

## INFLUENCE OF THE CREDIT-MODULE SYSTEM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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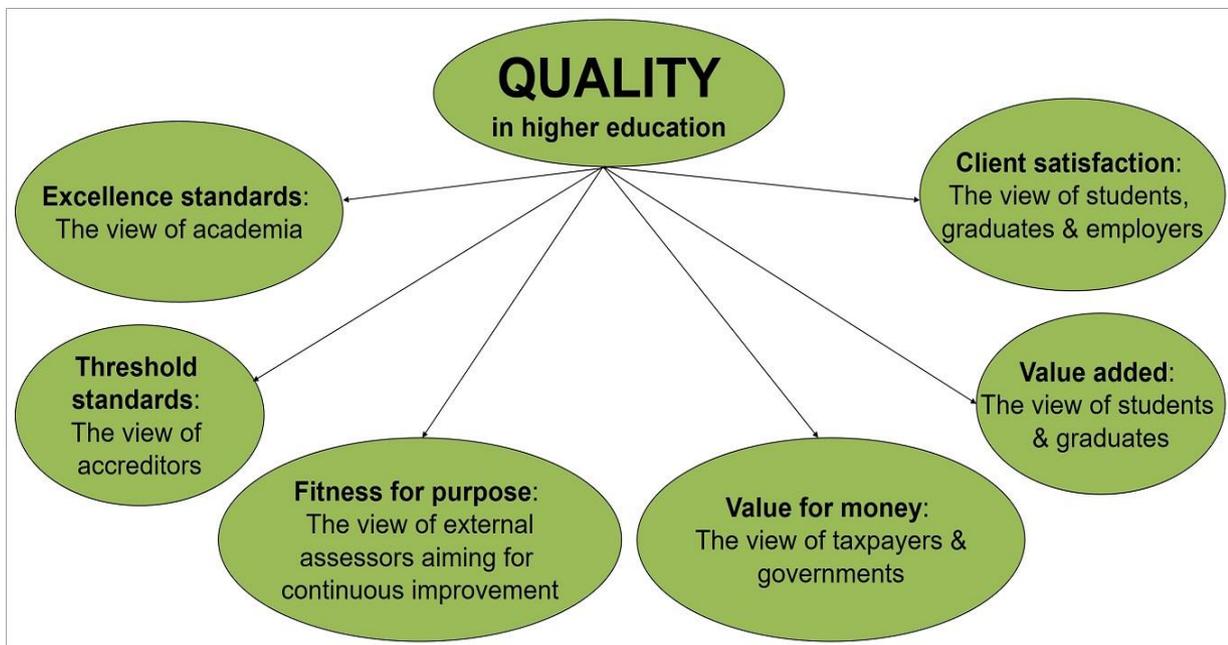
**Abstract.** The article analyzes the impact of the credit-modular system (CMS) on the quality of higher education. The main objectives of the article are to determine the impact of the credit-modular system on the quality of education and formulate questions for further research. The theoretical part examines the concept and principles of the credit-modular system. The impact of the system on the quality of education is analyzed, including advantages such as flexibility and individualization of education, as well as disadvantages, including the risk of overloading students. The practical application of the credit-modular system is illustrated by examples of successful universities and a comparative analysis of the results before and after the implementation of the system. We will also consider the prospects for the development of the credit-modular system, trends in higher education and recommendations for universities to optimize the implementation of the system and improve the quality of education.

**Keywords:** quality, credit, module, academic plan, individualization, flexibility, education, advantages, disadvantages, risks, students, teachers.

**Introduction.** The study of the impact of the credit-modular system on the development of the quality of higher education is extremely relevant and timely, especially in the context of rapid changes occurring in the educational environment. In recent decades, higher education has undergone significant transformations caused by both global economic and social processes and internal reforms aimed at increasing the competitiveness of educational institutions. Traditional approaches to learning, based on a rigid link to curricula and fixed terms for mastering educational programs, are beginning to lose their effectiveness.

