



REGULATORY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE TRAINING OF CONSTRUCTION PROFESSIONALS IN VOCATIONAL COLLEGES OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

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Abstract

The relevance of the article is determined by the necessity of analyzing the regulatory and legal framework for the training of construction professionals within the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system of the United Kingdom, which is essential for implementing progressive British experience into the educational legislation of Ukraine in the context of enhancing the impact of vocational education on post-war reconstruction.

The purpose of the article is to identify and analyze the primary regulatory acts and mechanisms of the United Kingdom governing the activities of vocational colleges in the field of training construction professionals, and to substantiate the possibilities of implementing specific elements of this experience into Ukrainian legislation for the development of vocational education.

Methods: analysis of legislative acts of the British Government, strategic documents, and reports of regulatory bodies (Ofsted, Ofqual, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) for the period 2000–2025; study of scientific works by Ukrainian and British scholars to ascertain the current state of research on the problem; comparison to identify differences and common trends between the British and Ukrainian vocational education systems; generalization to formulate conclusions and recommendations.

Results: a comprehensive analysis of the regulatory and legal documents of the United Kingdom regulating the activities of construction-oriented vocational colleges was conducted; key legislative acts (Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, Building Safety Act 2022, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009) providing the legal basis for the functioning of vocational colleges were identified; the role of specialized state institutions (Department for Education, Ofsted, IfATE, CITB) in regulating the quality of vocational construction education was characterized; requirements for training programs, certification, and accreditation in construction fields were outlined; promising directions for implementing British experience in the context of improving the regulatory and legal framework for the vocational training of construction professionals in Ukraine were determined.

Conclusions: it was established that the legislative framework of the United Kingdom regarding the training of construction professionals in vocational colleges provides a clear distribution of powers among regulators, defines qualification standards, and ensures that training content meets the requirements of the modern construction industry; the implementation of specific elements of British experience (mechanisms of institutional autonomy, practice-oriented learning, and the participation of industry partners in the formation of educational standards) is promising for improving the regulatory and legal framework for training construction professionals in vocational colleges of Ukraine.

Keywords: *vocational training, vocational colleges, construction professionals, educational legislation, United Kingdom.*

Introduction. The United Kingdom possesses a well-developed system of vocational education and training (hereinafter: VET) and established traditions of professional training, particularly for the construction industry, which plays a vital role in the country's economy. The relevance of the study of the regulatory and legal framework for the training of construction professionals in vocational colleges of the United Kingdom is driven by the need to modernize vocational education in Ukraine based on best European practices. The British experience is characterized by a combination of state quality control mechanisms and internal quality assurance systems, with an orientation toward a competency-based approach and labor market needs (Radkevych, 2025). Its study is essential for improving the training of qualified personnel in Ukraine, especially in the construction sector, where increasing human capital quality and implementing modern educational technologies are of high priority.

The Ukrainian vocational education system is in the process of reform aimed at aligning with EU standards regarding training quality and interaction with employers (Pukhovska, 2018). Priority is given to adopting the best international practices in training construction professionals—a field that requires constant updating of educational content due to the rapid development of technologies and safety standards. In the United Kingdom, further education colleges, which are functionally similar to Ukrainian vocational colleges, operate on the basis of a sophisticated regulatory and legal framework and with the active participation of the state and business. The analysis of these regulatory foundations allows for the identification of mechanisms for ensuring the quality and relevance of construction training and the determination of elements of the British experience relevant to Ukraine.

