

# ACCOUNTABILITY, PUBLICITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN VIETNAM

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## Abstract

The quality of higher education is always a special concern for many people, in which the responsibility for accountability and transparency is the decisive factor for the quality of training as well as the development of the economy. So, developing the knowledge economy is playing a decisive role in the development of the country in the industrial revolution 4.0. There are many reasons leading to the situation that Vietnam's higher education has not the development requirements, but the reason comes from attracting enough enrollment quotas, leading to many universities tend to “break through the barriers” enrollment and the number of students increased significantly but inversely proportional to the quality of training. Therefore, this article focuses on research on “Accountability, publicity and transparency in higher education” to find out the limitations of current legal regulations, from which propose recommendations improving the quality of higher education.

**Keywords:** Accountability; Publicity; Transparency; Higher education.

## Introduction

### 1. Overview

Education and training provide human resources and talents for the development of science - technology, economy - society of the country. Especially in Vietnam's socialist-oriented market economy, the development of science and technology, the knowledge economy, and the widespread trend of globalization, it requires education and training to create core values in the word “quality” to meet the requirements of integration and development.

The promotion of the assignment of autonomy and self-responsibility to higher education institutions (higher education) in organizational apparatus, human resources, finance and academics is increasingly promoted. Therefore, in order to ensure “quality” in education and training, it is necessary to pay attention to the

improvement of proactive accountability and publicity and transparency of the results of the exercise of the assigned autonomy of educational institutions in order to promote the preeminence in the cause of industrialization and modernization, in the context of the socialist-oriented market economy and international integration. At the same time, preventing negative effects arising from autonomy, giving learners and their parents have peace of mind with the financial investments they have invested in education in accordance with the policies they commit to students and their parents.

### 2. The legal provisions on accountability and publicity and transparency in higher education

The accountability of the higher education institution to its owners, learners, society,

competent management agencies and related parties is prescribed as follows:

- Explain the implementation of standards, quality policies, regulations and implementation of regulations of higher education institutions; take responsibility before law for failure to comply with regulations and commitments to ensure operation quality;
- Publicize the annual report on the performance indicators on the website of the higher education institution; to make periodical and irregular reports to the owner and to the competent management agency;
- Explain the salary, bonus and other benefits of the leadership and management titles of the higher education institution at the conference of cadres, public employees and employees; perform audits of financial statements, annual settlement reports, investment and procurement audits; explain the operation of the higher education institution to the owner, the competent management agency;
- To honestly publicize the annual financial report and other contents on the website of the higher education institution in accordance with the regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training.

Thus, accountability and publicity and transparency in higher education help higher education institutions fulfill their commitments on training quality to learners and society. It is objective and plays an important role in promoting training universities to meet social needs. Therefore, accountability and publicity and transparency in higher education demonstrate the university's commitment and assurance of responsibility in performing its functions and duties.

### 3. Actual situation of accountability and publicity and transparency in higher education

#### 3.1. Achievements acquired

In order to ensure strictness and clarity, to help higher education institutions fulfill their commitments on training quality, publicity and transparency of information and accountability for the school's activities, Decree 99/2019/

Decree-CP dated December 30, 2019 details and fully guides regulations and requirements on periodical and irregular reporting regimes of owners and competent state management agencies. This Decree has helped create fairness for higher education institutions in general in exercising their rights and obligations in university governance more effectively. Specifically:

#### Firstly, autonomy in training quality assurance

According to the Higher Education Law, the higher education institution's accountability to owners, learners, society, competent state management agencies and stakeholders for the implementation of standards, Quality Policy; on reporting annual and periodical performance indicators as well as on financial policy to officials, public servants, employees and to owners, competent state agencies.

This regulation shows that higher education institutions have expanded autonomy, no longer being directly controlled by state agencies, but higher education institutions can autonomously conduct training according to social needs corresponding to the quality of the education system training quality of the school, helping learners have enough information in choosing a future career in accordance with the capacity and forte of the learner. At the same time, it helps employers to find associate partners in training to create human resources suitable for social needs. In addition, it also helps state management agencies to issue policies to support and promote training schools to meet social needs.

At the same time, the autonomy in the explanation, publicity and transparency of the training quality helps higher education institutions to identify the limitations in their training, thereby overcoming the limitations, improving the training quality to meet social needs.

