

# HERB



Higher Education in Russia and Beyond

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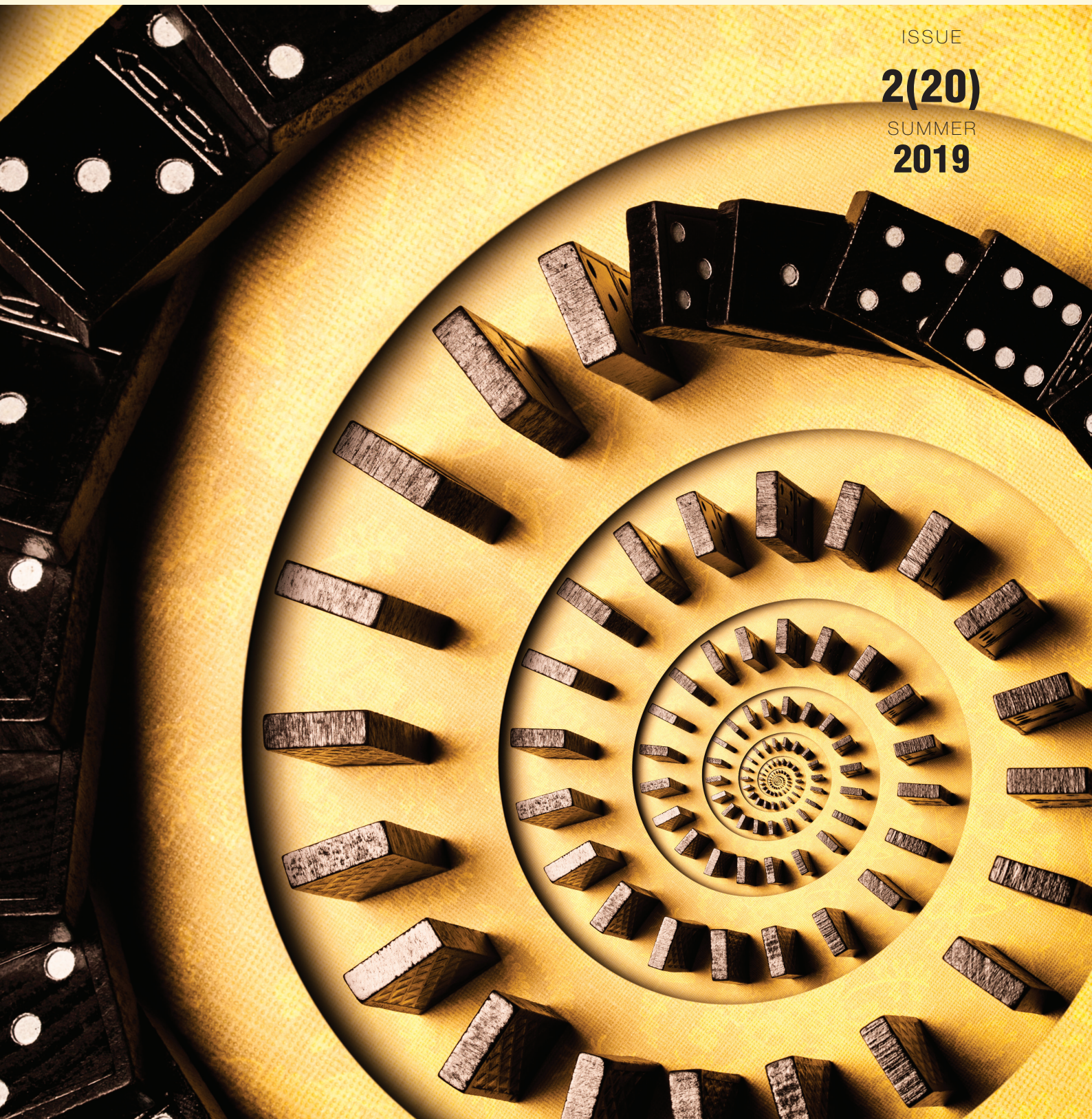
How to Recruit Internationally and Live Happily Ever After

ISSUE

**2(20)**

SUMMER

**2019**







## Dear colleagues,

In this issue on international faculty we explore the challenges and best practices which come with a worldwide search for the best scholars. Attracting the best talent in research has become an important goal for universities which want to be part of the global academic market. This pursuit for the *crème de la crème* has different formats, from the international mobility of scholars to international recruitment programs either for short-term postdoctoral positions or for longer tenure-track contracts. Though most discussions focus on the recruitment of internal faculty, the desire to build strong long-lasting research teams has brought the issue of retention into the limelight, and this brings a new set of challenges, both in terms of how to create effective and meaningful collaborations and how to solve administrative issues arising from differences in legal systems and research support practices in different countries and institutions.

In this issue of *Higher Education in Russia and Beyond* (HERB) contributors from universities in Russia and beyond share case studies about making good use of international mobility programs to enhance research collaboration, about the successes and challenges of hiring faculty members and postdocs internationally, and about the best practices and pitfalls of integrating internationally recruited faculty into the university community.

*Higher Education in Russia and Beyond*  
editorial team



## National Research University Higher School of Economics

National Research University Higher School of Economics is the largest center of socio-economic studies and one of the top-ranked higher education institutions in Eastern Europe. The University efficiently carries out fundamental and applied research projects in such fields as computer science, management, sociology, political science, philosophy, international relations, mathematics, Oriental studies, and journalism, which all come together on grounds of basic principles of modern economics.

HSE professors and researchers contribute to the elaboration of social and economic reforms in Russia as experts. The University transmits up-to-date economic knowledge to the government, business community and civil society through system analysis and complex interdisciplinary research.

Higher School of Economics incorporates 97 research centers and 32 international laboratories, which are involved in fundamental and applied research. Higher education studies are one of the University's key priorities. According to recent QS World University Ranking, HSE is now among the top 150 universities in the subject of "Education". This research field consolidates intellectual efforts of several research groups, whose work fully complies highest world standards. Experts in economics, sociology, psychology and management from Russia and other countries work together on comparative projects. The main research spheres include: analysis of global and Russian higher education system development, transformation of the academic profession, effective contract in higher education, developing educational standards and HEI evaluation models, etc.

## Center for Institutional Studies

The Center for Institutional Studies is one of HSE's research centers. CInSt focuses on fundamental and applied interdisciplinary researches in the field of institutional analysis, economics and sociology of science and higher education. Researchers are working in the center strictly adhere to the world's top academic standards.

The Center for Institutional Studies is integrated into international higher education research networks. The center cooperates with foreign experts through joint comparative projects that cover the problems of higher education development and education policy. As part of our long-term cooperation with the Boston College Center for International Higher Education, CInSt has taken up the publication of the Russian version of the "International Higher Education" newsletter.



# Contents

## **HERB**

Issue 2(20) Summer 2019

How to Recruit Internationally and Live Happily Ever After

## **International Mobility to Enhance Staff Cooperation**

### **6 Elena Eremenko**

International Cooperation in Research: from the Foundation's Viewpoint

### **7 Elena Vashurina, Olga Vershinina, Yana Evdokimova**

From Bilateral Scientific Cooperation to Network Interaction

### **9 Maria Kiseleva, Dmitry Kholodnyak**

International Mobility Programs as a Tool for Enhancing Research Cooperation and Faculty Recruitment

### **10 Michele Debrenne**

Research Internships in Siberia for International Students – a Bridge to New Scientific Collaboration

## Hiring Internationally: Whom and Why?

**11 Vadim Radaev**

The Evolution and Impact of International Recruitment at Higher School of Economics University

**13 Sergey Zvonarev, Vladimir Kruzhaev**

A Program for Attracting International and Russian Researchers for Postdoctoral Positions at the Ural Federal University

**14 Andrey Shcherbenok**

Hiring (Many) International Faculty in a Siberian University

**15 Karin A. C. Johnson**

The Internationalization of Higher Education: Faculty and Postdoctoral Researcher Recruitment Initiatives in Russia

**17 Valentina Kuskova**

Why Recruit Internationally? The Role of International Collaboration in Academic Development at HSE University

## Integration: Supporting without Isolating

**18 Madina Aitakanova, Aidos Taizhanov, Leila Maslova**

The Integration of Internationally Recruited Faculty into the University Community: Best Practices and Pitfalls

**20 Yulia Grinkevich, Maria Shabanova, Anna Krasheninina**

The Administrative Dimension of Integrating International Faculty: The Case of HSE University

# International Cooperation in Research: from the Foundation's Viewpoint

Elena Eremenko

*Head Moscow Office: Helmholtz Association, Russia*  
[elena.ereenko@helmholtz.de](mailto:elena.ereenko@helmholtz.de)

## Portrait of an Organization

Helmholtz Association of German Research Centers (HAGRC) is the largest scientific organization in Germany, consisting of 19 science and biomedical research centers, with nearly 40,000 employees; their annual budget is 4.5 billion euros. HAGRC continues the traditions of the great natural scientist Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894).

