

Higher Education In Russia and Bologna Process

1. Introductory Remarks

The Ministry for Education of the Russian Federation is making efforts to develop higher professional education system and the system of post-graduate education. The strategic lines for education system development defined by the Ministry have been set in the Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education" (1996), in respective by-laws and in The Conception of Modernisation of Russian Education for the period up to 2010.

The Conception formulates the main objective of Russian educational policy as "providing modern quality of education on the basis of preserved fundamental character and correspondence to urgent and perspective needs of an Individual, Society and State".

To achieve sustainable development of education system the following primary tasks should be fulfilled:

Establishment of modern higher education system in accordance with the Bologna process.

Within the system the main defined objectives were:

- to provide state guarantees of education accessibility;
- to achieve new modern quality of pre-school, secondary and professional education;
- to form legislative and managerial-economic mechanisms within education system enabling to raise and use extra-budgetary funds;
- to improve social status and professionalism of education staff, to strengthen their governmental and social support;
- to develop education as an open state-and-social system.

Development of higher professional education system involves a broad spectrum of urgent and perspective objectives. These objectives have been stated in a number of legislative documents; here are some of the objectives:

- to preserve and promote fundamental and humanitarian character of higher education;
- to increase the efficiency of the HE system in terms of the drop-out rate and the length of studies;
- to harmonize the HE system with European tendencies, in particular through the introduction of quality control mechanisms;
- to set variability for a student studies' trajectory, the individual character of training, the relevance of the programmes with respect to the national needs as well as the market demand; to promote the interdisciplinary programmes leading towards new professions created in the technological era;
- to promote the concept of applied studies, which provide practical skills and competence required by the labour market;
- to incorporate students as partners in the educational process.

On a broader scale the set goals were expected to imply:

- contribution to the democratic development of the country;
- support of economic recovery;

- promotion of the value of European integration;
- making more active steps leading to integration into European educational community which is being formed as a result of Bologna Process.

In order to achieve the defined goals a number of activities were started. They can be divided into two categories:

- to study the history of HE development in European countries;
- to analyse the current state of the HE system in Russia and to formulate the objectives for development.

2. A survey of the activities related to the European HE (2002-2003)

The Ministry for Education of the Russian Federation is taking an active part in studying materials on Bologna process issues, as well as on society, market economy and political democracy. The AAEN was accepted by the relevant European HE institutions and was able to monitor the beginning of the Bologna process. Later, in 2002 and 2003 a number of workshops and conferences were arranged where different aspects of Bologna Process were discussed. Most conferences were devoted to particular issues of providing higher education quality, to the problems of developing a multi-level system of specialist training, to discussing the project of national system of result points in higher education system modeling. The results of numerous workshops and conferences have been summarized in handbooks and discussed in mass-media.

In December 2002 the Ministry for Education of Russia assisted by international experts of the Council of Europe, UNESCO and other international organizations, as well as higher education institutions conducted an international seminar "Bologna Process and Modernisation of Russian Education: Moving in the Same Direction". The audience of the Conference exceeded 200 people (representatives of legislative and executive bodies of the Russian Federation, academicians, professors, rectors, representatives of organizations) who stated that preconditions of introducing Russian higher professional education system into Bologna Process had been created. Present-day legislation does provide for implementing a multi-level structure of higher education. A number of higher education institutions are using a multi-level structure of basic educational programmes. Current state educational standards for higher professional education made it possible to build a succession of programmes for training Bachelors, Diploma Specialists and Masters on the level of I–III years of training with the following possibility for a student to choose a particular study trajectory. Projects for organising training process based on result points involving higher education institutions of the countries-participants of Bologna Process have been started. Introducing result points into the training process is facilitated by expansion of distant learning and stimulation of students' self-studies. In Russia, the state system of quality evaluation of higher professional education is being improved; at the same time inner systems of education quality control are being formed in HE institutions.

Broad discussion of basic materials of Sorbonna Declaration (1998), Bologna Declaration (1999), Prague Communiqué (2001) and other documents aimed at harmonizing the structure of European system of higher education, took place at the conferences and meetings held in Russia.

