

4. SHARE OF SCHOOL GRADUATES ENTERING HIGHER EDUCATION IS DECLINING

Elena Lomteva, Candidate of Pedagogic Sciences, Leading researcher, the Center of Economy of Continuous Education (CENO), IAES, RANEPA;

Larisa Bedareva, Senior researcher, CENO, IAES, RANEPA

Social and economic changes resulted in a transformation of youth' values: the attitude towards higher education, granting both social status and, consequently, privileges in employment, became a history. However, the changes taking place in Russia, external to the vocational education system, may have a serious impact on the behavior of young people in the near future, especially young men, who will be more targeted to enroll in full-time higher education programs.

In recent years, CENO IAES RANEPA has studied the educational trends of graduates of the 9th and 11th graders, as well as graduates of educational institutions of the secondary vocational education (SVE). The choice of graduates was determined by analysis of statistical data contained in the forms GE-1, SVE-1 and HVE-1 of statistical observation, and the motivation of this choice was estimated on the basis of information collected in the course of various sociological surveys.

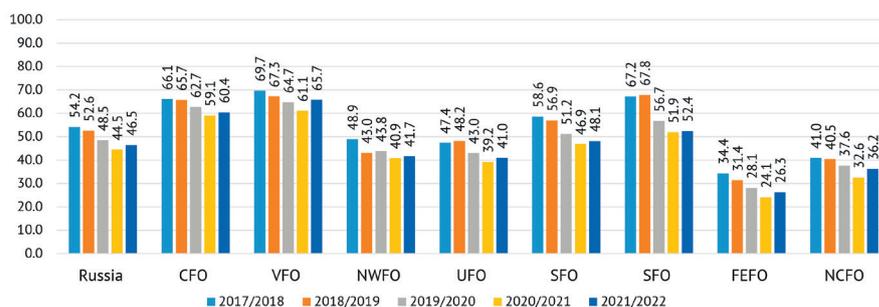
Higher education has always been in the focus of young people and the population on the whole. The goal to get it has long been considered a social norm, crucial in shaping human capital and life success. Now, this norm began to change.

Socio-economic changes resulted in a transformation of young people's values: setting towards higher education granting social status and, inevitably, privileges in employment, has become a history. Thus, according to the findings, the share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities right after school was between 20% and 70% over the five years from 2017 to 2021, depending on the federal okrug, while the meaning of this share by 2021 decreased relative to 2017 (*Fig. 1*): the lowest indicator was recorded in 2020, when the USE was abolished for those eleventh-graders not planning to continue their studies in higher education. Hence, in 2020 the share of eleventh-graders admitted to SVE institutions increased significantly (from 1.6 to 3.6 p.p.).

The share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities right after school largely depends on special aspects of a particular RF region. High figures of this share in the Volga (VFO) and the Central Federal Okrugs (CFO) have been attributed to the fact that in a number of regions these figures were off the charts: thus, in Moscow (CFO) these shares in different years in the period under consideration changed from 155.5 to 169.7%, while in the Republic of Tatarstan (VFO) they changed from 97 to 106%¹.

¹ If this indicator exceeds 100%, it means that eleventh-graders from other regions come to study in the universities of this particular region (i.e. education migration).

Monitoring of Russia's Economic Outlook



Note. Shares estimated relative to a number of the eleventh-graders.

Fig. 1. Share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities in 2017/18–2021/22 school years, %

The insignificant admission rates to higher education in the Far Eastern Federal Okrug (FEFO) in 2017/18–2021/22 academic years are associated with their ultra-low values in Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (0.0–3.7%), Sakhalin Region (9.9–17.8%) and Jewish AO (9.8–16.6%). One of the reasons for the low demand for higher education in these regions is the small number of universities: 1 (branch) in Chukotka AO, 2 in Sakhalin Region and 1 in Jewish AO.