HAGRC identifies and works to solve global, societal, scientific and economic problems through the implementation of strategic research programs in six areas: Energy; Earth and environment; Health; Aeronautics, space and transport; Key technologies; Structure of matter. The infrastructure includes research laboratories, megascience installations, supercomputers, its own fleet, and space satellites.

## Support for (Young) Scientists

Considering the global and long-term nature of the tasks that HAGRC faces, tools to support young scientists play a special role, because it is young researchers who will determine the development of science in the future. To this end, HAGRC supports various formats, such as mentoring programs, scholarships for young leaders and their research groups, doctoral studies – often in collaboration with universities – and training modules for future academic leaders at the Helmholtz Academy of Management.

Helmholtz colleges and research schools are small divisions that are engaged in research in clearly defined fields; projects are carried out with leading international research centers. The working groups include up to 25 doctoral students, who get experience of international scientific cooperation, and professional and personal training. For the latter, the mentoring program Helmholtz Advance was created.

From 2017, special departments for career growth, “Helmholtz Career Development Centers for Researchers”, have been created.

A key element of the integrated support of scientists is the Helmholtz Academy for the leaders of scientific organizations. The educational programs of the Academy are designed for young managers as well as managers with many years of experience. They learn to work strategically, efficiently organize structures and processes, and successfully

lead teams. The Helmholtz Academy is intended for those whose activities are related to the management of research teams at HAGRC and at partner organizations and universities.

## International Cooperation

For HAGRC, international cooperation is one of the main reasons for advanced research. The German scientific environment provides excellent opportunities for such interaction. Joint research activities contain great potential. They can become the basis for political dialogue as science and diplomacy are multifaceted and are closely related. Relations between science and foreign policy can strengthen diplomatic relations, so that all parties benefit: politics can deepen the interaction of domestic and foreign scientists (“diplomacy for science”), and scientific partnerships can support diplomatic relations (“science for diplomacy”).

HAGRC is actively engaged in the development of scientific exchange. Outstanding research with partners in other countries is a prerequisite for serious scientific work, and for the development of diplomatic ties. Thanks to its extensive network of contacts and its role as an intermediary, HAGRC makes a significant contribution to German scientific diplomacy. This is confirmed by the “Strategy of Internationalization 2017–2022”, which HAGRC adopted to structure international cooperation. This document states: “The brilliant scientific activities of [HAGRC] provides numerous opportunities for scientific and diplomatic cooperation: it is during times of political tension that science can build bridges, create trust and reliability. Building long-term research projects with foreign partners and, in particular, supporting young scientists can serve as a sign of mutual trust. Scientific partnerships can significantly contribute to the preservation of diplomatic channels and promote dialogue. Science thus influences the political agenda. It promotes the training of future scientists and the building of long-term (political) relations.”

## Cooperation with Russia

Of particular importance to scientists from HAGRC is cooperation with Russian scientific organizations. Since 2005, it has had a representative office in Moscow, supporting cooperation between Russian research institutes and HAGRC. The office establishes contacts between participants for scientific exchange. Through the annual event “HAGRC Winter meetings”, the Moscow office has created a very successful format that brings together influential German and Russian representatives of science, politics, economics and public figures in discussions on current topics.

HAGRC has a broad network of well-established ties with many institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Kurchatov Institute Research Center and leading Russian universities. Every year we offer numerous opportunities for young scientists from Russia and Germany to solve scientific problems together and exchange experience.

In cooperation with the Russian Science Foundation (RSF) and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, we

regularly offer competitions to support research projects. One of the recent examples of such cooperation is the program for financing HAGRC-RSF joint research groups. Joint research projects of young scientists from both countries are purposefully supported. At each of the three phases of the program, six research teams receive support. RSF finances the Russian part of the project; HAGRC – the German part. Teams of Russian scientists from scientific institutes and universities can apply for the competition. As practice shows, research teams from universities are more active – two thirds of the projects supported are university based. The geography of cooperation covers the scientific centers of Moscow, St. Petersburg, the Urals and Siberia.

One of the prerequisites for participation in the competition is the presence of young German and Russian scientists. The next competition will be held in 2020, and we look forward to seeing new young Russian-German research teams.

Annual summer schools are also important for collaboration and the format has proven to be very effective for international cooperation. Traditionally HAGRC supports international summer schools on various topics. For example, since 2002, at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna and in collaboration with HAGRC, a quantum physics summer schools has been held. In 2016, another joint project was launched by HAGRC and the Vernadsky Foundation: an ecology and sustainable development summer school.

The basic principle of the summer schools is project work by young scientists from different countries in mixed groups under the guidance of leading scientists. This approach allows participants to gain in-depth knowledge of a given topic, expand their competencies in international cooperation, and provide a foundation for the creation of international research teams in the future.

It is impossible not to take into account the geopolitical context of the two countries when speaking of the development of Russian-German scientific cooperation. It is obvious that the cooling of the long-term partnership between Russia and Germany influences cooperation in science. More important are the efforts that are currently being made on both sides to maintain Russian-German scientific ties. For its part, HAGRC has consistently advocated the expansion of Russian-German dialogue and the organization and support of bilateral meetings, thereby making a significant contribution to the strengthening of Russian-German cooperation.

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## From Bilateral Scientific Cooperation to Network Interaction

**Elena Vashurina**

*Leading Expert: International Office,  
Kazan Federal University, Russia*  
[evashuri@mail.ru](mailto:evashuri@mail.ru)

**Olga Vershinina**

*Director: International Office,  
Kazan Federal University, Russia*  
[overshin@kpfu.ru](mailto:overshin@kpfu.ru)

**Yana Evdokimova**

*Leading Expert: International Office,  
Kazan Federal University, Russia*  
[yana\\_akhmetzyanova@mail.ru](mailto:yana_akhmetzyanova@mail.ru)

The international mobility of academics is one of the key factors in the internationalization of Kazan Federal University (KFU) and its integration into the international academic space. The development of international cooperation at KFU, including incoming academic mobility, is based on the effective use of bottom-up and top-down approaches. The first is based on the development of long-term international scientific relations between faculty, and the second identifies and concentrates resources in strategic areas of cooperation to form an integrated system of strategic partnerships with leading academic centers in individual countries.

An example of effective scientific interaction which has grown into a strategic partnership is the cooperation of KFU with the National Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), a leading Japanese scientific center. The long-term history of cooperation between KFU and RIKEN can be divided into 3 main stages.

The first stage (2002–2009) was characterized by the development of bilateral scientific contacts between members of the KFU Physics Faculty and the RIKEN Nanotechnology Center. During this period, the main forms of cooperation were bilateral academic mobility, joint research in low temperature physics and the development and launch of a joint postgraduate program. The incoming mobility of Japanese partners during this period was based mainly on the bottom-up approach, with the direct participation of leading RIKEN staff, including Professor Ryoji Noyori, winner of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry (2001).

The second stage (2010–2016) was largely associated with the institutional changes that were implemented at KFU, including:

- the identification of priority development areas – biomedicine and pharmaceuticals, oil production, oil refining and petrochemistry, material development,

information and space technologies; and the formation of centers of excellence;

- the emergence of new scientific (including interdisciplinary) directions;
- the creation of new scientific and educational structures (the Institute of Fundamental Medicine and Biology, the Graduate School of Information Technologies and Information Systems, various laboratories, Scientific and Educational Centers).

During this period, there was cooperation in physics, chemistry, biology, medical research, engineering and computer science, and the creation of a set of joint units at KFU-RIKEN, the organization of joint scientific projects and events. There was a strengthening of the top-down approach, which is reflected in the signing of a number of formal agreements between KFU and RIKEN, including the Strategic Partnership Agreement (2016), which brought bilateral cooperation between organizations to a new level.

The third stage (2017 to the present) is transforming KFU-RIKEN cooperation by building a network of KFU interaction with academic centers in Japan with the active participation of RIKEN, including: The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (physics), Juntendo University (medicine), Kanazawa University (medicine, academic exchanges in the Future Leaders Training Program, funded by the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Science). At KFU, the Republican Clinical Oncology Dispensary of the Tatarstan Ministry of Health (oncology), and the Eidos group of companies (medical simulators) were involved in biomedical cooperation. This cooperation combines the potential of partners and creates a synergistic effect for the successful implementation of breakthrough projects and to attract new participants to the project, including from other countries.

Another example of bilateral Russian-Japanese cooperation, implemented according to the top-down model, is the creation of the first in Russia IT clinics of personalized genomics (KFU, RIKEN and Juntendo University cooperation). An international scientific consortium for "Diagnostic and therapeutic RNA technologies in translational genomic medicine" was formed in a more "bottom-up" manner on the initiative of Kazan and Japanese scientists, and researchers from leading Russian universities (Tomsk State University and Novosibirsk State University) and the USA (the Fox Chase Cancer Center).

