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## WAYS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN HIGHER MILITARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

*The article considers the issues of improving the quality of education, as well as a number of important issues of training of higher education students in higher military educational institutions. Attention is paid to the quality and level of teaching disciplines and preparation of educational components. The aspect of the interest of higher education students in learning and preparation for further career growth, their motivation for further education and self-improvement is also studied.*

*The author's proposals and recommendations for improving the methods of teaching and learning by students are presented.*

**Keywords:** *educational competences, level of higher education, quality of higher education, motivation of students.*

**Statement of the problem.** Today, the dramatic events that have engulfed Ukraine force us, unfortunately, to focus on the escalation and modernisation of weapons, the development and rapid implementation of modern military innovative technologies in the armament of the Ukrainian army. This requires training officers and military specialists at a modern, higher level in order to always be one step ahead of the enemy. This task is entrusted to higher military educational institutions, which train officers who will teach and pass on knowledge in their units to the personnel.

Time is moving forward, events are changing rapidly, and during military operations this process is accelerated to the maximum and requires constant analysis of actions, events and situations in order to develop, create and implement new, etc. In this regard, the modern training of higher education students should dynamically change in the direction of raising the level of teaching and learning. Attention should also be paid to what is appropriate and essential for a modern higher education student, and to what has already lost its relevance or is outdated.

Considering the issues of education, training and graduation of cadets and adjuncts in higher education institutions, the authors believe that a number of issues are relevant:

- the level of teaching of academic disciplines,

theoretical and practical classes, and other educational competences;

- the ability of academic staff to work with the audience, to establish contact and rapport with students;

- interest and motivation of higher education students to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills;

- creating the necessary conditions for modern teaching of educational components (equipment for audio-visual perception of educational material).

In the context of education and training of higher education students in higher military educational institutions, the issue of involving cadets in scientific activities is relevant. Scientific clubs have been created and are functioning in the military educational institutions, where students are preparing for future scientific activities in the field of military science under the guidance of experienced teachers.

Academic staff directly organise and conduct meetings of scientific and practical clubs, prepare relevant and interesting information for students on important issues of modern military science. At the meetings of the club, the students discuss relevant issues, express their own positions and visions, prepare scientific articles and abstracts of scientific conferences.

However, academic staff faced the problem of encouraging and stimulating students to attend clubs. In a higher education institution, a modern higher education student may ask the following questions of the teacher: Why and to what extent do I need this? What will it do for me to improve the quality of my studies and pass an exam or test? And this is an absolutely reasonable approach of a modern young person who is already sufficiently saturated with information from Internet resources, has an already formed worldview, knows certain terminology and, at a certain level, a foreign language. This leads to the following conclusion: there is no intrinsic motivation for self-improvement. In this regard, the issue of encouraging students to engage in cognitive, creative and proactive activities in higher military educational institutions remains open.

The above issues certainly affect the quality of training, which requires careful analysis and the search for ways to address them.

#### **Analysis of recent research and publications.**

The legal regulation of education and educational processes in Ukraine is represented by the Constitution of Ukraine [1], the Laws of Ukraine "On Education" [2], "On Higher Education" [3], Methodological Recommendations for the Development of Educational and Professional Programmes and Curricula for the Training of Applicants for Professional Higher Education [4], as well as a number of by-laws. Certain aspects of cadet training, military service, labour relations in the National Guard of Ukraine, rights and responsibilities of the National Guard of Ukraine are regulated by the Law of Ukraine "On the National Guard of Ukraine" [5]. State control over the quality of educational processes is exercised by the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, which was established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine and operates on the basis of the Charter [6].

The scientific literature on the above-mentioned issues provides a wide range of information material for analysis, study and identification of further directions for solving the above problems. Issues that to some extent touched upon the problems of improving the level of training of cadets in higher military educational institutions, the level and quality of teaching material, ensuring appropriate conditions for training students and prospects for the development of higher education institutions were dealt with by such scholars as S. Bielai [8], V. Yemanov [8], V. Kozlov [11], A. Meiko [10], S. Pavlov [10], A. Savin [9], O. Salnikov [11],

V. Telelym [7], V. Trobiuk [8], O. Shcherbachuk [9] and others.

However, the issues of quality of educational services, quality and level of training of students will always be relevant, as the dynamic development of society, technical and technological innovations will constantly encourage the improvement of the level of training of applicants. Scientists note that today the National Guard of Ukraine is on the way of development on the model of the security and defence forces of the leading countries of the world, which also emphasises the importance of a high level of training of future officers [8].

