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## INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF RECOVERY OF UKRAINE: GOALS AND CHALLENGES

*The goal of the study is the analysis of Recovery Plan of Ukraine (draft) on the topic of internationalisation of higher education, its goals and their fulfilment. Goal 4 Internationalization of higher education of Ukraine includes the following steps: introduction of online admission of foreigners to Ukrainian universities on a regular basis; determination of priority measures for learning English; bringing the list of fields of knowledge into compliance with ISCED (stage 1: June 2022 – the end of 2022). To achieve the above goal, several methods have been used, including an internet search, analysis, systematization of evident information. It was found that Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine provides the regulatory framework for fulfilling goals of the first stage. At the same time it is stated that it is necessary to: approve electronic invitation form; register (registration and issuance by HEIs) electronic invitations using the means of a single interdepartmental electronic platform; interact regarding the approval of electronic invitations; keep records of electronic invitations; introduce the Law of Ukraine «On Employment of the Population» regarding the work of foreigners and stateless persons pursuing higher education in Ukraine; ratify the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019). The increase in the volume of state funding of higher education in Ukraine in the conditions of recovery from the consequences of the war with Russia compared to the pre-war period is not realistic. The number of Ukrainian and foreign applicants to HEIs will decrease.*

**Keywords:** *English language, foreign students, internationalization of higher education, International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), Recovery Plan of Ukraine.*

### INTRODUCTION

Having confirmed its European vector of development Ukrainian higher education institutions ensure internationalization of education in order to equip young people with skills needed for intercultural understanding and successful employment in the international labour market. The candidate status of Ukraine to the European Union membership opens up new opportunities for graduates, and the European integration needs reforming higher education system.

In a document «Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union» (Title XII Education, Vocational Training, Youth and Sport, Article 165) it is stated that «the Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity» (Consolidated version of the Treaty, 2016).

In «Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union» (Chapter 23 Education, Training and Youth, Article 430) it is stated «Fully respecting the responsibility of the Parties for the content of teaching and the organisation of education systems and their

cultural and linguistic diversity, the Parties shall promote cooperation in the field of education, training and youth in order to enhance mutual understanding, promote intercultural dialogue and increase the knowledge of their respective cultures» (Association Agreement, 2014).

Thus, both documents contribute to the development of quality education while fully respect cultural and linguistic diversity of the countries. The aims to encourage mobility of students and teachers and promote cooperation between education establishments have been declared in both documents.

The adoption of the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019) by the 40th session of the UNESCO General Conference has become the first United Nations treaty on higher education with a global dimension. The Global Convention establishes universal principles for fair, transparent and non-discriminatory recognition of higher education qualifications and will assist in employing in the international labour market (Global Convention).

The war unleashed by Russia against Ukraine dramatically affected the sphere of higher education in Ukraine. A large number of pupils, students and academics went abroad. Foreign students left Ukraine or continue online education. These circumstances make it necessary to take concrete measures for the restoration of higher education in «Education and Science» direction in the Recovery Plan of Ukraine.

**The goal of the study** is the analysis of Recovery Plan of Ukraine on the topic of internationalisation of higher education, its goals (introduction of online admission of foreigners to Ukrainian universities on a regular basis; determination of priority measures for learning English; bringing the list of fields of knowledge into compliance with ISCED) and their fulfilment on the first stage (June 2022 – the end of 2022).

## METHODOLOGY

To achieve the above goal, several methods have been used, including an internet search, analysis, systematization of evident information. Recent documents on the development of higher education internationalization have been searched and analysed to reveal the fulfilment of Recovery Plan goals concerning the internationalisation of higher education. The statistic data of the state enterprise «Ukrainian State Center for International education» give information about enrollment of foreign students in Ukrainian higher education institutions and testify the decrease in number of foreign students in Ukraine.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

In the draft of the Recovery Plan of Ukraine (Materials of the working group «Education and Science», 2022), the key challenges, namely «insufficient level of internationalisation of higher education of Ukraine into the world and, especially, the European system of higher education, barriers to attracting foreign teachers to teaching and foreign students to study or internship in Ukraine under exchange programmes» have been named. The key opportunities (generalized for the specified field) are the internationalization of higher education institutions (research institutions) through the expansion of opportunities to participate in international projects and programmes of the EU and other countries, the involvement of foreign students and teachers, researchers; support of the active part of the educational environment toward progressive changes (Proiekt Planu vidnovlennia Ukrainy, 2022).