The development of the KFU-RIKEN cooperation has been evolutionary. There has been a sustainable expansion and a broadening of the areas in which the two institutions work together. The increasing support of the university management was manifested in the creation of unique research infrastructure, the development of services for foreign research and teaching staff, including the creation of a favorable (including multilingual) academic environment. In this regard, the effective management decisions include:

- the concentration of Project 5-100 resources on selected interdisciplinary projects involving external stakeholders at regional, national and international levels;
- the opening of the OpenLabs laboratories based at KFU under the leadership of a visiting foreign scientist;
- the development of grant support for incoming research mobility using national and international funds and programs (including the Tatarstan Algarysh grant program);
- the creation and expansion of Support for Foreign Citizens, for incoming research mobility.

The result of close and constantly expanding international scientific cooperation has been increased incoming academic mobility, and the long-term and short-term tenure of Japanese researchers. The joint activities of KFU, RIKEN and their industrial and academic partners attracted the close attention of their respective governments. The ongoing projects in the field of gene diagnostics and the creation of a new generation of biobanks based on dry storage have been included in the list of 30 priority Russian-Japanese projects approved by President Putin and Prime Minister Abe. Information on joint KFU-RIKEN medical projects was included in a special issue of the government information collection "We Are Tomodachi", devoted to cooperation between Japan and Russia and published during President Putin's visit to Japan in December 2016.

The network model of interaction with foreign research and educational centers formed in KFU (using the example of Japan) allows the evolutionary development of strategic partnerships in accordance with the profiles of the participants and the needs and development strategies of the main stakeholders. This development with support from regional and national bodies is key to effective cooperation.

At present, this model of cooperation has been successfully extended to other countries and universities, for example, the 30th anniversary of the partnership with Justus Liebig University Giessen (Germany) was celebrated this year. A new platform for the implementation of the strategic plans of both universities is the Russian-German roadmap of cooperation in education and science for the next decade.

The experience cited in the article shows possible trajectories for the development of international cooperation of other Russian universities in strategic and network partnerships and the development of human capital, including research mobility.

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# International Mobility Programs as a Tool for Enhancing Research Cooperation and Faculty Recruitment

**Maria Kiseleva**

*Director: International Academic Mobility Office, Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI", Russia*  
[MAKiseleva@etu.ru](mailto:MAKiseleva@etu.ru)

**Dmitry Kholodnyak**

*Professor: Department of Microelectronics & Radio Engineering*  
*Director: International Projects Office, Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI", Russia*  
[DVKholodnyak@etu.ru](mailto:DVKholodnyak@etu.ru)

## Introduction

International faculty, bringing new vision, knowledge and experience, are considered the "new blood" necessary for the sustainable development of a university. That is why the recruitment of international faculty is a key issue for any university development strategy or internationalization program. The employment of international researchers and academics, especially recognized ones, can be important for conducting research projects, establishing new research groups, delivering lectures, supervising and mentoring students at all levels. The analysis of the labour market and head hunting are common tools for the recruitment and employment of international faculty.

Offering tenure track positions is the most desirable and efficient approach to employ and retain such staff from the employer's point of view; this should certainly be a goal to aim for. The long-term employment of renowned researchers and academics is not always possible since they are typically in high demand and have many different commitments. An international faculty member is often required for a limited period of time to work on a certain research project or to deliver a particular lecture course.

International mobility programs can help in the recruitment of temporary international faculty without the need for an analysis of the labour market. Participation in such programs can also simplify the integration of an international faculty member into a new institution. The efficient use of international mobility programs can enhance research cooperation and strengthen a university's reputation. Both these issues are discussed in the paper. The successful practice of using different mobility programs to develop international cooperation between Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University "LETI" (ETU), Russia,

and Technische Universität Ilmenau (TU Ilmenau), Germany, in research and education from individual contacts to a strategic partnership is presented.

## Enhancing Cooperation

As a rule, international research cooperation starts from personal contact between researchers. The driving forces for the establishment and development of such cooperation are the international scientific conferences and mobility programs.

Cooperation between ETU and TU Ilmenau started from research contacts between professors of the two universities. At this early stage of the cooperation, the scholarship programs of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) such as Mikhail Lomonosov, Leonhard Euler, and GoEast were the only funding sources allowing the exchange of young researchers which led to joint publications and conference presentations.

With the purpose of extending the cooperation to education, the virtual Russian-German Engineering Faculty was established by the two universities and a double-degree Master's program was launched in 2012. The program was implemented with the financial support of DAAD; to date more than 20 graduates of the program have received a double Master's degree.

Besides curricula harmonization, the recipe for success of the double-degree program includes matching the subject of a student's research work and appropriate supervisor at both ends. This also fosters the development of research cooperation in new research areas and new personal contacts.

A specific feature of the double-degree program is that most classes at TU Ilmenau are conducted in German. Hence, a good knowledge of German is required from Russian students taking part in the program. In order to meet the requirement, German language courses were established at ETU to start the program. Students not only study the language itself, but also attend regular technical lectures in German delivered by visiting professors from TU Ilmenau.

Some of the graduates of the program continue doing research as PhD students at ETU. Others have been employed in Russia and in Europe by the German and international companies such as Cisco, Dell, Jenoptik.

The next step of the cooperation was a trilateral strategic partnership SPITSE, established among TU Ilmenau, ETU, and the National Research University "Moscow Power Engineering Institute" in 2013. The project, funded by DAAD, was aimed at joint research and educational activities in the area of sensors and sensor networks. It allowed an increased number of academic exchanges for research, delivering lectures, and planning future activities. To share experiences, the annual SPITSE Research Symposium was organized in Ilmenau (2014), Saint Petersburg (2015), and Moscow (2016). These event drew the attention of SPITSE partner institutions, who contributed actively to the symposia. This networking resulted in strengthened research cooperation.

The successful implementation of SPITSE meant that DAAD continued the financial support of the project for the next two years and academic exchanges intensified during this period. In particular, a number of trainees from TU Ilmenau undertook internships at ETU. The number of lectures by German professors at ETU also increased. All of this became possible because of the DAAD support in combination with funding from the Erasmus+ program.

## International Faculty Recruitment

The research and educational cooperation opened new possibilities for ETU in obtaining world-class results and enhancing the university's visibility by increasing participation in major international scientific conferences and membership in professional associations. This led to an increase of networking with representatives of the world's leading universities with the potential for future collaborations. Further, this gave new opportunities for international faculty recruitment.

To realize its strategic development program, ETU has recently been active in looking for talented international faculty members. A straightforward approach is an analysis of the labour market. Well developed research cooperation makes it possible to attract faculty members from partner institutions for temporary positions. An obvious benefit of such recruitment is that both parties already know each other and these individuals face fewer problems integrating into the university of employment.

The long-term partnership between ETU and TU Ilmenau in research and education made it possible to consider some of professors from TU Ilmenau for employment at ETU. Being permanently employed by TU Ilmenau, they can leave TU Ilmenau for short periods of time only. Long-term employment of international faculty is an option for retirees or those who are head hunted. However, head hunting is beyond partner relationship and out of consideration in this paper.

The results of the SPITSE project established partner relations with more universities from Germany such as Magdeburg University of Applied Sciences and Stralsund University of Applied Sciences as well as from other countries, e.g. Czech Technical University in Prague. In particular, ETU has recently offered a number of Master's programs in English in different subject areas. Some lecture courses are delivered by international faculty members employed on a temporary basis. Many of them were recruited from partner institutions thanks to the international research cooperation and the partner network of ETU.

## Conclusion

International mobility programs are an efficient tool to enhance university research cooperation. Besides the obvious benefits of the research cooperation itself, such as the increased number of publications, indirect but important consequences are deepened personal contacts and a broadened partner network. Researchers and academics from such networks who have been involved in the mo-

bility programs are promising target candidates for temporary employment. They can be easily integrated into the new university as they have already have relationships with local faculty and are familiar with the infrastructure. Thus broadening the partner network as a result of research cooperation gives additional possibilities to recruit international faculty members.

## Research Internships in Siberia for International Students – a Bridge to New Scientific Collaboration

**Michele Debrenne**

*Professor: Novosibirsk State University, Russia*

*[Coor-france@nsu.ru](mailto:Coor-france@nsu.ru)*

Education export is a priority for Russia, however it is difficult to attract international students to Siberia, due to the commonly spread poor image of the region. International recruitment of teachers and researchers faces the same difficulties despite the high quality of HEIs. Novosibirsk State University (NSU), one of the most famous university in Russia, was designed as a special place to train young researchers aiming to continue their career in the research institutes of "Akademgorodok", the famous academic city. Most research labs are well-known abroad, international scientific collaboration is very active, but mostly within institutes.

