



CURRENT REFORMS IN UZBEKISTAN HIGHER EDUCATION (ARIA, UZBEKISTAN)

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ARIA

- First Uzbekistan non-governmental organization in accreditation and quality assurance
- ARIA focuses its activities on meeting the needs of all stakeholders of education process
- Established in 2024
- Self-assessment reports initiated in 3 educational institutions
- Accreditation of 2 HEIs completed, 2 in process

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Historical Background of Higher Education in Uzbekistan

- **Soviet Legacy:**

- Education in Uzbekistan was centralized, with strict control over curricula, faculty, and institutional management.
- Focus on technical and vocational training, but limited academic autonomy.
- Low global integration and innovation.

- **Post-Independence Challenges:**

- Economic instability and underfunding of universities.
- Lack of international cooperation and outdated curricula.
- Limited access to modern educational resources and technology.

Major Milestones in Higher Education Reforms

1. 2017 Education Law:

- Emphasized modernization of the education system.
- Promoted the expansion of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.
- Focused on improving the quality of higher education and aligning with global standards.

2. Increase in International Collaboration:

- Partnerships with foreign universities and international institutions (e.g., INHA, Westminster University in Tashkent).
- Promotion of joint degree programs and student exchange opportunities.

3. Digitalization:

- Emphasis on digital transformation in higher education.
- Launch of online education platforms and e-learning resources.

1. Curriculum Modernization:

- Updating curricula to meet international standards.
- Integrating global best practices in teaching and research.
- Introducing courses in entrepreneurship, critical thinking, and information technology.

2. Expansion of Private and Foreign Universities:

- Establishment of private and international universities.
- Support for private investment in education.

3. Scholarships and Financial Aid:

- Introduction of government scholarships for students, especially in STEM fields.
- Funding support for students to study abroad.

4. Language of Instruction:

- Encouragement of English as a medium of instruction alongside Uzbek and Russian.
- Language skills as a priority to connect Uzbekistan's higher education with global academic networks.

Challenges Facing Higher Education Reforms

1. Capacity Building:

- Shortage of highly qualified professors and educators.
- Need for ongoing training and professional development.

2. Infrastructure:

- Insufficient educational infrastructure, particularly in rural areas.
- Limited access to modern research facilities and technology.

3. International Recognition:

- Slow progress in getting degrees recognized globally.
- Bureaucratic obstacles in implementing reforms.

Government Strategies Moving Forward

1. Presidential Initiatives:

- President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's leadership in promoting education as a national priority.
- Commitment to increasing education funding and establishing more research institutions.

2. 2030 Education Strategy:

- Aiming for Uzbekistan to be included in the top 50 countries in the Global Innovation Index by 2030.
- Increasing the percentage of higher education enrollment from 9% to 50%.

3. Focus on STEM Fields:

- Priority on STEM education to drive innovation and economic development.
- Establishment of research parks and technology hubs in universities.



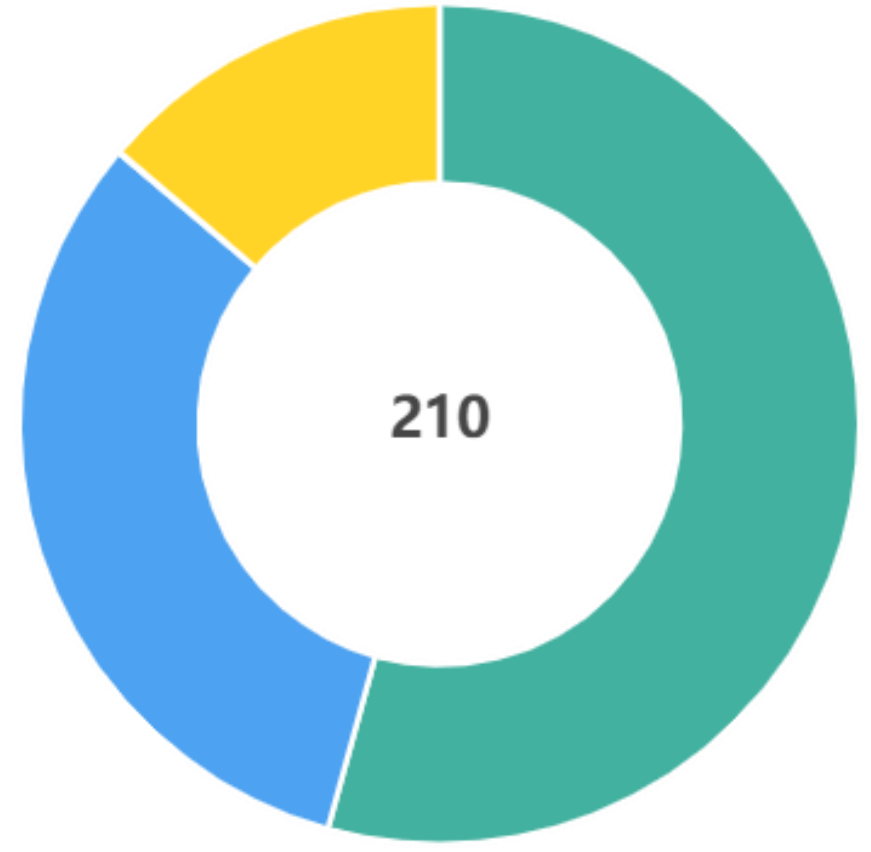
Number of HEIs – 210

Number of academic staff - 41155

Number of students - 1228428



HEI types by ownership



State **54.29%** Non-state **31.90%** Foreign **13.81%**

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Main results:



Institutional changes.

- Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation
- Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030
- Project Office “Center for Projects in the Field of Education”

Integration of higher education, science, and innovation

- “University 3.0” concept
- Articles in the Scopus and Web of Science databases has reached 3,574
- 17 spin-off companies

Infrastructure and capacity of HEIs

Engagement with employers

Dual education

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Main results:



Introduction of credit-modular system

- ECTS
- double degree programs

Enrollment ratio from 9% in 2016 to 42% in 2023

- HEI from 77 in 2016 to 210 in 2023
- (97 non-state or foreign universities)
- 40 state HEIs are financially and academically autonomous

International recognition

Thirty-eight educational programs from six universities underwent international accreditation.

Two universities in the country – the National Research University “Tashkent Institute of Irrigation and Agricultural Mechanization Engineers” and the National University of Uzbekistan named after Mirzo Ulugbek – **were included for the first time in the TOP-1000 best universities in the world** (QS World University Rankings 2025) together

Challenges in Accreditation and Ranking

1. Limited Global Recognition:

- Many Uzbek universities are still working to achieve global recognition, as accreditation processes can be lengthy and resource-intensive.
- Global rankings often require institutions to improve research output, which remains a challenge due to limited infrastructure and funding.

2. Faculty Development:

- Many institutions lack faculty members who meet international qualifications, which can impact rankings and accreditation standards.

3. Research and Innovation:

- Low research output and limited participation in international research collaborations hinder universities from performing better in global rankings.

4. Quality Control Gaps:

- There is often a disconnect between national accreditation standards and international expectations, which can impact the reputation of Uzbek universities.

Conclusion

- **Impact of Reforms:**

- Higher education reforms are crucial for Uzbekistan's socio-economic development.
- The country is positioning itself as an emerging regional center for higher learning.
- Ongoing reforms indicate significant progress, but challenges remain in achieving full global integration and recognition.



Thanks!

Do you have any questions?

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