One of the first scientists to draw attention to the need for innovative development of education was V. Telelym, who noted that among the general trends and educational systems characteristic of the leading countries of the world, the following are implemented in the higher education system: self-organisation in training specialists; gradual, continuous, advanced orientation of education; integration of education and science; fundamentalisation, informatisation, humanisation, democratisation, standardisation, technologisation of education; ensuring the quality of education and its personal orientation; unity of training and military-patriotic education; connection with the troops; analysis of graduates' activities; adjustment of the military-educational process [7].

**The purpose of the article** is to analyse the regulatory documents and views of leading scholars on the existing problems and difficulties in the scientific and pedagogical activities of teachers of higher military educational institutions in the process of forming educational competences of students. Elimination of these problems will improve the efficiency and quality of scientific and pedagogical activities in the field of higher military education, as well as allow developing mechanisms for further improving the quality of the educational process.

**Summary of the main material.** Higher education today is a set of educational competences and special competences that provides the necessary level of knowledge, skills, abilities required to perform certain functional duties of a special level and specific complexity. A modern officer of the Ukrainian army must have a higher military education of a level that would fully meet the requirements of service in the current conditions of martial law.

Higher education is a fundamental element of the training of officers of the National Guard of

Ukraine, providing the necessary level of knowledge, skills and competences required to perform both complex combat missions and routine daily activities. Officers must have a higher military or civilian education that meets the requirements of their service. This provision is especially relevant in the context of modern warfare, as the role of education is extremely important [9].

According to the legislative definition, higher education is a set of systematised knowledge, skills and practical abilities, ways of thinking, professional, ideological and civic qualities, moral and ethical values, and other competences acquired in a higher education institution (research institution) in a relevant field of knowledge with a certain qualification at levels of higher education that are higher in complexity than the level of complete general secondary education [3]. In this definition, the term "competence" is used, which in a highly specialised definition is a dynamic combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, ways of thinking, attitudes, values, and other personal qualities that determine a person's ability to successfully socialise, conduct professional and/or further educational activities [4]. Special competences are competences that are relevant to the subject area and are important for successful professional and/or further educational activities in a particular speciality [4].

Academic staff form educational competence in students through the following components:

- teaching certain educational components (lectures, seminars and practical classes);
- research work (writing scientific articles and abstracts, holding conferences, scientific seminars, round tables);
- methodological work of a research and teaching staff member (preparation of curricula and work programmes, methodological materials, conducting clubs);
- organisational and cultural work with applicants;
- career guidance work of academic staff with applicants (assistance in choosing a future professional field of activity).

This volume of scientific and pedagogical work contains all the elements of the educational component, which is part of the educational and professional programme [academic discipline, practice, term paper (project), qualification work (project)] aimed at achieving certain learning outcomes, which establishes the form of final control and determines the number of credits of the European Credit Transfer System [4].

It is not easy to perform such a large amount of work at the same time, and with maximum efficiency in lectures, seminars and practical classes, so the question of the quality of the work performed and the desire to work in such a workload in general becomes relevant. In other words, the issues of quality of education, motivation and incentives for both academic staff and students come to the fore.

In the case of heavy workloads on academic staff and lack of motivation of students, it is clear that the quality of educational activities will decrease, which the legislator defines as the level of organisation, provision and implementation of the educational process that ensures that individuals receive quality education and meets the requirements established by law and/or the contract for the provision of educational services [2].

The term "quality", in the authors' opinion, is an evaluative category, more inherent in socio-economic relations. However, it is a category with socio-philosophical content that can be used in any field, including education. The quality of education is the level of service provided by an educational institution, a certain degree of perfection at a certain stage.

The legislative definition of quality of education, as a broader, all-encompassing definition, is the compliance of learning outcomes with the requirements established by law, the relevant education standard and/or the contract for the provision of educational services. It is enshrined in the Law of Ukraine "On Education" [2]. The quality of higher education is the compliance of the conditions of educational activities and learning outcomes with the requirements of legislation and standards of higher education, professional and/or international standards (if any), as well as the needs of stakeholders and society, which is ensured through the implementation of internal and external quality assurance procedures [3]. The above definitions provide a certain, but not complete, understanding of what constitutes the quality of higher education.