In order to extend the scientific collaboration to universities and to attract researchers for teaching, NSU proposed the "Research internships for international students" program. Every year it offers 50 internships for international students in various scientific fields. Trainees and tutors in their home universities can see that NSU is a place where strong scientific research is being done and where they can receive further high-level education, e. g. a PhD. The exact dates and duration of the internships (usually 3–4 months) depend on the requirements of the partner HEI. According to Russian law, international trainees cannot be paid, but considering that the internship is free of charge and the low cost of life in Siberia, the only real expenses are travel costs, which in some cases can be paid by the Erasmus+ ICM program.

In 2000, the French "Grandes Ecoles" introduced compulsory international mobility for their students. A research internship is also required in all the French engineering schools. Teachers at NSU are used to being scientific advisers in the labs of Novosibirsk's Akademgorodok. Over 30 French HEIs are NSU partners, so NSU proposed



welcoming French trainees to its labs for summer training internships. Originally designed for French students of Grandes Ecoles, this program has been gradually opened to students from HEIs all over the world. They can find information on a dedicated page of the NSU website, where there are examples of topics and testimonials from international students.

The scientific topics have to be approved by both institutions before the beginning of the internship. An agreement is signed between the competent offices in both HEIs; the topic is discussed directly between the student and the scientific advisor, taking into account the previous knowledge of the trainee and the current interest of the lab. The trainee becomes part of a laboratory, his or her work is not a fictive school exercise but a real research task, fulfilled within a team in accordance with the scientific program of the given institute.

For now, the project "Research internships for international students" has been financed by Program 5-100, therefore it is strongly evaluated every year. The expertise obtained during the implementation of this program has been useful in creating other short-term programs at NSU, such as field trip programs in geology and archeology, and summer schools.

This program opens opportunities for collaboration in education and in research. The fact that the internships usually take place in spring and summer allows trainees from different countries to come to Siberia, avoiding the cold time of the year. It helps them to get over the psychological barrier about Russia in general and Siberia in particular.

The main interest of this project for NSU is in enhancing its visibility among researchers all over the world. During the internship, the trainees may have the opportunity to take part in a scientific event (conference, congress, summer school) or to publish their results. By the end of the internship the trainee writes a report, and defends it, first in Novosibirsk, then back in his or her own HEI. The scientific advisor at NSU is asked to give his evaluation of the trainee's work. In some cases, the defense is held in the form of a contest. The internship undertaken at NSU by Diane Silva, Ecole des Ponts, (2014) was awarded first place. In 2016, Cynthia Beziers, a student of the ESCOM grande école in Chemistry, could enter a master's program in the prestigious Université Pierre et Marie Curie, then she won an internship at the Institut Pasteur and one at Stowers Institute in Kansas city, presenting the results of the internship she performed at NSU at her interviews.

Several trainees want to return to NSU after the internship to enter an English taught master's program or a PhD program, eventually in co-direction. In fact, scientific contacts were established between the scientific advisors from the sending institution and NSU. For instance, a strong collaboration has been established between the Laboratoire Navier, at Ecole des Ponts ParisTech and the department of geophysics of NSU. A new research team has been created, which was awarded Russian and French financial grants.

Internships of French doctoral students and postdocs from the University of Bordeaux (UB) reinforced the collaboration in archeology, which had been previously formalized in a joint laboratory between NSU and UB. In 2019 Prof. William Rendu gave lectures to NSU students in his field, archaeozoology, which is a new topic at NSU. Some students are now working with him and participating in the archaeological summer camp he organized.

During the past 6 years over 250 international students have undertaken a research internship at NSU. This has helped to overcome the stereotype of Siberia, to improve international relations and to build strong collaboration between researchers and teachers in different parts of the world, attracting them to teach at the NSU.

## The Evolution and Impact of International Recruitment at Higher School of Economics University

**Vadim Radaev**

*First Vice Rector*

*Professor: School of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences*

*Head: Department of Economic Sociology*

*Head: Laboratory for Studies in Economic Sociology*

*HSE University, Russia*

[radaev@hse.ru](mailto:radaev@hse.ru)

In 2007, Higher School of Economics University (HSE) was the first university in Russia (alongside New Economic School) to start using international recruitment procedures. This allowed HSE to attract and integrate international faculty members across different research areas and it changed the way HSE approached the recruitment of academic staff overall.

### Different Tracks

There are 3 different tracks which HSE University uses to recruit international faculty members: tenure-track positions, postdoctoral fellowships, and part-time positions for senior academics.

To outline the procedures briefly, we publish and disseminate an open call for positions in specific fields. The initial screening and selection of candidates is performed by Search and Selection Committees within each academic field. The committees assess the applicants' CV, publications, and motivation, and hold Skype interviews. They draw up a short list of candidates invited for an interview, either at HSE or at an international conference.

The applicants give a public presentation of their research and are interviewed about their motivation and academic career. If the results are rated positively by the Search and Selection Committees and the International Recruitment Committee, a candidate receives a job offer specifying the conditions. This arrangement maintains a cohesive policy while taking into account the academic practices of different fields. Once the offer is accepted, HSE begins contract drafting procedures and visa arrangements.

Recruitment for tenure-track positions was the first to be launched at HSE, offering a three-year contract. If the interim review is positive, the contract can be extended for another three years. Similarly, if the final review demonstrates great results in research and teaching, a tenured position at HSE is offered. If there is a negative evaluation, an additional year is offered before the termination of the contract. Initially only departments at HSE Moscow could recruit faculty through these procedures, but the program was extended to other campuses, with HSE St. Petersburg being the most proactive after Moscow. Currently HSE recruits researchers for tenure-track positions in over 15 academic fields. Each year we get from 10 to 150 applications per research area from candidates who were recently awarded PhDs from leading universities worldwide.

When tenure-track recruitment proved successful, HSE launched two more international tracks. The second was the postdoctoral fellowship program – since 2013 HSE has been recruiting postdocs for one-year contracts. They have an opportunity to extend their contract twice (up to three years in total) depending on research performance and feedback from the host laboratory or department. The postdoc program has already served as a pathway to tenure-track positions, with several former postdocs now working at HSE as Assistant Professors.

The third track of international recruitment, Senior Part-Timers, was created only in 2017. It is aimed at building strong research collaborations and international teams through inviting tenured academics with extensive experience to spend a part of the academic year in Russia. They help establish and develop research teams, provide guidance to junior colleagues, and co-author research publications with HSE faculty members.

A combination of these three tracks helped to make HSE's international recruitment efforts more balanced, so as to better enhance the internationalization of the university's academic environment and community. Internationally recruited researchers are those who are successful in the international academic market, and are not defined by their citizenship. Currently there are 179 internationally recruited researchers working at HSE: 90 tenure-track faculty members, 18 faculty members holding tenured positions, 47 postdocs and 24 senior researchers working part-time. However, the overall number of international academic staff at HSE is at least twice that, since many of them were invited to work at HSE international labs as lead researchers and some of them were recruited through standard procedures for non-tenure-track contracts.

## The Impact on the University Policy and Environment

International recruitment prompted a series of changes across the university. Obviously, it is important academically to have colleagues from different backgrounds and universities, however, the transformation also concerned university services. Faculty members with experience at international universities bring expectations with them, in some cases these served as a starting point for many much-needed changes which have helped HSE to create better work and study conditions for all its students and staff. For instance, the university needed to provide its internationally recruited members with health insurance, and it prompted a serious discussion as to what kind of support in this area all HSE staff should have. Another concerns raising the bar for administrative staff regarding fluency in English, since many international researchers do not speak Russian. As a result, most administrative units and all the Study Program offices have managers who speak English and can directly help international students and faculty members with their inquiries.

The success of the postdoctoral fellowship program prompted the university to create a similar track, but aimed at colleagues working at Russian universities who would like to spend a year at one of the laboratories or research centers at HSE and participate in their research projects. Its purpose is twofold – to find young researchers with good potential and track records and to strengthen ties between Russian universities so that a shared academic space can emerge. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, professional connections between Russian universities weakened greatly. Academic mobility within the country is still, regrettably, rare, with the majority of colleagues going abroad or inviting international colleagues to Russia. Seeing how enriching it is for international postdocs to spend a year at HSE (both for them and for the university), we were inspired to try and increase domestic academic mobility as well, so that it becomes a significant contributor to creating a more tightly knit academic community.

HSE has two parallel recruitment systems – international and standard. Typically the 'standard' one is thought of as 'domestic' even though there are international colleagues who were recruited through it. Similarly, there are Russian citizens who have PhDs from universities across the world and who were hired through the international recruitment track. The standard track was greatly transformed in 2013, largely due to the influence of international recruitment procedures. The call for applications has become open to everyone and is publicly advertised, each candidate's research papers are reviewed by an impartial evaluator, and the results are assessed by field-specific committees.

At the moment these two recruitment policies have a lot in common, but the international track is more demanding in terms of publication activity and quality and thus has a significantly reduced teaching workload. These two recruitment systems are like train tracks, allowing the university to go forward, and the further we look into the



future, the more indistinguishable from one another they become. We continue our efforts to harmonize the evaluation criteria of the university's general policy towards recruiting academic staff with our international recruitment tracks.

