

Higher Education Systems and Institutions of Russia

Synonyms

Higher education in Russia, higher education institutions in Russia

Definition

Transmission from the Soviet system of higher education; increase of participation in higher education; large role of the government in the development of higher education; change of funding mechanism; marketization.

The Country in Context

Russia, also known as the Russian Federation, is the largest country in the world and spans over 11 time zones. As a federal state, Russia includes 85 regional subjects. Over 146 million people (FSSS, 2017a) are unevenly distributed within the country. About 77% of the population lives in the more urbanized European part of the country, whereas the Asian portion of the country occupies more than 76% of the total area. 74% of the population lives in urban areas. The youth population is declining. Although there are around 180 different ethnic groups in Russia, most of the population – 78% - are ethnic Russians (Statdata, 2017).

The Russian economy is based heavily on natural resources, particularly on oil and gas. As of 2015, it has the 13th largest economy in the world by nominal GDP (World Bank, 2017a) and the 6th largest by purchasing power parity (World Bank, 2017b).

The Constitution of the Russian Federation guarantees the right to free higher education on a competitive basis for those obtaining it for the first time. General and vocational education is free and available to all.

The social and economic landscape has been rapidly changing in Russia during the last quarter of a century. After the collapse of the USSR in 1991, Russia experienced many changes, including:

- movement to an electoral democracy and a market economy;
- the rejection of a planned human resources policy relating to the main economic sectors;
- the decline or elimination of a number of key industries (OECD, 2007).

Historical Background

In 1917, Soviet Russia inherited from the Russian Empire a very centralized and elitist system of higher education. The first decade of the Soviet period can be characterized by the search for a socialist model of higher education ensuring ideological cohesion and social justice via special courses in “Marxism-Leninism” and affirmative action favouring children of workers and peasants. The higher education system worked as a means of building the new socialist ruling class and was dramatically expanded compared to the pre-revolutionary system.

The rapid industrial development of the early 1930s fuelled even further expansion and the transformation of higher education into a part of the Soviet centralized government-controlled economy, a so-called “manpower production machine” (Froumin and Kouzminov, 2015). In this period, the education system attained the form and structure that has largely survived to this day.

This structure was based on simple principles: no private initiative; rigid specialization and narrow professional training; separation of education and research (through placing research into the Academy of Sciences); a standardized curriculum; limited to minimal autonomy; mandatory job placement of graduates. Specialized universities were placed under the control of specialized branch ministries. By the end of the Soviet period, the regular length of study in full-time programs was 5 years for a “specialist” degree. The next academic degree was “Candidate of Science” (equivalent to a PhD).

One of the main purposes of higher education in the USSR, alongside preparing for highly skilled labour, was mastery of Marxist-Leninist theory. The student trained in institutions of higher education had to be ideologically staunch. He was to be an active builder of a Communist society with high moral and civic virtues, a collectivist, internationalist, and patriot ready to defend the socialist fatherland.

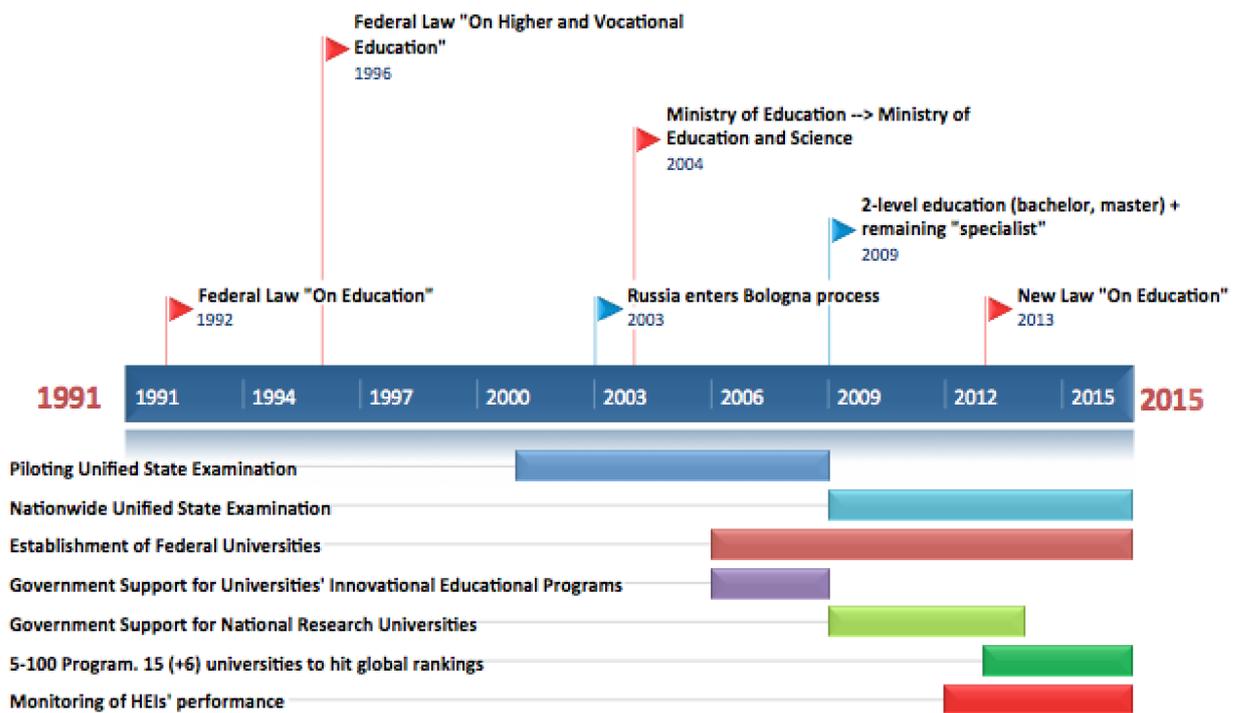
At the end of the Soviet era, there were 514 HEIs in Russia with almost 2.825 million students enrolled in them (FSSS, 2017b). More than half of students (58%) were studying in full-time programmes, 32% on correspondence courses and 10% attended evening courses.

