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INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC MOBILITY IN TOURISM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS A FACTOR OF THE INTERNATIONAL LABOR MARKET'S DEVELOPMENT

Abstract. Russian tourism vocational education has faced a number of restructuring measures in recent years and is now making progress in becoming a sustainable system integrated into the higher education system and the international labor market with a high degree of readiness for further development and innovation. However, the global pandemic has shown that some optimization of the structure and priorities of Russian vocational education in the field of tourism is still desirable. This paper presents an analysis of major problems and possible ways to overcome them from the standpoint of educational design, including such issues as international academic mobility, credit transfer, blended learning. The paper also expands on features of internationalization abroad and at home in the context of challenges and opportunities in the post-COVID era. The central research issue is interrelations between academic mobility, tourism vocational education and labor market. The authors argue that in many configurations of circumstances the best way for the development of international academic mobility is blended mobility, which could become the most important link between secondary vocational and higher tourism education of both Russian and foreign educational organizations – and, thus, lead to a sustainable supply of human resources in the international labor market. The paper also approaches the shortage of highly qualified personnel in the rapidly growing tourism sector. This problem is becoming chronic. In this regard, the formation of a structured framework of qualifications in the form of the national qualifications system is in high demand not only as a general institution for the strategic development of Russian educational organizations, but also as a means of training personnel, technologies, competencies and innovative potential of the tourism and hospitality industry. The formation of the national qualifications framework in the Russian Federation with respect to the tourism sector can gradually increase relevance of vocational tourism education to the labor market's demands both in Russia and abroad.



Keywords: tourism, hospitality, qualifications, national qualifications framework, professional standards, educational standards, vocational education, tourism education, labor market, academic mobility, internationalization at home

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКАЯ МОБИЛЬНОСТЬ В ТУРИСТСКОМ ПРОФЕССИОНАЛЬНОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИИ КАК ФАКТОР РАЗВИТИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОГО РЫНКА ТРУДА

Российское профессиональное образование в сфере туризма в последние годы столкнулось с рядом мер по реструктуризации и в настоящее время достигло некоторых успехов в превращении в устойчивую систему, интегрированную в систему высшего образования и международный рынок труда, с высокой степенью готовности к дальнейшему развитию и инновациям. Однако глобальная пандемия показала, что некоторая оптимизация структуры и приоритетов российского профессионального образования в сфере туризма все же желательна. В данной работе представлен анализ основных проблем и возможных путей их преодоления с позиций образовательного проектирования, включая такие вопросы как международная академическая мобильность, кредитный перевод (трансферт зачетных единиц), смешанное обучение. В статье также подробно рассматриваются особенности интернационализации за рубежом и так называемой «домашней интернационализации» в контексте новых проблем и возможностей в эпоху после COVID. Центральным вопросом исследования является взаимосвязь между академической мобильностью, туристским профессиональным образованием и рынком труда. Авторы утверждают, что во многих конфигурациях обстоятельств наилучшим способом развития международной академической мобильности является смешанная мобильность, которая могла бы стать важнейшим связующим звеном между средним профессиональным и высшим туристским образованием как российских, так и зарубежных образовательных организаций – и, таким образом, привести к устойчивому предложению человеческих ресурсов на международном рынке труда. В статье также рассматривается проблема нехватки высококвалифицированных кадров в быстрорастущем секторе туризма. Эта проблема становится хронической. В связи с этим формирование структурированной рамки квалификаций в виде национальной системы квалификаций является востребованным не только как общий институт стратегического развития российских образовательных организаций, но и как средство подготовки кадров, развития технологий, компетенций и инновационного потенциала индустрии туризма и гостеприимства. Формирование национальной рамки квалификаций в Российской Федерации применительно к сфере туризма может постепенно повысить актуальность и соответствие профессионального туристского образования запросам рынка труда как в России, так и за рубежом.

