STAKEHOLDER-MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION QUALITY ENSURING IN ACCORDANCE WITH EUROPEAN STANDARDS

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Abstract: The article is devoted to considering stakeholder management as a tool for ensuring the quality of higher education by European standards. The Europeanization of national education is an essential component of the development strategy of the Ukrainian state. Scientific intelligence is being updated, providing for the analysis of European practices for ensuring the quality of education, notably higher education, and algorithms for introducing similar practices into the domestic higher education system. The necessity of applying management methods and techniques in education to study and consider the stakeholders' interests is noted. The study of the forms and analysis of the dynamics of relations with stakeholders, which are practiced in domestic educational institutions, will make it possible to conclude the implementation of one of the most important principles for ensuring the quality of higher education following European standards. Based on research conducted by the authors in 2011, 2017, and 2022, the forms of interaction of domestic educational institutions with internal and external stakeholders are concretized, and the dynamics of these forms are investigated. According to the research results, it is concluded that today the forms of interaction with stakeholders are highly diverse, and such interaction is not a formality. Still, instead, it is a planned and organized activity, the importance of which is fully recognized by all the subjects involved in it. It was revealed that there had been positive changes in cultural quality in Ukrainian domestic higher education, which is a significant step in approaching European standards.

Keywords: European quality standards of higher education, Higher education, Institution of higher education, Quality of higher education, Stakeholder, Stakeholder management.

1 Introduction

It is obvious that achieving a qualitatively new state of society does not seem possible without improving the quality of education, in particular, higher education. The education system as a whole is one of the main social institutions that determine the development of the state and society. That is why striving for a high level of education quality and its proper support is one of the main tasks of modern policy in the field of education, a national priority.

Being in the active stage of European integration, Ukraine, as well as the Ukrainian education system, have an excellent reference point – European standards of education quality. The Association Agreement between Ukraine and the European Union (2014) recognizes that Ukraine, as a European country, shares a common history and common values with EU member states. Chapter 23 "Education, training, and youth" in Article 430 declares that the Parties promote the development of cooperation in the field of education, training, and youth policy in order to improve mutual understanding, intensify intercultural dialogue, and strengthen knowledge about the respective cultures. In Article 431, it is noted that the Parties undertake to intensify cooperation in the field of higher education, in particular, with the aim of: reforming and modernizing higher education systems; promoting rapprochement in the field of higher education is stated, which takes place within the framework of the Bologna process. The Article also mentions increasing in the quality of higher education and its importance, deepening of cooperation between higher educational institutions, expansion of opportunities of higher educational institutions, activation of the mobility of students and teachers, etc. [21]. According to the Law of Ukraine "On Education" (2017), the purpose of education, among other things, is to raise the educational level of citizens "to ensure the sustainable development of Ukraine and its European choice" [23].

Therefore, the Europeanization of national education is an important component of the development strategy of the Ukrainian state. In view of the above, scientific intelligence is being updated, which involves the analysis of European practices for ensuring the quality of education, in particular, higher education, and algorithms for the implementation of similar practices in the system of Ukrainian higher education [2, 4, 5, 8, 14, 16]. One of these practices is the interaction of higher education institutions with stakeholders (interested individuals, groups, organizations). This necessitates the use of management methods and techniques aimed at studying and taking into account the interests of stakeholders in the field of education, essentially, when it comes to stakeholder management.

Stakeholder management for domestic institutions of higher education is a relatively new and underdeveloped type of activity. So, in our opinion, the study of the forms and analysis of the dynamics of relations with stakeholders, which are practiced in domestic educational institutions, will allow drawing conclusions regarding the implementation of one of the most important principles of ensuring the quality of higher education, in accordance with European standards.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to study the forms of interaction with stakeholders as elements of implementation of stakeholder management by modern Ukrainian domestic institutions of higher education, as well as the analysis of the dynamics of these forms in the period from 2011 to 2022.

