

**ATTESTATION FOR LIBRARIANS:
*New Standards and International Practices****

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The process of attestation for library staff has recently been introduced in Armenia following amendments to the national law on libraries and librarianship. According to these changes, all librarians are now required to undergo attestation through a training program approved by the competent governmental authority. This is the first time in Armenian history that such a requirement has been imposed on library employees.

The article is about the introduction of a new attestation (certification) system for library staff in Armenia, which marks a significant shift in the country's approach to professional standards in the field of librarianship. It provides historical background on attestation in Armenia (such as in public service and education), explains what attestation means, and examines international models of library staff attestation-specifically those in Russia, the United States, and European Council countries.

The goal of the article is to inform readers about the new legal requirement for attestation of Armenian library staff, explain what attestation entails, why it matters, and what questions it raises, compare Armenia's new approach with international practices in order to offer perspective, guidance, and potential

* Հոդվածը ներկայացվել է 01.06.2025, գրախոսվել է 20.06.2025, ընդունվել է տպագրության 24.06.2025:

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benchmarks, prepare the professional library community in Armenia for this major change by promoting awareness and understanding of how attestation supports professional development, standardization, and quality assurance in librarianship.

In essence, the article seeks to contextualize and clarify a new policy in Armenia by connecting it to global trends, encouraging thoughtful implementation, and addressing the concerns that naturally arise from such a foundational change.

Հայաստանի գրադարանային աշխատակիցների արեստավորման հարցը փարհներ շարունակ եղել է ուշադրության կենտրոնում: 2024 թ. հոկտեմբերի 2-ին այն ամրագրվեց նաև «Գրադարանների և գրադարանային գործի մասին» օրենքում՝ որպես 13-րդ հոդվածի կետ 16 մաս¹: Ըստ այս փոփոխության՝ Հայաստանում բոլոր գրադարանավարները պարտավոր են անցնել արեստավորում՝ համապատասխան պետական լիազոր մարմնի կողմից հաստատված վերապատրաստման ծրագրի: Սա առաջին դեպքն է Հայաստանի պատմության մեջ, երբ գրադարաններին նման պահանջ է ներկայացվում:

Հոդվածի նպատակն է ներկայացնել Հայաստանի գրադարանների աշխատակիցների արեստավորման նոր իրավական պահանջը, բացատրել՝ ինչ է արեստավորումը, ինչու է այն կարևոր և ինչ հարցեր են ծագում դրա շուրջ, համեմատել միջազգային փորձի հետ, ինչպես նաև նախապատրաստել Հայաստանի գրադարանային մասնագիտական հանրությանը այս կարևոր փոփոխությանը՝ բարձրացնելով իրազեկվածությունն ու խթանելով ըմբռնումն այն մասին, թե ինչպես է արեստավորումը նպաստում գրադարանային գործում մասնագիտական աճին, սրանդարաբանում և որակի ապահովմանը:

Keywords: Republic of Armenia, Library, Law, Attestation, Training, International Best Practices, Training Programs.

¹ Գրադարանների և գրադարանային գործի մասին օրենքում փոփոխություններ և լրացումներ կատարելու մասին <https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/198712> (24.06.2025)

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Ինչպես հղել՝ Մեսրոպյան, Ս. (2025). Ատեստավորում Հայաստանի գրադարանավարների համար. Նոր չափորոշիչներ և միջազգային փորձ, *Լրագրու Հայկական գրադարանային ասոցիացիայի*, 1(5), 29-47.

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Introduction:

The library staff is scheduled to be attested in Armenia. The appropriate law of the Republic of Armenia, which pertains to libraries and library work, was amended, as necessary. It was stipulated that librarians must complete attestation by the training program established by the competent government agency in the field of librarianship.

Not previously has the library staff been subjected to attestation in Armenia. However, the process of attestation is not a new practice in the RA. The first attestation procedure for government employees was approved by the Armenian government in 2001². It was deemed to be in full compliance with the reforms that were being implemented in the field later in 2023³. Therefore, a new system of attestation for government employees was implemented.