Research Sources. The theoretical foundation of this study consists of the works of Ukrainian scholars dedicated to the analysis of foreign experience in organizing vocational education, the transformation of the professional training system, and the formation of educational policy in the context of European integration processes. Among the works that constitute the scientific basis for comparative analysis, the studies

of N. Bidiuk (2000), T. Desiatov (2018), S. Leu (2018), V. Melnyk (2014), N. Paziura (2022), L. Pukhovska (2018), and V. Radkevych (2025) stand out. The works of S. Leu (2018) highlight contemporary vocational education standards in the United Kingdom and their regulation procedures, which directly relate to the training of construction professionals in vocational colleges. A collective monograph involving N. Paziura (2022) addresses foreign approaches to external quality control of education, specifically British models of accreditation and assessment, providing an opportunity to correlate them with the regulatory and legal mechanisms governing the training of construction professionals in the UK (Avsheniuk et al., 2022). L. Pukhovska (2018) analyzes European approaches to the formation of professional qualifications and state policy in the field of vocational education, enabling a comparison of the regulatory principles of the British and Ukrainian systems. The contribution of V. Radkevych (2025) is significant, as she emphasizes the mechanisms of regulation and quality assurance of vocational education and training in the United Kingdom, forming the basis for analyzing British regulatory and legal instruments in the field of construction training.

Of great methodological significance are the works of foreign authors, which substantiate the concept of learning outcomes as a regulatory tool for the formation of qualifications (Adams, 2004), reveal the management of national qualification frameworks (Bjornavold & Coles, 2007), analyze policies for regulating professional qualifications (Raggatt & Williams, 1999), and examine the legal foundations of the apprenticeship system in the construction industry (Fuller & Unwin, 2003).

A separate group of sources consists of the regulatory and legal acts of the United Kingdom (Further and Higher Education Act, 1992; Learning and Skills Act, 2000; Education and Skills Act, 2008; Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, 2009; Education Act, 2011; Technical and Further Education Act, 2017; Skills and Post-16 Education Act, 2022), which regulate the activities of vocational colleges, the organization of the educational process, funding, accreditation, and qualifications management.

The purpose of the article is to identify and analyze the primary regulatory acts and mechanisms of the United Kingdom governing the activities of vocational colleges in the field of training construction professionals, and to substantiate the possibilities of implementing specific elements of this experience into Ukrainian vocational education legislation.

Research methods: analysis of legislative acts of the British Government, strategic documents, and reports of regulatory bodies (Ofsted, Ofqual, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education) for the period 2000–2025; study of scientific works by Ukrainian and British scholars to ascertain the state of research on the problem; comparison to identify differences and common trends between the British and Ukrainian vocational education systems; generalization to formulate conclusions and recommendations.

Results and Discussion. The vocational education and training (VET) system of the United Kingdom is not governed by a single codified law; its functioning is ensured by a set of legislative acts and regulatory documents from various years (Cedefop, 2015). This model was formed as a result of decentralized educational management: since 1999, educational policy has been largely delegated to the governments of the constituent parts of the country (British Council, 2022). At the same time, the entire United Kingdom is characterized by an orientation toward close interaction between education and the labor market and employers, especially in the field of vocational training. The training of construction professionals is of particular importance given the industry's role in the economy and the increasing requirements for technology and energy efficiency, which necessitates constant updating of the regulatory framework (GOV.UK, 2024).

The legal field of VET was shaped by a series of historical legislative decisions. The Education Act 1944 laid the foundations for post-school education (UK Parliament, 1944), and the Industrial Training Act 1964 initiated the system of industry boards and a mechanism for collecting employer levies for vocational training (UK Parliament, 1964). In the construction sector, this led to the creation of the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB), authorized to implement an industry

levy and fund professional training using these resources (CITB, n.d.). Although most industry boards were abolished or stripped of the right to mandatory levies in the 1980s, the construction industry retained the CITB, justifying this by the high mobility of the workforce and the fragmented structure of the sector. As a result, the CITB remains one of the few industrial boards in the United Kingdom with the right to a mandatory levy for professional training, ensuring industry investment in the training and professional development of personnel based on a legally established financial mechanism (Cedefop, n.d.).

The key legislative act that defined the modern model of vocational education in the United Kingdom was the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. It removed vocational colleges from the jurisdiction of local authorities and granted them the status of autonomous corporations. Since then, colleges in England have operated as self-governing non-profit institutions that independently develop educational programs and management structures and are responsible for financial sustainability. Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have their own legislative acts with similar framework provisions and regional specifics. Ultimately, a high degree of institutional autonomy for vocational colleges is legally established, ensuring their flexibility and ability to respond promptly to labor market needs.

