

## ACADEMIC MOBILITY OF STUDENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATIONAL INTERNATIONALIZATION

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**Abstract:** An internationalization process is holistically aimed at creating a single educational space for education applicants, so they will have access to high-quality professional education regardless of the economic and social level of their home country's development. Academic mobility of education applicants is a key condition for the educational internationalization principle's implementation. This article examines the academic mobility features of both foreign education applicants and Ukrainian students who want to study at foreign universities.

Academic mobility development in the educational internationalization context contributes to economic growth and country development, ensures that higher professional education is taken to a new quality level, which will attract applicants from other countries.

**Keywords:** academic mobility, higher professional education, internationalization of education, foreign students, education applicants

### 1 Introduction

In today's information-saturated world, internationalization of higher education provides some advantages, among which can be noted: increase and diversification of finances through attracting applicants from other countries to academic activities; expansion of educational and professional plans and programs through the training of Ukrainian applicants in foreign educational institutions; improvement of educational quality through knowledge exchange with other countries both teachers and educational applicants while attending and holding international conferences, symposiums, etc. (Plinokos, 2018).

Since 2000, higher education internationalization has become one of the leading topics on the European agenda. For the first ten years, educational internationalization was seen as a process of Europeanization with a focus on the development of student mobility. The manifestation of this specific trend was reflected in the Leuven Communiqué (2009), which clearly defined the leading goal of the internationalization process: to reach a 20% level of student mobility at European universities by 2020. Despite this, in 2013, the European Commission's policy document "European Higher Education in the World" (July 11, 2013, Brussels) changes the direction of this sector. On this basis, new priorities were defined, new interpretations and new approaches began to be applied to the educational internationalization concept (Knight J., 2018).

In the scientific literature, we meet with the fact that the beginning and development of the higher education internationalization process is identified with the beginning of globalization in the second half of the 20th century. Exactly at this stage, there is an increase in the academic mobility of education applicants and an increase in the level of teachers' cooperation in different countries. Academic mobility is one of the key components of internationalization, which concerns all participants of the educational process, both teachers and education applicants (Horbunova, 2016).

Higher education as an economic and social development engine, which is recognized on the world stage, has been talked about for a long time. Thanks to the educational integration principle, countries form a linkage system through which interaction is enhanced not only on the educational level but also on the industrial and economic levels.

To prepare their citizens for life and work in the globalizing world of the 21st century, to increase the national competitiveness of their countries on the world stage, governments around the world are implementing policies of higher education internationalization at the national and regional levels (Hryshchenko, 2020).

Internationalization in Ukraine began with a significant delay, and today, despite the intensification of this industry over the past few years, it is being implemented without a developed and approved national strategy and comprehensive strategies approved at the institutional level. In the modern Ukrainian educational space, even among the education stakeholders have not yet formed a relevant understanding of the leading importance of the process, its multifaceted content, and principles of implementation and intensification. At the same time, the international experience of higher education internationalization remains understudied (Horbunova, 2016).

Because higher education in Ukraine should make the transition to a new competitive level, which can be achieved only with the integration into the international educational space, in 2018, the "National strategy for the development of education in Ukraine until 2021" was developed and approved. (Decree of the President of Ukraine, June 25, 2013). The development of integration processes in the higher education system causes the need to study the academic mobility level of education applicants in terms of internationalization.

### 2 Literature Review

The peculiarities of the educational system development in Ukraine have been described by many researchers, including V. Andrushchenko, I. Antoshkina, T. Bogolib, G. Bordovsky, V. Viktorov, L. Hayevska, I. Kalenyuk, A. Levchenko, A. Mizichenko, N. Ostroverkhova, L. Redko, L. Trofimets, N. Ushenko, and others.

Such researchers as F. Altbach, M. van der Wende, L. Verbeek, B. Wechter, H. de Wit, G. Laureys, S. Marginson, J. Knight, B. Reeves, H. Ridder-Simoens, J. Sadlak, and W. Teichler described in their works the concept of "academic mobility," defined the main periods of its formation and manifestation, the prospects of this direction in different world regions. The basic stages of academic mobility development and state regulatory structure of academic mobility of education applicants were investigated by such scientists as A. Antonov, S. Verbitska, A. Hladyr, I. Sheptorenko, and others.

