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**SELECTED ISSUES OF ASSURING QUALITY
IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN UKRAINE IN MODERN REALIA**

The article seeks to discuss important implications of higher education quality in various society areas of – politics, management, pedagogy, economics, etc. Insights on international best practice convincingly demonstrate that assuring high quality of education and enhancing its further development are the key governance and public administration priorities in all developed countries. It is argued that the quality of life is greatly affected by the level and quality of education. Moreover, it is highlighted that Ukraine has built a robust institutional paradigm of the education system and its governing bodies which focuses on retaining and accumulating strong human capital and research potential. Among the shortcomings in the implementation of the education quality assurance process, the study has identified the following: weak links in the relationships between higher education institutions and business; immaturity of monetization system for university students in the context of their cooperation with private companies; lack of university involvement in promoting the creation of business incubators, science & technology parks, technocities, etc. Apart from that, the findings have revealed significant imbalances in the national economy that translate into the supply shortage in certain occupations and labor market surplus in other professionals, along with displaying another negative trends associated with the processes of skilled workforce migration from rural areas to more developed cities and regions, or the outflow of the working-age population abroad. In turn, labor migration challenges drastic demographic changes that according to statistics, negatively affect the number of higher education applicants. A special emphasis is placed that the national higher education system is facing serious competition from higher education institutions of economically developed neighbouring countries that offer educational services in prestigious high ranked universities, as well as create ample scholarship and grant opportunities to international students. Thus, from the tuition fee perspective, domestic HEIs are often far behind their European counterparts, too. The study presents an in-depth analysis of the range of various impact factors affecting the education quality, the most essential of them are reported to be the legal and regulatory framework for higher education; government policy for higher education management; higher education funding rates; labor market saturation; the effectiveness of quality management tools in rendering educational services, etc.

Keywords: higher education; higher education quality; higher education students; higher education institution; quality assurance framework in higher education.

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**ОКРЕМІ ПИТАННЯ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ
В УКРАЇНІ НА СУЧАСНОМУ ЕТАПІ**

У статті висвітлено питання вагомості впливу якості вищої освіти на політичні, управлінські, педагогічні, економічні та інші сфери життя держави. Результати вивчення міжнародного досвіду переконливо свідчать, що забезпечення високої якості й визначення перспектив подальшого розвитку освіти є одними з актуальних завдань державного управління всіх розвинутих країн світу. Доведено, що якість життя людей залежить від рівня і якості освіти. Показано, що в Україні створено інституціональну структуру системи освіти та органів управління нею, яка серед іншого має на меті збереження й накопичення потужного науково-освітнього ресурсу. Серед виявлених недоліків в реалізації

процесу забезпечення якості освіти зазначаються, зокрема, слабкі зв'язки закладів вищої освіти з бізнесом; недостатній розвиток системи монетизації діяльності здобувачів вищої освіти у сфері співробітництва з приватними підприємствами; спад інтересу з боку університетів до участі у створенні бізнес-інкубаторів, наукових парків, технопарків, технополісів. Зафіксовано наявність значних диспропорцій системи національної економіки в галузі освіти, що відображається в дефіциті кадрів певних спеціальностей та/або перенасиченні ринку праці фахівцями інших професій. Негативними тенденціями таких диспропорцій виступають також процеси міграції кваліфікованих працівників із сільської місцевості до більш розвинутих міст і регіонів країни, або виїзд працездатного населення за кордон. Своєю чергою, трудова міграція спричиняє демографічні зміни, які відповідно до статистичних даних, негативно впливають на кількість потенційних здобувачів вищої освіти. З'ясовано, що національна система вищої освіти має чимало конкурентів із числа закладів вищої освіти економічно розвинених країн-сусідів, які пропонують освітні послуги в престижних університетах з високими світовими рейтингами, а також створюють умови та широкі можливості для отримання стипендіальних грантів, тому за вартістю навчання вітчизняні ЗВО найчастіше програють своїм європейським колегам. У статті підкреслюється, що на якість освіти впливає ціла низка різноманітних факторів, найвагомішими з яких є такі: нормативно-правовий базис регулювання сфери вищої освіти; державна політика управління закладами вищої освіти; рівень забезпечення фінансування сфери вищої освіти; стан ринку праці; дієвість механізму контролю якості надання освітніх послуг тощо.