Ключевые слова: туризм, гостеприимство, квалификации, национальная рамка квалификаций, профессиональные стандарты, образовательные стандарты, профессиональное образование, туристское образование, рынок труда, академическая мобильность, домашняя интернационализация



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Introduction: Interrelations between academic mobility, tourism vocational education and labor market

In the present time the system of tourism vocational education is popular among applicants, and working professions have become a conscious choice of the younger generation and a certain guarantee of a successful career start. This became possible thanks to the program-targeted approach of the Ministry of Education of Russia. Among the most effective solutions for the institutional and systemic development of vocational education (including in the field of tourism) are the following elements:

- a demonstration exam as an independent assessment of the practical skills of students and graduates of Secondary Vocational Education (SVE);
- career guidance project for schoolchildren "Ticket to the Future";
- open online lessons;
- professional skill competitions;
- international championships in professional fields (World Skills International).

The draft Strategy for the development of a system for training workers and the formation of applied qualifications in the Russian Federation for the period up to 2030 was developed by leading experts in the field of Secondary Vocational Education [20].

As a result of the recent and current transformations, the balance of power between universities, employers and learners will continue to shift [19], and universities are already in the process of establishing accurate, effective and reputational validation mechanisms (VNIL, validation of non-formal and informal learning) for workplace-based competencies. The quality of professional training and vocational education are increasingly regarded within the framework of intersectoral, transborder, public and private models of social partnership concepts and theories [22].

Significant changes affected the infrastructure of colleges and technical schools: as of the year 2022, more than 3,500 organizations implementing Secondary Vocational Education (SVE) programs are operating across the country, in

which more than 3 million people study, as well as over 12,000 educational and laboratory buildings. In the system of Secondary Vocational Education there are 360 thousand teachers and masters of industrial training.

The vocational education development strategy until 2030 includes five priority areas:

- updating the content;
- creating a new landscape for the vocational education network;
- increasing financial stability and targeted support for colleges;
- improving the qualifications of vocational education system employees;
- and developing a culture of professional competition.

Formation of a new set of teachers' competencies will become key area for professional development of employees of the vocational education system. For those who come to work in colleges from production, the emphasis will be on pedagogical competencies. For those who have a pedagogical education, but do not have experience in production, the emphasis will be on training in professional competencies.

In the past decade, significant legal and institutional changes have taken place in the Secondary Vocational Education system, the most important of which are the transfer of federal colleges and technical schools to the jurisdiction of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, the establishment of a unified level of Secondary Vocational Education in accordance with the Federal Law "On Education in the Russian Federation". The specifics of Russian education in SVE is that today most of the young people formally included in the statistics as students of SVE actually master the secondary school program at the age of 15–16 years, combining the training program for their future profession. This is due to the influence of the demographic dynamics of the Russian Federation, a change in the number of the young population, a decrease in the birth rate of which occurred in the 90-2000s.

All these factors are taken into account today in the formation of educational policy. The sustainable development of SVE in tourism

primarily depends on the balance between supply and demand for labor in the tourism sector. Such harmonization can be achieved through the formation of a single coordinate system for employees and employers [10].

This system should include the development of competencies that graduates should have and which, in turn, should correspond to the national qualifications framework. Qualifications frameworks are especially crucial as a tool for linking the labor market and the education system.

Results: major components and significance of sustainable tourism vocational education

The field of Secondary Vocational Education faces a challenge of harmonizing the educational skills and competencies of graduates with the demands of employers. The spheres of labor and education should be united, and for this to happen, professional qualifications and educational standards should become a single platform.

It could be argued that stable development of tourism vocational education depends on four factors:

- Development of approaches to harmonization of national qualifications framework and educational standards;
- Compliance of educational competencies with the requirements of the labor market of the tourism industry;
- Credit system which needs to be recognized and understood by all stakeholders: government agencies, students, teachers, employers, etc.);
- Internationalization of education based on the transfer of credits and recognition of the levels of education by national and foreign partner universities.

Fig. 1 demonstrates how the dimensions of sustainable tourism vocational education interact with one another.

The national qualifications framework consists of sectoral applications and qualification levels. The central task of the national qualifications system is to describe all job positions by industry (using the so-called descriptors). This task is also facing the tourism industry.