## A Program for Attracting International and Russian Researchers for Postdoctoral Positions at the Ural Federal University

**Sergey Zvonarev**

*Associate Professor: Ural Federal University, Russia*  
[s.v.zvonarev@urfu.ru](mailto:s.v.zvonarev@urfu.ru)

**Vladimir Kruzhaev**

*Vice-Rector for Research: Ural Federal University, Russia*  
[v.v.kruzhaev@urfu.ru](mailto:v.v.kruzhaev@urfu.ru)

### Introduction

Internationalization is one of the most important criteria in evaluating whether research reaches international standards. It covers international laboratories, including mega-projects, joint research with publications in top ranking journals, and mobility programs. The latter include the participation of scientists in international conferences and attracting leading and young foreign researchers to universities and research centers for postdoctoral programs. Such programs are very well developed at foreign universities and in recent years Russian universities have started the work on attracting international specialists. To create joint research projects with international research teams, Ural Federal University introduced "The UrFU postdoctoral program" in 2014. This program can accelerate the development of research collaboration between young research teams, support the formation of interdisciplinary research and facilitate the internal and external mobility of researchers.

### "The UrFU Postdoctoral Program"

The main challenge for this program was to support academic research conducted by young researchers, local and international, under the supervision of leading UrFU scientists representing competence centers, to obtain research results competitive at the international level and suitable for publication in top ranking international academic

journals. This competition was open for researchers under 35, who obtained candidate or PhD degree not earlier than 7 years prior to the program announcement, were engaged in academic and research activities, were fluent in English, and had publications in Web of Science and Scopus journals. The program aims included the identification of the most promising academic and research projects among UrFU excellence centers and research groups and the attraction of young international and Russian researchers to these projects, including establishing and maintaining further research cooperation with international specialists. This collaboration should ensure the creation of joint research projects with foreign research groups and prepare articles for international journals indexed in Web of Science and Scopus.

"The UrFU postdoctoral program" was conducted annually and consisted of two stages: the overall project and the postdoctoral competition. During the first stage, heads of UrFU Competence centers formed requests in English and Russian with a description of the project for participation to which postdoctoral researchers were invited. During the second stage a competition was announced for postdoctoral researchers who won the first stage, considering the requirements of the supervisors of the projects.

### Program Results

For over 5 years, "The UrFU postdoctoral program" has attracted 40 researchers, including 35 from abroad: Japan, USA, Great Britain, Italy, France, Morocco, China, Hong Kong, Egypt, India, Armenia, Belarus, Ukraine, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan. At present 29 researchers, more than half of them with the status of "highly qualified specialist", are employed within "The UrFU postdoctoral program". The number of postdoctoral researchers, employed in 2014 was 6 (5 highly qualified specialists); 16 in 2015 (11 highly qualified specialists); 23 in 2016 (12 highly qualified specialists); 26 in 2017 (13 highly qualified specialists); 29 in 2018 (15 highly qualified specialists).

### Publication Activity

There is an annual evaluation of postdoctoral researchers' efficacy based on the number of articles affiliated with UrFU in Scopus and Web of Science. Overall the number of articles indexed in Scopus and Web of Science, in 2015 was 12 (1 article from Q1, 3 from the Q2, 3 from the Q3 and 2 from the Q4); 57 in 2016 (12 articles from the Q1, 12 – Q2, 8 – Q3 and 5 – Q4); 79 in 2017 (18 articles from the Q1, 18 – Q2, 15 – Q3, 10 – Q4); 130 in 2018 (30 articles from Q1, 33 – Q2, 20 – Q3 and 28 – Q4). The last years demonstrated the most significant growth of publication numbers despite an insignificant increase in the number of postdoctoral researchers. Since 2016, the number of publications in journals with no quartile demonstrated an insignificant decrease and its share in the overall number of articles became notably smaller. The number of publications in Q1 and Q2 journals shows annual growth and in 2018 their share was almost 50% of all articles published by postdoctoral researchers.

Grant activities are another result achieved within the program. International researchers employed within the framework of “The UrFU postdoctoral program” received grants from different foundations. In 2018, 3 postdoctoral researchers received grants from RSF as project leaders and 1 postdoctoral researcher as executive contractor.

“The UrFU postdoctoral program” has attracted high-quality specialists. Despite the publication activity demonstrated by post-docs, the number of articles did not exceed 5% of the overall university publication output and further up-scaling of the program was not fulfilled.

## Conclusion

We can conclude that “The UrFU postdoctoral program” has demonstrated its potential in attracting promising young scientists capable of preparing a solid basis for international level research and publishing their results in leading international journals. The next step for UrFU is to transform employed postdoctoral researchers into research fellows using their academic activities as the foundation for creating international level research laboratories and working groups. This program was acknowledged as the best practice of 2017 as part of the working group “International specialists support” of the “Global Universities” association.

# Hiring (Many) International Faculty in a Siberian University

Andrey Shcherbenok

*Director: School of Advanced Studies, University of Tyumen, Russia*

*Associate Professor: Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO, Russia*

[a.scherbenok@utmn.ru](mailto:a.scherbenok@utmn.ru)

## The University's Situation

In the fall of 2015 the University of Tyumen (Siberia) joined Project 5-100. [1] For a regional university entering this project was a challenge. It was clear that it had to do something very unusual to be taken seriously by the Project 5-100 International Council and by leading Russian research universities.

One thing that made doing something unusual possible was the university's brand-new governing team that was brought onboard by the new rector to lead the university into a different league. Both the rector and the team studied at the Moscow School of Management Skolkovo which

routinely emphasizes the necessity for the radical transformation of Russian universities. It was, in part, through Skolkovo's inspiration that the university decided to create the School of Advanced Studies (SAS).

## The Design of the School of Advanced Studies

SAS was conceived as a greenfield institution which, while being a part of the university, is not based on any of its existing institutes. As an educational institution, SAS was to offer 7 BA majors – 5 in social sciences and the humanities and 2 in life sciences and IT, along with some MA programs. SAS was expected to offer a qualitatively different education, which would attract the best high school graduates from across Russia and beyond. As a research institution, SAS was to produce internationally recognized research. Unlike most Russian universities, SAS chose not to focus on Russia as an object of study but to address research problems of global academic relevance.

## The Cluster Hiring Challenge

SAS needed at least a dozen permanent faculty to launch its educational and research programs in the fall of 2017, 10 months after the decision on its establishment was made. To make SAS substantially different from the rest of the university, the core of its faculty had to come from outside Tyumen. Faculty who can work according to international standards in social sciences and the humanities in Russia tend to concentrate in a handful of universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg and are generally unwilling to move. SAS was made an English-language institution to be able to recruit on the international job market without requiring faculty to speak any Russian; however, to attract PhD holders to a no-name Siberian university with no history, no current faculty and not even a building at the time of first search was a daunting task, additionally exacerbated by the international situation.

### Creating Competitive Advantages

The SAS design included several features that served as competitive advantages in attracting international faculty:

- a brand-new institution with no history and traditions, which gave its faculty a chance to contribute to its design;
- multidisciplinary research teams instead of disciplinary departments. SAS decided to take interdisciplinarity seriously: a faculty member could only be hired as a part of a multidisciplinary research team, SAS only supported research done in team projects;
- good working conditions. SAS pays European (although not American) level salaries for junior faculty and occupies a custom-redesigned building that looks great and promotes communication;
- a liberal arts and sciences format of BA education – something most international faculty are used to;
- a unique faculty search involving a project design session.



## Project Design Sessions

Starting an institution from scratch means that you cannot rely on existing faculty expertise to select candidates. It also means that you need to hire many professors in different disciplines at once. SAS transformed these restrictions into constitutive features of its hiring procedure. A global call for applications and a series of preliminary Skype interviews selected finalists who were all invited for simultaneous on-campus interviews and to participate in a project design session, or PDS. SAS has run three PDS so far, in 2017, 2018, 2019, each of them involved 22–26 faculty candidates, a mostly external expert board and team moderators. In the course of the PDS, faculty candidates are invited to form multidisciplinary project teams and outline research projects they propose to do if hired by SAS. There are three rounds of the project design cycle (team work & plenary session), so candidates can try several teams and projects. The final hiring decisions are made by the SAS administration following board recommendations. [2]

## Hiring Outcomes

So far, the SAS international faculty search has proved very successful and allowed SAS to build its current permanent faculty body where 3/4 of the faculty, representing 7 nationalities, hold a PhD from a university in the top-100 of THE or QS general university rankings. [3]

As it turned out, the single most important factor that made faculty candidates accept SAS offers was the chance to continue working with other candidates they met during the intensive communication at PDS, with several of them citing PDS as the most exciting academic experience in their lifetime. PDS deliberately merges academic formats with those derived from business school practices to achieve an intensity rarely found in academic environments.