As a result, the Ministry for Education of the Russian Federation started to design a plan of activities to incorporate Russian higher professional education system into European educational community before 2010.

It can be concluded that the Russian academic community had been exposed to the most of the relevant documents concerning the creation of the EHEA and had been offered an opportunity to discuss them in detail.

3. Analysis of the Russian Higher Education system

Post-secondary education and university education are regulated by Federal Law "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education". Over eight years this Law regulates all the aspects of HE institutions life. Even when the establishing of private institutions was introduced (since the early nineties), their functioning was also regulated by this set of rules. Thus the university governance structure, study rules and training structure, types and names of the higher education institutions and their structure, as well as the structure of academic degrees, teaching staff, corresponding professions titles and rules for promotion, student rights and obligations are homogenized throughout the country. In general, the institutions are deemed to be autonomous, implementing their own decisions within the strictly prescribed framework. The only difference between state and private institutions lay in financing and ownership. The brief summary of the present state of the HE system in Russia is presented in the Appendix II.

4. Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education"

Currently, the Law is based on integrating the system of higher and post-graduate professional education with preserving and developing achievements and traditions of Russian higher school into the world system of higher education, on state support for post-graduates' training, broader access of Russian citizens to higher education, on not allowing to decrease the number of students whose training is funded by the state, on creating the conditions for equal accessibility of higher and post-graduate education, on assisting to establishment and functioning of non-governmental higher education institutions; the Law guarantees the right to get free higher and post-graduate education on competition basis to Russian citizens, in case the citizen gets the education of such level for the first time. The higher education institutions employ staff independently, carry out teaching, scientific and other activities according the legislation and their individual statutes. Teaching staff, research personnel and students of the higher educational institutions are guaranteed academic freedom.

The Law describes Russian system of higher and post-graduate professional education, its structure, the State Educational Standards for higher and post-graduate professional education which are meant for securing quality of higher and post-graduate professional education, institutes' evaluation, for stating recognition and equivalence of higher education documents issued in foreign countries, and for establishing the unity of educational space of Russia.

In Russia, a number of higher professional education levels have been established: Bachelor (no less than 4 years), Diploma Specialist (no less than 5 years), Master (no less than 5 years); there are also the following types of higher education institutions: University, Academy, Institute. A University is a higher education institution implementing educational programmes of higher and post-graduate professional education aimed at a wide spectrum of professions, carrying out wide range of scientific research projects, and being a leading scientific centre in the fields of its activities. An Academy is a higher education institution implementing educational programmes of higher and post-graduate professional education for a specific type of activity, carrying out scientific research projects mainly in one field of science and culture, and being a leading scientific centre in its particular field. An Institute is a higher education institution implementing educational programmes of higher and post-graduate professional education for a specific area of professional activity, and carrying out scientific research projects.

Academic degrees. In Russia, a Degree of Candidate of Sciences and a Doctor of Sciences are established.

Certification of higher education institutions is carried out by the State Certification Service on the basis of an institution's application, or on initiative of a body under whose authority the institution operates. The aim and matter of certification process is stating whether the level and quality of a university/academy/institute graduates' training correspond to the requirements of State Educational Standards for higher and post-graduate professional education set for particular fields of education. Certification criteria and procedure for the State Certification Service functioning are defined by the Government of the Russian Federation.

State accreditation of universities/academies/institutes is carried out on the basis of certification in the order established by the Government of the Russian Federation. State accreditation establishes the status of HE institution and gives the right to issue the state education certificate. HE institutions can receive public accreditation. Public accreditation is acceptance of a higher educational institution activity, that meet the criteria and requirements of public organisations. Public accreditation does not imply financial and other obligations on behalf of the state.

State monitoring over the quality of higher and post-graduate education is fulfilled by the State Certification Service and governmental bodies for higher professional education control. HE institutions having state accreditation (both state and non-governmental institutions) undergo the procedure of evaluation (at least once every 5 years) fulfilled by the State Service.

Control over higher and post-graduate professional education.