The credit-modular system, as one of the modern models of organizing the educational process, offers a more flexible and adaptive approach to learning, which allows students to independently shape their educational trajectory and choose the most relevant disciplines for them. This, in turn, helps to increase student motivation and improve the quality of knowledge acquisition. In addition, the introduction of the credit-modular system has become part of the general trend of transition to a competence-based approach in education, which focuses on the formation of students not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills necessary for successful professional activity. However, despite the obvious advantages, the introduction of the credit-modular system is accompanied by a number of challenges and problems, such as the need to revise traditional methods of academic performance assessment, changing the role of the teacher and adapting educational materials. The study of the impact of the credit-modular system on the quality of higher education is becoming an important task for scientists, teachers and university administrators.

**Analysis and results.** The purpose of the study is to identify problems and a detailed analysis of the impact of the credit-modular system on the quality of education, which will reveal both the positive and negative aspects of its implementation. Within the framework of this goal, the task is to determine the main characteristics of the credit-modular system and its impact on the educational process, as well as to analyze the results of its application in various universities. Let's consider some of the questions that will be answered in the article: How does the introduction of the credit-modular system affect student motivation and academic performance? What changes are taking place in the role of the teacher and in the methods of knowledge assessment? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this system from the point of view of students and teachers? How can the experience of successful universities be used to optimize the process of implementing the credit-modular system? Answers to these questions will help not only to understand the current state of the credit-modular system in higher education, but also to develop recommendations for its further development and improving the quality of education in general.



**Figure 1: Multi-stakeholder view of quality<sup>1</sup>**

Theoretical foundations of the credit-modular system. The credit-modular system is a modern approach to organizing the educational process, which is based on the principles of flexibility, individualization and learning effectiveness. This is a new form of organizing the process of training specialists, which is able to eliminate the shortcomings in training. The implementation of this direction is one of the first steps to joining the single European space. The main elements of this system are credits, modules and curricula. Credits are units of measurement of the academic load. Modules, educational blocks, which include various disciplines or courses. Curricula based on the credit-modular system provide flexibility and the ability to adapt educational programs to the requirements of the labor market and the needs of students.





Figure 2: United Nation's 17 SDGs<sup>2</sup>

The historical context for the introduction of the credit-modular system goes back to the higher education reforms that began in Europe at the end of the 20th century. In response to the globalization of the educational space and the need to improve the competitiveness of graduates in the international labor market, many countries began to review their educational systems. In 1999, the Bologna Declaration was signed in Bologna, which became an important step towards the creation of a single European Higher Education Area. An important element of this declaration was the introduction of the credit-modular system, which would ensure the comparability and recognition of diplomas between participating countries. Within the framework of the Bologna Process, countries began to develop national models of the credit-modular system, adapting them to their educational traditions and needs. The credit-modular system not only improved the quality of education, but also contributed to the development of student mobility. The credit-modular system is not just a method for organizing the educational process, but also an important tool for ensuring the quality of higher education in the context of global changes and modern challenges.



**Figure 1. Illustration of Harvey and Green's five ways of thinking**

The credit-modular system operates on the basis of the following principles, among which special attention is paid to credits as units of measurement of the study load and a modular approach to the organization of the educational process. Credits are a fundamental element of the system, allowing to assess the amount of study work that a student must complete in order to achieve certain educational results. One credit usually corresponds to 25-30 hours of study load, which includes not only the time spent in lectures and seminars, but also independent work, homework, participation in projects and preparation for exams. This approach ensures transparency and comparability of educational programs, since credits make it easy to assess and compare the amount of knowledge and skills acquired by students in different educational institutions and countries. It also promotes flexibility in learning, since students can choose courses and modules in accordance with their interests and career goals, and plan their time more effectively, taking into account the credits they have already received and those they still need to earn to complete their educational program.

The modular approach to organizing the educational process is also important for the functioning of the credit-modular system. Modules are separate educational units that may include various disciplines or courses grouped according to a certain principle, for example, by topic or professional focus. Each module has its own goals, content and assessment

methods, which allows students to choose the most suitable courses for them in accordance with their individual needs and interests. The modular structure of training provides greater flexibility and adaptability of educational programs, allowing educational institutions to quickly respond to changes in the requirements of the labor market and educational standards. In addition, the modular approach promotes interdisciplinary learning, since students can combine courses from different fields of knowledge, which broadens their horizons and develops critical thinking skills.