In the draft of the Recovery Plan of Ukraine (2022) regarding the internationalization of higher education, the problems, the goals aimed at solving the defined problem, and the measurable indicators of goal achievement have been defined.

*Goal 4.* Internationalization of higher education of Ukraine includes the following steps (Proiekt Planu vidnovlennia Ukrainy):

- introduction of online admission of foreigners to Ukrainian universities on a regular basis;
- determination of priority measures for learning English;
- bringing the list of fields of knowledge into compliance with ISCED (*stage 1: June 2022 – the end of 2022*);
- full completion of the training of higher education applicants at levels (degrees) that are not provided for in the governing documents of the European Higher Education Area;
- support for the development of English-language educational programmes, as well as joint (dual) educational programmes with universities belonging to the TOP 1000 world rankings;
- introduction of online admission of foreigners to Ukrainian universities on a regular basis;
- increasing opportunities to study foreign languages at universities, raising requirements for mastering them (*stage 2: January 2023 – December 2025*);
- supporting HEIs in entering the best world rankings;
- determination of priority measures for the popularization of natural and mathematical sciences (*stage 3: January 2026 – December 2032*).

The Plan uses the term «internationalisation», but Ukraine does not have a national internationalisation strategy that would determine the state's policy. The Law of Ukraine «On Higher Education» (2014) contains Chapter XIII «International Cooperation», which defines the main directions of international cooperation in the field of higher education. However, the strategy is a clear document that defines the vision, mission, values and strategic goals of internationalisation. The development of the National Strategy for the Internationalisation of Higher Education will contribute to the implementation of the Plan for the Restoration and Integration of Higher Education into the European Educational Space (Borodiienko et al., 2022).

**Introduction of online admission of foreigners to Ukrainian universities on a regular basis.** The large-scale aggression of Russia against Ukraine has caused a number of acute problems in the fields of education, science and innovation. At the same time war opened a new window of opportunity to accelerate Ukraine's integration into the European Union. Therefore, the policy of restoration and development of the spheres of education, science and innovation in the post-war period will be aimed at improving the quality and accessibility of education, development of science, synchronizing them with the educational and research space of the European Union by implementing strategic goals in the direction of higher education (in particular, internationalization): reboot work with foreign students to ensure the attractiveness and competitiveness of Ukrainian institutions of higher education in the world market of educational services; convenient and transparent admission for foreign citizens to higher education institutions (HEIs), development of English-language educational programmes: 200,000 foreign students receive higher education in Ukraine (Proiekt Planu vidnovlennia Ukrainy, 2022).

Having analysed the statistic data of the state enterprise «Ukrainian State Center for International education» one should conclude that to enroll 200,000 foreign students to Ukrainian HEIs is hardly achievable goal in the nearest future. The largest number of foreigners was in 2019 (80470). Pandemics caused reduction to 76548 foreign students in

2020. The number of higher education institutions in Ukraine that provide training for foreign students was 455 in 2019–2020, then decreased to 394 in 2020–2021. The most popular universities among foreign students were the following (2019): V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University (4277), Kharkiv National Medical University (4215), O.O. Bohomolets National Medical University (3061), Odesa National Medical University (2935), Zaporizhzhia State Medical University (2860). Top 10 countries of origin of foreign students were the following ones: India (18095), Morocco (8832), Turkmenistan (5322), Azerbaijan (4628), Nigeria (4227), China (4055), Turkey (3999), Egypt (3048), Israel (2107), Uzbekistan (1585). The data on number of foreign students after 2020 are not available (Inozemni studenty v Ukraini). Taking into account war in Ukraine and damage to HEI infrastructure the increase in the number of foreign students in Ukrainian HEIs cannot be expected.

Development Strategy of the state enterprise «Ukrainian State Center for International education» proposes to introduce an electronic visa and online admission for foreigners to study in Ukraine, in particular, through the Unified Interdepartmental Electronic Platform in the field of enrolment of foreign students (Stratehiia rozvytku derzhavnoho pidpriemstva, 2021).

