

INTERUNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF STUDENTS ACADEMIC MOBILITY IN MODERN DIGITALIZED ENVIRONMENT

Vasylyshyna N. M., Sydorenko K. V., Skyrda T. S.

INTRODUCTION

Modern education in digitalized world has been experiencing a lot of sufficient changes, innovations and improvements. In the new era of higher education, collaboration is a strategy that many institutions must pursue simply to survive. Collaborations can provide a much-needed boost – and quickly – in academic and extracurricular offerings for universities that lack strengths in certain areas.

By emphasizing collaboration, we can define the new era of higher education as one of growth through collaboration, not contraction.

Looking to the future, universities must become more open, integrated and sustainable. Universities must contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment to meet the challenges of this new era. The openness of universities contributes to national development, well-being and progress of human civilization.

“Openness” means promoting values that are inclusive and fair. Greater openness expands understanding and promotes the development of global and leadership competencies. More open universities promote human knowledge and cultural understanding [4]¹.

Universities must also make a greater contribution to society, must demonstrate their sustainability by continuing to develop. Being more “resilient” means being able to adapt to change, anticipate needs and demonstrate inspirational leadership.

When crises occur, our resilience allows us to overcome challenges and turn them into opportunities for growth and learning. Universities are called to play a unique role in solving global problems and make humanity more prepared for future crises by creating knowledge, striving for innovation and educating future leaders who initiate change [6].²

One of the benefit of it is the fact that university students are able to face the realization of the right to academic mobility. It worth mentioning that this scope comprises the goals, objectives, procedure for organizing academic

¹ Bowles T., Hattie J. Seven Motivating Conceptions of Learning of Tertiary Students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*. (2016). 15(3). P. 15–24.

² Byram M. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Revisited (2nd ed.). Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters. 2021. P. 13–37.

mobility, conditions for returning to the place of permanent study (work), implementation of academic mobility programs, recognition and enrollment of its results for those seeking education (scientific degrees) studying in institutions of professional pre-university and higher education, scientific institutions as well as employees of the specified institutions (Figure 1) [6].

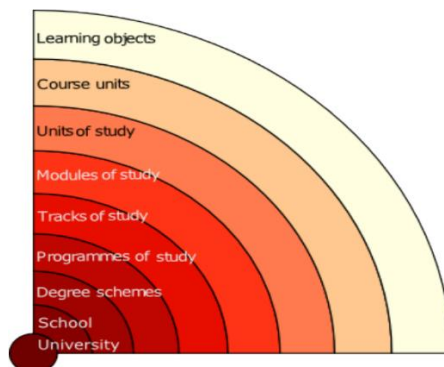


Fig. 1. Areas of Interuniversity Cooperation

The goals of academic mobility are as follows: Ukraine's integration into the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area; exchange of best practices and experience in the fields of education and science; modernization of the education system; digitization of education and management; improving the quality of education and the effectiveness of scientific research; increasing the competitiveness of the educational and scientific community of Ukraine; development of professional skills and personal qualities of academic mobility participants; deepening cooperation with international partners in the fields of education and science; support of social, economic, cultural relations and connections with other countries [15].

The tasks of academic mobility participants are as follows: increasing the level of theoretical and practical training, professional skills of the participants of academic mobility; obtaining international experience in conducting teaching, scientific, scientific and technical activities and access to European and global research infrastructure; implementation of joint scientific, scientific-technical and/or educational projects; increasing the level of foreign language proficiency; popularization of the Ukrainian language and culture, deepening of knowledge about the culture of other countries.

1. Internationalization and academic mobility today

We are in a globalized world, where through technology and informatics, knowledge has become a factor of production. We walked towards the knowledge society, towards a planned society. So we live in a world that is in

constant change, in all respects, a competitive world where preparation becomes our best tool [15]³.

There are two terms: globalization and internationalization, used to describe the

trends of global relations intensification of interaction and exchange, global networking in the fields of social communication, and transnational harmonization models and social structures. Both terms refer to a social context, which extends more and more in different parts of the world [15].

The first of the terms, globalization is the result of the internationalization of the economy first, through the formation of economic blocs and the establishment of new business relationships, which with the use of information technologies in specific case Internet, allows buy-sell transactions with countries far away or better yet, with everyone [8].

