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**INTERNATIONALIZATION OF MEDICAL EDUCATION:  
VORONEZH MEDICAL UNIVERSITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL TRENDS  
AND PERSPECTIVES**

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**Abstract.** *The paper discusses actual trends in the Russian higher education nowadays. It is stated that certain factors, such as an increase in competitiveness of Russian specialists at the international level, better quality of provided educational standards and increase of the status and reputation of the Russian education, contribute to the fact that education in Russia is increasingly becoming international in nature nowadays. It is pointed out that Russian medical universities are no exception. Voronezh N.N. Burdenko State Medical University is one of the best practices demonstrating how to educate international students successfully.*

**Keywords:** *medical education, international nature of education, internationalization of higher education.*

Nowadays education in Russia is increasingly becoming international in nature. This implies tackling challenges of economic, social and international significance, such as an increase in competitiveness of Russian specialists at the international level, better quality of provided educational standards and increase of the status and reputation of the Russian education, creating multicultural environment enabling development of peaceful relations between countries and broaden international partnership.

Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation actively contributes to the process being involved in the Bologna Process, the Copenhagen Process and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

In 2015, the UN Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) on Sustainable Development Goals identified 17 promising development goals, and Goal 4 was formulated as follows: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” [1]. One of the targets it includes is “4.7 By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence,

global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” [2].

Thus, there are objectively reasonable causes for education to become international globally. Academic and professional (vocational) requirements that university graduates should meet more and more reflect processes of globalization at various levels – communal, economic, marketing etc. The major goal of higher educational institutions is to ensure adequate training of professionals consistent with the imperatives of our times. As experts state, these should not only include academic and professional knowledge, but also social, communicative, intercultural skills and attitudes [3].

The report “Internationalization of Higher Education: Study” published by European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies points out that, despite the currently deepening challenges of an economic, social and cultural nature, such as the financial crisis, adverse demographic changes, immigration, ethnic and religious tensions, the internationalization of higher education has an “optimistic outlook” [4]. Increasing international student mobility, international research cooperation and strategic partnership appear to be the priority focal areas having absolute preference at modern age.

Development of the export potential of higher education is recognized as one of the superior strategic trends in the state policy of Russia. Competitiveness of the system of national education is achieved by reinforcement of the academic prestige of the Russian higher education, increased attractiveness of the Russian universities at the global international market; this, in turns, enhances positions of the country in the global community due to propagation of national achievements in the scientific and cultural spheres. Furthermore, teaching international students is an essential additional source of funding for the Russian higher educational institutions - situation similar in most countries, – since for almost 70% of foreign students studying in Russia tuition fees are charged [5].

Export of education is mainly aimed at the improvement of educational marketing, increased level of education and social adaptation of foreign students in Russia. Export of education provides interpersonal communication, allows broadening cultural contacts and attracting professionals with creative thinking being involved into national economics.

Recently the Russian Federation (RF) has been able to stabilize its presence at the global market of educational services. As the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development estimated, in 2016 the proportion of Russia in this sphere of activity was about 7%, ranking the 6th after the USA, UK, China, France, Australia [6]. As UNESCO estimated, Russia has the world's fifth-largest foreign student population [7]. In 2016 Russia ranked 34th in the global rating of the education index (the education attainment index constituted 0.816) [8].

Number of foreign students, who study in the RF taking either intramural or extramural form of study, is even more essential indicator of the export of education. According to Rosstat report “Russia in numbers [Россия в цифрах]”, dated 2017, the proportion of foreign students in the state and municipal universities increased from 58,992 people in 2000 to 207,356 in 2016; in private universities there were 37,241 foreign students in 2016 [9]. This increase in number of international students is attributed to certain beneficial factors: low tuition fee, traditionally high

level of educational services and long-term experience of training that have gained favorable reputation since the USSR epoch, as well as fundamental nature of the Russian higher education.

**Discussion.** In this regard Russian medical universities are no exception. In most of them there are international institutes and faculties working successfully for many years. Participation in the international educational programs, teaching international students, exchange of academic best practices and experience, development and realization of international projects are main directions of their activity. Voronezh N.N. Burdenko State Medical University is an excellent example of such experience. Teaching international students was organized in 1991 there. Later Department of Foreign Students was re-organized into the International Faculty of Medical Education. In 2004 it started teaching 1-3-year foreign students in English language. In 2008 the International Faculty of Medical Education was re-arranged into the International Institute of Medical Education and Cooperation (MIMOS in Russian). Its major tasks are:

- to train highly-skilled professionals who are experts in their specialty, have adequate fundamental and practical training and experience, able to work at the international level;
- to popularize, develop and propagate Russian language and culture abroad;
- to expand the world's foremost medical achievements in Russia.

