

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS AS AN ELEMENT OF THE STATE SYSTEM OF SCIENTIFIC ATTESTATION

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The aim of the work is to analyze peer-reviewed scientific publications as an element of the state system of scientific attestation in order to improve its regulatory legal regulation. The article shows the directions of improving the formation of the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications. Suggestions are made to optimize the formation of the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications, namely, to form a list of peer-reviewed scientific publications by groups of scientific specialties without detailing by branches of science, as well as to improve some regulatory legal acts in terms of requirements for peer-reviewed scientific publications.

### Keywords

Peer-reviewed publication,  
journal, article, list of publications,  
scientific attestation, academic  
degree, academic title

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### 1. Introduction

This article is devoted to the discussion of the state of affairs in such an element of the state system of scientific attestation as peer-reviewed scientific publications.

This issue is relevant including in the light of the introduction of a new nomenclature of scientific specialties in which academic degrees are awarded<sup>1</sup>, which in turn was considered by us in the previous article [1].

Also, the reason for writing the article was the appearance in the media of information about the decision to create a working group from the scientific community under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Russia in order to develop approaches to improve the requirements for the quality of scientific publications in which the main

results of dissertations are published. It is planned that by the meeting of the Higher Attestation Commission in June 2021, the necessary proposals will be prepared to revise the current "List of the Higher Attestation Commission" within 2-3 years<sup>2</sup>.

In accordance with paragraph 2 of Art. 4 of the Federal Law of August 23, 1996 No. 127-FZ "On Science and State Scientific and Technical Policy"<sup>3</sup> the state system of scientific attestation provides for the award of academic degrees of candidate of sciences and doctor of sciences, the assignment of academic titles of associate professor and professor, therefore, in relation to the above processes, problems will be considered in relation to peer-reviewed scientific publications.

In scientific periodicals, the issues of functioning of peer-reviewed scientific publications were reflected in a number of works [2–25]. Thus, in the works [4, 5] approaches to the implementation of quality control of the list of peer-reviewed

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<sup>1</sup> Order of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation of February 24, 2021 No. 118 "On approval of the nomenclature of scientific specialties in which academic degrees are awarded, and amendments to the Regulations on the Council for the Defense of Dissertations for the Degree of Candidate of Sciences, for the degree of Doctor of Sciences, approved by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of November 10, 2017. No 1093» » / SPS "Garant".

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<sup>2</sup> URL: <https://rg.ru/2020/12/26/vladimir-filippov-zhurnalam-iz-perechnia-vak-izmeniat-usloviia-i-podnimut-planku.html> (accessed 28.12.2020).

<sup>3</sup> Federal Law of 23 August 1996 No. 127-FZ "On Science and State Scientific and Technical Policy" // SZ RF. 1996. No. 35. Art. 4137.

publications are proposed. In the article [7] colleagues highlight a number of problems that authors have to face at the stage of preparing articles for publication: the difference in the requirements for the design of articles, the results of checking for plagiarism, the paid nature of publications, the constant change in the list of journals of the Higher Attestation Commission, etc. In the article Abramov E.G. the idea of dividing the list into two is given: one - for the purposes of attestation, the other - to assess the current scientific and publication activity, which will allow to achieve all the goals that the participants of the discussions talk about and avoid conflicts in the scientific community [8]. The question of determining the rational number of scientific publications in the formation of the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications is given in the work [9]. The article [10] evaluates the distribution of scientific publications by the number of branches of science covered by them - the most frequent and most rare branches of science are given.

This article will discuss approaches to the formation of a list of peer-reviewed scientific publications.

## **2. Peer-reviewed scientific publications: awarding a degree**

In accordance with paragraph 11 of the Regulations on the award of academic degrees<sup>4</sup> the main scientific results of the dissertation should be published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (hereinafter referred to as peer-reviewed publications).