2 Materials and Methods

In order for all European institutions of higher education to move along the same path in the direction of supporting and ensuring their activities, a special document "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG)" was created. The following institutions participated in the creation of this document: European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA); European Students' Union (ESU); European University Association (EUA); European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE); in cooperation with Education International (EI), BUSINESSEUROPE and European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR) [19]. The term "stakeholder" is one of the key terms in this document. For example, it is noted that "A key goal of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) is to contribute to the common understanding of quality assurance for learning and teaching across borders and among all stakeholders" [19, p. 6].

At the same time, "stakeholders" mean "...all actors within an institution, including students and staff, as well as external stakeholders such as employers and external partners of an institution" [19, p. 6]. It is also emphasized that "higher education aims to fulfill multiple purposes, including preparing students for active citizenship, for their future careers (e.g., contributing to their employability), supporting their personal development, creating a broad advanced knowledge base and stimulating research and innovation. Therefore, stakeholders, who may prioritize different purposes, can view quality in higher education differently and quality assurance needs to take into account these different perspectives..." [19, p. 7]. According to the document, one of the standards for quality assurance of higher education, which is of primary importance, is the following: "Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance that is made public and forms part of their strategic management. Internal stakeholders should develop and implement this policy through appropriate structures and processes, while involving external stakeholders... The development of quality culture in which all internal stakeholders

assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance at all levels of the institution. In order to facilitate this, the policy has a formal status and is publicly available... The involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance" [19, p. 11]. The standards provide that in order to ensure the quality of higher education, the educational institution should involve stakeholders in: the design of academic programs [19, p. 12], informing stakeholders about the activities of the institution of higher education and activities that take place in its academic programs [19, p. 14], attracting stakeholders in conducting regular review of academic programs [19, p. 15], as well as approval of learning and teaching goals in academic programs [19, p. 18], etc.

It cannot be claimed that the Ukrainian education system has never used any form of interaction with stakeholders. To one degree or another, the stakeholder approach to ensuring the quality of education has always been used, in particular, within the framework of the social partnership paradigm. Various aspects of social partnership in the field of education were studied by such scientists as K. Astakhova, M. Denisenko, V. Mikheev, V. Mitrokhin, I. Motsna, O. Muravyova, O. Nazarkin, O. Oleinikova, G. Semigin, S. Furduy, N. Shevchenko, Yu. Shumilo, I. Yashchuk, and others.

It should be noted that there are not many specific definitions of such a phenomenon as social partnership in the field of education in the scientific literature, however, in our opinion, the definition proposed by the domestic researcher I. Yashchuk is quite rational – he considers social partnership in education as "a leading the mechanism of achieving the quality of education, the special interaction of educational institutions with subjects and social institutions, state institutions, public bodies, aimed at coordination, implementation of the interests of all participants in this process and achievement of the educational goal" [22, p. 176].

Modern realities are such that the viability, competitiveness, and effectiveness of the higher education institution depends on the presence of extensive connections, which requires the purposeful work of the institution to involve various interested groups in the process of educational development [6, p. 130; 7, p. 190]. Such interested groups, as already mentioned above, are called "stakeholders", and work on their involvement is a special type of management activity - stakeholder management.

Social partnership is a natural result of active cooperation of interested parties. At the same time, the university itself is also a stakeholder organization both for its employees and for external entities.

Questions regarding the organization's relations with stakeholders were raised in the scientific works of such scientists as B. Agle, R. Watson, R. Mitchell, E. Freeman, R. Phillips, and others. Scientific works by K. Astakhova, V. Korneschuk, G. Piskurska, O. Nazarkin, and others are devoted to the problem of determining the role of stakeholders in the activities of a higher education institution.

Taking into account the new requirements for the quality of higher education, it is important to understand how actively domestic higher education institutions implement certain elements of stakeholder management, which forms of interaction with stakeholders they implement. The extent to which modern higher education institutions have learned to identify their stakeholders and establish relationships with them, how actively they implement certain elements of stakeholder management in their management practice, determines the prospects for the further development of domestic higher education, in particular, in the context of European integration.

