

Original Research

Pondering on the ways to enhance university reputation

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The article describes positive experience of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University), which has risen significantly in QS World University Rankings, both in the overall assessment and in the subject ranking. The authors provide factual material and give recommendations for a step-by-step strategy for reorganising educational and scientific activities of the university with a view to increasing the quality of education services, which include the allocation of priority areas; application of new forms of work; development of image strategies in the field of scientific activity and cooperation with employers. The study is based on the analysis of the methodology of the world's leading rankings. It also focuses on the implementation of the road map of RUDN University and other Russian universities. To reveal best practices, the authors break down the activities of RUDN University while implementing the 5-100 programme and other activities with a view to promoting the university in international university rankings and enhancing its reputation. Study results suggest that the most important steps in determining the direction in the development of the university are the selection of priority areas of activity, organisation of new forms of work, the attraction of leading international and Russian scientists in a certain field of activity for cooperation, the support and development of scientific projects, cooperation with scientific, educational, practical and industrial organisations in Russia and the world, development and implementation of a number of image strategies in the field of scientific activity, and working with employers to organise internships and further employment of university graduates.

KEYWORDS: QS World University Rankings, subject ranking, RUDN University, best practices, university reputation, Scopus



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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education at the present stage is a costly educational service for the applicant, and the choice of the place where to study is based on several factors. An important factor when choosing a university is its place in world rankings (Bebenina, 2018; Stukalova, 2019; Neudachin, 2020; Antyukhova, 2020; Akoev et al.,

2021). In addition to attracting enrollees, the researchers identify such goals for compiling rankings as (1) economic, which means the attractiveness of investments in the university, the justification of tuition fees and the university's contribution to the export/import of educational services, (2) image (place in the table, growth in international rankings is included in the information

'As researchers and teachers in intercultural studies, we need to recognise what brings us together, not the differences that might drive us apart. We need to recognise our tendency to see the world through our own filters, and often we are not aware of what that filter is'

that the university posts online willingly), and (3) political, which implies increasing the attractiveness of the national education system as a whole. This goal provides for an increase in the number of national universities included in the global ranking, which enhances the competitiveness of the educational system of a particular country. The high positions of universities in global rankings and the number of top universities that have entered the world rankings form a certain contribution to the image of the state, and the university's attractiveness for foreign applicants increases the share of the educational sector in the country's export structure.

In world educational practice nowadays, we can observe a relatively new terminological combination *leading international rankings* which implies three rankings that, in the process of development, have gained a reputation as the most impartial and voluminous assessment of the educational services market. These include QS World University Rankings, Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). QS World University Rankings occupies the leading position among them.

QS World University Rankings is an annually published university ranking, a product of the QS Quacquarelli Symonds system. It includes general and subject rankings with 51 subjects and 5 subject areas. QS World University Rankings has been known since 1990 and is considered the world's most popular source of comparative data on the success of universities worldwide. QS World University Rankings also lists alumni employability rankings, top campus listings, higher education system performance rankings, rankings by location, and business school rankings, including global MBA, EMBA, distance online MBA, etc.

The QS World University Rankings methodology is based on the collection and analysis of data provided by universities on their websites, and it is also measured based on the analysis of indicators, such as the quality of research, the demand for graduates from employers, the quality of teaching and internationalisation. To compile these indicators, QS methodology implies a

survey and voting of representatives from employers and experts from the academic community. The quantitative indicators, which include the number of citations relative to the number of teachers, the ratio of the number of international students to the total number of students, the ratio of the number of international teachers to the total number of teachers, are taken from university reports. Publication activity statistics are compiled using the Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar databases. The indices used to evaluate the university are classified into 5 areas: social sciences, natural sciences, life sciences and biomedicine, technological sciences, and arts and humanities.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In these conditions, heads of universities are interested in gaining positive experience in promoting universities in the world educational institutions ranking lists (Salimova et al., 2021; Ebzeeva et al., 2022; Ebzeeva, 2021; Ebzeeva & Gishkaeva, 2022). Heading for rankings, each university goes through four main stages, each of which is a notable achievement:

1) *being in the lists* – a start; the inclusion of a university means getting a place in the ranking table, and for small regions/countries it is often the norm to be represented by only one university; as a rule, for QS World University Rankings, the starting position is 1201+;

2) *growth of general indicators* – a forward movement to the top of the ranking tables or maintaining the positions of the previous year (Kudryashova, 2021);

3) *growth in subject rankings* – purposeful work on one or several subject areas, which is displayed in the ranking table in a separate table; can significantly differ upward from the overall ranking of the university (Vorobeva et al., 2021);

4) *growth according to certain criteria* – work on the indicators according to which the university was initially different or has the goal of distinguishing itself; such indicators can be, for example, the level of internationalisation or the degree of the campus comfort (Kozyrskaya, 2020).

The inclusion of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in the overall QS World University Rankings in 2012 with a relatively high starting position of 501-550 showed its recognition by the world educational community. The next stage was an increase up to 471-480 in 2014. This was followed by a stage typical for many newcomers in the ranking when RUDN University experienced a decrease in the ranking table of 2015-2017 to 601-650.

The accumulated experience, participation in the 5–100 programme, and the university's own ambitions led to the formation of a strategy for the development of the university, its roadmap set a goal – further advancement both in the overall ranking and in rankings by subject area.

RUDN University was set up as a multidisciplinary university, its specialisation was not determined by the status itself unlike, for example, Kazan (Volga region) Federal University the status of which determined its central function (including state and other investments) in higher education compared to other universities in the region. Moreover, RUDN University is not a university with a historically established specialisation unlike Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology (MIPT/Moscow Phystech) – one of the first research institutes in Russia, the specialisation of which is determined by its origin – Moscow Mechanical Institute of Ammuni-

tion. Another example is Saint Petersburg Electrotechnical University ETU-LETI (energy) or Bauman Moscow State Technical University (historically – engineering and instrumentation in defence). Further movement of RUDN University in the overall ranking in the QS World University Rankings has been progressive: in 2018 it was in the 501-550th place in the overall ranking, in 2019 – 446, in 2020 – 392, in 2021 – 326, in 2022 – 317. However, the most strategically justified was the work of RUDN University on promotion in subject rankings (Table 1). RUDN University has been present in rankings by subject: since 2019 – Modern Languages, Linguistics and Arts & Humanities; since 2020 – Mathematics, Social Sciences & Management, Economics & Econometrics, and Chemistry; since 2021 – Engineering Petroleum, Law & Legal Studies, Computer Science & Information Systems, and Business & Management Studies.

Table 1

Growth of RUDN University positions in QS World University Rankings by subject

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Modern Languages	–	151-200	101-150	88	58
Linguistics	–	251-300	151-200	101-150	71
Mathematics	–	–	351-400	201-250	201-250
Engineering Petroleum	–	–	–	101-150	51-100
Law & Legal Studies	–	–	–	151-200	151-200
Arts & Humanities	–	366	345	245	173
Social Sciences & Management	–	–	401-450	273	254
Economics & Econometrics	–	–	451-500	351-400	351-400
Computer Science & Information	–	–	–	451-500	401-450
Business & Management Studies	–	–	–	451-500	401-450
Chemistry	–	–	551-600	501-550	123

In 2021, RUDN University was represented in 11 subject rankings of the QS World University Rankings. The most effective is the promotion of the university in Modern Languages and Linguistics. In 2019, RUDN University became 151-200 in the subject ranking Modern languages; in 2021 it took the honourable 88th place; and in 2022 has soared to new heights – 58th

place in the world. The EECA University Rankings awarded RUDN University the 58th position, the Graduate Employability Rankings – 301-500th position.

