

# Socio-Educational Problems Of The Academic Mobility System And Their Solutions

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## Abstract

The article reveals the importance of higher education, its significance and the importance of academic mobility in the education system.

**Keywords:** higher education, mobility, academic level, flexibility, efficiency

## Introduction

One of the priority principles of Modern higher education is openness, flexibility and academic mobility. Through academic mobility, students have the opportunity to expand their knowledge, get acquainted with different pedagogical approaches and acquire competitive competencies. At the same time, a number of systemic, organizational and social problems are observed during the implementation of this system in the educational practice of Uzbekistan. These problems are among the main factors that hinder the full implementation of the system and increase its effectiveness.

## Literature review

Weakness of coordination mechanisms between higher education institutions : Although the "Regulation on the Procedure for Implementing Academic Mobility", approved by Resolution No. 436 of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated July 22, 2021, establishes the main forms of academic mobility, the procedure for recognizing credits, and student selection criteria, the implementation of this document is not at the same level in all higher education institutions <sup>1</sup> Many universities have not developed separate strategic approaches to academic mobility, there are no internal regulatory documents, and no separate persons responsible for international relations or academic mobility have been appointed. **Example:** Although about 30

students participated in the exchange program between Tashkent State Pedagogical University and Karshi State University in the 2022–2023 academic year, more than half of them reported that their post-exchange credits were not fully recognized. In this case, differences in assessment criteria and curricula were the main obstacles <sup>2</sup> This example shows that subjects, assessment methods and module systems are not aligned between higher education institutions. The lack of a mechanism for automatic credit recognition creates distrust among students regarding mobility.

## Analysis and results

Weakness of psychological and social support for students participating in academic mobility programs: When a student temporarily transfers to another university to study, he or she finds himself in a foreign environment. In this environment, it is not easy to adapt, establish communication, work with new teaching methods and requirements. Unfortunately, many universities do not have **psychological preparation courses, adaptation trainings, or a mentoring system** for participants in academic mobility. **Example:** In the spring semester of 2023, 14 out of 25 students who came to Andijan State University from Fergana State University reported that they were unable to integrate into the academic process. The lack of amenities in the student dormitory, access to library

<sup>1</sup> Resolution No. VMQ-436. "On the Procedure for Academic Mobility". Lex.uz, 2021. <https://lex.uz/docs/5564055>

<sup>2</sup>Statistical reports of the Academic Mobility Department of TDPU, 2023. <https://tdpu.uz>

resources, and communication with the librarian and dean's office led to their emotional disengagement.<sup>3</sup> This situation shows that academic mobility is not only an important factor in the organization of the educational process, but also in socio-psychological conditions. The student's inability to socially adapt to new conditions becomes an obstacle to his learning.

Insufficiently developed organizational and material and technical base: In order to effectively organize academic mobility, the receiving university should:

flexible lesson schedule,

- teachers and groups are ready to welcome,

- student accommodation, technical facilities, and library resources must be ready.

However, in many universities, mobility programs **are being implemented "as a pilot" without specific preparation or coordination.** The student finds himself in unexpected circumstances, which negatively affects his studies. **Example:** Termez State University did not develop a special class schedule for students admitted in 2022 as part of academic mobility, they were taught in existing groups, as a result of which there was confusion in the assessment system for 6 subjects. Due to the fact that the subject modules did not fully match, the credits of 8 students were only partially recognized.<sup>4</sup>

Academic mobility is not "coming to class for one semester", but a clearly planned **didactic project based on methodological, organizational, social and technical readiness.** This didactic project is not yet available in all universities. Lack of information and lack of an information coordination system: Students, their parents, and in many cases even teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and information about academic mobility. Many people only learn about mobility programs from a brief announcement on the

university's official website. This undermines the openness and clarity of the mobility process. **Example:** According to a survey of students participating in the 2022 academic mobility program at Samarkand State University, participants **received detailed information about mobile programs only 3-4 days before the start of classes.** This limited the opportunity for them to prepare for the necessary (textbooks, materials, choice of direction) <sup>5</sup> This situation means that there is no "digital coordination" between universities. The delayed delivery of information leads to the perception of mobility as a "challenge" rather than an "important opportunity" .