It should be noted that various attempts to institutionalize interaction with interested parties have manifested themselves in national education since the first years of Ukraine's independence. So, for example, the practice of introducing the activities of advisory and coordination councils as advisory bodies, which include representatives of various interested

parties, has been implemented since the mid-1990s. However, the role of such bodies of "partner cooperation" in most cases was formal and simply imitated "models of behavior" of leading European higher education institutions. No real partnership was observed [3, p. 220].

Over time, the understanding that partnerships with interested parties are needed, first of all, by the educational institution itself, because they determine the prospects for its development, led to the promotion of the stakeholder approach in the domestic system of higher education.

The concept of "stakeholder" in the Ukrainian national scientific discourse is relatively new. In the sociology of education, the sociology of organizations, the sociology of management, a stakeholder is understood to be an interested party involved in certain activities to achieve common goals, a party - an individual, an organization, a social group, etc. At the same time, it is emphasized that stakeholders provide opportunities for the functioning of this or that organization and represent a source of requirements for it [18, p. 36].

In the special scientific literature, two main groups of stakeholders are distinguished: internal and external. Internal stakeholders are the organization's management and employees. For an educational institution, internal stakeholders are also students or pupils. External stakeholders are individual (influential) persons, institutions, organizations, social groups, etc., whose activities are not directly related to the activities of a certain organization. For an educational institution, these are government representatives, employers, graduates, education management bodies, civil organizations, and others [18, p. 50].

According to the "Standard for interaction with interested parties" (AA1000SES), developed by the Account Ability Institute, such interaction should be based on three principles: 1) materiality - the organization must know exactly who (may be) interested in the results of its activities, and what are common interests that should be considered significant for it; 2) completeness – the organization is expected to understand the views, needs, fears, etc. of interested parties; 3) responsiveness – the organization must consistently respond to the essential issues facing stakeholders and the organization itself [11, p. 98].

Domestic researchers identify the following as the goals of higher education institutions' interaction with stakeholders: 1) implementation of state policy in the field of professional education and personnel training; 2) provision of the labor market under the conditions of systemic social transformations with the necessary workers, representatives of in-demand professions, taking into account the main trends of strategic development; 3) quick adaptation of young specialists in the labor market; 4) increasing the competitiveness of graduates of educational institutions [15, p. 401].

Implementation of the above-mentioned principles and goals requires stakeholders from educational institutions a thorough analysis of, which forms the basis of such a relatively new type of activity for Ukrainian educational institutions as stakeholder management. This activity, as a rule, is implemented through a system of stages: 1) identification of stakeholder groups; 2) collection of relevant information, recording and assessment of expectations and interests of each group of stakeholders; 3) determination of the purpose of future interaction with stakeholders; 4) identifying strengths and weaknesses in working with stakeholder groups; 5) choosing a strategy of interaction with interested parties, and, on this basis, determining promising long-term directions for the further development of the educational institution; 6) implementation and evaluation of the effectiveness of the stakeholder relations management strategy [20].

The main task of stakeholder management is to create favorable conditions for conducting the organization's activities, which involves a cycle of consecutive actions that will allow: 1) to assess the current state of relations with stakeholders; 2) analyze

the causes of the current state; 3) set priorities and implement measures to improve stakeholder interaction [20].

Social entrepreneurship trainer and consultant Karina Sunlife claims that, in some cases, activities aimed at one or another group of interested parties can have a multiplier effect. Such measures should be a priority for the management of the organization [20].

As the analysis of the literature shows, the following strategies of interaction with stakeholders in the field of higher education most often confirm their productivity: 1) regular control and maximum involvement of stakeholders in the process of planning, organization, and implementation of key processes in higher education; 2) organization of consultative meetings with representatives of various stakeholder groups regarding the coordination of long-term decisions of the educational institution in order to maintain the satisfaction of these groups; 3) informing stakeholders about the intentions of the educational institution, engaging in public discussion of current problems with the aim of obtaining their support [1, p. 180; 10, p. 178].

