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# ANALYSIS OF PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES AT THE UKRAINIAN FREE UNIVERSITY IN GERMANY

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## Abstract

*The relevance* of the study stems from the need for self-reliant educators capable of working with children and youth exhibiting varying degrees of trauma and stress, as well as the importance of examining the positive experience of training such educators at the Ukrainian Free University (Munich, Germany) for its potential implementation in Ukraine's education system.

*Objective:* To investigate the features of the educational design of teacher training within the master's and doctoral programs at the Ukrainian Free University (hereinafter: UFU), and to formulate recommendations for Ukrainian institutions of higher pedagogical education regarding the implementation of UFU's positive experience in fostering educators' agency.

*Methods:* Analysis of scientific sources on the research problem, relevant documents, and educational-methodological materials; content analysis; SWOT analysis; observation; interviews; systematization; and generalization – applied to identify the specifics of the pedagogical education structure and to develop recommendations for integrating UFU's positive practices into teacher training in Ukraine at the master's and doctoral levels.

*Results:* From a cultural-historical perspective, it was established that UFU is the first and only Ukrainian higher education institution abroad, one of the oldest private universities in Germany, meeting German university standards for integrating research with education and engaging students in scientific activities. It adheres to Western university education principles, with the specifics of its pedagogical studies shaped by their historical establishment and development. From an informational-content perspective, the educational and scientific components of pedagogical studies were analyzed, along with the research-informational and educational-methodological support for master's and doctoral courses in pedagogy, and the role of the library and archive in enhancing the educational environment. From a subject-process perspective, the properties of the teacher training process were examined, including a content analysis of its key features and a SWOT analysis of teacher training in the context of digitalization.

*Conclusions:* The Ukrainian Free University is a unique educational institution that combines Ukrainian pedagogical traditions with European standards. Its historical trajectory underscores the importance of preserving academic freedom and national identity in emigration contexts, while its prominent figures laid the foundation for pedagogical studies oriented toward humanistic values and the formation of a Ukrainian educational ideal. UFU's uniqueness is characterized by its preservation of pedagogical traditions and support for innovations by contemporary educators, creating a space for transformational pedagogy; its focus on inclusive education and psychological-pedagogical support for working with children who have experienced trauma, particularly in wartime conditions; the provision of additional specializations; and its

multicultural approach. The results of the research project under the DAAD program “Analysis of Pedagogical Studies at the Ukrainian Free University” demonstrate the development of self-reliant educators capable of supporting national identity, critical thinking, introducing innovative approaches, and working in multicultural environments. This underscores the significance of UFU’s experience for advancing Ukrainian pedagogy amid global challenges and European integration, as reflected in the formulated recommendations.

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**Keywords:** *Ukrainian Free University, pedagogical studies, transformational pedagogy, positive experience, development of educator agency.*

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**Introduction.** In the context of war, the role of the Ukrainian pedagogical community, which ensures the socialization and upbringing of children and youth, becomes critically important for societal development. Particular attention is required for fostering the agency of educators in general secondary education institutions. According to data from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, at the onset of the war in the first half of 2022, over 670,000 students and 25,000 teachers left Ukraine (Kabanets, 2022). Consequently, the task emerged of collaborating with the governments of various countries and ensuring the inclusion of a Ukrainian studies component. Ukrainian experts have identified the need for self-reliant teachers capable of working with children exhibiting varying degrees of trauma and stress.

The laws of Ukraine "On Education" (2017), "On Higher Education" (2014), and the "Conceptual Foundations of Pedagogical Education in Ukraine and Its Integration into the European Educational Space" (2004) outline the requirements for the quality of training future teachers. The Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2022–2032, aimed at achieving the strategic goal of "Internationalization of Ukrainian Higher Education," includes operational objectives such as the adoption of the best foreign educational practices in Ukraine, increasing the number of international educational and scientific collaboration projects, and integrating scientific and academic staff into the global scientific community (Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2022–2032, 2022). Thus, studying the experience of teacher training in universities across European Union countries is a priority for the successful integration into the European educational space and the fulfillment of Ukraine’s national objectives.

In this regard, the study and implementation of positive practices in teacher training at the Ukrainian

Free University (hereinafter: UFU; Munich, Germany) are relevant both for Ukraine and for other countries currently providing assistance to its citizens. The university has long established itself as an innovative hub of Ukrainian education abroad, offering educational programs that blend Ukrainian traditions with European educational standards. Its unique experience merits attention, particularly in the context of its active engagement at the intersection of two cultures and its provision of opportunities for high-quality pedagogical education that considers global trends, the specifics of Ukrainian culture, and the needs of the diaspora.

**Sources.** The theoretical and methodological aspects of the Western system of pedagogical education have been explored by N. Avshenyuk, L. Zyazyun, N. Nychkalo, L. Pukhovska, S. Kohut, O. Lokshyna, and others. Studies on foreign experiences in teacher training have been presented in the works of V. Bauer, N. Zhuravska, Ye. Neroba, O. Ohienko, T. Osadcha, and others. The preparation of educators in Germany has been the focus of research by N. Abashkina, O. Haiduk, L. Diachenko, N. Kish, L. Pasichnyk, O. Melnyk, O. Pryshliak, and others. The foundation for scientific inquiries into the training of future teachers in Germany is provided by the works of German researchers whose scientific investigations center on this topic, including H. Altrichter, S. Blömeke, F. Weinert, M. Winter, H. Hentig, W. Klafki, R. Messner, S. Robinsohn, A. Nolle, and E. Terhart. Aspects of the development and activities of UFU have been elucidated in publications by I. Mirchuk, A. Kokosh, M. Pryshliak, L. Rudnytskyi, T. Sydorhuk-Potulnytska, M. Shafoval, and others.