## Problems

While SAS faculty successfully overcame the inevitable problems that characterize a new institution doing everything for the first time, there is one important problem that appears more enduring. Faculty who join SAS to do a multidisciplinary research project often lose their interdisciplinary enthusiasm as they discover how difficult it actually is. The dilemma they face is to either engage in the multidisciplinary research project with uncertain chances of success or to continue with their previous monodisciplinary individual research where the results are more predictable. SAS has an institutionalized external annual review of team projects to incentivize faculty to concentrate on team research; however, since multidisciplinary research is risky and takes time, SAS cannot punish faculty too much if they do not succeed in their first year. This means the annual review is not a powerful enough instrument for faculty who are thinking of moving somewhere after 2–3 years in Tyumen.

This problem should be mitigated as SAS becomes better known, attracts more high-quality applications and can se-

lect those best prepared for multidisciplinary research projects. It cannot, however, alter its institutional design and lift the requirement of multidisciplinary. This design is something that sets SAS apart on a global scale and allows it to attract faculty who choose it over jobs in other universities. If SAS mimics other universities, SAS will only be able to hire faculty who could not find jobs in decent research universities around the world, thus undermining its mission as an academic driver for the University of Tyumen and the Russian university system in general.

## Notes

[1] See <https://5top100.ru/en/>.

[2] See <https://sas.utmn.ru/en/research-en/> for a description of each PDS and current multidisciplinary research projects.

[3] For the list of current faculty, see <https://sas.utmn.ru/en/people-en/>.

# The Internationalization of Higher Education: Faculty and Postdoctoral Researcher Recruitment Initiatives in Russia

Karin A. C. Johnson

*PhD Candidate, University of California Riverside, USA*  
[kjohn033@ucr.edu](mailto:kjohn033@ucr.edu)

The internationalization of higher education is developing globally and Russia is relatively new to this scene compared to other countries. One strategic component is to internationalize home campuses by hosting more foreigners. We may, by default, think this means enrolling foreign students but it also includes attracting and hiring international faculty and postdoctoral researchers. How do higher education institutes recruit skilled talent and what policies and initiatives—both at institutional and national levels—support these efforts? This article draws on 22 interviews with experts from 9 leading research-oriented higher education institutions and 2 governmental organizations to consider how the internationalization policy shapes mobility to Russia within the academic sector.

## Policy and International Recruitment Initiatives

Russian higher education was historically insular—Russian universities competed against each other to attract

Russophone foreign students. The higher education policies adopted during the past 10 years aimed to break this isolation by adopting international standards. Recent policies such as Project 5-100 established in 2013 and the Export Education initiative approved in 2017, encouraged Russian HEIs to internationalize more quickly.

These two national policies are aimed at attracting foreign talent. Explicitly, Export Education sets out to double or triple the number of foreign students by 2025, but Project 5-100 demarcates recruitment in another manner. KPIs for the 21 member universities involve increasing their global rankings through academic publishing and quality teaching, increasing foreign student numbers, offering courses and programs in English, and establishing more international partnerships with foreign scholars and universities. 5 of the 9 visited universities are Project 5-100 members, yet all 9 have an internationalization strategies which include the KPIs listed above. To achieve this, departments attract, develop, and hire skilled researchers and faculty.

Russian universities meet these needs through various initiatives. One of the most common ways is to establish international partnerships and joint research with leading scholars from highly-ranked universities around the world. Relationships begin informally based on collegial interactions. Partnerships can be institutionalized into formal exchanges, double degree programs, faculty affiliation, or short-term lecturer positions. Secondly, universities invest in developing their current faculty. For example, Maria and Alexander, the two Directors of the Office of International Development at a Project 5-100 technical-based research university, said that with federal funding they now have the resources to train their lectures to teach in English—although all courses are taught in Russian to maintain quality standards and cohesion among students. Likewise, other administrators said their universities created writing centers and workshops to assist faculty in publishing in high-ranking international journals. Finally, top-performing universities hire international faculty and postdocs, but applications are subject to market forces. Yulia, Head of International Faculty Support, said that previously the university saw more tenure-track applications, whereas in recent years, postdoc positions are more popular. Not only have universities overtly recruited international talent, they have also sought out foreign-educated, English-speaking Russian faculty members.

Academic recruitment to meet policy goals is not without challenges. As Tania, a Department Chair, said, it is difficult to hire qualified candidates because they must be a leading academic and teacher and be proficient in English. Although it is easier for researchers and faculty to work on 1-year or 3-year “Highly Qualified Specialist” residency visas, this can be a complicated process which may include ad hoc requests or requirements by the state. Another issue is retainment. Sue, a postdoc at a research university, said that she is hesitant to stay without knowing Russian and would prefer employment elsewhere, but an increasingly constrained academic market offers few choices.

## The Internationalization of Higher Education

We infer two simultaneous processes: First, that higher education is internationalizing via the attraction, partnership, and recruitment of foreign and foreign-trained researchers; and second, postdocs and faculty may cast a broader net when seeking academic collaboration and employment. We conclude that academic labor circulation reifies the internationalization of higher education.

The key may be what a university and academic unit can provide. For temporary researchers, access to equipment, resources and affiliation, and publications with leading scholars at Russian universities are attractive. For long-term candidates, research funds and publishing bonuses, limited service for junior faculty members during their formative years, retention benefits, and family/spousal support are important factors. As our interviews suggest, national policy supports the goals of attracting global talent, but institutional strategic plans to promote academic mobility are decisive. Institutions can also address recruitment difficulties by training future academics for an international career and providing them with what they need to be successful beyond their research and teaching (e.g., English language training and introducing them to international mentorship networks). Finally, industry actively recruits candidates and opportunities outside of academia attract PhDs. For a higher education institute to maintain its competitive edge in an international market, it needs to be happy and productive to recruit and retain the best people. Now is the time for emerging destination countries to capitalize on the chance to market themselves to high-quality candidates.

## Conclusion

Our investigation has three implications. First, the analysis contributes to the theoretical understanding of how internationalization policy and practice shape academic talent recruitment. Second, using these recommendations, institutional programming—in Russia and other countries—can modify graduate training, recruitment and hiring to be more effective in an increasingly international environment. Lastly, in terms of policy making at the local and national levels around the world, actions should reflect goals to attract and retain skilled professionals, by, for example standardizing immigration procedures. In sum, opportunities that attract research talent and cohesive institutional and national policies which facilitate and modernized recruitment processes reinforce internationalization efforts.

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# Why Recruit Internationally? The Role of International Collaboration in Academic Development at HSE University

**Valentina Kuskova**

*Deputy First Vice Rector*

*Head: International Laboratory for Applied Network Research*

*Associate Professor: School of Sociology Programme, Faculty of Social Sciences*

*Academic Supervisor: Applied Statistics with Network Analysis*

*HSE University, Russia*

[vkuskova@hse.ru](mailto:vkuskova@hse.ru)

One question that comes up often at HSE University is “why recruit internationally?” Bringing in faculty from abroad requires many resources (not only financial, and in fact, intangible resources often play a much more important role), and the impact of international scholars may not be apparent immediately. There are several, almost universal, reasons for attracting faculty trained elsewhere, and international collaboration is what lies at the heart of the idea of international recruitment.

## Different Expertise

It is difficult to overestimate the diversity of academic expertise, even within the same field. Over time, academics within the same school develop a certain way of doing things, which is rooted in culture, procedures, and the personalities of mentors. When we train young scholars, we teach them “the way,” and over time, we face “academic inbreeding.” By itself, it may not be a problem, especially in the natural sciences. However, systematically and in the entire academic environment – as was the case in Russia for many years – such an approach can lead to a lack of diversity in research ideas and a culture of academic isolation. To combat stagnation and ensure a constant exchange of experience, some universities in the USA even have an explicit rule that PhD graduates cannot remain as faculty in their alma maters – they have to work elsewhere for a few years before returning “home,” should they choose to return. Therefore, the first and most important reason for recruiting international faculty was diversity – the simple fact that, regardless of the field, international scholars were just different from PhD candidates trained in Russia. Attracting foreign staff would allow HSE University to become more easily integrated into international academic discussions, including

the development of international collaboration in research and bringing internationally trained scholars into the classroom.

## The Role of International Experts

However, it became clear early on that we needed to rely on the expertise of our colleagues from abroad in order to establish the institute of international recruitment. In most western universities, there is no such thing as “international recruitment” – the academic market is simply open to everyone, regardless of their country of education, as long as they fit the criteria of what the university is looking for. The Russian academic environment was isolated in that regard, and most international scholars working in Russia were attracted through the Fulbright program, personal connections, or some other similarly unique channels, not sustainable on any sizable scale. In order to make HSE University attractive to foreign faculty, recruiting procedures and academic career development had to become similar to what international faculty could expect elsewhere, and we needed the expertise of renowned international academics in order to adapt western procedures to our realities.