The regulatory and legal assurance of the quality of training for construction professionals is based on the activities of specialized state bodies. Each part of the country has an inspectorate authorized to monitor educational standards in vocational colleges: in England – Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), in Scotland – Education Scotland, in Wales – Estyn, and in Northern Ireland – the Education and Training Inspectorate (British Council, 2022). They conduct regular inspections of colleges and educational providers, publicly report on the quality of services, and can recommend interventions or the termination of funding for institutions that fail to meet requirements.

Thus, the state legally guarantees an external VET quality assurance system, complementing the colleges' internal controls. In addition to inspectorates, national qualification agencies set

standards for programs and the assessment of learning outcomes. Ofqual regulates the content and assessment of professional qualifications, including those in construction, ensuring their compliance with a single national Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF). This prevents the lowering of requirements or the issuance of diplomas without the verification of competencies. Furthermore, Ofqual adopted updated regulatory requirements for assessments in apprenticeship programs to enhance their reliability and alignment with professional standards. Collectively, institutional autonomy, industry-funded training, qualification standards, and independent quality monitoring form a comprehensive system for the flexible and high-quality functioning of VET in the United Kingdom.

Vocational colleges are the primary link in the training and professional development of personnel for the construction industry: they provide qualifications for bricklayers, carpenters, electricians, scaffolders, finishers, construction technicians, and more. There are two main pathways for entering the profession: full-time vocational courses at a college and apprenticeships, which combine on-the-job training with college attendance. Both pathways are legally recognized as equivalent: according to the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and the 2016 amendments, an apprenticeship is legally equated to obtaining higher education in terms of qualification significance (Department for Education, 2022).

One of the defining features of construction training is the cooperation between colleges and employers. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) involves construction companies in the development of occupational standards and curricula. Each specialty has a standard developed by an expert group of employers aimed at defining knowledge, skills, and competencies, which guarantees that training aligns with current industry needs. The 2017–2022 reform granted employers a more formalized role in program planning: the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 introduced a requirement for colleges to develop Local Skills Improvement Plans in collaboration with employers and to align educational offerings with local economic needs through regular consultations with industry associations (Department for Education, 2022).

Alongside this, programs to increase the quantity and quality of trained personnel for construction companies are being implemented with regulatory and legal support. In connection with plans to build 1.5 million new homes by the early 2030s and the transition to a "green" economy, the need for skilled professionals (bricklayers, roofers, insulators, solar panel installers, energy efficiency specialists, etc.) has grown. The response was the initiative to create Homebuilding Skills Hubs. In November 2024, the opening of 32 regional centers for rapid construction training was announced, funded on a partnership basis by the government and leading companies (Department for Education, 2024). The industry is investing £140 million, which will allow for the additional training of 5,000 construction apprentices annually. The hubs serve as educational and production sites for intensive practical training; apprenticeship programs, which usually last 2–3 years, have been shortened to 12–18 months due to intensity and narrow specialization. The CITB and the National House-Building Council (NHBC) are involved in creating the centers in cooperation with Skills England (the skills agency for England). Skills England analyzes the labor market and identifies regions with a shortage of construction specialists, directing hub resources to the most locally needed professions (Department for Education, 2025). The initiative is funded through the Apprenticeship Levy mechanism and CITB grants, and its implementation is coordinated by several ministries (Education, Housing, Business, Labor) in partnership with industry boards. Such an interdepartmental and public-private approach reflects the trend of British VET policy: strengthening interaction with employers and flexible regulation allow for the rapid scaling of personnel training to meet the country's strategic needs.

Conclusions. The analysis of the regulatory and legal framework for the training of construction professionals in vocational colleges of the United Kingdom has demonstrated the existence of a coherent multi-level system that combines state regulation with active employer participation. The absence of a single codified law on vocational education and training is compensated by a flexible set of regulatory acts governing the status and autonomy of vocational colleges, funding

mechanisms, quality assurance, and learning outcomes management. The evolution of the British model has moved toward decentralization and partnership, within which educational institutions are held accountable for training results, and employers influence the content and volume of workforce formation. In the construction industry, this model ensures a sustainable cycle of interaction between education and industry, oriented toward training specialists according to agreed standards.