According to the researchers that have been analyzed both by scientists and education applicants, it was noted that higher education in Ukraine does not meet the present requirements, and, therefore, cannot meet the real requirements and needs of both education applicants and the labor market.

This article aims to examine the peculiarities of academic mobility of higher education applicants under the educational integration conditions at the present stage.

### 3 Materials and Methods

A theoretical literature review of the research problem, questionnaire survey, statistical data analysis, and survey results.

#### 4 Results

Modern world society is characterized by a high level of integration processes relating to absolutely all spheres of human activity. The globalized academic system has responded to the challenges of the knowledge-based economy, and academic mobility is becoming a leading idea of this process and in the world in general.

The concept of "academic mobility" can be viewed from several viewpoints. Some specialists speak of academic mobility as a limited period of an applicant's education and of which country the student is not a citizen. In this case, academic mobility ends when the applicant returns to the home country after completing educational activities abroad. Other sources note that academic mobility is an opportunity for education applicants to determine their educational trajectory, the choice of courses and academic disciplines, corresponding to the state educational system of standards, per the abilities, aspirations, and educational needs, which in the course of educational activities reveals the education applicant (Kizilov O., 2014).

Such researchers as Kovbatiuk M.V. and Shevchuk V.A. talk about academic mobility as an opportunity for the applicant to gain knowledge and conduct educational activities in another higher education institution, which trains specialists of the same field, taking into account the basic disciplines, assessment system (credits) and study periods. These researchers characterize academic mobility as a dynamic phenomenon that encourages the educational internationalization process and integration of the applicant into the world-class education system (Kovbatiuk, 2020).

The Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" (Law of Ukraine "On Higher Education" July 01, 2014) provides the following definition "academic mobility is the ability of participants in the educational process to study, teach, intern or conduct research activities in another higher education institution (academic institution) on or off the territory of the country".

Academic mobility allows higher education students to plan their academic path and choose subjects and courses according to their abilities and preferences. Increased academic mobility leads to internationalization and greater transparency of academic and educational processes. From a humanitarian point of view, it is an effective tool for enhancing professional and communication skills, promoting personal growth, and modifying the cognitive matrix of its participants (Korchova Gh., 2017).

S. I. Khominets research offers a classification of different types of academic mobility according to the key attributes:

- academic mobility of teachers and students (based on the principles of subject realization),
- academic, research, aimed at sharing experiences or improving qualifications (taking into account the object of academic mobility),
- real and virtual (based on different forms of academic mobility),
- vertical, horizontal, direct and reverse (in the direction of academic mobility),
- regional, interregional, international (by spatial feature).

The most common types of academic mobility are spatial and virtual (Khominets S., 2019). Spatial academic mobility is characterized by learning at an institution, which is located in another place with the need to change the place of residence. Virtual academic mobility – does not require a physical stay at another educational institution and is based on the use of modern information and communication technologies or distance learning systems.

At this level of development of the world community and the interaction of countries between the world, we are talking about

education and knowledge of transnational and transboundary nature. The formation of a single global educational space is due to the convergence of approaches of different countries to the organization of education as well as the recognition of educational documents of some countries in others. Based on the community concept, the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) and the European Research Area (ERA) were formed. The formation and development of a common educational space in Europe have two advantages: on the one hand the level of academic mobility of applicants for education increases, on the other – it is a prerequisite for independent formation of common educational space (Zdioruk C., 2014).

In the leading countries of the world over the past 20 years, the international component of national educational policy has attracted the attention of experts in migration policy, employment, and trade involved in the regulation, organization, and financing of academic mobility with regional and international organizations (UNESCO, OECD, EBRD, World Bank, etc.) (Fedorova I., 2012).

Internationalization of higher education does not occur in isolation or a vacuum. Internationalization today is a global world process (Vasilenko O., 2019). Nevertheless, the global landscape of international higher education and its internationalization has its specifics and is uneven. Taking this into account, the conclusions about the need to create a unified legislative framework and remove obstacles to effective and fair recognition of learning outcomes and comparative qualifications of higher education are correct (Shatalova L., 2016).

The recognition of foreign diplomas and learning certificates requires appropriate bureaucratic procedures. Although Ukraine is a party to the Bologna Process and the 1997 Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications in the European Region, this does not mean that diplomas of Ukrainian higher education institutions are automatically recognized abroad (Vasilenko A., 2020). Thus, the state nostrification mechanism is one of the key elements of higher education internationalization.

