

HIGHER EDUCATION REFORM IN UKRAINE AND BOLOGNA PROCESS

Nowadays, higher education is one of the determining factors of the intellectual and productive forces of society reproduction, of the development of spiritual culture of the Ukrainian people, the guarantor of the future success in consolidation and strengthening of the authority of Ukraine as a sovereign, independent, democratic, social and law based state. This is one of the priorities, determined by the Agreement between the Anti-crisis coalition and the draft government activity programme “Competitive Ukraine”. The leading role of higher education was highlighted at the final summit of “the Group of Eight’ – “Education for innovation society in the XXI century”, held in St. Petersburg.

The process of integration of Europe, its move to the East, is followed up by the creation of general education and scientific area, development of the unified criteria and standards in the field of education and science, where the quality of higher education is the basis for the formation of this area. The problem of quality of education has never yet been of so great ideologic, social, economic and technical importance as it is today. Putting forward the problem of quality has objective reasons:

firstly, human resources quality determines the level of development of the country and its global economic competitiveness;

secondly, quality of education gets more and more importance in providing with competitiveness of higher school graduates in the labour market.

The basic principles, that cause development of the higher education system of Ukraine in modern conditions, are:

- creation of innovation environment on the basis of educational and scientific support.

This is the innovation way of development of the society that can be provided only if the generation of people is formed, who think and act in an innovative way. This gives rise to a greater attention to the general development of a person, his communicative abilities, gaining knowledge, independence in taking decisions, critical approach and culture of thinking, formation of informational and social skills. Such approaches are determined by the main pedagogical idea of contemporaneity – life-long education.

- adaptation of the higher education system of Ukraine to the norms, standards and basic principles in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).
- providing goals of higher education with social context, that enables higher education establishments graduates to build up their professional career on the principles of social justice, responsibility, human values.

Educational sector, including higher education, is considered to be a strategic importance sphere and the priority significance in the development of society and state of Ukraine.

Beginning since Bergen (May, 2005) the important steps in realising the regulations of Bologna Process have been implemented in the higher education system of Ukraine, as well as there has been prepared the Action Plan of their implementation till 2010.

By the order of the Government of Ukraine there has been created an interbranch working group on implementing Bologna Process provisions attached to the Ministry of Education and Science.

In 2006 there was created the National Team of Bologna Promoters in Ukraine, to which specialists from the leading universities of Ukraine were included. They take part in training seminars on topical problems of higher education in the European Education Area and respectively they organize training seminars in Ukraine in the following basic directions:

- Quality Assurance (QA)
- three cycle system of education;
- Qualifications Framework (system of qualifications) in the European Educational Area.

All-Ukrainian Council of Students, created at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, became a candidate for the members of the National Union of Students in Europe (ESIB).

During the academic year 2006/ 2007 in all higher education institutions (HEIs) of the III-IV levels of accreditation there was implemented credit transfer system ECTS. The corresponding package of innovation normative ECTS documents and recommendations has been elaborated, organizational measures on implementation of the Diploma Supplement of the European Standard are carried out.

In 2006 there were held two seminars initiated by Magna Charta Council concerning problems of convergence of higher education on the way to the European Education Area.

The system of informing and motivating the subjects of higher education institutions activity on problems of integration of Ukraine's system of higher education into European one has been extended.

Institutional structure of Ukraine is represented by 232 state and 113 private institutions of higher education (See Figure 1).

