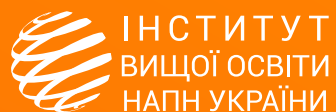




AdvanceHE



Forum Report

Teaching and Learning Excellence Forum

17-18 March 2021, online

Introduction

Teaching and Learning Excellence Forum was the second forum within the Higher Education Teaching Excellence Programme. The British Council in Ukraine is implementing the Programme in partnership with the Institute of Higher Education of the NAES of Ukraine, Advance HE (UK) and with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance.

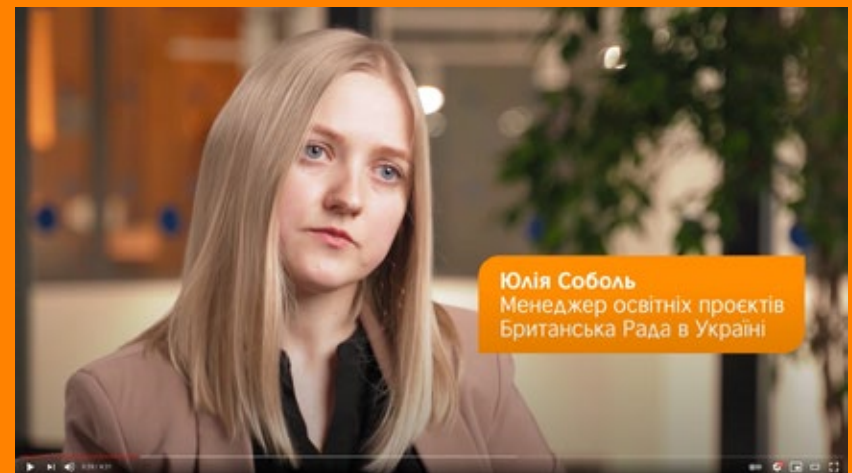
Key Forum themes:

- Professional development of higher education teachers.
- Transformation of teaching in a new reality: challenges and opportunities.
- Student-centred teaching and its peculiarities.
- The UK and Ukraine experience in improving teaching excellence in higher education.

The Forum programme consisted of panel discussions, practical workshops and presentations of institutional cases.

More than 6000 participants attended the Forum, including rectors, vice-rectors, heads of departments, teachers of higher education institutions, experts who are actively involved in the process of improving the teaching and professional development of university teachers.

You can watch the video about Higher Education Teaching Excellence Programme (available only in Ukrainian).



Key points of the Forum discussions

Teaching excellence and the ways to achieve it

Dough Parkin, Principal Adviser for Leadership and Management, Advance HE, shared the following messages:

“There can be no excellent teaching unless there is excellent learning. There are lots of skills that help us to achieve a quality, but excellence is an individual and collective commitment that propels us there, that is empowered by leadership, by and through leadership”.

“So, in institutions there can be strong management systems, standards, processes, frameworks that help to assure quality. But over and above that we need inspiring and empowering leadership to propel us towards excellence. So, to really achieve excellence as a culture at an institutional level we need to create that environment where others can succeed”.

“If you want to achieve teaching excellence — focus on the culture. Teachers must be able

to take risks. Focus on actively encouraging creativity, giving people the tools that they need, rewarding success, and developing the teaching faculty that takes a real sense of pride and enjoyment in achievement”.

Key players that influence professional development of a university teacher

• University

“I believe that the first player is the university itself that acts as corporate body that combines management, academics and other personnel,” says **Oleh Sharov**, General Director of the Directorate of Professional Higher Education, Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine. “Students are on the second place. I suggest ranking the Ministry of Education and Science and National Agency for Quality Assurance and other stakeholders in a random order.”

• Student

“Student is a consumer of a teacher’s professionalism, and student’s performance is an indicator of teachers’ professionalism.”

It is the students who choose a university according to certain criteria,” says **Olena Huzar**, Head of the Centre for Teachers Professional Development at Ternopil Volodymyr Hnatiuk National Pedagogical University.