The formation of a single European Higher Education Area is possible only with the mobility of higher education applicants.

It is traditionally accepted that the availability of international higher education is mainly related to international academic mobility (The Impact of the Coronavirus, 2020). Various forms of such academic mobility are highlighted in discussions and research on internationalization, including the mobility of individuals, programs, educational providers, policies, projects, etc. (Knight J., 2018). We have two perspectives on international academic mobility programs. On the one hand (Fedorova I., 2012), these programs strengthen friendships and mutual understanding between people, promote cooperation between universities in different countries, and establish business contacts. The introduction of new methods of student exchange and government support for individual mobility create a new approach to promoting economic growth, political stability, and the social balance of citizens. Academic mobility allows responding to personal needs: the desire for change in life; the desire to meet more interesting perspectives (the search for ample employment and future career opportunities; prospects for growth and professional status; higher wages) (Khominets S., 2019).

In another approach, international mobility programs are perceived with caution, and sometimes negatively, due to the increasing trend of educational migration to other countries due to the low socio-economic status of the homeland. The openness of education at the international level stems from the fact that in addition to education applicants, teachers can also migrate to foreign institutions. The majority of teachers and education applicants assess academic mobility as a new quality of

education and an opportunity to acquire new knowledge in a foreign environment (Kozlakova H., 2017).

Student mobility provides the opportunity for partial study at associated European universities with additional recognition of both the time spent at the foreign university and the ECTS credits earned. Student mobility also facilitates access to relevant services at the host university. In particular, ECTS, Diploma Supplement, Red ENIC/Red NARIC are essential tools for mobility.

UNESCO data show that in 2010, 3.6 million education applicants received higher education outside their home country. To compare the number was only 2 million students in 2000 and crossed the 5.6 million's line in 2020. The leading countries whose students receive higher professional education abroad are China, India, and South Korea (UNESCO, 2018).

Educational mobility in the European Union is possible thanks to a series of special programs with a budget of several million dollars. Over 20 years, more than 1.7 million European citizens have taken advantage of the Erasmus program. The Erasmus-Mundus program (Erasmus-World) is used for academic exchanges between the EU and other countries. However, despite the professional support of the EU, it is used by only a few Ukrainian universities that have real partnerships with universities of the European Union (OECD, 2019).

Gh. Korchova says that the number of Ukrainian students in any given country depends on several factors, in particular, the size of the Ukrainian community, the quality of education, cultural affinity, the cost of education, the cost of living, and the level of pay. As a rule, most educational applicants from Ukraine go to countries with a high level of language and cultural affinity, where there is already a significant contingent of Ukrainians (Korchova Gh., 2017).

The process of academic mobility is a reverse process, so it is important not only to recognize Ukrainian diplomas in the world but also to establish the equivalence and use of diplomas obtained abroad to work in Ukraine. And this, as evidenced by the literature, requires improvement and withdrawal of innovative and progressive mechanisms for the recognition of educational documents, one of the components of education, clearly meeting modern needs (Puhach A., 2017).

In the economic context, the external economic mobility of education applicants is regarded as one of the items to replenish the budget. Every year about 48 thousand applicants for education come to Ukraine for training, and it allows replenishing the budget at least by \$100 million and this, only through universities, the total budget replenishment crosses the border of UAH 4 billion 300 thousand per year (MES, UGCMO). The national level of the educational system is increasing since higher education institutions teachers have the opportunity to acquire new experience in foreign educational institutions. In addition, this experience can be used to overcome those educational problems which in our education system have not yet been solved. The experience of teachers can also be used to overcome the problems that arise against a background of lack of funding and associated with outdated equipment or its lack at all.

Researchers Knight J., Puhach A., Kozlakova H., Vasilenko O., Gnatiuk T., and Novosad Gh. note that academic mobility is a systemic phenomenon organized at the state and political level. Unfortunately, in Ukraine, academic mobility is spontaneous.