<b>MODULE 1</b>	<b>DESIGNING EFFECTIVE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Quality concepts, definitions and instruments</li> <li>- Origins of QM and its application to higher education</li> <li>- Roles, structures, models and how to implement a QM system at institutional level</li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 2</b>	<b>TOOLS AND PROCEDURES FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evaluation theories and methodology</li> <li>- Empirical social science research methods focusing on conception and conduction of qualitative and quantitative data collection, analysis and interpretation</li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 3</b>	<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE OF TEACHING AND LEARNING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Role of quality managers in study programme design</li> <li>- How to support study programme design (objectives, learning outcomes and competences)</li> <li>- Process of study programmes evaluation and revision</li> <li>- Linkage between external and internal quality assurance</li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 4</b>	<b>INFORMATION MANAGEMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibilities and limitations of information management</li> <li>- Use and relevance of (performance) indicators</li> <li>- How to establish a data-based reporting system and related challenges</li> </ul>
<b>MODULE 5</b>	<b>QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND ITS LINKAGES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wrap-up of key elements of the training, showing how to close quality loops</li> <li>- Linkage between quality management and decision-making processes</li> <li>- Communication and implementation strategies relevant to develop change processes</li> </ul>

As a result, students become more competitive in the labor market, since they receive a broader and more diverse training. The credit-modular system in higher education, despite its many advantages, also faces a number of shortcomings and challenges that can affect the quality of the educational process. One of the main disadvantages is the potential for quality issues. In a flexible and individualized learning environment, students can choose courses based on their own preferences, which sometimes leads to choosing less challenging or less meaningful modules, which in turn can reduce the overall level of knowledge and skills they acquire. This creates a risk that students may graduate with an incomplete or inadequate understanding of their specialty, which negatively affects their professional preparation and competitiveness in the labor market. In addition, such a system can contribute to the fragmentation of knowledge, when students do not receive a holistic understanding of their field of study, which can also affect the quality of their education. Another significant challenge is the risk of student overload. In a credit-modular system, students may be faced with the need to master several modules at the same time, which leads to an increased study

load and stress. This can negatively affect their psycho-emotional state and overall level of satisfaction with the learning process. Students may feel pressured to keep up with the demands of various courses, which sometimes leads to poorer quality assignments and poorer learning outcomes. It is important to note that under constant stress and overload, students may lose interest in learning, which also negatively affects their motivation and engagement in the educational process.

There is a need to prepare teachers for the new format of education. The transition to a credit-modular system requires teachers not only to change their approaches to teaching, but also to master new methods of assessment and organization of the educational process. Teachers must be ready to adapt their courses to the modular format, develop new teaching materials and use modern technologies to improve the effectiveness of teaching. However, not all teachers have sufficient experience or resources to successfully implement these changes, which can lead to uneven quality of teaching and, as a result, to differences in the level of student preparation. Therefore, it is necessary to organize appropriate training and support for teachers to ensure the successful implementation of the credit-modular system and improve the quality of higher education in general.

Problems with the quality of education, the risk of student overload and the need to prepare teachers for the new format require careful analysis and development by educational institutions. Only an integrated approach to solving these problems will allow the most effective use of the advantages of the credit-modular system and ensure a high level of training of future specialists. The practical application of the credit-modular system in higher education is clearly demonstrated by many successful practices that have been implemented in various universities both in Russia and abroad. One of the striking examples is St. Petersburg State University, which has been actively implementing the credit-modular system as part of its educational program since 2015. At this university, students have the opportunity to choose modules that match their interests and career goals, which allows them to form individual educational trajectories. As a result of this approach, there is an increase in student motivation, since they can independently determine the direction of their studies. In addition, the university has implemented an e-learning system, which greatly facilitates access to educational materials and interaction between students and teachers.