In conducting this research, we used the method of analysing the data of the world's leading rankings and their methodology, having focused, first of all, on QS World University Rankings. We also implied the results

of SWOT-analysis of the activities of the Peoples' Friendship University of Russia based on the material of the roadmap and activity reports for the last five years, as well as the analysis of data from the roadmaps of other leading Russian universities.

The main task of applying SWOT analysis was to build a strategy for the development of activities while realising that the main driving forces for successful growth are taken into account. It is generally accepted that this type of analysis is suitable for designing and introducing a development strategy for an enterprise, service and product. In recent years, SWOT analysis has also been used for introspection, so it is involved in building a strategy for personal professional growth.

3. RUDN UNIVERSITY ADVANCES IN QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS BY SUBJECT

3.1. Priority areas of development

RUDN University was established in 1960 as a multidisciplinary university. Medical, Agricultural, Engineering, along with the faculties of humanitarian orientation, posed the task of determining the areas of special attention which require forces and funds with a view to modernising and optimising the educational process. The first important step was the allocation of a priority direction for the scientific development of RUDN University, which included Mathematics, Medicine, Chemistry, Physics, and Modern Languages. The main projects were concentrated in five research institutes, created on the base of university's oldest departments of Physical, Mathematical and Natural Sciences:

1) Nikolski Mathematical Institute (functional analysis, theory of function spaces, differential equations of various types, and nonlinear analysis);

2) Joint Institute for Chemical Research (JICR) (synthesis of drugs for the treatment of neuropsychiatric and oncological diseases, computer modelling of the biological activity of molecules of the structure and properties of substances and their biological activity);

3) Institute of Applied Mathematics and Telecommunications (development of new technologies in the field of mobile communications and software for data transmission channels);

4) Institute of Innovative Engineering Technologies (artificial intelligence using GPU technologies, surface engineering, vibration and multi-wave seismic exploration, enhanced oil recovery of productive formations, composite materials in construction);

5) Academic Research Institute of Gravitation and Cosmology (fundamental physics).

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The creation of research institutes in these areas of scientific activity in RUDN University made it possible to focus the activities of the teaching staff on solving theoretical issues within several scientific projects, the results of which, as a rule, become visible to the international scientific community through publications in journals indexed on high-ranking platforms. Developing new areas of research, for example, questions of mathematical medicine, RUDN University scientists are attracting leading research institutes in Russia, international organisations and foreign universities for cooperation.

When determining the priority areas of the university's activities, the university's own resources and history, it is necessary to consider priority areas identified by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation, global trends, and experience of other countries (see, e.g., Riccardo et al., 2020).

In the humanities, the reorganisation of the scientific and educational space led to the creation of the Institute of Modern Languages, Intercultural Communication and Migration working in two directions: (1) development of innovative models of teaching foreign languages; training of professional translators, including simultaneous interpreters for international organisations; (2) study of migration processes, for example, the representation of languages and cultures in various socio-cultural contexts, primarily in an urbanised environment, analysis of linguocultural identity, expert and analytical activities in the legislative regulation of migration processes (Moskvitcheva & Viaut, 2019).

3.2. New forms of university activity

The second step towards success should involve the expansion of cooperation with world leading scientific centres, experts from other countries, new partners within the country. Thus, the Institute of Modern Languages, Intercultural Communication and Migration has created Dynamics of Languages in a Minority Situation

– the Franco-Russian laboratory working on interdisciplinary research of ethnic minority languages in Europe and Russia.

Attracting foreign researchers is a new form of educational and scientific activity. On a regular basis, RUDN University concludes labour contracts with international specialists who work in classrooms and engage in research and publishing activities.

Bringing international specialists to Russian universities is one of the mechanisms for resolving the issue of increasing its competitiveness in the world market of educational services. The leading universities in the QS World University Rankings have international staff, and the indicator of the share of international teaching staff is the basis of one of the markers of this ranking.