The Federal Assembly of Russia drafts, passes and amends laws on education, approves federal budget, ratifies international treaties, approves programmes of education development.

The Government takes part in implementing the state policy, drafts legal acts, sets the procedure for developing standards, defines the procedure of issuing licenses for higher education institutions, lists specialist training aspects, assumes responsibility for state funding. The federal (central) body for education control exercises the authority of higher education institution founder after the higher education institution has been established. The Subjects of the Russian Federation possess sovereign power regarding the general issues of higher and post-graduate education.

The Federal (central) body governing higher professional education determines general questions of creating and implementing the federal programme of education development, confirming federal components of state educational standards, licencing and accreditation of educational institutions, establishing model state form education certificates, HE institutions' financing etc.

5. Preparing for Implementation of Bologna Process Objectives

As a result of conferences and meetings held by the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation, it was decided to start preparation for deployment of Bologna Process in Russia.

Several activities identified as the highest priority within the HE reform strategy were organized. The choice was guided by different factors.

First, in order to set the ground for the future assessment of the existing HE institutions, it is necessary to establish a clear procedure and to leave some time to the institutions for reorganizing themselves in order to satisfy the prescribed criteria. Hence, the Accreditation agency was chosen as a starting point. In addition, the established methodology will be important in accrediting the private institutions that applied for the license.

Second, in the beginning of the nineties Russia took steps to introduce the system of higher professional education based on two main cycles: under-graduate and post-graduate. The Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education"

(1996) introduces the establishment in Russia of education system which provides Bachelor and Master training as well as traditional specialist training.

Third, the same Federal Law expands autonomy of higher educational institutions and allows to introduce credit systems of ECTS type (European system of considering result points) as a proper mechanism of supporting students' mobility on a large scale. For the last 3 years, a number of Russian HE institutions together with European universities implement projects aimed at using ECTS system in Russian HE institutions. For example, a similar project is being carried out jointly by Saratov State Technical University and Leeds University (the UK).

In 2002, the Ministry for Education of the Russian Federation started a large-scaled experiment of introducing the system of result points in HE institutions. The documents on participation of several institutions in the experiment have been prepared. In the same year, Methodology for result points calculation in Russian HE institutions has been designed and distributed among institutions in Russia. This Methodology considered the specific nature of Russian education system and recommended HE institutions a particular procedure for calculating result points compatible with ECTS. The experiment was carried out on the voluntary basis, and by May 2003, over 30 higher education institutions used the system in question (the whole or part of it). A number of institutions willing to use the system is growing dramatically.

Fourth, the Ministry for Education of the Russian Federation is considering the issue of approving a system of easily understandable and comparable degrees, among other mechanisms introducing Diploma Supplement. The Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education" does not prohibit institutions to issue additional diplomas supplements (besides the compulsory Supplement of the recognized state form). This fact allows a number of Russian higher education institutions to present their graduates with their own additional document close in contents to Diploma Supplement, while Cheliabinsk State University issues Diploma Supplement in the form used by European universities and printed in Spain.

Currently, the Ministry considers the possibility of introducing in perspective Diploma Supplement all over the Russian Federation territory.

Fifth, The Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education" supports the development of students' and teachers' mobility. Higher education institutions autonomy enables them to work out programmes of study tours and study trips in other Russian and international institutions for students and teachers. This year, the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation used the grant system to support mobility, which made it possible for several hundreds of Russian students to study abroad.

Sixth, Russia aims at providing high quality of education and makes efforts to develop comparable criteria and methods for education quality assessment. Currently, the Ministry is working on coordinating requirements of European Universities and Russian higher education institutions. In particular, the Ministry is supporting projects on:

- bringing together requirements to general and special competence of philologists graduating from European and Russian universities, with Goettingen University named after George-August;
- testing international accreditation of engineering programmes at Tomsk Polytechnic University and Taganrog State Radiotechnological University;
- "Eurofaculty" for training lawyers and economists at Kaliningrad State University.

The State Inspection responsible for evaluation of Russian education institutions is considering possibilities of designing systems, mechanisms and criteria for assessment and quality control of education which would be compatible with European ones. And by 2010 the State Inspection expects to form the quality securing system for higher professional education which would be compatible with international procedures for education quality assessment.