A significant contribution to the institutionalization of the stakeholder approach and the implementation of elements of stakeholder management in the practice of domestic higher education institutions was made by the introduction of a new procedure for the accreditation of academic programs and the activities of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (hereinafter referred to as NAQA). The first composition of NAQA was elected in 2015, but due to a number of reasons, it never started its work. In 2018, NAQA was "rebooted" – the Law of Ukraine "On Education" of 2017 changed the principles of selecting members of the Agency, the new composition was selected by the international competition commission and approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in December 2018; in January-February 2019 it was selected and the management staff of the Agency was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. At the end of February 2019, NAQA officially launched its operations and began the selection and appointment of its staff.

NAQA's mission is to be a catalyst for positive changes in higher education and the formation of a culture of its quality. NAQA has developed a number of important documents and recommendations that regulate the creation and functioning of the internal quality system of a higher education institution. Acquaintance with these documents shows that the quality of education in higher education institutions depends on the quality of interaction with internal and external stakeholders. So, for example, the document "Recommendations of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance regarding internal quality assurance" contains a number of points that note the need to conduct regular surveys of applicants, employers and graduates" [13]. In addition, it notes the need to involve stakeholders in the procedures for introducing and revising academic programs, as well as in other processes and events taking place in the educational institution [12].

As one can see, an established system of interaction with all groups of stakeholders (students, scientific and pedagogical workers, employers, graduates, industry experts, scientific and research institutions, etc.) is a necessary condition for ensuring the quality of higher education.

Thus, the stakeholder management of an educational institution involves establishing permanent connections and communication channels with interested parties, holding negotiations, motivating their behavior in order to determine the greatest benefit for the educational institution. A properly constructed system of stakeholder management should maximize the possible positive influence of the interests of various groups on the process of educational, scientific, and other activities of the educational institution. Therefore, the system of stakeholder management should work, starting from the stage of strategic planning of the activity of higher education institutions to the monitoring and evaluation of educational and scientific-innovative processes. This system includes the following elements: 1) monitoring of

stakeholder positions; 2) taking into account the positions and proposals of stakeholders when planning the activities of the higher educational institutions; 3) informing stakeholders; 4) education, consultation of stakeholders; 5) implementation of joint projects; 6) cooperation based on regulated agreements, including at the decision-making level.

3 Results and Discussion

Despite its importance and proven effectiveness, it should be noted that stakeholder management, as a separate and integral type of management activity, is not implemented in domestic universities. The tasks of interaction with various groups of interested parties are "scattered" across various structural divisions (deanships, departments, "career departments", etc.). Scientific ideas about the main trends of such activity, as well as about the transformation of its forms, make it possible to compile the results of research conducted by us in 2011, 2017, and 2022.

The purpose of the 2011 and 2017 studies was to determine the trends in the development of social partnership in the higher education system. At the same time, the unified method of data collection was used – expert surveys (survey forms had the same structure and the same set of questions). The 2022 study had a more specific goal, which was to find out the specific forms of interaction of the universities with interested parties, in order to conclude whether the principles are applied and whether the tasks of stakeholder management are realized. At the same time, a different (than in 2011 and 2017) method was chosen – the analysis of documents, which made it possible to obtain more accurate, specific, and objective data.

Taken together, the results of these studies make it possible to investigate the dynamics of the development of social partnership relations of domestic higher education institutions: from the very vague ideas of representatives of higher education institutions and business structures about the essence of social partnership in the field of higher education and common goals (in 2011) to the adoption of specific management decisions regarding interaction with key groups of stakeholders and practical implementation of the principles and tasks of stakeholder management (in 2022).