**Purpose of the Article.** The article aims to investigate the features of the educational design of teacher training within the master’s and doctoral programs at the UFU, and to formulate recommendations for Ukrainian higher pedagogical

education institutions regarding the implementation of positive experiences from the UFU in fostering educators' agency.

**Methods.** The study underlying this article employed methods such as analysis of scientific sources related to the research problem, examination of relevant documents and educational-methodological materials, content analysis, SWOT analysis, observation, interviewing, systematization, and generalization. These methods were used to identify the specific characteristics of the structure of pedagogical education and to formulate recommendations for integrating the UFU's positive practices into the training of educators in Ukraine at the master's and doctoral levels.

**Results and Discussion.** The research project titled "Analysis of Pedagogical Studies at the UFU in Germany," conducted under the DAAD program "Future of Ukraine: Research Grants for Ukrainian Master's Students and Researchers," consisted of three stages: preparatory, main, and concluding. During the preparatory stage (December 2024 – January 2025), scientific studies on pedagogical education in Germany were analyzed with a focus on key trends in teacher training. The main stage was implemented at the UFU (Munich, Germany) over a one-month period from January 29, 2025, to February 28, 2025. During this time at the UFU, the educational programs for master's and doctoral degrees in pedagogy, along with their components (academic disciplines), were analyzed. The relevant scientific-informational and educational-methodological resources were examined, in-depth interviews were conducted with university leadership, structural unit representatives, faculty, and students, and the role of the university library as an entity in designing the educational environment for teacher training was investigated. Archival materials and publications concerning the establishment and development of pedagogical studies at the UFU were also analyzed. At the concluding stage (March 2025 – April 2025), recommendations were formulated for incorporating the UFU's positive practices into teacher training in Ukraine at the master's and doctoral levels, and an article and project report were prepared. In accordance with the project's goals and objectives, its implementation at the UFU can be viewed through several perspectives: cultural-historical (the establishment and development of pedagogical

studies, the influence of prominent faculty figures), informational-content (educational and academic programs, scientific-informational and educational-methodological resources), and subject-processual (classroom observations, in-depth interviews).

During the preparatory stage, attention was focused on the fact that modern approaches to the development of pedagogical education in Germany hold significant importance for reforming this field in Ukraine, necessitating an analysis of the German experience. The authors of the monograph *Competency-Based Approach to Teacher Training in Foreign Countries: Theory and Practice* emphasize that one of the leading trends in the development of pedagogical education in Germany is the active introduction and implementation of a competency-based model for teacher preparation (Avshenyuk et al., 2014). Among the promising directions for the development of pedagogical education in Germany within the context of creating a European Higher Education Area, N. Kish highlights the trend of incorporating a European dimension into the content of teachers' professional training (Kish, 2016).

During the main phase of the study, while working in the library and archive of the UFU, it was established that, from a historical perspective, this institution is one of the oldest private universities in Germany. Investigating its history, L. Rudnytsky (2011, pp. 88-106) convincingly demonstrates that UFU meets the requirements for German universities in terms of integrating academic research with education, involving students in scholarly activities, and adhering to the principles of Western university education, including scientific rigor, responsibility, independence, honesty and integrity, tolerance, the popularization of scientific knowledge, and collaboration. At the same time, it remains faithful to the ideals of its founders and the principle of academic freedom, functioning as "a university that serves Ukraine and is open to the world."

UFU is the first and only Ukrainian institution of higher education abroad, and in 2026, it will celebrate its 105th anniversary. The university's founders, including D. Antonovych, O. Kolessa, I. Horbachevsky, M. Hrushevsky, S. Dnistriansky, S. Rudnytsky, and others, realized a unique vision in the global history of academic institutions: establishing a higher education institution with the right to award

doctoral degrees and habilitation outside its homeland and without its support. This was done to preserve the spirit of academic freedom, ensure objective truth in the humanities, and represent the Ukrainian nation. Based on the three European cities associated with the institution's activities, its development is divided into three periods: the Vienna Period – from 1920 to September 1921; the Prague Period – from October 1921 to mid-May 1945; and the Munich Period – from autumn 1945 to the present (Shafoval, 2011, pp. 1-2, 7-9).

An analysis of UFU's lecture programs in Prague (1922–1942) revealed that psychological disciplines appeared in the curriculum of the historical-philological section of the Faculty of Philosophy in 1930 ("Psychology," 1930–1931; "Fundamental Problems of Psychology," 1936–1937), while pedagogical disciplines emerged in 1935 ("Fundamental Problems of Pedagogy," summer semester of 1935; "Foundations of Pedagogy," 1937–1938). These courses were authored by Professor Ivan Mirchuk and were taught for 3 hours per week, though they were not included in the curriculum every academic year but rather appeared periodically. In 1939, pedagogy was distinguished as a separate block, developed by Professor Avgustin Voloshyn. This block consisted of two disciplines: "Pedagogical Methodology" (3 hours per week) and "Practical Exercises" (2 hours per week). By the 1942–1943 academic year, the course titles had changed to "Pedagogy. Pedagogical Ethics" and "School Administration." During this period, psychology was also separated into a distinct block comprising two disciplines ("Introduction to Characterology" and "Psychological Seminar"), developed by Associate Professor O. Ivanov (UFU Archive, Munich, Germany).