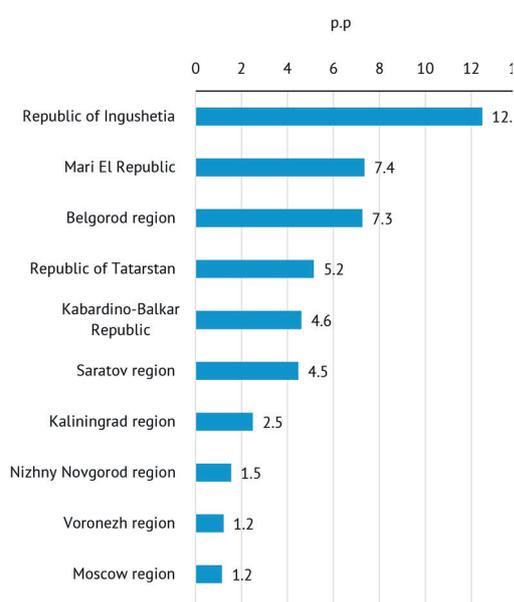
The share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities immediately after school increased only in 11 out of 85 regions of the Russian Federation over 5 years under consideration (Fig. 2).

Over the 2017/2018–2021/2022 academic year, the share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities right after graduating from school declined in all forms of higher education (Fig. 3).

The share of eleventh graders admitted to universities right after completing school education, calculated relative to total admission to higher education institutions, has also decreased (Fig. 4). Their share in total admission over five years (2017–2021) did not exceed 50% both for Russia as a whole and for all federal okrugs, while this indicator dropped, especially in 2019–2021.

The decline in the share of eleventh-graders choosing to continue education in the universities right after school, is due to:

- growing social and financial instability of households and inevitable inability to prepare their children for the Uniform State Exam (USE) guaranteeing scores sufficient to get into state-financed higher



Note. Share estimates relative to a number of eleventh-graders.

Fig. 2. Regions demonstrating growth in the share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities immediately after completing school education, p.p.

4. Share of school graduates entering higher education is declining

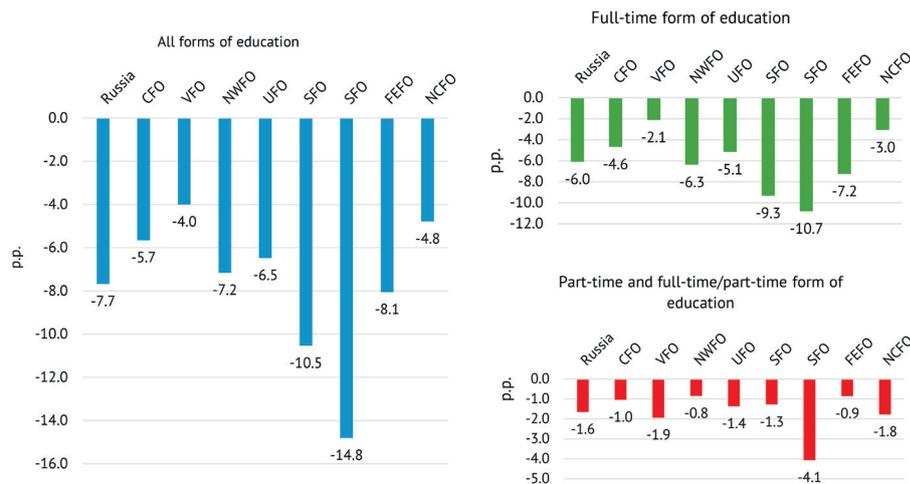
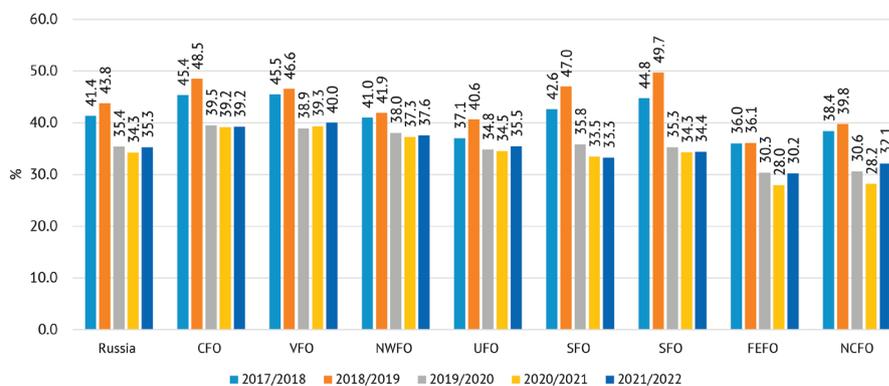


Fig. 3. Decline in the share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities right after completing school education, p.p.