So, let us proceed to a more detailed consideration of the obtained results. In 2017, we conducted an expert survey of employers (heads of organizations in Kharkiv) and representatives of higher education institutions (representatives of the administration and management of Kharkiv higher education institutions). The total number of experts who took part in the research is 27 people (13 of them are representatives of higher education institutions, 14 are employers). In the course of the research, we found out the expert opinion about social partnership in the field of education (including, compared to 2011). In this regard, the survey toolkit included a number of open-ended questions that meaningfully repeated those that were asked during a similar study conducted by us with the same quantitative and qualitative composition of experts in 2011. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire that included 6 open-ended questions aimed at identifying an expert point of view about the real state and prospects of social partnership in the field of education. In 2017 and 2011, we deliberately avoided the term "stakeholders", as it was new and unclear to most representatives of educational institutions. That is why we tried to find out whom exactly our respondents see as their partners, because, in fact, such partners are namely stakeholders.

It should be noted that in 2017, compared to 2011, experts' views on social partnership differed with greater clarity, which was reflected: first, in more precise formulations of social partnership as such; secondly, in a more confident and detailed specification of its forms; thirdly, in ascertaining wider opportunities for development. The most typical definition of social partnership, according to the answers of the experts, was the following: "Equal relations of subjects in a certain field of activity, who are equally interested in the successful outcome of joint projects, solving certain problems, tasks, etc." Specifically, this definition

represents the point of view of 23 experts interviewed in 2017, compared to 12 experts in 2011. It should also be noted that in both (in different years) groups of experts, almost every second expert, offering their definition of social partnership, clarified that the interest of "partners" is far from always based on material benefits. Regarding the types and forms of interaction of interested parties in the field of education, their lists and descriptions in the questionnaires of experts in 2017, as already noted above, are more complete and diverse. Namely, 24 out of 27 experts described from 4 to 6 types of partnership interaction, such as: "school-high school" (conclusion of agreements on interaction between schools and high school, speeches of teachers before students and teachers on specific problems; joint research, higher education institutions open lectures and practical classes for students, etc.); "school-school" (joint activities of different schools to compile and improve curricula in certain "special subjects", organization of joint educational and educational events, etc.); "University-University" (organization of "exchange programs" for students and teachers, etc.); between higher education institutions and business structures and organizations acting as potential employers (organization of students' internships and their further employment, involvement of "practitioners" in drawing up educational plans and work programs, etc.); between higher educational institution and authorities; between university and public, volunteer, charitable, and other organizations.

As for the answers of experts to a similar question in 2011, they are generally simple, and the lists of possible types and forms of interaction with interested parties in most cases (22 out of 27) included no more than four options, among which career guidance work in schools and involvement of certain organizations as practice bases for students dominated.

Regarding the prospects for the development of social partnership in the field of education, optimistic statements were more characteristic of expert managers, who are not directly related to the field of education, than of experts – representatives of higher education institutions. Perhaps this is due to the fact that representatives of higher education institutions are well aware of the specifics of the educational institution and the institutional barriers that arise/may arise on the way to the development of social partnership. If we compare the answers of experts by year, the general opinion of experts in 2017 is characterized by greater optimism, which is reflected in the answers to the question "Please describe in one or two words the prospects for the development of social partnership in the domestic sphere of education in the coming decade".

The general opinion of experts in 2017 is reflected in answers such as: "very favorable", "good", "very promising", while the opinion of the experts in 2011 on this matter is less homogeneous, and among the answers both optimistic formulations (such as: "sure that they are favorable", etc.) and those containing doubts (such as: "I would like to believe that they are...", "rather favorable than not", etc.). In addition, among the answers of experts in 2011, there were also negative assessments of the prospects for the development of social partnership in the field of education. In one case, the negative assessment was related to a lack of faith in the well-being of the national education system as a whole: "The prospects of social partnership are very vague, or even worse. There are many other problems that need to be solved in education, first of all, funding and personnel issues. Partnership is secondary" (this judgment was expressed by an expert – a representative of the university). In the second case, the negative assessment was related to "the absence of a culture of partnership as such in the country, not only in the education system, but in principle" (this judgment was expressed by an expert on business structure). In general, as we can see, there is a deepening of the understanding of the essence and forms of social partnership in the field of higher education, as well as an increase in confidence regarding the favorable prospects for the development of such partnership. However, it should be emphasized that experts – representatives of higher education institutions – do not consider either students or teachers as partners. Social partnership is interpreted exclusively as an externally oriented activity of higher education institutions.