Number of publications<sup>5</sup>, which should set out the main scientific results of the thesis for the

degree of doctor / candidate of sciences, in peer-reviewed publications should be:

in the field of art history and cultural studies, socio-economic, social and humanitarian sciences - at least 15 / 3, in other areas - at least 10 / 2.

The commission of the dissertation council submits to the dissertation council a conclusion on the compliance of the topic and content of the dissertation with scientific specialties and branches of science for which the dissertation council is granted the right to accept dissertations for defense, on the completeness of the presentation of the dissertation materials in the works published by the applicant for a scientific degree, on the fulfillment of the requirements for the publication of the main scientific results of the dissertation provided for in paragraphs 11 and 13 of the Regulations on the award of academic degrees. it, and compliance with the requirements established by paragraph 14 of the said Regulations (paragraph 18 of the Regulations on the award of academic degrees).

As one of the grounds for refusing to accept a dissertation for defense is the failure to comply with the requirements for the publication of the main scientific results of the dissertation provided for in paragraphs 11 and 13 of the Regulations under consideration (subparagraph "c" of paragraph 20 of the Regulations on the award of academic degrees).

The conclusion of the dissertation council reflects information on the number of published works, including on the topic of the dissertation, as well as in peer-reviewed scientific publications. A brief description of the applicant's scientific works is given, indicating the presence (absence) in the dissertation of unreliable information about the works published by the applicant for a scientific degree, the type, author's contribution and the volume of scientific publications, as well as the most significant works, primarily from among the peer-reviewed scientific publications, indicating the output data<sup>6</sup>.

It should be noted that by the Resolution of

<sup>4</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of September 24, 2013 No. 842 "On the procedure for awarding academic degrees". *Sobranie zakonodatelstva Rossiskoi Federatsii*. 2013. No. 40 (part III). Art. 5074.

<sup>5</sup> In peer-reviewed publications, patents for inventions, patents (certificates) for utility models, patents for industrial designs, patents for breeding achievements, certificates for programs for electronic computers, base data, the topology of integrated circuits, registered in the prescribed manner (clause 13 of the Regulation on the award of academic degrees).

<sup>6</sup> Appendix No. 4 to the Regulation on the Council for the Defense of Dissertations for the Degree of Candidate of Science, for the Degree of Doctor of Science, approved by order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation No. 1093 dated November 10, 2017.

the Government of the Russian Federation of March 20, 2021 No. 426<sup>7</sup>, coming into force on August 1, 2021, amendments are made to the Regulations on the award of academic degrees, namely in terms of requirements for publications.

Thus, publications in which the main scientific results of the dissertation should be presented in peer-reviewed publications are equated with publications in scientific journals indexed in international databases Web of Science and Scopus and international databases determined in accordance with the recommendation of the Commission (hereinafter referred to as international databases), as well as in scientific journals indexed in the scientometric database Russian Science Citation Index (RSCI).

Separately, the number of publications is regulated, which set out the main scientific results of the thesis for the degree of Doctor of Sciences, issued in the form of a scientific report, which should be for the last 10 years:

in historical, pedagogical, political, psychological, sociological, philological, philosophical, economic, legal branches of science, art history, cultural studies and theology - at least 50 in scientific publications of the first, second and third quartiles indexed by international databases;

in other branches of science - at least 30 in scientific publications of the first and second quartiles indexed by international databases.

Thus, it should be noted that in the current version of the Regulations on the award of academic degrees there is no norm that publications in peer-reviewed publications are equated with publications in scientific journals indexed in international databases.

### **3. Peer-reviewed scientific publications: awarding the academic title**

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<sup>7</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of March 20, 2021 No. 426 "On Amending Certain Acts of the Government of the Russian Federation and Recognizing Invalidation of the Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 751 of May 26, 2020". Official Internet Portal of Legal Information ([www.pravo.gov.ru](http://www.pravo.gov.ru)). March 24, 2021 No. 0001202103240006.

In accordance with paragraph 2 of the Regulations on the assignment of academic titles<sup>8</sup> academic titles are awarded in scientific specialties in accordance with the nomenclature of specialties of scientists, which is approved by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation.