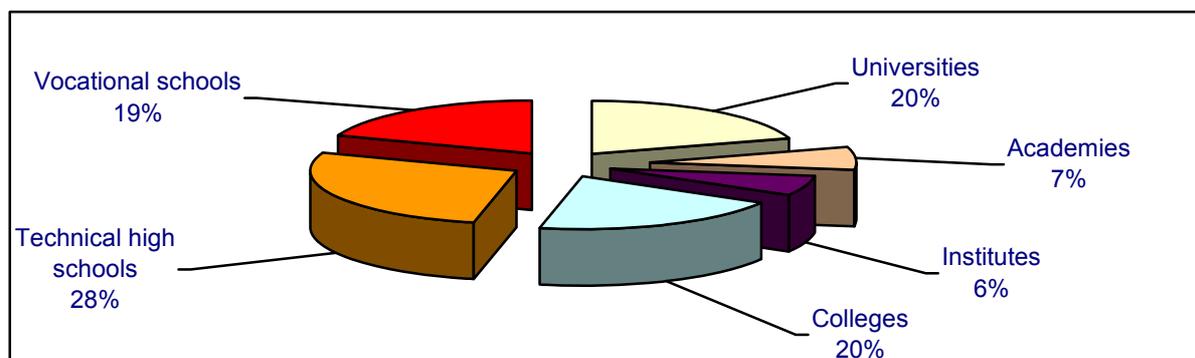


Figure 1. Structure of higher education institutions of the I-IV levels of accreditation according to the types (*at the beginning of 2006/07 academic year, state and municipal forms of property*)

There is the following classification of educational institutions in the education system of Ukraine: technical high schools, vocational schools, colleges, universities, academies, institutes.

The percentage of the students, admitted in the 2006-2007 academic year to each of the types of institutions, is:

- technical high schools – 12.4%;
- vocational schools – 3.3%;
- colleges – 8.9%;
- universities – 55.9%;
- academies – 12.5%;
- institutes – 7.0%.

Different types of institutions are governed by the same rules and Laws, except for the matters of financing of the state and private educational institutions.

Higher education institutions admit students in accordance with the "Terms of admittance to the higher education institutions of Ukraine", adopted by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The Admission board of a higher education institution functions according to the "Regulations on the Admission board of the higher education institution", adopted by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine has taken the following measures directed at the formation and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework. This process is planned to be completed gradually till 2010 with realising the commitments, adopted in Bergen in 2005. The basis for these actions is harmonization of the National Qualifications Framework with the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area.

In particular, the following actions are carried out:

- on the governmental level there has been developed and adopted a number of bachelor training programmes where the existing European experience is taken into account. At present, the formation of the National Bachelor Qualification Framework is initiated, which is carried out according to these programs and will be included to the Bologna Follow-up Group (BFUG) for adaptation into the overarching European Qualifications Framework.

- In 2006/2007 academic year the students of all universities of the III-IV levels of accreditation are involved into the Two Cycle System of training, which corresponds to Bologna principles (See Figure 2).

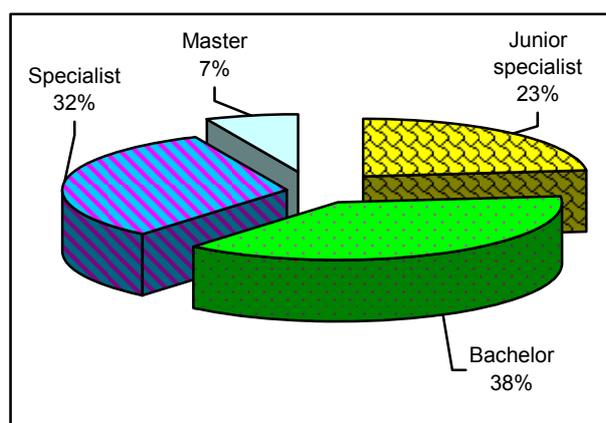


Figure 2. Conferring educational and qualification levels.

As far as the programmes of the second cycle are concerned, the problem of diversification of the programmes according to the academic and professional criteria is studied. At present, in Ukraine there exist the post-bachelor programme of Master of Science and the so called “Specialist” programme, which is oriented mostly to practical activity.

In the course of discussion of such programs by higher education institutions and employers the following two variants are proposed:

1. to leave only the Master training programme at the II cycle (then, however, the problem of employment of bachelors and a lot of those, who will have an access to the Master programmes, will be accentuated).
2. to elaborate two variants of the Master programmes – of Master of academic and professional profiles. For instance, for the technical specialities – Master of Science, Master of Engineering. The latter is oriented mostly to practical activity. Some integrated Master training programmes are planned to be created on the basis of full secondary education.