The Modern System of Higher Education

The period after the collapse of the USSR can be divided into three parts according to the main focus of the educational reforms of each (a timeline of the key reforms is represented in Figure 1):

1. ‘Laissez-faire’ – In the first decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the government adopted the Laws on Education and Educational Standards, but kept a neutral position in shaping the educational landscape. Private HEIs are permitted.
2. 2000s (up to 2012) – Introduction of national centralized university entrance exams; joining the Bologna process: introduction of bachelor and master degrees; launching support programmes for universities’ development plans; development of quality assurance through new educational standards and state accreditation for educational programmes; decline of the universities’ autonomy.
3. Post-2012 – Adoption of the new Law On Education; national monitoring of the performance of HEIs; mergers and reorganizations of HEIs; implementation of the Russian excellence initiative; introduction of online education; period of increased government control of higher education.

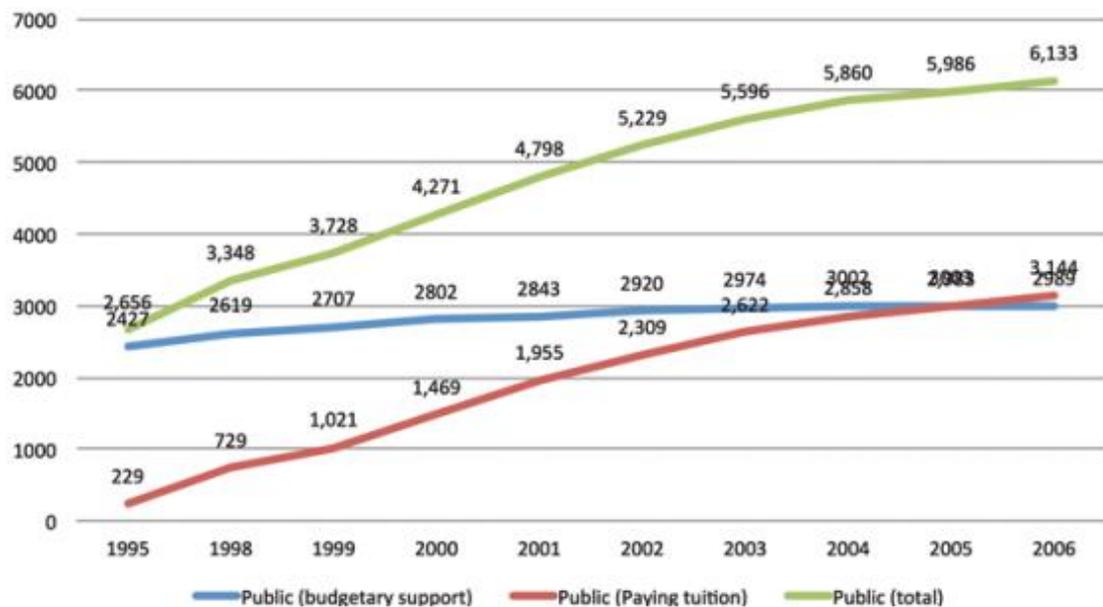
Figure 1. Timeline of Key Higher Education Reforms in Russia, 1991-2015.



Source: Platonova and Semyonov. Forthcoming. Russia: The Institutional Landscape of Russian Higher Education.

The introduction of tuition fees and private HEIs in 1992 initiated the marketization of higher education in Russia. It also opened access to higher education for those who were unable to get it through the state-set enrolment limits. In the mid-1990s, people became conscious of new social and economic values leading to an interest in continuing their education. The government increased the number of state-funded institutions, yet the number of students interested in higher education outpaced this growth (Figure 2). The increasingly high demand for obtaining university degrees led to the expansion of higher education within the new open market system (Froumin and Kouzminov, 2015). Due to increased demands for higher education, there were twice as many HEIs in 2011 than there were in 1991 (FSSS, 2017b).

Figure 2. Number of Students by Source of Finance.



Source: Froumin and Kouzminov, 2016. Supply and Demand Patterns in Russian Higher Education. Isak Froumin and Yaroslav Kouzminov.

Enrolment in higher education begins with passing the national exam, which was introduced in 2001. This exam provides a combination of final certification for graduates and the entrance tests for admission to institutions of higher professional education. Students with high exam scores or winners of Olympiads (academic competitions between pupils) can typically easily get state-funded placement in the university, but those with lower grades must often seek other sources of funding. Although state-subsidized loans are available to students in higher education, school graduates are mostly dependent on their parents when fees are required. Whereas in 1995 only 13.7% of students paid for their own education, since the 2000s more than 40% of students pay education fees (Platonova and Semyonov, forthcoming).

