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## CONCEPT OF FORMATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES OF FUTURE OFFICERS OF THE NATIONAL GUARD OF UKRAINE

*The concept of formation and development of professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine in the context of the transformation of military education in accordance with NATO standards is presented. The essence of the concept of "professional competence of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine" as a holistic qualitative characteristic covering both personal and professional components is substantiated.*

*The scientific approaches underlying the concept are identified: systemic, competence-based, personality-oriented, activity-based, environmental, axiological, and integrative. The regulatory and legal framework is analysed and the practical principles for implementing the concept are outlined. Current trends in the professional training of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine are considered.*

**Keywords:** concept, future officers, NATO, National Guard of Ukraine, professional training.

**Statement of the problem.** In the current conditions of reforming the security and defence sector of Ukraine, the issue of professional training of future officers, in particular of the National Guard of Ukraine (NGU), is of particular importance. Thus, a future NGU officer must possess not only theoretical knowledge, but also a whole range of professional competencies that enable them to effectively perform tasks related to maintaining public order, combating terrorism, protecting state borders, participating in combat operations, etc.

The increased requirements for future NGU officers necessitate the development of a clear concept for the formation and development of their professional competencies, which would include a comprehensive system of scientific approaches, forms, methods, and means of such professional training.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The theoretical basis of the study is the provisions, ideas and conclusions of contemporary Ukrainian scholars concerning the formation and development of professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine, in particular M. Medvid [20, 21], M. Ktitorov [22, 23], A. Plaksin [24, 25], L. Semenov, O. Turskyi [26], as well as the regulatory and legal framework governing the functioning of the system

of higher military education and training of specialists in the field of national security [6, 7].

**The purpose of the article** is to provide a theoretical justification for the concept of the formation and development of professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine in the context of current challenges and the transformation of the military education system in Ukraine.

**Summary of the main material.** Since the core of the outlined scientific research is the concept of forming the professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine, attention should be focused on defining the essence of the concept. Thus, in the context of the research problem, we consider it as a scientifically based system of views, ideas and principles that determine the approaches to the formation of professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine.

As noted by M. Semenov and O. Turskyi, the professional competence of military personnel should be understood as a set of key competencies necessary for a military serviceman, which determine the transition to a productive and qualified state, enabling him to carry out his professional activities and effectively perform his military duties [26].

The above interpretation of the concept of "professional competence of military personnel" became the basis for the author's definition of the key concept of the study, "professional competence of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine." Thus, we interpret this concept as a qualitative characteristic of the degree to which a future officer of the National Guard of Ukraine has mastered professional activities, which involves awareness of their aspirations for this activity, ideas about their social role, assessment of their personal traits and qualities as future specialists in the field of national security, as well as correlation of the assessment results with the objective requirements for the specified activity, regulation of their professional development, growth, and self-improvement on this basis [22].

It should be noted that the concept we have outlined for the formation and development of the professional competencies of future NGU officers is based on the following scientific approaches: *systemic* – allows us to consider the professional training of an officer as a holistic, interconnected system of components (knowledge, activity, values, personality, psychophysical); *competence-based* – focuses on the formation of specific

professional competencies necessary for the effective performance of service and combat tasks; *personality-oriented* – takes into account the individual characteristics, potential and values of the future officer; *activity-based* – ensures the formation of competencies in the process of practical, command and staff, tactical, situational and model activities; *environment-based* – focuses on creating an educational environment with clearly defined military norms, traditions and discipline; *axiological* – aimed at forming a system of professionally significant values (loyalty to the oath, officer's honour, patriotism); *integrative* – combines the above approaches into a single conceptual framework that reflects both general pedagogical principles and the specifics of military education.

It should be noted that the concept of forming and developing the professional competencies of future NGU officers is based not only on a complex of scientific approaches, but also on legal and practical principles, taking into account international and combat experience.

Thus, the legislative and regulatory framework includes the following (Table 1).

