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## **THE SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATION QUALITY MANAGEMENT: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

*The article deals with the current tendencies in the quality management of university education in the context of modern European practices. The evolution of the quality management system development in the European Union and the modern approaches to the quality problem of university education have been traced. The main tendencies in the development of the quality management system of university education in Ukraine have been determined, both at the state level and at the level of a separate institution of higher education. The expediency of implementing the best European practices for maintaining university education quality in Ukraine has been proved.*

**Key words:** *European educational space; quality; university education quality; university education quality management.*

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**Introduction.** The experience of the leading EU countries clearly demonstrates the fact that investment in the development of higher education and science at the level of 3–8% of the gross domestic product allows them to remain at the level of advanced economically developed states. And this is understandable, because education becomes the impetus which in the conditions of transition from the industrial to the information society enables the development of the intellectual potential of the nation, and therefore the economy.

In this regard, the category of university education quality becomes defining, and not in the traditional narrow sense but in a broader aspect – to build a quality management system, which provides a new level of development of higher education in general.

It should be noted that the process of reforming the domestic higher school is still largely directed in the presence of old structures and management methods, left from the Soviet administrative-command socio-economic system.

Therefore, currently in Ukraine the development and implementation of the modern education quality management strategies is an important factor for accelerating the development of both the entire educational sector and a separate higher education institution.

The analysis of numerous publications has shown the interest of scientists in the mentioned problem: ensuring the quality of education both at the state and regional levels (V. Kremen, V. Lugovyi, S. Nikolayenko, V. Ognevyuk and others); methodological aspects and issues of education quality assurance (K. Korsak, T. Lukina, V. Lunyachek, S. Sysoyeva, I. Sokolova, etc.). The scientists prove the need for changes in approaches to the higher education quality in the context of modern processes of globalization, fierce competition, informatization and adaptation of the educational sphere of Ukraine to European standards.

One of the possible ways that will allow higher education institutions to withstand fierce competition in the market of services in the field of higher education, which reached culmination in Ukraine, is the development and implementation of quality management system. At the same time, in our opinion, the issues of building a national quality management system for university education on the basis of a thorough study of the experience of the European Union remain relevant.

**The purpose of the article** is to develop a theoretical and methodological basis for building a quality management system of Ukrainian university education in the context of the experience of the European Union countries.

**University education quality management system in the European Union: a historical discourse.** The increased interest and attention to the problems of determining quality in the higher education system is a characteristic feature not only for individual European countries, but also for the European Union as a whole. In many European countries, the system of the University Education Quality Management: the experience of the European Union

countries, the concept of the quality of the educational process began to attract attention from the beginning of the 80s of the previous century. In the UK in 1984, R. Joseph expressed the view that the main objects in assessing the higher education system should be «quality» and «investment». In the same year, the National Quality Committee was organized in France. In the Netherlands in 1985, a government document was published entitled «Higher Education: Autonomy and Quality». In a number of other European countries, discussions began on the need to introduce a quality system in the structure of higher education. The actualization of this problem D. F. Westerheijden (1992) explains the following factors. One of the main reasons lies in the general social concept of increasing the state budget as a whole, in connection with which questions are raised about the advantages that higher education should provide in comparison with other social spheres. The next one is to increase attention to the quality of the educational process, which is explained by the expansion of the West European educational system. The rapid increase in the number of students over the past decades is accompanied by an increase and the emergence of new educational areas (especially in the social sphere), faculties and even institutes, which led to discussions about increasing the national budget in the higher education sector. As the next one, we will highlight the factor of «openness» in many areas of modern society. This means that information about this institution, about the system of its work, programs, level of knowledge and qualifications obtained by graduates of this institution or university, is becoming more accessible outside this institution; the fourth is explained by the increased international mobility of students, teachers and researchers in Europe, as well as the internationalization of the European labor market.

Thus, the expansion of the Western European system of higher education and the increase in the costs of its development and support lead to the fact that educational institutions are really faced with the need to demonstrate a high level of specialist training in order to justify the investments made. At the same time, the process of internationalization of the European higher education determines the importance and necessity of creating a system for assessing the quality of educational institutions on an international scale.