In 2003, Russia became a member of the Bologna process and consistently replaces the traditional five year specialist degree with a two-tier degree system. Currently, there are three levels of higher education:

- Bachelor's programmes (undergraduate, ISCED level 6);
- Specialist's and Master's programmes (ISCED level 7);
- Doctoral training (postgraduate, ISCED level 8).

The duration of full-time programmes are as follows: four years for Bachelor's, five to six years for Specialist's (depending on the area of training), two years for Master's, and three to four years for postgraduate (doctoral) programmes. Students can enter Bachelor's and Specialist's programmes after basic secondary education, students can enter a Master's programme on the basis of Bachelor's or Specialist's degrees, and to enter a postgraduate programme the applicant should have a Specialist's or Master's degree. Tertiary non-university programmes (ISCED level 5) may be delivered at VET colleges and colleges affiliated with higher education institutions. These lead to a secondary VET diploma at either the basic or advanced level; graduates of colleges can also use their diplomas for admission to Bachelor's or Specialist's programmes.

The Russian system of higher education provides educational courses in three modes: full-time, part-time (also called correspondence), and evening classes. Part-time study in Russian HEIs is different from that in Europe. Most of these programmes are based on distance learning; students usually have classes in HEIs for 2 to 4 weeks 2 to 3 times a year. In terms of popularity, the total number of students studying in part-time programmes and evening courses has increased threefold over a 25 year period and now attract a majority of students (53% in 2014, Table 1).

Table 1 represents the number of students studying in Bachelor's, Specialist's, and Master's programmes. It also includes a division by modes of study. The decrease in the number of students per ten thousandths of the population may be explained by the demographic situation as well as by the attempts of the government to attract students to vocational education.

Table 1. Number of Students in Russian Higher Education with Division by Modes of Studying.

	2000/01	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15
Total number of students (thou.)	4741.4	7049.8	6490.0	6075.4	5646.7	5209.0
Number of students per 10 thou. population	324	493	454	424	393	356
By modes of studying (thou.):						
full-time	2625.1	3073.7	2847.7	2724.3	2618.8	2575
evening courses	302.2	304.7	263.4	229.7	189.2	158.5
part-time	1814.1	3671.3	3378.9	3121.4	2838.6	2475.5

Source: adopted from Gokhberg et al. 2016. Indicators of Education, 2016.

According to OECD (2016), enrolment in higher education among 25 to 34-year-olds in 2015 was 58% (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral degrees and equivalents). The enrolment rate in tertiary education among 20 to 24-year-olds from 2005 to 2014 remained stable; enrolment rates are quite similar to the OECD average data. 6% of Bachelor's and Master's students and 5% of doctoral students are foreigners.

In 2002, 162 of every 1000 people older than 15 had higher education whereas in 2010 this increased to 234 of every 1000. More women than men per thousand have obtained higher education.

Since 1992, the number of private institutions of higher education has rapidly grown from 0 to 474 in 2008. The introduction of state licensing and accreditation, and later performance-based evaluation, has led to a reduction in private institutions; in 2015, the total number of private HEIs was 366 (FSSS, 2017b). About 14% of students were enrolled in private HEIs in 2014. However, private universities have mostly failed to take up central positions in the field of higher education (Froumin and Kouzminov, 2015).

In the Soviet period, the higher education institutions were located mainly in large cities making access to higher education more difficult for graduates from rural and remote areas and from small towns. Both public and private higher education institutions responded to the growing demand for broader geographical access by establishing campuses (branches) in new geographical locations and large cities. The pick figure of the branches of private HEIs were

reached 599 in 2010, the number of branches of public universities reached 1102 in 2005. Both the government and the public complained about the low quality of education offered in these branches. Many of them failed accreditation and were subsequently closed.

The fluctuation in the total number of universities reflects major reforms in Russian higher education. Due to increased student demands for higher education, there were twice as many HEIs in 2011 than in 1991 (Table 2). However, the introduction of quality assurance and performance-based evaluations has resulted in a reduction of institutions.

Table 2. Higher Education Institutions (at the beginning of the academic year).

Years	Total number of HEIs	Number of public HEIs (branches - where data is available)	Number of private HEIs (branches - where data is available)	Number of students per 10 000 people
1914	72	72	-*	10
1917	150	150	-	16
1940/41	481	481	-	43
1950/51	516	516	-	77
1960/61	430	430	-	124
1980/81	494	494	-	219
1990/91	514	514	-	190
1995/96	762	569	-	188
2000/01	965	607	358	324
2005/06	1068	655 (1102)	413 (519)	493
2006/07	1090	660	430	512
2007/08	1108	658	450	523
2008/09	1134	660	474	526
2009/10	1114	662	452	519
2010/11	1115	653 (1069)	462 (599)	493
2011/12	1080	634 (1045)	446 (594)	454
2012/13	1046	609 (1013)	437 (590)	424
2013/14	969	578 (949)	391 (533)	393
2014/15	950	548 (843)	402 (476)	356
2015/16	896	530	366	

* - no data is available

Source: adapted from FSSS,2017b and Gokhberg et al., 2016.

