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ON SOME DUAL-DEGREE CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

Abstract. The article summarizes some of the existing challenges and perspectives of the dual-degree baccalaureate programs realized through Baikal International Business School of Irkutsk State University and its international partners in the USA and Australia. The authors bring the issues of new federal educational standard in Russian Federation being implemented and its impact on the programs, as well as such factors as competition, demography, economics, job-placement attractiveness are brought to readers' attention.

Keywords: dual-degree program, FSES, the Gini coefficient, bachelor degree, job placement.

1. Russian Baccalaureate Program Enrollment.
 - a. Regional and Universities Competition for the “best entrants”.
 - b. “Quality entrants” loss – the ones from financially unsecured families who cannot afford two programs.
 - c. “Federal State Preferences” demonstration – federal budget allocation to natural sciences support; Bachelor Degree of Applied Sciences frightens the entrants away.
2. Standard Regulation. Educational standards are currently changing. Contemporary acting standards impose several problems some of which will be solved when the new standard FSES 3+ is introduced and implemented.
 - a. The imitation on 60 credit hours per academic year does not allow BIBS to provide the students with sufficient credit hours on English language learning in order to provide desired level of preparation for the TOEFL and all prerequisite courses for the dual-degrees programs with the United States and Australia. Truly speaking, our students take upon themselves a larger workload than it is allowed in the legislation.
 - b. The limitation on class hours also restricts our possibilities in terms of TOEFL test preparation as well as the readiness for the dual-degree programs.

These two problems are solved in the following way – we introduce two curricula: a “Russian” curriculum in the program of Russian Bachelor’s Degree and “Additional” curriculum that assumes additional hours. This is a

standard infringement. However, the upcoming standard FSES 3+ will allow BIBS to vary the credit and class hours to the benefit of dual-degree programs.

Additional Limitations. UMUC courses are transferred to the Russian Degree diploma in the transcript. However, there are the textbook supply requirements within the program. Electronic books (which provide temporary access sometimes) may not be added to the library's balance. Consequently, BIBS is forced to buy additional Russian textbooks.

EMCD (Educational Methodological Complex of a Discipline): the disciplines that go towards the degree are created additional EMCD by BIBS and it undoubtedly increases work content and labor-intensiveness.

3. Regions covered by University's presence.

a. Demography.

b. Economics.

c. Job placement attractiveness.

Demography: Irkutsk region has been facing a negative trend for the past decade – natural population loss (figure 1), population aging, and negative migratory balance. Thus, the number of university's entrants is also decreasing (including the number of Irkutsk secondary schoolchildren who plan to enter a university in Irkutsk).

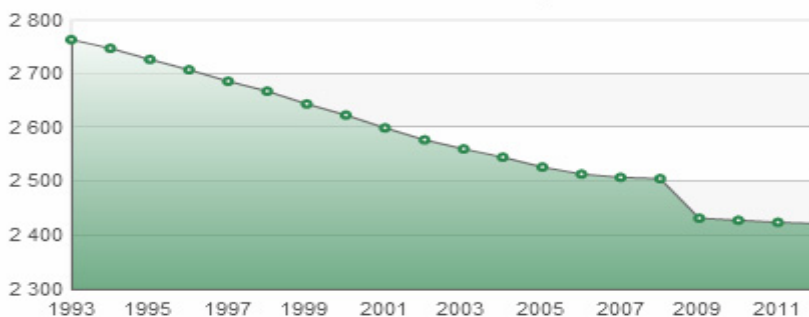


Figure 1. Irkutsk Region Population

Economics: the Gini coefficient which represents a measurement tool for inequality of income or wealth is increasing. The gap between the poor and the rich people is rising. On the one hand, the solvent demand is diminishing; on the other hand, financially-secured families tend to send their children abroad for their studies. For instance, more than 15 % of SASM students had a period of foreign studies.

Job Placement: business federalization in the region leads to headquarters location in the central part of the country, consequently, the demand for

dual-degree specialists is moving to the central regions of the country. As a result, our clients are those planning to move to another region.

Student motivation is an important issue in the life cycle of an educational service (throughout all the stages while he or she is an applicant till becoming alumni of the university). That is why it is so urgently discussed by the state, employers, and educational institutions on the need to new approaches implementation which are backed and required by the new generation of students – millennials or the Y-generation.

Obviously, different generation values vary a lot and sometimes are dramatically diverse. Contrasting values lead to various behavioral stereotyping which in their turn may cause all levels of miscommunications and as a result distrust or even disrespect among the representatives of generations both in academic and business environment.

BIBS premise is that in order to fully grow and foster students' potential and concurrently prepare such professionals who would better satisfy the needs of employers, joint collaboration of educational institutions with employers along with the estimation of millennials' priorities and interests and new pedagogical and technological applications are highly required nowadays.

The Program's Perspectives:

Our clients are entrants who plan to work in federal state or international companies and foreign students (e.g. from China and Mongolia).

Education Cost – we search for grants and scholarships for our students, arrange internships. This practice allows us to attract very talented and brilliant students from financially-insecured families.

Job Placement: we attract corporate order customers who cover tuition expenses and guarantee a position in the company (including such companies as Sberbank, Aircraft Construction Plant, and Region Administration, etc.

We create perspectives and opportunities. Our alumni may matriculate for budgeted or grant-supported enrollments in the top Russian and global universities (including Higher School of Economics, Cambridge University, Oxford University, and Harvard University). It is also the merit of the business school's participation in numerous international projects.