Such programmes have already been proposed for training specialists in some of the directions of education. It concerns Medicine and Veterinary. Extension is possible also for the Philosophy and Art.

The proposals concerning the adaptation of the National Qualifications Framework to the Qualifications Framework in the European Higher Education Area has been discussed by all interested parties at the national level, and the terms of its implementation have been coordinated (2010).

According to the structured doctoral programmes, the mechanisms of implementation of the Doctoral training as the III Bologna cycle are developed:

- standard course of full-time doctoral studies is 3 years;
- doctoral study programmes include both lectures and independent scientific research;
- control and assessment procedures for doctoral studies are being developed;
- doctoral studies are integrated into interdisciplinary training and contribute to the development of interchangeable skills. Gradually the principles of continuity and succession of training programmes are realized at the second and the third cycles.
- ECTS credit points are planned to be introduced for evaluation of the doctoral student workload during the doctoral studies;
- the work on coordination of the principles of including doctoral studies into the national qualifications framework is carried out.

All qualifications of the first cycle give an access to several programmes of the second cycle, and all the following ones give an access to at least one programme of the third cycle practically without any transition (bridge) programmes.

Different actions on adaptation of the national system of quality assurance standards provision and recommendations to the quality assurance (QA) in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) have been held in Ukraine.

For the purpose of cooperation and studying the ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance) activity there was created a special department in the State Accreditation Commission.

Ministry of Education and Science has worked out plans and determined terms for the improvement and coordination of the national system of QA for Higher Education according to the standards and recommendations of QA in EHEA.

In April 2007 the Ministry of Education and Science is going to hold a seminar on the problems of Education Quality Assurance (QA) with the assistance of the ENQA representatives in Yalta. The goal of holding out this seminar is the further creation of methodology on QA system for Higher Education according to the ENQA requirements, studying the best practices of this structure as well the participating countries of the Bologna process, presentation of own experience and its proper evaluation and certification of our QA agencies/institutions. Such an experience will be useful for the development of the normative legislative base concerning this problem (that is amendments to laws, regulations, etc.)

At present, in Ukraine it is formed the system of monitoring and rating the HEIs, which uses international parameters in evaluation. At the same time, there is also a national system of monitoring and rating of the HEIs with the purpose of making managerial decisions.

The National QA system is realized through the licensing and accreditation systems.

The external quality assurance system covers all HEIs of Ukraine and is spread over the existing branches of foreign education institutions in Ukraine.

The existing system of QA includes the following:

- internal evaluation (self-analysis of the education institution with further document preparation for licensing or during the accreditation);
- external expertise (expert assessment of the HEI activity).

The corresponding system of society information on accreditation results is in the process of elaboration.

In addition to the accreditation system, the internal QA evaluation of the HEI is realised by means of rector tests and the State Examination Boards system.

In Ukraine there functions also the State Independent Inspection.

Students and public take part in the QA evaluation.

The public Accreditation Commissions were created at regional education boards in all regions.

Thus, on the national level there functions the QA system, which is applied to the whole higher education and includes all elements of higher education QA: external and internal evaluation and publication of results.

The procedures on detailed examination of the national quality assurance agency(ies)/institutions in accordance with the standards and recommendations of the QA in EHEA are being formed.

Students take part in the following aspects of QA:

- since 2007 the representative of bodies for student self-government will be included in the national agency administration for QA;
- as full members or observers in commissions for external check-up;
- as the respondents in the sociological polls on external evaluation;
- in internal evaluations.

With the purpose of collaboration, studying the experience of the European Network for Quality Assurance there was created a special department in the Sector of licensing, accreditation and nostrification of the Ministry of Education and Science.

At present, in Ukraine there was developed the plan on improvement and adaptation of the national quality assurance system for higher education in accordance with the standards and norms of the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) in respect of:

- internal quality assurance for higher education institutions;
- external quality assurance for higher education;
- quality assurance of the activity of the external quality assurance agencies/institutions (a copy of the full contents of the plan is enclosed).

