

# Higher Education in Ukraine: Agenda for Reforms

KAS Policy Paper

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## Higher Education in Ukraine: Agenda for Reforms

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The publication is dedicated to covering major reforms in higher education in Ukraine. Achievements and problems in this sector since the time of Ukraine gaining independence until 2013 are briefly presented. The main focus is on the reforms, which started by the adoption of a new version of the Law On Higher Education in 2014. The issues of state higher education policy, the introduction of internal and external quality assurance system in higher education, the changing perception of academic integrity principles within the educational community are examined. The experience of several student initiatives related to their rights protection is generalized. Key challenges faced by the development of high quality higher education in Germany and the European Union are covered.

Publication is prepared by authors from universities and Ukrainian and German academic institutions with the participation of *Educational Trends* analytical agency.

The publication is sponsored by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Ukraine Office.

Project coordinator: Iuliia Skok, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Ukraine Office.

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Translated from Ukrainian by Yana Husak.

Cover photo: <https://pixabay.com/>.

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## Foreword

An active group of indifferent teachers and students, officials, experts, civil activists, and organizations gathered around the higher education reform. Starting 2014 the agenda of the necessary changes in this area was determined by the newly adopted Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* which was prepared by experts representing leading universities with minimum official participation and influence from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Since that time the majority of the expert discussions about the events and changes in higher education in Ukraine are mentioning implementation, realization and introduction of certain regulations of this document.

Are the changes of the last two and a half years tangible in this area? Sometimes there is an opinion expressed about the fact that all novelties are minor, that almost nothing critically new is introduced in Ukrainian education, especially under the influence of the state policy. I think, such opinion is a natural consequence of obscurity of every separate change: we do not pay attention to small everyday steps, and sometimes our attention is switched to other more important events. Nevertheless, having read this publication, one can see the prominent transformations in higher education. We witness the development of new educational standards. Some of us already study or teach at new postgraduate programs for future PhDs. Universities create departments of internal quality assurance and spend hard cash on connecting to commercial anti-plagiarism systems. In the framework of Ukraine's Ukraine to the European Union according to the Association Agreement, the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance was established, which, to be honest, does not yet work at full capacity. Educators started to actively learn foreign languages and participate in exchange programs with foreign HEIs. Students are getting involved in solving the current problems in their educational institutions and protecting their rights. In May 2017, when this policy paper was in preparation, three thousand of Ukrainian medicine students of the sixth year of education were for the first time taking an independent international test in medicine which was developed by American professionals. 97% (sic!) of these students failed the test, which proves the case for the urgency of fundamental reforms of Ukrainian education.

New terminology is spreading. We have already almost got used to the term "competency-based approach", but "academic integrity", "mixed" and "online-education", "anti-plagiarism systems", "academic writing courses", in general, are new notions and phenomena for Ukrainian educational environment, which, however, already become new topics for discussions and pave new ways for themselves.

Therefore, the higher education reform is far from an outright failure. There are achievements, there are obstacles. The speed of constructive changes is, possibly, slower compared to how we want it to be. All this creates current and future agenda for higher education in Ukraine. Its assessment from the perspective of leading Ukrainian and German experts can be found in this publication.

On behalf of all the authors and the publisher, I would like to express a most sincere gratitude to Dr Anatoly Oleksiyenko, Ms Hy T. Quach-Hoang and Ms Nguyen Ngoc Quynh Nhu for reviewing this publication and helping to polish its English translation.

Yevhen Nikolaiev

May-August 2017

## **Chapter 1**

# **New agenda for higher education in Ukraine: the first stage of changes**

**Inna Sovsun**

### **Introduction**

The new law on higher education became the first large systemic reformatory bill, adopted by the Verkhovna Rada after the Revolution of Dignity in summer 2014. Intensive work on the bill had been conducted for several years. The Ministry of Education was developing their version of the bill. The community, including the most progressive universities, was developing their versions of the draft law. The attempts of then-leaders of the Ministry of Education and Science to create a law, which would further centralize the governance of the higher education system, became the ground for multiple student protests and forced the leadership of the country to impose pressure on the Ministry of Education and Science to search for the compromise between different positions.

The situation changed dramatically in March 2014, when the new Government was formed, and Serhiy Kvit, a former rector of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, one of the most progressive higher education institutions in the country, became the Minister of Education and Science. The Minister invited me to take the position of the First Deputy Minister and supervise the higher education reform. Despite the fact that several years prior to that I had actively worked in different working groups for the development of higher education reform bills, the appointment became an unexpected challenge for me.

In fact, the finalization of the law became the first step of that challenge, as the bill was initially developed as a compromising, rather than radical or reformatory one. When preparing for the second reading of the bill, we managed to make certain changes, balance areas of responsibilities, add autonomous rights for the universities. We managed to make some other changes, which seemed to be smaller but were the driver for further reforms. For example, it was my initiative to add a regulation on the necessity to publish texts of the PhD and Doctorate theses online to simplify the checking process for plagiarism and academic integrity. However, in general, the bill was prepared for a different political situation, a situation in which groundbreaking changes were improbable. Eventually, even though the bill was not overly radical, its implementation was complicated and constantly faced unreadiness for changes from the larger part of the university community. On the other hand, a different part of the community demanded more decisive and groundbreaking actions.

The process of transformation of higher education in Ukraine was launched while balancing between these different interest groups, against a background of additional challenges connected with war, economic crisis and ineffective state governance system. This text is an attempt to analyse what was successful and what was not, to draw a line under the first reforms stage and partially to define in what direction the system should move next.

### **Expectations and evaluations**

According to the data of the survey conducted by Democratic Initiatives Foundation in December 2016, the society considers the following to be the major problems of higher education:

- corruption among faculty (37% of the surveyed),
- non-recognition of diplomas of Ukrainian HEIs in the world (34%),

- the divergence of higher education from the demands of the labour market (32%),
- poor infrastructure and facilities of the higher education institutions (32%).

This problems list stays mostly the same for the entire period when the survey was conducted. Nevertheless, some of the mentioned problems are gradually losing “popularity” among the population. Thus, the 37% support for the idea that the main problem of higher education is corruption is much lower compared to the way it was in 2015 when exactly half of the surveyed supported this idea.

Clearly, it would be naive to believe that the situation with bribes in universities has critically changed in one year. To prove or to discard this one would need to conduct a more complex research. However, we surely are witnessing the process of formation of a deeper understanding of the complexity of problems in higher education in the society, as opposed to the simplified idea that all the problems are only related to corruption.

It is a positive development, as problems in the higher education in Ukraine are very systematic and complex. They are created by the years of absence of a clear development strategy. Certainly, one cannot say that this is only the problem of educational policy. Since the first days of independence, the Ukrainian state was living with the mindset of “survival”, without a clear development strategy, without a clear understanding of where we are heading as the society. This was the so-called “policy of non-policy” — policy of avoiding policy (“policy” as a strategy; because there was more “politics” as political struggle than needed — both in education and in the state overall).

One cannot say that no changes in the higher education were happening, some things indeed changed. The changes were partially caused by the pressing economic factors (for example, the possibility to charge tuition fees from students was introduced in the early 1990s to supplement the HEIs budgets), less often the changes took place under international influence. The introduction of an independent external test, which was largely inspired by the international donors (primarily by International Renaissance Foundation<sup>1</sup>) is a success story, which has minimized corruption during university admissions. The credit-modular system of the education process organization, which enforced professors to introduce obligatory multiple-choice tests for every course was introduced under the guise of the Bologna process (instead of the proper use of the ECTS), this can be considered a grotesque result of international influence. The political need to preserve “stability” forced the politicians to revise the legislation from time to time, to raise the faculty salaries level faculty little by little. However, these steps were insufficient to solve all the problems that piled up.

That is why the most dramatic changes in the higher education were happening not because of certain decisions, but due to their absence.

The accumulated problems in Ukraine’s higher education can be seen in three dimensions: the visionary, the academic and the managerial one.

### **Lack of vision**

The absence of a clear and properly articulated vision of the development of higher education sector in general and individual universities, in particular, is the most complex problem to solve or even define, but this problem is surely fundamental. One can hardly expect that higher education in Ukraine will reach new heights without the society, the state or the universities thinking through the role of the higher education in the country development, particularly since there is no development strategy for Ukraine in general. Without this, it is impossible to understand how many and what professionals exactly should be trained by the universities, what types of educational institutions are needed, what scientific research will contribute the most to the overall country’s growth.

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<sup>1</sup> Open Society Foundation Kyiv office.

With this in mind, we cannot expect individual educators and universities to work to achieve a broader goal as the goal itself stays undefined. That is why the tactics of personal adaptation and search for the simplest ways to achieve personal goals within the educational system became commonplace.

### **Academic domain problems**

Clearly, academic problems are the most complicated and tangible ones; these are those problems that have to do directly with education and scientific research. The following painful issues should be pointed out in this regard:

- the content of the educational programs is often outdated, it poorly incorporates recent technological developments and is inconsistent with the up-to-date research. To a large extent, it is explained by the closed nature of the system, either deliberate or forced; the faculty mostly use literature only in Ukrainian, which limits their access to the recent academic research and disables incorporating it into the learning process. The outdated facilities and lack of resources to conduct high-quality research also complicate the development of the content relevant to the current study needs.
- pedagogic approaches of the faculty aren't adjusted to the needs of modern students or to the new opportunities that appeared with the recent IT developments. Typical examples are regular complaints from the students about the faculty controlling the education quality by examining written notes on the lectures, instead of motivating students and sparking their interest in the topic.
- the students are poorly prepared to study in universities. Statistical data provide a solid explanation for this: during the demographic crisis, the total number of school graduates has decreased – from 500 thousand in 2004 to 200 thousand in 2016, while the number of HEIs, as well as the number of seats for students, have significantly grown. These circumstances, which resulted in a significant increase in the share of school graduates admitted into universities (up to 80%), automatically meant a decrease of training quality. Thus, universities started enrolling students who were not prepared or motivated to study. In addition, uncontrolled enrollment of students on the tuition-paying basis significantly distorted the distribution of the applicants among the specialities: up to 80% of students studying popular majors (e.g. law) are paying tuition fees. Often these applicants could have opted to have engineering or science majors with the governmental financial support, however, they instead preferred paying the fee to get a more prestigious major.
- outdated educational facilities and lack of resources to ensure their modernization. It makes high-quality education impossible, especially in engineering and natural sciences programs.
- mass disregard for academic integrity and a high tolerance for academic violations. A combination of social crises and problems in education led to the steep degrading of rigour within the system; the demands for students, faculty and managers decreased. Tolerating the mediocrity became a regular practice, and systematic harsh violations of academic integrity principles (e.g. cheating during exams, as reported by nearly 90% of students, or plagiarism in master's or doctorate theses) are not perceived as abuses. The distorted system of ethical principles was created as a result, and it got so rooted in the academic culture that overcoming it is probably the biggest current challenge.

### **Governance and funding problems**

Problems of governance and funding are the most sensitive for the faculty and other employees of the HEIs. All surveys among the faculty demonstrate that the lack of funding is perceived to be the key problem. The major aspects of this problem are:

- an excessive centralization in higher education governance inherited from the Soviet period made the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine a carrier of overwhelming powers. The corruption risks and profanation of governance managerial process also skyrocketed, since the Ministry lacks the institutional capacity to perform its functions properly. For example, the total amount of employees in the Ministry is slightly over 300 people, whereas there are over 700 employees in the Ministry of Higher Education and Science in Poland.
- the centralization trends were visible on the level of individual HEIs. The legislative norms and conservative governance practices concentrated the executive power at the top. The career of the faculty largely depends on good relations with the heads of their department, while research and teaching achievements have less importance. This generates a distorted motivation system for both faculty and students, that cannot inspire professional growth.
- the system of university funding urgently needs reform. Although Ukraine is spending a comparatively high share of the state budget on higher education, the existing model of cost distribution scatters the funds between the many of HEIs, employees and students. As a result, the faculty get an uncompetitive salary, the available funding does not allow to upgrade the equipment and facilities; eventually, resources are insufficient to keep the education quality on a proper level. The existing model guarantees minimum expenditures for everything (salary, students' scholarships, partly utilities), yet the rest of the money should be earned by the HEI, which is primarily done via attracting tuition-paying students. However, even such earnings are disputable and do not facilitate development, as the fee is lower (on average twice as low. — *editor*) compared to the expenses for one student whose tuition is covered by the government.
- corruption and bribes exist on all levels: between faculty and students, between students/applicants and faculty and HEIs administration, between HEIs and state bodies etc. Unquestionably, it is a characteristic of the broader problems and high level of corruption in the country overall. One can hardly expect that one separate area can be fully free from corruption in a society largely built on corrupt ties. However, just as in other areas, corruption in higher education has its specifics and hence requires special measures to overcome it.

### **Reform: methods and approaches**

The Cambridge English Dictionary defines the verb “to reform” as “to make an improvement, especially by changing a person’s behaviour or the structure of something”.

In Ukrainian discourse, reform is most often believed to consist of legislative changes only. At the same time, acknowledging a number of systemic problems, many of which are ethical, not legal, the law cannot be a single solution. That is why adoption of the law *On higher education* has only marked the start of the reform. The first stage of the reform included revision of a considerable part of the secondary legislation. By 2017, this phase is to a large extent finished. The second phase of the reform process has started when changes are starting to take root in the universities. What we are facing today is universities getting out of their comfort zone when implementing specific changes. This creates minor conflict zones inside universities, which is a clear indication of change taking place. Of course, there is an urge for this process to speed up, however, due to the scale of the planned changes, complicated situation in the country and lack of resources the reform will be implemented step-by-step and in relatively slow manner.

Over two years since the new law came into force, a lot has been changed, and it is worth analysing it in more details, scrupulously, critically, and in a constructive manner. Due to my personal involvement in the process of reforming, I do not claim to be fully objective in covering the first stage of the reform. My task in this publication is slightly different — to cover the priorities which were addressed by the Ministry during this period and define major areas of work.

## **Autonomy**

The issue of autonomy was one of the key elements of the reform. It was too obvious for everybody that total centralization of governance and defining the education content did not bring any positive results. At the same time, open questions remain on the specific approach in increasing the universities' autonomy, and on whether universities are prepared to use it wisely and responsibly.

Still, there were no doubts concerning the fact that the previous overly centralized system definitely was not working for the common good and was not delivering socially meaningful results. Changes were required. And it was not only about changing the management tools. It seems to me that the issue of autonomy is even broader. The ideas that there is only one proper way of creating knowledge or only one proper model of governance is possible are slowly being phased out. Instead, there is a growing understanding that knowledge is shaped in different ways and different approaches to organizing education process or managing the university are possible. And the major challenge is the increase of the responsibility of individuals and institutions for the quality of their work. Eventually, this should open the space for creative scientific search and create a new environment for critical discussions in the universities. Such paradigm change cannot happen quickly, and after two or three years of the new law being in force, there is naturally little evidence to see how this idea has worked. Yet, there is surely no alternative to increasing the autonomy.

The autonomy issue should be considered in two dimensions: governance and academic ones. Despite the fact that public discussion on this matter in the first place is focused on a governance component, I believe that providing rights and opportunities to shape the new content of education are more important, as a university is evaluated by the students, industries and international partners according to the quality of courses and programs.

Once the Ministry has cancelled all existing requirements concerning the obligatory courses, which used to be set as part of the educational standards on the national level, the universities got the full authority to develop educational program independently. Of course, this does not automatically lead to improving the education quality, however, it definitely creates opportunities for such improvement. In some cases, we resorted to administrative measures to foster such development. For instance, the Decree was issued to limit to eight the number of the courses that students can take per semester simultaneously. In Ukraine, as well as in many other post-Soviet countries, a long-established tradition of overloading the curriculum with an excessive number of courses was in place: it was typical for Ukrainian students to have 15 courses per semester, while their colleagues in Europe and America have four or five. The reasons behind this are both conservative approaches to creating study programs, and the necessity to provide a certain workload for the constantly growing faculty. For the students the situation meant that they were unable to concentrate on their courses and had to take similar courses several times. The long-lasting effect of such approach to curriculum development was the loss of interest in education. Sadly, this also provoked different forms of academic dishonesty: students felt comfortable with downloading papers from the Internet for the courses that they found to be boring and unnecessary, cheat during exams etc.

Cutting the teaching workload (from 900 to 600 hours per year) opened opportunities for a broader change of the curriculum. Universities received an opportunity to reduce the number of unnecessary courses (which in some cases meant firing of professors whose qualifications were questionable). Instead, they could create better working conditions for more qualified professors by allowing them to have a smaller workload. Did the universities use these opportunities? Administrative limitations regarding the number of courses per semester in addition to lifting the requirements regarding compulsory courses forced them to start changing the format of curricula. I realize that such transformations were not always happening transparently, on the basis of clearly defined quality criteria. At least this has opened up opportunities for those institutions that were willing to change. And I am convinced that in the mid-term perspective more universities will be paying more attention to developing curricula, particularly since the

number of students they can enrol will depend more and more on how interesting their programs are for potential students. Surely, this requires a systemic change in university funding model, as funding provides tangible incentives for the system. This will be described in more details below.

The issue about managerial autonomy is more ambiguous. What level of self-governance can be delegated to the organizations, which have little public trust, yet receive considerable public funding? How one can provide more autonomy to highly centralised institutions without turning them into feudal domains of the individual rectors? These threats are still valid. Moreover, these concerns only grew stronger after the analysis of how universities were using their right to elect rectors without any influence from the Ministry of Education and Science. Results of the rectors' elections showed that once the faculty for the first time received the right to elect their rector directly, they overwhelmingly were supporting those candidates who were offering a conservative path of no or little change in university management. Is there a hope for support of a major structural change within the university? I do not have the final answer to this question. Theoretically, such changes can be encouraged from outside through the new funding model. At the same time, such change will most likely be gradual, probably even too gradual given current high societal expectations for rapid changes. Another option widely discussed on the social networks today is to change once again the mechanism of how university rectors are being elected: instead of having direct elections, a separate identification committee can be created that will choose the most competent candidates, who are ready to introduce fundamental reforms in the universities. I think that this should be the issue of a broader discussion in order to find a well-grounded decision.

### **New content – new quality?**

Beyond doubt, any higher education reform will be meaningless if it does not get into individual university classrooms. Yet, given the broadening autonomy, the opportunities for introducing change into classrooms are more and more limited. In the previous model, the Ministry was directly responsible for the contents of education and thus could influence what is being taught. That is no longer possible. In the old paradigm, one thought that quality was assured via direct regulation of the educational content. In the new paradigm these approaches change, the ministry loses the monopoly on approving the content of educational programs. On the one hand, it creates opportunities for development, on the other hand, it also makes rapid change impossible.

