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IMPROVEMENT OF THE INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Abstract. The article notes that the system of higher education, as well as other spheres of social and economic life of Ukraine, faced numerous challenges during the war. Despite this, it is necessary to continue its reformation, because it is the educational sphere that will play an important role in ensuring the quality of the country's future post-war life through full entry into the European educational space, ensuring the achievement of the UN sustainable development goals in the field of education (to which Ukraine joined as a country-member of the UN), training of citizens who will build the post-war economy and protect democratic values for a society. At the same time, national higher education needs to take into account world trends affecting the future of education: globalization, digitalization, aging of the population, and also focus efforts on improving the quality of the educational process directly in higher education institutions. In this context, the main documents that are currently used in the field of higher education reform by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Ukraine, the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education, namely: "Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2021-2031" and "Recovery Plan of Ukraine. Education and science", developed taking into account the main problems of the higher education sphere.

In order to systematically support the quality of the educational process in higher education institutions (the necessity of which is emphasized in both mentioned documents), the authors proposed an appropriate diagnostic tool for the internal quality assurance system, namely, an analysis of the expert opinion of key stakeholders (internal and external) of the educational process according to five main parameters: educational ambition, effective leadership, teacher collaboration, supportive educational environment, stakeholders involvement. Such an analysis will allow higher educational institutions, relying on the perception of the educational process by its main stakeholders, to maintain a high-quality educational environment, to establish a comprehensive system for assessing the quality of the educational process, and to lay the foundation for actions to improve it.

Keywords: *quality of higher education, European educational space, system of internal quality assurance of higher education institutions, stakeholders of the educational process, leadership, globalization, digitalization.*

Introduction. Today, during a full-scale war, when institutions of higher education and the higher education system of Ukraine as a whole are faced with

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a number of new challenges, the issue of reforming the education sector continues to be relevant. Steps to support the quality level of higher education in wartime are currently being carried out by the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education together with the School of Political Analytics of the National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" with the support of German partners from the Friedrich Naumann Foundation. They conduct a "comprehensive study of the work of the Ukrainian higher education system – both at the institutional and individual levels – after the beginning of the full – scale invasion of Russia into Ukraine" on the issues of "identifying individual experience, needs, problems, expectations, opportunities and challenges for students and scientists who arose during the war" and the development of proposals for stakeholders "regarding education policy under the new conditions in which Ukraine found itself" (<http://surl.li/isbsc>). This kind of work is extremely important and is a reaction to what is happening. At the same time, proactive decisions are needed to improve the internal system of ensuring the quality of the educational process in Ukrainian higher education institutions with the aim of its full entry into the European educational space.

Analysis of recent research and publications. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with which Ukraine has been cooperating since 1997, cites three megatrends that affect the future of education: globalization, digitalization, and aging of the population. "Strategy for the development of higher education in Ukraine for 2021-2031" (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on February 23, 2022. It defines the place of higher education in the society and economy of the country, contains an analysis of the current state and singles out, among others, such problems of the development of the system of higher education in Ukraine, which indicate a gap between the system of higher education and the labor market, the insufficiency of feedback mechanisms between employers and higher education institutions:

- inconsistent autonomy of higher education institutions, the unwillingness of many of them to use the opportunities provided by legislation;
- low level of trust in the innovative activities of higher education institutions, insufficient practice and experience in the implementation of digital technologies;
- lack of readiness of higher education institutions to conduct applied research demanded by business and create innovative intellectual products for the economy;
- insufficient attention of the state and higher education institutions to the education of adults, a formal attitude towards continuous education widespread in society (<http://surl.li/dgylw>).

The draft Strategy, developed and presented for public discussion in 2020, cites data that "indicates the low interest of the private sector in cooperation and ordering scientific, technical and design developments in higher education institutions", and the reasons are recognized as "on the one hand, distrust of the private commercial sector to the ability of higher education institutions to carry out research and offer a high-quality intellectual product, on the other – the tendency to borrow foreign technologies" (<http://surl.li/mphq>). The main problem of the development of national higher education is determined by "the lack of a long-term strategy for the socio-economic development of Ukraine,

which makes it difficult to create a model of higher education adequate to the country's future goals" (<http://surl.li/mphq>).