Note. Shares estimated relative to overall admission to universities.

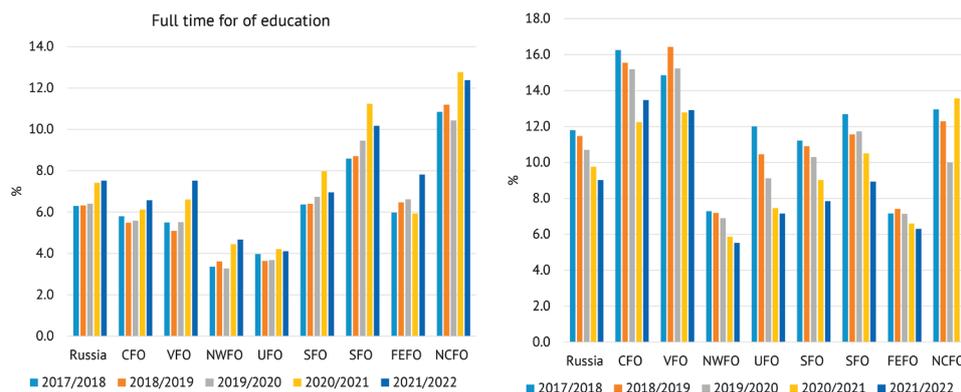
Fig. 4. Share of eleventh-graders admitted to universities right after completing school in 2017/18–2021/22 school years, %

education institutions, as well as lack of funds to educate their children on a fee-paying basis;

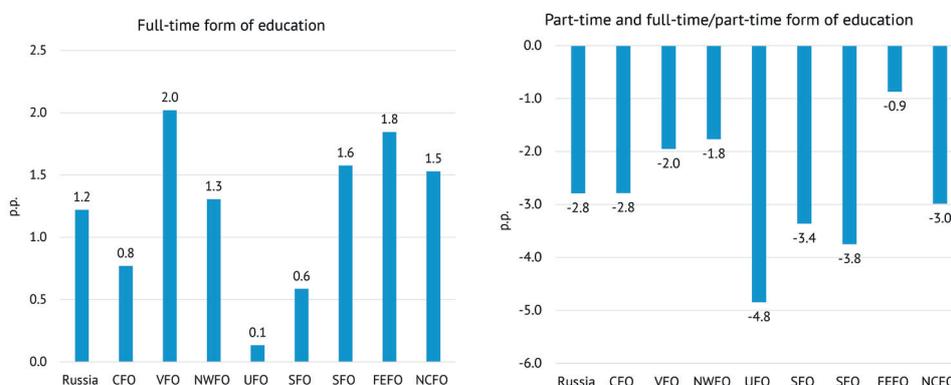
- an increasing risk of failing to enter the university due to the one-stage admission campaign;
- rather poor school preparation in the subjects required for studies at technical universities, especially in mathematics and physics;
- the fact that many young people are already actively employed by the time they leave school, including without formal employment, especially in information technology.

The choice of graduates in the SVE system differs from that of the eleventh-graders. Thus, 3 to 13% of graduates prefer full-time education right after graduating from SVE institutions, and 5 to 17% chose part-time and evening classes (Fig. 5). Every year the share of SVE graduates who continued their studies full-time at the universities has been increasing, while the share of part-time and full-time/part time graduates has been decreasing. The reason for this is primarily the limited range of educational programs demanded by young people, implemented in full time/ part-time and part time forms.

Monitoring of Russia's Economic Outlook



Note. Shares estimated relative to a number of Professional Educational Organizations (PEO) graduates.
Fig. 5. Share of PEO graduates admitted to higher education institutions right after completing school over the period of 2017/18–2021/22 school years



Note. Shares estimated relative to a number of PEO graduates.
Fig. 6. Changes in the share of PEO graduates admitted to universities right after completing education in 2021/2022 school years against 2017/2018

Over the five years (2017–2021), the share of graduates admitted to universities as full-time students right after graduating from SVE institutions increased by 0.1 p.p. in UFO (minimum) and by 2 p.p. in VFO (maximum), while the share of part-time and full-time students fell by a minimum of 0.9 p.p. in FEFO and a maximum of 4.8 p.p. in UFO (Fig. 6).