Under the old legislation, the Ministry had the powers to define in quite a detailed way the content of the education for different fields of studies using the system of standards, which prescribed what specific courses have to be taught. This has changed under the new law. The Ministry of Education still has the right to approve standards. However, we have seen an enormous change in the idea of what the standards look like and what the tasks of the standards are. The new standards do not dictate what courses to teach and how to teach; they only establish the expected learning outcomes for different programs. The rest is up to the university and individual professor. To develop the new standards the Ministry of Education created the Scientific and Methodological Council and Scientific and Methodological Commissions. For the first time, members of the Committee and Commissions were elected via open competition. Earlier educational standards had been developed by a designated department in one of the universities and then approved by the Ministry. Thus a single department had full control over the curriculum for a specific field of study for all universities and little space for discussion existed. Under the new law, such standards are developed by experts from different universities as well as from relevant industry sectors. The new standards are less prescriptive and are the result of intense debates between representatives of different institutions. This has created space for an open discussion about the goals and contents of the education for different fields of study; professors and industry representatives for the first time had to explain what and why is taught to the students. At the same time, new standards leave room for autonomous choice on specifics

of the programs for different universities. Such discussions resulted in dozens of standards, which were developed by the commissions and await approval by the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

The creation of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (NAHEQA) is probably the most problematic element in the implementation of the new law on higher education. The Agency had to be created by universities as the key institution in external quality assurance. Today these functions are performed by the Accreditation Commission under the Ministry of Education and Science, yet there is an understanding that this is performed inefficiently and in an untransparent manner. The new Agency had to change this. The Law prescribed that members of the Agency had to be nominated mainly by universities, but also by national academies of science and employers' associations. Given such autonomous rights, the universities have selected those people who were representing the "old guard", those people that universities knew how to work with. Some of the members of the "new" Agency had previously been ousted from the Ministry of Education and Science for corruption. Activists have found out that many of them have plagiarized their dissertation. This is a particularly sensitive issue, since in Ukraine, unlike in most other European countries, the Agency is empowered to control plagiarism in dissertations among other things.

A few comments concerning the Agency are necessary. First, without clear criteria for potential members, the universities have elected to the Agency those people who would guarantee that there shall be no dramatic changes in the system (similar to the situation with the elections of rectors). Secondly, the creation of the Agency has been the focus of public debate since the first day the new law came into force. This means that academic community is still looking "upwards", it still tries to understand who is in control at the top and does not seem to grasp that within the new paradigm control is concentrated in the universities themselves. Furthermore, Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in European Higher Education Area clearly state that the key element of the quality assurance system is internal quality assurance mechanisms. And universities do not require the National Agency in order to independently start working on those mechanisms. What they need is knowledge and willingness to introduce change. There surely is a lack of expertise on developing internal quality assurance mechanisms in the academic community in Ukraine. And probably the main task of the Agency, once it is launched, is actually to spread knowledge and share new ideas on how to ensure education quality from inside the universities. I have doubts as to whether the current members of the Agency, the destiny of which stays unknown (they still have not been officially approved by the government), is capable of that. However, it should in no way become an obstacle to the improvement of the education quality on the level of individual universities.

Another crucial issue related to the training quality in the universities is faculty qualifications. The standard of higher education, in general, is perceived by students mainly via expertise of individual professors. A student can see when a professor is demotivated, teaches the same courses for years (or even decades), does not read recent research (not to mention conducting one themselves), is not familiar with modern technology etc. Regrettably, that is a typical situation and it is indeed the most complicated problem to solve as it requires changes in the behaviour of thousands of faculty. Surely, a low salaries level is one of the primary causes for losing interest in professional development. Is it possible to raise the professors' salaries immediately? Today Ukraine is spending a comparatively large share of GDP directly on higher education. Within this funding, professors' salaries are the largest portion of expenses (up to 65%). Unfortunately, given the increase in the number of universities and faculty, this money is scattered and spent very inefficiently. Thus a significant rise in salaries can only happen as a result of increasing efficiency in spending. Surely, raising public funding on higher education is expected as the economy recovers from a severe economic crisis created as a result of the war in 2014, yet this will never be enough without structural changes in the way funding is allocated within universities. It is important that spending per one student and per one professor increases, which means that the total number of students and professors has to decrease.

As the main goal of the higher education reform is to improve the education quality, the key challenge in this context is how to guarantee that the best and most eminent professors will stay in universities. What criteria guarantee high qualification of faculty members? In general, this decision is up to a university. However, one has to ask themselves: are Ukrainian universities today capable of objectively assessing faculty, taking into account traditions of cronyism, corruption, "telephone law" etc? As a suggestion to solve this dilemma the Ministry developed a new decree on awarding the academic titles (docent, professor), which tried to establish new high requirements for teaching staff. Given the low level of trust to internal mechanisms of quality assessment, the international criteria were emphasized: a person seeking a "docent" or "professor" title has to have publications in international peer-review journals which are indexed in Scopus or Web of Science and to have proven knowledge of English (at least B2 level according to the Common European Framework of References for Languages, confirmed by an international certificate). These requirements were based on the idea that one cannot ensure high quality of teaching and research in the 21<sup>st</sup> century without command of English. I agree with the criticism that exceptions should have been made for the instructors of other languages (e.g. instructors of French). Those who have worked or studied abroad should have the right to prove their command of English without necessarily passing a separate exam for an international certificate. Yet, with these omissions fixed, I am convinced that a formal requirement for faculty members to speak English is one of the strongest mechanisms for ensuring teaching and research quality.

The decision about these new requirements faced a lot of opposition. Some insisted that knowledge of English does not guarantee the quality of teaching and research. I partially agree with the argument: good command of English alone does not necessarily guarantee high-quality teaching. However, the opposite is true: when a person does speak English, that surely signals that she/he has little knowledge about ongoing research, academic debates in the world etc. And this undoubtedly means she/he can hardly ensure high teaching quality. Some critics agreed that knowing English is important, however, they argued that ensuring knowledge of English should be implemented at an earlier stage when a person is defending her/his PhD thesis. I partially agree with that argument and I believe steps in that direction have to be taken. However, such procedure for future holders of PhD degrees does not answer the question as to how to assess thousands of faculty members who already have PhDs, who already work in the universities and refuse to learn English. They still teach every day, and the quality of their teaching is questionable. Some criticized ministerial decision because it imposed additional expenses on faculty: they have to pay for an exam to receive the international English language certificate. I agree that, ideally, the government could develop an English language test which would be objective and independent and would cost less compared to international ones. Some work is being done in this area. However, for the moment, the absence of a cheaper version of the test should not be used as a reason to abolish English language requirements. Anyways, before new requirements were introduced, those who were seeking docent and professor titles had to publish numerous articles (up to 20) in Ukrainian "academic journals", and that typically cost much more than one English language exam. In the light of new requirements in some universities, the faculty demanded that administration creates opportunities to study English for free. This is surely a positive signal, though there is still plenty of work in this area, and unfortunately, it is not fully clear whether the academic community is ready for the complicated process of self-improvement and professional growth. At least, this launched internal discussions about qualifications of faculty in Ukrainian universities.

### **University admission campaign: new approaches**

Admission to universities is the most popular education-related topic for the media and society. This makes sense, as getting into a university is a high-stake event, which greatly influences the future of a person. Thus, admission campaigns always draw the greatest attention from the media (also due to the fact that they take place in summertime, during the period of a political lull). Admission campaign is also a sort of litmus test for the society, a measure of how much universities can be trusted in general.

The problems with corruption during admission were largely overcome with the introduction of External Independent Testing in 2008. However, there were plenty of loopholes that allowed universities to enrol students without them taking the tests. Once the students have applied to a university, it was the university's task to select the best out of those who applied. Yet, since students could submit up to 15 applications to different study programs, there was a lot of confusion and irregularities in this process. The universities would not know whether a certain student is already enrolled in another university. Thus, they had to update their information constantly and offer places of those students who opted to study in other programs to the next students in the list. However, due to overwork and sometimes personal connections of different types with the students (or rather with their parents) admissions officers were not very diligent in offering seats to the best applicants.

In order to make admissions more transparent, in 2015 significant changes were introduced. Applicants had to assign a priority (from 1 to 15) to all the applications that they submitted. Priority number one means that this application is the highest priority for the applicant. All applications were collected in a single national database. Afterwards, the students were offered one seat in a university based on their priorities and test results (a modified version of the Gale-Shapley algorithm was used for those purposes). The algorithm functioned in such a way as to ensure that the student is offered the best seat based on his/her results. In 2016 this system slightly changed. The number of the government-funded seats for a specific program in a specific university was not pre-fixed by the Ministry as it had been done before. Instead, the number of government-funded seats that the university would get depended to a large extent on whether the university attracted the strongest applicants. Thus, the stronger the applicants to a specific program in a specific university, the more seats in that program the government will cover. This is a crucial step towards reforming the system; new rules of university admission make the process more transparent. Moreover, the focus of university activities has shifted now: under the previous system, the number of government-funded seats depended to a large extent on the rectors' relations with the Minister. Under the new system, universities have to work to attract the strongest students.

New mechanisms of university admission have been supported by would-be students. According to the survey of the applicants in 2016 by the Democratic Initiatives Foundation, 64% were satisfied with the stage of submitting applications (55% in 2015), 63% are satisfied with the stage when government-funded seats are allocated, which is, in fact, the most important reform element (compared to 36% who were satisfied in 2015). As we can see, the level of applicants' satisfaction has increased significantly. Unexpectedly, applicants have also appreciated transition to an online-only submission of the admission documents, despite the fact that electronic submission system did not always function properly during the first days of the campaign.

Another novelty in the admission process was introduced in 2016 concerning master's programs: an independent external test for applicants for Master's in Law programs was piloted<sup>2</sup>. I do not think that this experience can be applied to many other fields of study. However, I am convinced that for regulated professions (such as law or medicine) with specific professional requirements a stronger unification of university curriculum is needed. A unified curriculum allows for a unified test which can be used for admissions to master's level programs in these fields of study. The fact the External Independent Test in Law has been expanded in 2017 is a good sign that the reform is much-needed and clear.

### **Academic integrity**

Closer attention to academic integrity is acknowledged as one of the key elements of higher education reform. That said, the new law *On higher education* does not even contain the term

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<sup>2</sup> Since 2017, an external entrance exam for Master's in Law programs is obligatory. — *editor*.

“academic integrity”. This wording appeared in the education discourse only in 2015, a year after the new law was passed. There are certain provisions in the law which introduced liability for violation of academic integrity principles. In particular, the law requires that all PhD dissertations are published online. This provision was added to the draft law in spring 2014 when preparing it for the second reading at the request of the Ministry. Another provision established liability for plagiarism detected in the dissertation both for the author as well as for the academic board where such thesis was defended.

Is this enough to overcome the epidemic of plagiarism and other academic integrity violations in Ukrainian higher education? Certainly not. However, it created the prerequisites for opening this battle-front. This resulted in several loud scandals concerning plagiarism in the dissertations of certain people (for the first time activists had the chance to see dissertations and check them for plagiarism after they were published online). Several people lost their PhD degrees by decisions of the Ministry of Education and Science. These minor steps are important. What is even more important, however, is that a whole discourse of “academic integrity” has been introduced. For the first time, the problem has been clearly and openly defined. This allowed for the progressive part of the academic community to unite around this issue. The idea of “academic integrity” has become a motto for reform-minded academicians. An important role is also played by the *Support to Academic Integrity* project, which was initiated by the Ministry of Education and is implemented by American Councils. The project works on spreading new ideas and practices of academic integrity, urges universities to talk about plagiarism and other problems openly. Clearly, plagiarism scandals draw a lot of public attention. Sanctions for people who deliberately and massively violate academic integrity principles is an important step in tackling the problem. However, it is just as important to train people, teach them new ideas and new approaches to academic writing. This work is less visible, but it is crucially needed if we want to change the academic culture, alter the behaviour norms in Ukrainian academic community. Creation of a community of like-minded people around the issue of academic integrity also works as a preventative mechanism that ensures that changes will be sustainable.

It was exactly through these mechanisms that External Independent Testing was launched. It started with raising public concern via public discussions, this led to the creation of constant public discussions about corruption during admissions to university. A community of like-minded people formed. Later the concrete mechanisms for the functioning of the External Independent Testing were developed. Such an approach is time-consuming and less fascinating. However, when we talk about the need to change the way of thinking, it has no alternative.

Surely, technical and legal solutions for exposing plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are still needed. The National Repository of Academic Texts was designed specifically with the goal of facilitating plagiarism detection. The task of the Repository is to serve as a database where all the dissertations and other academic papers will be collected. This would enable simple check-up for plagiarism, yet this does not mean that academic community can stay idle and not get involved.

Furthermore, attention to the problem of academic plagiarism is growing outside of the academic community. During public hearings where candidates for the positions of Judges of the Supreme Court were being discussed, activists paid attention to plagiarism in dissertations of some of the candidates and recommended that they not be appointed because of that.

Drawing attention to this issue is a clear sign that the process is moving forward. It is slower than desired, however, it is visible.

### **Development of the new funding model for universities**

The law on higher education introduced little change into the mechanisms of allocation of public funding to universities. Primarily this is due to the fact that (though the reform was being discussed for a few years before the law was passed) as of 2014 there was no clear

understanding of how the system of funding of higher education should evolve. Everyone agrees that the model that existed at the time had to be changed, however the direction of such changes was not designated, there was very little expertise on this matter to suggest concrete ways for the reform.

I personally started to work closely on the funding model when still working at the CEDOS think tank, before joining the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. At CEDOS we were looking for an alternative to a popular idea of introducing a voucher-type funding model in higher education. Therefore we started analysing international experience in that sphere. We came up with the idea of introducing the performance-based funding model which is widely used in Western Europe.

Later on, this idea has developed into a full-scale reform proposal. Numerous round tables, presentations and discussions were held to create a common understanding of the reform, to explain its philosophy and approach to funding the universities. Just as the situation with academic integrity, the most important task for me at this stage was making new ideas popular, explaining and discussing them. The fact that these ideas are now supported by the new leadership of the Ministry of Education and Science gives hope that at some point this reform can be implemented. And it would be the logical next step of the higher education reform that will create a new incentives model for the universities.

## **Conclusion**

In addition to the changes aimed at structural transformation of higher education, many other things can be mentioned, such as university mergers, active international cooperation (the main achievement here was joining the *Horizon 2020* EU Program), facilitating communication with the students (primarily with the goal of promotion of the idea about expanding their opportunities regarding choice of courses) and many other things.

All these steps are aimed at gradually transforming higher education, introducing new ideas and approaches, creating new meanings and solutions. Clearly, it would be nice for these changes to be more evident. However, the task initially set is so broad that one cannot expect instant results. I believe everybody should get ready for a marathon, rather than for a sprint.

## Chapter 2

### Ukrainian higher education in 1991–2013: successes and failures of the reforms

**Petro Kostrobiy, Yuriy Rashkevych**

#### Introduction

Transformation processes in the Ukrainian economy, which started with the proclamation of the country's independence in 1991, were characterized by:

- division of the production facilities, which were dominantly state-owned;
- market-formation policies did not take into account national interests; as a result, the processes were mostly happening in quite a chaotic way.

The result was the loss of opportunities for post-industrial development of the state, where modernization of the national education and science could become the foundation with the priority for boosting knowledge-intensive production.

Stabilization and further socio-economic growth of Ukraine depended a lot on the quality training of the professionals, whose level of competence could ensure production of knowledge-intensive and competitive products on the world market and make Ukraine's economy more resistant to the consequences of market globalization.

Update and actual establishment of the national system of higher education, modernization of education content and technologies, introduction of modern forms of learning process organization, which would comply with large social and economic metamorphoses, began in Ukraine and set a number of specific tasks:

- to guarantee constitutional right of a person for quality education, including education throughout life;
- to create opportunities for flexible and dynamic reaction to rapid changes in the labour market, for consideration of individual needs of a person;
- to define what to teach and how to teach in a knowledge-based society, considering the necessity to reform Ukraine's economy on the innovative foundations.

#### Establishment of national higher education system during 1991–2002

Let us consider the major tasks of the first decade of development of a national higher education system in Ukraine, its legal environment, as well as achievements and failures of reform efforts during the period.

The first step in reforming higher education was the adoption of the Law of Ukraine *On Education* (1991), which declared the new for that time bachelor's and master's higher education levels. New qualification levels of bachelor's, specialist, and master's were outlined. This led to a number of serious controversies (especially for the training of engineering specialists), the most important of which were the following:

- rejection of the graduates with bachelor's degree by the labour market, due to insufficient practical training and as a result unreadiness for implementation of the operational level of activities;
- the necessity to assure the compliance of variable parts of learning programs with the regional programs of socio-economic development, demands of the labour market and students, potential and available resources of the scientific schools of universities;

- degree requirements included a large variable part, which complicated the students' mobility opportunities within educational field, major or area of knowledge;
- the master's education and qualification level was unclear for the local educational tradition. Its status in the labour market, duration, and prerequisites were perceived as ambiguous.

To resolve these and other controversies of the Law and create a legal foundation for educational activities, a two-week working school of representatives of the higher and secondary educational institutions of Ukraine was held in fall 1992 in Vorzel. Guided by Deputy Minister of Education of Ukraine Valeriy Hondyul, the school aimed at creating drafts of the regulatory documents, namely:

- Regulations on Educational Institution;
- Regulations on Multi-level System of Education;
- Regulations on Typical Rules of Admission;
- Regulations on Organization of Educational Process in Higher Education Institutions;
- Regulations on Awarding Academic Degrees;
- List of Fields of Study and Majors for Training of Professionals etc.

The new educational notions set forth in these drafts were:

- statutes of educational institutions;
- licensing and accreditation of the educational activities; type of the educational institution was defined only by the four levels of accreditation (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> level-accredited institutions award qualifications corresponding to 5B ISCED level, 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions award bachelor's and 4<sup>th</sup> level award master's degrees);
- state and industry-specific education standards;
- permission of admission for a field of study or major (at the discretion of education institution) with the definite duration of training on each educational level;
- master's training after obtaining bachelor's or specialist degree with different training time.

A little-known decree of the Ministry of Science and Education No. 34 was prepared and approved in 1992. It for the first time contained a list of bachelor's program fields of study and majors for specialist and master's level with a defined duration of training:

- bachelor's level — 3–4 years,
- specialist level — 1–1,5 years upon obtaining a bachelor's degree,
- master's level — 2 years upon obtaining a bachelor's degree.

However, this decree was not circulated among higher education institutions and it was later forgotten. Implementation of this decree required structural changes in the universities, therefore it was carried out in only a few of them (Lviv Polytechnic University, Vinnytsia Polytechnic University).

Later, these requirements (with additional amendments of the officials) were incorporated in *Regulations on State Higher Education Institution* (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1074 from 25.09.1996), in which for the first time:

- Ukrainian HEIs were allowed to act in line with the procedure established by these Regulations, on the basis of a statute, create self-government bodies, create student self-government bodies;
- notions of licensing, accreditation and certification of majors, HEIs accreditation levels were introduced into educational activities of the HEIs;
- establishment of government accreditation and licensing bodies was planned;
- requirements to categorise the state higher education institutions were introduced (university, industry-specific university, academy, institute, college).