Sustainable Tourism Vocational Education

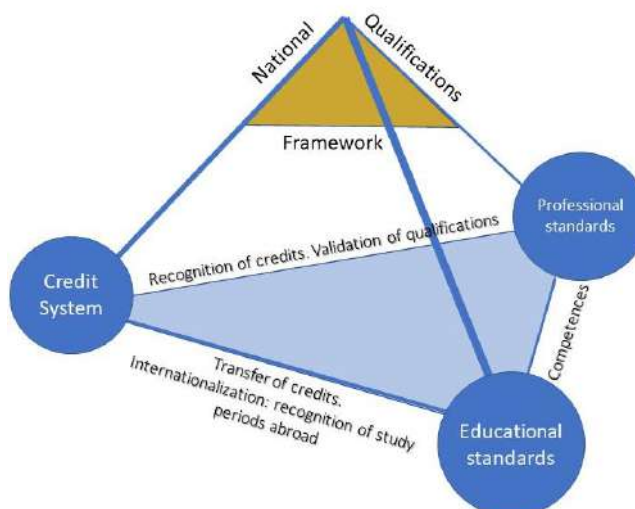










Fig. 1 – Key dimensions of sustainable tourism vocational education and their interactions

There are nine levels of qualifications with requirements for different levels of workers (Table 1). From the first to the third level, the positions are described for which no special education is required. Starting from the fourth position, there are increasing requirements for vocational training.

Qualification characteristics of positions should be associated with educational programs of different levels: Secondary Vocational Education (SVE), bachelor's and master's programs. The two main tasks of education, in turn, are 1) to develop educational modules (programs, disciplines) that would form certain competencies in accordance with the qualification units and 2) to determine the level of education for each qualification.

For example, the level of competence of a travel agency manager is the level of undergraduate education, and the level of competence of a tourism specialist (accompanying a group, an office worker) is the level of SVE; the level of the head of the travel agency is the level of the master's degree. Each of the listed positions must correspond to a set of different competencies: from technical operation to a specialist or an office worker, to organizational and managerial skills, which a department manager must possess, to strategic planning (master's degree), which must be possessed by the head of the company (Fig. 2).

*Table 1 – Table of descriptors of the Russian Federation's NQF:
Requirements for different levels of workers [15]*

Level	Job	Complexity of activity (nature of skills)	Ways to achieve qualifications at the appropriate level
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performing standard practice tasks in a known situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practical experience short-term on-the-job training short-term courses general education not lower than primary general
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solution of typical practical problems. Following instructions Adjustment of actions taking into account the conditions for their implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practical experience professional training – short-term courses general education not lower than the basic general
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solution of typical practical problems. Selection of methods of action from known ones based on knowledge and practical experience. Adjustment of actions taking into account the conditions for their implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> practical experience professional training programs up to one year general education not lower than or primary vocational education
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Various types of practical problems that require analysis Ability to make the choice out of pre-determined options Current and final control, evaluation and correction of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> primary vocational education practical experience or vocational training programs up to one year and additional vocational educational programs
5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solution of practical problems based on the choice of solutions in various conditions of a work situation. Current and final control, evaluation and correction of activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> secondary vocational education practical experience
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solving problems of a technological or methodological nature, involving the choice and variety of solutions. Development, implementation, control, evaluation and correction of the components of professional activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> bachelor's degree secondary vocational education is possible
7		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that involve solving development problems, developing new approaches, using a variety of methods (including innovative ones) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> master's practical experience. specialist undergraduate and additional professional education (MBA programs, etc.)
8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that involve solving problems of a research and design nature related to improving the efficiency of managed processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> postgraduate education programs leading to a Ph.D. practical experience) master's or specialist training program
9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activities that involve solving problems of a methodological, research and design nature related to the development and improvement of the efficiency of complex social, industrial, scientific processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> postgraduate education (including Ph.D.) practical experience additional professional education or practical experience and social and professional recognition at the sectoral, cross-sectoral, international level