Table 1 – Legislative and regulatory framework for the formation of professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine

No.	Group of documents	Name of document	Year of adoption
1	Constitutional and legal framework	Constitution of Ukraine [1]	1996
		Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" [2]	2014
		Law of Ukraine "On Education" [3]	2017
		Law of Ukraine "On National Security" [4]	2018
		Law of Ukraine "On the National Guard of Ukraine" [5]	2014
2	Conceptual and international documents	Concept of transforming the military education system in line with NATO standards [8]	2023
		Standardisation of military education (NATO STANAG 6001) [9]	2015 (ed. 5)
3	Regulatory framework of the National Guard of Ukraine	Directive of the Commander of the National Guard of Ukraine "On the organisation of training for the National Guard of Ukraine in 2025" [13]	2024
		Catalogue of capabilities of the National Guard of Ukraine [14]	2020
		Order of the Commander of the National Guard of Ukraine "On Approval of Instructions for Studying and Implementing the Experience of Performing Combat (Special) Tasks of the National Guard of Ukraine during the Repulsion of Armed Aggression [15]	2022

End Table 1

No.	Group of documents	Name of document	Year of adoption
4	Regulatory framework of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine	Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine No. 62 "On Approval of the Regulations on Higher Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine" [16]	2008
		Order of the Ministry of Internal Affairs No. 69 "On Approval of the Regulations on the Organisation of the Educational Process in Higher Education Institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine" [17]	2008
5	Regulatory framework of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine	Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 120 "On Approval of the Regulations on the Specifics of the Organisation of the Educational Process in Higher Military Educational Institutions of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, Military Educational Units of Higher Education Institutions, and Institutions of Pre-Higher Military Education" [18]	2024
		Order of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine No. 85 "On the organisation and conduct of advanced training courses in higher military educational institutions, military training units of higher education institutions and institutions of professional pre-higher military education in 2025–2026" [19]	2025

As for the practical principles of the concept of forming and developing the professional competencies of future NGU officers, it is made possible through: analysis of the experience of the ATO / OOS / full-scale war and the territory of Ukraine in 2022–2025; tactics and methods of action in conditions of hybrid warfare; integration of combat experience into the training programmes of future officers undergoing professional military training in higher education institutions with specific training conditions; interaction with commanders and mentors; taking NATO standards (STANAG) into account in the professional training of future NGU officers; exchange of experience with the armies of partner countries; integration of modern military technologies and approaches to command.

In recent years, a number of key trends have been observed in the development of the military education system, among which the following are worth highlighting: active introduction of combat experience gained in armed conflicts; systematic implementation of NATO standards in educational programmes; focus on advanced approaches to training military specialists, taking into account the practices of partner countries. Let us consider each of these trends in more detail.

First of all, attention should be focused on the integration of NATO standards into the professional training of future NGU officers through the DEEP programme (Defence Education Enhancement Programme), which oversees the development and reform of professional military education institutions seeking to achieve compatibility with the Alliance. Thus, a competency-based approach based on NATO and FIEP standards (following the example of the French National Gendarmerie) is being introduced, with an emphasis on practice-oriented training, military leadership and the continuous development of officers [10, 11].

Through the NATO DEEP programme, military education institutions are being reformed, the latest teaching methods are being introduced, and key military competencies are being developed. In particular, eight indicative training programmes aimed at modernising the professional military education system have been developed. These programmes cover a wide range of areas, including the development of defence institutions, the training of officers and sergeants, non-commissioned officers and military instructors, as well as thematic areas such as cyber security, countering insurgency and terrorism, and fostering

a culture of integrity in the armed forces [10].

In this context, it is important to strengthen collaboration with other partner countries, in particular with representatives of Poland. This is achieved through joint training exercises aimed at exchanging experience in the professional training of future officers.