It is important to understand that globalization is multidimensional, encompassing economic, political, social, cultural and educational course. The great advances in science and technology have led globalization through information flow. Internationalization refers to integrate the international dimension in education, globalization serves as a catalyst for the internationalization of education. It is for this reason that the educational models are increasingly adapting to the demands brought about by globalization such as trade and economic openness, which makes the educational landscape is in a process of permanent change (Figure 2) [8]⁴.

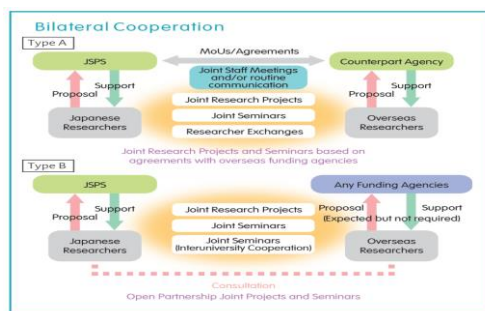


Fig. 2. Scheme of International Interuniversity Cooperation

³ Lappo V., Soichuk L., Akimova M. Digital technologies of support the spiritual development of students. Information Technologies and Learning Tools. 2022. 88(2). P. 103–114.

⁴ Candlin, C., & Mercer, N. (2021). English Language Teaching in its Social Context. Routledge. URL: <https://www.scribd.com/document/50034988/EnglishLanguageTeaching-in-Its-Social-Context-Candlin-ChristopherN-MercerNeil.D0% B2% D1% 96% D1% 82-2020.pdf>. (Reference Date: 10.09.2023)

The internationalization of higher education is a response to the challenges and needs that globalization brings more specifically the globalization of education, is one of the ways in which a university or country face the repercussions of that, without neglecting the principles of the institution or, what is more important the idiosyncrasies of the nation. All this is achieved through academic programs such as student exchange; study a foreign language, mobility of academic and administrative staff. Educational programs of masters and doctoral sets, international students, lecturers and visiting professors. Distance education programs, also are important research activities, including joint projects and seminars, international research agreements, articles and essays published in journals and international journals [9].

Internationalization refers to a comprehensive institutional transformation process, which aims to integrate international and intercultural dimension in the mission and the substantive functions of higher education institutions, so that they are inseparable from their identity and culture [9].

The internationalization of higher education has been a reality since the late twentieth century has been emphasized and prioritized in this century, in this context, consider the academics and students as the most visible and important elements of internationalization, becoming the quintessential protagonists of this process, because not only are recipients of knowledge [9]⁵.

Is that the reason why struggle in undeveloped countries to achieve the developed country model, gives the formation of high-level resources in the field of

technology, a strategic area important for any nation and therefore also the effort to send their top students to study in abroad [23]⁶.

2. Benefits of university students academic mobility in modern digitalized environment

Important aspects of the problem of interuniversity cooperation based on the trend of internationalization of higher education, modern requirements for the quality of higher education and international accreditation of educational programs are highlighted in scientific works of domestic (N. Avsheniuk, V. Andrushchenko, V. Zahorskyi, K. Korsak, V. Kremen, V. Lugovyiy, I. Motunova, A. Sbrueva, V. Soloshchenko and foreign researchers F. Altbach, J. Knight, T. Whaley [11].

Summarizing the scientific approaches of researchers to the definition of the concept "*academic mobility*", it should be interpreted as: the opportunity

⁵ Clanfield N. Teaching Online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities. Delta Publishing. 2017. 109 p.

⁶ Zhang T., Shaikh Z., Yumashev A., Chlad M. Applied Model of E-Learning in the Framework of Education for Sustainable Development. Sustainability. 2020. 12(16). P. 6420–6435.

of participants in the educational process under the time of implementation of pedagogical, scientific-pedagogical, scientific and / or innovative activities, which is carried out on the principles of freedom of speech and creativity, dissemination of knowledge and information, conducting scientific research and using their results and implementing them with consideration restrictions established by law [11].

At the same time, the newest types of international academic cooperation need adequate coverage, in particular, the creation of joint accredited educational programs in various fields of knowledge. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to specify conceptual approaches regarding organization and implementation of international cooperation between higher educational institutions on the implementation of joint accredited educational programs taking into account the trends of internationalization of higher education [11].