Analyzing higher education systems, in particular, in the policy of quality, two approaches are distinguished: continental (countries of continental Europe) and British. For

the *continental approach*, the most important characteristic is the external side, that is, it is turned out how prepared graduates of higher education institutions are to participate in the country's national economy. This is because higher education institutions are mainly financed by the government.

In the context of the *British approach*, quality is characterized by greater independence and autonomy, since British universities are free in their development and in the choice of forms of control. This is due to the fact that the higher education system in the UK is less dependent on public funding.

However, in the late 80s and early 90s of the previous century, new methods began to be developed and used in higher education quality systems both in Europe and the UK. Their main goal is not only fulfillment of control by the state, but also the organization of a process that would contribute to the improvement of the education system itself.

**University education quality assurance in the European educational space: a scientific discourse.** The World Declaration on Higher Education, adopted in November 1998, stated that the quality of higher education is a multidimensional concept that covers all activities of higher education institutions, training and academic programs, training and research work, higher-education teaching personnel and specialists, material and technical base and other resources. For a better understanding of the phenomenon under study and the implementation of the research goal, we will justify those approaches to ensuring higher education quality which are most used in modern scientific discourse. So, in particular, R. Barnett distinguishes three main ones: objectivist, relativistic, and a developmental concept.

It should be noted that in the framework of the *objectivist approach*, the most important in this sense is the possibility of objective measurements and the comparability of the results of evaluations of various objects (disciplines, institutions, etc.). This approach involves the analysis of quality associated with the characteristics of «input» and «output» in the educational system. The main indicators of the «input» are the teachers' professional level, the level of technical equipment of higher education institutions, the level of knowledge of students who have come to it. Typical indicators of the «output» in the educational system are students' rating, the possibility of graduates' employment and their further education.

The essence of *the relativistic approach* is in the absence of absolute criteria with the help of which it would be possible to evaluate any actions in the educational system. The practical implementations of the relativistic approach are, first of all, related to the assessment of «correspondence to the goal».

Development is a key concept in the *concept of development*, the third approach in ensuring education quality.

Let us characterize the relationships between these approaches and their inherent features: first, if the relativistic and objectivist approaches relate to the level of external assessment of the quality of the educational process, then the third, as opposed to them, refers to the level of internal assessment of the higher education institutions activities (higher-education teaching personnel and students who study at this institution). However, this does not mean that the third concept excludes external quality assessment; secondly, if the previous approaches evaluate the past experience of higher education institutions, the third is focused on improving the quality of the educational process in the current period of time, that is, it is creative in nature; thirdly, measurements based on objectivistic and relativistic concepts evaluate the quality of work of educational institutions as a whole or its managerial policy or are used as a tool in the procedures for distributing national resources. The concept of development is based on the activities for curricula improvement.

Brennan, Williams, Harris, McNamara (1997), who conducted research in higher education institutions, came to the conclusion that the assessment of the quality of educational space is a collective and multifactorial process, the purpose of which is not only proper assessment, but also monitoring compliance with the standards system, tracking changes and news; the assessment process should be obvious and should be based on real phenomena and facts related to the work of specific higher education institutions (Gordon, 1998, p. 300).

P. Jacobsson (1990) notes that different approaches to defining quality are most often based on ideas such as customer satisfaction, usability, or a good level. The definition of the concept of quality also depends on what is being evaluated and by whom, what criteria or indicators are distinguished, which prospects are determined and for what purpose. Thus, P. Jacobsson, considering the quality of the educational process, identifies several areas: the

quality of applicants, the quality of the training process, the quality of exams, the quality and level of educational funding (Jacobsson, 1990, p. 61).