It is also worth noting the transformation of the basic military training curriculum for 2024–2025, which includes an increased number of hours of practical training in important military disciplines, such as: "Tactical, Firearms and Military Engineering Training"; "Tactical Medicine"; "Military Topography"; "Reconnaissance Training". The intensity of classes in topography, engineering, shooting, etc. has been increased. An important aspect of the formation and development of the professional competencies of future NGU officers is also the fact that unit officers, teachers and instructors are with cadets 24/7 during field training, which promotes team cohesion, as there are mixed groups where future officers are trained alongside civilian youth and military personnel who already have combat experience.

In addition, since October 2024, the training load allocated for basic general military training has been increased to two months. The programme now includes topics such as unmanned aerial vehicles, electronic warfare, cyber defence and patriotic education.

At the same time, in order to unify the level of competence throughout the structure of the National Guard of Ukraine and to comply with NATO standards, work is being done to update professional standards for key military specialties: sniper, combat medic, mechanic-driver, APC-operator, facility controller, high-altitude worker, physical training instructor, etc.

In today's conditions, the use of various forms of training is becoming increasingly important in the context of the concept of forming and developing the professional competencies of future NGU officers:

*1) traditional forms of training:* lectures, practical classes, seminars, independent work, consultations, training practice, scientific circles;

*2) military professional training:* tactical and specialised classes, military training (including live fire exercises), military competitions, development of tactical scenarios, joint interagency training with units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, State Border Guard Service, State Emergency Service, and National Police;

*3) analytical and interactive methods:* analysis of combat case studies based on real events in the ATO/JFO/2022–2025; SWOT analysis; work in small groups (team-based learning, battle staff teams); tactical films and video analysis of combat operations.

There are also the following forms of training:

– *technological forms and digital tools:* use of military simulators and virtual trainers (VR/AR technologies); online courses and self-study platforms (Moodle, MIMIO, platforms of the Ministry of Internal Affairs);

– *educational exchange and applied learning:* excursions to military units and military equipment museums; exchange of experience with cadets and teachers from foreign academies within the framework of international training programmes; participation in international educational programmes and training courses.

These forms of training in the context of professional training for future NGU officers significantly improve motivation, critical thinking, resilience, tolerance and decision-making skills.

As part of the professional training of future NGU officers, specialised educational models have been developed that focus on preparing them for action in conditions of radioactive, chemical, biological threats and CBRN risks. These models combine in-depth physical training, the development of specialised tactical skills and the mastery of response algorithms in conditions involving the use of weapons of mass destruction or man-made disasters.

Particular emphasis is placed on: the ability to operate in contaminated areas; the organisation of personnel protection; evacuation, decontamination, and medical support; the use of individual and collective protection equipment; and command and control in complex environments.

The inclusion of CBRN training components in the educational process is a response to current hybrid threats and contributes to the development of adaptability, professional resilience and readiness to act in critical conditions, which, in turn, are key elements of the modern professional competence of NGU officers.

Since the document "Standardisation of Military Education" (NATO STANAG 6001) establishes requirements for the foreign language proficiency of military personnel and ensures the standardisation of the assessment of these skills, distance learning courses in foreign languages, digital pedagogy and language skills development

are being introduced for effective interaction with NATO/EU partners. This is necessary to ensure that Ukrainian military personnel can communicate with their international colleagues in a military environment, which requires future NGU officers to have an adequate level of foreign language proficiency.

Increased attention is being paid to integrating forms and methods aimed at developing tolerance, intercultural respect, ethical leadership and psychological resilience into the educational process, which are an integral part of the professional training of NGU officers. In this context, the use of a cognitive-emotional-behavioural approach is effective, which is implemented through: training in emotional intelligence development, classes in conflict management and bullying prevention; thematic seminars and discussions on issues of tolerance, human rights and gender equality; role-playing games and modelling of moral and psychological situations; case studies (analysis of real situations involving moral choices in combat conditions); interactive lectures with the involvement of practitioners (military psychologists, veterans, chaplains); volunteer activities and participation in public initiatives; intercultural forums, exchanges with representatives of other military educational institutions; art therapy events (photo projects about humanity in war); reflection and self-observation exercises within training modules, etc.