Another resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (No. 325 of 18.05.1994) introduced a *List of fields of study and majors*. The list included such new for Ukraine educational fields as Computer science, Computer engineering, Mechanical engineering, Chemical technology and engineering, Management, Automation and computer-integrated technologies etc.

An important landmark in the activities of HEIs was the introduction of Regulations on Education and Qualification Levels (Levels of Education), approved by the Decree of Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 65 from 20.01.1996, where the notions of levels of educational qualification, educational qualification program and standards of education were first introduced.

To further develop this, a next Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (No. 2147 from 07.08.1998) introduced Requirements for State Standards of Higher Education.

Despite large formalism of these Requirements for State Standards, notions of competencies obtained in learning-professional programs were first laid out in this document.

Drafts of these provisions and resolutions were prepared by the working groups under the direct supervision of Deputy Minister of Education Mykhaylo Stepko. The working style (basically brainstorming methods) back then was new and highly effective. Unfortunately, this practice was later gradually forgotten.

Generally, "dominating trends of this decade of reforming Ukraine's higher education system were de-ideologization and demilitarization under the conditions of partial deindustrialization of the country, transfer from elite to mass education, humanization of the educational process and humanitarianization of the structure for professional training, uprise of the private sector and diversification of the funding sources".<sup>3</sup> The legislative framework for these changes was provided in the new Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* of 2002.

Unfortunately, the leaders of Ukrainian education and the lawmakers did not pay enough attention to extremely important and deep transformation process in Europe, which started several years earlier and was reflected in the Sorbonne (1998) and Bologna (1999) Declarations of the Ministers of Education and Science of the leading European countries. That is why the new Law did not contain conceptual fundamentals and instruments necessary for further development of Ukrainian education in the context of Bologna process. Moreover, a long-lasting development period, discussion and adoption of the new Law "has led to significant impact of parliamentary political compromises on its content, which caused internal controversy, preservation of a number of rudimental educational norms, and in the end, the Law was outdated from the moment of adoption".<sup>4</sup>

Jumping ahead, unfortunately, this Law was in force up until 2014, and Ukraine, already being a member of Bologna process for almost 10 years, was the only country with legislation in higher education not adjusted to current requirements and realities.

Simultaneously with the preparation of the new bill *On Higher Education* at the beginning of the new century, another important process was influencing the reform of higher education system. A new list of fields of study and majors, according to which the professionals are trained in higher education institutions at different education and qualification levels, was being developed. It more properly reflected the requirements for professionals of the Ukrainian economy. Legally this process resulted in the adoption of:

- Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 507 from 24.05.1997 *On a List of Fields of Study and Majors, according to which the Training of Professionals is Performed in Higher Education institutions at the Relevant Education and Qualification Levels*;
- the corresponding Resolution of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (No. 618 from 14.07.2004).

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<sup>3</sup> Entry of the national system of higher education into European space of higher education and scientific research: Analytical report of International Foundation for Educational Policy Research charity foundation, T. V. Finikov, head of the research group, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Despite the fact that during the following years certain changes were made in the list, it became the foundation for the development of the new higher education standards.

The new list with its quantitative indicators generally corresponded to its legal equivalents in other countries, where such lists were defined by the state. The number of fields of study for bachelor's program was close to 80 (in Poland back at that time there were about 100 fields of study), and the number of majors for specialist and master's degrees reached 340. The obvious non-compliance with foreign examples was that the list (especially in terms of fields of study) was approved on the level of the Cabinet of Ministers, which severely restricted opportunities for the timely follow-up of the needs in the labor market and making necessary amendments (for instance, in Poland the list of fields of study was approved by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, and the titles of the majors were approved by the academic board of the faculty). The following five or six years were dedicated to the development of the standards, which were finalized by 2004, approved by the corresponding Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science and were supposed to be introduced starting academic year 2005/2006.

But the plan did not fully work out. Bologna process came to Ukraine, and after the Orange Revolution the management of the line Ministry changed and decided on new priorities for higher education reforms.

### **Bologna Process and its influence on education reforms in Ukraine**

Joining the Bologna process and introducing its major goals and instruments into the national higher education system was not an easy process for Ukraine. In 1999 Ukraine missed the chance to become one of the co-founders of Bologna process simply by putting a signature. The reasons remain unknown to the wider audience. The application to join was only submitted at the Berlin Conference of Education Ministers in 2003. Unfortunately, Ukraine was not accepted immediately, that is why it had to go through a hectic preparation process for two years, which included numerous conferences, visits of "Bologna experts", active propaganda campaign in the press and on TV.

All this led to the situation where the idea of Ukraine not being ready to join Eurointegration process got stuck in the minds of the higher education leaders and HEI representatives. It was thus believed that we had to quickly fulfil a certain externally developed action plan, as without its implementation we would be unable to join the European educational and scientific community. This need to fulfil the program without its proper critical analysis and broad public discussion stayed in minds also after the Bergen Conference in 2005, when Ukraine finally joined the Bologna process. The next couple of "reform" years led to a rapid drop in education quality, disastrous bureaucratization strengthening, and persistent objection of most professors and students both to modernization activities and Bologna process in general.

Here are two examples.

In the beginning of 2005 a newly appointed Minister of Education and Science, Stanislav Nikolaienko, announced that yet another "Bologna commission" had made a remark to Ukraine saying that we have too many fields of study and majors, and that must be fixed immediately. A task was set to reduce the number of fields of study twice (!), and respectively to decrease the number of majors. To remind you, at that moment the new higher education standards had already been adopted, and many HEIs implemented internal structural reforms according to the new List. However, the decision was made and the process started. Lobbyism, protectionism, and non-transparency, which accompanied the process of "cutting", led to increasing the number of bachelor's degree programs (fields of study) to over 140, and majors to about 500. This offset the work done in previous years over developing the standards and caused their absence today. Many view this "reform" as the biggest harm to Ukraine's higher education over the last years.

The second example relates to the introduction of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which, as is known, is one of the key elements of the Bologna

process. Unexpectedly, instead of carefully studying the necessary legal framework and procedural guidelines, devising the system for training ECTS coordinators at HEI and faculty levels, officials of the Ministry of Education and Science and representatives from several universities developed and forcedly introduced (Decree of the Ministry of Education and Science No. 774 from 30.12.2005) credit-modular system of the education process (KMSoEP) in all HEIs. "Adaptation of the ECTS ideas to the system of Ukraine's higher education" was mentioned in the corresponding Temporary regulations of 2004 to make it look "European".

Nobody was stopped either by the lack of anything in common between "organization of educational process" and "transfer and accumulation of credits" or the absurdity of the "credit-modular system" term. According to ECTS glossary, a module is a kind of a synonym to course unit, while credit is a unit of measurement of module workload: a module must have associated credits. Therefore the term "credit-modular" is similar in semantic structure to "hour-timely" or "meter-lengthy". The terminology not in line with generally accepted in Bologna process was introduced. Modules started to be interpreted as a time measure: breaking semester into two modules; the new term "content module" as part of a subject appeared; content modules started to be assessed independently; it became possible to get a mark for the term without taking it. There appeared universities where it is possible to graduate with honours without having even once passed an exam to a professor. There is no point in even mentioning the mayhem of bureaucratization which accompanied the process of "ECTS ideas adaptation": all professors, for instance, remember the requirement to put marks into the academic transcripts in three scales at once — institutional 100-point, national 4-point and ECTS scale (7 grades). Individual protests were stopped from the top with the statement about "improving higher education quality, competitiveness of the graduates and prestige of the national higher education", and the most important thing — "requirements of the Bologna process".

The KMSoEP appeared to be extremely enduring. Even the introduction of the real ECTS by new heads of the Ministry of Education and Science in 2009 did not change the situation. Moreover, Decree of the Ministry of Science and Education No. 943 from 16.10.2009 *On the Introduction of ECTS* had no mention regarding the KMSoEP. For this reason, the universities continued using KMSoEP, convinced that this is the ECTS. Only in September 2014, the Decree of the Ministry of Science and Education No. 1050 cancelled compulsory use of the KMSoEP, and corresponding explanation set the record straight.<sup>5</sup>

Problems also accompanied the introduction of other instruments of Bologna process — Diploma Supplement, the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), recognition of foreign qualifications, providing HEIs with academic autonomy etc.

It is, therefore, no wonder that the Ukrainian higher education system is still lagging behind the European Higher Education Area in terms of the level of real ECTS implementation, the introduction of competency-based approach and using learning outcomes while developing and implementing study programs.

The situation started to gradually improve in 2009. ECTS was introduced officially, a new concept of learning programs diversification on master's level appeared, a new bill on higher education, which had to take into account the reality of Bologna process was in development. But another change of leaders in the Ministry of Education and Science led to yet another change of priorities for higher education development, especially in the context of its regulatory environment.

In the beginning of 2010, those who were carefully studying priorities of reforming higher education declared in the program of economic reforms of the President of Ukraine, had their hopes up. Increasing financial independence of HEIs, development of a national system of quality assurance, legalization of endowment institute, profiling of educational programs and other relevant matters were mentioned among others. But real actions of Ministry of Education and

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<sup>5</sup> [http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art\\_id=247627082&cat\\_id=248446171](http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=247627082&cat_id=248446171).

Science quickly demonstrated that it is clearly too early for universities to hope for autonomy, introduction of a modern funding system, change of the education paradigm. Everything was done towards strengthening centralization, which was reflected in notorious draft law *On Higher Education* by MPs S. Kivalov, M. Soroka, H. Kaletnik.

Promotion of this bill followed the methods known back from the Soviet days. A meeting of the educators, who were chosen according to their loyalty to the governing bodies, in October 2011 with active pressure from the leaders of the Ministry of Education and Science showed support for the bill. But they could not ignore the negative reaction of many academic groups, students, international and national experts. And “resolved unanimously” definitely did not fit into the proclaimed presidential concept of reforms. For this reason, alternative Law drafts by the opposition and by the representative of the President in the Parliament appeared. As a result, Prime Minister had to create an independent working group under the supervision of Professor Mykhaylo Zgurovskiy, Rector of NTUU Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, for developing a new bill which would be supported by all parties.

However, heads of the Ministry of Education and other ministries continued to resist deregulation in higher education. The situation became a stalemate and only Revolution of Dignity resolved it. But this is a topic for a different discussion.

To ensure objectivity it is worth mentioning that during 2011–2013 there were also certain achievements, namely National Qualification Framework, adopted in 2011, development and publication of modern educational glossary, visible development of academic mobility. The Ministry of Education and Science was imposing substantial pressure on HEIs with the aim of developing their internationalization.

## **Conclusion**

Summing up the period of reforming higher education in Ukraine from 1991 to 2013, we can say the following: despite certain successes (Ukraine formally joined European Higher Education Area, certain instruments of the Bologna process were introduced, different aspects of internationalization of individual HEIs and higher education system, in general, grew stronger), education and science in Ukraine were not united, the third cycle of higher education (compatible with European programs of doctoral education) was not introduced, the idea of ECTS and competent-based approach did not get inside the process of creation and implementation of study programs, academic autonomy stayed a dream, no real steps for assuring higher education quality were taken. The gap between the Ukrainian national higher education system and EHEA was on the rise.

## Chapter 3

# What has been achieved by the third anniversary of the new Law on Higher Education?

**Yevhen Nikolaiev**

### Introduction

The overall context of current large-scale changes in the Ukrainian higher education is designated by the process of implementing the provisions of the new version of the relevant law that came into force in fall 2014.<sup>6</sup> As of the middle of 2017, some novelties inscribed in it were already implemented; work on the implementation of the reform in several areas defined by law continues; implementation of some of the provisions is actively sabotaged. New challenges for higher education have arisen, and the current legislation has not yet provided a clear answer to them.

This chapter offers an overview and a brief expert evaluation of the main areas where implementation of the provisions of a new version of Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* is taking place.

### New educational standards

One of the most prominent innovations of the law is the modernization of approach towards creating standards of higher education. The Law *On higher education* states that "Standards of higher education are developed for every level of higher education within every major according to National Qualifications Framework...". They will include, among all else, a list of competencies of the graduate, outcomes of learning for a certain major and other components defined by the methodology of standards preparation.<sup>7</sup>

Peculiarities of the new vision of the content of higher education standards:

- from now on the higher education standards will be developed not only for students but also for post-graduates;
- it is forbidden to define in the standards the concrete subjects and their credits, which the students (postgraduates) have to study, as this issue is now transferred to the autonomous competence of the HEIs;
- prominent misunderstandings and difficulties are caused by the issue of defining the content of competencies, which listeners of specific study programs obtain, formalization of the learning outcomes and corresponding indices, defining what subjects are aimed at creating certain competencies in students.

Transition to new standards of higher education calls for a review of the majors in which the students are trained: cut their number, and instead expand each of them. Before 2015 the master's students, for example, could choose among over 600 officially adopted majors.<sup>8</sup> As a

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<sup>6</sup> Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* from 01.07.2014 No. 1556-VII. <http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1556-18>.

<sup>7</sup> Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*, article 10; Resolution of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine from 01.06.2016 No. 600 *On Approval and Implementation of Methodological Recommendations regarding Higher Education Standards Development*. <http://old.mon.gov.ua/ua/about-ministry/normative/5555->.

<sup>8</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 27.08.2010 No. 787 *On Approval of List of Fields of Study, in which Training of Specialist and Master's Program Professionals is Performed* (ceased to be in force). <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/787-2010-n>.

result of adopting the new list of majors and making certain amendments to it, as of 01.04.2017 one can get a degree in 121 majors<sup>9</sup> in Ukraine, which are the same for all levels of higher education (bachelor's, master's, doctorate).

This gives the universities an opportunity to get a license with a broader major and offer it in the framework of several different areas of study, which do not require getting an additional license (but the accreditation will be required, as it allows to issue a state-recognized diploma). However, this democratic novelty faced a lot of resistance, associated with the concerns of individual departments about "not finding their place" in the new list of majors and getting closed. Sometimes the problems really existed (for instance, degrees in geography and paediatrics "fell out" of the first version of the new list of majors). However, in most of the cases, resistance to "broad" fields of study was caused by the unwillingness of the teaching staff to compete in line with the criteria of the learning programs quality and attempts to instead lobby inclusion of their "narrow" field of study into the new list.

At the moment of writing this text, the new higher education standards for different fields of study are on different preparation stages, for more details see chapter 5 of this publication.

Creating a modern system of internal and external higher education quality assurance is closely connected to the development of new training standards, which is foreseen in the new edition of the *Law On Higher Education*. Other chapters of this publication are dedicated to the detailed analysis of this issue.

### **Steps towards academic and financial autonomy of universities**

Alongside the right to freely form educational specializations within licensed fields of study and independently fill these programs with subjects, Ukrainian universities gained other rights that increase their academic autonomy.

For example, the practice of "stamping" (official approval of quality, which was given by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine) university textbooks is cancelled. This procedure did not fulfil its function but caused procedural complications and additional expenses for authors. HEIs professors received a right to officially apply for and go on long-term educational trips, which expands academic mobility. HEIs will on their own recognize ("nostrificate") diplomas acquired by their staff, postgraduates, PhD students in foreign educational institutions, this procedure became much simpler. At the same time, such issues as hiring administrative staff and professors or, for example, rules for admission of applicants remain regulated by the state. The reporting system of the universities to the Ministry remains very bulky.

Academic autonomy in the area of higher education has to go hand-in-hand with financial autonomy. Unfortunately, since 2014 only one tangible innovation was introduced in the area of university finances (aside from changing rules of assigning scholarships, which does not have to do with the financial stability of the educational institutions). Universities obtained a right to open current accounts not only in the State Treasury but also in the state banks. This way technical obstacles to making payments are getting smaller. The opportunity of creating financial funds (endowments) by universities is enacted by legislation but is not implemented due to the lack of resources in Ukrainian economy to fill such funds.

However, officials declared the intention to change the funding principles in higher education. In 2015 a draft on a new system of HEIs funding was developed, but as of May 2017, it has not been adopted. The draft funding scheme suggests the following innovations:

- the state guarantees the HEIs funding of their educational activities from the state budget in the volume of 80% compared to previous year;

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<sup>9</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine from 29.04.2015 No. 266 *On Approval of List of Fields of Study and Majors in which HEIs Students are Trained*. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/266-2015-n>.

- an HEI can receive additional budget funds for educational activities if it will demonstrate high performance according to the chosen set of indicators;
- as a result, state funding of unsuccessful HEIs will decrease by 20% compared to previous year, until it completely disappears, while successful HEIs will receive additional budget funds;
- creation and provision of separate funds for capital and social expenditures of HEIs is foreseen: over the last years the state did not fund capital expenditures of the HEIs; it is suggested to allocate funds for students' scholarships into the separate fund and transfer its administration to the Ministry of Social Policy.

However, the destiny of this draft is currently unclear, since "developing the concept of higher education funding reform" is mentioned as a task for the IV quarter of 2017 in the recently adopted plan of priority actions of the government.<sup>10</sup>

### **Insufficient managerial changes**

The new Law changed the rules which regulate procedure and requirements regarding appointment to administrative positions in HEIs. According to the new rules:

- one person cannot occupy two administrative positions at once (rector, vice-rector, dean, head of the department);
- positions of rector, dean and head of the department are elective;
- one person taking an administrative position is limited by two terms, five years for each term;
- rector of the HEI is elected to the position through direct elections, where all educational research fellows and representatives of other staff and students of HEI can participate.

These changes, obviously, are aimed at an alteration of management verticals, created over many years by the same heads of numerous HEIs, at broader access to managerial positions, democratization of this component of universities' lives.

However, they appeared to be insufficient for the full achievement of these goals, as:

- we will be able to determine the results of limiting the number of terms for the same administrative position in HEIs only in 5–10 years;
- the algorithm of democratic rector elections by staff often leads to "conservative" candidate winning — the one who does not offer active HEI modernization program. A prominent and well-known case is the example of Eduard Rubin, who fulfilled the duties of the rector of the Kharkiv National University of Radioelectronics for over a year, attracted impressive international investments to university, cut the amount of corruption in the institution etc. However, (with involvement of the Ministry of Education and Science, which was actively against Mr Rubin winning and was not letting him participate in elections, which was appealed to court) he lost rector elections to the representatives of the previous management of this institution;
- there still exists an official requirement about scientific and teaching background of the candidates for administrative positions in HEIs, them having an academic degree and/or an academic rank. This makes potential management of a university or a faculty by a successful business representative, who could actively modernize educational institution, impossible or quite complicated;

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<sup>10</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 275-p from 03.04.2017 *On Approval of Medium-Term Plan of Priority Actions for the Government till 2020 and Plan of Priority Actions for the Government for 2017*. <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/cardnpd?docid=249935442>.

