Introduction: role of higher education today

The role of higher education today is crucial in shaping the future. It provides individuals with the necessary knowledge, skills, and opportunities to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Furthermore, it acts as a catalyst for social and economic development, by producing a skilled workforce and contributing to scientific research and innovation.

* levels of higher education and length of study in Belarus, the UK and the US

In Belarus, higher education is organized into three levels: Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctoral degrees. The length of study for each level can vary.

At the Bachelor's level, students typically study for four years, although in some cases it can take five years, especially for certain specialized professions. This level provides students with a foundational knowledge and skills in their chosen field.

After completing a Bachelor's degree, students have the option to pursue a Master's degree, which typically takes 1-2 years to complete. Master's programs offer more specialized and advanced coursework, allowing students to deepen their knowledge and skills in a specific area of study.

For those interested in pursuing advanced research or academic careers, the Doctoral level is available. Doctoral degrees in Belarus usually take three years to complete and require in-depth research, culminating in the defense of a doctoral thesis.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that degree programmes in the US take about one year longer than programmes in the UK. So, in the UK Bachelor's degree requires three years of studying whereas in the US it's four years. Master's degrees are one and two years respectively and Doctoral degrees are three and from five to seven years

* university organisation in Belarus, the UK and the US

All HEIs in Belarus are made up of faculties according to the specialities they provide. Whereas many universities in the UK are made up of "colleges" that are dedicated to a specific subject and have quite a lot of autonomy from each other. By contrast, in the US, you apply to the larger university and for the first year or more, you take courses from a variety of fields and only declare a major at the end of the first year. American universities have different "schools", or departments, which house a number of related majors. For this reason, the general emphasis of higher education in the US is breadth or getting a range of knowledge from a variety of different subjects which resembles the Belarusian system. Meanwhile, in the UK, the emphasis is more of your chosen subject. on depth, getting a very thorough understanding of your chosen subject.

* course of study in Belarus, the UK and the US

An academic year in Belarus is divided into two terms starting on the 1" of September with shorter winter and longer summer holidays. Most universities in the US begin their studies in mid to late August and last for two semesters as well with a rather lengthy break beginning in mid-December. Whereas the year in Britain's universities consists of trimesters, which usually run from the beginning of October to the end of June or the beginning of July.

* assignments and grades in Belarus, the UK and the US

Because the US system emphasises breadth, courses require weekly or even biweekly readings as well as other assignments such as small writing projects, major research papers, and oral presentations throughout the course. On the contrary, in the UK, most schools are much more lecture-based, with only occasional assignments throughout the semester. In some cases, there may be no actual required assignments and instead your entire grade may be based on one final exam. In the US, your grade will be based on your performance on a variety of assignments, with a final exam making up only a percentage of your total grade.

Concerning the Belarusian system of high education, it embraces the features of both British and American ones. So, on some subjects, students are assessed according to their participation throughout the course whilst the success in other subjects depends on the final credit or exam mark.

* cost of study in Belarus, the UK and the US

It is well acknowledged that the cost of education in the US and the UK is far from cheap, but in the United States is generally higher. Universities in England may charge up to 9000 pounds (approximately 14,300 dollars) per year for citizens of the UK and the EU. Fees for international students can be significantly higher. The US differentiates between in-state tuition fees and out-of-state ones, as well as between private and public universities. Public out-of-state institutions are much more affordable than private in-state ones that can cost up to 50,000 dollars per year. In order to help students to cover the cost of tuition in both countries, loans are available through the government with favourable terms and interest rates.

What concerns Belarus higher education is provided by public (state) and private (non-state) HEIs. In public ones, students with high grades in Centralised Testing (typically three subjects) are admitted on a cost-free basis and granted a scholarship. whereas, in private HEIs, all students pay tuition fees which don't vary much from university to university and are generally more affordable comparing to similar institutions in the UK and the US.

* the mission of BSUIR and core areas of training

Our mission is to train engineers and scientists capable of generating and implementing innovative ideas, creating competitive high-tech products in the spheres of computer science and electronics.

Being founded in 1964 as Minsk Radio Engineering Institute, Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics strives to achieve academic excellence heading towards the future with confidence and dignity.

Today, the University has become a large national research and educational centre possessing a great workforce, scientific and training environment, state-of-the-art laboratory equipment, and extensive infrastructure. It is the leading IT university, core institution in information technologies among the CIS countries.

* the University framework

Today the University framework includes 8 faculties, 32 departments, 49 specialities, Institute of Information Technologies, the Research and Development (R&D) Department. More than 16,000 students including international undergraduate and postgraduate ones coming from different countries of Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, the European Union, and the receive education in the form of full-time, part-time, or distance learning.

* the teaching staff of BSUIR

The highly qualified teaching staff consists of academicians, Corresponding members of the Belarusian Academy of Sciences, foreign Academies of Sciences, professors, doctors, associate professors, senior lecturers, and assistants.