In the context of trends in the professional training of future NGU officers, a course on the protection of military personnel rights was launched in 2024, which teaches how to draw up powers of attorney, make donations, and protect

subordinates in civilian and combat situations. It concerns future NGU officers, because a future officer, especially at the tactical level, not only performs combat or administrative functions, but also bears personal responsibility for the legal protection of subordinates, is obliged to know the basics of military and civil law, and must be able to act competently in situations of legal regulation—while on duty, in conflict situations, when interacting with civilian structures, and is a key figure in protecting the rights of military personnel in combat conditions and during rotations/demobilisation.

In the new military education paradigm (especially in the training system for future NGU officers), it is important that cadets receive not only combat training but also management training, otherwise officers will not be able to effectively command units in complex operational environments. Thus, the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine has developed courses for "agents of change" – specialists who acquire skills in strategic planning, benchmarking, process re-engineering and team communication.

In conclusion, it should be noted that, according to the Decree of the President of Ukraine and the provisions of the "Concept of Transformation of the Military Education System in Accordance with NATO Standards" (2023) [8], by the end of 2025, institutions of higher military education, in particular those that train future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine, must complete the key stages of integration with the educational, methodological and organisational standards of the North Atlantic Alliance (Table 2).

Table 2 – Integration of NATO standards into the professional training of future NGU officers in Ukraine

No.	Area of integration	Content and objectives	Expected results
1	Training of instructors according to NATO standards	Certification of instructors according to NATO programmes. Training at multinational centres (DEEP, JMTG-U). Introduction of the "Train the trainer" model	Training of professional instructors. Uniformity of training methods with NATO countries. Strengthening the practical component of training
2	Introduction of training technologies	Use of simulators, VR/AR trainers. Use of JCATS, STEEL BEASTS and other platforms. Focus on team interaction and action analysis	Improving training effectiveness. Simulation of real combat situations. Development of decision-making skills under pressure



End Table 2

No.	Area of integration	Content and objectives	Expected results
3	Creation of psychological training centres	Development of stress resistance programmes. Psychological training for the development of moral and volitional qualities. Use of STANAG 2542	Psychological resilience of officers. Reduction of combat losses due to psychological breakdowns. Formation of leadership and emotional competencies
4	Unification of special tactical training	Harmonisation of training for snipers, artillerymen, sappers, etc. Introduction of combat readiness assessment according to NATO standards. Training in hybrid warfare	Compatibility with NATO armies. Improving tactical mobility and effectiveness. Standardised combat operations
5	Language training (English according to STANAG 6001)	Intensive English language training. Certification according to STANAG 6001. Language laboratories, participation in international programmes	Language readiness for participation in NATO missions. Opportunity to study abroad. Communication in multinational units

The implementation of this process will not only improve the quality of officer training, but also ensure the interoperability of the units of the National Guard of Ukraine with the armed forces of NATO member countries, which is a determining factor for effective participation in joint peace and security operations, training (internships), exchange of experience, etc.

Therefore, achieving this stage by the end of 2025 should be a priority for higher military educational institutions in the context of transforming Ukraine's military education system in the current conditions.

### Conclusions

The concept of forming and developing the professional competencies of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine is based on a combination of a comprehensive set of scientific approaches that ensure its consistency, adaptability and practical effectiveness. Each of these approaches is implemented through specific forms, methods and organisational solutions in professional military education, namely: *systemic* [modernisation of general military training (increased hours, CBRN); introduction of digital technologies (VR/AR, Moodle, MIMIO); presence of teachers in the field; combination of combat and civilian experience; unification of standards in the structure of the National Guard of Ukraine];

*competency-based* [NATO standards (STANAG, DEEP, FIEP); development of new military-special programmes; courses in digital pedagogy, law, languages; practical skills – shooting, tactics, topography; development of strategic thinking, benchmarking]; *personality-oriented* (training in emotional intelligence, self-observation; mentoring, work in mixed groups; intercultural forums, exchanges, art therapy; individual educational trajectories through Moodle).