Ключові слова: вища освіта; якість вищої освіти; здобувачі вищої освіти; заклад вищої освіти; система забезпечення якості вищої освіти.

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ВОПРОСЫ ОБЕСПЕЧЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВА ВЫСШЕГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
В УКРАИНЕ НА СОВРЕМЕННОМ ЭТАПЕ

В статье проанализированы вопросы значимости влияния качества высшего образования на политические, управленческие, педагогические, экономические и другие сферы жизни государства. Результаты изучения международного опыта убедительно свидетельствуют о том, что обеспечение высокого качества и определение перспектив дальнейшего развития образования являются одними из актуальных задач государственного управления всех развитых стран мира. Доказана зависимость качества жизни и уровня развития общества от уровня образования. Показано, что в Украине сформирована институциональная структура системы образования и органов управления, целью которой является сохранение и накопление потенциала научно-образовательного ресурса. Среди выявленных недостатков в реализации процесса обеспечения качества образования указываются, в частности, слабые связи учреждений высшего образования с бизнесом; недостаточное развитие системы монетизации деятельности соискателей высшего образования в сфере сотрудничества с частными предприятиями; спад интереса со стороны университетов к участию в создании бизнес-инкубаторов, научных парков, технопарков, технополісов. Зафиксировано наличие значительных образовательных диспропорций системы национальной экономики в области образования, что отображается в дефиците кадров определённых специальностей и/или перенасыщении рынка труда специалистами других профессий. Негативными тенденциями таких диспропорций выступают также процессы миграции квалифицированных работников из сельской местности в более развитые города и регионы страны, или выезд трудоспособного

населения за границу. В свою очередь, трудовая миграция влечёт за собой демографические изменения, которые согласно статистическим данным, негативно влияют на количество потенциальных соискателей высшего образования. Выяснено, что у национальной системы высшего образования есть немало конкурентов из числа учреждений высшего образования экономически развитых стран-соседей, которые предлагают образовательные услуги в престижных университетах с высокими мировыми рейтингами, а также создают условия и широкие возможности для получения стипендиальных грантов, поэтому по стоимости обучения отечественные ЗВО чаще всего проигрывают своим европейским коллегам. В статье подчёркивается, что на качество образования влияет целый ряд различных факторов, наиболее важными из которых являются: нормативно-правовой базис регулирования сферы высшего образования; государственная политика управления заведениями высшего образования; уровень обеспечения финансирования сферы высшего образования; состояние рынка труда; действенность механизма контроля качества предоставления образовательных услуг.

Ключевые слова: высшее образование; качество высшего образования; соискатели высшего образования; учреждение высшего образования; система обеспечения качества высшего образования.

Problem statement. The importance of education remains significant at all times. Education forms a thinking personality and, accordingly, the society, contributes to the development and growth of the state capabilities.

Global trends in globalization, informatization and internationalization of all spheres of life contribute to the emergence of new challenges to the education sector; create new requirements for both employers and incumbents for vacant positions; update the list of professions.

The labour market of Ukraine has clear trends towards an increase in the unemployment rate among persons with vocational and technical, and complete higher education [1]. Employers define two main problems: low response to posted job ads and high staff turnover for both the young and older population [1].

Objective. To investigate the state of quality assurance in education at the present stage and suggest improvements for the system of quality assurance in higher education.

According to KPMG study (one of the Big Four accounting firms in the world) "Growing Challenges" using the methodology of the annual international survey KPMG 2018 Global CEO Outlook, it was revealed: "...the threat of personnel shortages has become one of the main challenges for doing business in Ukraine among the surveyed respondents (approximately 50%)" [2].

According to the study "Youth 2017" performed by the Centre for independent sociological research "Omega" at the commission of the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, it was found that in 2017, the majority of respondents – Ukrainian youth aged 14–34 years (48.1%) – worked not in their degree field or in specialization obtained at the institution of vocational and technical or higher education. The main reasons were, in particular, the lack of vacancies in the speciality (36.7%) and unsatisfactory material remuneration (31.4%) [3].