Analysis of research in the aspect of students' academic mobility shows that the main purposes of students' academic mobility of Ukrainian universities are to improve the quality of higher education; increase the effectiveness of research; increase the competitiveness of graduates of higher education institutions in the Ukrainian and international markets of educational services

and employment; enrich individual student experience other models of knowledge generation and distribution; integration of global intellectual potential into the national educational process through bilateral and multilateral agreements between associated universities; formation of internal and external integration links; harmonization of educational standards of associated universities (Gnatiuk T., 2018).

Today, determined students can experience learning in a fundamentally different university system. Cooperation is based on alliances with foreign universities and companies, through which students can participate in international educational programs and try a different system of higher education; gain additional knowledge in related fields; use modern technical devices in foreign training laboratories and scientific centers to solve problems; improve their knowledge of foreign languages; obtain a diploma of a foreign university; get professional experience during an internship in a foreign company or during an internship in a scientific laboratory (center), generally provided by the educational course; learn about foreign culture and history, study the customs of the country and learn to understand the strategy of negotiations; get a diploma of a foreign university and a Ukrainian educational institution (Oleshko A., 2020).

Assessing the level of academic mobility many researchers talk about the quantitative indicator of migration of education applicants both to Ukraine and abroad. UNESCO data show that the level of academic migration increases every year. In 2008 the migration figure was just under 3 million people; in 2010 – almost 4 million, and in 2020 – it has crossed the border of 6 million. Intensive migrations are recorded to the UK, the US, France, and Germany.

To assess the level of internationalization of higher education in Ukraine, let us analyze the indicator of academic migration of education applicants both in Ukraine and abroad (Table 1).

Table 1. The level of academic mobility of education applicants in 2011–2020

Year	Number of foreign students in Ukraine	Number of Ukrainian students abroad
2011	53664	28456
2012	60480	32608
2013	69969	46382
2014	63172	47724
2015	63906	59648
2016	64066	66668
2017	66310	77424
2018	75606	82171
2019	80470	96123
2020	76548	104356

Source: compiled by authors based on Oleshko A., Novosad Gh., MES, USCIE website.

Analyzing the data in Table 1, we can see that the educational applicants' level who studied in Ukraine from 2011 to 2019 is constantly growing, with an average growth rate of 2546 students per year, even though in 2014 the numbers decreased significantly. Unfortunately, in the last year, the number of applicants from foreign countries decreased by 3992 students, but the overall rate is still quite high. An assessment of the overall dynamics can also be made from the chart presented (Figure 1).

Nowadays, students from 155 countries receive higher professional education, with the largest number of students coming to study in Ukraine from India (23.64%), in second place – Morocco (11.54%), and in third place – Turkmenistan (6). (95%). In addition to these countries, students from Azerbaijan, Nigeria, China, Turkey, Egypt, Israel, Uzbekistan, and other countries are sent to study in Ukraine.

The goal that foreign education applicants set for themselves is different. Thus, 90.02% of foreign students are studying in higher education institutions to obtain a professional profile, 6.45% – trained in languages, 2.25% – improve the professional

level of postgraduate education, 1.27% – obtain the title of doctor or postgraduate student.

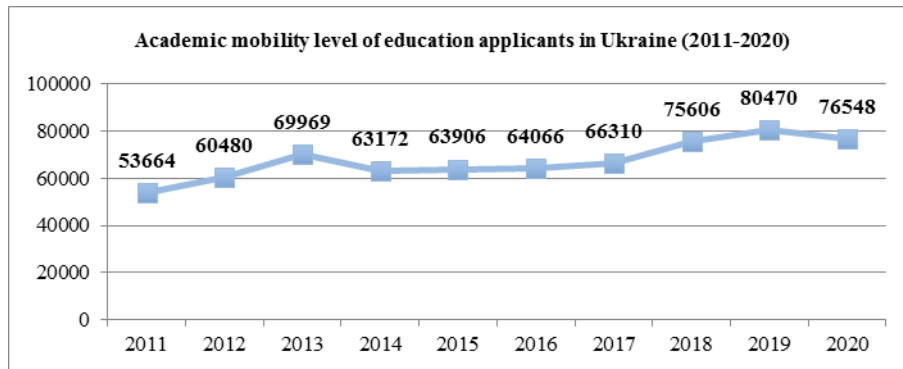


Figure 1. Dynamics of Education Applicants' Academic Mobility in Ukraine

Source: compiled by authors based on Oleshko A., Novosad Gh., MES, USCIE website.