We would like to note that the issues of cooperation of entrepreneurs with higher educational institutions are being actively developed by scientists from different countries of the world. Thus, the authors of the work "The role and function of cooperative research centers in entrepreneurial universities: a micro level perspective" (Dolan, Cunningham, Menter & McGregor, 2019, pp. 3406-3425) justify the need to create cooperative research centers designed to solve numerous scientific, commercial, educational and public tasks in entrepreneurial universities in Ireland. The article "University-industry collaborations: an industry perspective" is devoted to the analysis of university-industry collaboration in Denmark (Giones, 2019, pp. 3258-3279). The publication "Strategic knowledge management within subsidized entrepreneurial university-industry partnerships" investigates cooperation/opportunistic behavior within subsidized partnerships between universities and industry in Mexico as a country with a developing economy (Uerrero, Herrera & Urbano, 2019, pp. 3280-3300).

From year to year, no less attention is paid to the issue of ensuring the quality of higher education as in the context of the formation of institutional concepts of ensuring the quality of the educational process (Khalil, 2021, pp. 41-52; Kolodii, Kostolovych, Kolomiets, Muratova & Tsoi, 2021, pp. 292-300; Nemchenko & Starokogko, 2018, pp. 926-931), and the involvement of students and other stakeholders in this process (Chaudhary & Dey, 2021, pp. 32-40).

The purpose of the article. The purpose of the article is to develop a diagnostic tool for the system of internal quality assurance of higher education institutions to support the quality of the educational process.

Formulation of the main material. On the official website of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the "Recovery Plan of Ukraine. Education and Science" is posted and dated November, 2022. It summarizes the main problems that must be solved in the field of higher education by 2032. Among the problems related to the destructive consequences for the infrastructure and institutional foundations of higher education in Ukraine as a result of the war, systemic problems accompanying it throughout the years of independence are also presented. Among these (<http://surl.li/isbtu>):

- high level of corruption (assessment of academic subjects for bribes, academic dishonesty);
- insufficient integration of Ukrainian higher education into the world, including obstacles for teachers and students regarding participation in academic mobility programs;
- a significant percentage of entrants gain access to higher education bypassing the full independent external evaluation;
- the Ukrainian network of higher education institutions is ineffective and does not correlate with the financial capabilities of the country;
- insufficient financial autonomy of higher education institutions prevents, among other things, attracting investments from businesses and grants from foundations;
- there are no legal instruments regarding the freedom to study according to an autonomous educational trajectory, which would allow to extend or to reduce the time for studying.

It should also be noted that in April, 2022, the Council of the European

Association of Universities (EAU) approved a set of measures to help the Ukrainian higher education sector with the aim of promoting the "full integration of Ukrainian universities into European activities" (<http://surl.li/lsbue>), which should accelerate the European integration processes of the national higher education as an important factor in its improvement. The plan for the restoration of the "Higher education" direction contains three periodized stages: Stage I – until the end of 2022, Stage II – January, 2023 – December, 2025, Stage III – January, 2026 – December, 2032. We will analyze the path that is drawn (Table 1).

Table 1

The main problems that need to be solved within the framework of the "Higher Education" recovery plan

Necessary to achieve by 2032	Measurable indicator of goal achievement in 2032	Connections of the goal with economic recovery and development of other spheres
1	2	3
Problem 1. Inefficient use of resources in the system of higher education	Goal: effective management of higher education	
provision of wide, including financial, autonomy of higher educational institutions	degree of autonomy of higher education institutions (according to the methodology of the European Association of Universities) is: academic – 70 %; organizational – 80 %; personnel – 87 %; financial – 70 %	restoration and development of the economy; the Euroatlantic integration
Problem 2. Out-of-system perception and mistrust of institutional mechanisms for ensuring the quality of higher education	Goal: public, state and business trust to the educational, scientific and innovative activities of higher educational institutions	
formation of zero tolerance for corruption, discrimination on various grounds and academic dishonesty of those involved in the educational process	– at least 80 % of the participants of the educational process during the previous 3 years did not face corruption, discrimination or academic dishonesty (according to the results of the National Student Survey through the Diya application); – the sums of funds have been raised by the Higher Education Institution for public projects; – number of established (recognized) associations of graduates of higher education institutions	digitization; the Euroatlantic integration; anti-corruption policy
Problem 3. Low level of availability of higher education for certain groups of the population	Goal: provision of competitive higher education that is available to various segments of the population;	
modernization of infrastructure, educational space, educational and scientific equipment, especially considering inclusive requirements	reconstruction and reequipping of 1,000 laboratories and classrooms (according to the World Bank project); reconstruction of 200 dormitory buildings; ensuring that 100 % of students who need it are accommodated in dormitories with appropriate living conditions; construction of 10 academic buildings	infrastructure recovery and development; planning, building, modernization of cities and regions
	Goal: to provide a high-quality competitive higher education that meets the standards of the European Higher Education Area and quality assurance recommendations	