Legal and financial uncertainties: Any academic mobility system should provide legal guarantees, economic convenience, and financial reinforcement mechanisms for participants. However, in the conditions of Uzbekistan, academic mobility programs for students:

- travel and living expenses reimbursement;
- scholarships or additional incentives;
- recognition of secured credit;

The duration of study and the circumstances affecting the diploma are often resolved differently. **Example:** Although financial support for students studying abroad is provided through the El-Yurt Umidi Fund, **students participating in internal academic mobility often cover all expenses at their own expense.** This causes social inequality and makes the process inconvenient for children from low-income families.<sup>6</sup> This situation can lead to the perception of academic mobility as an opportunity only for the "well-off." However, this process should be open, equal, and guaranteed for all students.

Insufficient mechanisms for monitoring and analyzing the academic mobility process: The results of academic mobility programs in Uzbek universities are usually limited to statistical forms - that is, how many students participated, how many subjects were

<sup>3</sup> ADU social - psychological service reports , 2023.

<https://adu.uz>

<sup>4</sup> Termez DU Mobility Coordinator Information, 2022.

<https://tsu.uz>

<sup>5</sup> SamDU student survey. On the mobility process . 2022.

<https://samdu.uz>

<sup>6</sup> The hope of the people and the country. Fund regulations, financial conditions. <https://eyuf.uz>

passed. However, questions **about how this process is going, what students learned, what problems they faced, what are the dynamics of their growth** - remain open. In European universities (in particular, the Netherlands, Denmark, Slovakia), **reflective questionnaires** with students at the end of each semester on the results of academic mobility, **mentor reports, portfolios** This data is then analyzed to improve the quality of education<sup>7</sup>. **Recommendation:** Each higher education institution should introduce **individual reflection sheets, control diagnostics, and final experience reports for students participating in academic mobility**. Annually, according to the higher education institution **Mobility monitoring** should be compiled and submitted to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. Low student motivation and choices focused on convenience rather than knowledge: Academic mobility is an opportunity to learn, gain knowledge, and grow. However, in some cases, the student **may not value** this opportunity enough. Many students go to another university with the misconception that **the exams will be easier or the requirements will be less demanding**. This undermines the essence of mobility. To participate in academic mobility in China, a student must **submit a motivational essay, stating his/her goals, plans, and expected results**. This will allow the selection of those who truly want to learn to be <sup>8</sup>selected. **Recommendation:** Each university should require students participating in a mobility program to prepare **a motivational statement, a statement of purpose, and an academic plan that outlines their own learning trajectory**. Such documents will help select those who are truly ready to learn.

institutional leadership and initiative in higher education institutions: Much depends on the position, strategic approach and initiative of the university leadership in implementing academic mobility. Unfortunately, in many universities, this issue is approached only at the level of the international relations department, and the rectorate or faculty dean's office does not accept this system as a strategic direction. In the Republic of Korea, each university has a "Mobility Promotion Committee". This committee includes the rector, vice-rectors, deans and student representatives. They hold regular meetings on <sup>9</sup>mutual planning, monitoring and quality assessment. **Recommendation:** Each university should establish a committee on the development of academic mobility **An institutional commission** should be created. This commission will set strategic goals, coordinate student selection, expand foreign cooperation, and prepare reports. academic mobility into an indicator of quality education: Today, academic mobility in Uzbekistan is still assessed more in an organizational form, as a statistical number. However, in order to truly develop this system, it is necessary to transform it into an integral indicator of **the quality of education**. In the rating and accreditation criteria of the Estonian Higher Education Quality Agency (EKKA), the number of mobile students in higher education institutions, their level of mastery, and their academic performance are considered one of the main quality indicators. <sup>10</sup>**Recommendation:** The national ranking of higher education institutions of Uzbekistan should include "the number of students participating in academic mobility and their quality mastery" as a separate indicator. the scientific community and research institutions: Academic mobility should not be limited to the educational process alone.