² ՀՀ օրենքը քաղաքացիական ծառայության մասին
<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/94715> (24.06.2025)

³ ՀՀ վարչապետ որոշում N 986-Ն ՀՀ պետական պահպանության ծառայության ծառայողներին հավելավճար հաշվարկելու նպատակով ատեստավորման կարգը, հավելավճարի հաշվարկման կարգը և հաշվարկված հավելավճարի վճարումը դադարեցնելու հիմքերը սահմանելու մասին
<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/183401> (24.06.2025)

Teachers' Voluntary attestation was initially implemented in Armenia in 2021⁴. Additionally, it was designed to evaluate the professional knowledge and skills of educators through testing, as was previously mentioned.

Although the concept of teacher attestation was not new, it was still employed during Soviet times. Conversely, library employees have never previously been required to submit an attestation. Although this is a prevalent practice in certain countries, it is a new development in the history of Armenia's libraries. Consequently, there must be some questions and concerns about it. To answer these questions, we must first understand what an attestation is.

So, what is an attestation?

Attestation / from Latin attestatio-Testimony / is the verification of the authenticity of a document and its signatures by a third party who witnesses the signing and ensures that proper procedures were followed. It is also an assessment process that determines the professional level, knowledge, and skills of an employee or learner. It can be applied in education, public service, professional development, and other areas.

The next questions to be asked are.

- Who should undergo the attestation?
- How will the attestation be carried out?
- How often should it take place?
- Will it be voluntary or mandatory?

⁴ ՀՀ կառավարության որոշում 28 ապրիլի 2022 թ. N 596-Ն Ուսուցիչների կամավոր ատեստավորման արդյունքով ուսուցչի դրույքաչափի և դրան հատկացվող հավելավճարի տրամադրման, կամավոր ատեստավորման հանձնաժողովի ձևավորման կարգը հաստատելու մասին
<https://www.arlis.am/hy/acts/162427> (24.06.2025)

- What criteria are used for evaluation in an attestation?
- What is the role of attestation in professional development?

There are many questions, especially since this is a new and unclear concept. To gain a better understanding, we should look to other countries that already have experience with library staff attestation.

International practice of attestation or certification of the library staff

Attestation Practices in Russia

The Federal Law "On Librarianship"⁵ of 1994 of the Russian Federation determines that librarians are subject to periodic attestation. This was later approved by The Order of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation which established the rules for conducting the attestation. The document came into force in 2016 and was published on the official Internet portal of legal information and the official website of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation⁶.

The attestation can be carried out in a traditional format or a remote format.

⁵ Федеральный закон от 29 декабря 1994 г. N 78-ФЗ "О библиотечном деле" (с изменениями и дополнениями) <https://base.garant.ru/103585/> (24.06.2025)

⁶ Министерство культуры Российской Федерации. Приказ от 24 июня 2016 г. N 1435 об утверждении порядка проведения периодической аттестации работников библиотек <https://rulaws.ru/acts/Prikaz-Minkultury-Rossii-ot-24.06.2016-N-1435/> (24.06.2025)

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- The traditional attestation can be both in written form and through an interview. During the testing together with the questions referring to the professional knowledge of computer skills of the applicants are also checked.

- Remote attestation involves the use of online questionnaires designed to assess the applicant's professional and computer skills, ensuring they meet the requirements for the position.

Each library independently determines whether to implement a traditional or remote attestation program.

The attestation can also be regular or unscheduled.

Every five years, a regular attestation process is undertaken to ensure librarians' compliance with the professional standards of their positions.

A regular attestation process is conducted every five years to confirm that librarians continue to meet the professional standards required for their positions.

For the attestation, a commission is formed consisting of at least three members who make the following decisions regarding the applicant's results.

- The applicant is confirmed in their current position;
- The applicant may retain their position but is required to complete further professional training within the library;
- The applicant is deemed not to meet the requirements for the position.

As attestation is carried out to validate library staff qualifications, ensure compliance with their current positions, and determine the need for advanced training, the following categories of library employees are subject to attestation.