The figures of I. Mirchuk and A. Voloshyn merit particular attention. In 1921, I. Mirchuk became an associate professor at the UFU in Vienna, and from 1925, he served as a professor, teaching philosophy, ethics, psychology, and pedagogy. After World War II, in 1946, I. Mirchuk played an active role in reviving UFU's activities in Munich, where he served as rector during various periods. He advocated for the development of a national pedagogy that would account for the specifics of the Ukrainian mentality and history. His pedagogical approach significantly

influenced the education of a new generation of intellectuals capable of advancing the Ukrainian nation in exile and on the international stage (Kokosh, pp. 139–154).

A. Voloshyn, the last rector of UFU in Prague, met a tragic end on July 19, 1945, in prison, a victim of Stalinist repression. As noted by T. Bednarzova in the article "Avgustin Voloshyn – The Last Rector of UFU in Prague" (1998), he was a prominent figure in the state-building efforts of Carpathian Ukraine (1938–1939), opposing Magyar-Russification policies and advocating for Ukrainian as the language of instruction in educational institutions. As a professor at UFU, A. Voloshyn taught psychology, logic, and pedagogical disciplines. His seminal pedagogical work, *Methodology of Teaching* (Voloshyn, 1943), remains relevant to this day for fostering pedagogical thought and teacher creativity.

The archive also provided insight into lecture programs from the early Munich Period. Specifically, in the 1946–1947 academic year, the pedagogical block included the disciplines "Teaching Methods" (2 hours per week) and "Practice" (1 hour per week), authored and taught by Professor H. Vashchenko (UFU Archive, Munich, Germany).

Archival materials from the collection of H. Vashchenko, a prominent Ukrainian educator who played a significant role in the development of the pedagogical discipline at the UFU in Munich, have been studied. The archive contains the manuscript of a seminal article for Ukrainian pedagogy titled "The Traditional Ukrainian Ideal of a Human Being," which begins with words that still demand profound reflection: "The foundation of pedagogical work, as its goal, rests upon the ideal of a human being accepted by the pedagogical system employed by a given nation. Due to harsh historical circumstances, the Ukrainian people currently lack their own clearly developed pedagogical system and, consequently, a clearly defined ideal of upbringing. The construction of such a system and the formulation of the human ideal as the goal of upbringing constitute the most critical tasks of contemporary pedagogy" (Vashchenko, 1957). The archival materials of H. Vashchenko also include manuscripts of articles such as "Bolshevik Distortions of Western Pedagogues' Ideas in the Field of Didactics" (in Ukrainian and

German), "Psychology in the Soviet Union" (in German), newspaper articles "Notes on Aesthetics," "Socialism and Individualism in the Light of Christianity," "The Third Generation (Grandchildren)," and "Psychology in the Soviet Union" (in German), as well as the manuscript of the work "On the History of Spiritual Education in Pre-Revolutionary Russia" (UFU Archive, Munich, Germany).

Evidence of the focus on educational activities at UFU is provided by an analysis of the minutes of the meetings of the Professorial Council of the Philosophical Faculty of UFU. For instance, Minute No. 18 from July 10, 1948, highlights the need to strengthen the educational aspect of the learning process in the spirit of Christianity and national statehood (Minute No. 18, July 10, 1948, UFU Archive, Munich, Germany).

In the context of the development of pedagogical studies, documents from 1947–1948 – when the University continued its operations in Munich after World War II – were examined. These include the Statute (1947), Study Regulations of the Philosophical Faculty (1947), Study Regulations of the Faculty of Law and Socio-Economic Sciences (1948), and requirements for the ordination of associate professors and habilitation (1948). The adoption of these documents was driven by the need to regulate the educational process, which was a prerequisite for obtaining a decree from the Bavarian Ministry of Education and Religion recognizing UFU's activities, an event that occurred in 1950 (Kokosh, p. 100).

In A. Kokosh's publication "Institutional Formation of the UFU in Bavaria (1945–1950)," information is systematized regarding the establishment of the Department of Philosophy and Pedagogy within the Philosophical Faculty at the outset of the Munich period, during which the Chair of Pedagogy and Didactics began functioning. The author notes that students could earn a Master's degree in Philosophy, specializing in pedagogy and psychology, by successfully passing exams in Group A subjects (general), covering fundamental issues of philosophical sciences, general and pedagogical psychology, the history of world and Ukrainian pedagogy, and five Group B subjects (specific), namely pedagogical theory, didactics, school hygiene and school studies, methods of selected subjects,

preschool pedagogy and methods, and extracurricular education. Additionally, they were required to attend two semesters of a pedagogical pro-seminar, three semesters of a pedagogical seminar, and complete a six-month school internship (8 hours per week) in their primary and supplementary disciplines. For students choosing pedagogy as a minor specialization, all subjects except fundamental issues of philosophical sciences, didactics, school hygiene, and school studies were mandatory, along with two semesters of a pedagogical pro-seminar (Kokosh, pp. 103–108).

Thus, the findings from work in the UFU library and archive affirm that the historical context is crucial for understanding the specifics of pedagogical studies at UFU. The development of pedagogy at the University has occurred and continues to occur within a cultural-educational environment shaped by progressive ideas: a general tradition of resisting dogmatism, intolerance, and restrictions on academic freedom, as well as the scholarly contributions of the faculty, such as O. Kolessa's methodology of folk studies, H. Vashchenko's justification of the Ukrainian people's educational ideal, A. Voloshyn's principles of Ukrainian school studies, I. Mirchuk's concepts of national pedagogy, V. Yaniv's establishment of the Pedagogical Institute, and B. Yerzhabkova's research in social pedagogy, among others.