One of the criteria for awarding the academic title of professor is the presence of at least 50 published educational publications and scientific papers (including co-authorship), including patents for inventions and other intellectual property objects that are used in the educational process. At the same time, over the past 5 years, at least 3 educational publications and at least 5 scientific papers must be published in the scientific specialty specified in the certification file of the applicant for an academic title. Scientific works should be published in peer-reviewed scientific publications, the requirements for which and the rules for the formation of a notification list of which are established by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. The latter circumstance should be interpreted in such a way that a scientific work should be published in a peer-reviewed publication, which is included in the List of peer-reviewed publications in the desired scientific specialty.

In turn, the Regulation on the assignment of academic titles also does not contain a norm that publications in peer-reviewed publications are equated with publications in scientific journals indexed in international databases.

### **4. Peer-reviewed scientific publications: the list**

According to GOST R 7.0.3-2006, the publication is understood as a document intended for the dissemination of the information contained in it, which has undergone editorial and publishing processing, independently designed, having imprint

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<sup>8</sup> Resolution of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 10, 2013 No. 1139 "On the procedure for conferring academic titles". *Sobranie zakonodatelstva Rossiiskoi Federatsii*. 2013. No. 50. Art. 6605.

information<sup>9</sup>.

In turn, paragraph 12 of the Regulations on the award of academic degrees established that the requirements for peer-reviewed publications and the rules for the formation of their list are established by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation. If the peer-reviewed publication does not meet these requirements, it is excluded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation from the list of peer-reviewed publications with the right to include it no earlier than 3 years later.

The list of peer-reviewed publications is posted on the official website of the Higher Attestation Commission under the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (hereinafter - the Higher Attestation Commission) in the information and telecommunication network "Internet" (hereinafter - the "Internet")<sup>10</sup>.

Rules for the formation of a list of peer-reviewed scientific publications in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of sciences, for the degree of doctor of sciences should be published, and the requirements for peer-reviewed scientific publications for inclusion in the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of sciences, for the degree of doctor of sciences should be published, approved by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2016 No. 1586<sup>11</sup>.

The list of peer-reviewed publications contains the following information:

- Serial number (No. in seq.);
- Name of the publication;
- International Standard Serial Number (ISSN);
- Scientific specialties and corresponding branches of science, in which academic degrees are awarded;
- Date of inclusion of the publication in the List.

As an example, for the journals "Law Enforcement Review" and "Kazan Medical Journal" information from the list of peer-reviewed publications is presented in Table 1.

<sup>9</sup> National standard of the Russian Federation GOST R 7.0.3-2006 "System of standards for information, librarianship and publishing. Editions. Main elements. Terms and definitions" (approved by order of the Federal Agency for Technical Regulation and Metrology of July 12, 2006 No. 130-st).

<sup>10</sup>

<https://vak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/uploader/loader?type=19&name=91107547002&f=8118> (accessed 27.04.2021).

<sup>11</sup> Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2016 No. 1586 "On the approval of the rules for the formation of a list of peer-reviewed scientific publications in which the main

scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of science, for the degree of doctor of sciences, and requirements to peer-reviewed scientific publications for inclusion in the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications, in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of sciences, for the degree of doctor of sciences must be published".