1	2	3
legislative regulation of the status of accreditations by foreign accreditation agencies and agencies for quality assurance of higher education	the results of satisfaction with the quality of higher education among students, graduates and stakeholders made by the national monitoring are at least 60%	digitization; the Euroatlantic integration;
Problem 4. Low level of integration of higher education into modern globalization processes		Goal: internationalization of higher education in Ukraine
inclusion of Ukrainian higher education institutions in the list of 1,000 best universities in the world	20 universities in the ranking of the 1000 best universities in the world; distribution of graduates according to the level of foreign language proficiency in accordance with the Common European Competences for Foreign Language Proficiency (CEFR)	the Euroatlantic integration; restoration and development of the economy;
Problem 5. Low attractiveness of higher education institutions for study and academic career		Goal: to gain attractiveness of higher education institutions for study and academic career
ensuring a high social status and career prospects for teachers in order to increase the attractiveness of an academic career	the correlation coefficient between the salary of scientific and pedagogical personnel and the national average (1.5); 5 analytical centers are included in world and national rankings; 5% of the total number of Master's graduates are holders of scientific degrees	restoration and development of the economy; employment policy
Problem 6. Loss of human potential (teachers, scientists, potential entrants) and destruction of higher education infrastructure of Ukraine during martial law		Goal: to restore the potential of higher education, ensuring the rights and freedoms of internally displaced persons and residents of temporarily occupied territories in relation to education, resuming the activities of higher education institutions in the liberated territories
provision of infrastructure for the activities of the higher education institutions in the de-occupied territories	100% of the infrastructure facilities supporting the activities of the higher education institutions operating in the de-occupied territories have been restored or newly built (as needed by the end of 2032)	economic policy (formation of human potential necessary for acceleration of economic development); audit of damages caused by war; planning, construction, modernization of cities and regions; infrastructure recovery and development

Source: (<http://surl.li/isbtu>, pp. 158-168)

We will dwell in more detail on the first two goals outlined in the Recovery Plan in "Higher Education" Sector. We believe that they are basic for the further development of higher education in Ukraine, the foundation for the formation of competitiveness of higher education institutions on the international market, Euro-Atlantic integration.

The first of them is the effective management of higher education, the achievement of which by 2032 involves the provision of broad autonomy of higher education institutions. The autonomy of higher education institutions is measured in four directions: academic – the sphere of student recruitment, development of educational programs, ensuring the quality of the educational process; organizational – independent decisions regarding the formation of academic and administrative structures, management models of higher education institutions; personnel – the degree of independence of higher education institutions in relation to hiring employees, ensuring their professional and scientific development; financial – the ability to attract funds, dispose of

buildings and property, set tuition fees.

In (<http://surl.li/isbwj>) presented an expert assessment of a representative of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine regarding the level of autonomy of higher education institutions in Ukraine as of 2019 (the data mainly concerns state higher education institutions) and noted that "university autonomy is implemented with great distrust and numerous reservations", namely:

– academic autonomy did not push higher education institutions to consider the improvement of educational programs as a competitive advantage, they continue to compete at the expense of other advantages: the size of the tuition fee, favorable location, development of opportunistic specialties, etc.;

– organizational autonomy is almost completely absent in state higher education institutions, if considered according to the criteria of the EAU. Detailed procedures for the formation of governing bodies and the practice of their application make the university a rather closed environment, largely dependent on internal groups of influence, which preserves university life;

– personnel autonomy legally meets the criteria of the EAU to a large extent, but in practice it has many limitations: the personnel policy of the higher education institutions is influenced by loyalty and nepotism; the practice of certification of scientific and pedagogical personnel, formation of teaching load, and setting of salaries ensure compliance with qualification and legislative requirements, but promote paternalism and provide little incentive for significant achievements;

– financial autonomy was and still remains the most problematic aspect for Ukraine, which is connected both with the specifics of the legislation and with the unwillingness of the higher education institutions themselves to use the opportunities provided by the legislation.

The second goal is the trust of the public, the state, and business in the educational, scientific, and innovative activities of higher education institutions. involves digitalization at the national level of the process of surveying the participants of the educational process regarding corruption, discrimination, academic dishonesty, as well as the improvement and commercialization of public practices of higher education institutions. As mentioned above, today experts note the unpreparedness of higher education institutions to conduct applied research and the creation of innovative intellectual products for the economy on the one hand, and a low level of trust in the innovative activities of higher education institutions of business on the other. The criteria (links) proposed by (Chaika, 2020, p. 356) of the marketing mechanism for the cooperation of higher education institutions and stakeholders and indicators for evaluating their effectiveness should help to form a partnership network between higher education institutions and business, to achieve understanding and increase mutual trust.