The experience of a foreign specialist allows creating an educational programme that meets the standards of the world's leading universities. Furthermore, the programme is taught in English, which brings it to a new level. The government provides the necessary assistance in attracting international scientists and promises support, for instance, in obtaining visas or introducing changes in legislation in the field of international recruiting. Thus, the status of a 'highly qualified specialist' was introduced in 2010. This status gives an international specialist the following benefits: no quota and work permit acquisition procedures; 30 to 13% tax reduction; residence permits granted under the simplified procedure, including for family members. However, not every international specialist can apply for this status, since their threshold minimum is 2,000,000 roubles in annual income. The right to lower the threshold level to 1,000,000 roubles belongs to universities that have the status of national research centres. In general, an international specialist working at a Russian university is a necessary resource but faces a number of organisational and legal problems.

Expanding the horizons of cooperation is the work on the creation of the UNESCO Chair of Sociolinguistics and Global Migration Processes, which was motivated by the necessity to carry out research, expert-analytical and consulting activities in the field of sociolinguistics, modern languages, migration, and intercultural communication, which is impossible without cooperation with leading international scientists and educational organisations.

The activities of the Chair of the declared format are designed to contribute to the implementation of the UNESCO Strategy for the dissemination of literacy among youth and adults (2020-2025). The key direction

of the development of scientific thought within the Chair's project activities is the analysis of linguocultural identity, the representation of languages and cultures in various socio-cultural contexts, primarily in an urbanised environment. The UNESCO Chair is one of the forms of recognition of the importance of an educational institution in the specialised scientific environment. At the moment in Russia there are just over 20 Chairs in the field of education.

An important innovation of Russian universities is the development and expansion of programmes of continuing education, currently receiving the utmost attention. According to the Federal Law on Education in the Russian Federation, continuing education is aimed at meeting educational and professional needs, the professional development of a person, ensuring the compliance of their qualifications with the changing conditions of professional activity and social environment. In a changing market, the re-profiling and activation of professional skills along with the improvement of existing skills is a highly demanded educational service.

Continuing education is an area of activity in high demand for any university: among other things as part of activities to increase the social significance of a higher education lecturer (see, e.g., Efimova et al., 2022). Its implementation is possible through continuing education programmes, where students are required to have secondary specialised or higher education in the same subject area. The content of the continuing education programmes correlates with the educational programmes of the university.

3.3. Image strategies in scientific activity

The third step is work on the scientific image of the university, which, in our opinion, is most successfully carried out with the help of conferences at various levels. For modern higher education, combining teaching and research activities by the staff of a country's leading research centres – universities – is not new. In fact, a scientific conference is the best opportunity to show scientific potential, exchange relevant scientific information and methods. The activities of universities in organising and holding conferences is a long-standing practice. Many RUDN conferences are annual (e.g., Firsov Readings) or held once every 2-3 years (e.g., Novikov Readings) and have an established circle of permanent participants. Traditionally, conferences held by the university end with the publication of a collection of articles by the authors participating in the conference.

'Orientation of the teaching staff to the publication of their research in English, stimulation of their publication activity in international journals and participation in international conferences brought significant results. Thus, in 2020, the number of articles published in the subject area Modern Languages in Q1-Q2 journals amounted to 50, of which 45 articles (90%) were published in English; 40 papers (80%) – in international scientific journals, 10 articles (20%) – in Russian journals (3) or in conference proceedings (7)'

One of the necessary conditions for the implementation of this step is the accumulation of a significant number of publications by RUDN University employees available to the world scientific community, i.e., published in quartile scientific journals.

Quartality of a journal is determined by two bibliometric indicators: the Journal Citation Reports impact factor in the Web of Science database and the SCImago ranking, which is calculated based on citations in the Scopus database. Popularity and recognition, as well as the fact of trust in the quality of scientific analysis of articles in journals of high quartiles (Q1-Q2) are confirmed by a large number of references to articles published in them.

