



## **CORRUPT PRACTICES IN UZBEK UNIVERSITIES AND INSTITUTIONAL APPROACHES TO OVERCOMING THEM**

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### **Abstract**

Corruption in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan is one of the most acute problems hindering the formation of high-quality human capital. This article analyzes the forms of its manifestation, from bribery at exams and buying grades to nepotism and administrative abuse. Particular attention is paid to systemic causes, including low teachers' salaries, archaic governance models and weak public control. Comprehensive measures aimed at eradicating corruption are proposed: digitalization of educational processes, increasing transparency, improving the social status of the teaching staff and the formation of legal awareness of students. The author comes to the conclusion that the fight against corruption in universities is a key condition for the sustainable development of the country and the training of competitive specialists.

**Keywords:** Corruption, higher education, academic integrity, digitalization, reforms, nepotism, legal consciousness.

### **Introduction**

Higher education plays a strategic role in the development of the nation's intellectual potential. However, its effectiveness can be undermined by corruption, a phenomenon that distorts the principles of justice, undermines trust in institutions and reduces the quality of training. In the context of large-scale reforms that Uzbekistan is undergoing, the problem of corruption in universities is of particular relevance. The purpose of this article is to identify the characteristic forms of academic corruption, analyze its underlying causes and offer realistic ways to overcome it.



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## **Relevance of the problem**

Corruption in Uzbek universities generates social injustice, depriving talented but low-income young people of access to quality education. It reduces motivation to study, since grades and diplomas become a subject of purchase and sale, and not the result of work. This leads to the graduation of unqualified specialists, which threatens public safety and reduces the level of trust in professional personnel. Such consequences become especially dangerous. In addition, corruption demotivates honest students and teachers, provoking a brain drain and destroying academic culture. In the context of national reforms, where the fight against corruption is proclaimed a priority, the cleansing of the education system becomes a necessary element of sustainable development.

**Forms of corruption.** Corrupt practices cover all stages of the academic process. Upon admission, schemes of substitution of tests, bribery of commissions and paid "tutoring" with a guarantee of enrollment are preserved. During the exams, bribes for positive grades, "automatons" and the possibility of retaking are common. Term papers and diploma papers are often purchased from third-party performers, and teachers turn a blind eye to this. Nepotism is manifested in employment, career growth and the awarding of scientific degrees the principle of kinship, not professionalism. In the administrative sphere, there are illegal fees, fraud with dormitories, grants and scholarships, which further undermines confidence in the system.

The roots of academic corruption lie in systemic dysfunctions. The low level of teachers' salaries, especially in the regions, makes them vulnerable to informal income. An outdated management model based on authoritarianism and closeness contributes to abuse. Pressure on students seeking to enter and successfully graduate from the university at any cost provokes a willingness to give bribes. Lack of legal literacy and fear of the administration hinder the exposure of violations. In addition, the tradition of "gratitude" persists in the public consciousness, which blurs the boundaries between respect and corruption.

**Solutions.** An effective fight against corruption requires a systematic approach. Digitalization of educational processes is one of the key tools. The transition to



electronic systems for assessing, attending and storing educational materials increases transparency and reduces opportunities for manipulation. The introduction of anonymous channels for reporting violations and video recording of exams strengthen control. informal income. Raising salaries, stimulating scientific activity through grants and allowances create motivation for honest work. The formation of a legal and ethical culture requires mandatory courses on academic integrity, the introduction of codes of conduct and educational campaigns among students. Administrative reforms should include decentralization of governance, the creation of independent anti-corruption committees, and the inevitability of punishment for violations.

## **Conclusion**

Corruption in Uzbek universities is not just an ethical problem, but a systemic challenge that undermines the foundations of national development. It cannot be overcome without comprehensive measures that combine digitalization, social support, legal education and institutional reforms. The main emphasis should be placed not on repression, but on prevention and change of mentality. It is possible to build a competitive knowledge economy. The success of this transformation depends on the joint efforts of the state, universities, civil society and the academic environment itself.

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