However, the central issue of higher education remains the construction of a system of internal quality assurance based on measurable results of the educational process – target performance indicators. Social indicators that allow in practice to record the component qualities of the educational process, to be its research tools, were proposed in (Chaika, 2018, p. 45). As an additional tool for diagnosing the practice of implementing the internal quality assurance system, we suggest conducting regular (once a year) surveys of teachers, students and stakeholders according to five main parameters: educational ambitions, effective

leadership, cooperation of teachers, supportive educational environment, stakeholder involvement (see Fig. 1).

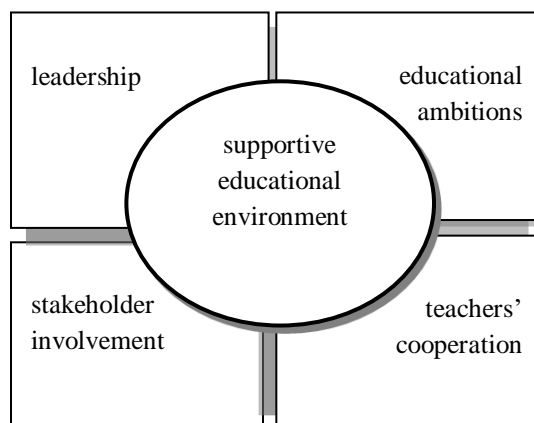


Fig. 1. – Parameters of internal assessment of the quality of the educational process in higher education institutions

Source: based on (<http://surl.li/isbwp>)

Let us describe each parameter in more detail:

1. Educational ambitions. In universities with ambitious education, classes should be complex, interactive, and practically oriented; evaluation of the results is transparent and objective; task instructions are clear, well-structured and such that they encourage students to accumulate and apply knowledge. Ambitious learning combined with a supportive educational environment should have a direct impact on students' academic performance. These are: clearly defined points for specific learning outcomes and the existence of procedures for ensuring the objectivity of evaluation; constant active and equal interaction of all study participants, which encourages students to apply the knowledge they have acquired; the possibility of practical application of theoretical knowledge at partner enterprises; maintaining a constant intensive pace of learning in order to ensure the necessary dynamics; a logically coordinated structure of the educational process according to the courses.

2. Leadership. In universities with effective leaders, managers, structural units and teachers work together to effectively implement the educational process. In such educational institutions, people and resources are focused on continuous improvement of educational programs. Leaders: create a shared vision; set ambitious goals for the quality of education; maintain relationships of mutual respect and mutual trust; support professional growth of teachers and staff; strive for continuous improvement of educational programs.

3. Teachers' cooperation. In universities with strong teaching-research staff collaboration, everyone works together to promote professional growth. In such a higher education institution, teachers are active partners in its improvement, are dedicated to their work and are oriented towards continuous professional development.

3. Supporting educational environment. Its essence lies in safety for the life and health (including mental health) of the participants of the educational process, satisfaction of their needs and interests, the value of the academic community for everyone through the built-in practices of social interactions,

which are based on mutual respect and mutual demands. In such universities: students feel safe both during educational activities and outside it (on campus, dormitory, etc.); they find organizational support from teachers, dean's offices, auxiliary units regarding their academic needs; they receive high-quality advisory and social support (in relation to employment, psychological needs, etc.).

4. Stakeholder involvement. In a higher education institution with stakeholders (entrepreneurs, employers, university graduates, etc.), the entire staff builds strong external relations. Such universities: consider stakeholders as partners who have authority in the relevant field and help students learn by providing classes with students, passing the latest industrial practices at their enterprises; value the contribution and participation of stakeholders in promoting the mission of the university; support efforts to strengthen student community resources; involve stakeholders in the joint implementation of scientific and research works; teachers' internships are carried out directly at enterprises.

Teachers, students and stakeholders are offered to evaluate the internal quality assurance system of higher education institutions on a 100-point scale divided into five segments – parameters of the internal quality assurance system of higher education institutions – 20 points each: up to 20 – a very weak parameter, 21-40 – weak, 41-60 – medium level, 61-80 – strong, 81-100 – very strong. The evaluation process must be anonymous and digitalized.