Analysis of the results shows that more than 80% of students note an increase in satisfaction with the learning process and the opportunity to study topics of interest to them in more depth. Teachers also positively assess the implementation of the credit-modular system, pointing to the possibility of a more flexible approach to learning and adaptation of courses to modern labor market requirements. Another example of the successful application of the credit-modular system is the National Research University Higher School of Economics, which has been actively using the credit-modular system in its educational programs since 2013. This university places emphasis on interdisciplinarity and integration of various fields of knowledge, which allows students not only to study their specialty in depth, but also to develop related skills. For example, students majoring in economics can choose modules in psychology or sociology, which helps to form a more comprehensive approach to solving professional problems. Student feedback shows that this approach helps them better understand the context of their specialty and develop critical thinking. Teachers also note that the credit-modular system creates opportunities for active involvement of students in the educational process through project activities and group assignments, which increases their



level of participation and interest. An analysis of the results of the implementation of the credit-modular system in these universities shows that this approach not only helps improve the quality of education, but also develops students' skills in independent planning and organization of their educational process. Students become more responsible for their learning and actively participate in choosing courses, which leads to increased engagement and motivation. Teachers note improved communication with students, as the credit-module system requires them to be more open and willing to give feedback. This creates a more trusting atmosphere in the learning process, where students can freely express their opinions and suggest ideas for improving the course.

In addition, international experience also confirms the effectiveness of the credit-modular system. For example, at the University of Manchester (UK), the modular learning system was introduced to increase the flexibility of the educational process and improve the quality of training specialists. Students have the opportunity to choose modules from various disciplines, which allows them to form unique educational trajectories. As a result of this approach, the university notes an increase in the number of students successfully completing their studies with high grades, as well as an improvement in their competitiveness in the labor market. Student reviews of the program show a high level of satisfaction with the opportunity to choose and personalize training. Thus, successful practices of applying the credit-modular system in various universities demonstrate its effectiveness in improving the quality of education and student satisfaction.

Flexibility, individualization of training and the possibility of an interdisciplinary approach contribute to the creation of a more dynamic and adaptive educational environment that meets the modern requirements of the labor market and the needs of students. Feedback from both students and teachers confirms the positive impact of the credit-modular system on the educational process, and the results show a significant improvement in the level of training of graduates. Forecasts for the further development of the credit-modular system indicate that this system will continue to evolve, adapting to new challenges and requirements arising in a rapidly changing world. The use of online platforms, interactive tools and educational applications is becoming an integral part of learning, allowing students to access educational materials anytime and anywhere. The influence of technology is also manifested in the possibility of creating blended learning, where traditional lectures are combined with online formats, which contributes to a deeper assimilation of material and increased student engagement.

**Conclusions and recommendations.** In connection with the above trends, universities should pay attention to the recommendations for optimizing the implementation of the credit-modular system.

Firstly, it is important to ensure the necessary training of teachers to work in the new system, providing them with opportunities for professional growth and exchange of experience. Teachers must be ready for changes in approaches to teaching and assessing students' knowledge, as well as the use of new technologies.

Secondly, it is necessary to actively involve students in the process of developing curricula and modules, which will allow creating a more adaptive and relevant educational program. Universities should conduct regular surveys and research among students to identify their needs and preferences, which will help to better adjust the educational process to the current demands of the labor market.



Thirdly, it is important not only to monitor the academic performance of students, but also to analyze their level of satisfaction with their training, which will allow timely identification of weaknesses and making adjustments. It is also worth paying attention to the development of interdisciplinary programs and modules that help students develop an integrated approach to solving problems and expand their horizons. The introduction of practice-oriented modules, where students can apply the acquired knowledge in practice, will also contribute to improving the quality of education and the readiness of graduates for real working conditions.

The prospects for the development of the credit-modular system in higher education look promising. Given the current trends and the impact of technology on the educational process, universities can significantly improve the quality of their education and student satisfaction. Following recommendations for optimizing the implementation of the system and improving the quality of education, they will be able to adapt to new challenges and create a modern educational environment that meets the requirements of the time.

In the future, research in this area can focus on the following issues:

First, it is necessary to study in depth the impact of the credit-modular system on various categories of students, including those studying in additional education and professional retraining programs. This will identify specific needs and adapt educational programs to different groups of students.

Secondly, a promising area is the study of international experience in the implementation of the credit-modular system in higher education, which can help in developing effective strategies for domestic universities. It is also important to pay attention to the assessment of the long-term results of the credit-modular system, such as graduate employment and satisfaction with the education they received.

Thirdly, it is necessary to study and correctly calculate and determine GPA points to enable students to continue their education and choose a higher education institution that matches their accumulated points.

Based on the study, it can be said that the credit-modular system is a powerful tool for improving the quality of higher education, and further research in this area can contribute to its more effective implementation and development.

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