The first challenge we faced was the lack of an open academic market in Russia. As a result, we did not have a clear understanding of how to evaluate international scholars when, from their CVs, they looked about equal to each other. We learned several important lessons: the idea of a “sustainable research pipeline,” where we could evaluate someone’s working papers for their publication potential; the idea of working on a “hot topic,” which would ensure that working papers could lead to respectable publications. Finally, we learned the very idea of a “respectable publication,” when quality counts much more than quantity, and one paper in a top journal is better than several papers in journals from lower tiers. International professors from top western universities worked on our search and selection committees – two separate academic bodies, one tasked with identifying potential candidates (reviewing hundreds of CVs), and another with selecting suitable candidates for interviews, campus visits, and potentially extending offers of employment. Even in this work, we employed the idea of international collaboration, ensuring that each committee had no less than two international experts from different universities. Having developed enough expertise in evaluating potential candidates, many disciplines combined search and selection committees, but international academics continue to be a part of most recruiting committees and remain important contributors to HSE University’s international recruitment.

The second contribution of international experts was the creation of unified recruitment procedures and academic career standards. Internationally, many universities follow a “standard” career development, when after several years on “tenure track,” scholars are evaluated for their contribution and may get an offer of tenure. We started from scratch – not only did we not have unified recruitment



guidelines, which needed to be developed, but we did not know how to assess international faculty after they had worked at HSE University for some time. International experts, especially colleagues from London School of Economics, which worked with ICEF, helped with the original set of guidelines and procedures. While still a work in progress, after many iterations, the set of guidelines that HSE University has developed is the best way to communicate our recruitment policy and career standards to the outside world. Many scholars, prior to applying to HSE University, review them to see if our academic environment is suitable for their career aspirations.

One more contribution that international experts have made is they became a part of our academic community, joining existing research projects, opening new research laboratories, and teaching our students. Some have started as academic collaborators, but many did not, and having visited HSE University as part of their recruitment work, were taken by our vibrant research environment and enthusiasm. While there are too many experts to name in a short article, I want to mention that we are grateful to everyone for the contribution they have made and continue to make – and we hope this international collaboration continues into the future, even after we ourselves become experts in international recruiting.

### **Post-docs: the Success Story**

One area of academic collaboration where international recruitment has been most effective is the recruitment of post-docs. We did not have much hope for this program – after all, there are mixed opinions about the success of post-docs in their immediate and future career, and this track is more prominent in natural not social sciences – but with some encouragement from international experts and the HSE University administration, we gave it a try. The fact that this track was very attractive to international academics became apparent almost immediately – we had over a hundred applications in the very first year of the program announcement (in 2012). Since then, post-doctoral applications by far exceed tenure-track applications; close to 100 research centers and labs participate in recruitment every year, and this year, almost 150 applications were received for just 50 slots. However, the success of the program cannot be measured by the numbers alone: most post-docs stay at HSE for several years, renewing their contracts; actively publishing their work in top international peer-reviewed journals; and starting and continuing research projects with HSE University even after they go elsewhere to continue their employment. Quite a few apply for tenure-track positions within HSE University, and some of our most successful tenure-track faculty are former post-docs.

Having seen this program grow practically from scratch, I could name a few reasons for its success, but one of the most important reasons is what we started it with – international collaboration. Because post-doctoral researchers come to HSE University with the goal of seeing their dissertation work get published, they still actively collab-

orate with their former mentors and PhD advisors. Post-docs get their senior colleagues involved in working with HSE University, and quite a few fruitful collaborations with prominent foreign scholars started with seminar visits organized by laboratories, employing their former students. Even after post-docs leave, collaboration continues, and we receive many emails from our foreign colleagues with requests to consider “another one” of their students. As a result, we are not recruiting “cold” candidates; we are recruiting well-known, recommended and vetted professionals. The interest in the program continues to grow, as does HSE University’s reputation as an academic employer – all due to the international collaboration we have established.

If I could write more, I would continue with the idea of international collaboration and its role in academic development and recruitment. With limited space, I invite all interested colleagues to check out HSE University’s site <https://ifaculty.hse.ru/> – a resource developed by the International Faculty Support Unit, where international colleagues can find answers to many questions about international recruitment, faculty life, and beyond – most importantly, what it is like to be an international faculty member at HSE University. If you are not a part of HSE University already, consider joining us for any of the collaboration opportunities that we offer.

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## **The Integration of Internationally Recruited Faculty into the University Community: Best Practices and Pitfalls**

**Madina Aitakanova**

*Director: Department of International Cooperation, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan*  
[mtelmanova@nu.edu.kz](mailto:mtelmanova@nu.edu.kz)

**Aidos Taizhanov**

*General Manager: Department of International Cooperation, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan*  
[aidos.taizhanov@nu.edu.kz](mailto:aidos.taizhanov@nu.edu.kz)

**Leila Maslova**

*Senior Manager: Department of International Cooperation, Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan*  
[leila.akhmet@nu.edu.kz](mailto:leila.akhmet@nu.edu.kz)

In the era of globalization, many countries have made internationalization a priority strategy in the development of their higher education systems. Internationalization has become one of the top trends in higher education worldwide and is seen as one of the most effective tools to make education systems competitive. The successful and efficient implementation of internationalization strategies often requires international expertise to develop and deliver an internationalized curriculum, expand networks for interinstitutional collaboration and partnerships, and design and implement policies and procedures that meet international standards. Countries and institutions make the attraction of international faculty an integral part of their internationalization policies often seeing a high number of internationally recruited academics as a key indicator of internationalization [1].

Therefore, there are country and institutional-level policies and incentives that have been created to attract talented international academics. However, such policies are rarely covered in the literature, which focuses “on the experience of faculty at elite institutions”. These elite institutions rely on their reputation and attract international faculty without the implementation of specific policies and incentives. In some contexts, even cultural norms and bureaucratic administrative procedures may create barriers and institutions have to develop monetary and non-monetary incentives [2]. The case of Nazarbayev University (NU) demonstrates how national and institutional policies and monetary and non-monetary incentives work in practice.

Initiated by the first president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, and envisioned to become an international research university, NU was established in 2010. Considering the challenges faced by the first international universities in Kazakhstan (e.g. KIMEP, Suleyman Demirel University) which had difficulties in introducing the international standards regulated by the Ministry of Education and Science, it was decided to develop a special law on the status of NU, Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools [3], and the Nazarbayev Fund [4] which was adopted in January 2011. The law guarantees institutional autonomy and academic freedom for the university – two crucial conditions for flexibility in the operation and in creating incentives for the employment of international academics. In addition to autonomy and academic freedom, the law enables NU to develop and introduce its own academic programs based on international standards, regulations and policies, faculty-hiring standards, and introduce its own governance structure. Another important aspect of the law making NU’s international recruitment much more simplified and less bureaucratic is that NU has the right to hire foreign nationals without obtaining a special permit from the government. Therefore, NU became the first institution in Kazakhstan and Central Asia operating within a special legal framework.

According to Altbach and Yudkevich (2017), there are different rationales for creating national and institutional policies, and monetary and non-monetary incentives to

attract international faculty. NU’s rationale was the lack of qualified and experienced local academics, researchers, and administrators capable of developing the new university into a globally competitive research-intensive higher education institution.

As a brand-new university without a well-established reputation, but with an effective governance system and abundant funding [5], NU had to create both monetary and non-monetary incentives to attract talented highly-qualified academics. In addition to the legal framework, openness to all talented and outstanding professionals (regardless of their citizenship, nationality, gender, religion) and meritocracy have become the fundamental principles for NU in selecting and hiring the best talent.

Faculty are recruited through an internationally competitive hiring process. A candidate passes three rounds of interviews and submits a package of documents, which are carefully examined by a commission. Depending on the candidate’s profile, the commission is composed of representatives from Schools and the NU executive management. The hiring standards and procedures were developed under the guidance of NU’s strategic partners (e.g. University of Wisconsin-Madison, Duke University, University of Pittsburgh, and University of Pennsylvania).

One of the initial challenges was that NU was unknown in the academic world, however, owing to its strategic partners, NU has managed to overcome this challenge and to attract talented faculty and eminent professionals. Today, the NU faculty consists of 477 academics coming from 56 countries, and the share of international faculty is 75%.

The successful integration of international academic and administrative staff into the university community has not come easily and even after nine years, it is still a challenge. In this regard, in addition to attractive monetary incentives (including competitive salaries, on-campus housing, and a schooling allowance), for the smooth integration of international academics and the creation of favorable conditions NU has been developing effective administrative support and HR management systems. For this purpose, in addition to the central HR department and faculty support unit within the Department of International Cooperation (dealing with issues such as visas, housing, travel, repatriation and expatriation, schooling for dependents), each School has a special HR-manager whose main responsibility is to provide support to faculty members.