However, it should be understood that higher military educational institutions have a specific system of theoretical and practical training of cadets, who, in addition to theoretical knowledge and practical skills, must also have certain moral and psychological qualities, because they will not only have to perform certain tasks and manage personnel, but also be an example for subordinates. Also, this training is full of *special competences* – competences relevant to the subject area and

important for successful professional and/or further educational activities in a particular speciality [5].

In this regard, it is important to pay attention to career guidance work with cadets so that they understand the importance of their profession for society and the state.

Based on the legislative definitions of the quality of higher education, the quality of education in higher military educational institutions can be defined as the level of theoretical and practical military knowledge provided to students and capable of forming an officer with a certain level of knowledge, skills and moral qualities.

The national system of higher education includes a network of military educational institutions, faculties, departments, colleges, and lyceums, which includes two universities [the National Defence University of Ukraine (NDU) and the Kharkiv National University of the Air Force (KNUAF)], five academies, three military institutes within civilian universities, three faculties of military training, six colleges, fifteen departments of military training in higher education institutions, three departments of disaster medicine and military medicine, a military lyceum, a naval lyceum and seventeen lyceums with enhanced military and physical training [7].

As mentioned above, the leading role in ensuring quality control of educational services belongs to the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education [6]. The competence and powers of this state body are important and allow to properly monitor the activities of higher education institutions and encourage them to maintain a certain level of implementation of programmes, tasks and achievement of their goals.

Scholars point out that the National Agency is gaining the ability to implement state policy in the field of higher education, to confront modern challenges and to become a catalyst for change in higher education in Ukraine in order to create a culture of quality. The strategic goals of the National Agency are implemented in three main areas: quality of educational services; recognition of the quality of scientific results; and ensuring the systemic impact of the National Agency's activities. In their opinion, the main value of the National Agency is innovation, namely the ability to produce and implement new ideas, technologies, methods related to quality assurance in higher education that are not available in domestic practice [10].

The professional development of officers is a complex and multifaceted process that consists of theoretical knowledge and practical skills

necessary to perform tasks in a complex and dynamic environment of military operations. Effective preparation for leadership positions requires the use of various approaches and methods that allow officers to adapt to the realities of modern warfare. Education as a way of implementing the process of officer training and the basis of preparation for leadership positions is divided into two levels – higher education and professional military education courses, which are implemented in higher military educational institutions and in retraining and advanced training units, respectively.

An important role in maintaining the level of professional training is played by professional military education courses, which allow servicemen to improve their professional level and acquire new knowledge and skills. As noted by scholars V. Yemanov, V. Trobiuk, and S. Bielai, such courses lay the foundations for the psychological components of a leader's activity, and form the philosophical concept of a leader, supervisor, and mentor. They explain the activities of the National Guard of Ukraine in performing assigned tasks as a military formation with law enforcement functions in peacetime – as part of the security forces, and in wartime – as part of the defence forces, and also highlight the prospects for the development of these areas in the national security system [8].

The issue of professional development of servicemen is discussed in detail in the scientific works of A. Savin and O. Shcherbachuk. They note that professional military education courses serve as a driving force for continuous professional development and adaptation to the dynamic conditions of the modern military environment. Courses that consider current trends and requirements of the military sphere are a necessary component of training effective military leaders. In a time of war, it is especially important to maintain a sequence of courses that will ensure that officers' knowledge and skills are updated promptly, and that they are ready to manage and perform current tasks. It would also be advisable to introduce intensive courses on mastering new areas of military activity, adapting and adjusting civilian industries to the needs of the military.

Professional military education courses are an essential component of officers' ongoing professional development. They enable officers to keep abreast of the latest advances in military science, new methods of warfare and military operations management. Intensive courses facilitate the rapid acquisition of the necessary knowledge



and skills, which is especially important during active combat operations [9].

Advanced training as a system of improving the level of knowledge is more operational, focused on the rapid updating of knowledge of military personnel. This system should be sufficiently responsive, mobile and effective. Professional development should not be a formal process, as Ukrainian army personnel receive the latest weapons and move to new personnel management systems. Ukraine has made great strides in this direction, including foreign training for servicemen to learn new tactical methods of warfare and use of advanced weapons.