Credits and qualifications recognition system

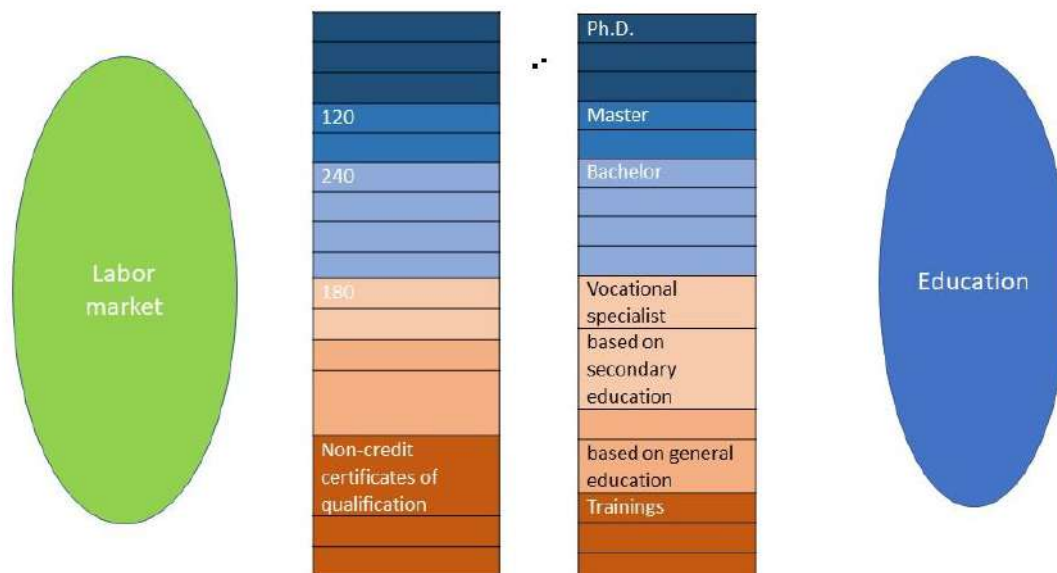


Fig. 2 – Credits and qualifications recognition system

Thus, educational standards are harmonized with professional standards, which in turn provide a clearer understanding of the situation in certain sub-sectors of the tourism industry, shedding light onto what kind of workers are lacking or, conversely, are overabundant and excessive. This helps to develop a regional personnel policy in order to understand what training programs are needed for various qualification levels, how to measure the control of learning outcomes and how to recognize diplomas and certificates at various levels of training, including international ones. It ultimately creates stability in the labor market and sustainable interaction with vocational education institutions.

Thanks to the formation of national qualifications framework, not only the comparability of qualifications at the international level is achieved, but also the possibility of networking between educational organizations and a more diversified international exchange of experience emerges. There is a need for the continuation of studies [3, 5] in the field of comparisons of the processes of formation and implementation of national qualifications systems, both mature and emerging ones. The institutional effect of the path

dependence in the national educational system is manifested in different priorities, the participation of various groups of stakeholders in the full implementation of the national qualifications system [8]. Another promising field of research is measuring the comparative effectiveness of what has already been implemented [17] and studying possibilities for more representative inclusion of non-formal and informal learning [6].

Medium-term effects of the formation of the qualifications framework for the tourism sector

Over time it is possible to develop in detail "road maps", specific scientific and practical approaches and organizational and methodological mechanisms to maximize the following positive effects:

1. **Achieving a balance between supply and demand for labor.** A structured qualification approach ensures the formation of a single coordinate system for employees and employers in order to ensure correct information, goal setting, and correlation of competencies and qualifications. This, in turn, is supposed to ensure a good connection and self-regulation between supply and demand for human resources.

- 2. Possibilities of correlating educational qualifications and professional qualifications.** What now is not very clear even at the conceptual level is to how correlate qualifications obtained in Russia with foreign professional diplomas and qualifications in tourism and hospitality.
- 3. Optimization of the content, scope and timing of educational programs.** Including theoretical and practical components. The aspect of ensuring the optimal succession of skill levels according to the types of professional activity is also important.
- 4. Activation of labor mobility of the population in Russia and abroad.** An understandable and transparent system of correlation of qualifications will allow those who wish to join the global educational and professional space, find a suitable educational institution or place of work for themselves, and improve the labor mobility of the population within the country as well.
- 5. Decrease in precarization (instability) of labor of youth, older age, women.** "Employment instability is seen as a condition in which the level of uncertainty and risk of labor relations increases in the labor market, and work ceases to serve as a source of medium and long-term life planning for the economically active population" [21]. For the tourism and hospitality industry precarization is a well-recognized problem. The qualifications framework is instrumental in elevating some problems and risks.