Some of the universities in Ukraine address directly the international accreditation agencies.

With the purpose of recognition of degrees and terms of training there were developed recommendations and carried out organizational procedures on implementing the Diploma Supplement, which will be issued to each student graduating in 2008/09 academic year in a widely spoken European language, free of charge, automatically, in the format of the EU/CoE/UNESCO Diploma Supplement.

The Lisbon Convention came into force in accordance with the Law of Ukraine “On Ratification of the Convention on Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region” in 1999.

Recognition of the Higher Education Qualifications is regulated by the Laws of Ukraine “On Education”, “On Higher Education”, Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decrees No. 1260 “On Education and Scientific Degrees Documents” and No. 1380 “On licensing of education services”, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine order No. 563 “On approving the Regulations on recognition of the foreign educational documents” that determine the legal and organizational basis of the recognition of the foreign educational documents. These normative documents establish a centralised procedure of recognition, which is in the competence of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. The National criteria of quality evaluation for foreign qualifications from different parts of the world are based on Provisions of the Lisbon Convention. Realisation of these functions in the Ministry is carried out by the Sector of the Licensing, Accreditation and Nostrification Board.

All of the following principles are applied in practice:

- applicant’s right to fair assessment;
- recognition, if no essential differences have been proved;
- demonstration of essential differences, if recognition had not been granted;
- provision of the information on study programmes and higher education institutions of the country.

The Sector of licensing, accreditation and nostrification forms the national education informational network that corresponds to ENIC.

Current legislation on recognition of foreign qualifications does not contradict to the regulations and principles of the Lisbon Convention. Ukraine signed 22 intergovernmental international agreements on mutual recognition of educational documents, scientific degrees and academic titles. 32 drafts of such agreements are in the process of adjustment.

In 2006/2007 academic year it was introduced ECTS for all training programmes of specialists of the I and II cycles, which allows the student transfer to be done and to accumulate credits. The national system correlates with the ECTS. The ratio of the national and the ECTS credits is 1:1.

A number of measures concerning recognition of prior learning, including non-formal and informal learning, is carried out:

- the national recommendations on evaluation of prior learning as the basis for an access to higher education were developed;
- the student workload is evaluated in ECTS credits.
- the national recommendations on the number of the ECTS credits were worked out, and the ECTS credits were distributed in all programmes of the first and second cycles of training of specialists.

Also, the corresponding work on recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the system of Lifelong Learning is in progress.

The corresponding decisions on creating facilities for flexible approaches to studying in higher education are made:

- modular programmes are offered for the graduates from the education institutions of the I and II accreditation levels, who enter the first cycle of education – bachelorate;
- the prior learning modules are transferred and thus the duration of the course of study in this cycle becomes reduced;
- in the first and second cycles the students have the right to choose a certain number of academic disciplines;
- the procedure of adoption of the Master programmes list for universities is simplified. Universities can offer some students the individual curriculum.

In Ukraine there is formed a legislative base for the development and introduction of joint inter-university study programmes for specialists with the aim of granting students joint degrees after the completion of the course of studies. Joint degrees are allowed and encouraged during experience exchange within the framework of joint programmes (TEMPUS/TASIS projects support, etc.) of all three cycles of training of specialists. Some of the higher education institutions, that introduced joint programmes of specialist training in European Area of Higher Education (EAHE) and award nationally recognised degrees jointly with higher education institutions of other countries, amount to 3 percent.

Measures for the improvement of synergism between higher education and other sectors of research work are applied. Scientists from other research institutions are involved into teaching process in the higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions jointly with research institutions establish the departments' branches, where Masters have their scientific probation period.

In Ukraine the regional and international student scientific conferences, take place annually.

In comparison with 2005, the number of candidates for doctoral degree, who choose the research career, has increased, and at present it amounts to 90%.

68998 people having a scientific degree (candidate and doctor of sciences) work at higher education institutions, which make 95% of the total amount of researchers with a scientific degree in Ukraine (See Figure 3).

