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Differences in higher education between Russia and the USA

The culture of any country begins with the education of its population. Education, especially higher education, allows people to upgrade to a higher level of development, opens amazing opportunities and helps to show skills in different areas of activity. The main task of any higher educational institution is to give students the opportunity to get a huge amount of information and new knowledge.

Despite the fact that all educational systems have the same goal, they still have both similarities and differences. These differences and similarities deal with various areas of higher education, from admission to the housing offered to students.

First of all, future students must pass all the required school examinations. In Russia such an examination is called the Unified State Exam which serves as both school finals and entrance examinations. It gives pupils an opportunity to apply to several universities at once. Teenagers are to take at least three exams - Math and the Russian language are mandatory while other subjects are chosen depending on a teenager's major [4]. As for the United States, the most common entrance examinations are SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) and ACT (American College Test). The first one is a standard test to assess an applicant's preparation for college. The test is typically essential for undergraduate programs. SAT consists of two parts: a reasoning test and a subject test. The admissions departments in both Russia and the United States welcome not only examination results, but also certificates of participation in sports competitions, volunteering and other extracurricular activities [1].

As for higher educational institutions, they are divided into several types. At present time, there are several types of institutions of higher education in Russia: universities which are responsible for education and research in a variety of disciplines as well as academies. The difference between academies and universities is that academies are limited to one major. So-called institutes which are parts of either an academy or a university are common in Russia. The last type of institutions is private ones which offer applicants to receive degrees in humanitarian fields such as business, culture and social science. In the US, there are public and private universities. The difference between them is that public universities, or state universities, operate with the support of public taxes, whereas private universities receive funding via grants and tuition fees. In addition, community colleges are quite popular with graduates in the US, as this type of institutions is much cheaper and easier to enroll.

Educational system in Russia is similar to American one. First of all, undergraduate level of educational system includes Bachelor's and Master's degree. Bachelor's degree lasts at least 4 years, and Master's degree is awarded after successful work of two years' full-time studies. Contrast to Russia, it is available in the US to get Associate's degree, which takes 2 years in a college or a university. After graduation students can continue their studies. It is called Postgraduate level. This stage of education usually takes 2-3 years and qualifies with a Candidate of Science degree [2].

The methods of teaching in the USA and Russia differ greatly. In the United States the students' independent work takes a significant part of the learning process. No more than 30 per cent of the time is spend for the theoretical part of a course. The American educational system tries to dedicate more time for development of practical skills. Courses require assignments such as writing projects, research papers and presentations throughout the studies. Lectures are organized in the form of discussion, for which students prepare in advance. Besides, professors have extra time after classes to consult students and answer their questions. The Russian system of education is lecture-based. Unlike the US, lectures in Russian colleges and universities take the form of a monologue - that is students just listen to a lecturer's speech and write it down. Students can show their skills during seminars. This

type of classes implies discussion. Independent work is the same as in America. It is mostly reading and writing assignments, making projects focused on various topics and sets of exercises and tests.

In conclusion, although Russia and America have distinctive differences, they still have the same goal. This goal is ensure the quality development of the society of the whole country.

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