Features of credit transfers in tourism vocational education

International interaction of educational organizations is based on understanding and recognition of the levels of education and credits of partner universities. Next, consider the concept of credit and the rules for their recognition. The credit system is based on so-called "credits", which are a way of describing and presenting learning outcomes within a particular qualification. A unit of learning outcomes is a set of

outcomes (knowledge, skills and competencies) that form part of a qualification. In this regard, these units should be understandable to all subjects of educational and training processes (students, teachers, employers) and should be clearly articulated, well-structured and meet the requirements and the contents of professional activities, be measurable during the assessment.

Thanks to these attributes, it becomes possible to master the qualification gradually (by units), and in various ways (within the framework of formal education or validation and recognition of educational credits received informally or at a foreign university for a certain period of study). It is important to emphasize that learning outcomes only acquire "value" within the framework of national, regional or sectoral rules for the award of qualifications.

Credits express the labor intensity of educational work. The academic year corresponds to approximately 60 credits, i.e., in each semester, the student will have to master a number of subjects with a total labor intensity of approximately 30 credit units. With a four-year training plan, a student must earn 240 credits, with a three-year plan - 180. Credits allow looking at a given academic discipline as an interdisciplinary course (IDC) and considering the expediency of combining classes of various types: lectures, seminars, laboratory works and assignments, and others.

As an example, there is a content-thematic description of the educational standard of Secondary Vocational Education in the specialty "Tourism" (Table 2).

The system of credit transfers is developed to provide an opportunity to build an individual learning path in terms of accumulating credits corresponding to qualifications included in the national qualifications framework. This system allows the transfer of credit units from one system to another, establishing the "point" of entry for a student from system A to the receiving system B, and taking into account the features of educational programs.

Table 2 – Excerpt from Russia's Federal State Educational Standard
Secondary Vocational Education in the Specialty "Tourism"¹

Level of school education for admission to training in Secondary Vocational Education	Name of qualification	The term for obtaining the basic level of preparation of open source software	Activities:	Competencies	REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STRUCTURE OF THE TRAINING PROGRAM MIDDLE MANAGERS
secondary general education (after grade 11)	Basic Training Tourism Specialist	1 year 10 months	Provision of travel agency and tour operator services, tourist escort services.	Search and use of information on the state and structure of the tourist services market; Using the potential of tourist regions in the formation of tourism products	Fundamentals of philosophy History Physical culture Information and communication technologies Geography of tourism. Psychology of business communication
basic general education (after grade 9)		2 years 10 months	Management of the functional unit of the organization	Analysis of customer needs and selection of the optimal tourism product; Carrying out a comparative analysis of the proposals of tour operators, the development of promotional materials and the presentation of the tourist product	Organization of the tourism industry Foreign language in the field of professional communication Technology of sales and promotion of tourist products
secondary general education (after grade 11)	Advanced Tourism Specialist	2 years 10 months	Provision of travel agency and tour operator services, tourist escort services.	Accompanying tourists on the route; Organization of tourists' leisure; quality control of services provided to tourists	Technology and organization of travel agency activities
basic general education (after grade 9)		3 years 10 months	Management of the functional unit of the organization	Carrying out marketing research and creating a database on tourism products; Planning travel programs, drawing up tour programs and tour packages; drawing up a work plan for the unit; Conducting employee briefings; Work with office equipment; Quality control of personnel work	Technology and organization of tourist escort activities Organization of tourist leisure Marketing technologies in tourism Management of the activities of the functional unit Modern office equipment and business organization
			Provision of excursion services	Selection of information on a given topic of the excursion; Comparative analysis of the developed instructions on the rules of behavior for tourists during the tour; selection of a local catering organization for cooperation during the excursion	Technology and organization of information and excursion activities
				Be able to: to conduct a conversation on a wide range of issues of regional studies conduct a conversation (dialogue, negotiations) of a professional orientation	Development and conducting of excursions in a foreign language

¹ Source: Professional standards. URL: <http://profstandart.rosmintrud.ru>.

The transfer of credits is, among other things, a serious motivational mechanism, since it allows: to justifiably exempt students from any courses (completely or partially); optimize the duration of the educational or training program; determine the required level of integration into the educational or training program; recognize equivalence with full or partial qualifications, and overall promote international academic mobility.

**Internationalization abroad and at home:
challenges and opportunities
in the post-COVID era**

Traditional models of academic mobility, based on credit transferring, are based on a sound and well-detailed agreement between the partners. Transparency about the contents of the programs and modules that are open for exchange is vital for keeping up progressive level of student and faculty exchange [1].