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- Librarians of all positions;
- Heads of libraries;
- Methodologists of librarianship;
- Archivists and library specialists.

Based on the results of the attestation, the attestation committee decides whether the attested person corresponds to his/her position.

Each librarian position has specific qualification characteristics that must be met. These are as follows:

- Job Duties: Outlines the primary labour functions that may be assigned-either in full or in part-to the employee holding the position. These functions are defined with regard to technological coherence and task interconnectivity, promoting optimal specialization across the workforce.

- Knowledge Requirements: specifies the essential knowledge required for the role. This includes both professional expertise and familiarity with relevant regulatory legal acts as well as other documents necessary for the effective performance of job duties.

- Qualification Requirements: defines the necessary level of professional training and outlines the expectations for additional professional development or advanced training as required for the role.

After the attestation process, based on the grades received by the employee, the commission members issue one of the following four decisions:

- The employee meets the requirements of the current position and is recommended for promotion;

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- The employee meets the requirements of the current position;
- The employee meets the requirements of the current position conditionally, subject to one or both of the following:
 - Completion of additional professional education in the field of librarianship;
 - Fulfillment of the requirements or recommendations set forth by the Attestation Commission;
 - The employee does not meet the requirements of the position.

The U.S. Approach to Library Staff Certification and Accreditation

In the USA, the development of formal accreditation and certification for library staff has taken several decades, making it difficult to pinpoint a specific starting point for U.S. libraries. Initially, the American Library Association (ALA) was responsible for accrediting library programs, while certification for individual librarians remained an open issue. The need for staff certification frequently resurfaced in discussions.

In 1996, leaders from the ALA divisions, specifically the Public Library Association and the Library Administration and Management Association, along with the board of the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies, approved a program for Certified Public Library Administrators⁷. This decision reignited the certification debate. However, a standardized nationwide certification system has not been established, as each state has its requirements for library staff. Nevertheless, educational and certification

⁷ <https://www.ala.org/tools/atoz/certification-and-licensure>(24.06.2025)

standards play a crucial role in guiding the broader profession throughout the United States.

In the U.S., both certification and licensure assist employers in evaluating the knowledge and skills of library staff. Certification demonstrates a commitment to professional growth, while licensure indicates that the state officially recognizes an individual's skills and grants them the legal authority to practice. Certification is entirely voluntary and available to anyone who seeks it, in contrast to licensure, which is mandatory and enforced by government agencies. Library employer requirements may vary significantly from state to state. Different types of libraries require different certification types:

- **Public Librarian Certification**⁸: Required for working in public libraries. Most public librarian positions require a Master of Library Science (MLS) or a Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree. Certification may be requirement for library directors and administrators, but optional for general librarians.

- **Academic Librarian Certification**: Necessary for librarians in colleges and universities. A master's degree in library science (MLS), preferably from an American Library Association (ALA) accredited school, is necessary for getting a position as an academic librarian, although some positions may require an advanced degree in a subject speciality.

- **Special Librarian Certification**: For librarians in specialized libraries, such as law or medical libraries or librarians working

⁸ State/Regional Certifications (primarily for public library staff)
<https://ala-apa.org/certification-news/stateregional-certifications/> (24.06.2025)

in special libraries serving particular populations, such as the blind and physically handicapped.

- **School Librarian Certification:** Required for librarians in schools. According to the American Association for School Librarians (AASL), the appropriate first professional degree for a school librarian is either of the following:

- A master's degree from a program accredited by the American Library Association (ALA)
- A master's degree with a speciality in school librarianship from a program recognized by AASL in an educational unit accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE)

Some states require a Master's degree in Library Science (MLS), while others may accept only certification or licensure. Requirements for certification can also vary based on educational qualifications and library types, leading to different standards for public librarians, academic librarians, and school librarians. The most notable difference among them is the educational requirement. The certification criteria can differ significantly between states in several ways:

- Not all states have certification programs or requirements.
- Certification may be mandatory or voluntary.
- It may apply to all library workers or only specific categories.
- Certification can be granted based on exams, portfolios, or course evaluations.
- It may relate to individual career growth opportunities.