The positive impact of internationalization on education:

- *internationalizing the curriculum, i.e. international elements add to the content of the courses;*
- *proficiency in foreign languages, allowing the approach to other cultures;*
- *internationalization of research through cooperation between different national and foreign institutions;*
- *internationalization extension, like administrative and academic links all the events and projects of the university (Figure 3) [11]⁷.*

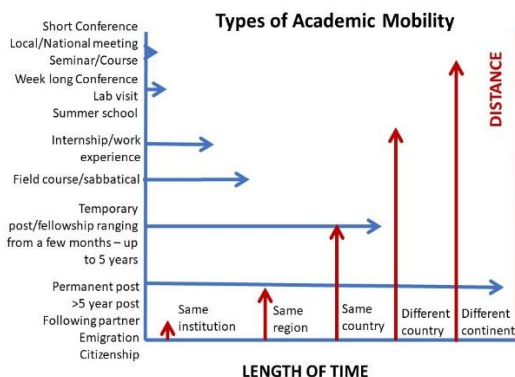


Fig. 3. Different forms of academic mobility at modern universities

⁷ Khominets I. The Essence and Types of Academic Mobility of Students. Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod University. Series: Pedagogy. Social work. (2019. 2(45). P. 223–227.

In this part it is worth highlighting *a number of factors that lead to the formation of various species mobility (academic, personal, professional) of future specialists in the economic field:*

- *acceleration of the rate of development of society and, as a result, the need for training*

- *people to life in rapidly changing conditions;*

- *transition to the information society;*

- *emergence of global problems that can be solved only by efforts the international community;*

- *democratization of society, expansion of political and social opportunities choice, which causes the need to increase the level of citizens' readiness for its implementation;*

- *dynamic development of the economy, growth of competition, reduction unskilled and low-skilled labor;*

- *increasing the value of human capital, which in developed countries is about 80% of national wealth;*

- *formation of a unified global information system using the latest information technologies;*

- *creation by international organizations of legal acts of an international nature, which*

- *become leading landmarks for the world community [12]⁸.*

Shared programs have a number of benefits for participants in the academic mobility process, including:

- *students get new additional opportunities for mastering the profession and developing a new type of thinking, gaining experience in other academic and social conditions, which creates the preconditions for their greater professional mobility and demand in the labor market, the development of the «European citizenship» quality;*

- *flexible conditions are created for professors to professional cooperation and growth, including cooperation in scientific research with foreign colleagues, establishment of long-term professional contacts;*

- *Universities receive a kind of added value in the form of better and more attractive educational programs, increase of academic potential, as a result of new opportunities of cooperation with other universities, the experience use and, as a result, an increase of reputation and competitiveness (Figure 4) [13]⁹.*

⁸ Knight J., Wit H. Internationalization of Higher Education: Past and Future. International Higher Education. 2018. 95. P. 2–4. URL: <https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/view/10715/9188>. (Reference Date: 10.09.2023)

⁹ Korchova Gh. Academic Mobility of Applicants in the Context of the Modern Educational Process. 2017. URL: http://www.irbis-nbu.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis_nbu/cgiirbis_64.exe. (Reference Date: 08.09.2023)

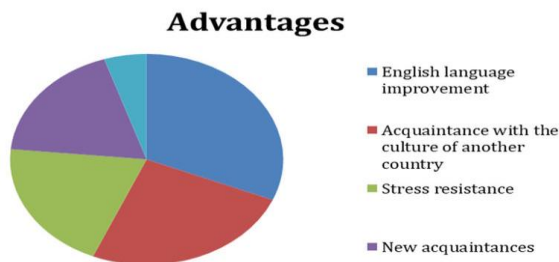


Fig. 4. Advantages of Students Academic Mobility

3. Challenges of university students academic mobility in modern digitalized environment

At the same time, it is necessary *to outline those problems* that complicate the participation of domestic students and teachers in academic mobility programs:

- *inconsistency of educational plans of the educational and qualification level “bachelor” in Ukraine (in particular, the optional completion of qualifying bachelor’s work);*
- *lack of complete transition to two-level education (educational qualification remains*
- *“specialist” level, and master’s studies are possible both on the basis of a bachelor’s degree and specialist; at the same time, a person who receives a bachelor’s degree loses additional specialization);*
- *nostrification of the diploma of the European model, which is recognized by all countries of the European Union (its compliance is considered by the State Nostrification commission Special rejection is caused by diplomas in interdisciplinary specialties character, while this is a trend of modern education in the majority of EU countries, where examination of diplomas compliance is carried out by relevant departments of universities) [3]¹⁰.*

Problems are faced by Ukrainian universities and research institutions, staff, students and postgraduate students who have carried out academic mobility. The main problems of academic mobility are related to the non-harmonization of the European Higher Education Area. It is not only the specificity of the Ukrainian education organization and its difference from the European; the fact is that it is too early to talk about the European higher education system. There are educational systems in each country that are sometimes quite different from one another (Figure 5) [5; 9; 21].