Educational services for international students, to date, offer 394 higher educational institutions, but compared with previous years, this figure has decreased significantly. So, in 2018, 443 higher education institutions accepted international students, and in 2019 – 455. Such institutions of higher education as the Kharkiv National University named after V. Karazin (the institution receives professional education 4277 foreign students), Kharkiv National Medical University (4215 foreign students), National Medical University named after A. Bogomolets (3061 students) (MSE USCIE) are the most popular.

Among professional profiles, the most popular are medical profile (medicine, dentistry, medicine, pharmacology), management, economic profile, construction profile, legal profile. Education applicants have the opportunity to choose the language of instruction Ukrainian, English, or Russian (Faisal M., 2019).

The academic mobility of Ukrainian students is also high, and as evidenced by the data of the Ukrainian Center for International Education, this indicator is increasing annually (Figure 2).

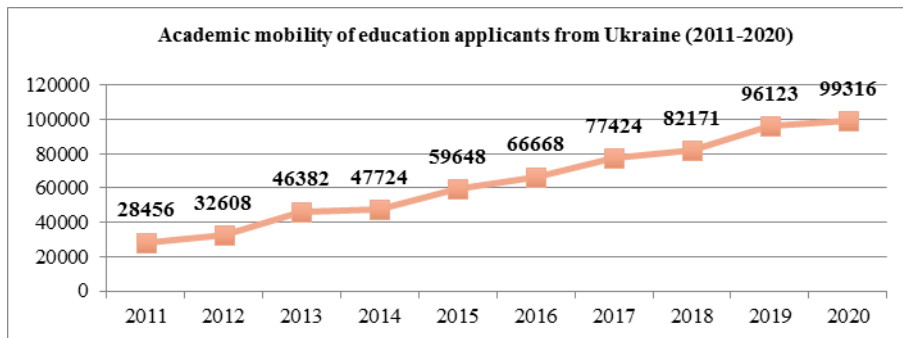


Figure 2. Dynamics of Academic Mobility of Education Applicants in Ukraine

Source: compiled by authors based on Oleshko A., Novosad Gh., MES, USCIE website.

According to the data presented, we see that the minimum increase of education applicants who prefer to study abroad is 1,342 students (2013–2014), while the maximum is 13,952 students (2018–2019).

Analyzing the level of popularity of the countries to which Ukrainian education applicants migrate over the past 10 years, we get the following data (Figure 3).

The most popular country to which Ukrainian education seekers migrate is Poland. Only in 2019, 37,780 education seekers left in this country to study. The second most popular country is Russia, where 11,360 education applicants migrated to study in 2019. In the same year, 9,338 students left for Germany, 3,425 for Canada, 2,718 for Italy, 2,652 for the Czech Republic, and 1,928 for the United States (Faisal M., 2019; Oleshko A., Kruhlij O. 2020).

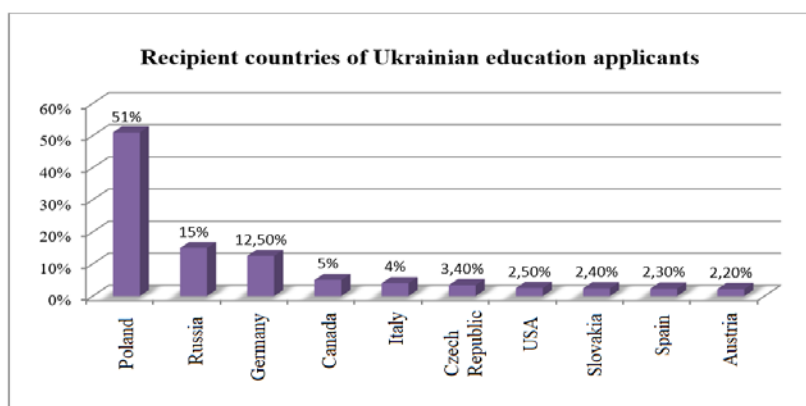


Figure 3. Top 10 Recipient Countries of Ukrainian Education Applicants by Popularity  
Source: compiled by authors.