The vertical stratification of universities is somewhat determined by current legislation. However, some specialized groups of HEIs can be distinguished. One such specialized group is Federal Universities, which are the leading higher education institutions and centres in large regions. All but one were established in the last decade by merging a number of regional universities. Currently, there are ten federal universities (Russian education, 2017). Another type is National Research Universities: 29 higher education institutions which aim to integrate and lead research activities. The establishment of both Federal and National Research universities is

a manifestation of the major move toward the reintegration of research and higher education. Two universities, Moscow State and St. Petersburg State Universities, possess a special legal status, which provides them an exclusive model of funding and autonomy and gives them the right to adopt their own curriculum standards and award their own diplomas and degrees (European Commission, 2012).

The continuing tendency towards stratification in higher education is reflected by the Russian excellence initiative, the so-called “Project 5-100” launched in 2013 by special decree of the President of Russia. 15 HEIs were competitively chosen for significant government support in order that at least 5 of them would achieve placement among the top 100 places in global rankings by 2020. In 2015, another 6 HEIs were added to the programme. The substantive goal of the project is not simply to achieve high-ranking but to support the creation of a set of globally competitive modern research universities.

The differentiation of higher education is continued by MoES through the launching of an initiative to develop a group of “flagship” universities in the various Russian regions. The objective of this group of universities is to drive the social and economic development of the regions in which they are located. Some researchers compare these attempts to the “California master-plan.”

Russian HEIs can also be presented in clusters characterised by different features (Table 3).

Table 3. Classification of HEIs in Russia, 2015.

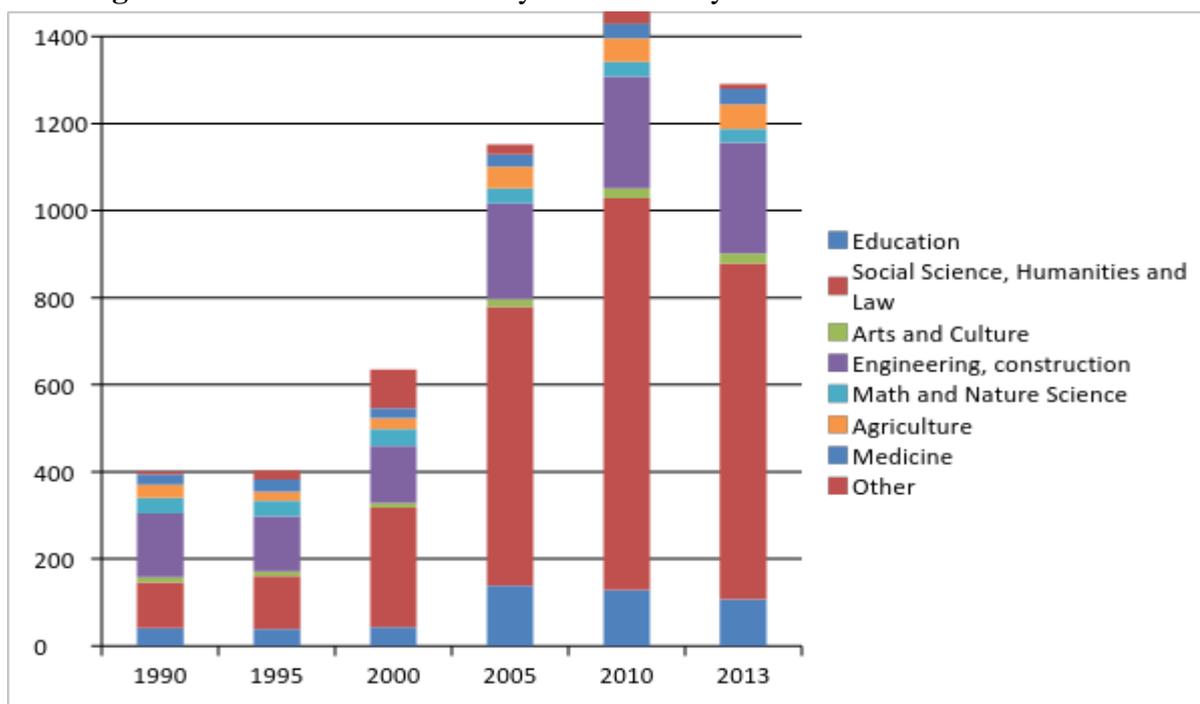
	Type	Features	1 - # of HEIs 2 - % of HEIs 3 - % of students
1	Research universities	Diversified subject mix, research-productive, selective, attract talented students, MA students, attract fee-paying students, located particularly in Moscow and Saint Petersburg	1 - 22 2 - 3% 3 - 5%
2	Public Regional Universities	Very large, diversified subject mix, selective, large part-time, large state support, some R&D	1 - 84 2 - 11% 3 - 38%
3	Specialised HEIs	Small, highly selective, highly specialised, full-time, mostly medical	1 - 88 2 - 11% 3 - 9%
4	Public Mass Universities	Diversified subject mix, selective, large part-time, large state support, do not attract fee-paying students	1 - 248 2 - 32% 3 - 42%
5	Private HEIs	Small, only fee-paying students, large part-time, very low selectivity	
5a	<i>Specialised</i>	<i>specialisation in popular programmes</i>	1 - 167 2 - 22% 3 - 6%

5b	Diversified	diversified subject mix	1 - 95 2 - 12% 3 - 6%
6	Part-time HEIs	Only part-time fee-paying students, very small, specialisation in popular programmes	1 - 68 2 - 9% 3 - 11%

Source: Platonova and Semyonov. Forthcoming. Russia: The Institutional Landscape of Russian Higher Education.