The study of the situation with work in the speciality in Ukraine was conducted by The Point (online magazine of the website work.ua). As of May 2018, only 42% of Ukrainians work in their speciality, 33% have never found a job in their speciality at all, and 18% have decided to leave their field of specialization. Why did such a situation occur? The Point found out the following: work in a speciality in most cases was not financially attractive; it was very difficult to find a job in a speciality, as the chosen segment of the labour market was oversaturated; a person did not like the

received speciality; it was quite difficult to build a career in their field of specialization; work in a speciality involved a high level of stress [4].

Thus, the current state of education development in Ukraine records the presence of significant educational disproportions in the national economy system, and they contribute to the emergence of educational disproportions, mainly manifesting themselves as follows:

- at the industry/sector level, they manifest themselves as the oversaturation of some industries with qualified personnel, and its shortage in other industries. In particular, this includes a significant demand among seekers for economic and legal specialities, which does not meet the needs of the labour market;

- at the territorial level, they manifest themselves as a difference in the levels of development of individual territories and regions, which causes the outflow of qualified workers to more developed cities, regions, countries, and so on. An example of this disproportion may be a process called "brain and hand drain", which involves mass emigration of qualified personnel and technical specialists to other countries with better terms of remuneration;

- at the socio-demographic level, they manifest themselves as the influence of the demographic factor and the level of well-being of certain groups of the population. This, in turn, now affects the state of education, in particular, higher education, and, consequently, the number of future graduates.

In connection with the above-mentioned imbalance, a condition occurs when the performance indicators and competitiveness of business entities deteriorate due to the inability to meet their need for qualified workers that has an impact on the economic and social situation in the region, country, etc.

According to statistics indicators, "at the beginning of the new century, in terms of the share of adults (aged 25 years and older) with higher education (38%), Ukraine, along with Israel (40%) and Canada (38%), became the world leader among 90 countries (an average of 17%), ahead of the United States (36%), Norway (32%), Denmark, Finland, Japan (30% each), Italy, the Netherlands, France, Switzerland, Sweden, South Korea, New Zealand and other developed countries" [5].

Ukraine belongs to the countries (Ireland, South Korea, Lithuania, etc.) that "annually graduate the most specialists with higher education per 100 thousand population (sample made from 104 countries) – more than 1.2 thousand (with the world indicator – 580). In the middle of the current decade, Ukraine was also among the leading countries where higher education had the largest number of the population of the appropriate age – 76%, significantly ahead of Spain (69%), Italy (68%), Belgium (62%), Israel and the Netherlands (60% each), the United Kingdom (59%), Japan (58%), France (56%), Switzerland (47%).

There are relatively few countries ahead of Ukraine – 10, and almost all of them are developed. This indicator is 26% in the world, 62% in Central and East Asia, 70% in North America and Western Europe, and 26% in East Asia and Oceania" [6].

Among 153 countries in the world, Ukraine is on the 76th place, according to the overall rating The Good Country Index 2020. The main competitors of Ukraine, its geographical neighbours, hold the following places: Poland – 31st, and Germany – 5th [7].

According to the International Association of Universities (WHED – World Higher Education Database), there are about 18,400 universities in the world [8].

In Ukraine, there are 6.7 universities and 8 colleges, technical schools and specialized schools per 1 million of population. The density is even higher in Poland – 9.2 universities (and equivalent higher educational institutions), the network in Germany and the UK is smaller in coverage (4.3 and 3.7 universities, respectively). As of the beginning of the 2019/2020 academic year, the number of universities, institutes, and academies increased by 1.4% (to 281) compared to 2014/2015 academic year, and, on the contrary, technical schools, colleges and specialized schools

decreased by 12.7% (338 institutions), and compared to 1991 – by 51.1%. Therefore, the network of higher educational institutions as a whole is narrowing. The introduction of market relations in Ukraine in all spheres of society life has caused the emergence of private higher educational institutions along with state-owned institutions. The number of state-owned higher educational institutions was 504 in 2019, while the number of private higher educational institutions was decreasing rapidly, and as of 2019, only 115 institutions remained. Together, private and corporate higher educational institutions account for only 18.6% of all higher educational institutions in the country [9].

Among 50 countries with the world's strongest higher education systems, according to the QS Higher Education System Strength Ranking [10], studied in 2018, Ukraine took 44th place.

The QS World University Rankings is one of the most authoritative rankings of educational institutions in the world, along with the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities, the American U.S. News and the British Times Higher Education ratings.