The attractiveness of different world countries for students is determined by the specifics of higher education systems and conditions of study and residence. The main reasons for young Ukrainians to emigrate for higher education are:

- high quality of education, the opportunity to study in prestigious institutions of higher education;
- no need for an EIE (External independent evaluation);
- high probability of getting a prestigious job and obtaining citizenship of another country;
- territorial and cultural affinity, the similarity of mentalities, quick adaptation to new conditions;
- the possibility of free training or scholarships;
- improvement of foreign language skills;
- accessibility of learning in more favorable social and living conditions (OECD, 2004; OECD, 2019).

However, the most important factor motivating Ukrainian students to receive higher education abroad is the opportunity to get a decent job and a permanent place of residence after graduation. Therefore, the unfavorable economic and social situation in Ukraine, compared to highly developed countries, is

much lower and will further contribute to the growth of educational migrants.

The development of international academic mobility in Ukraine is very slow. The vast majority of applicants for education go abroad at the expense of parents, sponsors, foreign charities. No more than 10% of the officially announced number of "academic migrants" are sent to foreign educational institutions at the state and higher education expense. Most student exchanges are carried out through bilateral agreements between Ukrainian and European universities. This fact was recorded by the Ministry of Education in the "Model regulation on academic mobility of students of higher educational institutions of Ukraine," the approval of which became a purely bureaucratic procedure that does not contribute to the academic mobility of education applicants (Novosad Gh., 2016; Gnatiuk T., 2018; Kruhlij O., Oleshko A., 2020).

To determine the attitudes of Ukrainian education applicants towards academic migration, a questionnaire was conducted (186 students have participated). The questionnaire, offered in electronic format, consisted of 5 closed-type questions with two options "yes" or "no" (Table 2).

Table 2. Survey questions and respondents' answers

Survey questions	Yes	No
Would you like to complete your professional education abroad?	82%	18%
Do you have the opportunity to do that?	9%	91%
Do you consider vocational education abroad more qualitative?	64%	36%
If you were offered to complete your professional education abroad at the state's expense, would you accept it?	100%	0%
Would you return to your home country after your vocational training?	55%	45%

## 5 Discussion

The statistics given on the Ministry of Education website, presented in the section of the Ukrainian State Center for International Education, allow us to state the fact that the institutions of higher professional education in Ukraine gladly accept foreign students but, over the last year, the number of educational institutions accepting foreign students, has decreased significantly. Ukrainian educational institutions are most popular with students from India, Morocco, and Turkmenistan.

Every year the number of academic migrants from Ukraine increases significantly, with Ukrainian students preferring countries that have a convenient geographical location, a similar mentality, a system of values, but, at the same time, have a higher socioeconomic level of development. Thus, the majority of Ukrainian students migrate to Poland, Russia, and Germany.

To determine the attitude of education applicants to academic migration, a questionnaire survey was conducted, which showed

mixed results. As we can see, the majority of respondents have a desire to study in foreign institutions of higher education (82%), but they do not have the opportunity to realize this desire. A pleasant fact is that 64% of respondents believe that the Ukrainian higher education quality is high enough and Ukraine is not behind foreign higher professional education institutions. In the case of the development of academic mobility and implementation of receiving professional education ideas in foreign higher education institutions at public expense, 100% of respondents are ready to go abroad, and, unfortunately, only 55% are ready to return to their home country.

Such indicators demonstrate that the Ukrainian educational system requires intensification of the internationalization process, which will improve its quality and solve the problem of migration of Ukrainian applicants for education abroad by attracting applicants from other countries to educational institutions.

## 6 Conclusions

International educational emigration is a universal trend of global development, contributing to scientific and technological progress in general. At the same time, modern processes of educational migration contribute to the growing gap in the socio-economic, educational and cultural development of higher education recipients and donor countries.

Academic migration in the context of educational internationalization is a normal phenomenon, but the problem in Ukraine is that young people do not want to return home, while foreign students want to stay in Ukraine.

The problem of the educational migration of education applicants and the non-return of young people after studying in Ukraine can only be solved when qualitatively new conditions of higher professional education, defined at the level of state educational policy, are created in Ukraine.

The development of academic mobility will accelerate the country's integration into the European educational space, contribute to the improvement of educational technologies, raise the quality of Ukrainian education to the world level, promote the innovative development of academic science and its integration into production, and ensure the attraction of additional f

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**Primary Paper Section: A**

**Secondary Paper Section: AM**