In addition, the sample of respondents must be stratified, that is, the entire population of people who will be interviewed must be previously divided into strata according to the principle of belonging to the following groups in terms of education levels (junior bachelor, bachelor, master): students, teachers and employees of structural units of higher education institutions, stakeholders. Next, a random sample is formed from each stratum in a number proportional to the size of this stratum compared to the population. For example, if there are 3,000 students studying at the educational level, the support group consists of 150 teachers and 35 employees of structural units, and 100 external stakeholders are involved in the programs, then in the process of stratified random sampling three layers are created: students – 91 %, teachers and employees of structural units divisions – 6 %, stakeholders – 3 %. The research team then needs to sample and randomly select 300 people (about 10 % of the general population), of which 273 will be students, 18 will be faculty/staff, and 9 will be stakeholders. Thus, with a confidence probability of 0.95, the theoretical statistical measurement error will be 0.05 or 5.0 %. Such a sample is stratified and reflects the structure of the general population. Also, departments can independently conduct such research in the context of separate educational programs. Such a stratum of the sample is much smaller in number, which allows the survey to cover as many members of the stratum as possible.

Conclusions. The method of measuring the perception of the educational process by key stakeholders proposed in the article makes it possible to improve the system of internal quality assurance of higher education institutions, the results of the analysis of respondents' answers set a vector for its improvement, provide a basis for further goal setting. A true and systematic assessment of the quality of the educational process takes into account a wide range of indicators that shape the success of students, including (but not limited to) academic growth of students, expanding the range of academic opportunities, university culture

and climate, preparation for successful employment after graduation.

Systematic work of higher educational institutions with external stakeholders and evaluation of its results in the proposed way will allow to increase the level of trust in the activities of higher educational institutions on the part of practitioners, will contribute to the wider implementation of a dual form of education, which is currently a rarity for national education, and the conduct of applied research demanded by business.

Thus, this practice establishes a comprehensive system for evaluating the success of higher education institutions in order to monitor the process of ensuring the quality of the educational process, establishes standards of efficiency, and also creates a basis for actions to improve it and correct academic deficiencies.

In the Recovery Plan of the "Higher education" direction, the plan for the "Adult education" direction was separately considered. The perspective of further research is its analysis in the context of world educational trends in order to form proposals for a holistic approach to adult education.

Conflict of Interest and other Ethics Statements

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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УДОСКОНАЛЕННЯ ВНУТРІШНЬОЇ СИСТЕМИ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ОСВІТНЬОГО ПРОЦЕСУ ЗВО

Анотація. В статті відзначається, що система вищої освіти, як й інші сфери суспільно-економічного життя України, зіткнулася з численними викликами у воєнний час. Незважаючи на це, необхідно продовжувати її реформування, адже саме освітня сфера буде відігравати важливу роль в забезпеченні якості майбутнього післявоєнного життя країни через повноправний вхід в європейський освітній простір, забезпечення досягнення цілей сталого розвитку ООН в галузі освіти (до яких Україна долучилася як країна-член ООН), підготовку для суспільства громадян, які будуть розбудовувати післявоєнну економіку та захищати демократичні цінності. При цьому національній вищій освіті потрібно враховувати світові тренди, що впливають на майбутнє освіти: глобалізація, цифровізація, старіння населення, а також зосередити зусилля на покращенні якості освітнього процесу безпосередньо у ЗВО.

У цьому контексті проаналізовано основні документи, якими наразі послуговуються у сфері реформування вищої освіти МОН України, Національне агентство із забезпечення якості вищої освіти, а саме: «Стратегію розвитку вищої освіти в Україні на 2021-2031 роки» і «План відновлення України. Освіта і наука», розроблені з урахуванням основних проблем сфери вищої освіти. Для системної підтримки якості освітнього процесу у ЗВО (на необхідності якої наголошується в обох зазначених документах) авторами запропоновано відповідний інструмент діагностики системи внутрішнього забезпечення якості, а саме, аналіз експертної думки ключових стейкхолдерів (внутрішніх і зовнішніх) освітнього процесу за п'ятьма основними параметрами: освітні амбіції, ефективне лідерство, співпраця викладачів, підтримуюче освітнє середовище, залученість стейкхолдерів.

Такий аналіз дозволить ЗВО, спираючись на сприйняття освітнього процесу його основними стейкхолдерами, підтримувати якісне освітнє середовище, встановити комплексну систему оцінювання якості освітнього процесу, закласти основу для дій з його удосконалення.

Ключові слова: *якість вищої освіти, європейський освітній простір, система внутрішнього забезпечення якості ЗВО, стейкхолдери освітнього процесу, лідерство, глобалізація, діджиталізація.*

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