**Extract from the list of peer-reviewed publications**

No	Name	ISSN	Scientific specialties and corresponding branches of science in which scientific degrees are awarded	Date of inclusion
1222	Kazan Medical Journal	0368-4814	14.01.05 – Cardiology (biological sciences), 14.01.12 – Oncology (biological sciences), 14.01.17 – Surgery (medical sciences), 14.01.19 – Pediatric surgery (medical sciences), 14.01.21 – Hematology and blood transfusion (biological sciences), 14.01.24 – Transplantology and artificial organs (biological sciences), 14.02.01 – Hygiene (biological sciences), 14.02.01 – Hygiene (medical sciences), 14.02.03 – Public health and health care (medical sciences), 14.02.04 – Occupational medicine (medical sciences), 14.02.05 – Sociology of medicine (medical sciences), 14.02.06 – Medical and social expertise and medical and social rehabilitation (medical sciences), 14.03.01 – Human anatomy (biological sciences), 14.03.01 – Human anatomy (medical sciences), 14.03.02 – Pathological anatomy (biological sciences), 14.03.02 – Pathological anatomy (medical sciences), 14.03.03 – Pathological physiology (biological sciences), 14.03.03 – Pathological physiology (medical sciences), 14.03.06 – Pharmacology, clinical pharmacology (biological sciences), 14.03.06 – Pharmacology, clinical pharmacology (pharmaceutical sciences), 14.03.08 – Aviation, space and marine medicine (biological sciences), 14.03.09 – Clinical immunology, allergology (biological sciences), 14.03.09 – Clinical immunology, allergology (medical sciences), 14.03.10 – Clinical laboratory diagnostics (biological sciences), 14.03.10 – Clinical laboratory diagnostics (medical sciences)	28.12.2018
1795	Law Enforcement Review	2542-1514	12.00.01 – Theory and history of law and state; history of doctrines on law and the state (legal sciences), 12.00.02 – Constitutional law; constitutional litigation; municipal law (legal sciences), 12.00.04 – Financial law; tax law; budget law (legal sciences), 12.00.08 – Criminal law and criminology; criminal law (legal sciences), 12.00.09 – Criminal procedure (legal sciences), 12.00.10 – International law; European Law (legal sciences), 12.00.11 – Judicial activity, prosecutorial activity, human rights and law enforcement activities (legal sciences), 12.00.12 – Criminalistics; forensic expert activity; operational search activity (legal sciences), 12.00.13 – Information law (legal sciences), 12.00.14 – Administrative law; administrative process (legal sciences), 12.00.15 – Civil procedure; arbitration process (legal sciences)	26.03.2019

In the previously published article [11], the issue of determining the branch of science within the framework of a scientific specialty, in which it is possible to award a degree in two or more branches of science, was discussed. This aspect, including we propose to consider in this article.

The names of groups of scientific specialties, the names of scientific specialties and the corresponding names of branches of science for which a scientific degree is awarded are given in the nomenclature of scientific specialties in which

academic degrees are awarded<sup>12</sup> (hereinafter - the nomenclature of scientific specialties). For example, the group of specialties "Jurisprudence" contains 15 scientific specialties and in all of them it is possible to award a degree in only one branch of science - legal sciences. Thus, the content of the list of peer-reviewed publications in terms of scientific specialties of the group of specialties "Jurisprudence" is not critical in terms of the awarded branch of science.

A completely different situation, for example, within the framework of the specialty 14.03.06 - "Pharmacology, clinical pharmacology", in which it is possible to award a degree in three branches of science: medical, biological or pharmaceutical sciences. In the Kazan Medical Journal, cited as an example, this specialty is included in the list of peer-reviewed publications only in two branches of science - biological and pharmaceutical sciences. Thus, a physician-dissertative preparing a dissertation in the specialty 14.03.06 - "Pharmacology, clinical pharmacology" and wishing to obtain the degree of candidate / doctor of medical sciences, it is not advisable to send his article to the journal in question, since it will not (should not) be counted by the dissertation council due to the lack of a specialty and the corresponding branch of science 14.03.06 - "Pharmacology, clinical pharmacology" (medical sciences) in the list peer-reviewed publications of this journal. The above circumstance (condition), in our opinion, is excessive, formal and inexpedient. It is also necessary to pay attention to the fact that not all passports of scientific specialties have a differentiation of research areas in the awarded branch of science (if there are two or more). Hence, the first proposal follows on the formation of a list of peer-reviewed publications only for groups of scientific specialties and without reference to the branches of science in which academic degrees are awarded. In turn, it is appropriate to recall here that once before the list of peer-reviewed publications did not contain an indication of scientific specialties and branches of science at all -

<sup>12</sup> Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of October 23, 2017 No. 1027 "On the approval of the nomenclature of scientific specialties for which scientific degrees are awarded".

only the names of publications<sup>13</sup>. Subsequently, the list of peer-reviewed publications was formed already with the indication of groups of scientific specialties<sup>14</sup>. Since the end of 2018 on the basis of the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia of February 12, 2018 No. 99<sup>15</sup> the list of peer-reviewed publications began to take on a modern form.