Both in the citation bases and in analytical materials that describe the achievements of RUDN University in general and the Institute of Modern Languages, Intercultural Communication and Migration in particular, scientific research and, accordingly, journals are divided into categories, within which journals are ranked by quartile.

Since the quartile of a journal is associated with the length of time of its indexing in international scientific citation databases, so far only two RUDN University journals working in the field of Modern Languages have a high quartile – Russian Journal of Linguistics published by RUDN University, and New Research of Tuva published in collaboration with RUDN University.

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Thus, in 2020, the number of articles published in the subject area Modern Languages in Q1-Q2 journals amounted to 50, of which 45 articles (90%) were published in English; 40 papers (80%) – in international scientific journals, 10 articles (20%) – in Russian journals (3) or in conference proceedings (7). The articles offered research findings, including in the areas developed in the Institute of Modern Languages, Intercultural Communication and Migration. 15% of the teams of authors are young scientists – post-graduate students and doctoral students. Some of the works were the result of collaboration with employees of international universities (5). Research topics are presented in the following areas: (1) practical knowledge and teaching of various aspects of the language; (2) languages and cultures in the modern world; (3) discursive research; (4) dictionaries and corpus linguistics; (5) language for special purposes.

The growth of the recognition of scientific linguistics journals published by RUDN University should also be attributed to image strategies in the field of scientific activity (Moskaleva & Akoev, 2021; Malyuga & Grishchko, 2021; Beatty, 2022), which, in our opinion, correlates with the growth of the positions of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in the subject areas of Modern languages and Linguistics. At present, the following scientific journals are published at RUDN University in the subject area under consideration, which are included in the international citation databases.

1. Russian Journal of Linguistics, which in 2021 became one of the Q1 Scopus editions and ranks third in the subject ranking of scientific journals in Russia according to RSCI (ranked 274 in the overall Science Index ranking for 2020). Russian Journal of Linguistics has a long history. It was founded in 1984 and for a long time it was the main linguistic journal of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia. It was established by Russian linguist Lev Novikov, who identified such areas of the journal's development as functional semantics, functional grammar, and the linguistics of a literary text. The editorial board of the journal includes scientists from Russia, Australia, the UK, Germany, Israel, India, Spain, Italy, Canada, Qatar, China, Lithuania, the USA, and Japan. A distinctive feature of the journal is the regularly scheduled special issues coming out 2 or 4 times a year to address the most challenging research questions. Guest editors of such issues are well-known Russian and international scientists. A comprehensive deep study of the complex linguistic problems helps clarify controversial issues, offers comprehensive presentation

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of various scientific schools, and contributes to the development of the best possible research principles. In 2022, Russian Journal of Linguistics was recognised by Elsevier, together with the Association of Science Editors and Publishers, as the result of the most successful practice in publishing a scientific journal in the field of social sciences and the humanities.

2. RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics (12th place in the subject ranking of Russian scientific journals according to RSCI) and Russian Language Studies (20th place in the subject ranking of Russian scientific journals according to RSCI; placed 618 in the overall Science Index ranking for 2020; included in the number of journals indexed in Scopus in 2020 and Scopus Q2 in 2022). RUDN Journal of Language Studies, Semiotics and Semantics was founded in 2010, the focus of its scientific interest being research in the field of the general and special theory of language, theories of speech and speech activity. The articles in the journal present an analysis of the semiotic characteristics of sign systems, language units of different levels and text, semiotics and poetics of literary texts and a comprehensive and comparative study of the typology of categories and units of language. The editorial board of the journal includes scientists from Russia, Belarus, China, Slovakia, Kazakhstan, and Spain. The journal has a recognisable profile of published works. It is steadily growing in rankings. 30% of the content is published in English or in two languages (English and Russian).