The University's name is key to understanding both its free spirit and its sense of being a "territory of freedom," as well as the opportunities for autodidacticism – that is, the faculty's authorship in shaping the content, methods, forms, and technologies of education, and the proactive engagement of students in selecting courses, assignments, and implementing projects. Today, UFU students can pursue studies in 13 specialties, among which pedagogy remains one of the most popular.

The objective of the master's program is to provide students with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge in their chosen disciplines and to explore various issues within historical and contemporary contexts. The priority focus is on Ukraine in Europe, examining Ukrainian science, education, language, culture, literature, society, law, and economy in this light. Within the framework of the master's program, students can also obtain qualifications in specialized fields of knowledge, such as interdisciplinary programs in Ukrainian studies and international

relations, including German-Ukrainian or Ukrainian-German relations within a broader European context.

Admission requirements for the program include possession of a bachelor's degree or an equivalent diploma from an accredited higher education institution; proficiency in the Ukrainian language sufficient for writing essays, understanding texts, lectures, questions, and discussions; knowledge of German or English at least at the level of text comprehension, though comprehension of lectures is desirable; two recommendation letters from the applicant's previous educational institution, with the option to include additional recommendation letters from an employer; and a motivation essay in which the applicant explains why they chose UFU, their long-term plans, what they intend to study, how studying at UFU will help them achieve their goals, what research they have completed, and what practical knowledge they have acquired thus far.

The requirements of the master's program (120 credits) for students with a four-year bachelor's degree (240 credits) typically entail six semesters of study (17 courses with additional requirements), culminating in a master's thesis and a final examination. In line with the Bologna Process, master's students follow a modular system of study units, which may consist of relevant and related courses and disciplines. For instance, students at the Faculty of Philosophy may choose pedagogy as a core module or as an additional one. Master's students select their modular courses independently, except for the mandatory introductory course in methodology. They must earn 60% of their total credit points in their "core module," with each module carrying 4 credits.

According to the regulations, instructors are required to inform master's students at the first lecture about the course requirements: mandatory literature; the scope and deadlines for essays; the format of oral seminar presentations; the type of exams (oral or written) and their timing (which must occur after the completion of all coursework). Oral exams at UFU last 15-30 minutes, while written exams last 45-60 minutes. It is noted that exams may be substituted with other assessment tools, and final essays and exams may not account for more than 40% of the course grade.

Students in the program fulfill additional program requirements, such as completing an individual project, an internship, or an additional course. The regulations of the master's program emphasize individualized learning, enabling students to independently prepare for academic work and

deepen their knowledge in a specific field of study, though this is not mandatory. Master's students wishing to conduct independent research select their own topics. They are permitted a maximum of two individual courses and are encouraged to choose research topics aligned with their "core module" (primary discipline) or "additional module" (supplementary discipline).

Thus, the substantive components of the master's program include the course "Methodology of Academic Writing" (4 credits); 16 advanced courses (10 in the primary specialization, 4 in the supplementary specialization, 2 elective courses, and 1 course or internship, totaling 64 credits); the master's thesis (30 credits); and the defense and final examination (20 credits). Master's students may opt for two independent research projects in place of a proseminar or seminar course. Assessment is conducted according to the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

In terms of upholding academic integrity standards, it is emphasized that cheating during exams results in a failing grade (F) for the exam; a second instance of cheating leads to expulsion from the university; plagiarism or the use of unauthorized aids during essay writing or presentation preparation results in a failing grade (F) for those assignments. A second violation of the rules results in a failing grade (F) for the entire course. A repeated instance of plagiarism leads to expulsion from the university, while purchasing or verbatim copying of essays from the internet or other accessible sources results in immediate expulsion.

The master's program involves the defense of a master's thesis and the completion of a final master's examination, which concludes all ongoing exams and assessments. The master's thesis must demonstrate in-depth academic research on a chosen topic and consolidate the theoretical knowledge acquired during the program. Completing the thesis serves as evidence of the student's ability to select and analyze a scientific or practical problem, draw conclusions and generalizations, or substantiate specific recommendations of a theoretical or practical nature. The regulations stipulate that each master's thesis must contain at least a minor element of originality. Master's students may write their theses in Ukrainian, English, or German, with a summary required in Ukrainian (the chosen language must be one in which the thesis advisor, reviewers, and examiners are proficient).

Regarding the thesis preparation process, the following key aspects are outlined:

- The master's student submits the thesis topic for approval only after earning 50% of the required credit points;
- The student independently selects a thesis advisor and topic, then completes and obtains approval for the "Master's Project Form" from the advisor and a representative of the Academic Degree Committee (the dean or deputy dean);
- The thesis must be completed within one semester, or two at most;
- The thesis typically ranges from 60 to 100 pages;
- The student must submit the final version of the thesis electronically to the dean or deputy dean for plagiarism checks, then to the advisor for review, and sign a declaration confirming that the thesis was written independently, using only the cited resources, and has not been submitted to another examination board or institution or previously published. Submission of false declarations results in the thesis being disqualified and the student's expulsion from the university.

The evaluation of a master's thesis is conducted by the academic supervisor, who confirms that the thesis is ready for further review. Following this, the dean or their deputy appoints a second reviewer. A period of six weeks is allocated for the evaluation of the thesis. In cases where the evaluations are highly divergent and one of them is unsatisfactory, the dean, as a representative of the Commission, or their deputy, appoints a third expert reviewer. Reviewers may include professors of the UFU, associate professors, emeritus professors (senior professors who continue their academic work), honorary professors, and lecturers holding a doctoral degree or a Candidate of Sciences degree. The regulations stipulate that, in exceptional cases, a professor, associate professor, or lecturer from another higher education institution may be appointed as a reviewer, provided the thesis topic aligns with their professional and academic qualifications and they have at least three years of teaching experience. If the final evaluation of the master's thesis is "unsatisfactory," the master's student is entitled to write a new thesis on a different topic. Failure to pass the master's thesis a second time results in expulsion from the master's program.