While some libraries may only require a bachelor's degree in Library Science or a related field—mostly referring to public libraries—others necessitate a Master's degree accredited by the ALA. Libraries that do not require a master's degree often offer different levels of certification. Relevant work experience and continuing education are also taken into account. States typically have laws governing certification, and some may require certifications for all levels of staff, only for librarians, or exclusively for directors. In some cases, library staff must obtain certification for their library to receive state funding or to participate in state retirement plans. The purpose of these certifications may include legal requirements, skill enhancement, or the need to practice. Regardless of whether a librarian holds a master's or bachelor's degree, continuing education—such as attending conferences, webinars, and workshops—is mandated across all states. Ongoing education and certification are vital in the profession, making it essential for librarians to stay updated on continuing education requirements to maintain their knowledge and skills in this ever-evolving field.

Recertification Requirements⁹:

A librarian's certification is valid for five years from the date of issue. To renew the certificate, the librarian must submit a recertification application to the state library and archives administrator, along with proof of having satisfactorily completed either:

- Three semester credits in library science, including instruction in established core competencies; or

⁹ Recertification Education Requirements

<https://www.alanet.org/certification/recertifying-your-clm/recertification-education-requirements> (24.06.2025)

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- Forty-five hours of library-related continuing education, also covering the core competencies.

State-Specific Certification Examples

Nevada:

Levels of education and experience required:

- A master's degree; or
- A bachelor's degree with at least 2 years of library experience; or
- An associate's degree with at least 4 years of library experience; or
- A high school diploma or general equivalency diploma with at least 6 years of library experience.
- Have completed at least 21 semester credits from an accredited college or university, or 315 hours of continuing education or an equivalent combination of the two (1 semester credit = 15 hours).

Virginia

Levels of Education and Experience:

A master's degree in library science is required, as identified by the American Library Association's (ALA) Directory of Institutions Offering Accredited Master's Programs in Library and Information Studies. This includes a knowledge of books and library techniques equivalent to that required for graduation from any accredited library school, or graduation from a school of library science accredited by the American Library Association.

Applicants must provide a copy of their graduate transcript (official or unofficial), which should include their academic record (grades), the type of degree received, and the date the degree was conferred.

Florida, Georgia, Hawaii

Require none

Library Staff Certification Practices in European Council Countries

In 1997, the Lisbon Recognition Convention¹⁰, officially known as the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, was adopted in Lisbon, Portugal. This convention was ratified by all member states of the Council of Europe and legally ensures that higher education qualifications are recognized throughout the European region. Each country's NARIC/ENIC center facilitates the recognition of foreign degrees under this framework, which includes Armenia as a member of the NARIC/ENIC network¹¹.

Additionally, the Council of Europe plays a role in enhancing the quality and professionalism of library staff across Europe. Organizations such as CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) in the UK, as well as networks like Eurolib (European Institutions' Library Network) and LIBER (Association of European Research Libraries), have established standards and provided certification or professional registration for library and information professionals within and across European countries. However, each Council of Europe member country determines its own library staff certification standards independently.

¹⁰Lisbon Recognition Convention

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/higher-education-and-research/lisbon-recognition-convention> (24.06.2025)

¹¹ ENIC-NARIC: gateway to recognition of qualifications

<https://www.enic-naric.net/> (24.06.2025)

The requirements for library staff certification can vary significantly from one country to another. While some countries mandate periodic attestation for public library staff, others have implemented special programs and exams.

Below are examples of specific systems for library staff qualification and certification in various countries:

- **Moldova:** Requires to undergo attestation every five years for public library staff. The certification procedure is organized by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Research in collaboration with other authorities¹².

- **United Kingdom:** Requires LIS degrees accredited by CILIP (Chartered Institute of Library & Information Professionals). Professional registration options include ACLIP (affiliate), MCLIP (chartered member), and FCLIP (fellow)¹³. However, membership is not mandatory to work in the library profession.

- **Ireland:** The Library Association of Ireland accredits courses and offers exams, diplomas, certifications, and recognizes qualifications. Typically, managerial roles in public libraries require an MLIS or an equivalent qualification¹⁴.