According to paragraph 2 of the Rules for the formation of the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications, in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of sciences, for the degree of doctor of sciences (hereinafter referred to as the Rules) should be published, the list of peer-reviewed publications is formed in order to improve the quality of dissertation research by developing a mechanism for professional and public discussion of their scientific results. The list of peer-reviewed publications is formed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation on the basis of the recommendations of the Higher Attestation Commission on scientific specialties and their corresponding branches of science, in which academic degrees are awarded, provided for by the nomenclature of scientific

<sup>13</sup>

[http://arhvak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/documents/10179/0/%D0%9F%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8C\\_%D0%92%D0%90%D0%9A\\_%D0%B4%D0%BE%2030.06.2015.doc/bd125e92-a678-4401-a786-97750dd39cfc](http://arhvak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/documents/10179/0/%D0%9F%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8C_%D0%92%D0%90%D0%9A_%D0%B4%D0%BE%2030.06.2015.doc/bd125e92-a678-4401-a786-97750dd39cfc) (accessed 01.03.2021).

<sup>14</sup>

<http://arhvak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/documents/10179/0/%D0%9F%D0%B5%D1%80%D0%B5%D1%87%D0%B5%D0%BD%D1%8C%20%D0%92%D0%90%D0%9A%2019.04.2016.pdf/54546367-a2b3-44aa-8e69-07e569ccfadbb> (accessed 01.03.2021).

<sup>15</sup> Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of February 12, 2018 No. 99 "On Amending the Rules for Forming the List of Peer-Reviewed Scientific Publications in Which the Main Scientific Results of Dissertations for the Degree of Candidate of Science, for the Degree of Doctor of Science must be published, and the requirements for peer-reviewed scientific publications for inclusion in the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications, in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of science, for the degree of doctor of sciences, approved by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation of December 12, 2016 No. 1586.

specialties in which academic degrees are awarded. The peer-reviewed scientific publication may be included in the list in the aggregate for no more than three groups of scientific specialties (paragraph 3 of the Rules).

For inclusion in the list, the publication must meet the requirements for peer-reviewed scientific publications for inclusion in the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications in which the main scientific results of dissertations for the degree of candidate of sciences, for the degree of doctor of sciences should be published (paragraph 4 of the Rules).

Publications whose current numbers or their translated versions are included in at least one of the international abstract databases and citation systems Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed, MathSciNet, zbMATH, Chemical Abstracts, Springer or GeoRef are considered included in the list by branches of science corresponding to their profile. No requirements are imposed on these publications (clause 5 of the Rules). It is worth noting that the website of the Higher Attestation Commission contains background information on domestic publications that are included in international abstract databases and citation systems and, in accordance with paragraph 5 of the Rules, are considered included in the List (as of March 31, 2021)<sup>16</sup>. But in turn, it should be noted that this reference information does not provide information on the branches of science corresponding to the profile of the above publications.

It should be noted that the Kazan Medical Journal is included in the international abstract database and citation system Scopus (item No. 651 in the background information). Using the above example, with a physician-dissertative preparing a dissertation in the specialty 14.03.06 - "Pharmacology, clinical pharmacology" and wishing to obtain the degree of candidate / doctor of medical sciences, we can conclude that he can send his articles to the journal in question, since it will be considered included in the list of branches of science corresponding to his profile. Thus, it can be

stated that the publications included in the above international abstract databases and citation systems are universal in terms of awarding a degree in a particular scientific specialty.