The thesis defense lasts 30 minutes and includes a concise and clear statement by the student of the research problem, justification of its relevance, definition of the thesis objectives, methods for achieving them, and presentation of conclusions, recommendations, and the novelty of the work. The student is required to answer the examiners' questions regarding the thesis, provide additional clarifications, and respond to the reviewers' critical remarks.

The content of the final master's examination pertains to the disciplines of the "core module" and the "supplementary module." The examination may be written or oral. Written exams take place prior to the thesis defense. The oral examination occurs immediately after the defense and is conducted by two examiners, one of whom is typically the academic supervisor; the dean or their deputy records the proceedings of the exam.

The overall grade for the master's examination is calculated as the sum of all grades received for the modular course exams (i.e., courses with four credit points), independent research, and the results of the master's examination and thesis.

The regulations for master's studies outline cases in which an examination may be declared invalid if the student deliberately engages in deceit, including falsification of documents or exam results, use of unauthorized aids during the exam, or plagiarism in the master's thesis. In such instances, the Commission has full authority to declare the exam failed. As a consequence, any prior certification of the exam is annulled, and the student is stripped of their diploma.

It is worth noting that certain provisions regarding the training of master's students at UFU are also applicable to doctoral students. This includes requirements for recommendation letters and the language of instruction for admission, opportunities for independent selection of core and supplementary specializations, research topics, and supervisors, the procedure for appointing reviewers, and the promotion of academic integrity policies. Further attention will be focused on the key features of doctoral studies at UFU.

The Doctoral Studies Regulations (Ukrainian Free University, 2024c) consist of the following sections: "Introductory Note"; "Academic Degrees"; "Commission for the Awarding of Academic Degrees"; "Admission Requirements for Doctoral Programs"; "Doctoral Program Requirements";

“Dissertation”; “Dissertation Supervisors”; “Conditions for Admission to Promotion”; “Admission to Promotion”; “Reviewers and Examiners”; “Dissertation Evaluation”; “Dissertation Reviews”; “Third Reviewer and Overall Dissertation Grade”; “Oral Examination (Rigorosum or Defense)”; “Absence, Refusal, Deception, Breach of Procedure”; “Final Examination Result”; “Retaking the Examination”; “Submission of Required Dissertation Copies”; “Doctoral Diploma and Use of the Academic Degree”; “Non-Completion of Promotion and Revocation of the Academic Degree”; “Awarding of Honorary Degrees Dr.phil.h.c. and Dr.Oec.pol.h.c.”; “Effective Date of Transitional Provisions.” The academic component of training for Doctors of Philosophy, as outlined in the Doctoral Studies Regulations, is also governed by the “Procedure for Awarding a Doctoral Degree” (<https://ufu-muenchen.de/program/pedahohika/>).

At the Faculty of Philosophy, where a pedagogical specialization is obtained, UFU awards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Doctor philosophiae or Dr. phil. UFU). The regulations emphasize that the doctoral degree is both an educational and academic degree of the third level of higher education, building on a master’s degree or a Candidate of Sciences degree. The doctoral degree signifies that the doctoral candidate has mastered a specific field of knowledge, thoroughly studied the topic or subject of their specialization, opened a new field of research, conducted an analysis, and provided an innovative interpretation or novel solutions to significant issues within their area of specialization.

It should be noted that eligibility for admission to the doctoral program is granted to individuals who have obtained a master’s degree from the UFU, a German university, or a foreign university recognized in Germany, or a Candidate of Sciences degree from a recognized university in Ukraine; can demonstrate a high level of academic performance in their prior studies (80% or higher); and have received a high evaluation for their thesis and its defense (80% or higher).

The UFU doctoral program entails three years of study and includes the following components: coursework; doctoral research (dissertation); an examination in philosophy (for the Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Ukrainian Studies); and

an oral doctoral examination (defense or rigorosum). Doctoral students are required to complete a mandatory course in methodology, seven advanced courses in their primary specialization, and two courses in a supplementary specialization.

A doctoral candidate may begin preparing their dissertation project after successfully completing 60% of the coursework requirements of the doctoral program.

The doctoral candidate submits to the dean, as the representative of the Chair of the Commission, the topic of the doctoral dissertation and a dissertation project for approval. This project must include a hypothesis, an explanation of the significance and relevance of the dissertation topic, its novelty, the structure of the work, and a list of sources and bibliography.

During the writing of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent scientific research, analyze material, delve deeply into their chosen topic, and present the novelty of their dissertation. The dissertation must be an original work that the doctoral candidate has neither previously published nor defended. It is desirable for the dissertation to have a comparative character. A scientific work lacking a significant element of novelty and analysis will be rejected. The dissertation must comprise at least 150 pages of main text.

Prerequisites for admission to the doctoral promotion include: completion of the coursework requirements of the doctoral program with grades in the candidate’s primary specialization of at least “very good” / “B” (1.5 or better); study at the UFU for a minimum of three semesters, each involving the completion of three courses; selection of a dissertation topic aligned with the candidate’s specialization; certification that the doctoral candidate is worthy of holding a doctoral degree and has not taken a doctoral examination at another institution of higher education.