Eight national higher educational institutions were included in the QS World University Rankings in 2021, where they took places 511–520. The rating includes about 1,500 best universities in the world. In 2018, 7 Ukrainian universities were represented in the Round University Ranking, 10 in the Green Metrics World University Ranking (against 3 in 2014), and 11 universities in the Scimago Institute Ranking. According to the number of higher educational institutions, the above figures, according to experts, are not high. Among the problems of higher education, specialists of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine distinguish the following [11]:

1. Low level of self-government of higher educational institutions.
2. Inconsistency of the training structure with the current and future needs of the labour market.
3. Non-compliance of the skills of graduates of the higher educational institutions with the needs of employers.
4. Low and inefficient financial support for higher education.
5. Low prestige of the teacher's work, loss of human resources.
7. Weak connection of the higher educational institutions with science and business sectors.
8. Weak integration of higher education of Ukraine into the world and European educational and scientific space. The reason for this situation is the lack of competitive quality and an erroneously high number of educational institutions. With such a large number of universities, Ukrainian institutions are not among the highly ranked universities according to world classifications. The way out of this situation is to qualitatively improve the higher education.

The higher education sector already has the quality system. According to part 2 of Article 41 of the Law of Ukraine On Education and pursuant to the principles established in the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Space (ESG)" and DSTU ISO 9001:2015 "Quality Management Systems", the main components of the system of quality assurance in education are: internal system of quality assurance in education; system of external quality assurance in education; system of quality assurance in the activities of management bodies and institutions that carry out external quality assurance in education" [12]. According to part 3 of Article 41 of the Law of Ukraine On Education, the internal system of quality assurance in education can include: policies and procedures for quality assurance in education; published criteria, rules and procedures for evaluating students; mechanisms and system of ensuring academic integrity; published criteria and procedures for evaluating the teaching activities of employees; providing the necessary resources for organizing the educational process; published criteria and rules for evaluating the activities of heads of educational institutions; creating an inclusive educational environment, reasonable adaptation and universal design; providing information

systems for effective management of a certain educational institution; other procedures and measures defined by the legislation of Ukraine and internal regulations [13].

The system of external quality assurance in education includes [13]: tools, procedures and measures to ensure and improve the quality of education: standardization; licensing of learning activities; accreditation of educational programs; institutional accreditation; public accreditation of educational institutions; external independent assessment of learning outcomes; institutional audit; monitoring of the quality of education; performance evaluation of teaching staff; certification of teaching staff; public supervision.

The Law of Ukraine On Education defines the list of education management bodies and their powers. In accordance with the Constitution of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the CMU) shall take measures to ensure human and civil rights and freedoms in order to guarantee the constitutional right of everyone to education.

The Constitution indicates the powers of the CMU in the sphere of education of Ukraine in para. 4 of Article 116, which states that the CMU shall develop and implement national programs for the economic, scientific, technical, social and cultural development of Ukraine [14].

According to the Law of Ukraine On Education, the CMU shall approve the strategy for the development of education in Ukraine, and develop, approve and implement state target programs in the sphere of education [14]. The Cabinet of Ministers is also authorized to finance the sphere of education, namely: it shall determine the procedures for formation and distribution of educational subventions between budgets in accordance with the law and taking into account the Budget Code of Ukraine; determine the procedures for distribution of state funding for vocational (vocational and technical) and professional education; approve licensing conditions for learning activities; approve indicators for assessing the state of education in Ukraine and regions; determine licensing bodies for preschool and general secondary education institutions [14].

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (hereinafter referred to as the MES of Ukraine), in accordance with the Regulations on the MES of Ukraine [15], shall realize the main function in the formation and implementation of state policy in the sphere of education and science. The powers defined in the Law of Ukraine On Education have something in common with the powers defined in the regulations. The analysis of the regulatory framework for education shows that the legislation imposes on the said ministry almost all responsibilities for planning changes, organizing and monitoring the activities of both the entire education system and each of its levels. The MES of Ukraine shall determine the prospects and priority directions for the development of preschool, complete general secondary, out-of-school, vocational and higher education, inclusive education and lifelong learning, and other spheres within its competence; and so on. The MES of Ukraine shall work closely with the CMU to implement the tasks assigned to it. According to the Law On Education, two bodies have the authority to assure the quality in education: the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the NAQAHE) and the State Education Quality Service (hereinafter referred to as the SEQS).