¹⁰ Bao W. COVID-19 and Online Teaching in Higher Education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*. 2020). 2(2). P. 113–115.

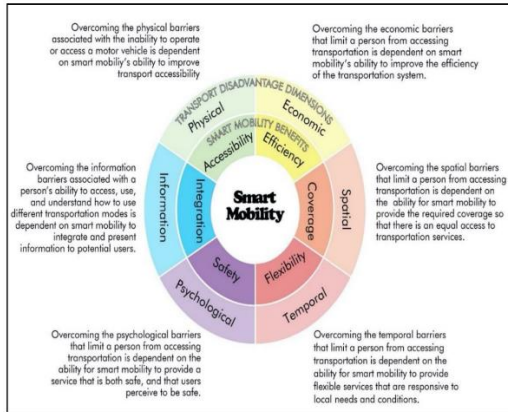


Fig. 5. Milestones Faced on the Way of Academic Mobility

At present, only few steps are being taken to harmonize the European educational space, and the main driver of this process is politicians, not universities. Neither the tendencies of integration and globalization, nor the scientific and technological progress speed, which requires special flexibility and variability of education, can be ignored; however, it is impossible to ignore the historically formed features of the education organization, especially if they determine the quality of education, and are confirmed by data on employment of graduates and successful development of this country [1]¹¹.

Both the first and difficult question that arises in connection with academic mobility is the peculiarity of the Ukrainian education organization, such as «department-centricity». This is the presence of a large variety of fundamental subjects taught in the faculty, as a mandatory preparatory stage of further specialization. The volume of them both in quantity and in volume has considerable differences [1].

Secondly, «department-centricity» determines the early (almost from the second year) specialization of the student. Programs in Europe do not require undergraduate specialization [15]¹².

Thirdly, the complicated thoughtfulness of educational programs in Ukrainian universities is recorded in the consistent development of courses, within which variability is possible only to a very small extent.

The problem of introducing two-level training for the Ukrainian university is not just a problem of dividing the curriculum into two stages, it is a problem

¹¹ Andrews J., Higson H. Graduate employability, 'soft skills' versus 'hard' business knowledge: A European study. Higher education in Europe. 2008. 33(4). P. 411–422.

¹² Lappo V., Soichuk L., Akimova M. Digital technologies of support the spiritual development of students. Information Technologies and Learning Tools. 2022. 88(2). P. 103–114.

of its radical revision, but also a problem of creating a fundamentally different organizational and personnel structure of universities, which provides not the departmental system, but the directorate of educational programs and contracts with specialists for the implementation of this program (lecturing, conducting classes, tutoring) [1; 15].

However, in such circumstances, first of all, the scientific activity becomes problematic (chairs usually represent the formed scientific teams; the creation of teams within the educational programs organization is an additional task). Second, the department is responsible for specialist training, quality and modernization of education. These functions may be delegated to the directorate, but it is a replacement of the responsibility of the scientific team for the responsibility of one or two education managers. In most cases, it seems that such a replacement will be defective [21].

An analysis of the transitioning practice in Ukrainian universities to a two-level system shows that most universities were inclined to understand their existing programs as «integrated masters» programs, i.e. to enroll in a bachelor's degree program with mandatory continuing education for master's degrees. Now for universities it is essential to save a large number of budget places for the preparation of masters or specialists retention [21]¹³.

Another, equally acute, issue is the status, rules of issuance and of educational documents. One of the major problems of our education in the world market is the lack of recognition the diplomas of most universities at the international level [22]¹⁴.

Ukraine's accession to the Bologna Process is, of course, a significant step towards the reconciliation of Ukrainian standards with the European ones; this is the basis for international accreditation, but a host of mechanisms that inhibit the real process. Foreign countries, the buyers of educational services do not consider the Ukrainian matriculation certificate to be the equivalent of local comprehensive secondary education documents, and Western employers look at Ukrainian diplomas with skepticism [21; 22].

CONCLUSIONS

International cooperation is an integral part of the activity of modern university of Ukraine and an important tool in ensuring the quality of education and its compliance with international standards.