Main directions of its activities are teaching international students, development of international academic mobility, realization of international projects of the university providing increased professional qualification of the staff, attraction of international investments to develop scientific potential, information and advisory support of university students in the sphere of international partnership and cooperation.

The Institute policies are developed by the Academic Council consisting of 6 candidates of sciences. Various issues relating to the quality of foreign students' education, management of the educational process and international activity of the university are discussed by the Council. Over 1500 medical workers from 63 countries of the world have

graduated from the Institute throughout the whole period of its existence.

Academic curricula of the Institute include humanitarian, socio-economic, natural-science, mathematical, medico-biological, medical-preventive and clinical disciplines that meet federal state educational requirements (FGOS) on the corresponding special-

ty. Special attention is paid to individualization of the learning process considering national, religious and psychological features of the students, and the ways to overcome a language barrier. Figure demonstrates distribution of foreign students according to the chosen specialties.

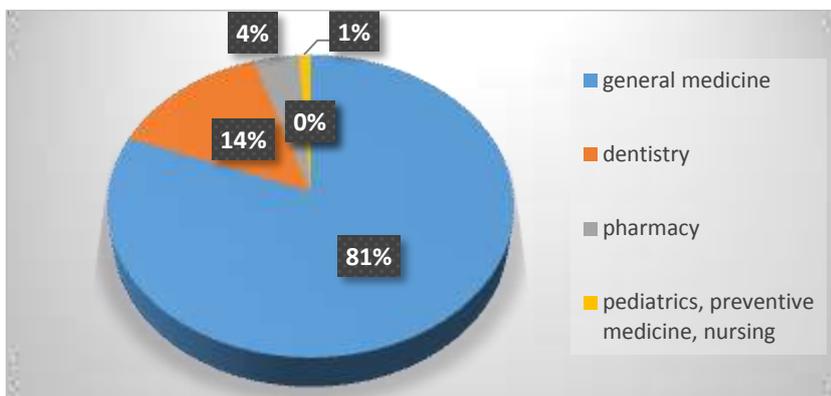


Figure. Distribution of foreign students on the specialties.

In this regard it is necessary to mention that the members of the academic staff of the university attend foreign language courses, namely English, to improve their language skills and competences and provide teaching in English not only for junior students during their 1-3 years of study, but also for senior students in the 4-6 courses. Moreover, professors and lecturers get involved in the international conferences and programs of international mobility and exchange in the former countries of the Soviet Union and far abroad; this also contributes to an increase in the educational attractiveness of our university and its academic prestige in the international arena.

The staff of the International Institute of Medical Education and Cooperation pays much attention to organization of the leisure time of foreign students and their adaptation to the Russian socio-cultural environment. Students have an opportunity to celebrate their national and religious festivals. They actively participate in amateur performances, festivals of national cuisine, drama club activity and club of the lovers of Russian folk songs. Introduction into the Russian history, customs and traditions is an important part of the educational process that aims at involving

foreign students into Russian culture. Tutors of the study groups provide outings to the theatres, cinemas, concerts including concerts of K.I. Massalitinov Russian Folk Choir that appears to be a landmark of Voronezh region.

Foreign students can attend sports clubs to do various sports, as well as sports and fitness complex. MIMOS team in mini-football regularly participates in inter-academic students' competitions.

**Conclusion.** Support of foreign students in the process of their adaptation is a powerful tool contributing to an increase of the university attractiveness for real and potential customers of educational services. Positive feedback of medical graduates with high level of loyalty may become an optional advertising for Russian medical universities and promote admission of new foreign students.

However, in spite of the high potential of Russian medical universities, imperfection of academic curricula sometimes prevents full realization of this potential. It is necessary to stimulate academic staff to be involved into academic mobility, to learn foreign languages, to improve professional competences more actively participating in the international programs of continuing professional development.

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**ИНТЕРНАЦИОНАЛИЗАЦИЯ МЕДИЦИНСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ:  
ВОРОНЕЖСКИЙ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЙ МЕДИЦИНСКИЙ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ В  
КОНТЕКСТЕ ГЛОБАЛЬНЫХ НАПРАВЛЕНИЙ И ПЕРСПЕКТИВ**

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***Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются актуальные тенденции развития российского высшего образования. Говорится, что определенные факторы, такие как повышение конкурентоспособности российских специалистов на международном уровне, повышение качества предоставляемых образовательных стандартов и повышение статуса и репутации российского образования, способствуют тому, что сегодня образование в России все больше приобретает интернациональный характер. Отмечается, что российские медицинские вузы не являются исключением. Воронежский государственный медицинский университет им. Н.Н. Бурденко – один из таких примеров, демонстрирующих успешное обучение иностранных студентов.*

***Ключевые слова:** медицинское образование, международный характер образования, интернационализация высшего образования.*