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## The Structure and Content of the Achievements Portfolio of University Students

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Alexander M. Petrovsky<sup>1</sup>, Zhanna V. Smirnova<sup>2</sup>, Olga I. Vaganova<sup>3</sup>, Maxim M. Kutepov<sup>4</sup>, Maria L. Gruzdeva<sup>5</sup>, Liubov I. Kutepova<sup>6</sup>

### **Abstract:**

*Introduction of the portfolio into the educational process requires precise regulation, systematization of its structure and content to attract students for filling it. The more students fill in the portfolio, the better becomes the quality of learning process. There were applied analysis, synthesis, induction and deduction for the purpose of studying the subject. The article denotes several definitions of the concept of portfolio. As a result, its essence was determined. The requirements for students have been established to fill it.*

*Based on the "Regulations on the Portfolio of Achievements of Students of Kozma Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University", the functions of the portfolio were identified, and their content disclosed. The sections are given that are filled by students as well: educational activities, professional, research, public, cultural and creative, sports. According to our study it is worth to conclude that to improve the quality of education, the portfolio should be based on the principles of continuity, diagnostics, problem orientation, technological traceability criteria, scientific.*

*It should have a clear structure and logical sequence of sections. As we have shown, the portfolio performs many pedagogical functions and has a positive effect on the personality of each student. The result of systematic participation in the compilation of a student's portfolio is developed abilities for self-organization, discipline, responsibility, the identification of strengths and weaknesses, and the elimination of learning gaps.*

**Keywords:** *Portfolio, Students, Evaluation Materials, University, Portfolio Functions, Professional Activity.*

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<sup>1</sup>Dzerzhinsky Polytechnic Institute (branch), R.E. Alekseeva Nizhny Novgorod State Technical University, Russia, [pposdf@mail.ru](mailto:pposdf@mail.ru)

<sup>2</sup>Federal State Budget Educational Institution "Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin", Russia, [z.v.smirnova@mininuniver.ru](mailto:z.v.smirnova@mininuniver.ru)

<sup>3</sup>Federal State Budget Educational Institution "Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin", Russia, [vaganova\\_o@mail.ru](mailto:vaganova_o@mail.ru)

<sup>4</sup>Federal State Budget Educational Institution "Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin", Russia, [kmm-asb@mail.ru](mailto:kmm-asb@mail.ru)

<sup>5</sup>Federal State Budget Educational Institution "Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin", Russia, [gru1234@yandex.ru](mailto:gru1234@yandex.ru)

<sup>6</sup>Federal State Budget Educational Institution "Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University named after Kozma Minin", Russia, [lubovkutepova@mail.ru](mailto:lubovkutepova@mail.ru)

## **1. Introduction**

The idea of introducing the portfolio has been appeared in the countries of Europe and the US as a solution to the problem of presenting the necessary information about the achievements of a particular student. They used the portfolio as part of the competence approach. And if in the US and Europe this is only a method of assessing students, then in Russia it is also a way to qualify for an increased scholarship. The student's portfolio in Russia solves many pedagogical tasks. By composing it, the student prepares himself for professional activity and takes possession of the necessary competences, both general cultural and professional (Kostylev *et al.*, 2016).

In the article by E. Igonina (2012) it has been mentioned the researchers I. Knysh and I. Pastukhova, who calls the portfolio as a way of control, they assign the status of a multi-functional tool for self-evaluation of their own achievements. It can be considered as an alternative way of self-analysis of knowledge, skills and qualities of the student, the ability to track the dynamics of becoming a student as a professional, I. Knysh and I. Pastukhova (Igonina, 2012) also believe that it can be viewed as a way of identifying the student's prospects and opportunities, revealing his inner potential, demonstrating the strongest and the brightest features.

In these days the portfolio of student performs more than one function. This is an opportunity to get an enhanced stipend and conduct a reflection of one's own activity, determine the strengths and the weaknesses develop the necessary skills (Prokhorova & Semchenko, 2017). Therefore, the modern student portfolio is high-demand. To attract more students to fill out the form, it is necessary to ensure the clarity of the portfolio logic. This requires a clear systematization of the structure and content of the portfolio. That's why this provision is relevant within considering the subject.

Regulations on the portfolio of achievements of students of the federal state budgetary educational institution of higher education Kozma Minin Nizhniy Novgorod State Pedagogical University, Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation dated December 27, 2016 No. 1663 *"On approval of the procedure for appointing a state academic scholarship and (or) state social scholarship to students who are studying in intramural form of study at the expense of budgetary appropriations of the federal budget ... "*.