Particular attention should be paid to the use of electronic resources in the training of higher education students, which are a means of transmitting, processing and storing information that facilitates the acquisition of systematic knowledge and ensures its application in practice. An electronic educational resource is understood as educational, scientific, informational, reference materials and tools developed in electronic form and presented on any type of media or placed in computer networks, which are reproduced using electronic digital technical means and are necessary for the effective organisation of the educational process in terms of its filling with quality teaching and learning materials [11]. The use of these resources allows you to quickly find the necessary information and keep abreast of the latest innovative developments and technologies. This is an important point, as society is entering a new era – the era of information technology and artificial intelligence, we can say that the era of information (digital) civilisation is coming.

### Conclusions

1. Today, during the full-scale aggression on the territory of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the issue of high-quality training of cadets in higher military educational institutions has become even more relevant, so the proper quality of these institutions is now a priority.

2. The quality of education in a higher military educational institution is the level of theoretical and practical knowledge of military subjects provided to students and capable of forming an officer with a certain level of knowledge, skills and high mental, physical and moral level.

3. Curricula should be constantly reviewed and updated to ensure that they meet the current realities of cadet training. It is important to provide

classrooms with modern means of visual perception of theoretical and practical material (computer equipment, simulators, projectors, electronic whiteboards).

5. It is important to provide vocational guidance to cadets so that they have a clear and precise understanding of their purpose and the importance of their profession to society and the state, and also so that they understand what is important and what is secondary.

Further research will be aimed at finding new ways to improve the provision of educational services in higher military educational institutions and raise the level of training of students.

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### **ШЛЯХИ ПІДВИЩЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ОСВІТИ У ВИЩИХ ВІЙСЬКОВИХ НАВЧАЛЬНИХ ЗАКЛАДАХ**

*Розглянуто питання підвищення якості освіти, а також низку важливих проблем, що мають місце під час підготовки здобувачів вищої освіти у вищих військових навчальних закладах. Приділено увагу якості й рівню викладання навчальних дисциплін та підготовки освітніх компонентів. Також досліджено аспект зацікавленості здобувачів вищої освіти у навчанні й підготовці до подальшого кар'єрного зростання, умотивованості їх до подальшого навчання та самовдосконалення. Підкреслено, що на сьогодні вкрай необхідним є підготовка офіцерів, військових спеціалістів на більш високому рівні для того, щоб завжди бути на крок попереду ворога.*

*У процесі аналізу питань навчання та підготовки курсантів і ад'юнктів у вищих військових навчальних закладах звертається увага на рівень викладання навчальних дисциплін та кваліфікаційний рівень педагогічних і науково-педагогічних працівників, умотивованість здобувачів вищої освіти до навчання й наукової діяльності. У праці також порушено питання організації і належного функціонування наукових гуртків, підкреслено, що заохочення здобувачів до пізнавальної, творчої та ініціативної діяльності у вищих військових навчальних закладах залишається певною, ще не вирішеною до кінця проблемою.*

*Акцентовано на тому, що вища освіта є фундаментальним елементом підготовки офіцерського складу Національної гвардії України, забезпечуючи потрібний рівень знань, умінь та компетенцій, необхідних для виконання складних службових бойових завдань.*

*У статті розглянуто елементи освітнього компонента, який є складником освітньо-професійної програми. Звернуто увагу та наведено визначення якості освіти, підкреслено важливість профорієнтаційної роботи з курсантами та підвищення кваліфікації офіцерів. Окреслено питання застосування у підготовці здобувачів вищої освіти електронних ресурсів як засобів передавання, оброблення та зберігання інформації.*

*За результатами проведеного дослідження подано авторські пропозиції і рекомендації щодо поліпшення методів викладання та засвоювання навчального матеріалу здобувачами вищої освіти, наведено визначення якості освіти, вказано на необхідність забезпечення на найвищому рівні навчальних аудиторій сучасними засобами наглядного сприйняття матеріалу.*

**Ключові слова:** *освітні компетенції, рівень вищої освіти, якість вищої освіти, вмотивованість здобувачів.*

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