator 1.1.1. numbers of undergraduate students studied on Bachelor's and Specialist's degree programmes and graduate students studied on Master's degree programmes, i.e. with at least one degree in higher education.

Thus, the Ministry's way to understand of FTE students indicators contravenes the requirements of the ranking agencies. This confusion distorts data on the number of Russian and international students enrolled in degree programmes of different cycles and prevent further planning and development of internationalisation, both at the university level and at the national policy level. To emphasise once again: this is a direct consequence of incomplete implementation of three-level EHEA degrees system in Russia.

Below I focus on the study of figures of FTE students and international students, provided by Russian HEIs to WURs and to the Ministry accordingly the demands to their self-assessment reports (SAR) (Prikaz Minobrnauki Rossii ot 10.12.2013 No 1324). Table 2 and Table 3 show significant



differences in the figures for the same reporting period 2016. It should be noted that Moscow State and Tomsk State have not placed SAR 2016 on their websites by the time of writing this chapter. This is contrary to the decree of the Government of the Russian Federation (Postanovleniye Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federacii ot 10.07.2013 No. 582, 2013, p.3B). Therefore, MSU figures are taken from the official website. The data for TSU are taken from its SAR 2015.

**Table 2. Russian HEIs, WURs presented: Number of FTE students, 2015-2016**

THE 2016, Rank	QS 2016/17, Rank	Title	THE	QS	SAR the Ministry
188	108	Moscow State University, MSU	29563	30233	34722
301-350	350	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, MIPT	5535	5886	6651
401-500	258	Saint-Petersburg State University, SPbSU	21924	21019	20610
401-500	291	Novosibirsk State University, NSU	7125	6781	6533
401-500	401-410	National Research Nuclear University, MEPhI	7297	7064	7360
501-600	400	National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, TPU	10980	10833	10186
501-600	377	Tomsk State University, TSU	8565	8565	10991
601-800	411-420	Peter the Great Saint-Petersburg Polytechnic University, SPbPU	15759	15669	20478

Sources: THE web site, QS web site

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (State University) (2016).

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. National Research Novosibirsk State University. (2016).

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. National Research Nuclear University MEPhI (Moscow Engineering Physics Institute) (2016).

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University (2016).

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. National Research Tomsk State University (2015).

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. Peter the Great St Petersburg Polytechnic University. (2016).

Otchet o samoobsledovanii. St. Petersburg State University (2016).

MSU statistics (2017).

As it is shown in Table 2 TSU is the only Russian HEI which provided the same data to different ranking agencies. Therefore, I conclude that TSU organised the same team to prepare data to THE WUR and QS WUR. However, data for the Ministry differs from the ranking figures. It means that

they are prepared by other people and on the basis of other principles. For example, the number of FTE students in TSU SAR is 2 426 people, greater than in both WURs.

However, the divergence of the same indicator for "domestic" and international use in other Russian HEIs is even greater. As Table 2 shows, five Russian HEIs show in their domestic reports significantly greater number of FTE students than in international rankings. A few thousand is the difference in MSU data gives 5 169 FTE students more in favor of "domestic" report. The number of FTE students at St. Petersburg State University is 4809 people for the Ministry, which is greater than for WURs. MIPT shows the number of FTE students on 689 people more to the Ministry than to the rankings. And in case of MEPhI only the divergence in data (63 students) can be attributed to natural fluctuations in the values of the contingent.

Table 2 and Table 3 show that in most Russian HEIs different teams are occasionally and independently preparing different reports for different ranking agencies and for the Ministry. These teams are not cooperating with each other and not communicating. Only in TSU one team prepares data "for export" and the other "for domestic use". Duplicating teams responsible for domestic and international reporting is not just a symptom of broken communication channels within a university. This also results in excess expenditure of funding: the same data are processed not by one group of people, but two or three. I assume that financial flows of the governmental programs can be used more efficiently, being aimed directly at internationalisation, rather than financing proliferation of working groups for reporting.

Inadequate and different numbers of FTE students are disorienting not only those who are aspiring to enter one or another Russian HEI. It also destroys the quality of management decisions at institutional level, inhibits analysis and planning at the level of national policy and further development of internationalisation of higher education in Russia. Data for the same FTE indicator differ in each Russian HEI so much that it is possible to discuss minimisation strategy with the aim of artificial overstatement of the foreign students proportion. The objective of such manipulation can be achievement of relevant indicators for continued Governmental funding under the auspices of internationalisation.