## **2. Methodology of the study: analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction**

There is a need for an educational tool which is capable of developing independence and the desire to learn and develop in the student for the formation of a highly qualified specialist who is able of easily perceiving innovations and ready for personal and professional development within the framework of lifelong learning. This tool is a portfolio. It promotes the development of creative and critical thinking.

In the process of working on it, the student accumulates a sufficiently large amount of information in which it is possible to trace the development of the learner and determine further ways of self-improvement. The concept of "portfolio" can be interpreted in different ways. The first one is a collection of student works, showing all his efforts and achievements in various fields. The second one is a working file folder with a variety of information, which is documenting the acquired experience and achievements of the student. The third one is a way of recording, accumulating and evaluating of the student's individual achievements. Portfolio - (from Italian translates as a bag or a folder for documents), is a dossier, a collection of achievements for fixing successes (Kostyleva, 2017).

We will adhere to the following definition of the student portfolio. A student's portfolio is the total number of individual educational and creative achievements of a student which is recorded on a paper and electronic medium for a certain period of time (the institution can set this period independently, for example, per semester) (Smirnova & Mukhina, 2016). Portfolio helps to disclose the individual capabilities of the student, contributes to increasing self-esteem (Ugodchikova, Aleshugina & Loshkareva, 2015).

Despite the fact that the main purpose is the right to apply for a scholarship, its peculiarity consists in solving important pedagogical tasks: developing skills in reflective activity, encouraging the activity of students, stimulating creative activity. All of them make the portfolio a promising tool for presenting individual achievements of the future graduate, reflecting his professional orientation.

Portfolio is also a monitoring and evaluation tool. Portfolio method as a way of evaluation has long been widely used both in Europe and in the United States. Portfolio is an individual set of materials, on the one hand it has being as educational results, and, on the other hand, it is a characteristic of planning your own educational activities for a student (Vaganova & Aleshugina, 2017). The essence of the student portfolio is:

- to support and stimulate of learning motivation. As a portfolio with a certain amount of grade points entitles you to get an enhanced stipend;
- to encourage student activity, self-reliance, expanding learning opportunities and self-learning;
- to develop students' reflection skills;
- to form and develop of skills of setting goals and systematically implement them;
- to develop the propensity of organization own independent learning activities;
- to promote the process of individualizing education;
- to develop students' responsibility (Vaganova *et al.*, 2016b).

It's necessary to note that the responsibility for making the portfolio is superimposed on the student by the local normative act of the university. Responsibility is not limited by collecting documents. The student also confirms that all his intellectual property is really his own and there is no plagiarism. Portfolio can be considered as a tool that promotes future professionals in the labor market, being a good way for assessing the formation of certain competences among students.

The creation of the portfolio is the result of the influence of the competence approach on the educational process. Carrying out various kinds of work the student learns to systematize his activities, self-discipline. This process does not exclude a competitive moment, that's why the student learns to act in rapidly changing conditions, make decisions promptly, plan and predict the results of his activities. Despite the fact that the portfolio can have different forms, there are general requirements:

- availability of the issued title page with indication of reliable information about the owner of the portfolio;
- reliability of information;
- availability of the date of receipt of the document;
- high quality of attached photocopies and pictures;
- conformity of achievements which are indicated in the form of portfolio to the number of attached documents;
- an accurate indication of the amount of grade points for each section and the total amount (Koldina, 2014).

Portfolio is a documentary proof of the competitiveness of a future graduate. Portfolio of the student's achievements can include participation in scientific conferences, competitions, passing elective courses, sports achievements, social activities and etc. The collected data in the portfolio will maximally reflect the reality (in which area is the student succeed: scientific, sports, public or cultural).

Many universities use the portfolio. Kozma Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University does it as well. The university calls "the portfolio of students' achievements" as a set of documents that confirm individual achievements of the student in different types of activities (educational, professional, scientific, public, cultural, creative, sports) (Koldina, 2014). The results of examination sessions, wins and top places in skills competitions, contests, the design activity, which is connected with training, include into achievements in educational activity (Vaganova, Koldina & Trutanova, 2017). Working on the relevant specialty, training in foreign language courses, other courses and additional education are in professional activity.

Achievements in scientific activity are grants, patents, awards for research results, publication of scientific articles. To fill out the section on social activities, it is necessary to confirm systematic participation in social events, as well as to conduct

active activities in student organizations. Cultural and creative activity is a participation in cultural events, creative associations. Sports activities are characterized by obtaining awards in sports competitions (winning or top place), obtaining a gold mark of the GTO complex. It is worth to note that only students who have an excellent mark for the previous two semesters have the right to qualify for an enhanced stipend.