For admission to the promotion, the doctoral candidate submits to the dean, as the representative of the Chair of the Commission, the dissertation text in electronic form for plagiarism checks; a review from the academic supervisor; a personally signed statement affirming that the work was completed independently and without external assistance; that all direct and indirect quotations or borrowings from additional

materials and scientific works used during the dissertation writing are accurately and properly cited; confirmation that the candidate has not previously attempted to obtain a doctoral degree and that the submitted dissertation is an original work not defended at another institution of higher education; and a statement regarding the choice between a rigorosum examination or dissertation defense.

The evaluation of the dissertation's quality involves two reviewers, each of whom provides a separate review justifying the acceptance or rejection of the work. If the dissertation is accepted for consideration, it is evaluated according to the following grading system: *summa cum laude* ("excellent"), 0.5; *magna cum laude* ("very good"), 1; *cum laude* ("good"), 2; *rite* ("satisfactory"), 3. This grading system also applies to the evaluation of the rigorosum or defense.

The regulations stipulate that professors and associate professors of faculties with the right to conduct examinations should be given the opportunity to review the dissertation and the reviewers' reports. They are notified in advance of the start date for reviewing the work and reports, as well as the option to submit a written opinion.

If the doctoral candidate opts for a rigorosum, the dean, as the representative of the Chair of the Commission, invites the candidate in writing to the examination and informs them of the examiners. The candidate's preferences regarding examiners are taken into account but are not binding. Each of the two parts of the rigorosum is conducted by different examiners. Each examiner appoints a co-examiner from their specialization, who must be at least an associate professor or a defended research fellow. The rigorosum in the primary specialization lasts approximately 75 minutes, while the additional discipline and the history of philosophical doctrines each last 45 minutes. During the rigorosum, auditors, master's students, and doctoral candidates may be present. The final result consists of three equally weighted grades, which together form the overall rigorosum assessment.

If the doctoral candidate chooses a dissertation defense, it typically lasts 90–120 minutes and is public. The candidate presents the main theses of their work in a 15–20-minute report, followed by a discussion and consideration of substantive questions

methodologically related to the dissertation topic. The dean, as the representative of the Chair of the Commission, appoints a defense committee, which includes the supervisor, reviewers, and 2–3 other experts, among them specialists representing the primary and additional specializations of the promotion. The committee members must agree on a joint evaluation; if no consensus is reached, the overall result is determined based on the grades proposed by all committee members.

The promotion is successfully completed if the dissertation is accepted for consideration and the doctoral candidate receives at least a "satisfactory" (*rite*) grade for the defense or each rigorosum subject. The overall examination result is determined by a grade that combines the individual assessments for the dissertation and the oral examination, following this grading scale: up to 0.6 – *summa cum laude* ("excellent"); 0.61 to 1.50 – *magna cum laude* ("very good"); 1.51 to 2.50 – *cum laude* ("satisfactory"); 2.51 to 3.15 – *rite* ("satisfactory").

Regulatory documents allow for the dissertation to be published in a periodical, as a monograph, or in electronic form, with the mandatory indication that it was defended at the UFU in Munich. The revised version of the work, incorporating feedback from the supervisor and reviewers, must be approved by them prior to publication.

Broadly speaking, regarding its content, the structure of pedagogical studies includes the following courses:

- A mandatory course, "Methodology of Writing Academic Papers";
- Profile-specific elective courses (10 courses for master's students, 7 advanced profile courses for doctoral students), offered within the program ("Philosophy of Education," "Features of the Development of Pedagogical Theories and Education in European Countries," "Comparative Pedagogy," "Strategies for Reforming General Secondary Education in Germany and Ukraine in the Second Half of the 20th Century – Early 21st Century (Comparative Context)," "Integration of Young Migrants and Refugees in German Educational Institutions: Challenges for Pedagogy," "Social Pedagogy and Social Work in Germany," "Inclusive Education," "Pedagogical Conflicts: Causes, Behavioral Strategies, and Resolution," "School Didactics," "Pedagogical

Technologies," "Science of Learning: How to Teach Children and Learn Yourself?");

- Elective courses from other disciplines chosen by students (2 courses for master's students);
- Courses in an additional specialization (4 courses for master's students, 2 courses for doctoral students). Students select an additional specialization from the following options: "Psychology," "History," "Ukrainian Language and Literature," "Art Studies," "Comparative Cultural Studies," "Philosophy";
- Additional program requirements for master's students (writing an individual project, completing an internship, or selecting 1 additional course).

An analysis of the academic, informational, and methodological support for the courses in master's and doctoral pedagogy programs at the UFU indicates an international context, with literature available in Ukrainian, English, and German. It also reflects consideration of students' opportunities to independently search for useful and engaging publications, as well as a division of sources into mandatory and elective, similar to Ukrainian disciplinary programs. The recommended reading lists for psycho-pedagogical disciplines feature the scholarly contributions of researchers from the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine, including V. Kremen, O. Liashenko, O. Lokshyna, S. Maksymenko, N. Nychkalo, S. Sysoieva, M. Sliusarevskyi, and others.

