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SNAPSHOT

Boosting Transparency at Osh State University

Osh State University initiated a process to improve transparency and reduce the potential for bribery during the university entrance exam and enrollment period.



Photo: USAID/OTI

Students enrolling at the Osh State University in Osh city.

"This year for the first time in Kyrgyzstan, in order to reduce the level of corruption in a just, democratic way, the enrollment process for all entrants was open, clear, broad, and transparent."

*-Kanybek Isakov
Rector of Osh State University*

October 2013 – In the past, students would often wait days to learn the results of the enrollment process at Osh State University (OSU), a period which provided the potential for corruption. The situation has changed this year. "Once we register and submit the national exam results – the registration results are immediately available on screens located outside of the hall. This is really convenient for applicants," said one of the parents during enrollment at OSU.

To provide fair, transparent and equal access to higher education in the Kyrgyz Republic, the independent Center for Educational Assessment and Teaching Methods developed the National Scholarship Test (NST), the results of which solely determine a student's admission to university. However, widespread reports of corruption during the admissions period suggest that students and parents are allegedly required to "buy" entry into state institutions of higher education. At most state universities, the results of the NST are manually entered into a database, which usually takes at least one day due to the limited number of computers and provides opportunities for officials to solicit bribes and manipulate the results.

At Osh State University (OSU), students would often wait days to learn the results of the enrollment process, a period which provided the potential for corruption. The situation changed during the registration for the 2013-2014 Academic Year.

Acknowledging the risk for corruption during the admissions process, OSU started accepting exam results through an automated system in 2012, which decreased the time needed to make them public from 24 hours to only minutes. To support this national initiative to increase transparent university admissions and reduce corruption, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) provided OSU with computers and bar code scanners which allow NST results to be entered and read electronically in real time to the OSU admissions website.

"I liked the enrollment procedures at OSU, because I can check and see my results online even from home," said graduate Akinay Topchubayeva. The introduction of the new transparent admissions procedures has increased applications to OSU by 25%. The successful initiative has caught the attention of the Ministry of Education, which is now promoting the approach at state universities nationwide.

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