- rectors have the majority of the powers that have to do with HEI management in their hands: for example, a decision of an academic board, which could act as a counterbalance to a rector, is given effect only by order of a rector, hence, cannot come into force without his personal consent. Currently, no ways of solving the problem of rectors' "mini-feudalism" have been suggested. There was a suggestion to create a position of the independent "financial secretary" of the HEI, who will be appointed by the Ministry of Education and Science, with financial powers delegated to them. However, such step according to Viktor Ohnevyuk, rector of one of the universities in Kyiv,<sup>11</sup> will create conflicts between two "co-heads" of the HEI, will only make the problem worse, instead of solving it.

### **New rules of awarding academic degrees**

Ukraine has a double system of formal recognition of the scientists' and professors' achievements. Besides the opportunity of defending two theses (Candidate of Sciences/PhD and Doctor of Sciences), the professors and researchers are aspiring to obtain two official academic degrees (the first one is of docent or senior researcher, the second one — of a full professor). Staying unique for the post-Soviet area, the system of official academic degrees plays both status and financial role (there is a law-guaranteed payment bonus in addition to the fixed salary for an academic degree).

The suggestion to cancel awarding official academic degrees because this practice does not exist in developed countries stays unimplemented. Instead in 2015 new requirements for applicants regarding award of an academic degree were developed, and implemented in the beginning of 2016. These requirements are more complicated and expensive for the degree-seeking person, as among others they presuppose:

- having an international certificate of English language of a level not lower than B2 in line with European Recommendation on Language Education (the price of exam begins at \$100, the price for preparing varies a lot, while the average salary of a Ukrainian professor is \$200–250 per month);
- persons seeking a professor degree can submit articles in English instead of certificate;
- having two or three research articles in journals that are indexed in scientometrical Scopus or Web of Science databases (Ukrainian researchers, especially in social and humanitarian studies, mostly do not know how to prepare articles in the format that complies with the requirements of high-quality international journals, where the publication is free of charge, whereas publication in low-quality journals, which are indexed in the above-mentioned databases, is expensive);
- internship, study or work experience in HEI of one of the OECD or EU member countries.

The obvious goal of the given criteria is expanding international network of Ukrainian educators. These requirements were met both with approval (taking into account focus on improving the international competitiveness of Ukrainian researchers),<sup>12</sup> and criticism (due to financial redundancy, the absence of such requirements for those who obtained academic degree earlier, discrimination of persons who have command of a different foreign language other than English).<sup>13</sup> From the beginning of March 2017, the requirements were somewhat relaxed. It is allowed to provide the certificate, proving the command of the official language of any EU

<sup>11</sup> <http://vnz.org.ua/novyny/osvita/10034-rektory-proty-vidminy-yih-odnoosibnogo-keruvannja-v-universytetah>

<sup>12</sup> Khalavka Yu. Docent is not as scary as it sounds. *Ukrainska Pravda*: Zhyttia, 01.09.2016. <https://life.pravda.com.ua/columns/2016/09/1/217490/>

<sup>13</sup> Nikolaiev Ye. How should academic degrees be awarded in Ukraine? — Kyiv : European Information and Research Center, August 2016. 48 p. <http://euinfocenter.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/28990.pdf>.

member country or substitute it with other certificates, connected with usage of foreign language, or submit a certain amount of research articles, written in foreign language. The number of required "international" research articles is decreased from three for professor degree and from two for associate professor and senior researcher to two and one article respectively.

New requirements quite obviously had a negative impact on the number of new academic degrees obtained. How strong was this impact? Table 3.1 shows the drop in the number of "awardees" of the academic degree during the first year of the new requirements of ten (for the "senior" degree of full professor) to forty (for the "junior" degrees) times compared to the pattern of the previous years. The questions arise, as to why in 2016 the number of professor degrees obtained was almost the same as docent degrees, while in the previous years there were 5 new docents for each full professor. Such questions are helpful for justification of ways for further improvement of the academic degree awarding system, and the answers to them require additional research.

Table 3.1. **Number of the academic degree recipients in 2012–2016**

Academic degree	Number of the received academic degrees, persons						Recipients of degrees in 2016 compared to avg. for 2012–15
	2012	2013	2014	2015*	average for 2012–2015	2016**	
full professor	701	727	959	1427	953	104	10,9%
docent	3562	3618	4127	6124	4357	109	2,5%
senior researcher***	322	378	324	722	436	18	4,1%
Total	4585	4723	5410	8273	5747	231	4,0%

\* Including persons, who were awarded academic degree by the Ministry of Education and Science on 25.02.2016 according to the "old" rules.

\*\* Academic degrees awarded according to the "new" rules over the 12-months period from May 2016 till April 2017 both inclusive.

\*\*\* Name before 2015 — "senior research fellow".

The table is drawn according to the published decrees of the Ministry of Education and Science on awarding academic degrees. Minor inaccuracies are possible due to the monotonous process of mechanical calculation. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine reports in letter No. 1/11-10997 from 12.08.2016 about the number of the obtainers of professor degree in 2012–2015 higher by 6–9% compared to the data in the table.

### **Postgraduate education according to European rules**

Beginning fall 2016 Ukraine has started admission of postgraduates — future Doctors of Philosophy, and not candidates of science — in line with the new structured educational programs. This step changes the training of young scientists from the post-Soviet to the modern European rules.

Training of candidates of science in post-soviet postgraduate programs offered a small (sometimes formal or bogus) training program for a postgraduate student in three subjects of the "candidate minimum" (philosophy, foreign language, and major subject) and conducting research in the form of a thesis. Structured educational programs for the training of philosophy doctors according to "Western" standards were first introduced by Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (NaUKMA) in Ukraine in 2006–2008 with the assistance of European Commission TEMPUS/Tacis program. Based on the outcomes of learning and thesis defence in the Doctoral School, NaUKMA

issues its own Diploma, which is recognized abroad, but until recently was outside Ukrainian legal field.<sup>14</sup>

This system underwent changes. From now on education for obtaining PhD degree presupposes:

- the need for higher education institution or academic institution to get a license for its postgraduate programs;
- prohibition to defend the PhD thesis without studying in the postgraduate program (there is an exception only for HEI professors and research staff members), which will lessen the possibility of theses defence by persons not involved in the scientific process (public officials, politicians, businessmen etc.). As a rule, such persons defend a thesis that was ghostwritten on a by-order basis for them;
- the presence of the educational component of postgraduates training in the amount of 30–60 ECTS credits (an equivalent of one to two full semesters of education). The content of educational component will be defined by decision of the institution with operating postgraduate programs, considering future standards of higher education;
- opportunity of defending PhD thesis in one-time boards, gathered especially for this defense, which in general complies with international practice (however, regulatory creation of such board is controversial as of today, as, for example, the thesis committee will include both “official opponents”, who will study the text of the thesis, and several researchers, who are not obliged to read the thesis text);
- the Ministry of Education and Science plans to create a special national online repository (internet-archive), where all theses defended in Ukraine will be saved and (possibly) will be available on open access, with the exception of classified works;
- extending the duration of postgraduate programs from three to four years;
- university or academic institution will award PhD degree on its own, this decision will not require approval from the public authority (before 2010 this function was fulfilled by the Higher Attestation Commission of Ukraine; in 2010 the Higher Attestation Commission was dissolved, and approval of corresponding decisions was delegated to the Department for Staff Attestation of the relevant ministry, formed mainly from the staff of the ex- Higher Attestation Commission).

At the same time, there are quite a few tasks on the agenda, which have to be implemented for raising the quality of all postgraduate programs in Ukraine to a decent level. In my opinion, they are the following:

- eliminating corruption factors in the procedures of theses defence;
- providing a reliably high level of knowledge of the leading foreign languages (English and others) by young Ukrainian scientists and university professors;
- a fundamental change of currently acting requirements to postgraduates’ publications regarding the need to be printed in the Ukrainian so-called “approved by the Ministry” scientific journals, where usually low-quality or no-quality research articles are published, since most of these journals do not conduct a peer review of submitted papers;
- simplification of incredibly complicated thesis technical requirements, which are incompatible with international rules and traditions, for text layout, lists of references (this is already partially implemented);
- introducing an effective, rather than a declarative policy of plagiarism prevention in research; development of operational sanctions system;

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<sup>14</sup> Nikolaiev Ye. How can Ukraine create a modern system for training Doctors of Philosophy? Kyiv, European Information and Research Center, p. 11.

<http://euinfocenter.rada.gov.ua/uploads/documents/28851.pdf>.

- making a shorter list of documents and procedures necessary for thesis defence, which have nothing to do with its scientific value (namely, certificates of the implementation of the research results, abstract of the thesis and its reviews, taking shorthand notes during thesis defence, paid publication of the official announcement about thesis defence);
- opportunity to prepare thesis research only in the English language, without the Ukrainian version (attempts to include this option into regulatory documents are facing active resistance from certain stakeholders);
- providing international academic mobility (several months of the internships abroad) as a compulsory component of postgraduate training;
- implementing most of the European principles for postgraduates training, set forth in Salzburg I,<sup>15</sup> 2005 and Salzburg II,<sup>16</sup> 2010 recommendations.

### **Briefly about other issues**

Recently there have been plenty of less notable but no less important trends in higher education.

Namely, the notion of academic integrity did not exist in Ukrainian academic discussions prior to 2015, but now it is already "loud". Information field and academic environment are full of events dedicated to the promotion of academic integrity, pressure on officials in whose theses plagiarism was detected, the creation of the negative attitude to this phenomenon. There are round tables, trainings and conferences on these issues, all these are paving the way towards the improvement of education and science area. Unfortunately, now one can sense certain unwillingness or fear of the line ministry to actively join these discussions and events.

The student community is sometimes ignored, but sometimes it gets active and achieves solutions for the most critical issues of its educational institution. The most remarkable conflicts due to this are mentioned in another chapter of this publication, while I would like to draw attention to the potential aggravation of disputes between the student self-government bodies and student unions. The new law raised the status of the student self-government, made their creation in HEIs compulsory, provided them with advisory functions and guarantees (unlike decisions of the administration of separate HEIs) certain financial support of their activities. At the same time, when student self-government receives officially recognized status, there is a question about the role and meaning of student unions, which according to the law are not considered student self-government bodies. On the level of the first argument, a union is an instrument of collective protection of the employee rights in behalf of an employer. However, HEI is not the employer of its students. The second problem here is the widespread practice of professors or other older persons becoming heads of the student unions, basically removing students from the control of their own organization. The third problem is that conflicts between two structures are not theoretic, but rather unavoidable. For example, in my university there already was quite a serious conflict between the student union and student academic council on the grounds of sharing powers, areas of work and financial flows. Thus, the issue of modernizing the logics of student unions awaits its denotation on the reform agenda.

Beginning 2017 the new rules for scholarships allocation are in force. Now to receive academic scholarship it is not necessary to get average "good" grade at the end-of-term exam, without "unsatisfactory" grades, but get to the top of the ranking of academic performance among all the students of one's faculty and course year. Internal university civic activities add points. The

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<sup>15</sup> Doctoral Programmes for the European Knowledge Society: Final Report of the European University Association.

[http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Doctoral\\_Programmes\\_Project\\_Report.1129285328581.pdf](http://www.eua.be/eua/jsp/en/upload/Doctoral_Programmes_Project_Report.1129285328581.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Salzburg II Recommendations. European Universities' Achievements since 2005 in Implementing the Salzburg Principles. [http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/Salzburg\\_II\\_Recommendations](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/publications-homepage-list/Salzburg_II_Recommendations).

amount of the scholarship has increased from 810 to 1100–1450 UAH (\$40–55) per month, while the number of scholarship receivers was reduced approximately to half. Now the student cannot forecast receiving a scholarship for the next semester, no matter how good they are at studying.

The specialist's degree, which mainly duplicated master's degree is cancelled. Diplomas of these two degrees had identical official status. On the other hand, despite the international practice, Bachelor's diploma is not perceived as completed higher education, and there is no progress regarding this issue.

## **Conclusion**

Despite a widespread opinion, higher education area is undergoing substantial changes. The legal innovations created in this area in 2014 are not always implemented as we desire them to be. However, changes in one of the most conservative spheres of life can be rapid only under a strictly authoritarian political regime. The current reform has the opposite logics of gradual refusal from the intense pressure of authorities on education.

What is next? There is a narrow and a broad agenda.

Narrow agenda in higher education is a soft compromise among all of the stakeholders and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, where the ministry has decided to avoid tough areas of work. This agenda is mentioned in the government action plan as an intention during 2017 to approve the newly developed educational standards, create internet archive of the academic texts and theses (this is mainly a technical issue and not a political one), increase the scale of using external entrance exam while applying for Master's in Law program and (again?) develop (but not to approve and implement!) a concept for funding reform in higher education.

The Ministry of Education and Science sees only one goal in the area of higher education till 2020 — assuring its quality. This goal is vaguely described as "creation of new learning programs according to the new standards of higher education; increasing level and optimizing the results of scientific and academic activities, supporting the process of establishment of the academic integrity of higher education institutions and academic institutions", which "is in line with goals of the Association Agreement" of Ukraine and European Union.<sup>17</sup>

The broad agenda includes solving other problems. The practicality of the state funding for pseudo-universities, which do not assure the minimum level of education quality; selling marks; unacceptable living conditions in many of the dormitories. Excessive massification of the higher education (according to the data by World Bank, Ukraine is number seven in Europe and number 14 in the world in the percentage of students among the whole population of the corresponding age group). The result is having a student status and later obtaining a diploma by tens of thousands of people, who cannot study at least on the minimum level. Minimum scale of attracting foreign grant resources in higher education and almost complete lack of Ukrainian funds and grant programs in this area should be addressed, etc.

Finally, the country manages to implement a public and professional vision of the future development of university education in a conceptually new law roughly once in ten years. We have already covered almost a third part of another cycle. Presently, from the middle of this ten-year cycle, the establishment of the principles for the next absolutely different steps in education will commence.

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<sup>17</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 275-p from 03.04.2017 *On Approval...*

## Chapter 4

# Internal quality assurance system in Ukrainian higher education: adopting the European Standards and Guidelines

**Oleksandr Dluhopolskyi**

### Introduction

In the context of painful but inevitable reforms in Ukrainian higher education, its quality, which was not attracting special attention for quite a while, becomes crucial. Constant competition between both Ukrainian and international HEIs for the students, demographic crisis and low life quality of the majority of Ukrainian citizens inspire universities to look the internationally tested and modern of improving the learning process and activities. The strategic goal of Ukrainian universities today must be the creation of efficient internal systems of quality assurance, which would aim at constantly improving education quality and activities in HEIs.

### European guidelines on the internal system of higher education quality assurance

According to the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)<sup>18</sup> adopted at the Ministerial conference in Yerevan on May 14–15, 2015, standards and guidelines regarding internal quality assurance cover 10 key blocks, provided in table 4.1.

### Ukrainian context of higher education quality assurance

Let us analyse the compliance with these guidelines of the present system of Ukrainian higher education in the context of developing its internal system of quality assurance.

Considering the first guideline — policy for quality assurance — we should acknowledge that in most HEIs in Ukraine function formal systems of quality assurance in the form of commissions, supervised by the authorised executives (heads or relevant vice-rectors). However, not all of the stakeholders take upon themselves the duties of quality assurance. There exist problems of compliance with guidelines of academic integrity and eliminating manifestations of academic cheating, providing autonomy of the professors from administrative pressure, desire to preserve the existing status quo and corrupt&lobbying balance, exclude the “dissenters” from managerial vertical of the education institutions etc. External stakeholders are often not involved in the development of the study programs, as the desire of most heads of HEIs to keep the “old staff” defeats the desire to provide students with quality education and modern competencies, relevant both for the European and Ukrainian markets.

The second guideline — design and approval of study programs — is not yet implemented either. This delay is caused by mostly low quality of teaching staff in many HEIs, the unwillingness of many professors to develop their skills for working in new conditions, with new students, under new challenges for higher education system. Also crucial are fear of changes, the passivity of students about standing for their right to quality education, as well as the unwillingness of many heads of the HEIs to implement a real selective component of study programs, which can promote competition between the subjects and the professors, but, naturally, requires additional expenses.

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<sup>18</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). 2015. Brussels, Belgium.

**Table 4.1. Internal quality assurance in higher education according to European Standards and Guidelines<sup>19</sup>**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Components</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Guidelines</b>
1.	Policy for quality assurance	Publicity is the integral part of institutions' strategic management. Cooperation of internal and external stakeholders	Policy should reflect the relationship between research, learning, and teaching, take into account the national and institutional context, support quality culture
2.	Design and approval of programs	Meeting the objectives set for the programs and achieving planned learning outcomes (qualifications)	Study programs should be at the core of the higher educations' teaching mission, connected with teaching, providing students with academic knowledge and necessary skills
3.	Student-centered learning, teaching and assessment	Encouraging students to take an active role in creating the learning process, reflecting this in the assessment of students	Stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process, transparency of the assessment of learning outcomes.
4.	Student admission, progression, recognition and certification	Pre-defined and published regulations covering all phases of the student "life cycle"	Transparency of access policies and admission criteria, introduction of the tools to collect and monitor information on student progress, recognition of non-formal and informal learning
5.	Teaching staff	Assurance of the competence of the teachers, application of fair and transparent processes for the recruitment and development of the staff	The teacher's role is essential in creating high-quality student experience, enabling the acquisition of knowledge, competencies, and skills
6.	Learning resources and student support	Having appropriate funding for learning and teaching activities, ensuring adequate and accessible learning resources, student support	Physical (IT-infrastructure, libraries, study facilities) and human (counsellors, advisors) resources are of particular importance for student support in learning
7.	Information management	Collecting, analysing and using relevant information for the effective management of programs and other activities	Reliable data is crucial for informed decision-making. Students and staff should be equally involved in providing, analysing and planning follow-up activities
8.	Public information	Publishing accurate, objective, clear, up-to-date and readily accessible information about the activities, including programmes	Providing information about programs, admission selection criteria, intended learning outcomes, qualifications, procedures, assessment, opportunities for graduate employment
9.	On-going monitoring and periodic review of programs	Institutions should monitor and periodically review programs to ensure that they achieve their objectives and guarantee their continuous improvement	Creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students involves assessment of the study programs content, students' workload, needs of society, expectations, students' satisfaction, their achievements
10.	Cyclical external quality assurance	Institutions should undergo external quality assurance in line with the ESG on a cyclical basis	External quality assurance is aimed at verifying internal quality assurance, catalyzation of quality and permanent changes

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

The third guideline — student-centered learning, teaching and assessment — is often declared as the main mission of universities. However, it is still far from actual implementation. Institutions do not take into account the difference in applicants' skills and during the first year of learning they often do not run corrective courses on key subjects, do not offer various ways for assuring quality learning services for students with different needs and requirements, rarely use different teaching methods in work with students aiming at developing not only hard skill but also soft skills. High level of power distance, typical for Ukrainian society in general, reflects on "teacher-student" relationship, and quite often students are afraid to make requests for quality learning services, objective assessment of the teaching team of the HEIs, which also influences the level of mutual respect between teachers and students. While in American educational system a teacher has to get attention and respect of the students, the Ukrainian higher education system often continues to use practices of the Soviet model, when it is almost impossible to substitute or fire an incompetent professor, as their employment and career growth is most likely based on personal connections and conformity, rather than on competitiveness of competencies and knowledge.