3. Training, Language and Culture published by RUDN University – indexed in Scopus Q1 since 2022 – a journal focused on publishing research articles in the field of teaching foreign languages, comparative linguistics and linguo-culturological research. A distinctive feature of the journal is the English version, and a high percentage of international authors (ranked 108 in the subject ranking of Russian scientific journals ac-

ording to RSCI; ranked 3131 in the overall Science Index ranking for 2020; the youngest of the journals under consideration – founded in 2017, it has demonstrated a rapid increase in recognition in the scientific world, as evidenced by the high Scopus quartile). The editorial board of the journal includes scientists from Russia, Germany, the UK, Spain, China, Colombia, Korea, the Netherlands, the USA, Croatia, France, and Switzerland. The main direction of the journal is scientific works devoted to various aspects of language teaching to strengthen the links between theory and practice, intercultural communication, mutually enriching international cooperation between teachers. Open access, publication of all content in English, participation of world-famous linguists and several thematic areas (Finding Culture in Language; Current Challenges in Language Teaching and Learning: Perspectives, Practices and Provisions; More than Meets the Eye: A Closer Look at Professional Discourse; Profession-Oriented Research: Educational and Methodological Perspectives) allowed the journal to receive well-deserved recognition in the scientific community.

All the journals presented above have taken significant steps to change with a view to achieving a high level of recognition in the scientific world. Importantly, their focus is on successful global practice. Thus, the international scientists representing the editorial board correspond to the goals and objectives of the journals under consideration. This correlates with the recommendations for the development of scientific journals, including the need for representation of various organisations of the regions of Russia and other countries of the world. It is also highly recommended to *'provide coverage with the use of scientific specialisations of members of the editorial boards when publishing and working in all scientific areas and sections of the journal'* (Alimova & Brumshteyn, 2020). Narrowing the thematic representation and working on special issues allows us to create an individual profile for the journal. Attracting new highly cited authors leads to an increase in the attention of the scientific community and to an increase in the competitiveness of the journal portfolio.

In the era of digital technologies and social networks, the university is involved in its own promotion on both public and personal levels. The level of public promotion is represented in the official website as well as the official YouTube channel.

RUDN University newspaper *Druzhba* and RUDN University television centre are also involved in promoting RUDN University in the media space. The staff

of the editorial board of the newspaper, which is published twice a month, inform a wide and mainly internal audience of university employees and students about significant events and important changes in the work of the university, which stimulates them to new aspects of educational and social activities. Currently, the newspaper is also published online.

The expansion of the boundaries of RUDN University's recognition is also facilitated by its promotion at the private level. For example, many university researchers post public speeches on their personal channels, have social networks, representing the department, faculty or journal.

The personal level of university promotion in the global educational space can be illustrated by the participation of employees in the editorial boards of international scientific journals (currently 10 employees of the Faculty of Philology are members of the editorial boards of scientific journals), since the invitation to cooperate with them is based on the personal scientific achievements of a member of the editorial board, but is necessarily associated with their affiliation.

The recognition of a university in the world can be assessed through the expansion of the geography of experts, whose opinion of the university is one of the criteria for evaluating the activities for the ranking. Scientific contacts of the university are made up of a number of factors, the most important of which, in our opinion, is the activities carried out within the academic mobility programme. This programme stimulated the scientific and pedagogical staff of the university to regularly participate in full-time scientific conferences and educational exhibitions, where, along with the presentation of the results of their scientific research, an employee of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia exchanged views with teachers from other universities, and also talked about certain new areas of activity, about the specific conditions for teaching students at RUDN University, announced scientific journals published by the university and many others.

Summing up, it should be noted that in the modern world, participation in international university rankings not only stimulates universities to search for new solutions that improve the quality of educational services but is also a constant aspect of the university's attention to its image. The positive experience of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia, which has demonstrated a rapid rise in the subject ranking of the area Modern Languages and Linguistics, will be of interest to the Russian academic community.