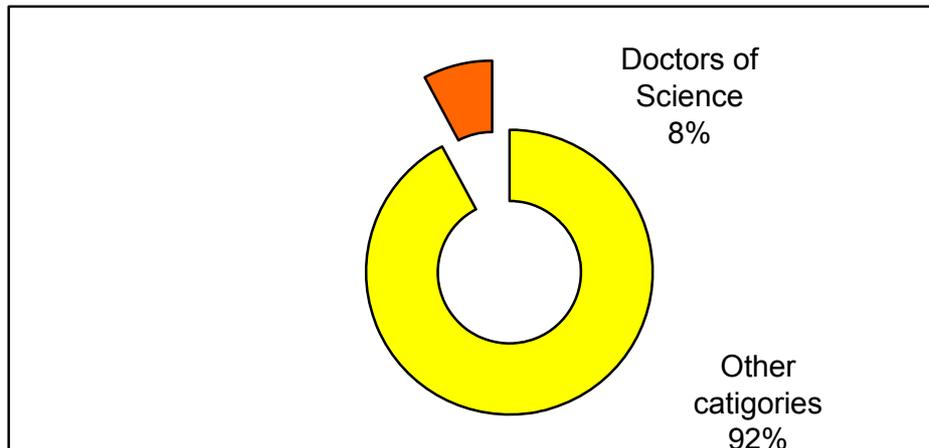


Figure 3. Doctors of sciences in comparison to total number of research and academic staff of the higher education institutions of the III-IV levels of accreditation (*at the beginning of the 2006/07 academic year*)

With the purpose of facilitation of an access to high-quality higher education the following measures are carried out:

- in Ukraine in 2006/07 academic year the state order for bachelors' training in all fields of education has increased by 3% (See Figure 4);

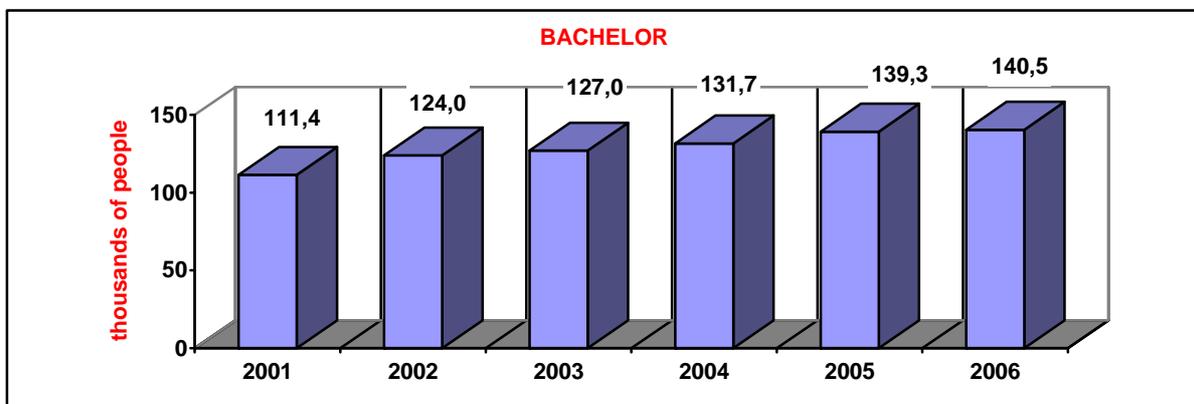


Figure 4. Formation of the state order volume for training of specialists according to the educational and qualification levels (*according to the regulations of the cabinet of ministers of Ukraine*)

- at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) pre-university training faculties have been set up, where the young people from depressed regions have the opportunity to get prepared for the entrance to the HEIs.

