

FEATURES AND MAIN FORMS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AND THE LABOUR MARKET

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The success of the modernisation of higher education in Ukraine largely depends on the accuracy of the strategic vision of its opportunities, prospects and threats in the context of our complex present. This vision is presented in the Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2022–2032 [2], in which the main directions are outlined based on the current stage of development of society and the state economy. This semantic emphasis articulates the interconnection and interdependence of social and economic factors in the reform of the education sector and highlights the importance of higher education as the foundation for building a knowledge economy and a pool of highly qualified personnel for all areas of state building. Given the importance of this social mission, the issue of building the institutional capacity of higher education institutions (HEIs) by expanding their institutional autonomy and strengthening their interaction with the labour market in the professional training of specialists is becoming increasingly relevant. The aim is to ensure that HEI graduates meet the requirements of potential employers and develop the professional qualities and micro-skills that are most in demand in the modern labour market. Therefore, in the process of professional training of higher education seekers, the interested parties are:

- employers as customers of qualified personnel;
- the labour market as a regulator and harmoniser of supply and demand for such specialists;
- higher education institutions as executors of state orders for the training of personnel, ensuring a high level of professional qualification of graduates and laying the foundation for their competitiveness in the labour market;
- the market for educational services as an entity ensuring the quality of higher education and bringing it into line with the requirements of the labour market.

The peculiarities of the interaction between these parties lie in its market regulation, organisation based on social partnership, orientation towards European values and best educational practices, and today also burdened by the conditions of martial law, forced migration and demographic decline. The first of these features is the real inseparability of HEIs and the labour market, the impossibility for each of these entities to achieve high quality functioning separately from each other: the university must produce new, ‘breakthrough’ knowledge that increases the effectiveness of practical activities and sets a higher bar for specialists in the labour market – the labour market provides HEIs with information about the current demand of employers for a particular specialist and the professional requirements for them. The number of budget places in HEIs is influenced by the labour market's demand for specialists in a particular profession. The second feature is the focus of interaction between HEIs and the labour market on the development and implementation of innovations in the "education – science – innovation – business system. This is manifested in:

- a policy of bringing HEIs closer to employers in order to agree on or develop common requirements for professionals and formalise them in legislative acts and regulatory documents that define the content of higher education in various fields;
- deepening cooperation in the development and improvement of industry and professional standards, qualification requirements, lists of competencies, specialist profiles, etc.;

– taking into account the requirements of employers for specialists in a particular profession when designing the content of higher education in a professional direction (introduction of dual education, development of educational programmes, content of training modules, etc.);

– combining the material and technical base, human resources and intellectual resources of universities and other labour market entities to improve the quality of professional training for graduates;

– creating a joint innovative infrastructure for training future specialists, which involves the creation of scientific, business and technological platforms based on leading higher education institutions; opening scientific departments and laboratories at manufacturing enterprises within the framework of public-private partnerships between higher education institutions and businesses, developing a network of research laboratories and centres in partnership with businesses; commercialising intellectual property [1, p. 9]; provision by employers of bases for dual training and industrial practice for students of higher education institutions in order to overcome the disconnect between their theoretical knowledge and the practical needs of modern enterprises and businesses and to immerse them in the context of their future professional activities;

– integration of higher education institutions into regional ecosystems and Industry 4.0 clusters by designing an adaptive competence-oriented component of higher education content in order to strengthen regional specialisation; expanding cooperation between regional higher education institutions and business to generate orders for innovative research and development, taking into account the key principles of SMART specialisation, etc.

The specifics of the interaction between higher education institutions and the labour market depend

on:

– the fields and industries for which specialists are being trained, their infrastructure provision, and the balance of supply and demand in the labour market;

– the establishment of contacts between higher education institutions and stakeholders in the process of selecting and recruiting, on the one hand, applicants for educational programmes and, on the other hand, graduates for state and private organisations, firms and companies taking into account the requirements of the labour market and the specifics of the industry (unfortunately, today this interaction in universities is somewhat formal due to a lack of understanding of its strategic importance and the labour-intensive process of establishing real working contacts with stakeholders).

The strategic direction of cooperation between higher education institutions and employers in the modern labour market has been the creation of an innovative infrastructure for higher education, whose facilities have already proven their economic, educational, human resource and organisational effectiveness. Taking into account the above-mentioned features of interaction between universities, business and the labour market will help to adjust this interaction in such a way that its participants can make the maximum contribution to the training of professionals, avoiding duplication or taking on functions that are not specific to them, coordinating their actions and plans and thereby maximising each other's strengths in achieving a common goal.

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