This work is carried out within the framework of cooperation programs with leading foreign universities, the implementation of international educational programs and projects, the implementation of joint research

¹³ Tkachuk I., Sosnovenko V. Development of "Soft Skills" among college students. Professional education. 2019. 3(84). P. 16–18.

¹⁴ Trends in Learning Structures in European Higher Education. URL: http://bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf7TrendsIII_full.pdf

activities, the organization of scientific and practical seminars and conferences, the exchange of teaching staff and the development of student mobility (Figure 6).

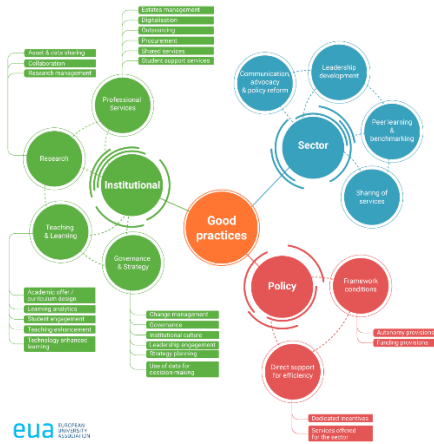


Fig. 6. Positive Impact of Interuniversity Cooperation

Active international activity of modern university of Ukraine contributes to raising the position of the university in the system of higher education of Ukraine and its further integration into the world educational and scientific community. So educators should strive for successful development and strengthening of educational, scientific and cultural ties between universities.

The essence of conceptual approaches to the introduction and implementation of international cooperation between higher educational institutions implementation of joint accredited educational programs taking into account trends in the internationalization of higher education are as follows:

- definition and specification of higher internationalization trends;
- education, which must be taken into account in the content of the agreement (resolution, memorandum) on cooperation between higher educational institutions;
- compliance with the requirements of international accreditation of joint educational institutions;
- programs based on improving the education quality system;
- development of the structure and content of the joint educational program based on the competence approach, taking into account the prospective needs of the labor market and national characteristics;

– organization of the educational process in accordance with the rules defined by the document on cooperation between higher educational institutions and national norms [9]¹⁵.

SUMMARY

The cooperation of the university with institutions of higher education and institutions of other countries is based on the principles of the priority of national interests, the development of the educational and scientific potential of the university, the systemic and mutually beneficial nature of cooperation, the orientation towards attracting additional sources of funding through the grant system, the conclusion of contracts with foreign legal entities and individuals regarding training students, training of scientific personnel, conducting research and design works.

Contacts with institutions of higher education in other countries provide an opportunity to improve the qualifications of scientific and pedagogical workers, enrich educational and scientific potential based on the borrowing and use of world experience, organize summer schools, exchange of teachers and students within the framework of the credit-transfer system, internships of professors and teaching staff.

International activity in the system of education and science was and remains an important component of the functioning of our university. In the conditions of globalization, full-fledged activity of higher education institutions is possible only thanks to their internationalization. After all, when forming one's own national education system, one must also take into account modern globalization influences, and one of the important modernization changes in higher education caused by globalization processes is internationalization and integration.

Cooperation is implemented within the framework of agreements of various types: agreements on international cooperation, memoranda with foreign HEIs and contracts with foreign HEIs-partners on the university's participation in Erasmus+ academic mobility programs. In accordance with the agreements, international scientific-practical conferences are held among students of higher education, scientific and scientific-pedagogical workers, planned joint scientific research is carried out, scientific collections, manuals and methodological recommendations are published, and internships of participants in the educational process are carried out. An important direction of international cooperation of the university is the implementation of international projects.

¹⁵ Clanfield N. Teaching Online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities. Delta Publishing. 2017. 109 p.

One of the forms of international integration of the university is membership in leading academic organizations, which is an important indicator of internationalization and international recognition.

References

1. Andrews J., Higson H. Graduate employability, 'soft skills' versus 'hard' business knowledge: A European study. *Higher education in Europe*. 2008. 33(4). P. 411–422.

2. Annual report of the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education for 2020. National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education. (2021). URL: <https://naqa.gov.ua/wpcontent/uploads/2021> (Reference Date: 21.09.2023).

3. Bao W. COVID-19 and Online Teaching in Higher Education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*. 2020). 2(2). P. 113–115.

4. Bowles T., Hattie J. Seven Motivating Conceptions of Learning of Tertiary Students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*. (2016). 15(3). P. 15–24.