In case of obstacles to the access to higher education for socially disadvantaged persons, the state provides the following measures:

- the increase of scholarships at the final year of study as well as the improving of accommodation conditions in hostels (See Figure 5);

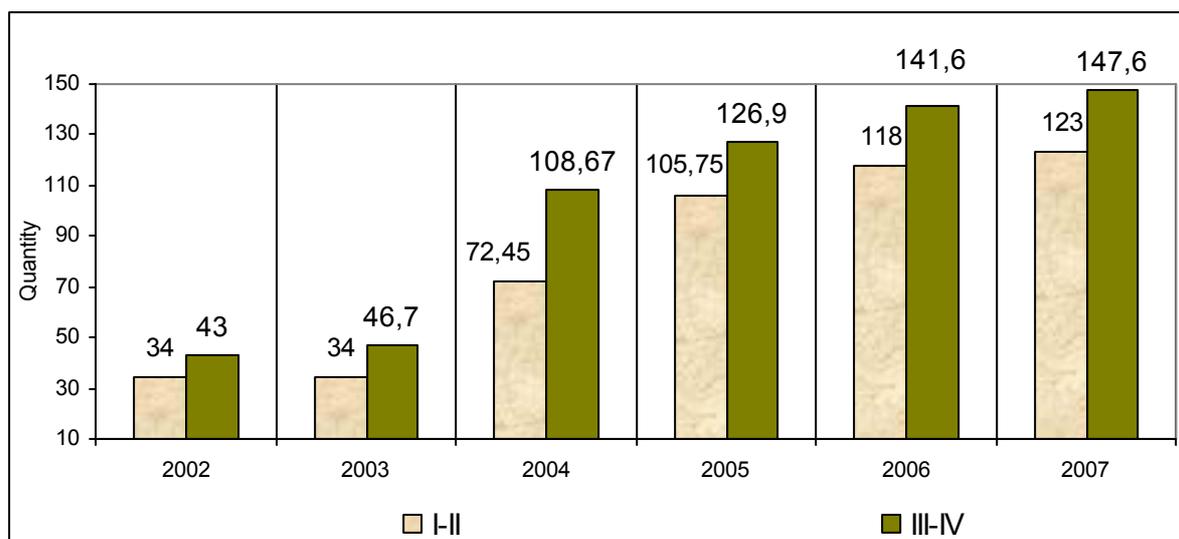


Figure 5. Dynamics of the increase of scholarship rates of the students of higher education institutions of the I-II and III-IV levels of accreditation

- approaches concerning the establishment of higher education institutions for the low income layers of the population are being considered;

- the task to provide handicapped students with the conditions for study is set up. In Ukraine there is the university “Ukraine”, where such students generally get their education;

- organization of distant learning at student’s place of residence;

- creation of university departments in regions, where consultation and lessons are conducted in places of students residence;

To the increase of internal and external mobility of students:

- the transfer of students from one higher education institution to another one at the expense of the transfer and accumulation of ECTS

credits was simplified. The bachelor of any university can continue his studies at the second cycle at another university;

- bilateral agreements on the student exchange are made.

The important indicator of the international academic mobility is the number of a body of foreign students in Ukraine and the Ukrainian students abroad. In 2005/2006 academic year 35,000 foreigners got higher education in Ukraine, and nearly 20,000 young Ukrainians had a chance to study and make the research abroad, which included the short term study, full time study, the research work, probation period, language courses, etc. (See Figure 6).