The fourth guideline — student admission, progression, recognition and certification — is implemented on a low level, as there still exist:

- non-transparent University application procedures, when applying for senior courses after college and for master's degree programs after bachelor's,
- indifference of the academic staff of the HEI regarding providing objective assessment of students, recognition of their abilities and achievements,
- creation of artificial barriers to students' and teachers' mobility by many administrators of the local HEIs etc.

The fifth guideline — good teaching staff — is a painful issue for the local education system. For quite a long time, as a heritage of the Soviet staff recruitment system, a lot less attention was paid to quality criteria for the university staff than to criteria of cronyism or bribery during recruitment and career promotion. Students' feedback about the intellectual level of the professors, quality of lectures and seminars, relevance or irrelevance of certain subjects, competence level in languages and modern teaching methods, corruption were barely considered by heads of the HEIs. Higher education system was built in such a way that academic degrees (hence, the right to work as a professor) were often awarded not to the real researchers, but rather to "diploma-seekers" who had good acquaintances in education institutions, or to "businessmen in science" who could fund both the defense, as well as writing and further follow-up of the academic thesis. In these conditions, HEI staff and real researchers had to undergo "organizational terror" of formalism and bureaucracy in order to be awarded an academic degree. Frequently the procedure of thesis defence took much longer and was a more resource-consuming period (in every meaning of this word) than writing the thesis itself. And the system, when anything and anyone could for money be pushed to defence, deprived the scientists of motivation for research activities. Their place was occupied by businessmen, officials and other "seekers" of academic pensions and benefits, who could not be the scientific elite of the country. In addition, there was no point in thinking about the competitiveness of Ukrainian professors in the European or North-American education area.<sup>20</sup>

All of this undermined professors' motivation for work, students' motivation for learning and in the end led to substantial reputation losses in Ukrainian higher education system in general. In these conditions not only do the political elites try to send their children to study abroad, but the middle-class is also looking for opportunities to provide their offsprings with quality education under complicated economic conditions. And unfortunately, quality is a trait of foreign HEIs, not

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<sup>20</sup> Hallak J., Poisson M. *Corrupt Schools, Corrupt Universities: What can be done?* Paris: UNESCO publishing, 2014. 356 p.; *Monitoring the Integration of Ukrainian Higher Education System into the European Higher Education and Research Area: Analytical Report* / Edited by Finikov T., Sharov. O. Kyiv: Takson, 2014. 144 p.

the local ones, as care about the reputation, transparency, honesty and other characteristics is generally not typical for Ukrainian higher education. Despite enormous challenges, most universities do not put their reputation first. They appeal to the problems with obtaining non-state funding, an ongoing decrease in the number of students, the need to preserve academic staff despite constant cuts in the budget, need to teach anyone who is capable of paying during the crisis, difficult working conditions for teaching team in HEI etc.

The sixth guideline — learning resources and student support — is related to acknowledgement of the specifics of learning in different student groups (from MBA-program students, foreigners to distance learning programs and full-time study). Not all university administrations are conscious that lecturers for bachelor's programs cannot teach on a sufficiently professional level at master's programs. For example, in business studies, it is necessary to get the practitioners involved in designing the study program or, even better, invite them to work with the students in classrooms. Also, we have problems with access to relevant English-language academic literature, as under budget cuts universities "save" on expenses for prepayments for foreign literature. Operating English-language programs for foreign students is difficult because the level of command of English is insufficient in many Ukrainian universities.

Ukraine is attracting more international students. In 2011, 53664 foreign students chose Ukrainian universities. Four years later, we had 63906 students from 148 countries.<sup>21</sup> The number of the foreigners who study in Ukraine in the English and Russian languages has been gradually decreasing. Between the 2014/2015 and 2015/2016 academic years, the number of foreign students who study in Ukrainian increased by almost 33%, and in Russian and English — decreased by 25 and 7% respectively.<sup>22</sup> A strategy for increasing the total number of the foreign students in Ukraine and simultaneous diversification of their countries of origin requires improving the quality of study programs, materials and facilities, and investments in academic staff. Administrations of most Ukrainian universities lack the understanding that quality requires investments. Thus, British universities spend 20 to 25% of their budget on supporting quality assurance system.<sup>23</sup> Whereas most of the rectors in Ukrainian HEIs consider this work to be either volunteering or civic duty and do not provide any resources for its support.

The seventh guideline — information management — is related to creating adequate indicators of HEI activities assessment in different areas, such as assessment of the enrolled students, learning outcomes, satisfaction with study programs and learning process, expelled students. And if HEI administration, for the most part, has all the information, evaluates the efficiency of institutions' activities from time to time, the problems arise in reacting to the detected problems, closing this information from the public, unwillingness to "air the dirty laundry in public" etc. Many university websites do not provide full information about peculiarities of learning, detailed description of programs and subjects; specifically, it is not provided in English.

The eighth guideline — public information — is the most problematic one. In Ranking of Universities Transparency 2016 from CEDOS, out of maximum 100 points, the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy received 72,2 points, Kyiv Polytechnic Institute — 67, National University of Life and Environmental Sciences — 66,8.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the vast majority of 168 universities received around 30 points, which shows the intransparency of information in many universities, especially in terms of financial transparency, availability of the strategic plan for the development of HEI on the website and information about the educational content.<sup>25</sup> Results of student surveys

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<sup>21</sup> Current Statistical and Analytical Data of Educational Services for Foreigners in Ukraine. <http://www.studyinukraine.gov.ua>.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Quality, equity, sustainability: the future of higher education regulation: Report of the Universities UK Regulation Tasks and Finish Group. Universities UK, 2015. 46 p.

<sup>24</sup> Universities Transparency Ranking 2016. <http://www.cedos.org.ua/uk/ranking-16>.

<sup>25</sup> National Universities Transparency Ranking. Kyiv, Center for Society Research, 2014. 34 p. [http://cedos.org.ua/ckeditor\\_assets/attachments/ranking/zvit.pdf](http://cedos.org.ua/ckeditor_assets/attachments/ranking/zvit.pdf).

regarding the level of teaching are also not taken into account by many universities during the development of the new and relevant courses, staff management policy, as is the case, for example, in the USA or Poland. Rankings of the academic staff are rarely published on the websites, as signing contracts in Ukrainian universities in most cases is a non-transparent procedure, and loyalty to the administration is still valued more than professionalism. There is no point in talking about bonuses for the best university professors, as only a few Ukrainian HEIs use such mechanism of increasing motivation for quality work.

The ninth guideline — on-going monitoring and periodic review of programs — is also in most cases a mere formality in Ukraine. As mentioned above, the quality of both students and teaching staff mostly is not high. Therefore the courses based on scientific research are rare. Effectiveness and objectiveness of students' evaluation are undermined by "phone law", which is often used by heads of department, deans, directors of the institutes and other representatives of universities administration who impose pressure on professors, forcing them to violate academic integrity principles. Study programs get updated in a small number of universities at the request of external and internal stakeholders. These universities have found their place in the competitive environment, especially due to the absence of guaranteed state support.

The tenth guideline — constant external quality assurance — provides for the creation of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance. The Agency would be independent from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, it will have powers for creating requirements for the higher education quality assurance system, developing requirements for accreditation of all study programs, analysis of educational activities quality in universities, conducting licensing expertise, creating criteria for assessing quality of educational activities, including scientific achievements of Ukrainian HEIs, according to which their ranking can be defined etc.<sup>26</sup> Despite the fact that in 2015–2016 there were numerous scandals related to the reputation of certain representatives and heads of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, in 2017 the state budget funds the Agency for 12,6m UAH (about \$500k) to ensure its activities.<sup>27</sup> Numerous European agencies (for example, the Polish Accreditation Committee — PKA, Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education — NOKUT) perform functions similar to the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance in Ukraine.

If we analyse higher education quality assurance systems in the majority of Ukrainian universities today, then we can state that all of them encounter resistance from the present power hierarchy, the model of assigning positions based on personal connections, paternalism, etc. This will last until the moment when the students, being the consumers of educational services, start demanding quality education and rating the value of competencies higher than the value of a diploma. Competition for students already forces HEIs to differently assess the importance of international cooperation compared to how it was ten years ago, pay attention to the relevance of quality publications, engagement in project activities etc. "Airbag" in the form of state funding slightly hinders this process in state universities, however, it activates innovative educational methodologies in private HEIs.

## **Recommendations**

In general, the external system of HEIs quality assurance should cover two main components: students' assessment of learning activities and learning in educational institution and ranking of the teaching team along with the criteria of academic and learning activities. That said, students' assessment of the teachers and programs must be taken into account while achieving guidelines no. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9 of the internal quality assurance system and the professors' rankings must be taken into account while achieving guidelines no. 1, 5, 8 and 10. With the purpose of

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<sup>26</sup> Law of Ukraine from 01.07.2014 No. 1556-VII *On Higher Education*.

<sup>27</sup> Law of Ukraine from 21.12.2016 No. 1801-VIII *On State Budget for 2017*.

increasing students' motivation for learning, and academic staff's for teaching and academic activities, in individual universities it is reasonable to:

- annually monitor the quality of the institutions' learning activities with different methods (self-assessment, questionnaires for students and professors, a ranking of academic staff according to clear and transparent criteria), which is delegated to relevant departments and services of HEI that deal with education quality assurance;
- strengthen the requirements for quality of academic papers, aimed at printing them in Ukrainian and foreign journals with independent peer-review, and simultaneously decrease the number of quantitative requirements for publications by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the universities;
- constantly analyse the subjects taught with the aim of assessing students' reaction not only to the quality of the professor's work but also to assess relevance/irrelevance of certain subjects in order to ensure prompt update of study programs, which will be initiated by the administration of HEI;
- lower the level of red tape in the learning process while dedicating more time for research work, which requires both an active position of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, as well as of the heads of individual universities;
- help professors in HEIs to learn foreign languages, stimulate them to conduct lectures and seminars both in Ukrainian and English with the help of bonuses, grants and other types of rewards;
- increase salaries (by applying a system of rewards and bonuses) for best professors and researchers, who create a positive image of the university (reputation capital);
- inspire young scientists to participate in international short-term and long-term programs, to receive future benefits by borrowing the best world learning practice, trainings, scientific developments, as well as cross-cultural communication, which local learning system often lacks;
- evaluate the level of professional skills of the professors when signing job contracts on the basis of clear criteria (namely, quality of publications instead of their quantity, the level of foreign language proficiency, engagement in international programs, Hirsch index, scientific-and-expert activities, learning and teaching activities, academic degree and academic rank).

## Chapter 5

# External quality assurance system in Ukrainian higher education: historical background and development opportunities

**Sergiy Kurbatov**

Development of the higher education external quality assurance system became especially relevant over the last decades. This has to do with mass access to higher education and commercialization of university life, gradual transformation of higher education from public to private good, increased level of universities' autonomy paralleled by increased state control over the use of budget funds, increased transparency requirements for decision-making processes at higher education institutions, globalization and unification of higher education requirements.<sup>28</sup>

In the majority of European countries the higher education external quality assurance system replaces various forms of state control over activities of HEIs and includes the following components:

- creation of the national agency, which would coordinate and support higher education assessment and quality assurance;
- self-assessment of higher education institutions as main quality assurance factor;
- external expert evaluation of self-assessment results;
- the openness of the assessment results for all the stakeholders;
- no direct connection between external evaluation results and funding of higher education institutions.<sup>29</sup>

At the same time, activities of independent agencies for quality assurance of higher education and creation of the relevant external system date back to over a hundred years ago to the USA. The oldest American organization on accreditation — New England Association of Schools and Colleges — was founded back in 1885.<sup>30</sup> Modern studies prove that systems of external quality assurance of higher education can be an effective tool to improve the quality of activities of educational institutions, and especially to fight corruption and other negative phenomena in universities.<sup>31</sup>

Creating modern configuration of external quality assurance of higher education in Ukraine began in the 1990s and was regulated by the Laws of Ukraine *On Education* (1991, 1996) and *On Science and Scientific and Technological Activities* (1991). The corresponding approaches to higher education quality assurance were systematized in Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* adopted on January 17, 2002 (ceased to be in force on September 6, 2014). This document provided for procedures of licensing and accreditation to be the mechanisms for external quality assurance. On the basis of conducted accreditation a new classification of higher education institutions was created:

- 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> accreditation level — technical schools, vocational schools and colleges (former secondary vocational education);

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<sup>28</sup> Module 1. Making basic choices for external quality assurance system. UNESCO, 2006. 270 p. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001824/182478e.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Billing, David. International comparisons and trends in external quality assurance of higher education: Commonality or diversity? Higher Education. 2004. No. 47. P. 113–137.

<sup>30</sup> New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC). <https://www.neasc.org/about-us/history>.

<sup>31</sup> Martin, Michaela. External quality assurance in higher education: how can it address corruption and other malpractices. Quality in Higher Education. 2016. No. 22 Vol. 1. P. 49–63.

- 3<sup>d</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> accreditation level — universities, academies, institutes, conservatories.<sup>32</sup>

The function of external quality assurance (in the form of attestation and awarding academic degrees) of the academic staff was carried out by Higher Attestation Commission of Ukraine created by the Decree of the President of Ukraine from 25.02.1992. The Soviet model of special academic boards and relevant system of codes and names of scientific specializations was used as a foundation for defending candidate and doctoral theses. In 2010 Higher Attestation Commission of Ukraine was dissolved, and the relevant functions were transferred to Attestation Board of the line ministry.<sup>33</sup>

A completely new stage in the development of higher education quality assurance system began on July 1, 2014, with the adoption of the new Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*. “The new law contains fundamental changes, which the society has been long anticipating. Given that during the last twenty years Ukrainian education system was barely reformed at all. The appearance of far too many higher educational institutions was not accompanied with improving the education quality”, — pointed out Liliya Hrynevych, former Head of the Verkhovna Rada Committee for Education and Science, in the foreword of the official publication of the Law.<sup>34</sup>

The current version of the Law *On Higher Education* defines quality of education as “level of knowledge obtained by a person, which reflects their competence according to the higher education standards” (art. 1-23; *hereinafter in this chapter the references to current version of the law On higher education are given in brackets. — editor*), and quality of learning activities as “level of organization of learning process in higher education institution, which complies with the higher education standards and ensures obtaining quality higher education by persons and facilitates creation of new knowledge” (art. 1-24).

In other words, we are talking about individualized, subjective measuring of the learning outcomes of a person obtaining higher education, as well as evaluation of the institutional parameters of higher education institution activities. Thus, the key parameter in defining higher education quality is compliance with certain standards. In any case, this provision is outlined by law in the corresponding definitions.

Standards also play a key role in defining the processes of licensing in higher education as “procedures of determining the capability of a legal entity to conduct educational activities in a certain field of study at a certain level of higher education in accordance with educational standards” (art. 1-15), and accreditation of the study program as “assessment of the study program in terms of compliance with the higher education standard; ability to fulfil requirements of the standards and achieve the goal set; achievement of the learning outcomes outlined in the program” (art. 1-4).

Supposedly, taking into account the central role of the standards in higher education quality assurance system, their development should have started immediately [after the adoption of the new bill *On Higher Education. — editor*] and in the most active way. Back in 2014 development of the standards was supposed to become a strategic priority, which would ensure reforming the national higher education system in line with the best European and global approaches and principles. Unfortunately, the reality was different. According to the mid-term plan of government priorities till 2020, as of January 1, 2017, there were only 102 drafts of higher education standards developed for the bachelor’s programs and 28 for the master’s programs, none of them was officially approved. It is planned that:

- by the end of 2017, 120 higher education standards for bachelor’s programs and 80 for master’s programs will be developed;

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<sup>32</sup> National Report on the State and Prospects of Education Development in Ukraine; edited by V. Kremen Kyiv: Pedahohichna dumka, 2016. 448 p.

<sup>33</sup> Higher Attestation Commission of Ukraine. <https://goo.gl/b72VYL>.

<sup>34</sup> Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*: Official publication. Kyiv: In Yure, 2014. p. 5.

- by 2020, 125 higher education standards for bachelor's programs and 127 standards for master's programs, 117 standards for doctorate programs will be developed and approved.<sup>35</sup>

The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance is the permanently functioning collegial body, authorized for implementation of the state policy in the area of higher education quality assurance (art. 17-1). Among the main functions of the National Agency are the creation of requirements for higher education quality assurance system, development of the provisions on accreditation of the study programs and conducting the accreditation, development of the requirements for academic qualification level of the persons who are awarded academic degrees, development of the provisions on accreditation of special academic boards, accreditation of independent assessment institutions and quality assurance (article 18). A transitional provision of the Law *On Higher Education* suggested that the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance shall start functioning from September 1, 2015. However, a doubtful legitimacy of two members of the National Agency, who were put under the Law *On Power Purge* and soon were resigned, scandals with plagiarism in the academic papers of the elected representatives of the academic community and permanent problem with approving of the elected head prevented this. That is why the major institution in the system of external quality assurance of higher education currently cannot fully assume its functions, which negatively impacts the situation in this area.

A good example of this problem is the situation with licensing higher education institutions. According to the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 609 from August 5, 2015,<sup>36</sup> the licensing body for the activities of higher education institutions is the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. Licensing terms of learning activities of the educational institutions are regulated by Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 1187.<sup>37</sup> At the same time, according to article 24 of the Law *On higher education*, before getting a license for performing learning activities, HEI should obtain an expert opinion letter on the possibility of issuing a license from the National Agency on Higher Education Quality Assurance, which makes enabling its full functionality especially important.

The situation with accreditation of study programs is even more complicated, as the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance should develop regulations on accreditation of the study programs, as well as conduct the accreditation of the programs, according to which people obtaining a higher education are trained (art. 18). The procedure of conducting the study program accreditation (art. 25) presupposes consideration of the application for accreditation submitted by the higher education institution and other relevant documents within a two-months period by the National Agency. Accreditation expertise is supposed to take place during this period and according to its results, the decision about accreditation or denial of accreditation shall be made. The expert opinion letter on the basis of which such decision is made is prepared by the expert board. Upon taking a decision on accreditation, The National Agency issues an accreditation certificate to the HEI institution within three days. A certificate is first issued for a five-year period, and during the second and subsequent accreditations — for ten years.

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<sup>35</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 275-p from 03.04.2017 *On Approval of Medium-Term Plan of Priority Actions for the Government till 2020 and Plan of Priority Actions for the Government for 2017*. <http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/cardnpd?docid=249935442>.

Even though current legislation provides for development of vocational technical education standards (junior bachelor's level), this work is not performed as of the beginning of 2017, as conceptual rethinking of the content and approaches to regulating this educational element and relevant regulatory changes are expected. — *editor*.

<sup>36</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 609 from 05.08.2015 *On Approval of List of Licensing Bodies...* <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/609-2015-%D0%BF>.