D. F. Westerheijden (1990), according to the results of the examination of the definition of quality in scientific discourse, notes that the achievement of specific educational goals is a characteristic element of quality. Achieving practical goals is equivalent to the quality level of the final «product». According to this concept, quality can be attributed to the relativistic approach; it is emphasized separately that quality is a multidimensional concept. Regarding the goals, this provision can be reformulated as follows: quality is measured relative to the many different goals that are set before the participants in the educational process (Westerheijden, 1992, p. 184).

Harvey (1997) consider five broad approaches to the quality system in higher education, which are regarded as: a special process aimed at a positive result at the «exit»; the process of improvement within the educational process; compliance with goals, indicating fulfillment of requests, requirements and expectations of consumers; result of investment; transformations denoting changes in improvement, providing opportunities for students or in the development of new ones (Harvey, 1997, p. 133).

Analyzing various approaches to ensuring and assessing the quality of higher education and taking into account its multidimensionality and multifactorial nature, we single out the most important aspects of this process. So, in the scientific discourse of the problems of education quality they talk about assessment, control, monitoring, quality assurance, etc.

*Quality control* is used to designate, as a rule, external quality assessment procedures aimed at achieving a certain expected level of quality. *Quality monitoring* involves the processes of direct assessment or tracking of certain criteria or indicators of quality, as well as the «level» of quality, it is also associated with assessing the material investments effectiveness.

It is necessary to note that in English publications on higher education quality problems the term *quality assessment* is widely used meaning a quality assessment system in the broad sense of both external and internal assessment, which includes a number of stages (planning stages, evaluation itself or monitoring, analysis, etc.). Narrower assessment procedures are also denoted by the terms *quality assessment*, *quality audit*, *quality judgement*, etc.

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In the European educational space, the term *quality assurance* is also often used, which can be translated as quality assurance or confidence in quality. Quality assurance system, except for the stages connected with the assessment, also includes the stages of search and decision-making on improvement and the stages of their implementation. The most important characteristics of a quality system are its cyclical nature and focus on improvement.

**The problem of university education quality management in the modern scientific research.** Although the issues related to the quality of education are priorities in the current scientific discourse, there is no consensus among scholars regarding the definitive analysis of the quality management of education and its interpretation.

First of all, it is worth distinguishing between the concepts of «quality management» and «management of quality», which, according to many researchers, are synonymous. So, in particular, N. Ginzburg (2016) believes that the term «management» should be borrowed only in that sense for which the Ukrainian language does not have an interrogative or already clarified term (since in the absence of a market economy there was no corresponding area of knowledge) (Ginsburg, 2016).

Secondly, referring to the essence of the concept of «higher education quality management», it is worth focusing on the essence of quality management in general. Management of quality is a branch of knowledge that helps to carry out management functions, whose subjects are people (managers of different types) and is aimed at people (management objects). Since management is the science of social, administrative management, quality management is a combination of principles, methods, tools and forms of organization and management of production and the production process in order to include quality requirements (Ginzburg, 2016).

It is precisely by the general positions of the management of quality that we can single out the definition field of the management of quality, and this approach, in our opinion, is quite justified, since the same laws are applied in the educational services market and in the material production or services market. Thus, comparing competitive priorities in industry and the provision of higher education services, R. Chase, N. Ekvilayn and R. Jacobs (2001), note that with a certain similarity there are some differences (Table 1).

Table 1

**Competitive priorities in industry and university education services**

Competitive priorities	
Industry	Higher education services
Product quality, compliance with established requirements	Quality of preparation of the graduate, compliance with the established requirements of the legislation and the consumer
Reliability	The ability of the graduate to work unmistakably, his or her adaptability to the conditions at the place of work
Timely fulfillment of the order	The need for graduates of the relevant specialty in the labor market
Price	Cost of a graduate training
Speed of order fulfillment	Graduate preparation time
Improvement of production and introduction of the new one	Pre-and post-diploma studies, improvement of the educational process, introduction of new specialties

Scientists (S. Sysoieva, I. Sokolova) are inclined to believe that effective management of quality in higher education correlates with the concept of effective management of quality in general and at a conceptual level. It means the following: constancy of purpose; focusing on customer satisfaction, on the process, which requires continuous improvement; the use of evidence in the decision-making process, and long-term obligations on the part of management. Education management, according to scientists, allows to significantly improve and actualize activities and increase the effectiveness of the educational institution, to achieve and consistently maintain the high quality of its educational services to meet the



needs and requirements of consumers; to receive customer recognition through the certification procedure; to participate in tenders, including international, on the provision of educational services on favorable terms (Sysoieva, Sokolova, 2016, p. 214).

**External and internal evaluation in higher education quality assurance systems.**

The tendency to provide greater independence to higher education institutions in many countries is associated with the development of not only an external, but also an internal quality assessment system. Self-assessment can be considered as a separate process and as part of the overall quality assessment cycle. The development of internal mechanisms for assessing quality is associated with processes such as the transition from government regulation to market orientation, increased attention to improvements and the development of the quality of educational programs and institutions of higher education.

D. F. Westerheijden (1992), considering the approach which is being developed in the Netherlands, identifies the external and internal components in a cyclical system of quality assessment focused on improvement (p. 11).

So, in particular, external quality control includes the following objectives: to contribute to improving the quality of education; to report to the public on the quality of education and research; to support the implementation of a process of self-regulation focused on quality at the faculty at the university and in general in the system of universities in the country; to contribute to the planning process; to provide students with information about the quality of courses being studied and job prospects. The external quality assessment system as a whole is more focused on understanding quality, related to standards, economic efficiency, etc., and the internal one is based on improvements focused on competitiveness and development. As a rule, the process of external evaluation includes elements of self-assessment.

E. El-Khawas & T. Jhan, (1998), considering various options for using internal audits, outlines the following main steps, such as setting goals and general preparation, the audit process, report and further practical application. The last stage includes (in several different versions) the steps to develop recommendations for improvement and their implementation (El-Khawas, Jhan, 1998).

In European quality assessment systems, there is a general tendency to shift the emphasis from control and monitoring to development, improvement and self-regulation.

The main approaches to the evaluation process that are used in both external and internal quality systems are *performance indicators* and *peer reviews*. Performance indicators are focused primarily on quantitative estimates, such as empirical quantitative or qualitative data that can be used to judge goals. Most assessment methods in which evaluation is done by people are called *peer reviews* (or reviews) (Geodegebuure, Maassen, 2000, p. 29).

The use of both performance metrics and peer reviews is connected with a number of problems and questions that are difficult to answer clearly. So, in particular, what indicators of effectiveness can serve as criteria in assessing the quality of education, who can be an expert, how reliable are those or other assessments, etc.

Thus, in Western European quality assurance systems there are still many unresolved problems – the balance between internal and external processes, the search for optimal methods of assessment, etc.

**University education quality management system of Ukraine in the context of European practices.** The analysis of European practices to ensure the quality of higher education allows us to identify the main requirements and areas regarding both internal and external assurance, as well as the activities of quality assurance agencies themselves: a clear definition of the policy and related quality assurance procedures; strategies, policies, procedures and implementers should have a certain official status; wording and promulgation and consistent compliance with the criteria on which any quality assurance activity should be based; compliance of available resources with the set goals and procedures for their implementation; participation of all interested parties in the quality assurance processes; regular monitoring and reporting; publicity and accessibility of all information on education quality assurance issues.

The fulfillment of these requirements provides for the implementation of the following measures:

- development of recommendations on the implementation of national standards and recommendations to ensure quality in the European space of higher education;

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- creation of an accreditation system and the National educational accreditation center;
- increasing the international level of Ukraine's participation in the external quality assurance system;
- development and implementation of mechanisms for the participation of employers in the control procedure and public responsibility for the quality of higher professional education;
- increasing student participation in the national quality system;
- introduction of ongoing monitoring of the quality of higher education, taking into account international, European and national experience;
- improving the rating system for evaluating the performance of higher education institutions as tools for managing the quality of higher education;
- introduction and development of the practice of ensuring accessibility and transparency of information on quality assurance issues in higher education at all levels: a separate institution of higher education, nationally and internationally.

For the successful completion of these tasks, a coordinated interaction of all parts of the system for ensuring the quality of education in Ukraine is necessary (Fig. 1)

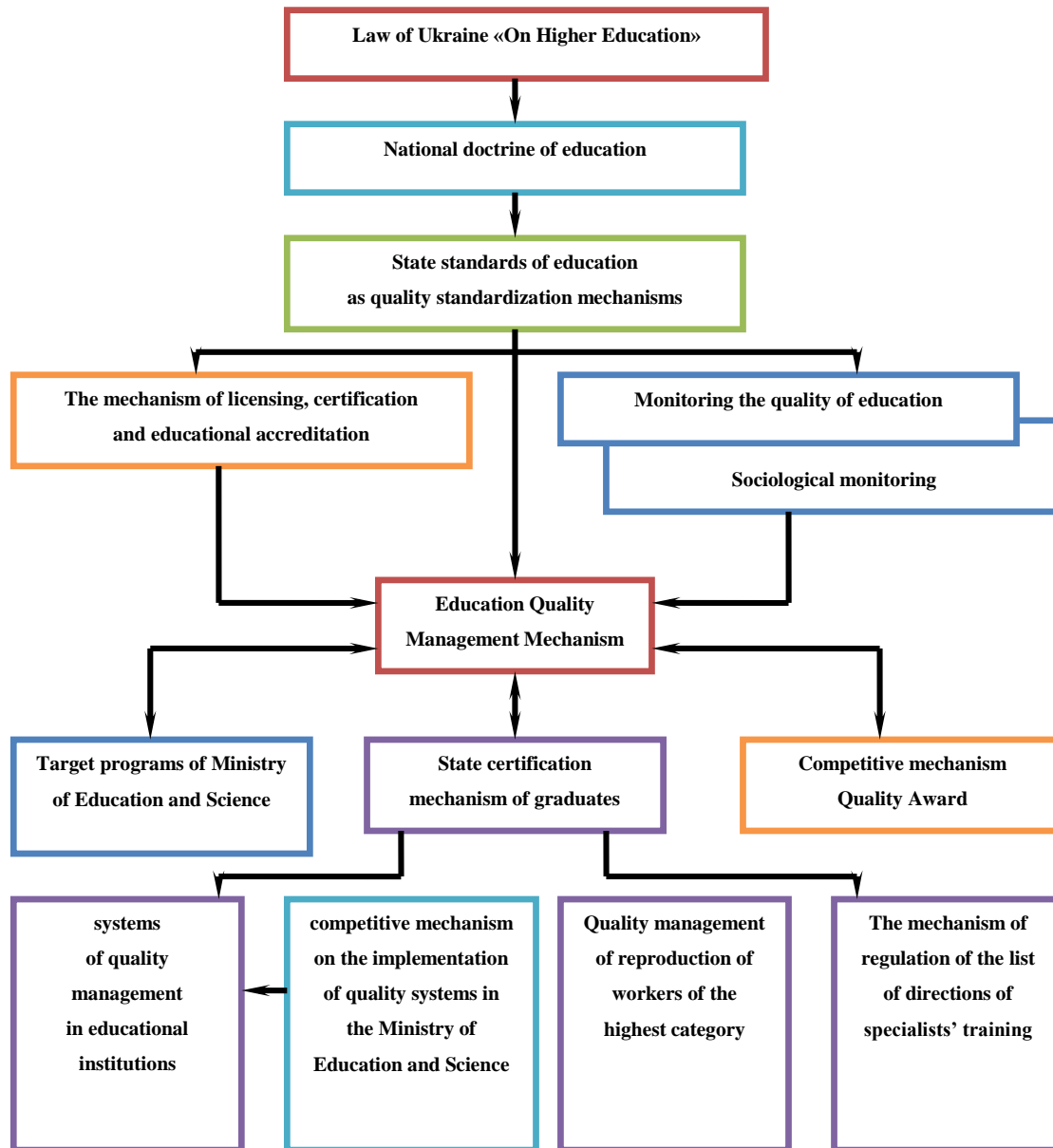


Figure 1. **The system of university education quality assurance in Ukraine at the state level**

It is necessary to note that for the successful implementation of the quality of education in Ukraine, it is vital to work in this direction of the highest educational institutions as well. The formation of a quality policy in a particular institution of higher education is based on the fact that its administration should take full responsibility for the implementation of the quality system of higher education and the technology for its implementation.