In order to identify the features of the modern university's interaction with stakeholders, we conducted an analysis of documents in December 2022. The reports of expert groups (hereinafter referred to as EG) based on the results of accreditation of educational (educational-professional and educational-scientific) programs acted as such. The general population consisted of 2,165 cases (from the 2020-2022 NAQA electronic database) with status 2.1 "NAQA decision signed". A sample size of 326 units is sufficient for such a general population. The selection of survey units was done mechanically. Since 5 cases are submitted on the page of the electronic database of accreditation cases, for the convenience of our work we analyzed one case from the page (on each first page – the first case in the list, on every second - the second case, and on every third – the third case, etc.). We did not differentiate educational programs either by the level of higher education or by specialty, because the requirements for the quality of educational programs are the same, and a necessary condition for quality is always established interaction with stakeholders.

Our sample included: 2 cases with EG assessments that correspond to the conclusion "Exemplary Accreditation"; 255 cases with the assessment of the EG "Accreditation"; 62 cases with evaluations that correspond to the conclusion "Conditional accreditation"; 1 case with EG evaluations that correspond to the conclusion "Rejection of accreditation".

Item 1.2 of EG reports was subject to analysis: "The goals of the educational program and program learning outcomes are determined taking into account the positions and needs of interested parties (stakeholders)". We understand that information about interaction with stakeholders is provided by other points of the EG report, for example, which contain evidence about the organization of academic mobility, about the involvement of experts and practitioners in teaching, and others. However, the rather large volume of the sample required us to focus our attention on one, the most relevant, point of the report. We tried to compensate for this shortcoming of our work by analyzing another part of the EG reports – the "Summary", which summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the educational programs.

Based on the results of the analysis of the documents, we found out that, in general, all higher education institutions understand the need for systematic interaction with various groups of stakeholders and try to implement this interaction, striving for constant improvement and diversification of its forms. The results of the study made it possible to identify typical forms of interaction with stakeholders, which indicate the implementation of certain elements of the stakeholder management system (we mean, first of all, the six key elements outlined in the theoretical part of this article).

Typical forms of interaction with internal stakeholders (recipients, scientific and pedagogical workers (hereinafter referred to as SPW), student self-government, etc.):

▪ Conducting surveys that allow revealing dissatisfaction and wishes; taking into account the results of the survey in the further activities of the educational program (monitoring and taking into account the positions of stakeholders);
▪ Participation of applicants and SPWs in discussing the content of academic programs at department meetings, special meetings and similar events; recording the progress and results of such discussions; consideration of proposals (finding out and taking into account the positions of stakeholders when planning activities);
▪ Participation of awardees in working groups for updating academic programs (cooperation with stakeholders at the decision-making level);
▪ Organizational participation of representatives of student self-government in conducting surveys among applicants regarding the quality of education and teaching and other

important issues (monitoring and taking into account the positions of stakeholders);

▪ Participation of representatives of student self-government in meetings of Faculty Councils and University Academic Councils; in this way, they have the opportunity to represent the interests of acquirers; some EG reports record the full implementation of this opportunity and the active role of representatives of student self-government at the above-mentioned events (cooperation based on regulated agreements, including at the level of decision-making).

Some unique practices were also discovered, for example, the introduction of the position of "student guarantor of the academic program" at the university, which is "an intermediary between applicants and the guarantor of the educational program".