5. Breeze R., Guinda S.. *Teaching English-Medium Instruction Courses in Higher Education: A Guide for Non Native Speakers*. Bloomsbury Academic. 2021. 68 p.

6. Byram M. *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Revisited (2nd ed.). Blue Ridge Summit, PA: Multilingual Matters. 2021. P. 13–37.

7. Campbell University. Weblogs for use in ESL classes. URL: <http://iteslj.org/Techniques/Campbell-Weblogs.html> (Reference Date: 13.09.2023)

8. Candlin, C., & Mercer, N. (2021). *English Language Teaching in its Social Context*. Routledge. URL: <https://www.scribd.com/document/50034988/EnglishLanguageTeaching-in-Its-Social-Context-Candlin-ChristopherN-MercerNeil.D0%B2%D1%96%D1%82-2020.pdf>. (Reference Date: 10.09.2023)

9. Clanfield N. *Teaching Online: Tools and techniques, options and opportunities*. Delta Publishing. 2017. 109 p.

10. Hamidah R., Azizah, R., Shah W., Faizah N., Wan Z., Mohd B. Factors Affecting Motivation in Language. *Learning International Journal of Information and Education Technology*. 2017. 7(7). P. 543–547.

11. Khominets I. The Essence and Types of Academic Mobility of Students. *Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod University. Series: Pedagogy. Social work*. (2019. 2(45). P. 223–227.

12. Knight J., Wit H. Internationalization of Higher Education: Past and Future. *International Higher Education*. 2018. 95. P. 2–4. URL:

<https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/ihe/article/view/10715/9188>. (Reference Date: 10.09.2023)

13. Korchova Gh. Academic Mobility of Applicants in the Context of the Modern Educational Process. 2017. URL: http://www.irbis-nbuv.gov.ua/cgi-bin/irbis_nbuv/cgiirbis_64.exe. (Reference Date: 08.09.2023)

14. Kovbatiuk V., Shevchuk O.. Academic Mobility of Students under the Conditions of Development of Educational Integration. Scientific Bulletin of Uzhhorod University. 2020. 30. P. 91–96. URL: http://www.visnyk-econom.uzhnu.uz.ua/archive/30_2020ua/19.pdf. (Reference Date: 03.09.2023)

15. Lappo V., Soichuk L., Akimova M. Digital technologies of support the spiritual development of students. Information Technologies and Learning Tools. 2022. 88(2). P. 103–114.

16. Maki W., Maki R. Multimedia comprehension skill predicts differential outcomes. Journal of Experimental Psychology Applied. 2002. 8(2). P. 85–98.

17. Masie E. E-learning definition of Masie Elliot Learning Center. 2016. URL: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=ynt5asIAAAAJ&h=en>. (reference Date: 13.09.2023)

18. Nakhod A. Significance of “Soft skills” for the professional formation of future specialists in socioeconomic professions. Scientific journal of the National Pedagogical University named after M. P. Drahomanov. 2018. Series 5: Pedagogical sciences: realities and prospects. 63. P. 131–135.

19. Ruba I. Motivation in selection of open source software license: Economic and social perspective. Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology. 2019. 97(24). P. 3868–3878.

20. The concept of training of specialists in the dual form of education, approved by the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of September 19, 2018 № 660 p.

21. Tkachuk I., Sosnovenko V. Development of “Soft Skills” among college students. Professional education. 2019. 3(84). P. 16–18.

22. Trends in Learning Structures in European Higher Education. URL: http://bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf7TrendsIII_full.pdf

23. Zhang T., Shaikh Z., Yumashev A., Chlad M. Applied Model of E-Learning in the Framework of Education for Sustainable Development. Sustainability. 2020. 12(16). P. 6420–6435.

Information about the authors:

Vasylyshyna Nataliia Maksymivna,

Doctor in Pedagogical Sciences, Professor,
Deputy Dean of the Faculty of International Relations
National Aviation University
4, Otradnyj avenue, Kyiv, 02000, Ukraine

Sydorenko Kateryna Victirivna,

Ph.D. in Economics, Associate Professor,
Deputy Dean of the Faculty of International Relations
National Aviation University
4, Otradnyj avenue, Kyiv, 02000, Ukraine

Skyrda Tetiana Sergiivna,

Ph.D. in Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor,
Associate Professor at the Foreign Languages and Translation
Department of the Faculty of International Relations
National Aviation University
4, Otradnyj avenue, Kyiv, 02000, Ukraine