<sup>37</sup> Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1187 from 30.12.2015 *On Approval of Licensing Terms of Performing Educational Activities in Educational Institutions*. <http://zakon2.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1187-2015-%D0%BF/page#n210>.

Accreditation is currently performed by the Accreditation Commission of Ukraine, which is “a permanently acting collegial body, which provides compliance with requirements for attestation and accreditation of higher, vocational and postgraduate education institutions, enterprises, agencies and organization according to fields of education (majors) for training and re-training of postgraduate professionals”.<sup>38</sup> Organization of work of the Accreditation Commission of Ukraine is provided by the State educational institution “Scientific and Methodological Center for Quality of Education”.<sup>39</sup>

The fact that the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance failed to start functioning within the timeframe defined by the Law *On Higher Education* also creates obstacles for independent assessment and quality assurance institutions — non-public organizations (agencies, institutions, bureaus etc.), accredited by the National Agency. Independent institutions assess the study program, learning outcomes with the aim of developing recommendations for higher education institutions regarding the organization of the system of higher education quality assurance and prepare proposals for the National Agency for the accreditation of the study program (art. 23). According to article 23-3, such independent institutions can also issue their own certificates of assessment of study program and/or higher education quality assurance systems.

Despite these obstacles, the draft of Strategic Areas of Activities for the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance for 2017–2020 was developed. This document envisages:

- modernization of the assessment and higher education quality assurance system;
- update of the accreditation process and other procedures of quality recognition in accordance with the European and global standards and development of the required regulations;
- creation of higher education standards designed in the first place for the needs of students and employers;
- assurance of training quality of those aspiring to receive academic degrees by creating facilities for effective research activities;
- fostering academic integrity;
- active cooperation with the society, government and non-government organizations, higher education institutions, international organizations in the area of quality assurance in higher education.<sup>40</sup>

One of the major priorities for developing a national system of higher education is joining European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and European Research Area (ERA). Thus we should consider how well the Ukrainian procedures and activities comply with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in European Higher Education Area (ESG), approved by the Ministerial Conference in Yerevan on May 14–15, 2015. ESG unified requirements for quality of higher education and created universal requirements for corresponding standards. The authors of the document point out that the key goal of ESG standards is to “contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders. They have played and will continue to play an important role in the development of national and institutional quality assurance systems across the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and cross-border cooperation”.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Accreditation Commission of Ukraine. <http://ak.gov.ua/index.php/about-aku>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Strategic Areas of Activities of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance for 2017–2020 (draft). <http://education-ua.org/ua/draft-regulations/890-strategichni-napryamki-diyalnosti-natsionalnogo-agentstva-iz-zabezpechennya-yakosti-vishchoji-osviti-na-period-2017-2020-rokiv-proekt>.

<sup>41</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). (2015). Brussels, Belgium. p. 6.

Quality assurance activities are based on “twin purposes of accountability and enhancement. Taken together, these create trust in the higher education institution’s performance”.<sup>42</sup> That said, “accountability” in this case means the opportunity to measure major parameters of university activities, which facilitates legalization of quality practices.

Especially important for us is the second part of this document, “Standards and Guidelines for External Quality Assurance”. The first standard “Consideration of internal quality assurance” says that “external quality assurance should address the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance processes described in Part 1 of the ESG”.<sup>43</sup> That is, the external quality assurance system has to be an organic supplement and should be based on the mechanisms of internal quality assurance created by the higher education institutions, as it fully complies with the fundamental principle of universities’ autonomy. It is worth mentioning that work in this area has become more active over the last years and universities are trying to bring traditionally formed models of internal quality assurance closer to the European and global standards.

In the Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*, the internal quality assurance system in higher education is regulated by art. 16-2 and includes:

- defining the principles and procedures for quality assurance in higher education;
- monitoring and timely review of study programs;
- annual assessment of persons obtaining higher education, research and teaching staff of the higher education institution;
- ensuring advanced training for professors, academic researchers and academic staff;
- providing necessary resources for the organization of learning process;
- availability of information systems for effective management of this process and effective system for prevention and disclosure of academic plagiarism, as well as other procedures and measures.

Among the international projects supporting this work, we can mention the project called QUAERE – “Quality Assurance System in Ukraine: Development on the Basis of ENQA Standards and Guidelines”, which is funded in the framework of ERASMUS+.<sup>44</sup> Leading Ukrainian universities, such as Taras Shevchenko Kyiv National University, Ivan Franko Lviv National University, Ilyya Mechnikov Odessa National University, Sumy State University and others participate in the projects. This project should result in the development of instruments for sustainable functioning of internal and external quality assurance systems.

The second standard establishes a need to ensure compliance of external quality assessment to “achieve the aims and objectives set for it while taking into account relevant regulations”.<sup>45</sup> This entails clear goals and objectives, coordinated as much as possible with major stakeholders, in the first place students and employers. Unfortunately, in Ukraine, there is a certain gap between requirements on the labour market and outcomes of the activities of universities. According to the results of research conducted by Kyiv International Institute of Sociology in 2012, 61% of the surveyed employers pointed out the graduates’ lack of professional skills, and 38% report lack of skills to handle challenging situations. At the same time, 26% of the employers pointed out that over the last five years quality of graduates from Ukrainian higher education institution has dropped, 30% that it did not change, and only 20% that it improved. In turn, graduates of higher education institutions believe that they lack knowledge of foreign languages (46%) and practical professional skills (25%).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p. 7.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> Summary of Information on International Grant Project of ERASMUS+ EU Program. <https://goo.gl/5FmYkF>.

<sup>45</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance... p. 18.

<sup>46</sup> Graduates of Ukrainian HEIs in the Eyes of Employers. <https://goo.gl/CxNmhv>.

The third standard states that processes of external quality assurance have to be reliable, helpful, defined in advance, fully implementable and published. They should include the following components:

1. self-assessment or equivalent;
2. assessment by the external experts;
3. a report resulting from external assessment and
4. further activities, aimed at improving the quality of higher education.

It is worth saying that one of the priorities of the above-mentioned QUAERE project is introducing a mechanism for self-analysis as an integral component of universities' operation, which will later facilitate the establishment of self-assessment culture in national higher education institutions.<sup>47</sup> We also believe that systematic and targeted development of culture for external quality assessment of higher education by relevant experts is reasonable, taking into account that currently such procedures look overly formal and carry serious corruption risks.

The fourth standard states that processes connected with external quality assurance should be carried out by groups of the independent experts that include students.<sup>48</sup> The guidelines point out the relevance of engaging international experts in external quality assurance processes. In accordance with the Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*, this function is practically not carried out by the sectoral advisory boards of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance. According to art. 21, a sectoral board is created for a period of no more than three years, it consists of 9 to 15 persons who have an academic degree in the relevant field of study or professional experience of no less than five years (except for the students).

The fifth standard defines that any outcomes or judgments made as a result of external quality assurance should be based on explicit and published criteria that are applied consistently and are evidence-based. The National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance creates requirements for the system of higher education quality assurance (art. 18-1) and criteria for assessment of learning activities, including scientific achievements, of higher education institutions in Ukraine (art. 18-7).

In the sixth standard it is pointed out that full reports by the experts should be clear and accessible to the academic community and other stakeholders, and also they have to be published. If the agency makes any official decision on the basis of these reports, it is made public together with the report. The following report structure is recommended:

- description of the context in which a certain higher education institution operates;
- description of assessment procedure, including personalities of the involved experts;
- concrete evidence, analysis of the current practice and results of the assessment of quality assurance system;
- conclusions;
- description of the relevant practice, demonstrated by an institution;
- recommendations for further actions.

The report will benefit from an Executive Summary so that it becomes accessible for a wider audience.

And finally, the seventh standard states that the process of handling complaints and appeals is an integral part of the processes for external quality assurance, and its procedures have to be known to the relevant institutions. Procedures for external quality assurance have to be open

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<sup>47</sup> Summary of Information on International Grant Project of ERASMUS+ EU Program.

<sup>48</sup> Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance... p. 19.

and accountable, and the institutions should have an opportunity to address observers with questions of their interest and receive professional answers to these questions.

In conclusion, we can say that the Ukrainian system of external quality assurance of higher education is undergoing a period of active transformation in order to align itself with the European and global approaches and practices. The major areas of corresponding transformations were outlined in the Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education* adopted on July 1, 2014. The key innovation introduced by this law on the institutional level is creation and functioning of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

## Chapter 6

# Academic integrity as a prerequisite and instrument for ensuring effective education reforms

**Volodymyr Satsyk**

### Introduction

It is impossible to nurture inner harmony, strong spirit and consistency of the moral image as essential attributes of the human consciousness, which should also be cultivated by higher education, without following fundamental values of academic integrity. Getting new knowledge through intellectual and personal honesty in the process of teaching and learning, proper respect for diversity of thoughts and ideas, while relying on the principle of personal responsibility, ultimately define the university as an integrious institution. However, in modern university practice one can come across unethical behaviour related to academic dishonesty; as well as irresponsible reaction to such behaviour from students, teachers, administrative staff of higher education institutions and state institutions by keeping quiet about it or without taking relevant measures for elimination thereof.

Beyond doubt, dishonest behaviour of the key higher education stakeholders destroys individual and public value of the education, decreases its contribution to social and economic development, and this means that academic misconduct should not be tolerated by society but met with appropriate resistance on all levels of the educational and scientific process. Academic integrity acts as a prerequisite for effective reforms of higher education in Ukraine, a guarantee of its integration into international academic area and enhancement of its competitiveness in the prospect. But on the other hand, these issues currently do not get much attention either in academic research or in studying internal and external factors causing a violation of ethical standards or in analysing modern global experience in countering academic misconduct for its implementation in Ukrainian educational practice.

Quite significant in this context are the results of data systematization in terms of the available practice of introducing academic integrity principles in HEIs of III-IV levels of accreditation in Ukraine, which were obtained by researchers at the Institute for Educational Analytics at the request of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.<sup>49</sup> In particular, monitoring of 172 web sites of the universities showed that only 27 of them have an honour code for students or an equivalent of it, and on 19 websites — code of ethics for academic staff or equivalent. At the same time, an additional survey of the administrative staff from 139 HEIs showed a larger number especially in codes of ethics for academic staff in open access (23 codes in total). Besides, a number of honour codes for students (in 5 HEIs) and codes of ethics for academic staff (in 5 HEIs) exist in closed access or in hard copy. This data shows a notably low level of academic integrity culture penetrating local university environment.

The purpose of this chapter is in the first place to demonstrate the essence and basic values of the academic integrity; secondly, to define successful educational practices, policy and instruments for prevention of copying and plagiarism; thirdly, to show on one case the potential of the modern means for countering plagiarism in a university.

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<sup>49</sup> Analytical Statement on the Results of Research of Practice of Academic Integrity in Ukrainian Higher Education Institutions. Institute of Educational Analytics. 2016.  
<http://mon.gov.ua/content/%D0%9D%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B8/2016/08/09/2-academic-integrity.pdf>

## Essence of academic integrity and its fundamental values

In the expression "academic integrity" the adjective *academic* means belonging to such type of activities that have to do with school or university, processes of learning and thinking. In turn, the term *integer* in Latin means "complete, whole, entire", and *integrity* in English means "completeness, wholeness, entirety". It means such psychological state of a person, which is characterized by their internal harmony, persistence, and consistency of moral portrait.<sup>50</sup> Such etymology of academic integrity defines its internal essence as related to personal choice, refusal to compromise and predictably strong loyalty to the privilege of moral and spiritual values in the academic area.

Experts of the International Center for Academic Integrity at Rutland Institute for Ethics, which is located at Clemson University in South Carolina, produced a document called "Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity".<sup>51</sup> According to their approach, academic integrity means loyalty even in the face of difficulty to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage (table 6.1).

Table 6.1. **Fundamental values of academic integrity**<sup>52</sup>

Honesty	Academic communities of integrity advance the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research and service under instructions of administration
Trust	Academic communities of integrity foster and rely on the climate of mutual trust. Climate of trust encourages and enables free exchange of ideas and allows scientific pursuits to reach their highest potential
Fairness	Academic communities of integrity establish clear and transparent expectations, standards and practices to foster fairness in the interactions of students, faculty and administration
Respect	Academic communities of integrity value interactive, cooperative and open to all participants nature of learning. They respect and consider proper a wide range of opinions and ideas
Responsibility	Academic communities of integrity rely on principles of personal accountability, which is reinforced by the readiness of people and groups to give an example of responsible behaviour. They support mutually agreed standards and resort to necessary means in case of their violation
Courage	For development and support of the academic communities of integrity more than simple trust in fundamental values is needed. Transformation of values from talks to relevant action, standing up for them under pressure and difficulties requires determination, motivation and courage

Contentwise, the opposite to academic integrity is the category of academic misconduct, dishonesty. Such misconducts include:

- fabrication and falsification of the materials (respectively, the artificial creation of non-existing data or facts and intentional change or modification of existing data or facts);

<sup>50</sup> Killinger B. (2010). *Integrity: Doing the Right Thing for the Right Reason*. McGill-Queen's University Press. p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> Fishman T. (2012). *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity* (2nd edition). International Center for Academic Integrity, Clemson University.  
[http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/assets/Revised\\_FV\\_2014.pdf](http://www.academicintegrity.org/icai/assets/Revised_FV_2014.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

- bribery (illegal extortion of material or monetary items in exchange for academic benefits);
- academic sabotage (deliberate actions which give the opportunity to obtain some academic gain or increase it for other members of the academic group or community);
- professors' dishonesty (abuse of one's official position through coercion or pressure on students and colleagues for the sake of obtaining academic gain).<sup>53</sup>

However, the most widespread in the modern international practice became such forms of academic dishonesty as cheating and plagiarism. Academic cheating is interpreted by the experts as such behaviour of the students, when in the process of fulfilling learning tasks they dishonestly use forbidden materials, information or other additional means.<sup>54</sup> Often such cheating is done in the form of copying, especially using cheat sheets, peeking into neighbour's test, cooperation among students for the sake of receiving a common benefit, actions aimed at a preliminary and illegal review of contents of exam cards etc.<sup>55</sup>

Experts have defined the following effective methods of countering copying:<sup>56</sup>

- implementing codes of honour of students by the higher education institution;
- conducting public awareness raising campaigns;
- strengthening overall control at the exams;
- modernization of learning programs to increase their creative component;
- improving the system of preparing for classes;
- imposing harsher punishments for academic misconducts etc.

To define plagiarism, the "Fishman's rule" is often used, which describes this phenomenon through the prism of the following five cumulative characteristics:

"Plagiarism occurs when someone

1. Uses words, ideas, or work products
2. Attributable to another identifiable person or source
3. Without attributing the work to the source from which it was obtained
4. In a situation in which there is a legitimate expectation of original authorship
5. In order to obtain some benefit, credit, or gain which need not be monetary".<sup>57</sup>

In general, violation of academic integrity is caused by a whole group of factors, among which we can identify three integral.

First, moral and cultural — related to the general intention of a member of a certain culture to violate ethical standards. Thus, an open cross-cultural research discovered that the level of

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<sup>53</sup> Siaputra I., Santosa D. (2016). Academic Integrity Campaign in Indonesia / in Tracey Bretag (ed.). *Handbook of Academic Integrity*, 75–86.

<sup>54</sup> Pavela G. (1978). Judicial review of academic decision making after Horowitz. *NOLPE School of Law Journal*, 8, 55–75.

<sup>55</sup> Klein A., Lecenburg M., Mckendall M. & Mothersell W. (2007). Cheating during the college years: How do business school students compare. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 21, 197–206.

<sup>56</sup> Rahman N., Hussein N., Esa M. (2016). Academic Dishonesty Among Business Students: Cheating Acts and Proposed Ways to Reduce Cheating Behavior. In: Fook C., Sidhu G., Narasuman S., Fong L., Abdul Rahman S. (eds) 7th International Conference on University Learning and Teaching (InCULT 2014) Proceedings. Springer, Singapore. p. 217.

<sup>57</sup> Fishman T. (2009). "We know it when we see it" is not good enough: toward a standard definition of plagiarism that transcends theft, fraud, and copyright. 4th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity (4APCEI). 28–30 September 2009, University of Wollongong NSW Australia, 2010. p. 5. <http://ro.uow.edu.au/apcei/09/papers/37/>

copying in the USA is remarkably lower compared to post-Soviet countries.<sup>58</sup> It is justified by the fact that such differences exist due to the cultural distinction between students, a prevalence of individual values in Western students and collectivist values in students from post-socialist countries.

Secondly, institutional factor: whether the current legislation of the country foresees relevant mechanisms and tools, or whether higher education institution has an effective policy of countering academic dishonesty. The bright example demonstrating the policy of fighting academic plagiarism is Indonesian legislation, which has clear regulations regarding the responsibility of students, professors and heads of the universities for academic misconducts.<sup>59</sup> Also, results of one international survey are interesting, which discovered that level of academic cheating is lower in universities where a code of honesty for students was adopted and is in force, compared to the institutions where such documents are not implemented.<sup>60</sup>

Thirdly, educational factor: academic integrity is caused by disadvantages in current learning standards in a country or incompleteness of educational process in HEIs. Moreover, studies prove that, for example, academic cheating during exams is an especially negative phenomenon in modern learning practice, as it decreases general institutional reputation and negatively impacts the individual reputation of those students who use righteous practices.<sup>61</sup>

### **Plagiarism and copying: in search for effective methods of assuring academic integrity in higher education institutions**

In the above-mentioned research of the students, which was based on surveys in such countries as USA, Albania, Belarus, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Ukraine, it was discovered that the frequency of academic cheating is the highest especially among Ukrainian students, namely over 85% of the surveyed stated that they resorted to cheating during learning process more than 10 times (the lowest percentage of such students is in Albania, Kyrgyzstan, and the USA).<sup>62</sup> Another national survey<sup>63</sup> asked, "Why do students resort to copying or purchasing different research papers, which they should write on their own?" 45% of the surveyed replied "because buying or copying necessary research paper is very easy and accessible", and 31,4% said, "because students see no connection between these tasks and their future profession". That said, many of the students place a high priority on obtaining a quality education and relevant knowledge level in higher education institutions.

Also illustrative of academic integrity standards violation was the situation with huge lines to buy cheat sheets during the winter examination in 2017 in Vadym Hetman Kyiv National Economic University.<sup>64</sup> So, the problem of fundamental values of academic integrity violation exists in Ukrainian higher education and it must be recognized both on the institutional and the state level. At the same time, currently there are no systemic measures against copying and plagiarism in local HEIs, or their nature is fragmentary.

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<sup>58</sup> Grimes P. (2004). Dishonesty in Academics and Business: A Cross-Cultural Evaluation of Student Attitudes. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 49(3), 273–290.

<sup>59</sup> Siaputra I., Santosa D. (2016). Op. cit.

<sup>60</sup> McCabe D., Trevino L. & Butterfield K. (1999). Academic Integrity in Honor Code and Non-Honor Code Environments: A Qualitative Investigation. *The Journal of Higher Education*. Vol. 70, No. 2 (Mar. - Apr.), 211–234.