¹² Study on continuous professional education of specialist staffs of the National Library System of Moldova

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372061070_Study_on_continuous_professional_education_of_specialist_staffs_of_the_National_Library_System (24.06.2025)

¹³ Professional Registration Certification

<https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/professionalregistrationcertification> (24.06.2025)

¹⁴The Library Association of Ireland

<https://www.libraryassociation.ie/continuing-professional-development/> (24.06.2025)

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- **France:** The Ministry of Culture is developing a national skills framework under an ongoing "Library Plan", which includes access to competitions and structured training paths for library staff¹⁵.

- **Spain:** Public library recruitment involves competitive civil service exams¹⁶, similar to those in France.

- **Germany:** Offers several career paths. The librarian role typically requires a bachelor's or master's degree in LIS, plus completion of the Referendariat (a civil-service-style trainee program). Alternatively, there is a vocational path, which involves a 2-3 year apprenticeship. Foreign degrees must undergo a recognition process for equivalency. Non-academic or library paraprofessional roles may require only vocational training or an assistant-level qualification¹⁷.

- **Nordic Countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland)**¹⁸: In **Norway**, work experience and computer skills, with a bachelor's or master's degree in LIS required. In **Sweden and Finland**, a bachelor's degree in LIS is sufficient for many positions, though a master's degree is preferred for roles in university libraries. There is no single special professional body responsible for the certification

¹⁵ Training after civil service exam <https://www.enssib.fr/en/our-courses/courses-following-competitive-entrance-exam> (24.06.2025)

¹⁶ Universidad de Granada Library Staff Training Week 2025 <https://biblioteca.ugr.es/informacion/presentacion/staff-training-week-2025> (24.06.2025)

¹⁷ Studied Library and information Science <https://meinjob-bibliothek.de/en/studies/> (24.06.2025)

¹⁸ Nordic recognition information centres <https://norric.org/> (24.06.2025)

of the library staff, and decisions are often made by individual institutions.

Bulgaria: LIS education is offered at the bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels. Students gain knowledge of European library standards and quality management standards (ISO)¹⁹.

Summary

Many countries today have chosen higher education as a key policy for future development, as it plays a crucial role in fostering democracy. Libraries, being custodians of resources essential for knowledge and education, have a significant role as sources of information and learning. Therefore, it is not surprising that having qualified and competent library staff, along with ongoing education, are fundamental criteria for becoming a librarian.

To meet these needs, governments, institutions, and library associations have developed standards and qualifications necessary for modern librarians. In some countries, these programs are called attestation, and in others, certification. But whatever the name, their purpose is the same: to prepare qualified and competent library staff who can meet the evolving needs of modern information environments.

Attestation, certification, and licensure programs for librarians have been created by governments or library associations in various countries, based on national standards, traditions, and the specific characteristics of their libraries. These programs can be either voluntary or mandatory, with requirements that vary not only

¹⁹ Republic of Bulgaria. National Centre for Information and Documentation <https://nacid.bg/en/bulgarian-qualifications-abroad/certificates/> (24.06.2025)

from country to country but sometimes between regions within the same country.

In some countries, attestation is government-controlled and regulated by law. It not only demonstrates a librarian's competency and knowledge but also supports career advancement. In others, certification is managed by library associations, which develop specific programs tailored to different librarian roles.

Some libraries require employees to hold degrees or have certificates in library science. Because libraries can differ-public, school, academic, and beyond-requirements may vary according to the type of library and the specific position. In other words, many nuances must be taken into account. Some libraries do not require any certification. However, one thing remains consistent across all libraries and related institutions: the importance of ongoing professional development. This can be achieved through online courses, live and recorded webinars, panel discussions, workshops, and more.

Armenia must develop its system of attestation or certification. At the same time, since Armenia is part of the European NARIC/ENIC network, its librarian qualification standards must align with those of European countries-without contradicting national priorities and practices. Researching and analyzing the experiences and practices of other nations is essential for shaping Armenia's standards in librarianship.