Plan of measures to popularize opportunities for higher education in Ukraine for foreign students until 2025, adopted by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in April, 2021, (Pro zatverdzhennia planu zakhodiv, 2021) puts forward several steps to make Ukrainian HEIs attractable for foreigners, namely: develop a strategy for marketing higher education services on the international educational market for the period up to 2025;... provide high-quality educational services to foreign students by the distance form of education according to accredited programmes (June 2021); ensure the development and implementation of a single interdepartmental electronic platform (single electronic window, electronic office of the applicant/student) in order to ensure the procedure for enrolling foreigners and stateless persons in higher education institutions, including registration (registration and issuance) by higher education institutions electronic invitations to study (internship) in Ukraine,... (2022); develop and submit in the established order for consideration of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine: 1) draft law: On amendments to the Law of Ukraine «On Employment of the Population» regarding the work of foreigners and stateless persons pursuing higher education in Ukraine (2022).

So, according to the Plan it is necessary to: approve electronic invitation form; register (registration and issuance by HEIs) of electronic invitations using the means of a Single interdepartmental electronic platform; interact regarding the approval of electronic invitations; keep records of electronic invitations; introduce the Law of Ukraine «On Employment of the Population» regarding the work of foreigners and stateless persons pursuing higher education in Ukraine; ratify the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019).

**Determination of priority measures for learning English.** Ukraine generally has a low level of English proficiency. In the 2016 English Proficiency Index (EPI), Ukraine was ranked 41st of the 72 countries included. This was a decline from the 2015 results, when it came 34th, and Ukraine remains close to the very bottom of the rankings for 26 European countries (Bolitho and West, 2017, p. 33).

Many governments have responded to the increased demand for enhanced levels of English by publishing guidelines or ‘benchmarks’ for the English language target levels for students, teachers and academics, defined on the six-level scale of the Common European Framework of Reference (2001). A recent survey carried out in the British Council’s Wider Europe region showed the levels that have been mandated or recommended across the countries of the region (Bolitho and West, 2017, p. 17). Table 1 shows English level proficiency mandated or recommended across Ukraine.

Table 1

**English level proficiency mandated or recommended across Ukraine**

	Language speakers	Level
1.	School-leavers	B1
2.	University graduates (nonlinguistic)	B2
3.	University graduates (linguistic)	Not yet benchmarked
4.	Primary teachers	Not yet benchmarked
5.	Secondary teachers of English	C1
6.	University teachers	B2
7.	University teachers of English	Not yet benchmarked
8.	English as a/the Medium of Instruction academics (EMI)	B2

Source: Bolitho and West, 2017, p. 17.

The Ministry of Education and Science offers for public discussion the draft of the order «Methodological recommendations for ensuring quality study, teaching and use of the English language in higher education institutions of Ukraine» (2023), developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine as part of the implementation of the «Conceptual foundations of state policy on the development of the English language in the field of higher education», with the aim of improving the quality of teaching, studying and using the English language in higher education institutions of Ukraine. This document has been prepared taking into account the principles of the draft law «On the functioning of the English language as a language of international communication in Ukraine», as well as the Recommendations of the Council of the European Union dated May 22, 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning. The document provides recommendations to the management of higher education institutions of Ukraine, teachers of English for professional purposes and English for academic purposes of higher education institutions, teachers of professional disciplines in English (Metodychni rekomendatsii, 2023).

The Ministry of Education and Science developed and approved the Concept of English Language Development in Universities at the meeting of the Board of the Ministry of Education and Science. The document provides for the organization of language courses and intensives, knowledge of the English language at a level of at least B1 will be a mandatory condition for admission, B2 – for graduation, it is proposed to make part of specialized disciplines taught in English-language and conduct regular «knowledge screenings», in particular, introduce mandatory Examination in a foreign language after the bachelor's degree (Kontseptsiia rozvytku anhliiskoi movy, 2019).

**Bringing the list of fields of knowledge into compliance with ISCED.** On December 16, 2022, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine adopted Resolution № 1392 «On Amendments to the List of Fields of Knowledge and Specialties for which Higher Education Candidates are Trained» (Pro vnesennia zmin do pereliku haluzei znan i spetsialnostei, 2022). The changes are due to the development of the labour market, new threats and tasks that Ukraine faces in 2022 and further.

**Challenges while achieving goals the Recovery Plan of Ukraine.** According to the previous researches (Vitrenko et al., 2022), the dynamics of students population in higher education institutions in 2022–2032 is going to continue decreasing by an estimated 1.5–2.0 times until 2032. In the conditions of a decrease in the number of higher education institutions of Ukraine at the rate of 2005–2020 (35% in 15 years), the number of higher education graduates per one higher education institution may in 2032 be the following: in colleges, technical schools, colleges – 380–400; in universities, academies, institutes – 3380–3400. The

projected decrease in the number of higher education applicants by one higher education on average will objectively cause a decrease in the quality of services in the field of higher education, the efficiency of educational and scientific activities, the economic efficiency of production and provision of services in the field of higher education and services related to scientific research and experimental development and, in ultimately, to ineffective use of state and regional budget funds. It is concluded that an increase in the volume of state funding of higher education in Ukraine in the conditions of recovery from the consequences of the war with Russia compared to the pre-war period is not realistic. The number of applicants to HEIs will be dramatically shortened. Table 2 gives information about number of damaged/ruined higher education institutions in Ukraine (dated May, 2023).