Soviet higher education served the needs of industrialization by increased training of engineers and technicians. New sectors of the economy such as finance, private retail, and services required new types of specialists (Froumin and Kouzminov, 2015). While industry faced serious problems in this new environment, the service sector developed rapidly. Lawyers, economists, and managers were in high demand by employers. This led to a significant shift in student preferences that can be observed in Figure 3. In 2013, more than half of all students were studying in the social sciences, humanities, and law. At the same time, public money continued to support training of specialists for the traditional industries.

Figure 3. Number of Graduates by Field of Study.



Source: Platonova and Semyonov. Forthcoming. Russia: The Institutional Landscape of Russian Higher Education.

Higher Education Governance

From the beginning of higher education in Russia in the 18th century, its governance has been characterised historically by rigid control and top-down decision making. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the regulation of the higher education system was slightly weakened, but in the 21st century the government took actions to regain its position as the main arbiter of supervision and change. The reforms were initiated not by the academic community or civil

society but by the government. For example, the Bologna process was criticized at the university level but the government pushed it through by top-down implementation, at times putting pressure on the university community.

Role of the Federal Government

Some regions of Russia established universities in the mid-1990s. This was a manifestation of the trend towards decentralization in higher education governance. It reflected the constitutional arrangements for education as an area of joint responsibilities at different levels of power from municipal to federal. In 2014, only 49 of all public universities were controlled by regional authorities. However, in accordance with the Law on Education of 2012, major responsibility for the higher education belongs to the federal authorities. This important role is carried out by the federal Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), which is in charge of policy development functions in higher education. More specifically, MoES establishes the rules and criteria for on-going and final assessment of students, requirements regarding workloads, and classroom conditions mandatory for accredited HEIs and even for those under the sectoral ministries.

Another important element of the federal governing system is the The Federal Supervision Service for Education and Science (*Rosobrnadzor*). It inspects the implementation of legislation in the sphere of education and the overall supervision of quality control in education, particularly the licensing, certification, and accreditation of educational institutions. Sector-specific ministries are responsible for financing, developing, supporting, and controlling their subordinate universities.

Despite the domination of the federal authorities, there are several legal channels for the regional authorities to influence federal HEIs within their territories, such as influencing the appointment of university presidents, providing regional approval for the central government's allocation of "free" student places funded by the federal budget, transferring region-owned property to these universities, and the co-financing of some universities.

Despite many attempts to reform the system and move all universities under the control of the Ministry of Education and Science, the majority of public universities are still subordinated to the sectoral ministries.

Most of the institutions fall under the jurisdiction of 21 governed bodies. The distribution of HEIs according to their subordination is presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Distribution of HEIs by Ministry and Other Agencies, 2014.

	Number of HEIs	Share of students (head count) in total number of students
Ministry of Education and Science	274	58.49%
Private HEIs	368	14.89%
The Russian Government	7	4.30%
Ministry of Agriculture	55	7.47%
Regional authorities	49	2.54%
Ministry of Culture	45	1.32%

Federal Agency for Railway Transport	9	2.64%
Ministry of Health and Social Development	46	4.13%
Ministry of Sport	14	0.78%
Federal Agency for Marine and River Transport	6	0.76%
Ministry of Justice	1	0.33%
Supreme Court	1	0.29%
Federal Communications Agency	4	0.53%
Federal Fishery Agency	6	0.77%
Federal Air Transport Agency	3	0.32%
Federal Customs Service	1	0.17%
Russian Academy of Arts	2	0.05%
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs	2	0.16%
Ministry of Economic Development	1	0.06%
Russian Science Academy	1	0.00%
The Federal Service for Intellectual Property, Patents and Trademarks	1	0.01%

Source: Adopted from Platonova and Semyonov. Forthcoming. Russia: The Institutional Landscape of Russian Higher Education.

Internal Governance of HEIs

The Law on Education (2012) sets a very broad framework for the internal governance of public HEIs. It does not include specific requirements for the governance system at private HEIs.

However, all private HEIs must be non-profit organizations and follow the operating and governing rules for such organizations. Most of them also implement practices of corporate governance.

Legally, there are three types of public HEIs: state controlled, state funded, and public autonomous. The distinctive feature is the level of autonomy and the role of the governing bodies. State controlled institutions cannot use their revenues whereas autonomous and state funded institutions can. State funded institutions have to ask the Ministry for permission for any significant structural change or big procurement. Autonomous institutions can make such decisions without the Ministry's permission.

The internal governance and management structure at public HEIs has not changed much since the Soviet period with the exception of the elimination of the Communist Party and Young Communists committees that played an important role in Soviet universities.

Rectors represent the executive authority at institutions. Their exact authority may vary depending on the provisions within the charter of the institution. Tradition says that the rectors should themselves be scholars. They have to have at least a PhD degree.

The MoES plays a critical role in appointing senior executives (rectors) to universities. There are two ways by which a rector may be appointed: election of the rector by university staff conference (with preliminary screening of the candidates by the MoES) or direct appointment by the MoES, government (for Federal universities), or even the President (for Moscow and Saint-Petersburg State Universities).