<sup>7</sup> Dutch Ministry of Education. Monitoring International Student Mobility, 2021. <https://government.nl>

<sup>8</sup> Chinese Higher Education Mobility Policy Review. China Ministry of Education, 2020. <http://en.moe.gov.cn>

<sup>9</sup> Korean Council for University Education. Mobility Promotion Committee Model, 2022. <https://kcue.or.k>

<sup>10</sup> Estonian Quality Agency for Higher and Vocational Education (EKKA). Annual Quality Indicators Report, 2023. <https://ekka.archimedes.ee>

Research institutes, experimental sites, and laboratories should also be involved in this system. A student must go to another university and not only study science, but also **write a project, conduct research, and enter a scientific environment**. At Canadian universities, 40 percent of mobile students are assigned to a research project. They work with a supervisor, often writing and preparing their own paper for publication.<sup>11</sup> **Recommendation: It is necessary to transform academic mobility in Uzbek universities into an integrated form**, not just "attending classes", but also culminating in "conducting scientific experiments", "defending projects", and "writing articles". This will have a positive impact on the professional and scientific growth of the student.

Analysis and recommendations show that the development of academic mobility should be organized not only by organizational reforms, but also in harmony with **substantive, psychological, motivational, institutional and scientific factors**. **Each higher education institution should see this system as an integral part of its strategy, and students should accept it as a means of personal and professional development**. When each participant in such a system (student, teacher, management, ministry, society) clearly understands their role, academic mobility will become one of the true quality features of the higher education system of Uzbekistan.

Lack of programs aimed at increasing the level of cultural adaptation of students: Students participating in internal academic mobility come to the university where they study from another province. This means not only a geographical change, but also a cultural, social and psychological transition into a new environment. The student's feeling of being an "alien", his inability to adapt to the group, his inability to accept

differences in local customs, dialects or manners weakens his motivation to study. Canadian universities have established **"intercultural communication training"** for local and international students. In such trainings, students are prepared in advance about <sup>12</sup>the cultural values, manners and social norms of another region. **Recommendation:** It is necessary to introduce short trainings and interactive lessons such as "intercultural communication", "behavior in a new environment", "regional social culture" as part of **adaptation weeks** for students participating in academic mobility at Uzbek universities.

Factors that make internal academic mobility lag behind foreign mobility: When academic mobility is mentioned in the Uzbek education system, foreign exchanges (Erasmus+, DAAD, Mevlana) are usually envisaged. As a result, internal mobility is often considered secondary, and students also prefer the opportunity to go abroad. This limits the exchange of experience between national educational institutions. Example: In Turkey, a special national program called **"Domestic Mobility Program"** has been developed, which finances, advertises and includes internal mobility in the evaluation system on an equal footing with foreign exchanges.

<sup>13</sup>**Recommendation:** Separate PR, grant, motivational support and scholarship programs should be developed for internal mobility in Uzbekistan as well. It is recommended to use the same incentive mechanisms for students abroad.

Insufficient use of the scientific-scientific-innovative potential of internal academic mobility: Many students go to another higher education institution and attend regular classroom classes, but do not have access to laboratories, innovation centers, and research institutes. This keeps the mobility process at a superficial level. In many US universities, academic mobility

<sup>11</sup> Canadian Bureau for International Education. Integrating Research into Academic Mobility, 2022. <https://cbie.ca>

<sup>12</sup> University of Toronto. Intercultural Training Modules, 2022. <https://uoft.ca>

<sup>13</sup> Turkish Higher Education Council. Introduction of the Local Mobility Program, 2021. <https://yok.gov.tr>



participants are not only **assigned to classes, but also to research projects on campus**, are allowed to use faculty laboratories, and are even encouraged with a “short-term research grant” at the end.

<sup>14</sup>**Recommendation:** It is necessary to introduce a system for conducting internal academic mobility programs not only based on classes, but also on scientific projects and mentoring. Each receiving higher education institution should involve students in practice in its most advanced areas. Gaps in the formalization of student portfolios and academic achievements: There is no official record in a single system about what subjects a student who participated in mobility studied, what projects he participated in, what competencies he developed. This hinders his/her professional activity or application to another higher education institution. Through the European Union's “Europass Mobility Document” model, each mobility participant has his/her academic and professional achievements officially confirmed by the receiving and sending universities in the form of a document.

