

EDUCATION AND TRAINING STATISTICS IN RUSSIA

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At the present stage of social development, when turning to the knowledge economy, a demand of the information society for full trustworthy and scientifically based official statistical data regarding social, economic, population and ecological processes increases. As a result highly-skilled experts in the field of statistics are required for the collection, processing and analysis of data.

Russian statistics has a branched information network and 68 official statistical authorities are engaged in the statistical service. More than 20 thousand experts work in the Russian Federal State Statistics Service. There are statistical departments functioning within many federal executive authorities and providing administrative data for statistical data collections, reports and other analysis findings of the Federal State Statistics Service. Each municipal unit and many other organizations (e.g. hospitals, identity and passport services and registry offices) have their own statistical service. All that is evidence of a high demand for highly-skilled statisticians.

If skilled experts, who obtained higher education in the field of statistics, work in the Federal State Statistics Service, then there is lack of skilled statisticians in many other official statistical authorities, especially in municipal units and organizations.

The main reason why there is lack of skilled statisticians is cutting down on training programmes for statisticians in universities. This situation results from several aspects such as higher education reform being carried out at the present time and excluding the programme "Statistics" from the official list of courses and programmes taught in universities.

Over the past 10 years a number of universities training experts in statistics decreased from 55 to 21. Founded in 1932, MESI is nowadays one of such universities in Russia specializing in statistics. However at the present time thanks to national grants approximately 50 graduates annually receive their degrees. All over Russia at least 300 statisticians annually graduate from universities. At the same time a majority of them are employed as analysts by profit-making organizations, since rates of pay for public service don't correspond to their skill level.

Under such conditions it may turn out in the foreseeable future that sufficient experts in statistics will not be trained and this will have a negative influence on the quality of statistical data provided for the society. In an attempt to prevent such a situation Russian statisticians have began process of creation of national statistical association. Development and advance of statistical education in the Russian Federation will be one of main goals of association.