Typically, rectors have a number of vice rectors who are responsible for the main activities of the university, such as teaching, research, and infrastructure.

Academic councils, which usually include a rector as chairman, heads of academic departments, and the leading academics of HEIs, are prototypes of legislative bodies. They may possess different levels of influence in university politics in different universities depending on informal tradition and the formal provisions presented in the charter. In some universities, the power of these academic councils includes abilities to appoint and depose the heads of departments, to reshape university structure, and to allocate funds. In others, the rector may govern HEIs almost single-handedly.

A new phenomenon in university governance is the emergence of Supervisory Boards or Boards of Trustees, which make university governance transparent to the public. Supervisory Boards have become mandatory for autonomous universities. These include government officials, as well as representatives of leading business companies and civil society organisations, and are quite influential. Many universities also establish a Board of Trustees whose key function is fundraising. As a rule, such bodies have no decisive authority. The MoES supports the establishment of governing bodies that include representatives from beyond the university itself. It requires universities participating in the Russian Excellence Initiative to establish International Advisory Boards that provide strategic guidance for the universities.

The typical structure of universities usually consists of academic units such as faculties, schools, institutes managed by deans or directors, and administrative units. Academic units, in turn, may include academic and research entities such as chairs, laboratories, and departments. Traditionally, the faculties were relatively small and included one or two areas of training. The recent trend has been an increase in the size of academic units by merging smaller faculties into big units that could also be called faculties or institutes. The autonomy of the academic units depends on the traditions of the university and the legal provisions of the university's charter. In many cases, these units exercise a very high level of autonomy ranging from financing to staff selection. In other cases, their autonomy is very limited. Interestingly, traditional universities allow more autonomy for their academic units. Other universities trying to introduce corporate practices limit the autonomy of the units. However, there are attempts to combine old traditions with new approaches and to give autonomy to academic units while increasing their accountability for results by establishing monitoring systems and key performance indicators.

Funding System

25 years ago public money was the only source of higher education funding. It was allocated by individual donations and traditional funding structures. Today, public money at different levels, private students' fees, as well as private donations and research contracts create a much more complex picture.

Two main financial streams fund Russian universities from the state: funding for science (research funding) and for higher education. The first decade of the 21st century has shown strong growth in state expenditures for science, increasing from 0,24% in 2000 to 0,56% of GDP in 2014. At the same time, government expenditures for science were 2,95% of the state budget in 2014 (FSSS, 2016). In comparison with OECD countries during the period 2000-2014, Russia has been spending a much lesser percentage of GDP: while the average expenditure in OECD

countries grew from 2,138% to 2.377%, the Russian index increased from 1,051% to 1,187% (OECD Data).

State expenditures on tertiary educational institutions grew from 0,8% of GDP in 2005 to 1,4% of GDP in 2013. However, it should be noted that these indicators are also less than the average expenditures in OECD countries: 1,4% in 2005 and 1,5% in 2013, respectively (OECD, 2016). Moreover, after 2013, state expenditures are growing only for higher education whereas there has been a decline in funding of the education system taken as a whole.

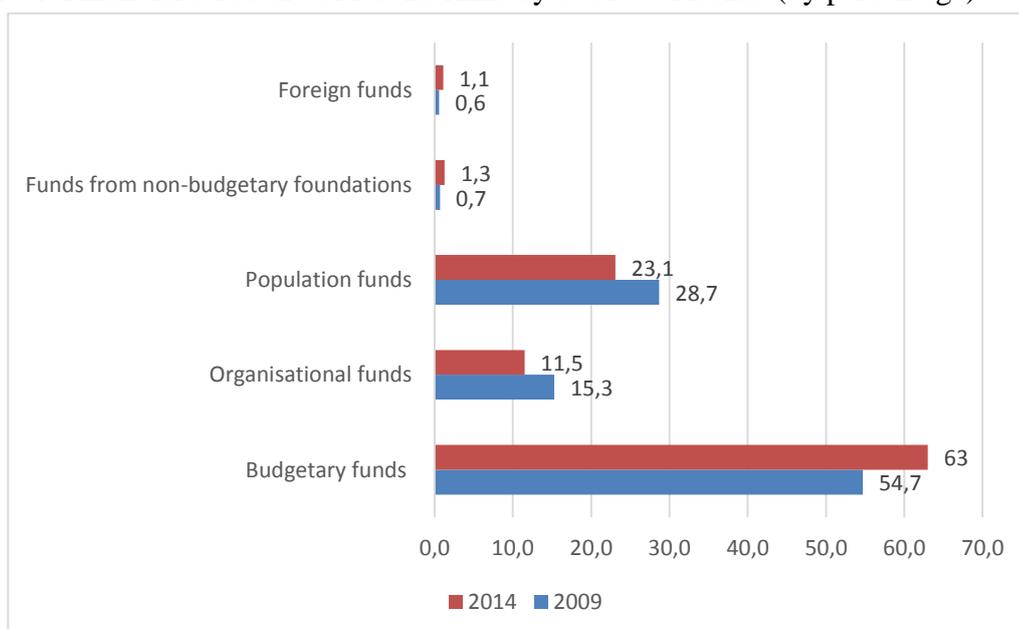
There are other sources of income apart from state funds available to universities. Particularly, they can attract additional finances by means of tuition fees, provisions for supplementary services for students, the staff and general public, contracts for consultations and research activities, and grants from non-governmental agencies.