Typical forms of interaction with external stakeholders (employers, representatives of the wider academic community, industry experts, graduates, potential applicants):

▪ Constant informal contact with graduates, informal or formalized tracking of their career path; organization of meetings of graduates with applicants (monitoring of stakeholder positions, stakeholder consultation);

▪ Participation of employers as managers of practice bases (in isolated cases, employers were also involved in the discussion of Practice Programs, their suggestions were taken into account) (cooperation based on regulated agreements, clarifying and taking into account the positions and proposals of stakeholders when planning activities);

▪ Participation of employers, industry experts, representatives of the academic community in reviewing academic programs; further discussion of reviews at department meetings, etc. (clarification and consideration of stakeholders' positions and proposals, cooperation at the level of decision-making);

▪ Writing feedback on the projects of academic programs clarification (taking into account the positions and proposals of stakeholders);

▪ Participation in working groups on updating academic programs (finding out and taking into account the positions and proposals of stakeholders, cooperation at the level of decision-making);

▪ Involvement in procedures for revising academic programs, participation in meetings of departments, faculty councils, and academic councils of the university (at the same time, it is recorded which proposals were made by stakeholders and which were taken into account) (taking into account the positions and proposals of stakeholders when planning the activities of higher education institutions; cooperation on the basis of decision-making);

▪ Conducting systematic surveys regarding the prospects for improving the content of academic programs and other issues (employers, industry experts, graduates in general are not the object of systematic surveys) (monitoring of stakeholder positions);

▪ Conducting joint research by external organizations with the involvement of SPWs and applicants of academic programs, implementation of joint projects, etc.;

▪ Involvement of employers and experts in the field to participate in scientific conferences, seminars, etc., which are organized by the higher educational institution, the faculty and the graduation department (implementation of joint projects, education and consulting of stakeholders, informing stakeholders);

▪ Industry experts (and in some cases employers) are involved in the teaching of scientific disciplines or individual blocks of topics (which we found out as a result of the analysis of the comprehensible parts of the report) (cooperation based on regulated agreements).

In individual cases, the following forms of interaction with external stakeholders were recorded, such as: the organization of job fairs by the Higher Education Institution with the involvement of employers, the functioning of the "Employers' Council" in the Higher Education Institution; discussion of academic programs at the meeting of the section within the framework of the International Scientific and Practical Conference.

From the "Summary" of the EG reports, it can also be concluded that educational institutions conclude cooperation agreements with other educational institutions, both domestic and foreign (stakeholder cooperation based on regulated agreements). These agreements mainly concern cooperation in research activities and the organization of academic mobility. However, in many EG reports, among the shortcomings, it was noted that applicants are not very involved in both academic (credit) mobility projects and research projects.

It should also be noted that educational institutions have learned to more or less effectively use the website of the Higher Education Institution and social networks as channels of information exchange with various groups of stakeholders (informing stakeholders).

It should be emphasized separately that only in isolated cases of EG were recorded examples of interaction with schools and potential applicants (as external stakeholders).

We also discovered a tendency: the more "A" grades (the highest grade according to the criterion, which indicates the exemplary organization and implementation of the academic program in the vast majority of areas that meet the criterion) the academic program received from experts, the greater the probability that some the key forms and channels of interaction with stakeholders in a given educational institution or in a given academic program were institutionalized long before the introduction of the new accreditation procedure, since the beginning of the 1990s, or even earlier (for example, systematic surveys of applicants, SPWs, graduates, employers, activities of special graduate employment departments at the institution, etc.).

As prospects for development, we will highlight the following points (which we took from the "Summary" of the EG reports, from the lists of weaknesses of academic programs):

▪ Improvement of the mechanism for recording proposals for improving academic programs received from stakeholders, as well as the mechanism for taking these proposals into account (which follows from a typical remark such as "Proposals received from graduates and the academic community do not always have proper design and documentary confirmation, and are also not always clear whether these proposals are taken into account in further activities under the academic program");

▪ Improvement of the "feedback" mechanism with stakeholders, as a response to their proposals (a typical advice of the EG is to "publish a consolidated table of proposals and comments from stakeholders on the website of the Higher Education Institution" with an indication of what was/was not taken into account);

▪ More active involvement of employers in improving the content of individual (in particular, practice-oriented) educational components (educational disciplines);

▪ Improvement of information exchange mechanisms with foreign stakeholders (applicants, applicants, potential partners from foreign higher education institutions) (for example: "develop and place on the website of the department, faculty, university foreign language versions of documents to fully inform foreign applicants about mandatory and optional educational components"; "expand cooperation with foreign employers"; "establish an exchange of specialists with foreign institutions of higher education", etc.);