Finally, the Ministry is supporting European ideas in the field of higher education relating development of inter-institutional cooperation, mobility schemes, joint studies programmes, and important role of practical training.

6. Financing

Public sector higher education is financed from two types of sources:

- Public funds (the State budget);
- Higher education institutions' own funds derived from revenues outside the budget.

The lump sum allocated for salaries depends on the total number of students (in ratio: one teacher for ten students).

Regardless of this "ideal" number of lecturers, an institution is entitled to its own hiring policy. This means that it can be easily overstaffed or understaffed.

In general the institution is expected to determine the level of salary based upon the ranks.

The extra budgetary revenue comes from students' tuition, research projects and cooperation with industry or public sector.

Teachers and professors may have additional sources for their salaries. Depending of the institutional policy this percentage may range from a symbolic 5% to the substantial 50% of the total sum. With the declining economy, the extra budgetary revenue was reduced mainly to tuition, which prompted the institutions to fight for a large number of students, even at the expense of lowering the teaching standards.

It is obvious that the amounts of extra budgetary revenue differ significantly from institution to institution. This is due to students' interest as well as to the possibilities to sell particular expertise on the market.

7. Implementation

The transformation from the current state of our HE system to the designed one will have to be done gradually over a number of years. A realistic time line is presented in the following diagram. The starting date has been fixed for the beginning of the next academic year. At this point it is still unclear whether this process will be able to be initiated at this date. Nevertheless, whenever it starts it will be staged as indicated bellow. Reforms in higher professional education in the framework of Bologna Process are progressing quickly.

<u>Planned Activities</u>	<u>Period</u>
Conduct experiment on transfer of educational process to ECTS standards in 20 HE institutions	2002-2004
Develop recommendations facilitating transfer to State Educational Standards for higher professional education based on result points (develop pilot standards for 5 disciplines)	2004
Form a new legislative foundation for a multi-level system of higher professional education (changes in legislation, Governmental resolutions, etc.)	2005
Create state documents on higher professional education compatible with All-European Diploma Supplement	2005

<u>Planned Activities</u>	<u>Period</u>
Test Certification Procedure for training programmes in Russia; set criteria and method of evaluation	2003 - 2005
Develop and introduce a two-level mechanism for accreditation of higher education institutions and training programmes on the level of National (Russian) and International standards	2008
Form a List of training subjects and disciplines in higher professional education compatible with European List of training programmes	2008
Form the system of quality control for higher professional education, compatible with international procedures of education quality control (assessment, educational audit)	2010
Establish systems, mechanisms and criteria of assessment and education quality control compatible with foreign and international ones	2010

Appendix 2

1. Higher Education in Russia (university sector)

The basic parameters and characteristics which determine the skill structure and levels of higher professional education (in university sector) including the general requirements for basic educational programmes are stated in the Federal Law of the Russian Federation "On Higher and Post-Graduate Professional Education" (1996).

Four-year educational programmes result in final attestation and awarding the bachelor's degree to the graduate certified by diploma, where the orientation of training is named, for example: "Bachelor of mathematics", "Bachelor of technology", "Bachelor of commerce" etc. The bachelor's degree gives a right to continue the education on the next stage, first of all, in the magistracy. During the job placement an employer evaluates bachelors' professional skills as persons with higher education, with regard to the level and character of training received.

The next stage of higher education at university sector is realized in two types of programmes: programme awarding the traditional diploma (Diploma Specialist), and programme leading to Master's degree.

The first of the above-mentioned programmes presupposes five-year training including the study of general scientific, general professional and special professional disciplines alongside with specialization and practical work considering particular activity lines of the graduate. These programmes result in final attestation including diploma paper (thesis) certified by the diploma with indication of specialization or line of training (for example "engineer", "agronomist", "physicist", "mathematician" etc. Continuous education programmes are carried out in medical training where the normal period of study is six years.

The second of the above-mentioned types of programmes of university education presupposes specialized two-year training on the basis of bachelor's degree including practical work, diploma paper with further scientific research, pedagogical and practical activity of the graduate.