Table 2

**Number of damaged/ruined higher education institutions in Ukraine**

N	Region	Damaged	Ruined
1.	Kharkiv	292	1
2.	Donetsk	9	3
3.	Mykolaiv	5	
4.	Luhansk	3	
5.	Chernihiv	4	
6.	Zhytomyr	2	
7.	Zaporizhzhia	2	5
8.	Kherson	1	
9.	Dnipropetrovsk	1	
10.	Odesa	1	
11.	Kirovohrad	1	
12.	Sumy	1	
13.	Kyiv	1	

Compiled by the author from Osvita pid zagrozoyu (2023).

**CONCLUSIONS**

The following steps of Goal 4 Internationalization of higher education of Ukraine (introduction of online admission of foreigners to Ukrainian universities on a regular basis; determination of priority measures for learning English; bringing the list of fields of knowledge into compliance with ISCED) adopted for the first stage 1 (June 2022 – the end of 2022) have been analysed. It should be concluded that the goals of the first stage have been fulfilled only partly. So, according to the Plan it is necessary to: approve electronic invitation form; register (registration and issuance by HEIs) of electronic invitations using the means of a Single interdepartmental electronic platform; interact regarding the approval of electronic invitations; keep records of electronic invitations; introduce the Law of Ukraine «On Employment of the Population» regarding the work of foreigners and stateless persons pursuing higher education in Ukraine; ratify the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education (2019).

The draft of the order «Methodological recommendations for ensuring quality study, teaching and use of the English language in higher education institutions of Ukraine» (2023), developed by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine as part of the implementation of the «Conceptual foundations of state policy on the development of the English language in the field of higher education», with the aim of improving the quality of teaching, studying and using the English language in higher education institutions of Ukraine should be adopted.

The increase in the volume of state funding of higher education in Ukraine in the conditions of recovery from the consequences of the war with Russia compared to the pre-war period is not realistic. The number of Ukrainian and foreign applicants to HEIs will decrease.

## PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

It is recommended to study how the Plan of measures to popularize opportunities for higher education in Ukraine for foreign students until 2025 is being implemented by Ukrainian HEIs.

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## ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛІЗАЦІЯ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ В КОНТЕКСТІ ВІДНОВЛЕННЯ УКРАЇНИ: ЦІЛІ ТА ВИКЛИКИ

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*Метою дослідження є аналіз Плану відновлення України з питань інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти, його цілей та їх досягнення. Ціль 4 Інтернаціоналізація вищої освіти України передбачає наступні кроки: запровадження он-лайн вступу іноземців до українських університетів на регулярній основі; визначення першочергових заходів щодо вивчення англійської мови; приведення переліку галузей знань у відповідність до МСКО (1 етап: червень 2022 – кінець 2022). Для досягнення вищезазначеної мети було використано декілька методів, серед яких пошук в Інтернеті, аналіз, систематизація наочної інформації. Встановлено, що МОНУ забезпечує нормативну базу для виконання завдань першого етапу. При цьому зазначено, що необхідно: затвердити електронну форму запрошення; оформлення (реєстрації та видачі закладами вищої освіти) електронних запрошень з використанням засобів єдиної міжвідомчої електронної платформи; взаємодіяти щодо погодження електронних запрошень; вести облік електронних запрошень; запровадити Закон України «Про зайнятість населення» щодо праці іноземців та осіб без громадянства, які здобувають вищу освіту в Україні; ратифікувати Глобальну конвенцію про визнання кваліфікацій вищої освіти (2019). Збільшення обсягів державного фінансування вищої освіти в Україні в умовах відновлення від наслідків війни з росією порівняно з довоєнним періодом не є реалістичним. Кількість українських та іноземних вступників до закладів вищої освіти зменшиться.*

*Ключові слова: англійська мова, іноземні студенти, інтернаціоналізація вищої освіти, Міжнародна стандартна класифікація освіти (МСКО), План відновлення України.*