▪ Improvement of the procedures and tools of surveys of various groups of stakeholders, involvement of relevant experts in the organization, conduct and analysis of the results of such surveys. The fact is that all higher education institutions, without exception, conduct surveys, but the quality of such surveys is far from always sufficient to

obtain objective and relevant information, and these surveys are carried out by people who do not have the appropriate competence (this problem is reflected in the following remarks of the EG: " ...It is necessary to conduct surveys that relate specifically to the content of the educational components of the academic program..."; "It is necessary to involve postgraduate students on a permanent basis in the annual monitoring surveys conducted at the Higher Education Institutions"; "EG draws attention to the low proportion of applicants involved in the questionnaire process" "Improve the monitoring of the educational and professional program in the procedures for conducting surveys of applicants in order to specify the results for each academic program");

▪ To establish an effective system of motivation of applicants for academic mobility, established by the terms of contracts with higher education institutions, including foreign ones. The fact is that in many cases, experts note that the possibilities of such an important form of cooperation with external stakeholders are not sufficiently practiced and often remain only "on paper" (typical are the following remarks of the EG: "The program of international academic mobility, which should be focused on the formation of professional competences..."; "Low results of academic mobility of students");

▪ To more actively use the stakeholder potential of employers and experts in the field, their professional knowledge and experience, involving them in the implementation of the educational process (in this regard, the following remark is typical; "EG recommends developing a general algorithm for involving potential employers in conducting lectures under this academic program").

Thus, the results of the research conducted by us in 2022, in comparison with the results of 2011 and 2017, testify to a significant diversification of types and forms of stakeholder interaction in the field of higher education. We observe the full awareness of domestic higher education institutions of the need for such interaction, effective decision-making and concrete steps towards the institutionalization of a stakeholder approach to the organization of internal and external relations and ensuring the quality of education.

4 Conclusion

Summing up, we note that the results of our research confirmed that over time, the understanding of higher education institutions, as well as organizations external to them, of the need for cooperation in their activities in achieving common goals has significantly increased. In 2011, among representatives of educational institutions, the dominant opinion was that the main external stakeholders are secondary education institutions (as potential donors of future students), as well as organizations and enterprises (as potential employers). Thus, the forms of interaction were actually limited to vocational orientation work in schools and the involvement of organizations of potential employers as practice bases. Despite the fact that in 2017, there was a significant expansion of ideas about the types and forms of interaction with interested parties, as well as the circle of potential partners of the university in achieving the set goals, we see that traditionally only external interested groups are considered as such. Neither the students of higher education, nor the teachers as interested parties and full-fledged partners in the achievement of the set goals appear.

Together with the introduction of a new procedure for accreditation of educational programs, the worldview of domestic educational institutions begins to change rapidly. For many higher education institutions, these changes were forced and painful, nevertheless, the results of our 2022 study proved that a significant shift did take place, which had a positive effect on the quality of educational activities of universities. The results of the study indicate that today the stakeholder approach to the organization of key processes at the university is in an active stage of institutionalization, modern higher education institutions implement all key elements of stakeholder management into practice.

A wide range of subjects appear as stakeholders, which includes not only organizations external to the Higher Education Institution, but also applicants, teachers, employees of the Higher Education Institution, as well as graduates. Universities are developing their own channels and methods of establishing and maintaining relations with stakeholders, unique methods of involving representatives of various stakeholder groups in the procedures for introducing, organizing, and implementing educational programs. Forms of interaction with interested parties are highly diverse and, most importantly, such interaction is not a formality, it is a planned and organized activity, the importance of which is fully understood by all subjects involved in it.

All of the above indicates positive changes in the quality culture of domestic higher education, which are a significant step in approaching European standards. In our opinion, the open register of accreditation cases of the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance contains a significant potential for conducting further research related to those important processes that are taking place in higher education in Ukraine today.

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