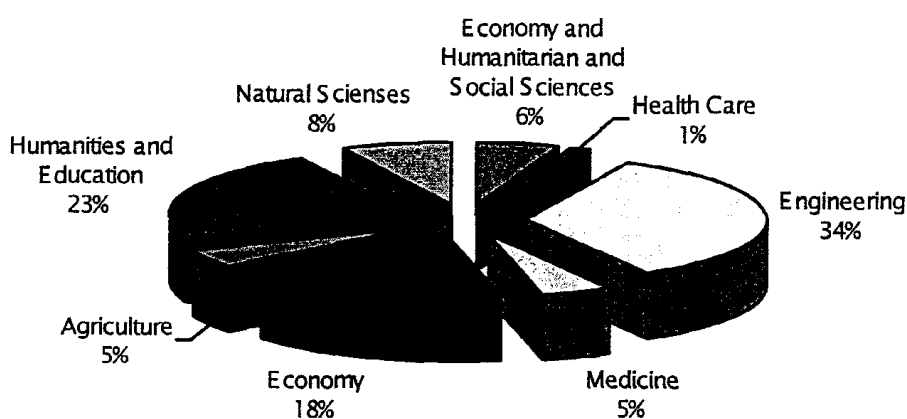
The normal duration of the Candidate of Sciences training program (post-graduate course) is 3 years. The Candidate of Sciences Diploma (Certificate) corresponds to Doctor's degree (Ph.D) in the education systems of Bologna process countries. On May 12, 2003 the Government of the Russian federation and the Government of France signed the Agreement on mutual recognition of the Candidate of Science Diploma.

2. Statistics

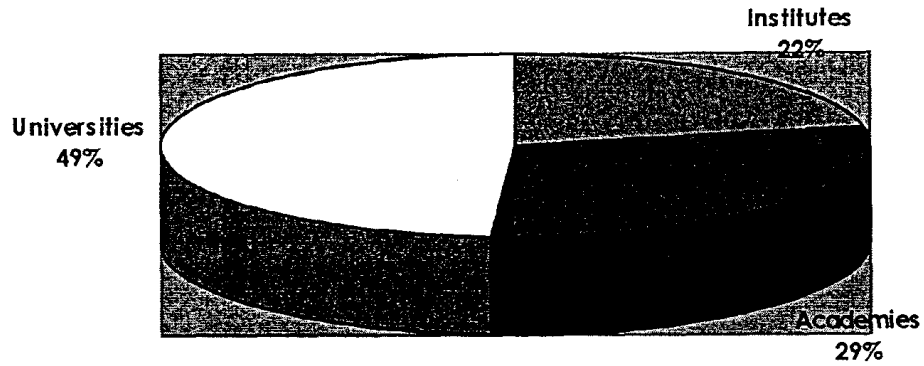
The general number of students, studying at institutes of higher education in Russia by 2001 reached 5,138,000 persons, 4,705,000 of them being financed from the state budget.

Distribution among the fields of study is shown on the diagram.

Student Distribution When Joining Day-Time Faculties



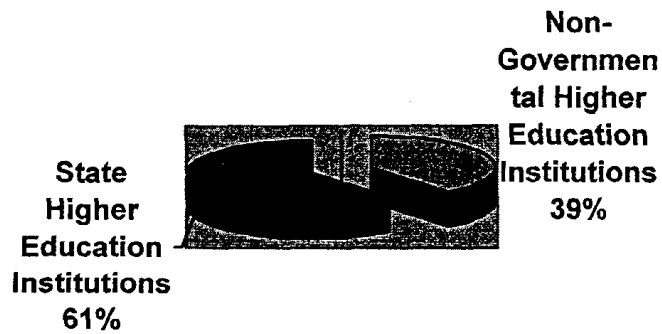
System Structure for Higher Professional Education