### 5. Transition period: the new nomenclature

In connection with the approval of a new nomenclature of scientific specialties, dissertators may have problems with the offset of publications in peer-reviewed publications, especially in the case of a change in scientific specialties (in name, consolidation or differentiation) or exclusion from the nomenclature of scientific specialties. Paragraph 3 of the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia dated February 24, 2021 No. 118, although it provides for a transition period allowing dissertation councils created in scientific specialties that have been changed or excluded from the nomenclature of scientific specialties, to function within 18 months after the entry into force of the regulatory legal act of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia on the approval of a new nomenclature of scientific specialties, but nevertheless questions will take place in the future. It should be noted that the information letter of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Affairs of Russia dated 13.05.2021 No. 382-02<sup>17</sup> in the above part it is noted that the decision to take into account scientific publications on the new nomenclature of scientific specialties is in coordination with the expert councils of the Higher Attestation Commission, taking into account their work on confirmations and editorial changes in scientific specialties.

### 6. Discussion: suggestions

As noted earlier, the website of the Higher Attestation Commission contains reference information about domestic publications that are included in international abstract databases and citation systems, while this reference information does not provide information on the branches of

<sup>16</sup>

<https://vak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/uploader/loader?type=19&name=3408291001&f=7864> (accessed 19.04.2021).

<sup>17</sup> Information letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia dated 05.13.2021 No. 382-02 "On the application of a new nomenclature of scientific specialties".

<https://vak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/uploader/loader?type=1&name=91531847002&f=8381> (accessed 21.05.2021).

science corresponding to the profile of the above publications. In addition, in this reference information there are no scientific specialties. Thus, scientific publications included in the list of peer-reviewed publications and journals included in at least one of the international abstract databases and citation systems are in unequal conditions on the basis of compliance of the publication of a scientific specialty and a branch of science. If in the first case the specialty and branch of science are given in the list that is used in the assessment of the applicant for a scientific degree (title), then in the second practically such an assessment is not made, that is, the appointment of a scientific specialty and branch of science is made automatically (by and large at the discretion of the dissertation council).

In the recommendation of the Higher Attestation Commission of October 2, 2020 No. 1-pl/2 "On improving the regulatory legal regulation of state scientific certification"<sup>18</sup> as part of the improvement of the procedure for awarding academic degrees, a wish is given to equate publications in editions of 1, 2 or 3 quartiles, taken into account in international databases, as well as Russian Science Citation Index (RSCI), to publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals that present the main results of dissertation research. Indeed, at present, journals included in the RSCI database are not considered included in the list of peer-reviewed publications, although the RSCI database is presented on the platform Web of Science (WoS). It is worth noting that more than 6% of RSCI journals are not included in the list of peer-reviewed publications [12].

Thus, in order to level the position (role) of the list of peer-reviewed publications and the list of domestic publications that are included in international abstract databases and citation systems, it is proposed to form a list of peer-reviewed publications only for groups of scientific specialties and without reference to the branches of science for which academic degrees are awarded (for example, the requirement - the publication can be included in the list of no more than three groups

of scientific specialties).

It seems that this norm will allow many dissertationists to quickly and without unnecessary formal restrictions on publications to come to the defense of the dissertation. In turn, this norm will free dissertation councils from checking publications with lists in terms of compliance of ciphers and branches of science for which dissertations are prepared. We also believe that dissertations who prepare dissertations in scientific specialties that have undergone significant changes or are excluded from the nomenclature of scientific specialties, and do not have time to defend them before October 16, 2022, will be protected (insured) by the proposed principle of forming a list of peer-reviewed publications.

In the future, we dare to assume that the list of peer-reviewed scientific publications will consist only of the names of the publications themselves as once in the past, since we are witnessing the process of liberalization of the state system of scientific attestation.

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<https://vak.minobrnauki.gov.ru/uploader/loader?type=35&name=91316117002&f=6528> (accessed 28.12.2020).



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