It should be noted that, as a rule, higher educational institutions that created their own quality systems focused on the educational process, the creation and documentation of The system of the University Education Quality Management: the experience of the European Union

methods and procedures in accordance with the requirements established by the standards, and also confirmed their implementation mainly at a formalized level. In some cases, this led to disappointment and resistance of the staff of a higher education the institution and further to the refusal to continue work in the field of quality. However, it is worth noting that the difficulties that arise in front of teachers cannot cross out the obvious advantages of applying modern quality management methods.

**Conclusions.** The quality of higher education in Ukraine is declining, while competition in the educational services market, in particular in Europe, is intensifying. The latter encourages government, scientists and educators to look for ways to ensure and improve the quality of training of specialists with higher education. The studied problem cannot be solved exclusively at the state level. Only combining the efforts of higher education institutions themselves with state initiatives will improve the quality of higher education in Ukraine, and therefore accelerate the process of its reform. Carefully studying the European practice of ensuring the quality of higher education, in particular, such as general quality management, project management, forecasting and modeling of the quality management system will enable the competitiveness of the national higher education institution in the European educational space.

**Contents of the article reflects only the author's view, the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency and the European Commission are not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.**

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## **СИСТЕМА УПРАВЛІННЯ ЯКІСТЮ УНІВЕРСИТЕТСЬКОЇ ОСВІТИ: ДОСВІД ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКОГО СОЮЗУ**

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*У статті висвітлено сучасні тенденції менеджменту якості університетської освіти в контексті сучасних європейських практик. Простежено еволюцію розвитку системи менеджменту якості в Європейському Союзі. Представлено сучасний науковий дискурс щодо проблеми менеджменту якості університетської освіти в європейському науковому просторі та в Україні, зокрема відмінності в дефініційному аналізі та концептуальних положеннях.*

*Зазначено особливості та відмінності зовнішнього та внутрішнього оцінювання в системах забезпечення якості університетської освіти, наголошено на необхідності балансу між цими процесами та пошуку оптимальних методів оцінювання. Окреслено основні тенденції розвитку системи менеджменту якості університетської освіти в Україні, зокрема, розробку та запровадження правових механізмів, постійно діючого моніторингу якості вищої освіти з урахуванням світового, європейського та національного досвіду, удосконалення рейтингової системи оцінювання результатів діяльності закладів вищої освіти як інструментів управління якістю вищої освіти. Представлено систему менеджменту якості університетської освіти, як на державному рівні, так і на рівні окремого закладу вищої освіти. Доведено доцільність втілення кращих європейських практик із збереження якості університетської освіти в Україні.*

**Ключові слова:** європейський освітній простір; менеджмент якості університетської освіти; якість; якість університетської освіти.

## **СИСТЕМА УПРАВЛЕНИЯ КАЧЕСТВОМ УНИВЕРСИТЕТСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ: ОПЫТ ЕВРОПЕЙСКОГО СОЮЗА**

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*В статье освещены современные тенденции менеджмента качества университетского образования в контексте современных европейских практик. Прослежено эволюцию развития системы менеджмента качества в Европейском Союзе и современные подходы к проблеме качества университетского образования. Очерчено основные тенденции развития системы менеджмента качества университетского образования в Украине, как на государственном уровне, так и на уровне отдельного высшего учебного заведения. Доказана целесообразность внедрения лучших европейских практик из развития качества университетского образования в Украине.*

**Ключевые слова:** европейское образовательное пространство; качество; качество университетского образования; менеджмент качества университетского образования.

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