According to the Law On Education, the SEQS is established to help educational institutions improve the quality of education, form public confidence, and guarantee the quality of education. Pre-school, out-of-school, general secondary and vocational education institutions fall under the area of responsibilities of the SEQS [14]. The SEQS is a central executive authority whose activities are directed and coordinated by the CMU through the MES of Ukraine. In addition to the stated above, the SEQS shall have the following tasks: 1) implementation of the state policy in the sphere of education on issues related to quality assurance in education, quality assurance in learning activities, implementation of state supervision (control) over educational institutions regarding their compliance with the legislation within the limits of the powers provided for by law; 2) submission

for the consideration of the Minister of Education and Science of proposals to ensure the formation of state policy in the sphere of education on issues within the competence of the Service.

The NAQAHE is a permanent collegial body authorized by the Law of Ukraine On Higher Education to implement the state policy in the sphere of quality assurance in higher education. In the implementation of state policy in the sphere of quality assurance in higher education, the National Agency shall interact with the CMU, the MES of Ukraine, other central and local executive authorities, the National Academy of Sciences and national branch academies of sciences, local self-government bodies, public associations, enterprises, institutions and organizations, with scientific institutions and higher educational institutions of foreign countries, as well as with international organizations in the sphere of higher education [16]. The NAQAHE shall be endowed with powers defined in the Law of Ukraine On Higher Education and stipulated in details in its Charter approved by the Resolution of the CMU dated April 15, 2015 [17].

According to the Law of Ukraine On Higher Education (Article 18), the powers and authorities of the Agency include, in particular, the following: establish the requirements for the system of quality assurance in higher education, develop the regulations on accreditation of educational programs and submit them for approval to the central executive authority in the sphere of education and science; analyse the quality of learning activities of higher educational institutions; conduct institutional accreditation; form a single database of specializations introduced by higher educational institutions, under which higher education seekers are trained at each level of higher education; conduct accreditation of educational programs.

Thus, the internal system of quality assurance in education includes four levels: the level of organization of teacher's activities (work on programs and training curricula, supervision of students, doctoral students, postgraduates, advanced training, participation in academic councils and expert commissions, etc.); the level of organization of students' activities (testing their knowledge, educational, organizational and cultural, social and scientific work of students, etc.); the level of organization of administrative activities (inspection of the work of university management bodies, the activities of departments, faculties, auxiliary divisions); the level of organization of the employer's activities (formation of the University's need for training of qualified specialists, as well as checking the level of certification of graduates based on the results of training). The mechanism of internal quality assurance in education consists in the state policy, strategy and procedures for quality assurance in higher education in higher educational institutions, as well as in the responsibility for improving the internal component of the system of quality assurance in education, which provides for a certain list of tasks, procedures and measures, monitoring and analysing the results of activities at all levels of the university structure, in particular, regarding the quality of knowledge acquisition in accordance with generally accepted educational standards.

The conducted research shows that the sphere of higher education in Ukraine has regulatory support and a quality control system, which, at the present stage, does not meet the corresponding needs of the domestic labour market. The task of harmonizing the state of the labour market and indicators of the quality and number of graduates who will be able to meet the corresponding demand in the labour market shall be one of the priorities.

Conclusions. The domestic education quality system is developing taking into account the processes of globalization, informatization and internationalization of all spheres of life and is characterized by an increase in competition both within the domestic and foreign markets. However, there are a number of problems in the higher education system, which create risks and negatively affect the possibilities of its development, together with significant external and internal challenges.

In our opinion, to ensure the real quality of higher education, it is necessary to: transform higher educational institutions into hubs of progressive innovative development; provide legal and

organizational framework for the formation of entrepreneurial universities on the basis of individual higher educational institutions, which will carry out entrepreneurial activities by conducting scientific research and monetizing their results on the basis of contractual cooperation with private enterprises, providing a wide range of consulting services in the profile of their activities; resume measures to create business incubators, science parks, technoparks, and technopolises; attract students to various forms of scientific work and other types of creativity, establish conditions for the development and realization of their personalities during the period of their study at university; strengthen cooperation with entrepreneurs; interest state-owned enterprises to participate in the organization of work experience internship by updating the system of payment for supporting work experience internship at state-owned enterprises at the expense of the budget funds.

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