<sup>61</sup> Siniver E. (2013). Cheating on exams: The case of Israeli students. *College Student Journal*, 47 (4), 593–604.

<sup>62</sup> Grimes P. (2004). Op. cit. p. 277.

<sup>63</sup> Higher Education in Ukraine: Public Opinion of the Students (2015). Nationwide Survey of the Students / Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, Ukrainian Sociology Service. <http://dif.org.ua/article/vishcha-osvita-v-ukraini-gromadska-dumka-studentiv>

<sup>64</sup> KNEU students captured, how cheat sheets are sold to them near the dormitory (2017). *Ukrayinska Pravda*. Zhyttia. <http://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2017/01/10/222064/>

We can find one example of policies on promoting academic integrity in higher education in Indonesia. This country with a population of 255 million people has 100 state and 2972 private higher education institutions as of 2014. In 2010 the Indonesian Ministry of National Education issued Rule no. 17 *On Preventing and Reducing Plagiarism in Higher Education*.<sup>65</sup> This regulation introduces a new form of prevention and control of plagiarism in higher education institutions (Fig. 6.1).

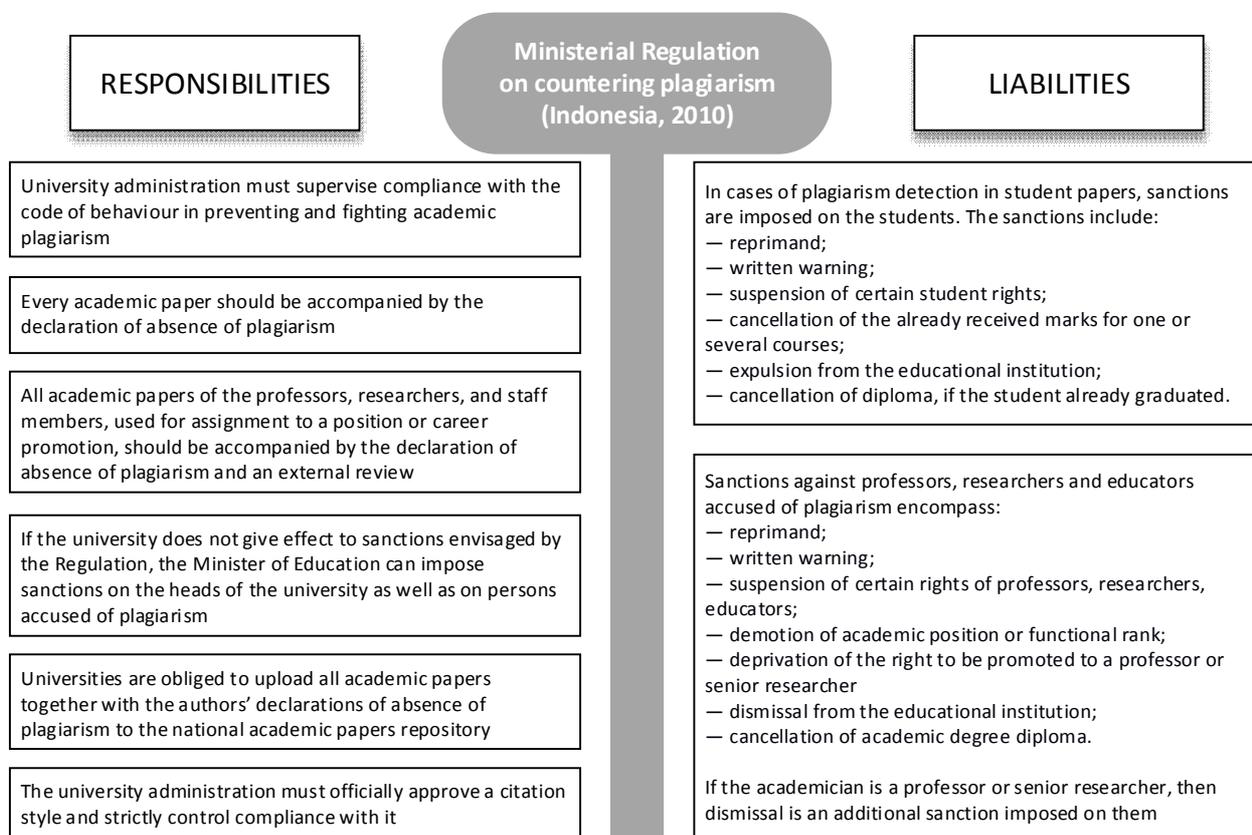


Figure 6.1. Key provisions of the Indonesian Regulations on countering plagiarism<sup>66</sup>

Addressing successful European experience, the following effective methods of fighting plagiarism on the state and institutional levels can be applied:

- Using special software for revealing plagiarism on the basis of simple rules and policy concerning its usage.
- Developing national and university repositories, which contain databases of academic/scientific papers by the students/professors/researchers.
- Developing and implementing special institutional policies for preventing and fighting plagiarism by the higher education institutions (codes of honour for students, codes of ethics, provisions on plagiarism prevention etc.).
- Founding independent national agencies-arbiters (as, for example in England and Wales), whose activities are aimed at resolving disputes in the area of academic integrity for the protection of students' and academics' rights.

<sup>65</sup> Republic of Indonesia Minister of National Education Regulation no. 17, 2010. Pencegahan Plagiat di Perguruan Tinggi. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

- Researching internal reasons and modern educational practices in the area of fighting plagiarism to develop relevant policies, instructions, guidelines.
- Developing state system for gathering statistics on cases of academic dishonesty in universities and publicising annual reports on their basis.
- Integrating into universities study programs at bachelor's and master's levels key topics on academic integrity, including those related to current standards of academic writing; general popularization of fighting plagiarism.
- Defining at the national level the procedures for dealing with academic integrity violations, which presupposes creation of special local institutional commissions (ethical committees) managed by the representatives of the administrative staff of a university.<sup>67</sup>

International practice shows a wide variety and potential of methods and instruments for countering academic dishonesty in the form of plagiarism and copying. Their choice and application should result from peculiarities of a country's or a university's academic environment, be based on fundamental values of integrity and be in line with the priority of creating socially responsible civil society. The key principles of applying integrity in practice should be honesty, trust, fairness, respect and clear responsibility.

### **Results of an educational experiment on countering plagiarism in term papers of the students**

In the first semester of academic year 2016/2017, the author of this chapter initiated an educational experiment in Vadym Hetman Kyiv National Economic University, which involved developing a new, more creative format of term paper on the subject "Foundations of economics". Requirements match the modern standards on writing academic articles from the leading world universities. An experimental model of term paper was suggested to the first year Bachelor's of Economics of Enterprise students. To ensure academic integrity, a compulsory check of the student's work for plagiarism was stipulated.

The key requirements for writing a term paper according to the new concept were as follows:

- the topic of the term paper should have a reference to the issue researched; a student is only offered a list of broad topics, on the basis of which and taking into account their own interest, they chose certain area of research and together with the professor (supervisor) develop a narrower name of the research;
- each term paper is checked for signs of plagiarism (checking in open sources on the internet and in the internal database of term papers) and in the case of improper text borrowing it is returned to the author for further work; the Unicheck e-system (<https://www.unicheck.com>) was used to check papers for plagiarism;
- the term paper should include parts which are usually found in academic papers that are published in the recognized Western social sciences academic journals, and namely:
  - introduction (it shows the problem and relevance of the research);
  - overview of the references (it shows available theoretical achievements on the topic of the research, their critical analysis is performed, summary overview of the modern English-language articles is provided, which a student searches and chooses on their

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<sup>67</sup> Comparison of policies for Academic Integrity in Higher Education across the European Union (2013). Impact of Policies for Plagiarism in Higher Education Across Europe / The Project of the European Union under Erasmus, Lifelong Learning Programme, Modernisation of Higher Education (2010–2013). Agreement 510321-LLP-1-2010-1-UK-ERASMUS-EMHE. <http://plagiarism.cz/ippheae/>, <http://plagiarism.cz/ippheae/files/D2-3-00%20EU%20IPPHEAE%20CU%20Survey%20EU-wide%20report.pdf>

own in open international depositories, for example in SSRN database, <https://www.ssrn.com/en/>, which contains over 1 million academic papers);

- practical/analytical part (empirical results obtained as a result of processing statistical data or information from open resources, which give an opportunity to answer the research question put in a paper in a complete manner);
- conclusions (key findings of the research are summarized);
- list of references (the list of no less than 20 references, out of them at least 5 foreign articles, published in English-language journals).

Term papers were checked for plagiarism in 2 stages. During the first stage (December 1–15, 2016) students on their own uploaded their papers into Unicheck e-system and the academic supervisor was performing a detailed check of the term-paper for integrity, checking every page in the system and paying attention to the bits highlighted in yellow color, which had evidence of plagiarism and hence required verification. Each student also had free access to the results of the check, which eliminated the subjectivity of the supervisor. At the second stage (starting December 15, 2016) after the papers were finalized, the supervisor performed comparison evaluation of the final version of the paper with the flaws that had been previously found in terms of improper text borrowings.

According to the results of the check, at the first stage out of 67 timely submitted term papers, 34 (more than 50%) were returned for improvement due to plagiarism.

During analysis of the other papers, where no plagiarism was found, the average percentage of text borrowing which basically is not plagiarism was determined to reach about 10–15%. In such cases, the above-mentioned index showed the relative amount of common phrases or text, which has a relevant reference to the source, compared to the total length of the term paper. Papers where such index was over 15% usually contained plagiarism.

However, it is worth pointing out that the results of this experiment regarding rates of originality cannot be translated to other majors in KNEU or other educational institutions, since the learning environment, requirements for term papers, even the profiles of the students will be different.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that each student was quite well instructed about the requirements for writing a term paper, which is proven by over a dozen term papers of a high quality, according to the result of checks at the first stage. Also, students knew about their responsibility in case of plagiarism, as in such a case the paper was considered not written by them and was returned for further improvement.

The results of the educational experiment on plagiarism counteraction in academic papers of the students showed the following key problems and challenges:

1. To write a term paper of proper quality and in compliance with integrity principles, it is reasonable to have special classes on academic writing in the study plan, with the aim of introducing students to modern standards of writing academic texts, formatting of citations, a list of references etc.
2. In order to effectively detect academic cheating in the form of improper text borrowings, a supervisor should have access to relevant electronic instruments, which give an opportunity to avoid spending extra time while checking students' papers for signs of plagiarism.
3. Supervisors should be quite competent and informed about general standards of writing student academic papers, which are accepted in the Western academic world. They should be able to explain how to structure the text paragraphs, how to write the introduction and the main paper parts, how to perform a structured overview of the references and foreign papers, how to format the references and citations of the text by other authors in the paper etc.

4. When checking papers for plagiarism, it is unreasonable to apply a predetermined percentage of the maximum amount of borrowed text, for example, 10, 20 or 30% (relative index of plagiarism). This indicator is only the first sign for the supervisor, which should result in a detailed analysis of the paper. The index of plagiarism value can vary depending on the year, subject, structure and format of a research paper etc. It can be determined reliably only during an experiment, using a selection of papers where no plagiarism was detected. Even the word-combination "threshold of plagiarism" resembles oxymoron. Even one sentence in an article by a scientist or in a paper by a student, which is borrowed from another source, meaning it was not written by them and does not have the necessary citation, can be viewed as plagiarism.

Thus, academics and management should in the first place realize the scale of the problem and analyse the current state of academic ethics violations in order to effectively implement academic integrity strategy in a university. Only such recognition of the reality, with the help of educational experiments, will give an opportunity to begin creating the environment that will not be tolerant to academic misconducts by participants of the learning process. It is also critically important to rationally and properly summarize the findings and take corresponding managerial decisions, aimed at promoting basic ethical standards in higher education institution.

## **Conclusion**

In modern international university practice, the issues of ensuring and promoting fundamental values of academic integrity as a complicated and multi-dimensional system of actions and mechanisms aimed at raising intellectual and personal fairness of the students, professors, administrative staff and other stakeholders of the higher education institutions become crucial. The key components of this system are the development of the moral and cultural environment which is non-tolerant to ethical standards violation, mainly in terms of cheating and plagiarism, in a university and in the country. Secondly, creating special national legislation, development and implementation of effective legislation-based policies for academic misconducts counteraction by the universities. Thirdly, modernization of educational standards in the country and of the educational process in higher education institutions, or using academic and educational outreach activities to teach students about virtuous academic behaviour. Finally, whether academic integrity will become the factor for improving higher education quality in Ukraine depends on the effectiveness of each of the above-mentioned components and their integral effect. Therefore, academic integrity is both the prerequisite as well as the instrument for ensuring effective higher education reform. Its cultivation and promotion on all levels will facilitate the parity-based integration of Ukrainian universities into global academic and scientific area, which is grounded on the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage.

## Chapter 7

### Student rights protection in Ukraine: KNUprotest case

**Olena Nikulina**

The law *On higher education* initiated a complex process of higher education reform, but the implementation of its provisions is still in progress. The law has changed the principles of student participation in university life: students have obtained a legal right to participate in management of higher education institution and in the process of education quality assurance (art. 40, 62; *hereinafter in this chapter the references to articles of the current version of the law On higher education are given in round brackets. — editor.*). Despite this, the principles of student-centered learning have mostly not yet become reality.

Despite the start of the higher education reform, from 2014 until 2017 numerous actions, protests and expulsions of student activists took place:

- expulsion of the student activists of “Shevapil”<sup>68</sup> initiative, who were performing anti-corruption investigation in Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv (KNU);
- student actions of Mychailo Boychuk Kyiv State Institute of Decorative Applied Arts and Design against merging with Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University;
- the vote of no confidence to the rector by the students of National Pedagogical Dragomanov University (NPU).

In September 2016 a “new wave” of student protests began:

- campaign for gathering signatures by the students of Igor Sikorsky Kyiv Polytechnic University (KPI) against renaming the university;
- “NPU protest” — seizure by the students of Dragomanov NPU of the academic building, which was rented as a furniture store, while there were not enough rooms for classes;
- protest of the students from Kyiv National Ivan Karpenko-Kary Theater, Cinema and Television University against cutting class hours in the main subjects;
- student rights protection initiative of the students from Taras Shevchenko KNU called KNUprotest.

All these events started one after another over a very short period of time. They show the deep systemic crisis in communication between HEIs administration and students. It happens both at the level of grassroots student initiatives, as well as student self-government bodies. The problems were so serious and so deep-rooted, were not solved for so long that the situation has led to protest among the students, and the first protest caused an avalanche.

One of the most important functions of student self-government bodies is establishing communication and interaction between university administration and students. The basic prerequisites for carrying out this function are recognition of student self-government bodies as legitimate representatives of the student community both by the students themselves and by HEI administration, and recognition of their right to participate in the management of the university in the regulatory documents of the HEI.

Today cooperation between university and student self-government bodies is mainly happening according to two scenarios: either student self-government bodies show entire loyalty to the administration and ignore the students’ right to actually influence the HEI or confrontation. Neither scenario is constructive, each of the cases has communication problems. In the first

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<sup>68</sup> From “Sheva” — informal short for Shevchenko as the colloquial name of the university and “pilit” (to saw) — informal for stealing money. — *editor.*

case, misunderstandings arise between student self-government bodies and the students, in the second one — between the administration and student representatives.

Wider autonomy of universities led to the situation where in a confrontation between students and administration only one of the sides owns real power, while students are limited in opportunities to influence the university, even in the case of violations and illegal acts. Thus, today there is no effective leverage to influence university in terms of higher education quality assurance, which students and their representatives could use, as the main controlling body — the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance — is not yet carrying out these functions. The only mechanism for protection of student rights remains bringing the matter before the court. And the Ministry is deprived of influence on universities.

According to the Law of Ukraine *On Higher Education*, students can protect their rights and participate in university management not only through higher collegial bodies of students self-government but also via the creation of other student organizations and unions (art. 63).

A common form of student participation in university life is grassroots initiatives — students uniting with the aim of solving certain issues. Such form of student activism is an example of students' organization for solving problems on a local level, which often appears as a reaction to inefficiency or inaction of responsible officials or formal bodies of student self-government. Grassroots initiatives address the issues of the creation of student open spaces, hubs for informal education, student rights protection:

- Sikorskyi KPI students created informal student spaces called "Vezha" and "Belka", where lectures, meetings, and other learning events are held;
- in NaUKMA grassroots initiatives gathered around creating "KMAyard" and "KMAspace" student centres, which also became places for holding different student events and centre for implementation of further projects;
- in Taras Shevchenko KNU "Political club", "Culturological club", "Chitalka" student unions for informal education and Institute for International Relations open space function well.

Similar grassroots initiatives are implemented outside of Kyiv. For example, students from the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv created a student union for informal learning called the Political club, an organization called Sumy fraternity created their own student's centre. Special to all these examples is that all of them were implemented by the students, without support and funds from a university, or with a minimum engagement of HEI's resources.

The introduction of grassroots initiatives and their future inclusion into the system of a university facilitates the development of a horizontal system of relationships in the university community and facilitates students' engagement in the life of the educational institution. Without administration of HEI accepting and supporting grassroots initiatives, it is hard to talk about democratic system existing in university management.

Student initiatives often face a lack of understanding or even prevention of their activities by the administration of a university. Student activists who reveal the problem of the educational institution are accused of smirching honour. Such position was expressed by the administration of Taras Shevchenko KNU and M. Dragomanov NPU during student protests in these institutions in fall 2016. At the same time, such reaction of the HEIs administrations results from objective circumstances. Image and prestige of a university continue to be important criteria for the applicants when they are choosing a university, as this was shown in sociological surveys. As the system of universities funding in Ukraine is based on quantitative characteristics, more students mean more funds, that is why any actions that cast doubt on university image are perceived by the administration as a direct threat to decreasing funding of the HEI.

A bright example of the consequences of a lack of interaction between students and administration of the HEI became KNUprotest case — a student initiative at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. KNUprotest started on October 25, 2016, with the protest against the decision of the administration to change the dates of the winter exams, which

was made less than a month prior to the exams, in violation of provision on the organization of learning process in the university. After that, students also raised other problems that exist in the university: insufficient winter heating of the university buildings, violation of student rights, transparent process of scholarships allocation, violation of tender procurement procedures etc.

Student movement faced misunderstanding and resistance from the university administration. During communication with the participants of the protest, the administration was using elements of pressure multiple times — direct threats from the Dean of the law faculty, Ivan Hrytsenko,<sup>69</sup> order of the rector, Leonid Huberskiy, to “watch closely” participants of the protest.<sup>70</sup> KNU press-center issued a statement where students and mass-media were accused of “doing harm to the image of one of the leading higher education institutions”.<sup>71</sup>

According to the results of the winter exams, part of the activists were expelled. Expulsion of the participants of a protest involved multiple violations, and namely:

- exams were conducted in oral form, therefore assessment cannot be checked for objectivity;
- the list of exam questions was changed one day prior to the exam;
- the time of the exam was changed one day prior to the exam;
- only one professor was present at the exam;
- the written part of the exam was not evaluated at all;
- study programs with clear assessment criteria were absent;
- students did not know their current marks until the very exam.