Physical academic mobility offers a learning experience that cannot be rivaled by virtual mobility – personal growth gained as a result of studying and living in another country cannot be fully substituted and matched by any other means. On top of that, outstanding opportunities to improve language and intercultural skills provide additional benefits to studying abroad. Opportunity to get first-hand experience of studying at a university in another country is a unique experience, which unfortunately is available only to a fraction of total students getting their education.

But physical academic mobility is equally important for receiving institutions. Researchers in the context of the best international practices mention a big variety of motivational aspects in attracting international students – and how important it is to comply with them [23]. Researchers in the field of "soft power" talk about the importance of the stage of transition from the common elements of cultural, diplomatic, educational, scientific, technological factors to an effective synthesis with "economic power". Moreover, in recent years, especially interesting methodological approaches have appeared in the field of assessing wider economic efficiency, social and cultural

implication of attracting foreign students [13].

It is also important to purposefully use cultural diversity in the educational process to ensure a greater degree of inclusiveness in the processes of learning, teaching and certification for building inclusive systems [12], as well as to utilize methodological approaches in the canvas "from international to intercultural" [9]. The concept of cultural intelligence [16] as a fundamental category within the framework of the internationalization of education does not imply the acquisition of knowledge as a result of training, but the ability of a representative of a foreign culture to interpret the signs of another culture in the way that the representatives of that culture themselves would do [11].

At the same time, physical mobility is not a realistic option for the majority of students due to lack of funds, family and/or work obligations, emotional issues and other impeding factors. Such circumstances force to look at alternatives. Even in the context of the presence in the educational organization of large resources and partnerships for the implementation of programs and projects in international academic mobility of students and teachers, this is not enough from the point of view of the need to comprehensively form competencies for working in a multicultural world (in the context of international competition, in international teams) for all graduates [2].

The digitalization of society and the promotion of the green economy will have a growing impact on the organization of studies, including credit mobility. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced higher and vocational education institutions to replace classroom learning by online learning at a very short notice. Experience so far has shown online learning cannot successfully replace face-to-face learning. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) struggle with meeting the intended learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the experiences today are expected to have a long-lasting effect. What lessons can we learn? What are the strategic implications for the future? How do we balance the models of internationalization?

Virtual and blended academic mobility as a perspective solution

Virtual academic mobility means the entire mobility is done online, including assessment. Blended academic mobility generally implies that virtual mobility is used in combination with physical mobility. Virtual classes and collaboration in projects are typically followed by a physical mobility period.

Virtual and blended academic mobility have a number of both positive and negative effects, especially challenges that exist in the online component of blended learning [18]. The negative effect can be concluded from what was discussed above, the unique living abroad experience is impossible along with intensive cultural immersion. However there are a number of positive effects unattainable in the world of regular mobility. Positive aspects of virtual and blended mobility are:

- Cheaper and 'greener' - no international travel is required;
- Less interference with family responsibilities;
- Possibilities to reach a wider audience students and staff that are not keen on physical mobility;
- Opportunities to ensure at least some genuine international classroom experience;
- The course does not have to be big or time-consuming to generate effect;
- Opportunities to create a comparably similar amount of friends and future contacts (networking).

To make things clear, let's consider an example. All first-year students are linked up with a first-year student from a partner institution. The students on the two sides have to set-up their own virtual meeting (Skype/Zoom/whatever) and record it as proof is needed. They have to interview each other with scripted questions about the profession they are studying in their respective home countries, the structure of the study program as well as discuss a particular touristic problem (e.g., what is the procedure to overcome standard airport related problems). They both have to write and submit a report on the

interview. Learning goals in this instance are going to be as follows: practice foreign language skills, train interpersonal/intercultural skills, gain knowledge about their future profession in an international context, increase interest in international collaboration.

Here is an example of online peer review learning. Shared virtual classes about a particular subject, where professional instructors are involved. At a later stage, students are given an assignment, which they do at their home institution. They are linked up with students from a partner institution (abroad or in the home country) and review each other's assignments in online sessions with two or more participants.