Whether these programs will successfully cultivate qualified library staff-or become tools of manipulation-only time will tell.

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ՍՈՆԱ ՄԵՍՐՈՊՅԱՆ

Խնկո Ապոր անվան ազգային մանկական գրադարան

Քանալի բառեր՝ Հայաստանի Հանրապետություն, գրադարան, օրենք, ատեստավորում, վերապատրաստում, միջազգային փորձ, դասընթացներ:

Ժամանակակից աշխարհում բազմաթիվ երկրներ բարձրագույն կրթությունն ու գիտելիքի հասանելիությունը դիտարկում են որպես ժողովրդավարական զարգացման առանցքային հենասյուներ: Գրադարաններն այդ գործընթացում հանդիսանում են կարևոր հաստատություններ՝ հիմնված որակավորված և բանիմաց մասնագետների աշխատանքի վրա, որոնք ապահովում են տեղեկատվության հավասար հասանելիությունն ու նպաստում են շարունակական ուսուցմանն ու կրթությանը: Հետևաբար, գրադարանային աշխատողների մասնագիտական զարգացումն ու որակավորումը՝ ատեստավորման, սերտիֆիկացման կամ լիցենզավորման համակարգերի միջոցով, դարձել է գլոբալ կարևորություն ունեցող հարց:

Հոդվածում ներկայացված համեմատական վերլուծությունը ցույց է տալիս, որ տարբեր երկրներում այս համակարգերը տարբեր ձևեր ունեն, սակայն դրանց հիմնական նպատակները նույնն են՝ գնահատել գրադարանավարների մասնագիտական հմտություններն ու որակավորումները, ապահովել նրանց համապատասխանությունը ժամանակակից պահանջներին և խթանել շարունակական զարգացումը: Անկախ նրանից՝ այս համակարգերը գործարկվում են պետական օրենսդրության, մասնագիտական ասոցացիաների կամ կրթական հաստատությունների կողմից, դրանց նպատակը մեկն է՝ ստեղծել գրադարանային անձնակազմ, որն ունակ է արձագանքել համայնքների փոփոխվող և բազմաբնույթ պահանջներին:

Հայաստանում գրադարանային աշխատողների համար ատեստավորման համակարգի ներդրումը ենթադրում է ոլորտի կարգավորման և ընկալման որակական փոփոխություն: Թեև դա նոր և անձանոթ երևույթ է

ՏԵՍՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ ԵՎ ՊՐԱԿՏԻԿԱ

Երկրի գրադարանային պատմության մեջ, այն միաժամանակ բարձրացնում է մի շարք հիմնախնդիրներ՝ կապված կիրառման մեխանիզմների, գնահատման չափանիշների, պարբերականության և երկարաժամկետ ազդեցության հետ: Միջազգային փորձի ուսումնասիրությունը կարող է ուղղություն տալ, սակայն Հայաստանի համար կենսական նշանակություն ունի մշակել ատեստավորման այնպիսի համակարգ, որն ամբողջությամբ կհամապատասխանի ազգային կրթական ավանդույթներին, ինստիտուցիոնալ առանձնահատկություններին և ռազմավարական առաջնահերթություններին:

Որպես ENIC/NARIC ցանցի անդամ՝ Հայաստանը միևնույն ժամանակ պարտավոր է ապահովել իր որակավորման չափանիշների համապատասխանությունը եվրոպական չափանիշներին: Ուստի այս նախաձեռնության հաջողությունն առնչվելու է ոչ միայն քաղաքականության ձևավորմանը, այլև շահառուների մասնակցությանը, գործընթացի թափանցիկությանը, ինչպես նաև մասնագիտական վերապատրաստման և անհրաժեշտ ռեսուրսների հասանելիությանը: Արդյունքում, արդյո՞ք այս նոր համակարգը կդառնա գրադարանային ոլորտի մասնագիտական աճի իրական խթան, թե՞ կվերածվի բյուրոկրատական ձևականության, ցույց կտա միայն դրա կիրառությունը և ժամանակի ընթացքում: