

Review of the national legislation and education policy in the context of the EHEA documents and Bologna principles

SUMMARY

SOURCES: State Statistics Service of Ukraine, SSSU (<https://www.ukrstat.gov.ua/>)
The Unified State Electronic Database on Education (<https://info.edbo.gov.ua/>)
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (<https://mon.gov.ua/>)
NEO – Ukraine, HERE resources (<https://erasmusplus.org.ua/library/materialy-here-team/>)
HERE publication, preprint “The network of public higher education institutions of Ukraine: analysis of efficiency and competitiveness” (in Ukrainian) (https://ihed.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Merezha-derzh.zakladiv-VO-Ukrayiny_NAPN-2024-68p.pdf)

The Annual Review presents glance on the national policy and legislation as of 2024 in the context of policies of the European Higher Education Area.

During 2024, there were certain quantitative changes in the higher education structure related to martial law in Ukraine, the lowering of the mobilization age as well as internal and external migration of teachers, students and youth. The number of HEIs decreased by 29 state institutions due to a number of HEIs mergers, but 4 private HEIs were established. The number of University teachers decreased by almost 5,000, and the number of students increased by 95,000, as full-time students have a deferral from conscription into the army. In 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine introduced a centralized procedure for taking entrance exams for Bachelor's, Master's and PhD studies through online testing in English and in general competence under the Ministry control.

The forecast for applicants to higher education institutions in the coming years looks pessimistic, as the number of schools and school students is decreasing. The number of public schools has decreased by 223, students in public schools has decreased by over 150,000, and teachers by almost 13,000. Moreover, there are 48 more private schools, the number of private schools' students has also increased by over 14,000, and teachers by 1,200, which is explained by the offer of its high-quality digital education in particular. The digital format of education is more attractive in conditions of war and constant shelling for those families who remain in Ukraine, and for those who have gone abroad but want to study according to the Ukrainian school curriculum.

The National Qualifications Agency provides activities related to the international recognition of NQF and the development of the national qualifications system, including its alignment with the European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations (ESCO). The Cabinet of Ministers has registered in the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) the *draft Law On the National Qualifications System*. The document is aimed at streamlining the National Qualifications System and its legislative support, determining the mechanisms for interaction between stakeholders within the National Qualifications System, standardizing the issues of assigning, confirming and recognizing professional qualifications, and creating conditions for maximum involvement of business in the process of training specialists in educational institutions and other subjects of educational activity.

The draft Law proposes to:

- ✓ determine the purpose, objectives, structure and principles of the organization and functioning of the National Qualifications System, the principles of developing qualifications frameworks, professional standards, the formation and maintenance of the Unified Register of Qualifications;
- ✓ determine the powers of state bodies in qualifications sphere, in particular, clarify the specifics of the status, tasks and powers of the National Qualifications Agency;
- ✓ outline the tasks and rights of sectoral councils for the development of professional qualifications, the procedures for accreditation and activities of qualification centers, the general principles of awarding, confirmation, recognition of professional qualifications, in particular, those obtained through non-formal and informal education, as well as the awarding and confirmation of educational qualifications, including partial ones;
- ✓ introduce, in accordance with the Council of Europe recommendation (COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 16 June 2022 on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability (2022/C 243/02), the concept of micro-credentials, the features of their acquisition and assignment.

The national system of external and internal quality assurance of higher education is developed in line with Bologna process and EHEA trends. In 2024, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine updated Council responsible for higher education standards development and started competitive selection to the commissions on higher education standards development by sectors. The Council worked out *draft Guidelines on developing higher education standards* taking into account the EHEA and ESG approaches. This draft introduces more liberal approach to standards design via reducing number of the requirements on content that expanding academic autonomy in study programmes design and implementation. The draft also takes into account the specifics of creating study programmes for regulated professions. Standards are a component of external quality assurance of higher education and are used in the evaluation of an study programme.

As of 2024, 285 higher education standards (about 80 %) for the Bachelor, Master and PhD levels built on the basis of a competency-based approach and learning outcomes, and NQF have been approved by the Ministry and implemented. The standards were developed with HEREs and NEO – Ukraine participation.