For instance, the source list for the course "Pedagogical Comparative Studies" (authored by T. Havrylenko) includes the scientific-analytical report by V. Kremen, O. Liashenko, and O. Lokshyna titled *General Secondary Education in Ukraine in the Context of Education in European Countries: Duration and Structure* (2020), the textbook by S. Sysoieva and T. Krystopchuk *Educational Systems of European Union Countries: General Characteristics* (2012), the article by S. Sysoieva "Global Research Infrastructure of Comparative Pedagogy" (2019), and monographs co-authored by O. Lokshyna, such as *Trends in School Education Development in EU Countries, the USA, and China* (2021) and *Transformational Processes in School Education in European Union Countries and the USA* (2018), among others. The study of the course "Adult Education" (authored by T. Havrylenko) involves

referencing the monograph by N. Nychkalo and I. Prokopenko *Adult Education: Global Trends, Ukrainian Realities, and Prospects* (2020). The curriculum for the course "Fundamentals of General Psychology" (authored by O. Kuzio and L. Didkovska) includes the textbook *General Psychology* edited by S. Maksymenko (2004), while the course "Psychology of Migration (Emigration)" (authored by A. Didkovskyi) features the textbook *Psychology of Migration* by M. Sliusarevskyi and O. Blynova (2013).

The design of course curricula, annotations, and syllabi is characterized by authorial approaches: instructors adhere to general requirements regarding the need to present the relevance, objectives, tasks, learning outcomes, topics, independent student work, assessment methods, and grading policies, while there are no rigid templates dictating format, scope, or sequence of information presentation. Faculty members who simultaneously teach at Ukrainian higher education institutions (e.g., Professors T. Havrylenko, S. Kohut, D. Shulzhenko) introduce contemporary Ukrainian approaches to content presentation at UFU.

Key components of UFU's human-centered educational environment, which includes teacher training, are its library and archive. The main library collection contains over 600 pedagogical publications, while the archive holds approximately 200, many of which were published in Ukraine. L. Rudnytskyi (2011) notes that this is a true treasure trove for scholars interested in Ukrainian émigré life in Europe during the 20th century, particularly German-Ukrainian relations. Daily updates of relevant information and announcements are prepared for faculty and students worldwide. It is worth noting that, in line with modern educational demands, UFU's electronic library is undergoing significant development (Ukrainian Free University, n.d.).

The archive preserves dissertations and master's theses, including those in pedagogy, defended at UFU since 1946 (UFU Archive, Munich, Germany). An analysis of dissertation topics reveals the development of philosophical-educational, historical-pedagogical, comparative-pedagogical, and psycho-pedagogical discourses, such as *The School of the Future* (O. Oryshkevych, 1948), *Behaviorism and Its Critique* (I. Fizer, 1949), *Critical Analysis of the Foundations of the Soviet Educational-Upbringing*

*System* (K. Kokhno, 1950), *Psychology and Pedagogy of Inner Balance* (P. Barvinov, 1950), *Ushynsky as a Pedagogue* (H. Zub, 1954), *Experiments in Family Upbringing in the USSR* (V. Kalynnyk, 1961), *Philosophy of Education in American Culture* (Ch. Sobolevskyi, 1962), *Teaching Slavic Languages (Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish) in American Schools* (A. Samofal, 1968), *Comparison of Foreign Language Teaching Methods in the USA and the Soviet Union After World War II* (D. Polutnyk, 1972), *Comparison of Russian Language Teaching Methodology in the USA and Ukrainian Language Teaching in Canada* (M. Smit, 1972), and *The Influence of Schopenhauer on Pedagogical Trends* (A. Zhyvotenko-Piachkov, 1985).

The subject-process perspective of the study focuses on examining approaches to the educational process, its characteristics, the interaction of participants, as well as the forms, methods, and technologies of teacher training. To this end, an analysis of reporting documentation was conducted (specifically, rector's reports for the academic years 2019–2020, 2020–2021, autumn 2022–2023, and the 2022–2023 academic year), teaching experiences were studied through classroom observations, and in-depth interviews were held with participants of the educational process.

According to the reporting data from 2019 to 2023, there was a significant increase in the number of students, by 43.1%, attributed to an effective informational campaign. Quarantine restrictions, prompted by the global pandemic that began in 2020, necessitated a shift to remote learning, as was the case in educational institutions across Ukraine. Under these conditions, a substantial effort was made to reformat the educational process without interruptions, maintaining the full scope of courses, exams, and defenses. Initially, ZOOM was employed as the simplest platform, followed by a transition to Microsoft Teams, a more professional tool designed specifically for online teaching. At UFU, training sessions and methodological seminars were introduced for instructors to master Teams, prepare materials for remote courses, monitor and evaluate student work, and organize online discussions. UFU staff also conducted individual training sessions for students. During this period, under the leadership of the Head of the Pedagogy Department, S. Kohut, the

curricula of pedagogy disciplines were updated (see Table 1).

Being at UFU provided an opportunity to directly engage in the educational process, including attending Professor L. Didkovska's lecture "Theoretical Models and Empirical Studies of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)" (4 hours) from the course "Psychological Assistance – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders," Professor S. Kohut's lecture "Assessment of Learning Achievements" (4 hours) from the course "Active Learning Methods," and participating extensively in P. Hiltes's seminar classes from the course "Teaching and Upbringing Styles in the Modern School: Challenges Not Only for Didactics" (20 hours).

Participation in the learning process allows for the observation that the engagement of students – both those attending in person and online – is exceptionally high. The interaction between instructors and students can be characterized by key terms such as "friendliness," "mutual respect," "subjectivity," "dialogue," "personality-developmental space," "practice-oriented approach," "free and relaxed atmosphere," "interactive engagement," and "teamwork." Overall, the learning process is predominantly exploratory in nature, with instructors emphasizing the practical application of information, drawing on students' experiences, providing relevant examples, posing thought-provoking questions, encouraging discussions, and guiding them tolerantly toward critical thinking, conclusions, and generalizations. At the same time, it should be noted that each class is unique and distinctive, a result of the instructor's authorship and proactivity, as well as the group synergy with students.