It is also important to point out that activists were expelled in line with the governmental *Regulations on the organization of learning process* (par. 3.12.2.3) about expulsion for two and more failed examinations without an opportunity to resit them.<sup>72</sup> Participants of KNUprotest claim about the selectivity of the decision, stating that this regulation had been barely used at the university before.

Request for public information resulted in receiving the data about the expulsion of the students from KNU after summer and winter exams for academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017, and namely the following:

- a full list of expelled students with the reason for the expulsion of every student,
- copies of expulsion orders.

Comparing lists of the expelled students during the examination of academic years 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 it is clear that in the result of the last exams more students were expelled, compared to previous ones. Namely, according to the results of previous exam sessions, including winter exams of academic year 2015/2016, 10 to 15 students were expelled, whereas during the last exams — twice as much (27 students). If during previous exams the reason for the expulsion was poor academic results (or non-fulfillment of the academic schedule), then according to the results of the winter exams for the academic year 2015/2016 the reason was an academic failure. According to the Law of Ukraine *On higher education*, non-fulfillment of the academic schedule can be a reason for expulsion (art. 46). Also, according to orders on expulsion of students, the grounds for expulsion were documents submitted by Expert in Teaching Methodology of the faculty, order of the Dean and consent of the First Deputy Rector, whereas

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<sup>69</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v\\_OrK0phu0A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_OrK0phu0A), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wos3YHkmX04>

<sup>70</sup> [https://vk.com/wall-61783769\\_3764](https://vk.com/wall-61783769_3764)

<sup>71</sup> <http://www.univ.kiev.ua/ua/news/8408>

<sup>72</sup> Decree of the Ministry of Education of Ukraine from 02.06.1993 No. 161 *On Organization of Educational Process in Higher Education Institutions*, <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/z0173-93>. Provision ceased to be in force in 2014 (order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine from 13.11.2014 No. 1310), however, Taras Shevchenko KNU continued following it. — editor.

consent with student self-government body was not mentioned, even though it has binding nature and not consulting one according to the law provision (art. 40).

Despite great public interest in the situation with expulsion of the students, administration of the university did not fulfil requirements of the students about publication of the exam papers and did not provide answers to the request regarding access to public information about the lists of the expelled students and extracts from the orders on expulsion, which violated the Law of Ukraine *On Access to Public Information*. The answer to requests for accessing public information was only received after an MP's appeal.

After the meeting on February 23, 2017, in support of expelled students near the Red (main. — *editor.*) building of Taras Shevchenko University, the commissions for assessing violation of control measures which resulted in the expulsion of activists were formed. Meetings of the commissions were held behind closed doors and with multiple violations: the same professors who earlier had not allowed KNUprotest participant to pass the exams were members of the commission; there were mistakes in the minutes of the meetings, specifically in the names of the expelled students. Decisions of the commission legitimized violations during the exam as such that "did not have a negative impact on the results of assessment" and stated that the students had not used the right for appeal (while the appeal procedure during exams is not mentioned in any university regulations). As we can see, the university chose the position of ignoring possible ways to solve the problem and cooperate with the students despite obvious violations of student rights to participate in education institution management.

KNUprotest has united students from different faculties of the university and was consolidated around the most important issues. The student initiative, which arose outside of student self-government bodies and was opposed by university administration, partly achieved its goals. Namely, the issue with winter heating in university buildings was partly resolved and reports on this matter were received, representatives of the KNUprotest were included in the scholarships committee and managed to conduct a transparent recounting of the number of students who receive a scholarship. All of this proves that cooperation between HEI administration and student organizations is an important factor for introduction of institutional reforms and solving urgent problems of a university.

Considering all of the above, possible steps for effective engagement of students in higher education institution management are the following:

- Implementation of student-oriented approach principles — orientation towards students in the process of providing quality learning services and in the management of higher education institution activities.
- University encouraging students to participate in university life and be a part of the student self-government bodies. To create such conditions it is necessary to establish rights guaranteed by the Law for student unions and student self-government bodies and implementation thereof.
- Creating opportunities for a student organization to approach controlling bodies on quality assurance in cases of violations by higher education institution (launching the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance).

## Chapter 8

# Efficient universities — challenges in Germany and in the European Union

**Norbert Arnold**

### **Expectations on higher education systems**

For good reason, knowledge is deemed the most important material of the XXI<sup>st</sup> century. Higher education institutions are prominent think-tanks that generate new knowledge, which leads to innovations in economy and society. That is why investments in higher education are not a luxury, but rather an integral prerequisite for the prosperity of the country.

Universities conduct science and research and stand at the beginning of the innovation chain. Both knowledge-oriented basic research and application-oriented research lead to results useful for the economy, although in different time dimensions. That is why their support and prevention of asymmetry, for example, in favour of applied research, belong to responsible higher education policy. However, not only science and research are key tasks of universities, but also teaching: it educates young scientists, who apply their knowledge and skills not only in the academic area but also in enterprises. Universities are places of science "reproduction", where new generations of young scientists are trained. This task cannot be underestimated, as well-educated professionals are often the decisive factor for economic success. Knowledge-intensive industry and service branches are the main growth sectors in modern society, which generate the highest added value, the highest job employment and make the highest contribution to economic wealth. They require well-educated professionals. Training of the professionals, as well as research and development, are the key areas in which universities contribute to a flourishing economy.

However, the role of universities should not be reduced to their meaning in economic development, as they also participate in solving urgent problems, such as healthcare, nutrition, resources, ecology and security. Furthermore, universities are centres for cultural development, in which societal change initiatives are born and cultural identity is formed. They are important for the cohesion of society.

Therefore it becomes clear why countries all over the world are attempting to improve their higher education and knowledge systems. This is not only true for traditional industrial countries but also, increasingly, for emerging economies.

### **Germany as a country of higher education and science**

The scientific system in Germany is marked by diversity. The country has 107 universities, 254 special-purpose higher education institutions, 6 pedagogical higher education institutions, 16 theological ones and 52 art schools,<sup>73</sup> with approximately 2,8 million students in total.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, non-university research institutions exist, which, unlike in many other countries, have a high significance in Germany. Most of them are part of the network of one of the four large research organizations — Helmholtz Association, Max Planck Society, Fraunhofer Society and Leibniz Association. Each of these organizations has its own specialized profile. The Max Planck Society, for example, conducts high-quality basic research, while the Fraunhofer Society focuses its activity on applied and corporate research and development. Helmholtz Association is a network of research centres which work in the area of energy, Earth and environmental

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<sup>73</sup> <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/Tabellen/HochschulenHochschularten.html>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/Hochschulen/Hochschulen.html>

sciences, medicine, aeronautics, space science and transport etc. Leibniz Association unites representatives of all sciences. The same large amount of differentiation can be found in universities.<sup>75</sup>

Such diversity in the system of science and higher education receives political support. At the same time, great attention is paid to close cooperation, for example, between higher education institutions and non-university institutions. The task of this strategy in the science policy is to increase competitiveness by synergy, which develops beyond institutional borders through cooperation. Even the federal system of Germany, which assigns the competencies of the higher education institutions among the 16 Federal States, while non-university research institutions are at least partially in the competence of the Federation of Germany, supports this idea of competition. At the political level, the independence of universities and non-university research institutions is promoted. They receive more opportunities to perform independent scientific activities, and therefore to increase their capacity. Hence, the autonomy of universities and governance structures of higher education are two major topics, which define current debates concerning higher education in Germany.

In connection with demographic development, the need for replacement of academic professionals amounts to 70.000 people per year. Due to positive economic development, the demand increases, especially in the knowledge-based sectors. Therefore the system of higher education must be improved in the future. Yet, it would be wrong to focus solely on academics and to neglect vocational education. Education politicians in Germany make a consistent effort to equally support these two areas. The German system of vocational education has proven to be successful and greatly facilitates a low level of youth unemployment. According to Eurostat data, the level of unemployment of young people in the age group 15–24 in Germany is 6,6–7,2%, which is the lowest index in the EU. And still, it is necessary to combine better vocational and higher education. For example, in the framework of integrated degree programs, in which young people study at universities and receive vocational education at an enterprise at the same time. Diversity and differentiated approaches are also guiding the policy here, aiming at strengthening Germany as a country of science and innovation.

The Federal Government of Germany, headed by the CDU, persistently favours active support of science and research, with a never before achieved intensity. Annually over €84bn are spent in Germany in this sector; most of this amount is provided by commercial enterprises.<sup>76</sup> After amendments to the constitution in 2014, the German Federal Government can provide universities with stronger support than before, without trenching on powers of the Federal States regarding control of higher education issues. Due to the increasing amount of students now more than half of young people enrol into higher education institutions, which causes more frequent financial problems for the Federal States. For this reason, the Federation had to join education funding in the framework of the so-called *Higher Education Pact*.<sup>77</sup> Whereas the non-university research institutions profit from the commitment of the Federation in the *Pact for Research and Innovation*.<sup>78</sup>

In the framework of other programs — such as the “High-Tech Strategy”<sup>79</sup> or the “Leading-Edge Cluster Competition”<sup>80</sup> — the Federation provides support for the implementation of research results in innovative projects. The aim is the strengthening of the whole added value chain, starting with science and research and ending with production processes and products, which can be used by the economy. An especially successful support program is the so-called

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<sup>75</sup> See, e.g. <http://www.german-u15.de/> and <https://www.tu9.de/>

<sup>76</sup> <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/BildungForschungKultur/ForschungEntwicklung/ForschungEntwicklung.html>

<sup>77</sup> <https://www.bmbf.de/de/hoerschulpakt-2020-506.html>

<sup>78</sup> <https://www.bmbf.de/de/pakt-fuer-forschung-und-innovation-546.html>

<sup>79</sup> <http://www.hightech-strategie.de/>

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.bmbf.de/de/der-spitzencluster-wettbewerb-537.html>

Excellence Initiative, put forward by the Federation in 2005, which will be replaced by the Excellence Strategy in 2017.<sup>81</sup> It aims at strengthening research activities in universities and improving international competitiveness. In the future, €530m are at disposal for especially result oriented universities.

Political-level efforts in the optimization of science and higher education system show results: in international rankings, German universities are currently better represented in the leading group than they were in the past.<sup>82</sup> Germany is becoming more attractive for famous scientists and successful students from other countries. It belongs to the leading group of innovative countries,<sup>83</sup> it successfully overcame the economic crisis in previous years, the level of unemployment in the country is comparatively low.<sup>84</sup> Everything suggests that the focus on creating a “knowledge society” is worth it.

## **Advantages of the European Research Area**

Despite positive trends, there is no reason to lessen further efforts of improvement. Emerging countries, like China, are developing from “imitators” to “innovators” and are becoming serious competitors in the global economy. Therefore, a common European Scientific Area is becoming even more important. A European area is necessary, which can compete with large players all over the world — with traditionally strong, industrially developed countries, like the USA and emerging countries — for example, with China, on equal footing.

One of the first steps towards creating a common higher education area was the Bologna process,<sup>85</sup> which led to the cross-border harmonization of education structures. In Germany, this process was criticised but has been proven to be the right decision.

Internationalization is a characteristic of science and research. Due to their complexity, many research projects cannot be conducted without international cooperation. The sooner students and junior researchers get an opportunity to go abroad, the better it is for the young people, as well as the innovation abilities of the countries. A common higher education area provides a bigger added value, compared to strictly national systems.

With the Lisbon agreement coming into force in 2009, the European Research Area is not only a political idea anymore, but has become a legally inscribed goal of the European Union, and therefore has a special political weight, which is represented in six concrete goals (strong national research systems, well-prepared cross-border cooperation, open labour market for people with higher education, equality, free access to research results and strengthening internationalization). Competitiveness in quality, openness for cooperation and internationalization, similar to the German academic political agenda, are the main principles of the scientific policy at the European level. The goal of European research policy is clearly not to make national scientific systems obsolete. On the contrary, it is considered as an addition to the structures and programs that already exist in the individual states, as a supranational link that unites national approaches, promoting synergies. The European research area is not only open to EU member-countries but also provides the opportunity for third countries to participate in joint research projects.

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<sup>81</sup> <https://www.bmbf.de/de/die-exzellenzstrategie-3021.html>

<sup>82</sup> See: [https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2017/world-ranking#!/page/1/length/25/locations/DE/sort\\_by/rank/sort\\_order/asc/cols/stats](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2017/world-ranking#!/page/1/length/25/locations/DE/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats). The top-200 world universities according to Times Higher Education ranking included 14 German HEIs in 2011, while now in 2017 there already are 22 German universities among top-200. — *editor*.

<sup>83</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/germany/news/innovationen-die-eu-holt-auf-deutschland-spitze-bei-investitionen\\_de](https://ec.europa.eu/germany/news/innovationen-die-eu-holt-auf-deutschland-spitze-bei-investitionen_de)

<sup>84</sup> <https://data.oecd.org/unemp/unemployment-rate.htm>

<sup>85</sup> [http://media.ehea.info/file/Ministerial\\_conferences/02/8/1999\\_Bologna\\_Declaration\\_English\\_553028.pdf](http://media.ehea.info/file/Ministerial_conferences/02/8/1999_Bologna_Declaration_English_553028.pdf)

Another milestone in the European science policy is presented in "Horizon 2020".<sup>86</sup> It is the first research framework program of the European Union, which does not view science and research isolated from each other, but explicitly underlines their importance for increasing innovative capacities. This is why, for good reason, the program is not called "framework program for research" anymore, but "framework program for research and innovations". With its long and reliable implementation time (2014–2020) and a total budget of almost €80bn, it is an effective supplement to educational policies of individual countries.

The European Research Area leads to added value because transnational cooperation in science and research improves the economic benefits. It is true that the common market of the European Union is strengthened through common projects in academia and science. According to patent statistics, the number of academic papers and other indicators, some individual European countries would not be able to keep up with the global competition. Their chance is in coordinated joint actions at the European level. Not only from the economic perspective but also considering the research content, it becomes clear that European partnership is essential: serious challenges, which are supposed to be solved by research, overburden individual countries and are only possible to tackle in the European network.

That is why it is reasonable to further develop the "European Education, Research and Innovation Community"<sup>87</sup> alongside with the systems of higher education in the individual countries. If this should succeed, then there is an actual chance that the visionary goal of the European Council for EU to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy" can be translated into reality.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/>

<sup>87</sup> [https://www.hrk.de/fileadmin/migrated/content/uploads/MV-Entschliessung\\_EU\\_08.11.2016.pdf](https://www.hrk.de/fileadmin/migrated/content/uploads/MV-Entschliessung_EU_08.11.2016.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_de.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_de.htm)

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## Executive summary

During 1991–2013, the following notable events occurred in higher education in Ukraine:

- fee-based higher education was introduced. This softened the impact of a harsh economic crisis of the 1990s on the Ukrainian universities but negatively influenced the quality of education;
- the universities implemented the “bachelor’s”, “specialist”, and “master’s” education levels (the “specialist” level has recently been discontinued since it is mostly identical to “master’s”);
- independent external knowledge tests were made obligatory for entrance into bachelor’s programs;
- in 2005 Ukraine joined the Bologna process;
- Ukraine adopted the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. However, it was wrongly reinterpreted as “credit and modular” system and extended onto the organization of educational programs in an incorrect form that contradicts the European practices;
- in 2011 the National Qualifications Framework was adopted, an up-to-date Education Glossary was developed and published, academic mobility was largely expanded.

Today the Ukrainian higher education faces the following key challenges:

- conceptual: the absence of a clear and widely discussed vision for the development of university education;
- academic:
  - most educational programs do not meet current employment requirements;
  - the educators happen to use outdated pedagogical methods and are not always highly qualified;
  - weak university entrants and students;
  - widespread practices of academic misconduct and plagiarism, their high support within academic community;
- managerial and financial:
  - excessive centralization both of governmental control of higher education and of the managerial procedures within the universities;
  - destimulating nature of the current model of university education state financing;
  - low to absent financing of capital renovation expenses of the universities;
  - high corruption.

Key results of implementing the 2014 Ukrainian Law *On Higher Education* in 2014–2017:

- new structured postgraduate educational-and-research programs to award the PhD degree have been opened, they replace the individual tuition-based research-only “aspirantura” programs that awarded the candidate of sciences degree;
- state student scholarship award requirements have been updated to increase the scholarship amount and to reduce the number of students who receive the scholarships;
- the requirements to obtain a state-awarded academic title of a senior researcher, docent or professor have been expanded to include an international language certificate, Scopus or World of Science-indexed publications, and participation in a study program abroad;
- new higher education standards based on competence approach are introduced;

- the Law guarantees the functioning of student self-governing bodies which are created separately from the student trade unions and function independently from them. The conflicts between student bodies and university administrations as well as between different student bodies are becoming more common;
- the topic of introducing academic integrity norms and practices and fighting plagiarism is widely discussed. In this regard:
  - the requirement to make dissertations available online before their defence has been introduced;
  - universities have been obliged by the Ministry of education and science to introduce an independent entrance exam for their Master's in Law programs;
  - the universities have begun a systematic use of both free and commercial plagiarism detection computer services;
  - many private initiatives of the professors and students aimed at teaching academic integrity principles, their assurance in student papers are spreading;
- university academic autonomy has been expanded:
  - the universities are now allowed to design study programs independently provided they meet the educational standards requirements. The standards may no longer include a list of subjects obligatory in a certain study program;
  - all ministerial requirements for obligatory study subjects were discontinued.

Further autonomy expansion is impeded by risks of increasing rector arbitrariness and feudalism under currently low trust towards universities as public institutions;
- since 2014–2015, a procedure for direct democratic elections of rectors by university staff and students was introduced. The procedure, however, does not usually promote reformers to head the universities, since the university staff is inclined to elect a candidate with a moderate, conservative election program.

The creation of a modern quality assurance system in higher education is an obligation of Ukraine according to the Association Agreement with the EU. University education quality is expected to improve thanks to:

- a decrease of academic workload both for students (the number of subjects that a students can study simultaneously is limited to eight) and for the professors (from 900 to 600 academic hours per year);
- the requirement for the professors to master a foreign language (English, in particular).

Ukraine has begun introducing the norms of the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education*. Currently, most of the requirements for internal quality assurance procedures do not work in Ukraine.

A key problem in implementing the Law *On Higher Education* is forming and ensuring the operability of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance. The Agency is to introduce up-to-date procedures of accreditation, external and internal quality assurance. The first attempt to form the body led to electing several persons with a reputation for academic dishonesty as its members. After a partial re-election of its members, the Agency elected its head. The Ministry of Science and Education went against that person and blocked his appointment by the government. Such conflicts are ongoing for over two years. Despite these difficulties, the Agency has worked out a constructive strategic plan of its activities till 2020.