- **Ministry of Education and Science and national agencies**

“It comes from the very meaning of the word ‘player’ — this is somebody who plays a game and can either win or lose it,” suggests **Olena Yeremenko**, Deputy Head of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance. “First of all, we are talking about school graduates and students here, who choose this or that university. As for the Ministry of Education, National Agency and other players, we are rather referees who set certain rules of the game, conditions and requirements.”

- **Professional associations and business**

“This culture might not be developed well enough as it is in the West, but the role of professional associations is crucial. Business is also an important player, especially those companies that promote their products and

educate their employees at the same time,” says **Yevhen Plotnikov**, Head of the Project Office at Nizhyn Mykola Gogol State University.

Forum participants expressed the following opinions regarding key players in the area of teacher professional development:



University teacher professional standard

“Every employee should be offered an opportunity to plan their career, scientific and professional development. On the other hand, we should create opportunities to promote employees to management positions and create a talent pool,” mentions **Oleh Sharov**.

You can learn more about the university teacher professional standard from [*the interview with Oleh Sharov, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.*](#)

Balancing teachers’ and university’s efforts

“University and administration in particular should not demand or impose any innovations,” suggests **Yevhen Plotnikov**. “There should be cross-faculty and faculty cooperation, i.e. small groups of people united by a shared goal. University’s role is to propel development of those groups. Use of bottom-up approach is a strategy that can be adopted and used by any higher education institution.”

“The first thing we have done when we started our participation in Teaching Excellence Program was a round-table discussion with all centers that operate in our university. Those include but not limited to the Centre for Education Quality Assurance, Career Centre etc.,” explains **Olena Huzar**. “We had to see a broad picture of understanding our own responsibility in order to create an ecosystem for the benefit of learning effectiveness.”

“It is not the institutional autonomy that defines a modern university, but academic freedom of teachers,” believes **Oleh Sharov**. “Continuous professional development is an element of academic freedom. If a teacher recognizes his or her professional mission, is eager to develop, and treats the university not just as a place of work, but as one’s way of life, it is quite natural for such person to take advantage of academic freedom and build his or her own career development path. And the university should treat this path with respect.”

Transformation of teaching

“Traditional ways of teaching are gradually becoming a thing of the past. If we want to compete with massive education platforms, if universities want to provide high quality and affordable education, we should get rid of big lecture halls,” says **Vladyslav Panchenko**, Head of the Centre for Education Quality Assurance of Ukrainian State University of Railway Transport. “You should be more inventive in order to be interesting in online format. Students feel the lack of teacher’s IT competence and, as soon as this happens, they show superior attitude towards the lectures regardless of how experienced the teacher is in the subject.”

“It is practical approach that became the biggest challenge for teachers, as the students have to be demonstrated on the daily basis where and how they can utilize their learnings,” admits **Tetiana Marynych**, Senior Lecturer of Complex Modeling Department of Sumy State University.

“Blended learning approach is the most suitable. We should take the best things from

virtual and offline education. I believe that blended learning will be the future of the whole world. Well, it is already,” mentioned **Illia Filipov**, a co-founder and CEO of EdEra online education studio.

Supporting teachers

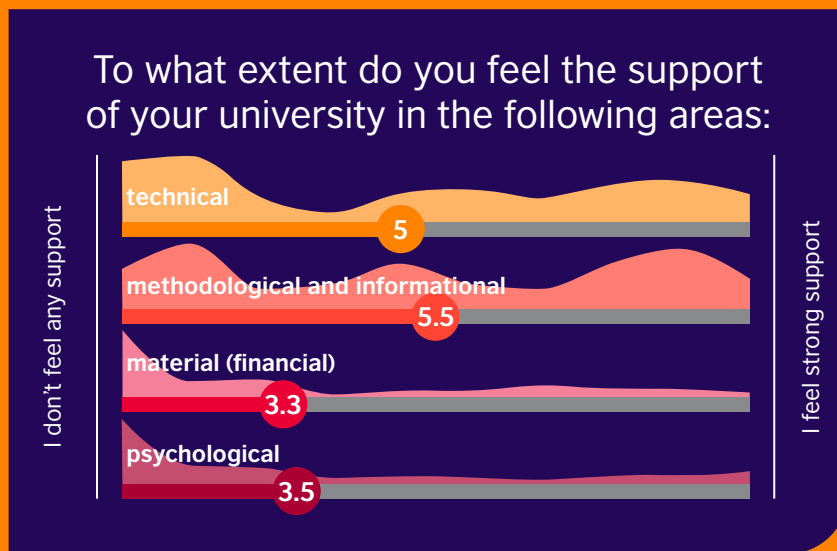
“One of the criteria of the accreditation policy is human resources,” says **Olena Yeremenko**. “Important institutional policies include staff recruitment, encouragement and motivation of teachers, rewarding and recognition of best practices.”

