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Top Moscow Humanities University Loses Accreditation

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A talk at the library of the Moscow Higher School of Social and Economic Sciences. **Shaninka / Facebook**

Moscow's Higher School of Social and Economic Sciences, better known as Shaninka, had the accreditation for several of its degree programs revoked on Monday by Russia's state education watchdog Rosobrnadzor.

Founded in 1995 by British sociologist Theodore Shanin, Shaninka is considered one of Russia's leading humanities institutions and counts prominent figures like political analyst Ekaterina Shulmann and sociologist Grigory Yudin among its alumni.

The decision to revoke accreditation for Shaninka's psychology, management and sociology programs followed an unannounced state inspection of the university in November 2024, after which Rosobrnadzor warned that it could lose its accreditation or even its license if it failed to address a list of violations by June.

The university had been barred from admitting new students since that warning was issued.

Rosobrnadzor accused Shaninka of lacking core higher education programs and qualified teaching staff, reporting poor student performance on diagnostic tests and failing to keep employee information up to date on its website.

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In July, Shaninka rector Maria Sigova told students that she was not confident the university would win its second court appeal against Rosobrnadzor and urged students to explore transfer options.

On Facebook, Shulmann described the "factual closure" of her alma mater as emblematic of the mood in Russia today.

"We do not ask why or for what, but we are glad that we lasted so long," the political analyst wrote. "Chaos will still come, in our case under the working pseudonym 'the Russian Federation,' and it will consume our labor and us personally."

Legally, Shaninka may still enroll and graduate students, but their diplomas will no longer be state-recognized, according to the business newspaper Kommersant.

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