*The activity-based approach* is reflected in: military training with live fire; command and staff, situational training; case studies of combat experience (ATO/JFO/war 2022–2025); preparation for management in critical situations. *The environmental approach* is implemented through real-time field training (24/7); patriotic education, military traditions; training in combat conditions; military subculture, joint training with other law enforcement agencies. *The axiological approach* is confirmed in the context of a set of measures (seminars, training sessions, courses) aimed at protecting human and civil rights, moral choice; shaping officer honour, dignity, patriotism; protecting the rights of military personnel and legal awareness, as well as participation in humanitarian/volunteer missions. *The integrative approach* is implemented through the NATO DEEP programme as an integrator of approaches, comprehensive reform of higher education institutions by 2025, and blended learning

models – a combination of theory, practice, values, and digital tools.

Further scientific research involves the development of an adaptive model for the professional training of future officers of the National Guard of Ukraine, considering the latest combat challenges and NATO standards, especially in the context of modern high-tech and multidimensional warfare.

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### **КОНЦЕПЦІЯ ФОРМУВАННЯ ТА РОЗВИТКУ ПРОФЕСІЙНИХ КОМПЕТЕНТНОСТЕЙ МАЙБУТНІХ ОФІЦЕРІВ НАЦІОНАЛЬНОЇ ГВАРДІЇ УКРАЇНИ**

*Подано концепцію формування та розвитку професійних компетентностей майбутніх офіцерів Національної гвардії України в умовах трансформації військової освіти відповідно до стандартів НАТО. Обґрунтовано сутність поняття «професійна компетентність майбутніх офіцерів Національної гвардії України» як цілісної якісної характеристики, що охоплює як особистісні, так і професійні складники. Проаналізовано нормативно-правову базу та окреслено практичні засади реалізації концепції, що враховує міжнародний та бойовий досвід.*

*Розглянуто сучасні тенденції професійної підготовки майбутніх офіцерів Національної гвардії України, серед яких виокремлено: активне впровадження бойового досвіду, набутого в умовах збройних конфліктів; системну імплементацію стандартів НАТО в освітні програми; орієнтацію на передові підходи до підготовки військових фахівців з урахуванням практик країн-партнерів. Проаналізовано окремі форми проведення навчальних занять у контексті професійної підготовки майбутніх офіцерів Національної гвардії України, що значно поліпшують мотивацію, критичне мислення, стійкість, толерантність та навички прийняття рішень: традиційні форми навчання; військово-професійна підготовка; аналітико-інтерактивні методи; технологічні форми та діджитал-інструменти; освітній обмін та прикладне навчання.*

*Окрему увагу приділено інтеграції стандартів НАТО в професійну підготовку майбутніх офіцерів Національної гвардії України за пріоритетними напрямками діяльності: підготовка інструкторів за стандартами НАТО; упровадження тренінгових технологій; створення психотренінгових центрів; уніфікація спеціальної тактичної підготовки; мовна підготовка (англійська за STANAG 6001).*

*Автором визначено наукові підходи, які склали основу концепції формування та розвитку професійних компетентностей майбутніх офіцерів Національної гвардії України, що ґрунтується на поєднанні цілісного комплексу наукових підходів, які забезпечують її системність, адаптивність та практичну ефективність: системний, компетентнісний, особистісно орієнтований, діяльнісний, середовищний, аксіологічний, інтегративний. Кожен із підходів знаходить своє реальне втілення через конкретні форми, методи й організаційні рішення у професійній військовій освіті.*

**Ключові слова:** концепція, майбутні офіцери, НАТО, Національна гвардія України, професійна підготовка.

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