

**ADMISSION TO MASTER DEGREE OF UNIVERSITIES
OF THE AZERBAIJAN REPUBLIC**

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It's known that the majority of the countries of the world have already passed or are passing on to the structure of higher education degrees "bachelor-master-doctor"/1,3/. Since 1997 Azerbaijan has been using two-stage model of higher education – bachelor and master degrees. Transition to the two-level form took place simultaneously in all higher schools of Azerbaijan which caused occurrence of many problems. Though the new model was a positive modification, its realization was formal and not worked out perfectly. So in most of the universities the structure of education did not adapt to new two-stage model of higher education.

In most universities lectures' plans were changed taking into account the experiences of foreign countries. Since unified standards for each specialty were not available, universities carried out modification on their own, so that programs of the same specialty in different universities were also different. As each university determined a different form and content of examination, the admission rules and entrance examinations to master degree were not suitable in different universities.

As reported by Christopher Walker, director of studies of Freedom House, the system of higher education suffered from widespread corruption; bribes were commonplace for receiving good grades. In the 1990s, a single exam and computerized audit system were introduced to screen university applicants for a bachelor's degree, which has reduced corruption at this phase of the admissions process. However, admission to the master's level, which did not include an audit process, reportedly required bribes on the order of US \$2,000. Private universities, which appeared to permit significantly less corruption, held some

promise for breaking the corruption mold, but these new institutions (of which there were now more than a dozen) were not likely to shake the prevailing behavior in the education sphere in the short term /2/.

In April 2005 by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the State Students Admission Commission (SSAC) was charged responsible for organizing and conducting the entrance examinations to the master degree of universities. SSAC began to establish new model of entrance examination to the master degree taking into account international experiences. In 2005 SSAC applied two-stage model of entrance examination to master degree. At the first stage all specialties were subdivided into 15 groups and applicants to all groups responded to 50 questions on mathematics and logical thinking, 20 questions in a foreign language and 30 questions on basic specialty knowledge during 2 hours. The total mark for the stage was 100. The applicant's total score must be not lower than 50 in order to take part in the second stage. At the second stage bachelors wrote an essay on specialty as required by universities during an hour and a half and the mark for the stage was 10 and the score on the specialty (essay) must be not lower than 5 points in order to take part in the competition.

In 2006 SSAC applied one-stage model of entrance examination to master degree according to 168 master programmers. The table of conformity of specialties in the bachelor and master degrees was compiled according to which bachelors can choose a master program out of the set of programs of master specialties. The first issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) was published containing the table of conformity of specialties and the programs defining the contents of entrance examination to master degree. Applicants to master degree answered 50 questions on mathematics and logical thinking, 30 questions on specialties (applicants to master specialties of journalism wrote an essay instead of 30 questions on specialties) and 20 questions in a foreign language during 2 hours and the total mark for the examination was

100. The applicant's total score must be not lower than 50 and the score on the specialty (essay) not lower than 10 points in order to take part in the competition.

The announcement, the plan of admission and the rules of admission to master degree were published in the second issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) and placed in the web site of SSAC www.tqdk.gov.az. After conducting of entrance examination the results were published in the third issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) and placed in the site www.tqdk.gov.az /1/.

In 2007 SSAC developed one-stage model of entrance examination to master degree. All specialties and directions were grouped in 79 master programmers. The table of conformity of specialties in the bachelor and master degrees was compiled according to which bachelors could choose a master program out of the set of programs of master specialties. The first issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) was published containing the table of conformity of specialties and the programs defining the contents of entrance examination to master degree. The reception of applications was conducted via internet. The announcement, the plan of admission and the rules of admission to master degree were published in the second issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) and placed in the web site of SSAC www.tqdk.gov.az. Applicants to master degree answered 50 questions on mathematics and logical thinking, 30 questions on specialties and 20 questions in a foreign language during 2 hours 30 minutes and the total mark for the examination was 100. Applicants to master specialties of journalism and languages except Azerbaijani, Russian and English wrote an essay instead of 30 questions on specialties. The applicant's total score must be not lower than 50 and the score on the specialty (essay) not lower than 10 points in order to take part in the competition. After conducting of entrance examination the results were

published in the third issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) and placed in the site www.tqdk.gov.az.

In the fourth issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) announcement on vacant places of master programs was published and reception of applications was carried out via internet. The results of the competition were reported via the fifth issue of the journal "Magistr" (Master) and via internet.

As it was mentioned above, the reception of documents to master degree was carried out via internet in 2007 and 12478 bachelors were registered who filled in application form for taking part in exams. 12140 applicants took part in the exams and 3514 of them entered the master degree of the higher schools (1821 boys and 1693 girls).

The master degree admission system of Azerbaijan has very short history. The system is efficient in Azerbaijan and it has been proved to be successful. Thousands of qualified applicants are admitted into master degree through this fair, secure and reliable admission procedure. The master degree admission system of Azerbaijan need to draw experiences from other well developed countries and need to innovate and develop on the foundation of Azerbaijan national conditions in order to meet modern needs of Azerbaijan.

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