On June 6, 2024, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (Parliament), based on the results of consideration in the first reading, adopted as a basis the *draft Law On Academic Integrity*. The adoption of the Law of Ukraine On Academic Integrity will be a historic step, since there are no analogues to it in any state of the European area. The Law will provide an opportunity to raise the level of culture in all educational institutions and research institutions to a higher level, corresponding to European standards, and to establish the values of academic integrity, both in the academic environment and in society as a whole. The formation of a culture of academic integrity in HEIs should lead to: increasing trust in the learning outcomes of students; improving the quality of education; improving the quality and honesty in scientific research; improving the integrity of citizens (school and university graduates) in public life: in civil service, in courts, law enforcement agencies, in business, etc.

The draft Law of Ukraine On Academic Integrity:

- ✓ ensure legal certainty in the issue of the content of academic integrity, revealing it through specific, defined by the global academic community, basic values: honesty, trust, respect, justice, responsibility, resilience, determination;
- ✓ determine the basic principles and basic rules of academic integrity, which must be followed by all participants in the educational process at all levels of education, all researchers during the conduct of scientific activities;
- ✓ outline the main ways to ensure academic integrity;
- ✓ determine the content and main types of violations of academic integrity, the content and main issues of academic responsibility, including the main types of sanctions for such violations;
- ✓ regulate the main procedures for responding to violations of academic integrity, having determined the specifics of responding to violations of academic integrity by a student, the specifics of holding heads of HEIs and research institutions to academic responsibility, and the specifics and consequences of depriving them of an awarded academic degree, higher education degree, or awarded academic title;
- ✓ provide in the final and transitional provisions of the draft Law for amendments to other laws of Ukraine for the systematic and balanced implementation of academic integrity at all levels of education, in scientific activity, etc.;
- ✓ clearly separate the issues of protecting academic integrity from the issues of protecting copyright and related rights (they have different objects of protection and these are different social relations).

An important reform is the modernization of the network of HEIs in the context of higher education quality assurance and enhancement. The state is unable to provide adequate funding for the existing number of state institutions and there is no need to maintain such an extensive network, given the demographic situation and limited human, financial and infrastructure resources. Also the national network of higher education institutions needs optimization due to the dominance of small-scale institutions that are unable to provide the necessary quality of education, often duplicate education on the similar study programmes in one city, train students in specialties that are not relevant for society and the economy, do not correspond to the profile of the HEI, and instead consume significant resources.

Draft Law on the prerequisites for the modernization of the network of educational institutions: University affiliates, units; colleges as HEIs, professional colleges within the structure of HEIs, HEI management includes mature and prepared decisions on the accession and merger of state HEIs in different regions and monitoring of relocated higher education institutions.

Despite the martial law, the work on the European integration of higher education of Ukraine continues – relevant regulatory and legal documents, which contribute to the higher education quality assurance and the qualifications recognition, are being developed and modernized.

Based on the required EU expertise and resources for the implementation of reforms, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine recommended the priorities for the higher education institutions to apply for EU's Erasmus+ Programme calls 2025:

- ✓ *European Integration of Ukraine in curricula / courses / modules*
- ✓ *Education of translators/interpreters for accession to European Union*
- ✓ *Higher Education for the post-war recovery*
- ✓ *Inclusive and innovative Higher Education area for the 3rd mission of University*
- ✓ *Individualisation of Learning Paths in Higher Education*
- ✓ *English as a lingua Franca of higher education*
- ✓ *Pedagogical (Teachers) Education Reform*
- ✓ *Open Science in Higher Education Institutions*

The details are placed on the NEO – Ukraine website

[https://erasmusplus.org.ua/wp-](https://erasmusplus.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/10.12_naczionalni_priorytety_erasmus_2025.pdf)

[content/uploads/2024/12/10.12_naczionalni_priorytety_erasmus_2025.pdf](https://erasmusplus.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/10.12_naczionalni_priorytety_erasmus_2025.pdf)

- ✓ Unofficial translation: https://erasmusplus.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/mesu_priorities_1.pptx
<https://erasmusplus.org.ua/opportunities/mozhlyvosti-dlya-organizacij/rozbudova-potenczialu-u-sferi-vyshhoyi-osvity/>

Other useful resources prepared by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine is a Roadmap on European Integration: https://erasmusplus.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/10.12_yevronitegracziya_rekomendacziyi_yek_ta_dorkarta.pdf

The EU's Erasmus+ Programme is considered as a most systemic instrument to implement reforms in higher education.