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**NAVIGATING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES: THE
DYNAMICS OF FOREIGN STUDENT MOBILITY AND INTEGRATION
IN UKRAINIAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Introduction. Ukrainian students are going abroad to study, while many young people are coming to Ukraine from abroad. Universities and higher education in general are the basis for development of the state and society. Every year, an increasing number of foreign students come to study at higher educational institutions of Ukraine. The main reasons for obtaining higher education in Ukraine are experienced professors, a wide range of specialties, and European quality standards, thanks to which foreigners choose our country. Foreign students are important all over the world and Ukraine is no exception. One of the reasons is financial investments in the budgets of our universities, which invite students from other countries to study.

The purpose of the work is to bring attention to key Ukrainian and international stakeholders regarding the vulnerable position of foreign students in Ukraine as well as identify issues related to the integration of foreign students into Ukrainian higher education institutions.

Students come to study in Ukraine from all over the world, with more than 120 countries in total. The most popular professions among foreigners are engineers, doctors, economists and financiers. Foreign students choose Ukraine because of relatively low tuition fees, good quality of education, as well as the fact that our diplomas are really recognized and valued in their countries. It is almost impossible for foreigners to live a comfortable life in Ukraine without language and culture proficiency. Therefore, to begin with, students can take courses where they choose either English or Ukrainian. After all, foreign citizens have the opportunity to acquire knowledge in Ukraine in these two

languages.

When it comes to financial affordability, the cost of living in Ukraine and tuition fees are quite reasonable. This ensures that education here is not only affordable, but also economically sustainable. What really sets Ukraine apart is the exceptional quality of life it offers. Ukraine provides a high standard of living and a hospitable atmosphere that makes you feel at home.

Medicine is the most popular field of study among foreign students in Ukraine. More than 50% of foreign students come to Ukraine to study various medical specialties [1]. Graduates of Ukrainian medical universities are highly valued for their fundamental knowledge and excellent practical skills. Now our country is at war, but it is precisely because of this that medical universities can offer foreign medical students unique practice opportunities. Wounded soldiers are treated not only in military hospitals, but also in ordinary hospitals. Therefore, all medical students can offer their help and improve their practice.

Due to Russian aggression, Ukrainian institutions of higher education have experienced a significant loss of nearly 20,000 foreign students who opted to transfer to universities in other countries [3]. Traditionally, higher education institutions of Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Odesa regions have been the most popular among foreigners. This aligns with the trends observed in Ukrainian admissions campaigns before the full-scale invasion, where Ukrainian applicants also frequently selected educational institutions of these regions [2]. Unfortunately, even after the de-occupation of the region, Kharkiv cannot yet be considered a safe place for foreign students to stay, as it suffered greatly during the war along with Sumy. Many students faced difficulties evacuating from these areas. Currently, some students continue to study online from their home countries, while others have managed to transfer to universities in other countries.

The war has certainly forced foreign students to reconsider their life plans. Some of them have left Ukraine for safer study destinations in other countries, but the majority, which is both encouraging and inspiring, continues their education at Ukrainian universities. Currently, there are almost 52 thousand

foreign students remaining in Ukraine. Many are engaged in remote learning from their home or in a mixed format. However, certain states, such as Nigeria, do not recognize online education at all, particularly in medical fields. This stands regardless of the country in which the education is obtained [4]. Despite these challenges, the majority of students from other countries have not altered their choice. They remain committed to Ukraine and believe in the future of our higher education.

Conclusion. Based on the aforementioned points, it can be concluded that Ukraine consistently extends a warm welcome to foreign students and endeavors to integrate them into Ukrainian culture, ensuring they feel at home. Modern teachers, in turn, often hold many events to acquaint our new students with Ukrainian traditions and customs. Despite recent events, our foreign students continue to choose Ukraine for their higher education.

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