Students are given a specially designed form to fill it, which is divided into sections. Each individual achievement, inscribed by the student in the form, must be documented. The student invests printouts in the portfolio for the purpose. Any activity related to the portfolio is regulated by the Regulations on the Portfolio of Achievements of Students of the Federal State Budget Educational Institution of Higher Education of Kozma Minin Nizhny Novgorod State Pedagogical University dated January 27, 2017.

There is a description of the university portfolio. The title page contains a photograph of the student, mail, the number of class and the time frame for completing the document. On each subsequent sheet, the date of the moment of printing the document is automatically set. This is done to ensure that the student has completed his work at the dates which are indicated by the university.

The headline of the document is called "Individual rating of the student's activity at Minin University for the specified period of time". Before starting to fill out the lines with the names of achievements, at the beginning the student indicates last name, first name, middle name, faculty, course, class and the basis of the training (budget or off-budget). If the student received "excellent" and "good" grades on the basis of the results of the interim evaluation for two consecutive semesters with "not less than 50%", then he has the right to write an additional 10 points to his portfolio. At the end, it is necessary to indicate how many sheets it was made the calculation of the rating and how many sheets of supporting documentation to avoid losing important information. Entries in the portfolio should have approximately the following form: the name of the work, the degree of participation, the output data (Salyaeva, 2014).

The application to the portfolio as certificates of support may be certificates, letters of commendation, diplomas, letters of appreciation, pictures as evidence of achievements in educational, sports, creative, scientific, public and other events. The form of the portfolio can be different. It can be a folder with files where the information is placed on A4 sheets, a regular folder with departments for different sections, or an electronic version. The Minin University preferred a file with A4 sheets placed in it. This option is presented to the Center for Quality Management Education. The leaders also send electronic versions of student portfolios in his class for reporting (Vaganova *et al.*, 2016a).

Portfolio functions are divided into two groups: evaluation and development. Some authors suggest dividing the evaluation group into the following functions:

- the diagnostic (its role is to identify the student's specific features of mastering the content of education, the student can assess their educational and professional achievements and look at the dynamics of their development);
- the rating (it helps to determine the rating of a particular student among all the others);
- the controlling (students themselves can follow the stages and quality of mastering the educational material, achievements in any area);
- the evaluation (identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the individual, filling in the gaps) (Prokhorova & Vaganova, 2017).

There are the functions of the second (development) group:

- the motivational (it supports the interest of the student to study, to research and extracurricular activities);
- the organizational (it contributes to develop of learning skills, the ability to predict and self-organization);
- the reflexive (it develops the ability to evaluate one's own activity) (Starodumova & Homolko, 2017).

There is also "a model function". It implies the possibility of making an individual educational route for each learner (Malakhova, Khokhlova & Starodumova, 2015).

During the compilation of the portfolio, the student acquires the skill of competition. He tries to evaluate himself and his forces objectively. Making a portfolio is necessary not only for students, but also for teachers. Since the teaching staff is aware of the importance of the portfolio for students, they can offer them to write an article on a specific topic to get a credit in the subject. The principles of portfolio formation include:

- continuity of data collection;
- diagnostic (there are special criteria for relating the work);
- the principle of problem orientation (it is necessary to include the most problematic indicators in the list of tracking criteria, which can reveal distortions of the monitored processes);
- scientific character (Kostylev & Kostyleva, 2015).

### **3. Analysis of research results**

Portfolio was introduced into the life of student youth a long time ago, but until present days it was not too popular. Portfolio should be based on the principles of continuity, diagnostic, problem-oriented approach, technological criteria for tracking, scientific character. A good portfolio should stimulate and support the

motivation of students. Its structure should be understandable for the student, there should be an explanation for each separate section of the portfolio on the issues of document processing. The totality of students' achievements in the portfolio is awarded certain grade points, which are indexed in money equivalent for paying students an enhanced stipend. The portfolio should have a clear structure and logical sequence of sections.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Portfolio is a way of student's motivation to learning, sports and cultural activities. As a consequence, students develop the ability of self-organization, discipline, responsibility. With the help of a portfolio they can identify their strengths and weaknesses, they can eliminate learning gaps. Received skills during the compilation of the portfolio, the student can project for his professional activities, as he is capable of forecasting and planning.

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