<sup>15</sup>**Recommendation:** Students returning from academic mobility in Uzbekistan should be given a **“Mobility Portfolio”** and a **“Certificate of Competence Acquisition”**. This document is attached to the diploma supplement and, in addition to credit recognition, formalizes academic achievements.

Weak initiatives at the faculty and department level: In most cases, academic mobility is limited to the initiative of the university leadership and the international relations department. Faculties and departments are not directly involved in this process, and there is almost no exchange of subjects or methodological materials.

In Japan, each faculty appoints a **“Mobility Facilitator”** - this person prepares the **subject modules** required for mobility, works with visiting students, and ensures

consistency in assessments.<sup>16</sup>

**Recommendation:** Each faculty and department should have a **mobility coordinator**. This specialist coordinates academic mobility-related educational processes within the faculty, and adapts subject plans, curriculum, and assessments for incoming and outgoing students.

The additional points outlined above show that academic mobility is not just a movement and location, but a deep didactic, psychological, cultural and scientific process. Approaches to it should also be multifaceted, networked, functional and systematized. The higher education system of Uzbekistan is currently taking significant steps in this regard, but if these efforts do not achieve **institutional stability**, the mobility system will remain superficial. Therefore, the proposals presented in this section are not only theoretical, but also offer comprehensive approaches **that have been tested in practice, based on international experience, and adapted to the national system**. Based on the analysis conducted so far, it has been determined that academic mobility is not only a component of the educational process, but also a key mechanism for the modernization of the higher education system itself. However, practice shows that the problems arising in this system cannot be solved by technical measures alone. They are deeper - **related to the philosophy of education, management culture, social consciousness, scientific approach and human factors**. Therefore, the following comprehensive approaches are also important for the full implementation of academic mobility in practice:

The role of academic mobility in human capital development needs to be reassessed: The issue of academic mobility is often approached only from the perspective of the educational process. In fact, this process plays a major role in

<sup>14</sup> US Department of State. Academic Research Mobility Initiatives, 2022. <https://state.gov>

<sup>15</sup> European Commission. Europass Mobility. <https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-mobility>

<sup>16</sup> Kyoto University Mobility Integration Guidelines, 2023. <https://kyoto-u.ac.jp>

increasing the student's social activity, forming communicative, cultural, leadership and initiative competencies . International studies (including OECD education analyses) show that young people who participate in academic mobility are more successful in later employment, leadership positions, and entrepreneurship.<sup>17</sup> **Recommendation:** Academic mobility in the higher education system of Uzbekistan should be recognized not only as an educational need, but also as a factor contributing to the formation of human capital and the innovative development of the state. Based on this approach, it would be appropriate to include it in state strategies. It is necessary to establish a system of psychological preparation of students for academic mobility: Many problems are related to the student's inability to adapt to the new environment, social isolation, inability to express themselves, loneliness, and loss of motivation. This negatively affects the student's learning performance. In US universities, there is a system called "Peer Integration Programs" , where mobile students are paired with local students. This provides them with social and emotional support.<sup>18</sup> **Recommendation:** In Uzbekistan, it is necessary to assign a psychologist and mentor to each mobility participant, introduce adaptation training, psychological tests, self-awareness and development programs. This will ensure not only academic but also emotional stability. **Conclusion.** Recognition of academic mobility results in society and transformation into a social image: Today, when a student participates in academic mobility, his/her activities are not sufficiently recognized in the labor market, in society, or in academic areas. This reduces motivation. In Finland, the document issued to a mobility participant is not only a diploma supplement, but also a "certificate of competence" recognized by a separate

state. Through this document, the employer clearly understands that the student has worked on himself/herself.<sup>19</sup> **Recommendation:** In Uzbekistan, academic mobility should also be integrated into national professional qualification standards. This should give the student an advantage not only in studies, but also in subsequent stages (employment, master's degree, grant competition) .

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