3.4. Cooperation with employers

We consider the fourth step to be efforts aimed at organising the post-educational stage of a student's activity – practice and employment. Students who receive education in Linguistics, Philology and Modern Languages are in demand in the labour market, however, for example, in Moscow they are competing with graduates of other humanitarian faculties and universities of the capital. To ensure the connection between RUDN University and employer, the following steps have been taken:

- establishing the Consortium of Russian educational organisations for the joint implementation of the cluster approach in the field of science, education, industrial and educational partnerships abroad. The year 2020 confirmed the need for universities and interested organisations to work together in recruiting students and graduates of Russian universities to implement the tasks set in the federal Export of Education project;

- establishing the University Practice and Employment Department designed to (1) expand the geography and areas of cooperation with the largest employers in Russia and abroad, (2) create and update the database of current vacancies, (3) offer professional consultations for students on recruiting issues including compiling and posting of their CVs in the database, (4) organise internships for Russian and international graduates, (5) offer project activities with practice for students, (6) establish collaboration with RUDN University Alumni Association on issues of employment for students, bachelors and masters.

Students of the Faculty of Philology find work in companies in diverse fields of activity, such as mass media (correspondent, copywriting, editing, translation with RBC, Russia Today International news Agency, TV Centre channel; teaching Russian, literature, foreign languages at schools; exhibition business (organisation, translations, copywriting, work at the stand, including in foreign languages, e.g. at Messe Dusseldorf Moscow, LLC; advertising activities (copywriting, work with clients, translation with the 2050.Lab National Centre for Industrial Design and Innovation; office work and management with the Embassy of Grenada to the Russian Federation, VTB Bank and many others. These areas of activity imply both temporary employment (for the period of practical training and part-time work of students), and permanent work after their graduation.

A special area of attention of RUDN University in matters of student employment is citizens of foreign countries studying at the university. For international

students, jobs are being created both at the university itself (for example, the established tradition of a construction team, a volunteering system, etc.), and in the increasing number of international companies with which the university cooperates on student practice and employment.

4. CONCLUSION

The stages of the work of Peoples' Friendship University of Russia in being promoted in the international rankings of the best universities in the world in the subject areas mentioned above allow us to summarise our positive experience in several universal recommendations.

1. Determining priority directions for scientific activity. This stage should be based on a SWOT analysis of the university's activities to determine the exceptional qualities of its activities, which are its competitive advantage and allow laying the foundations for further development without key changes. Thus, the creation or enhancement of the connection between the scientific and scientific-practical activities of the university with the enterprises of the region and/or with the scientific institutions of the region makes it possible to strengthen the priority areas identified at this stage.

2. Organising new forms of work (scientific institute, laboratory, scientific centre) with a change in the functionality of the teaching staff of the university and the invitation to leading scientists in this field of activity to cooperate with them; support and development of scientific projects and cooperation with scientific and educational, scientific and practical and industrial organisations in Russia and worldwide. This stage in-

cludes both the enlargement of existing units and the creation of fundamentally new ones within existing universities. Globalisation in the field of higher education makes it possible to implement cooperation with the world's leading universities, which, in turn, leads to an increase in interest in a particular Russian university.

3. Developing and implementing image strategies in the field of scientific activity (conferences, publication activity, specialised scientific journals as part of the publication activity of the university, popularisation of the university and its achievement of a level of international recognition in the world). Perceiving the university as an enterprise that can be changed using various image strategies makes it possible to make visible the efforts described above and their results.

4. Working with employers to organise internships and further employment of university graduates. Creating links between graduates and employers has always been a priority for universities, but it is at the present stage that these tasks have become feasible through a system of internships and practices, as well as recruiting, which involves enterprises from various fields of activity.

Outside this system, university graduates who could not find a job in their field of studies within two years after graduation reduce their level of training, and the enterprise does not receive a qualified employee with the most recent information about the subject of activity and the necessary skills.

The organised mutual efforts of the university and the employer make it possible to solve this problem both within the region or country, and at the international level.

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