Usually, immediately after graduating from PEO, young people continue their studies in the higher education system on a full-time basis, if this organization works under the university and there is a chance to continue studies in the specialization acquired at the college. If they failed to enroll in full-time education, they can apply for part-time and evening classes, but this share is small and mainly relates to those combining work and study.

The rather low indicators showing transition of PEO graduates to universities on a full-time basis immediately after completing education (3–13%) are primarily due to the high level of youth employment (up to 70% in Russia as a whole), as well as the fairly high share of young conscripts drafted to Russian Armed Forces. This is well illustrated in terms of the Volga Federal Okrug (Fig. 7).

4. Share of school graduates entering higher education is declining

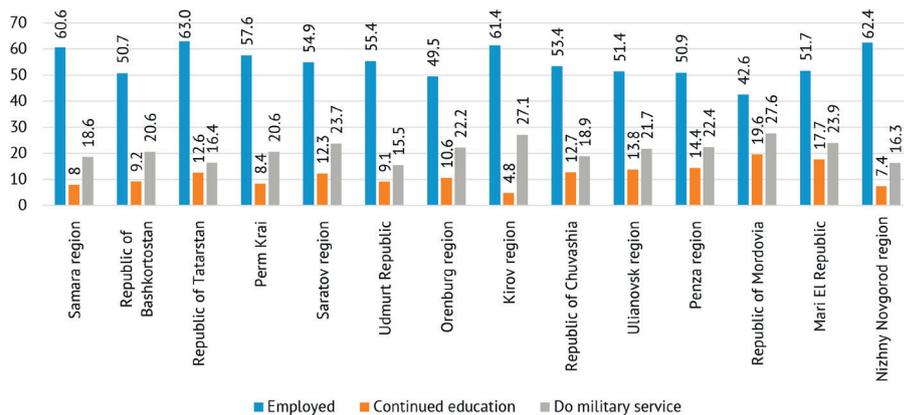
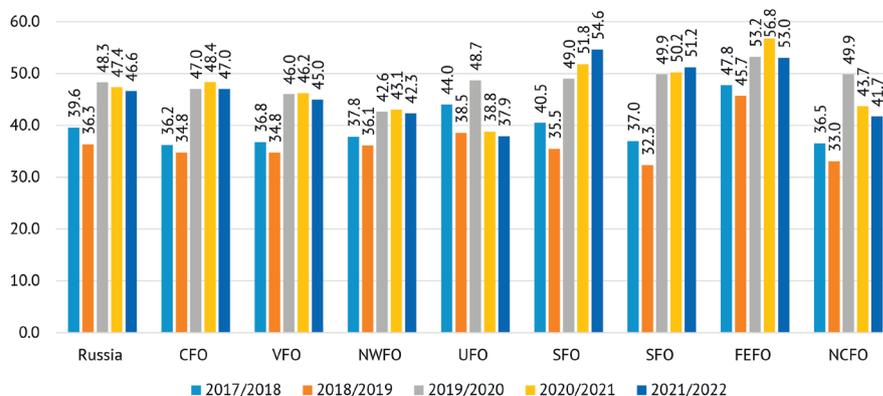


Fig. 7. Distribution of graduates of the VFO SVE regional systems per employment channels in 2022, %



Note. Estimates relative to the total universities admission.

Fig. 8. Share of graduates representing different levels of education, including SVE, who entered universities not immediately after completing their studies at the previous level, %

In 2022, almost a third of young people in the Volga Federal Okrug were forced to interrupt their educational and employment activities immediately after graduating from SVE. For these young people, in the context of rapidly changing technologies and labour market demands, a year of military service results in a reduced likelihood of employment, especially in the specialty they have acquired. This contributes to inequality of starting opportunities for different groups of young people. As a result, a significant part of SVE graduates do not enter the higher education system immediately, but after some time, which may be due to both military service and the need to improve professional competencies (Fig. 8).

At present, a change in young people's priorities can be confirmed. Whereas in the past it was more popular to have an end-to-end model of educational behaviour "school – university" or "school – college – university" followed by the labour market, young people now either combine work and study, or take turns in fulfilling their educational and professional needs.

Meanwhile, the changes taking place in Russia, external to the vocational education system, may in the near future dramatically affect the behaviour of young people, especially young men, while their focus on entering full-time higher education institutions will increase. ▀