* subjects being studied and the University curriculum

Different subjects are taught at the University depending on the faculty and the course. First-year students study physics, higher mathematics, descriptive geometry, technical drawing, and social sciences. Later they acquire profound knowledge in electronics, cybernetics, computing machinery, etc. Special attention is given to such subjects as impulse technique, analog and digital computers.

Four foreign languages are taught at the University. Two departments teach English, French, German and Spanish to students and post-graduates with an emphasis on acquiring profession-oriented language skills. Optional courses and languages are available in the Language Training Centre. Several specialities at the University are also available in English.

Lectures, seminars, laboratory works, and practical classes which attendance is obligatory make up the majority of the curriculum. Students are usually assessed at the end of each semester through a pass-fail system, written and oral examinations, and through their coursework projects.

* University facilities at the students’ disposal

The University offers excellent facilities for studying, research and recreation. University facilities at the students' disposal include a number of computer classes and modern engineering laboratories. A local computer net, including more than 4,000 computers with Wi-Fi access, connects all 8 education buildings. A video conferencing centre and lecture theatres are equipped with up-to-date multimedia means. There is a large library with nine reading halls, including three electronic ones with Internet access. Students from other cities live in four dormitories with all modern amenities.

* BSUIR as a scientific organisation

BSUIR today is a large scientific organisation 34 R&D labs, 8 scientific centres, and an IT business incubator that cooperate with more than 100 science organisations and educational institutions from more than 40 countries. The University staff and students take part in various international exchange programmes, fulfill scientific research contracts, receive grants and work placements in the world's top IT companies. The University presents its latest developments at Belarusian national expositions, as well as at world-famous fairs and exhibitions.

* the role of sport and extracurricular activities in the University life

Sport also occupies a crucial part of University life. The University teams regularly win the leading positions of student sports and compete at a national level. Students are engaged in athletics, soccer, basketball, volleyball, handball, swimming, freestyle wrestling, bodybuilding, shaping, and other sports activities. There are all the necessary facilities available like a swimming pool, a fitness centre, open playgrounds, a ski depot, and a summer camp at the Braslav Lakes.

* personal traits and skills needed for university success

University life is not only about classes and exams. The Students' Trade Union and the Student Council offer a plethora of extracurricular activities for students. The Student Club organises forums, contests, tournaments, festivals, discos, and other social events for recreation.

* ways to be a better student

Set your goals

The moment you get down to study, be sure of what you want to achieve and persist in pursuing your goal. Your goals will keep you going and help to focus on fulfilling them

Be punctual

Your professors will appreciate it, as it shows you are interested to learn from them. Also, never skip classes, as it can create a gap in your knowledge, and you can start falling behind the group with studies

Participate in activities

Do not just stay in the classroom, be involved in some extracurricular activities. If you excel in your academics, try to do the same with the non-academic activities. This will also increase your social capability

Make a to-do list

Be organised, that is one way to allot time for every task. List down in activities the activities that you need to do to meet a deadline. Your to-do list will serve as your reminder and help you to keep track of your progress

Take good care of your health

Health is wealth, and it's true. So, prioritise your health, as if you are healthy, you can study well. Hence, be physically, emotionally, and mentally fit, and you'll pass the exams

Listen and take down notes

It really helps to keep up with the workload, as you can review some of the material later. It is not necessary that you should write down all the words you see or hear, just highlight the important points

Love what you're doing

When you choose a course at university, be sure that you really want it, so you won't regret it in the long run. can be boring, but when you love the subject, you put much more effort into studies

* my daily routine as a student

My daily routine as a student starts early in the morning. I wake up at 7 am and get ready for the day. After having a quick breakfast, I head to my university I'm going to the university.

Pairs start at 9 o'clock. After class, I go to the dorm, have lunch, rest a little, and start doing my homework. After that, if there is time left, I take a break from my homework, and then at about 11 I go to bed.

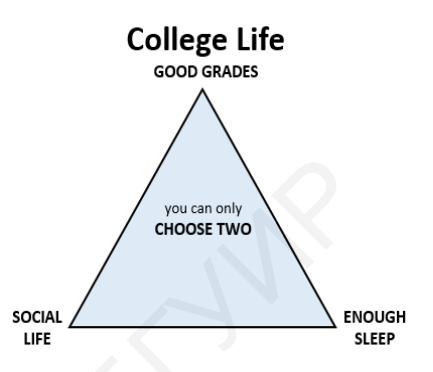
* the main characteristics of academic life and my workload

My workload is extremely high. Rather than spending time with my girlfriend I had to ruin my weekends, just to do my English homework. And I'm still not confident if I did everything correctly

* the main characteristics of student social life and my extracurricular activities

Very little free time. Pain.

* how to reach the balance between academic and social life at university



Conclusion: my short-term and long-tern goals

My main short-term goal at the time of writing this topic was to make my English homework and sleep peacefully.