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IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AS THE MAIN STRATEGIC GOAL OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

In the current conditions of transformation of Ukrainian society, military challenges and integration into the European Higher Education Area, improving the quality of higher education is gaining strategic importance. The quality of the educational process is becoming not only an academic, but also a socio-economic category that determines the competitiveness of the state, its human potential and capacity for innovative development. Ensuring the quality of education requires higher education institutions (HEIs) to take a systematic approach to updating educational programs, personnel development, digitalisation and the formation of effective internal and external control mechanisms. In the conditions of war and post-war reconstruction, special attention should be paid to the flexibility of the educational process, the preservation of human capital and the integration of international standards into the quality management system.

The purpose of the study is to generalise the conceptual principles and practical mechanisms for improving the quality of higher education in Ukraine in the conditions of military challenges and post-war reconstruction, to determine the main directions of development of the education quality assurance system, to analyse risks and expected results of implementing effective policies in this area.

The materials of the study are: 1) regulatory legal acts of Ukraine and the EU that regulate the system of quality assurance of higher education (ESG, documents of the National Agency for Quality Assurance of Higher Education); 2) analytical reports of the Ministry of Education and Science, the State Service for Quality of Education, ENQA, OECD; 3) works of domestic and foreign scientists devoted to the issues of quality management of education, personnel development, digitalisation and institutional sustainability of HEIs. The study used the methods of theoretical generalisation, content analysis, structural-functional approach, comparative analysis, as well as systemic risk analysis and assessment of managerial effects from the implementation of quality improvement policies.

The article determines that improving the quality of education is the central strategic goal of the development of HEIs, which has a multiplier effect: it ensures the competitiveness of universities, increases the employability of graduates, promotes international integration and financial sustainability. The main directions of the quality

improvement policy are identified: updating the content of education, developing internal and external QA systems, human resource development, digitalisation of infrastructure, expanding international cooperation, financial diversification and social inclusion. Particular attention is paid to the specifics of quality assurance in wartime conditions - preserving human capital, adapting programs to the needs of reconstruction, introducing reserve educational models and using international grant opportunities. Key risks of policy implementation (financial, personnel, technical, institutional) are identified and mechanisms for their mitigation are defined. The expected results are increasing the effectiveness of education, strengthening public trust, institutional stability and international reputation of Ukrainian HEIs.

Further research should be focused on developing models for assessing the effectiveness of internal quality assurance systems, studying the impact of hybrid learning formats on academic results, as well as the role of HEIs in the processes of national reconstruction. A comparative analysis of European QA practices, in particular ESG and ENQA, with the possibility of their adaptation to the Ukrainian context is promising. Deepening research in this area will contribute to the formation of a modern system of quality management in higher education, capable of ensuring its sustainability, transparency and efficiency in the global educational space.

Keywords: quality of higher education, quality assurance (QA), higher education institution, internal quality system, ESG, human resource development, digitalisation, institutional sustainability, international cooperation.