

Education Watchdog Revokes License of Top Russian University

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Olga Lukinova / MSSES

A state education watchdog has revoked the accreditation of a prestigious Russian private university in what critics fear could further erode independent education in the country.

Founded in 1995 as a [project](#) to bring British and Russian education models together, the Moscow School of Social and Economic Sciences, also known as Shaninka, [reportedly](#) boasts some of Russia's highest-earning graduates and is highly competitive among management students. It's the second privately-run university to face high-profile censure by education authorities in the last two years.

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Russia's education watchdog Rosobrnadzor [ordered](#) the school's education accreditation be revoked this week after it said inspections this spring [found](#) 11 of its master's and bachelor's

programs in violation of state education standards.

The school's rector Sergei Zuyev [assuaged](#) fears of a shutdown in an online statement, saying "a withdrawal of accreditation doesn't mean a suspension of educational activity."

Accreditation gives the university the right to issue state diplomas, reported Russian business website The Bell, which Shaninka has [only had](#) for the past decade.

The Bell quoted a senior administrator at Shaninka as saying that geopolitical tensions with Britain and security services' concern about its connections abroad could have influenced the watchdog's decision to withdraw accreditation.

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"There was an impression that the FSB considered the school too independent and too often in contact with foreign universities, a 'real hotbed of liberalism', " the anonymous source told The Bell. Other university sources dismissed this concern as a conspiracy theory.

The move comes two years after Rosobrnadzor [stripped](#) the European University in St. Petersburg, one of Russia's leading private post-graduate schools for the social sciences and humanities, of its license over building code violations. The move [narrowed](#) the university's educational scope primarily to research, rather than teaching.

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