“Our university started with material and technical support and use of free online platforms,” tells **Tetiana Konovalenko**, Dean of Faculty of Philology of Bogdan Khmelnytsky Melitopol State Pedagogical University. “Over the last year, we have also reviewed the system of teachers’ professional development and enabled online and in-house further training for our teachers. We have also established Teaching Excellence Hub.”

“We had the technical support available. As for psychological support, in most cases

we had to provide it to each other,” noted **Olena Yermoshkina**, Head of Mathematical Analysis and Finances Department of National Technical University Dnipro Polytechnic. “Proactiveness of teachers who are looking for information sources and applying to professional development centers for support in development of their skills indicates there is a need for more methodological support.”

The survey of Forum participants regarding the level of support from their universities showed the following results:



Interaction between students, teachers and the university

“I cannot imagine teaching without interaction with students,” admits **Olha Yashenkova**, Dean of the Department of English Philology and Intercultural Communication, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. “I start every course with finding out what students’ expectations are, who they are and where they come from. Otherwise, how would I know how to improve my courses? Constructive criticism helps and motivates the teacher. It is worth to consider students’ opinion and remember that education is a two-way process. And both parties are equally responsible for the results of this process.”

“‘Black screens’ issue is a matter of privacy for me. How do you “turn on” the student and not the camera? Structured approach to teaching and new tools are important. Students can be working in groups, taking part in quizzes and discussions even with their cameras off,” believes **Maria Tsypiashchuk**, teacher from National University of Ostroh Academy. “Sometimes we forget who education is meant

for and it turns into a process for the sake of process. Students are the focus of our activities and they are obviously the ones who should be asked questions and engaged in the development of the process.”

“We were happy to end up with blended learning because at least it allowed us to eliminate communication barriers to a certain extent. Now we have ‘meetings’ of our rector with students - everyone can ask the rector a question using Google form and his or her question will be voiced in the online meeting,” says **Yehor Hukov**, Head of the Student Council at Zaporizhzhia National University.

“Student surveys should become a basic approach in the university. It is important to engage student self-government in implementing those surveys. They should become a driver that promotes a survey, be involved in the analysis process and have access to the data,” believes **Andrii Kalinin**, President of Ukrainian Association of Students, “It is important for student self-government to be integrated into the internal higher education quality assurance system, be able to influence the academic council and other decision-making bodies.”

Resources

[Forum Day 1 Video](#)

[Forum Day 2 Video](#)

Universities' institutional cases of teachers' professional development:

[Teaching Excellence Courses: successes and failures. Case of Ivan Franko National University of Lviv \(only in Ukrainian\)](#)

[Organisation of teaching in distance courses: advantages and challenges. Case of Nizhyn Mykola Gogol State University \(only in Ukrainian\)](#)

["Building a plane while flying it": challenges of the pandemic and university responses. Case of National University of Ostroh Academy](#)

Practical workshops:

[Online Odyssey: from delivering content to designing interactive teaching and learning](#)

[Gamification of educational process during the pandemic \(only in Ukrainian\)](#)

[Blogging as a motivational trigger of student engagement in the learning process \(only in Ukrainian\)](#)

[In a teacher's shoes: tests created by students as a tool for active learning \(only in Ukrainian\)](#)



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