The research results allow for the formulation of practical recommendations for Ukraine aimed at creating a more effective, market-oriented vocational education system that meets the needs of infrastructure and economic recovery in the post-war period. Primarily, it is advisable to initiate the creation of permanent working groups or industry boards involving representatives of the

construction industry, employers, educators, and qualification policy specialists, who would serve an advisory function regarding the updating of professional standards, the assessment of training quality, and the implementation of innovative educational practices. Drawing on the experience of British regulatory structures, it is recommended to move gradually toward strengthening the autonomy of vocational colleges within a clearly defined system of external oversight focused not only on the process but also on the learning outcome. It is also worth promoting the consolidation of efforts of all stakeholders—through the creation of cross-sectoral coalitions or partnership platforms—to ensure the relevance of the training of qualified construction professionals and the effective use of national human potential in the context of the country's strategic recovery.

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НОРМАТИВНО- ПРАВОВЕ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ПІДГОТОВКИ ФАХІВЦІВ БУДІВЕЛЬНОГО ПРОФІЛЮ У ПРОФЕСІЙНИХ КОЛЕДЖАХ ВЕЛИКОЇ БРИТАНІЇ

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Реферат:

Актуальність статті зумовлюється необхідністю здійснення аналізу нормативно-правового забезпечення підготовки фахівців будівельного профілю в системі професійної освіти і підготовки Великої Британії, що є важливим для імплементації прогресивного британського досвіду в освітнє законодавство України в контексті посилення впливу професійної освіти на повоєнну відбудову.

Мета статті полягає у визначенні та аналізі основних нормативно-правових актів і механізмів Великої Британії, що регулюють діяльність професійних коледжів у сфері підготовки фахівців будівельного профілю, обґрунтування можливостей імплементації окремих елементів досвіду в українське законодавство для розвитку професійної освіти.

Методи: аналіз законодавчих актів Уряду Британії, стратегічних документів і звітів регуляторних органів (Ofsted, Ofqual, Інституту учнівства та технічної освіти) за період 2000 – 2025 рр., вивчення наукових праць українських і британських учених – для з'ясування стану дослідженості проблеми; порівняння – для виявлення відмінностей і спільних тенденцій між британською та українською системами професійної освіти; узагальнення – для формулювання висновків і рекомендацій.

Результати: здійснено комплексний аналіз нормативно-правових документів Великої Британії, що регламентують діяльність професійних коледжів будівельного профілю; визначено ключові законодавчі акти (Further and Higher Education Act 1992, Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, Building Safety Act 2022, Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009), що забезпечують правову основу функціонування професійних коледжів; охарактеризовано роль профільних державних інституцій (Department for Education, Ofsted, IfATE, CITB) у регулюванні якості професійної будівельної освіти; виокремлено вимоги до програм підготовки, сертифікації та акредитації за напрямками будівництва; визначено перспективні напрями імплементації британського досвіду в контексті вдосконалення нормативно-правового забезпечення професійної підготовки фахівців будівельного профілю в Україні.

Висновки: встановлено, що законодавча база Великої Британії щодо підготовки фахівців будівельного профілю у професійних коледжах, забезпечує чіткий розподіл повноважень між регуляторами, визначає стандарти кваліфікації та гарантує відповідність змісту навчання вимогам сучасної будівельної галузі; імплементація окремих елементів британського досвіду (механізмів інституційної автономії, практикоорієнтованого навчання, участі галузевих партнерів у формуванні освітніх стандартів) є перспективною для вдосконалення нормативно-правового забезпечення підготовки фахівців будівельного профілю в професійних коледжах України.

Ключові слова: професійна підготовка, професійні коледжі, фахівці будівельного профілю, освітнє законодавство, Велика Британія.

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