



**MODERN PRINCIPLES OF HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM  
MODERNIZATION AND THE PROCESSES OF INTERNATIONAL  
INTEGRATION: THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN**

G. Kh. Khasanova

Doctor of Science (DSc.), Associate professor, Journalism and  
Mass Communications University of Uzbekistan

M. A. Ismatova

2nd year master student, Journalism and  
Mass Communications University of Uzbekistan

**Abstract**

This article explores the modernization processes of the higher education system in Uzbekistan, highlighting contemporary principles and the country's integration into the global education space. It presents the main directions of modernization and reveals the structural, legal, and pedagogical transformations carried out in the republic. The paper analyzes the international integration of Uzbekistan's higher education system based on sociological surveys conducted among professors, researchers, and students. It identifies existing challenges and potential solutions, while also outlining future priorities. The article concludes that accelerating integration into the global educational space requires active cooperation with international educational institutions, strengthening legal frameworks, and developing the scientific potential of the country.

**Keywords:** Higher education, modernization, reform, international integration, scientific research, legal frameworks, digitalization, international cooperation.

**Introduction**

Modern trends in the development of higher education are defined by its openness, inclusiveness, a student-centered approach, and a focus on sustainable development. These criteria are regarded as key aspects of the process of modernizing the higher education system.



As emphasized in the Development Strategy of New Uzbekistan for 2022–2026, increasing the quality of human capital is a strategic goal. This includes strengthening the integration of science, education, and industry; implementing dual and inclusive education; introducing market mechanisms into educational institutions; and establishing a national and international quality assurance system. Uzbekistan’s integration into the global educational space is evolving within the framework of significant reforms aimed at enhancing the country’s international competitiveness. In this context, reforms such as increasing the autonomy of higher education institutions, expanding academic freedom, and diversifying funding sources are of particular importance.

The theoretical basis of the study includes the modernization theory of higher education and internationalization frameworks. Methodologically, the article is based on a sociological survey conducted among professors, researchers, and students from universities in Uzbekistan in 2024.

The purpose of the survey was to identify views on current trends in higher education modernization and international integration, as well as to determine the main factors and challenges influencing these processes.

In today’s increasingly integrated world, there is virtually no sector or field unaffected by the processes of globalization. Higher education, in particular, is not only advancing within national boundaries but is also undergoing substantial development on a global scale. The adoption of numerous legal and political regulations in the sphere of higher education in Uzbekistan clearly demonstrates that this process has been elevated to the level of state policy.

For instance, the Presidential Decree No. PQ–2909, dated April 20, 2017, outlines comprehensive political and legal norms aimed at the further development of the higher education system. According to this decree, each higher education institution in Uzbekistan is tasked with establishing close cooperative ties with leading scientific and educational institutions worldwide. Furthermore, it mandates the broad integration of advanced pedagogical technologies, educational programs, and teaching materials based on international standards into the teaching and learning process. The decree also emphasizes the importance of actively involving highly qualified foreign specialists and academics in pedagogical activities, including the delivery of masterclasses and professional development courses. These measures are complemented by the systematic organization of internships



for master's students, junior faculty, and researchers from Uzbekistan's universities at partner institutions abroad, as well as the retraining and professional development of faculty members. Additionally, Presidential Decree No. PF-5847, dated October 8, 2019, further reinforces these reforms, serving as a continuation and expansion of the state's commitment to comprehensive modernization and internationalization of the national higher education system.

### **Key Principles of Modernization in Higher Education**

In recent years, the term “modernization” has been widely applied across various sectors of society, particularly in the field of education. This concept has gained increasing significance as an essential component of societal development. The process of modernizing the education system involves preserving the most valuable traditions and accumulated experiences in teaching and upbringing, while integrating them with contemporary approaches. It entails a fundamental transformation of the content, structure, and methods of education. This process is carried out through a comprehensive approach and encompasses all components of the educational system. It not only aims to improve the quality of knowledge delivery but also seeks to train highly qualified and competitive specialists who meet the evolving needs of society.

The implementation of modernization in the educational sphere necessitates the resolution of several key priorities, which include:

- Foremost, ensuring every citizen's right to access quality and comprehensive education is given special attention. In this regard, the principles of equal opportunity and transparency for all social groups are regarded as fundamental.
- The establishment of a lifelong learning system is pursued with the aim of achieving qualitatively new results at every stage of education. This ensures the consistency and continuity of the educational process.
- Improving the quality of education by integrating modern technologies, innovative methods, and advanced educational resources into the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, effective legal, organizational, and economic mechanisms are developed to reinforce the lifelong learning framework.

Enhancing the social status of educators and developing their professional competencies is also a key priority. This is to be achieved through institutional



support provided by the state and the active participation of society in the development of the education system.

Modernization processes in higher education are shaped by global trends and domestic reforms. According to the sociological survey results, the following priorities were identified:

Digitalization of education – 41.5% of respondents noted the importance of digitalization and the introduction of innovative educational technologies;

Improving the quality of education – 34.0% emphasized the need to align the content and methodology of education with international standards;

Academic freedom and autonomy – 24.5% supported expanding institutional independence and academic freedom.

These priorities reflect a shift toward student-centered education, institutional flexibility, and quality assurance mechanisms. Digitalization is seen not only as a technological innovation but also as a cultural and organizational transformation.

### **International Integration of Higher Education in Uzbekistan**

The process of international integration includes participation in global educational networks, academic mobility, cooperation with foreign universities, and the implementation of joint programs. However, several barriers hinder this process. According to the survey:

36.0% of respondents cited the lack of foreign language proficiency and absence of international accreditation as major barriers;

33.5% identified insufficient financial resources;

30.5% pointed to limited institutional capacity and lack of international cooperation experience.

Despite these challenges, participants also identified key solutions:

Active international cooperation – 47.5%;

Introduction of modern educational methods and technologies – 30.5%;

Improvement of the legal and regulatory framework – 22.0%.

These findings emphasize the need for systemic measures to increase the internationalization of Uzbekistan's higher education system, including capacity building, international networking, and institutional reforms.

The modernization and internationalization of higher education in Uzbekistan align with global trends while being shaped by national conditions and goals. Ensuring



the quality and accessibility of education, integrating with the global scientific community, and developing human capital are fundamental aspects of these reforms. The creation of a competitive higher education system also depends on investments in research, the development of new academic programs, and the active involvement of faculty and students in international academic life.

The modernization of the higher education system in Uzbekistan is a complex and long-term process that requires coordinated efforts by the state, educational institutions, and international partners. The successful implementation of modernization strategies will depend on the ability to overcome existing barriers, adopt international best practices, and maintain a balance between global standards and national values.

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