Higher Education Revenues by Source

Before the public funding reforms were adapted by the government, universities used to rely almost entirely on state budget allocations, which covered up to 100% of their spending. Profit-making activities were largely seen as an optional income source. Changes in funding frameworks have provided an important market incentive encouraging engagement in for-profit operations. Thus, between 2013 and 2016, universities increased their revenues from income-generating activities 1.2 times.

Figure 4 demonstrates the structure of funding of public HEIs in Russia. Although the government took steps toward encouraging HEIs to raise their external financial sources, it still provides more than half of university budgets. This dependence on state funds has even increased in 2014 compared to 2009, when money from the state comprised 63% and 54.7%, respectively. The public is the second source of income for universities.

Figure 4. Financial Structure of Public HEIs by Source of Funds (by percentage).



Source: adopted from Gokhberg et al. 2016. Indicators of Education, 2016.

In regard to private HEIs, their main source of income is educational fees from the public: In 2009, this source accounted for 91.1% of funds, while in 2014 its contribution fell to 80.6% (Gokhberg et al., 2016). During this period, the percentage of funding from companies doubled and constituted 14.5% of all funds.

Funding System: New Mechanisms of Funding

The adoption of new budgetary legislation and the new Law on Education (2012) signalled an important turn in the framework of funding and a transition from cost-based to performance-based fund allocation in higher education. New mechanisms of funding introduced by the state included such instruments as: per capita funding, funding of the development plans of education institutions, state support through education loans, etc. Funding of educational institutions by the state is carried out according to uniform basic standard costs of educational services which take into account spatial features, indicators of the quality of education, and the particular characteristics and focus of governmental programmes.

The state funding of the leading Russian universities (around 40 HEIs) directly depends on indicators of the quality of their educational and research activities, such as their number of academic publications and the amount of non-budgetary funding per number of students with outstanding abilities. This means that they are able to influence the level of state funding by improving their performance.

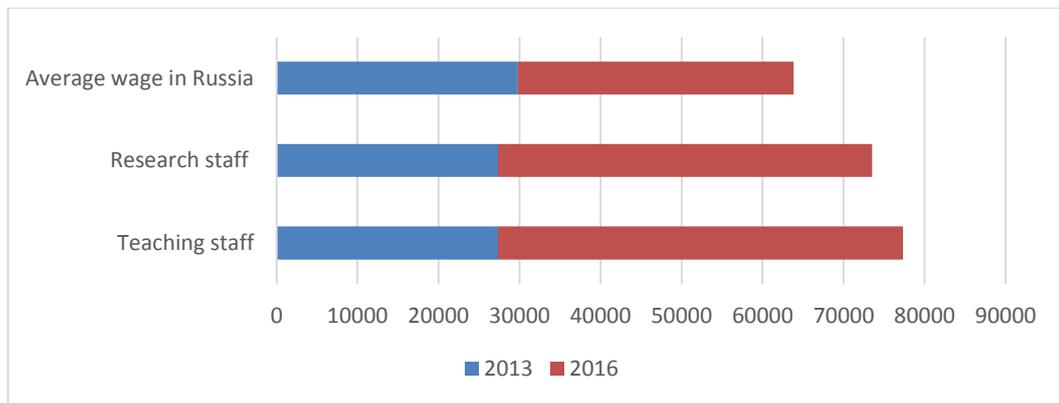
Therefore, the government seeks to make universities more responsible and independent in the allocation of non-budgetary financial sources. While government control of quality and performance increased, universities were granted more freedom in the disposal of finances and administrative control. Likewise, their responsibilities toward rational management and internal monitoring were also extended.

University Staff

The principal and largest category of staff in Russian HEIs is teaching staff. After the collapse of the USSR, academic wages were very low, so many talented people decided to leave and/or chose to work in other spheres. In order to turn professionals and talented students toward science and education, the government took steps to improve the level of income for academics. Figure 5 shows average wages of teaching and research staff and average countrywide wages in 2013 and 2016.

The requirements for teaching and research staff are also growing. They are required to have obtained higher education. To be appointed to positions of docent (associate professor), professor, leading or chief research fellows, doctoral degrees are required. Specialists with PhD degrees from foreign universities are welcomed. Staff selection is organised as an open competition. Until recently, staff was hired for a period of five years; however, there is a government-supported tendency toward the implication of ‘effective contracts’ which are made for a year and often include personal performance indicators.

Figure 5. Average Wages of Academic Staff in Russia.



Source: adopted from FSSS, 2017c.

An increase in wages has been attained, in particular due to the reduction of the number of employees at the institutions. Table 5 presents the number of the main categories of workers. As can be seen, the number of teaching and research staff has a greater tendency to decrease than the number of managerial staff, which fluctuates to a lesser extent.

Table 5. Number of Employees of HEIs by Categories in Russia (thousands of people, without external employees).

	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015
Administrative staff	26,5	27,2	28,9	27,7	26,6
Teaching staff	356,8	348,2	342	319,3	299,8
Research staff	21,6	22,1	21,9	18,9	17,7

Source: adopted from Gokhberg et al. 2016. Indicators of Education, 2016.

