

## CLUSTERING SYSTEM IN LEGAL EDUCATION: CONCEPT, MODELS AND PRINCIPLES

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In the current processes of globalization and digital transformation, the issue of training qualified personnel who can meet modern requirements in the field of jurisprudence is becoming increasingly relevant. The legal education system is primarily aimed at ensuring the harmony of theory and practice, developing students' professional skills, and implementing innovative ideas in the field of legal services. In this direction, in recent years, cluster models have been introduced in the development of legal education.

The term "cluster" was originally used in economic theory and was introduced into scientific circulation by one of the world's leading scientists, M. Porter.<sup>4</sup> By its definition, a cluster is a model based on the effective cooperation of interconnected production enterprises, service sectors, educational and scientific institutions in a single ecosystem in a certain territory or industry.

Clustering in the economy has made it possible to increase competitiveness, introduce innovations and effectively use resources. The adaptation of this idea to the field of education, in particular legal education, is of important conceptual importance. Because in modern conditions, the process of training lawyers is not limited to providing only theoretical knowledge, but also requires practical skills, innovative approaches to providing legal services, and the training of qualified personnel who can meet the needs of the state and society.

In the clustering system of legal education, this approach creates an opportunity to improve the quality of legal education, prepare students for a real professional environment, and deepen their competencies, as well as train modern specialists in new areas such as digital law, intellectual property law, and international investment law. Today, this model is also widely implemented in the education system, in particular, the first use of the cluster concept in legal education in Uzbekistan since 2020 is reflected in the Decree of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev No. PF-5987 dated April 29, 2020<sup>5</sup>.

Research shows that the main aspects of clustering are as follows:

- ✓ Combining theory and practice;
- ✓ Cooperation with the court, prosecutor's office, bar and other law enforcement agencies;

<sup>4</sup>Porter, ME (1998). Clusters and the New Economics of Competition. Harvard Business Review

<sup>5</sup>Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PQ-5987 dated April 29, 2020 "On additional measures to radically improve legal education and science in the Republic of Uzbekistan." — <https://lex.uz/docs/4812493>



- ✓ To direct students to practice and develop their professional competencies;
- ✓ Unity of science, education and practice in the development of legal services and innovative projects;
- ✓ Training specialists in new areas (e.g. digital law, cybersecurity, Islamic finance law).

So, to summarize, a legal education cluster is a system of integrated activities of higher education institutions, research centers, judicial and legal bodies, legal clinics and other partner institutions.

The importance of this system in legal education is the unification of sectors in the training of personnel that meet modern and market requirements. It is also a harmonization of the training process based on effective integration and cooperation between educational institutions, judicial and legal practice bodies, the bar and notary public, as well as practicing lawyers.

Thus, the cluster model, which has proven itself in the economy, can also yield high results in education, as it ensures the unity of theory and practice, develops the competencies of students and specialists in accordance with modern requirements.

Today, the process of clustering in the field of legal education is manifested in different countries in their own forms. Each region, based on its socio-legal conditions, state administration system and educational policy, has formed a separate model for the development of legal education. In particular, several cluster models of legal education have been formed in world experience:

- US model– a practice-oriented system through legal clinics at universities<sup>6</sup>.
- European model– There are mandatory internship programs with direct integration with government agencies and the prosecutor's office.
- Asian model (South Korea, Japan)– In Asian countries, particularly South Korea and Japan, the clustering process is combined with digital technologies<sup>7</sup>Students learn legal processes on electronic platforms, collaborate with corporate lawyers. The advantage of this model is that lawyers are trained not only in law, but also in IT and business.

At the same time, Uzbekistan also has its own model for integrating legal education and practice. This model combines the experience of the United States and Europe: on the one hand, legal clinics have been established, and on the other hand, the system of student internships with judicial and prosecutorial bodies has been expanded.

Just as every institution has principles that determine its activities, a clustering system in legal education can function effectively only if it is based on certain basic principles. We consider the following principles to be the foundation of this system:

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/aba-plan-boost-law-students-hands-on-experience-spurs-criticism-about-accreditor-2025-05-20>

<sup>7</sup> <https://english.kookmin.ac.kr/kookmin/newsplus/336>





1. Integration – ensuring the harmony of theory and practice, cooperation between higher education institutions and law enforcement institutions<sup>8</sup>.

2. Adaptability - the ability to quickly adapt educational programs to the needs of the labor market, to introduce new legal areas (for example, digital law, financial law).

3. Innovation – the use of digital platforms, artificial intelligence, and modern information technologies in the legal education process.

4. Transparency and cooperation - international exchange of experience, cooperation with state and non-state organizations, the bar and notary systems

5. Sustainability - establishing a continuous connection between education and practice, creating a system of regular professional development for students and teachers.

World experience shows that each country forms a clustering system in legal education based on its own social, political and legal conditions. Although the models of the USA, Europe and Asian countries have a number of advantages, it is important not to copy them completely, but to adapt them to national conditions, using their rich experience. For Uzbekistan, creating a national clustering model in legal education is an urgent issue. In such a model, special attention should be paid to the following:

- strengthening the activities of legal clinics and higher education institutions;
- expanding mandatory cooperation with the courts, prosecutor's offices and other law enforcement agencies;
- introduction of international experience and innovative technologies;
- taking into account national values and legal traditions.

Therefore, the development of a national clustering model in legal education will not only improve the quality of education, but also strengthen the scientific and legal basis for building a legal state and civil society in Uzbekistan.

The clustering system in legal education today, along with ensuring the unity of theory and practice, is emerging as an important conceptual mechanism for building a legal state and developing civil society. World experience shows that the US model is characterized by its practice orientation, the European model by its integration with state bodies, and the Asian model by its innovative approaches. In the experience of Uzbekistan, the positive aspects of these models are combined, and the formation of a unique clustering system of national legal education and its further improvement are an urgent task.

In conclusion, the development of a clustering system in legal education is one of the important factors in building a legal state and forming a civil society. Taking into account the positive aspects of world experience, it is necessary to create a national clustering model in Uzbekistan and continuously improve it. In this regard, it is necessary to rely on such basic principles as integration, flexibility, innovation, transparency and sustainability.

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<sup>8</sup>Porter, ME (1998). Clusters and the New Economics of Competition. Harvard Business Review, 76(6), 77-90.





This approach will serve to improve the quality of legal education, train qualified personnel and bring the national legal system into line with international standards.

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