#### Second, publicity and transparency of financial policies

The publicity and transparency of financial policies, scholarships, training costs, service fees as well as plans for future training costs...

helps learners to estimate suitable financial resources and is able to evaluate training costs compared to the training quality of higher education institutions to make reasonable decisions. At the same time, helping employers and businesses know the financial potential of higher education institutions as well as training quality through financial policies, thereby making decisions to link and cooperate with higher education institutions in supporting training to meet social needs.

Third, publicity and transparency of educational facilities, equipment and teaching staff, management staff

Publicizing images of the quality of teaching facilities and equipment makes it easier for learners to assess whether the equipment is suitable for the quality of training. In addition, the staff and lecturers are the subjects and factors that determine the quality of training and research as well as the quality of services of higher education institutions, because they are a special productive force that produces products as “human resources”. Therefore, the publicity and transparency of facilities, teaching equipment, etc., and staff and lecturers make a difference when assessing the quality of training among higher education institutions.

### 3.2. Difficulties and limitations

Although, the implementation of accountability and publicity and transparency of higher education institutions has been renewed, improved, and accountability is associated with the disclosure and transparency of information so that society can verify it. the information. However, the reality shows that Vietnamese higher education institutions only have the habit of explaining to state management agencies, while according to the law, according to the law, it is necessary to explain to the society. In practice, there are a number of limitations:

Firstly, although Decree 99/2019/ND-CP dated December 30, 2019 clearly stipulates “Autonomy” in terms of academics, professional activities, organizational structure and personnel, finance and assets with higher education institutions, and especially when public higher education institutions have

university autonomy, but the level of expenditure and return is not equal, it is still subsidized, making the competition process unfair, leading to non-public higher education institutions often have much higher average tuition fees than public higher education institutions, which is caused by the lack of an effective mechanism to control the payment of fees publicity and transparency in information disclosure of higher education institutions. For example, some educational institutions under the Ministry of Finance are autonomous, although decentralized, to decide on their own operations in terms of organizational structure, personnel, some training activities, etc. in fact, when situations arise, the school principal still requests the Ministry of Finance (the governing body) to give opinions or requests the Ministry of Finance to coordinate with the Ministry of Education and Training in giving opinions on the implementation of the university .

Secondly, according to Decree 99/2019/ND-CP dated December 30, 2019 , there are no specific sanctions on accountability to learners, competent state management agencies and related parties of educational institutions university education.

Thirdly, there has been no sanctions against higher education institutions giving incomplete or misleading information, misleading the trust and perception of people around, especially learners. For example, a number of higher education institutions have reported that they are the leading university in the Vietnamese education system, and the international standard training programs of the UK, Australia, and the US... but there is no one yet. Vietnamese State management agencies recognize that, even there are higher education institutions that have not achieved the quality accreditation of the Ministry of Education and Training.

### 4. Proposals to improve accountability and publicity and transparency in higher education

In order for the accountability, publicity and transparency between higher education institutions to be ensured clearly, fully and timely in order to protect the rights and interests

of learners and related parties, it is necessary to clarify a number of problems

Firstly, in order to quickly, promptly and fully explain public and transparent information, it is necessary to assign accountability to the head who is responsible for disclosing all information about the higher education institution students and must explain all relevant professional, financial, human resource issues... not just the school's operational issues

Secondly, it is necessary to build a public and transparent rating database of information from the society, especially learners, stakeholders, businesses, and state management agencies in education...Then, the comprehensiveness and objectivity will be higher

Thirdly, the Ministry of Education and Training needs to consider and have strong sanctions for inaccurate information in unfair competition when some higher education institutions publish some misleading educational information. , is missing in order to improve its position in attracting admissions such as facilities, teaching staff as well as the quality of training programs... to deceive society until it is revealed, then everything is impossible to overcome. Therefore, it is necessary to have strong enough sanctions to deal with deception of trust, unfair competition, then criminal sanctions can be applied to the messenger and the responsibility of the head and related persons (if any).

## CONCLUSION

Accountability, openness and transparency in higher education play a role in the integration of the global knowledge economy, it is inevitable to enhance autonomy and self-responsibility, openness, Transparency of information helps higher education institutions survive and renew education quality in the spirit of the 12th Party Central Committee's Executive Committee "Basically renewing the management of education and training, ensuring democracy, unified; increase the autonomy and social responsibility of education and training institutions; attach importance to quality management" and the State's policy on

education development "Ensuring the autonomy of higher education institutions associated with accountability, enhancing quality accreditation, ensuring original principles of publicity, transparency, inspection and supervision by the State and social supervision, according to the provisions of law" .

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