Internationalisation

Since 1991, internationalisation has been one of the top priorities of the national administration and educational institutions. It was proclaimed a vital element of the reformation by the first president of the Russian Federation, B.N. Yeltsin, in 1992 (Yeltsin, 1992).

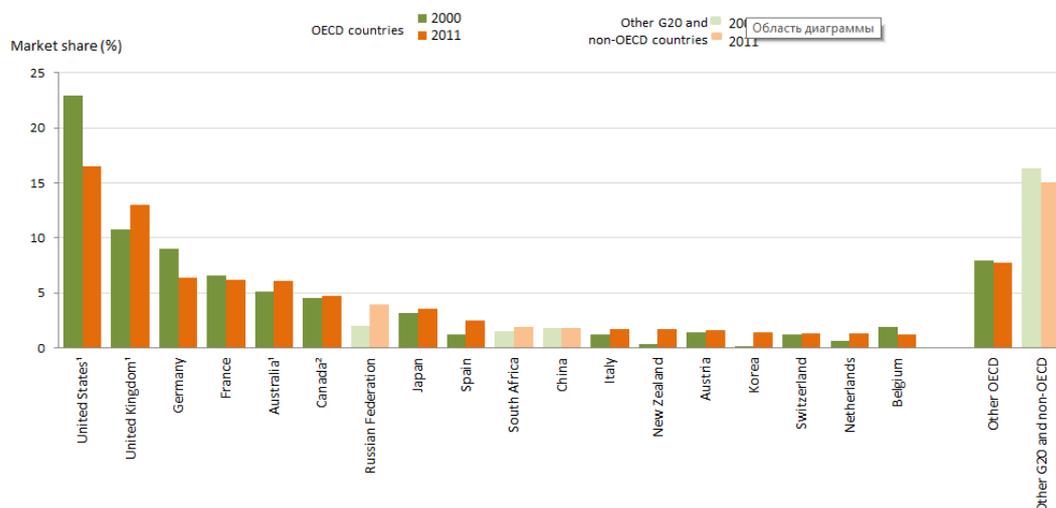
Since 2010, the government has taken many important steps toward making Russian higher education more internationalised. In April 2010, the government adopted a resolution which provides for competitive grants for leading scientists willing to make their research in Russian higher education and national research institutions. In 2013, the government approved another resolution aimed at automatic nostrification, or acknowledgement, of international diplomas and qualifications received in leading world universities. In June 2014, the ‘Global Education’ programme was launched to support Russian students entered leading universities abroad who were willing to work in Russian companies within three years of graduation. International students are also encouraged to study in Russian universities; every year 15,000 students from abroad study in Russia for free in state-funded institutions and get free accommodation for the period of their study.

Some universities also get additional support from the Russian government for internationalisation through “Project 5-100.” This project has helped to strengthen the position of Russian universities in global academic ranking. For example, the number of HEIs in the QS World University Rankings has increased from 3 representatives in 2005 to 22 in 2016. Although

the best Russian university according to this ranking, MSU, has occupied only 108th place for the past 2 years, Russian universities have demonstrated a positive trend in some faculty areas and have attained a fairly good level of achievement (QS Top Universities, 2015).

One of the main issues of international collaboration is student mobility. According to OECD (2013), Russia took up the seventh position with 4% of foreign students in 2011 (Figure 6). This is more than twice that of 2000, so interest in Russia as a provider of higher education is growing. The ratio of international students to the total number of students in Russia increased 3.7 times within ten years and reached 4,8% in 2015. The total number of international students in Russia in 2015 was 195,551 people (FSSS, 2016). Such international programmes as Tempus, Erasmus+, and Fulbright sponsor the mobility of students; however, these rates are still low and the current economic crisis within the country has forced universities and other organisations to scrap mobility programmes or cut funds allocated for this purpose.

Figure 6. Trends in International Education Market Shares (2000, 2011).



Source: OECD. 2013. Education at a Glance, 2013.

There is a growing number of peer-to-peer education programmes implemented together with international organisations. The most recent data is given in Table 6. Yet the overall number of peer-to-peer programmes implemented with international organisations is still very low. They comprise of roughly 9% of accredited Bachelor’s programme and about 29% of Master’s programmes. However, an accreditation system for the joint programmes in Russia is still absent and there are no concepts such as ‘joint certificate’ or ‘joint qualification’ in the Law on Education (2012). Thus, universities implementing joint educational programmes usually provide graduates with two documents: document-approval (diplomas, certificates) from both the Russian university and the international institution.

Table 6. Number of Education Programmes in HEIs in Russia in 2016, including Peer-to-Peer Educational Programmes.

Level of education programmes	Total number of accredited educational programmes	Total number of students	Number of students studying on peer-to-peer educational programmes with the usage of international organizations' sources	Total number of contract with organisations on implementation of peer-to-peer educational programmes with the usage of international organizations' sources
Bachelor education programmes	1732	3264460	3178	164
Specialist education programmes	353	695401	8	8
Master education programmes	865	451299	1632	249

Source: adopted from Unified Information System, 2016.

There are still some impediments to internationalization in Russia. Principal among these is the language barrier, which strongly affects the ability of Russian universities and students to cooperate with international HEIs. There is still an insufficient number of bilingual teachers and researchers at universities and the English language abilities of the students, on average, leave much to be desired as well.

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Study in Russia <http://studyinrussia.ru/en/>

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