In order to deliver comprehensive and consistent support to international faculty, NU has been scrupulous in hiring local administrative staff who are able to implement international standards and procedures. Based on data collected, there are 270 employees out of 517 administrative staff, who obtained their higher education abroad, including those ranked in Top-100 of Times Higher Education [6].

Even with the best practices and standards embedded in every layer of the university’s operations, there are still

some bureaucratic barriers demanding further improvement. One of the challenges identified in NU's Strategy 2018–2030 is “closing the cultural gap” between international and local faculty and administration. The cultural gap is further compounded by a lack of effective communication [7] (revealed during the Institutional Evaluation Program by the European Universities Association) sometimes leading to the misunderstanding of common rules, regulations, and procedures mostly related to procurement, finance and legal issues.

These issues are mostly addressed in different working groups and committees, such as the Faculty Senate, Campus Life Committee, townhall meetings, retreats (organized by the Office of the President and the Office of the Provost) with the participation of both local and international academic and administrative staff. For the smooth integration into the university community, the international faculty's workload includes 20 per cent community service (in addition to 40 per cent teaching and 40 per cent research), when faculty members usually serve on various committees and working groups along with their local colleagues and participate in activities targeted at sharing NU's experience with colleagues from other higher education institutions (such as conducting seminars, workshops, providing expert evaluation of academic programs).

NU's Strategy 2018–2030 declares internationalization as one of the core goals and a significant contribution is expected from international faculty, but the level of their contribution depends on the organizational arrangements [8] and level of integration into the university community. Some faculty become very enthusiastic and actively engage in activities to promote NU by using their past experience and networks in professional communities. Thus, on the threshold of its tenth anniversary and with the aim of successfully implementing the new Strategy, NU will continue working towards the further improvement of the existing internal processes and the development and implementation of the tools to overcome the challenges identified.

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## The Administrative Dimension of Integrating International Faculty: The Case of HSE University

**Yulia Grinkevich**

*Director of Internationalisation, HSE University, Russia*  
[ygrinkevich@hse.ru](mailto:ygrinkevich@hse.ru)

**Maria Shabanova**

*Deputy Director: Academic Integration Centre, Department of Internationalisation, HSE University, Russia*  
[mvshabanova@hse.ru](mailto:mvshabanova@hse.ru)

**Anna Krasheninina**

*Head: International Faculty Support Unit, Academic Integration Centre, Department of Internationalisation, HSE University, Russia*  
[akrasheninina@hse.ru](mailto:akrasheninina@hse.ru)

While the recruitment of international faculty members is a task that has many challenges, it would be ineffective without addressing the issue of their retainment. Given the cost of recruitment, it is vital for the university that its international faculty members become an integral part of the university community and are able to engage fully in the university's development. A lot of fairytales end with ‘and they lived happily ever after’, with all the challenges and obstacles seemingly in the past. The tale of international recruitment often sounds similar – but the ‘after’ is absolutely vital for making sure people stay at the university. Though the academic side of integration is of the utmost importance and has its challenges, the mismatch between previous experience and the new reality in the administration of university activities can be a great hindrance to successful retention. The task of creating an internal environ-



ment where all the members of the university community can equally thrive requires special deliberate effort, which influences the entire university administration.

At HSE University this need became apparent with the growth of the international recruitment program beyond one faculty, and the subsequent increase in the number of researchers, from 20–30 people in 2013 to over 160 in 2019.

In order to enable international faculty members to participate fully in university life, they have to be provided with full access to university services and opportunities. There are many barriers that can be listed, but to generalize, HSE University specified two basic features of university services which would effectively help international faculty members become integrated into the university environment:

- **An English-speaking environment:** both international and local faculty should have full access to university services and information about them in English and in Russian;
- **A new mindset for administrators:** not only should they work in English, but also have good intercultural communication skills, be aware of the relevant regulations concerning international faculty, and proactively apply them to address non-standard situations.

For both of these basic features there are strategic and tactical dimensions, with the former outlining the overall goals and milestones and the latter setting out tasks achievable in short-term, so as to provide adequate immediate support.

## An English-speaking Environment

On a strategic level all services should be available digitally in both Russian and English, and new ones should be developed with international faculty in mind from the start. Similarly, all self-governance mechanisms should also be accessible both for Russian- and English-speaking colleagues. However, this is a long process which requires negotiating with the key stakeholders responsible for specific university services, and the support needs to be provided from Day 0 – when international faculty are considering whether to apply or accept a job offer.

The management of expectations through making all the relevant information transparent and available beforehand is provided with a help of a dedicated website [1] for international faculty which provides information on what university life is like. This means that even prior to deciding to join HSE University, international faculty members have an opportunity to understand how university services work and what they need to do at different stages (when signing the contract, preparing for visa application, arriving, preparing to teach a course, etc.). To accommodate the increasing need for information in English, HSE University created its in-house Expert Translation Centre, which focuses on translating regulations, bylaws, and

official legal documentation, and ensures consistency in translations through developing an internal glossary. The shared information space this helped to create is crucial, especially when there is a conflict or a clash between the expectations shaped by previous experience and between current procedures.

Nevertheless, translated documents on their own do not enable international faculty to use university services directly if most administrative offices are not ready to work in English and update their expertise in the relevant fields to factor in the different citizenship and cultural expectations. Internal advocacy for the necessary changes and resources has been crucial, so that relevant offices hire employees who can work directly with international faculty members and provide university services as they would do to domestic faculty.

## A New Mindset for Administrators

Strategically speaking, to be successful in tackling the challenges in the fast-paced and increasingly globalized world, the universities need to develop a new mindset and new practices of administrative support. In order to provide a flexible interface for university services to an increasingly diverse university community, the current reality requires administrators to be:

- able to communicate clearly in different languages (English and Russian in our case);
- well-versed in intercultural communication, empathetic and have emotionally intelligent;
- able to understand and use their decision-making discretion, through professional knowledge, in-depth understanding of relevant processes and their institutional context;
- aware of when and who to signal for change when they see that some requests which cannot be fulfilled currently might become a crucial limitation for the institution;
- ready to be a part of the taskforce for working out solutions in cross-functional teams;
- ready to implement new procedures in project teams.

However, this is a very ambitious task, and the university must start somewhere to provide immediate support. One of the ways to get quick results is to create a strategic central set of changes, which provides support, analyses processes, creates guidelines and troubleshoots at the initial stages, while starting to build a network of support coordinators at the faculty and laboratory level across university so as not to become a bottleneck. Increasing the emphasis on the support at the faculty/department/laboratory level is essential when time is of the essence, since it allows international researchers to be more involved in the life of their primary work community. However, while the processes are yet far from being streamlined, it is the role of the central office to help develop this faculty-level support network.

At HSE University this central unit is the Department of Internationalization, which actively helps coordinators support international faculty members in routine and standard activities (e.g. business trips, research assistants etc.) through regular monthly meetings and a recently launched online knowledge base with guidelines and templates for different situations. The Department of Internationalization also has a trouble-shooting role, helping to negotiate and resolve non-standard problems, and works closely with other university units so as to keep internationalizing university services.

### **What the Future Holds?**

HSE University has recently created its strategic roadmap for 2030, and this has been a good opportunity to revise which parts of the administrative support system are working well in terms of addressing the needs of both local and international scholars, and what needs further and larger-scale efforts. While embedding the internationalization of the administrative environment into a strategic document is a good step, its success depends heavily on implementing those goals. Only through working closely with other university stakeholders and offices it is possible to make the administrative environment truly international, so that any faculty member working at HSE University can fully use all the available opportunities and services, and become an integral part of the community.

### **References**

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[1] <https://ifaculty.hse.ru/>

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## About HERB

Higher Education in Russia and Beyond (HERB) is a quarterly informational journal that has been published by the National Research University Higher School of Economics since 2014. HERB is intended to illuminate the transformation process of higher education institutions in Russia and countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The journal seeks to voice multiple-aspect opinions about current challenges and trends in higher education and share examples of the best local practices.

Our audience represents a wide international community of scholars and professionals in the field of higher education worldwide. The project is implemented as part of cooperation agreement between the Higher School of Economics and the Boston College Center of International Higher Education.

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Translator: **David Connolly**

Designer: **Vladimir Kremlev**

**Contact info:** E-mail: [herb.hse@gmail.com](mailto:herb.hse@gmail.com)  
[www.herb.hse.ru/en/](http://www.herb.hse.ru/en/)

### Editorial and publisher's address:

20 Myasnitskaya Str., Moscow, 101000 Russian

Russian mass medium registration certificates:

Print ПИ № ФС77-67449 issued 13.10.2016

Web ЭЛ № ФС 77 - 65994 issued 06.06.2016

To be distributed free of charge

Subscription to a web version:  
<https://herb.hse.ru/en/subscribe>



ISSUE

**2(20)**

SUMMER

**2019**