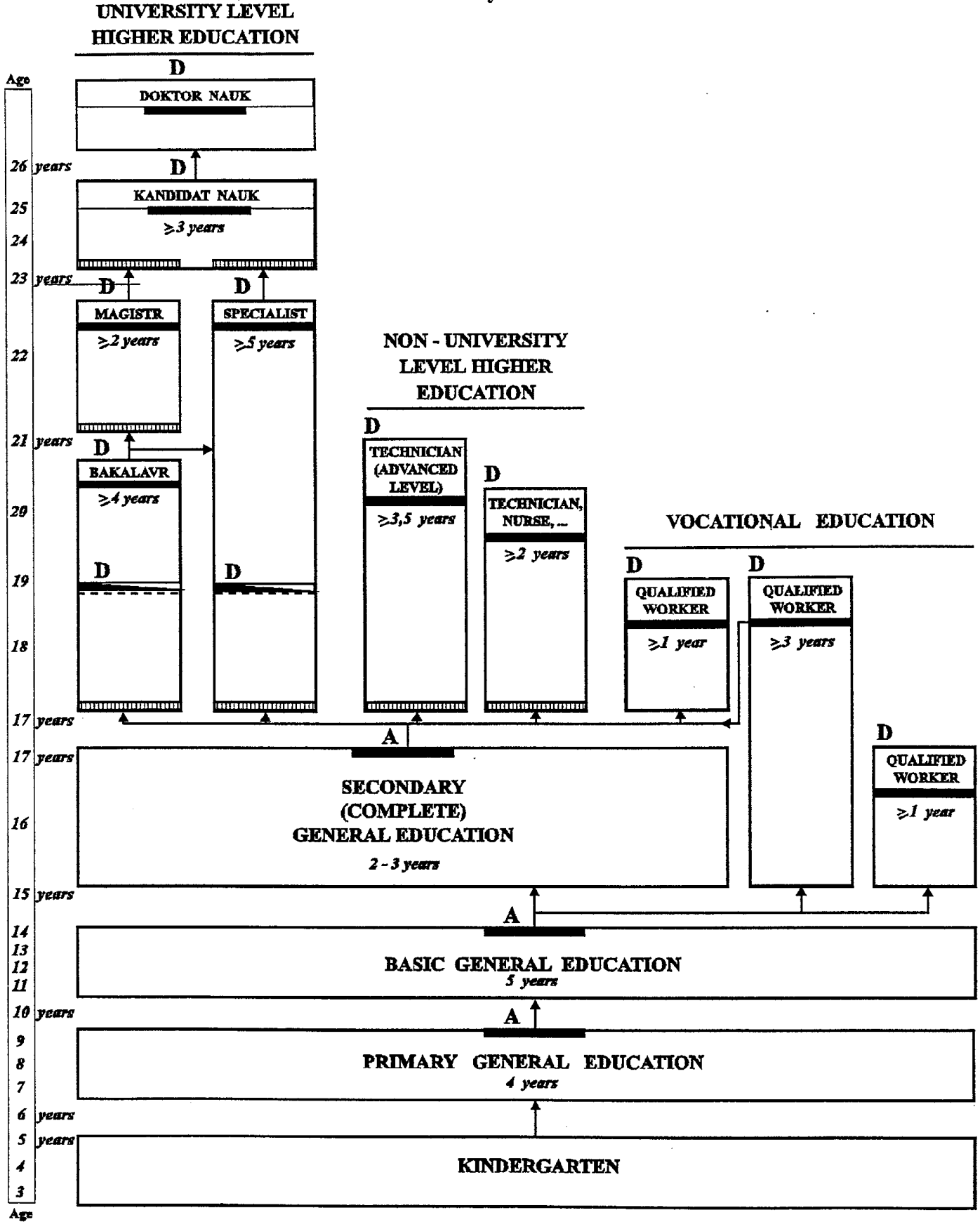
QUANTITY OF STUDENTS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (estimated in thousands of people)

State-owned HE institutions	92%
Non-state HE institutions	8%

Number of Higher Education Institutions in Russia; 2001



3. Scheme of the Education System of the Russian Federation



▤ - Entrance exams ▬ - Intermediate attestation ▬ - Final attestation

Types of credentials: A - Attestat D - Diploma