The positive side: it is an effective way of internationalization "at home". As a result, we have internationalized learning outcomes. We make purposeful use of cultural diversity in the classroom. We can further enrich this experience by inviting international guest lecturers. The challenging side: it requires a lot of organization and tuning for organizing staff. Technical problems may further influence the learning outcomes. Although blended learning preceded modern instructional technologies, its evolution will be inextricably bound to contemporary information communication technologies that are approximating some aspects of human thought processes [7].

Concerns with regards to virtual and blended academic mobility

One of the most obvious issues that we must deal with when it comes to virtual academic mobility is the lack of skills for teaching online – a didactical and technical training of teaching staff is necessary. However a legitimate concern arises: is there enough knowledge about the didactics of on-line teaching out there? With relative infancy of such way of conducting classes it is hard to pinpoint the necessities of an online classroom. Who will train the 'trainers'?

Another factor to consider is lack of motivation: students and teaching staff need personal contact to experience the teaching/learning experience as stimulating. Should we simply trust that we will all get used to this new way of teaching /

learning? Should we train ourselves to deal with the fact that few are truly going to be as engaged as they would be in a physical classroom?

Online assessment is challenging. Technical difficulties, online proctoring of exams, risk of fraud, conditions are not the same for all students. Should we re-think our assessment methods? Here are some of the things that we may conclude now that need to be done:

- Re-design the curriculum by looking at all components to investigate how and where a more international dimension can be introduced (international literature, international comparisons, international case studies, etc.);
- Make the international dimension explicit in the learning outcomes of the program (add them to the list of components perhaps) so that it can be assessed;
- Look for professionals in the field of online communication and train staff members and students. There is a certain ethic in communicating online that all participants need to be familiar with;
- Make technical training mandatory for all participants of the educational process;
- Organize brainstorm sessions among the teaching staff to generate ideas on engaging students effectively during online classes (a technique arguably equally relevant for staff teaching live classes – how many students in your live class are actually listening and engaged).

International mobility at home is the most ubiquitous and most sustainable approach; it can involve all staff and have an effect on all students. The positive gain from implementing such approach in today's times is evident. However, we must face some harsh truths as well:

- Not a quick win - it takes a long time to realize a truly internationalized curriculum;
- Not easy - competent staff is needed;
- As a result, not evidently attractive for management;
- Physical mobility will always have its attractions and in a post-Covid 19 world it is

likely to return in full swing;

- The right type of blended learning platform and high engagement are vital for success [4].

Conclusion: summing up sustainable development in tourism vocational education

Summing up sustainability development in tourism vocational education, we may conclude that virtual and blended academic mobility has its future in global education. Within it, staff and students can move freely; it fully respects the fundamental values of higher education - which is inclusive, innovative and interconnected; it prepares learners to become active and responsible students. It offers key instruments (and therefore references): credit transfer and Accumulation System of Education Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Qualifications Reference Frameworks for the appropriate level (and relevance) of education (based on the student-centered and learning-outcomes-focused approach)

Future Plans may include:

- An innovative governmental level support of higher and vocational education institutions;
 - Swift Up-dating of knowledge, skills and competencies;
 - Flexible and open learning paths;
 - Student-centered learning;
 - Smaller and more flexible units of learning;
 - Development of digital skills and competencies for all (sharing materials);
 - Fostering future teaching: make teaching and research mutually supportive; support professional development and create attractive career pathways;
 - Strengthening institutional and systems' capacity to support learning and teaching: develop strong and effective strategies for learning and teaching in a digital world; foster national and global cooperation.

Virtual and blended academic mobility offers a wide range of tailor-made possibilities. But we still have a long way to go to learn how to deal with the various negative aspects. What can we do together to make it easier? Sharing best

practices could be an option. It also seems increasingly plausible that having a number of workable templates for blended academic mobility would benefit the staff and introduce a well-correlated working program. Having a fill-in exercise at the fingertips rather than developing from scratch alleviates and speeds up preparation process.

International integration of education creates sustainable growth of tourism education not only locally but on the international job market. Human capital is not a purely economic phenomenon but has a markedly pronounced social and

public nature and is a socio-economic category for most tourism companies [14]. Qualification is always the result of mastering a certain educational program and practical experience. Accounting for various forms of education and training will be taking place within sectoral qualification systems. Credit transfer creates the possibility of building an individual educational trajectory, taking into account the educational and practical experience, which makes it possible to move both vertically and horizontally in the national and international systems of education.

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