A separate problem is the number of foreign students on postgraduate programs. Self-assessment reports (SARs) have no such indicators contained. Indicators 3.8 and 3.9. again demand figure, where "foreign citizens in the number of PhD students, adjuncts, clinical residents, medical interns and assistants-interns inside the total number of PhD students" are mixed without division into full- and part-time. Indicators required by the Ministry divide foreign students into arriving from the CIS and outside it are obviously outdated.

Table 3 shows differences in data on the number of foreign students, depending on where these data are sent: the Ministry, QS WUR or THE WUR. I would like to note that I have analysed only absolute quantitative data. Therefore I excluded from the analysis THE WUR requiring data on the percentage of foreign students in the total number of FTE students.

**Table 3. Russian HEIs, WUR presented: Number of FTE international students, 2015-2016**

THE 2016, Rank	QS 2016/17, Rank	Title	QS	SAR the Ministry
188	108	Moscow State University, MSU	5098	3875
301-350	350	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, MIPT	782	592
401-500	258	Saint-Petersburg State University, SPbSU	2258	1785
401-500	291	Novosibirsk State University NSU	1209	491
401-500	401-410	National Research Nuclear University, MEPhI	1063	870
501-600	400	National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, TPU	2504	1866
501-600	377	Tomsk State University, TSU	1553	1350
601-800	411-420	Peter the Great Saint-Petersburg Polytechnic University, SPbPU	2270	2326

*Sources:* THE web site, QS web site, Russian HEIs official web sites (SARs)

This discrepancy in absolute figures makes unreliable even such basic internationalisation data as the total number of FTE students, the number of foreign students and their number on undergraduate and graduate degree programmes. The Ministry strives for forcing into a single figure the number of undergraduate and graduate students in civil and military institutions. It results in distortion of the basic data and inability to generate relevant internationalisation strategy for leading Russian HEIs. The lack of a clear definition of internationalisation leads to multiplication of indicators: one of them are sent to the Ministry, others in various government structures, some to the 5-100 Project responsible bodies, some depending on the category/status of the HEI, etc.

However, despite such number of reporting none of Russian HEIs, except for MSU and TSU, failed to achieve the key indicator of 15% foreign students in the total number of FTE students. St. Petersburg State University, the second university of special status, informed THE WUR of only 7% of foreign students, domestic Ministry of 9% and QS WUR of 11% (see Table 4).

**Table 4. Russian HEIs, WUR presented: International FTE students in Total Number of FTE students, 2015-2016, %**

THE 2016, Rank	QS 2016/17, Rank	Title	THE	QS	Counted on SARs for the Ministry
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188	108	Moscow State University, MSU	21%	17%	11%
301-350	350	Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology, MIPT	12%	13%	9%
401-500	258	Saint-Petersburg State University, SPbSU	7%	11%	9%
401-500	291	Novosibirsk State University NSU	14%	18%	8%
401-500	401-410	National Research Nuclear University, MEPhI	10%	15%	12%
501-600	400	National Research Tomsk Polytechnic University, TPU	20%	23%	18%
501-600	377	Tomsk State University, TSU	18%	18%	12%
601-800	411-420	Peter the Great Saint-Petersburg Polytechnic University, SPbPU	15%	14%	11%

**Sources:** THE web site, QS web site, Russian HEIs official web sites (SARs)

In such circumstances, the transaction costs of internationalisation development in leading HEIs are of snowballing growth. Administrative costs start exceeding the benefits of internationalisation at the level of the higher education sector as well. The situation is aggravated by frequent shifts and uncertainty of the circle of the officials, responsible for implementation of different projects and programmes related to internationalisation of higher education.

Furthermore responsibility for various programs for development, competitiveness enhancement and reporting for the Ministry rests in each university on different divisions and groups. All this collectively results in severe defects of the collected data and, consequently, in managerial decisions impeding the internationalisation of higher education in HEIs and the country in general.

To conclude, internationalisation of higher education varies considerably in Russian HEIs and does not correlate directly with financial support. The results of recently supported Siberian universities where the number of foreign students is greater than inside their competitors in St. Petersburg supported for a long time, are dramatically impressive. Russian HEIs are able to develop internationalisation of higher education despite the traditions of hypercentralized governance. However, inequality of financial support, debilitating culture of reporting and accountability outside and inside Russian HEIs, inadequate statistics and vague responsibility at policy and institutional levels prevent implementation of internationalisation of higher education in Russia as the mechanism to enhance the quality of education and research.

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