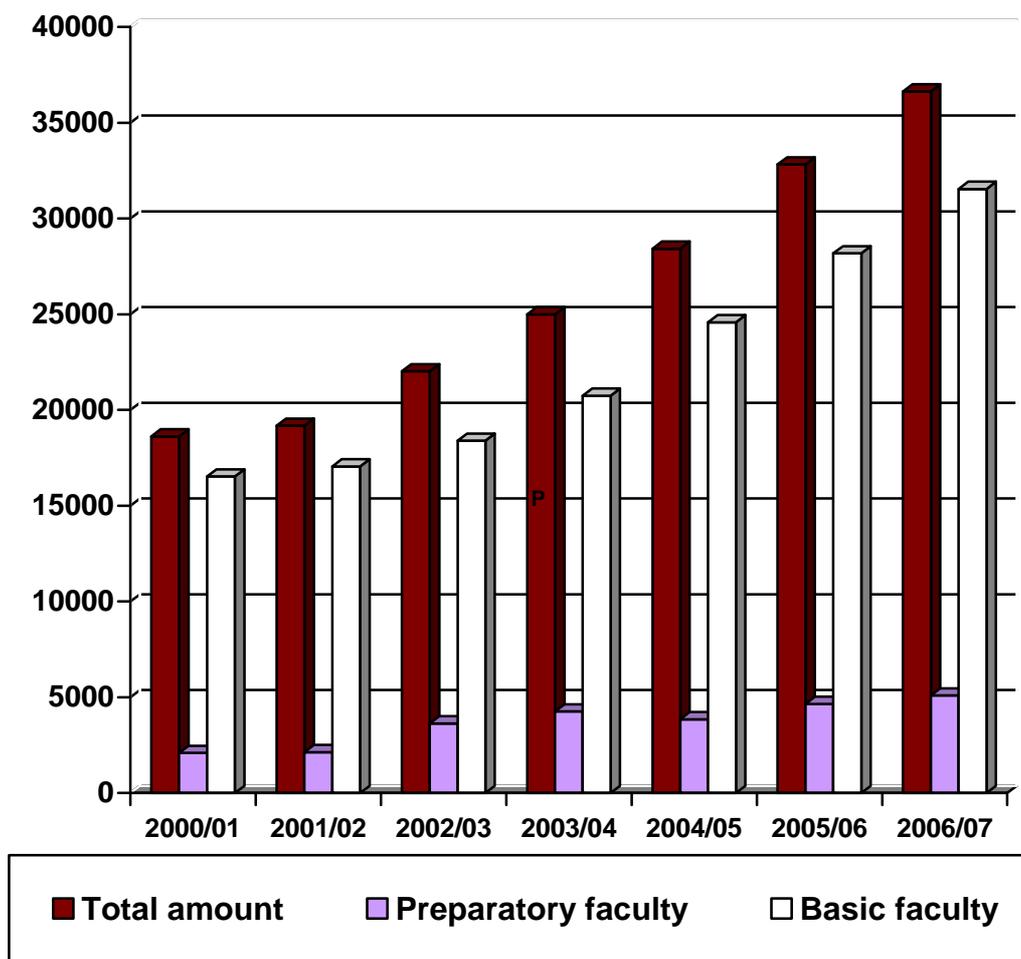


Figure 6. Dynamics of a body of foreign students (people)

In order to remove obstacles to the staff mobility and contribute to the full use of mobility programmes in the higher education of Ukraine the following measures are taken.

For the increase of the internal staff mobility contribute:

- teachers' exchange between different higher education institutions;

- opportunity of holding more than one position by the teachers of different higher education institutions;
- cancellation of rector's right to prohibit holding more than one position by the same teacher.

For the increase of the external staff mobility contribute:

- probation of the Ukrainian higher education institution teachers in the leading European universities
- signing of the interuniversity bilateral agreements on staff exchange;
- creation of the joint training programmes for specialists with leading European universities;
- carrying out the joint scientific programmes with leading universities of the European Higher Education Area, participating countries of the Bologna Process.

With the purpose of increase of the attractiveness of the European Higher Education Area and cooperation with the other European countries, there were held more than 20 regional international conferences, seminars, symposia on the problems of the Bologna Process implementation into Ukraine's higher education; curricula of the leading European Universities were introduced. It is encouraged to hold courses from European broadcasting studios in the Ukrainian Universities.

The basic educational problems the country faces at present are:

- development of principles, mechanisms and procedures of the introduction of doctoral study as Bologna cycle III.
- employment of bachelors - graduates of the first cycle.
- creation of the quality assurance system for higher education, which would correspond to the European standards and norms;
- provision the student and teaching staff mobility in the international education area;
- extension of the social partnership practice of the higher education institutions with employers, citizens and public associations, involving them into the process of elaboration and making decisions on problems of higher education.

Excerpt from: Nikolayenko S.M. Higher Education reform in Ukraine and Bologna Process: Information materials – K.: KNUTE, 2007. – 46 p.