A key advantage of being at UFU was the opportunity to apply the method of interviewing participants in the educational process. In-depth interviews regarding teacher training at UFU were semi-standardized, allowing for a consistent structure to compare responses across participants while also accommodating the unique characteristics of each interviewee. The target group, "participants in the educational process of teacher training at UFU," included representatives of the administration and leadership, instructors, students, and library and archive staff, totaling 10 individuals (UFU Rector Larysa Didkovska, Head of the Pedagogy Department

Svitlana Kohut, Pedagogy Department instructors Dina Shulzhenko and Peter Hiltes, Head of the Library and UFU graduate Ivan Zarytskyi, archivist and UFU student Yuliia Chernomor, project manager and UFU graduate Liliia Bondarenko, academic and student affairs officer and UFU graduate Roman Tiutenko, Master's student in pedagogy Anna Higl, and doctoral student in psychology Viktoriia Danylevska, who is pursuing pedagogy as a second specialization). For each respondent, an individualized guide was prepared, incorporating common questions about

methodology, educational management, content, methods, forms, and technologies of teaching, as well as quality assurance, while also accounting for their unique involvement with UFU. Consideration was also given to the fact that some participants fulfill multiple roles, such as being simultaneously administrators and instructors, graduates and staff, or staff and students. Table 1 presents the results of a content analysis of the characteristics of the educational process for teacher training at UFU.

Table 1.

**Results of the Content Analysis of Key Features of Teacher Training at UFU Through the Perspective of Educational Process Participants**

Parameters	Characteristics
Goals	<p>The training of educators capable of effectively working in a modern educational environment, responding to current challenges – particularly those caused by the full-scale war in Ukraine and the demands of inclusive education – while providing psychosocial support and ensuring quality education under various conditions. This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of professional competencies (ensuring deep knowledge and practical skills necessary for effective pedagogical activities);</li> <li>• Cultivation of critical thinking and innovation skills (promoting the ability to analyze, evaluate, and implement innovative methods and technologies in the educational process);</li> <li>• Preparation for work in a multicultural environment (developing skills for interacting with representatives of diverse cultures and adapting to various educational contexts);</li> <li>• Support for psychosocial well-being (training in methods to work with students who have experienced traumatic events and creating a safe, supportive learning environment).</li> </ul>
Methodological Approaches	<p>Synergetic: Openness of education, spontaneity, flexibility, innovative learning, recognition of students' individual needs and capabilities, and non-directive management of the educational process.</p> <p>Competency-Based: Development of educators' abilities to address professional pedagogical tasks through acquired values, attitudes, professional knowledge, skills, and professionally significant personal qualities.</p> <p>Environmental: Indirect management of the educational process with a primary focus on the proactivity of the learner, fostering self-learning, self-education, and professional self-development.</p> <p>Person-Centered: Development of individual abilities, creative potential, and professional competencies of future educators, taking into account their personal needs, values, and motivations.</p> <p>Personological: Engagement of experienced, highly professional, and talented scholars with strong reputations in teaching; creation of conditions and support for instructors' professional autonomy; influence of their original approaches, individual teaching styles, pedagogical experience, and the scientific</p>

	<p>legacy of prominent figures in the institution’s history (e.g., for UFU – I. Mirchuk, A. Voloshyn, H. Vashchenko, and others) on the formation and development of future teachers’ professional agency.</p> <p>Andragogical: Focus on adult education, considering learners’ life experiences, motivation for self-development, and need for practical application of knowledge.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary: Integration of knowledge from various academic fields such as pedagogy, psychology, history, sociology, cultural studies, Ukrainian studies, etc., to form a comprehensive understanding of the educational process and enhance the agency of future teachers.</p> <p>Social-Constructivist: Active interaction with the social environment and collaborative activities, emphasizing cooperation, discussion, reflection, and joint problem-solving to foster critical thinking and professional competence in future educators.</p> <p>Trauma-Informed: Development of competencies in future teachers to understand the impact of psychological trauma on students’ emotional states, behavior, and learning abilities; fostering empathy, supporting mental health, addressing the individual needs of students who have experienced stress or trauma, and creating a safe and supportive educational environment.</p>
Teacher’s Role	<p>A facilitator, mentor, moderator, and consultant who creates conditions for students’ independent learning and development, supports and motivates them, fosters personal growth, assists in solving educational and practical tasks, and employs a democratic teaching style.</p>
Student’s Role	<p>An active and proactive participant in the educational process, taking responsibility for their own learning and development, independently seeking, analyzing, and critically evaluating information, collaborating with instructors and peers to address tasks, and reflecting on their own learning experiences and outcomes.</p>
Interaction Between Teachers and Students, and Among Students	<p>Subject-to-subject, partnership-based relationships with well-established communication facilitated by modern management tools and social platforms. A distinctive feature is the absence of fixed study groups, which does not hinder effective communication, further supported by a designated academic and student affairs coordinator. The university involves students in various events and organizes informal gatherings.</p>
Learning Motivation	<p>Creation of a supportive educational environment that considers students’ individual needs and interests, ensures respect, encourages achievements, and fosters open communication. Motivational factors include:</p> <p>Professional development: Students aspire to gain quality education that enhances career growth and professional fulfillment;</p> <p>Cognitive interest: The desire to deepen understanding of their chosen field and acquire new knowledge stimulates active participation in the learning process;</p> <p>Self-affirmation: Students seek to demonstrate their abilities and achievements, boosting their self-confidence;</p> <p>Social interaction: University education provides opportunities to build new connections, exchange experiences, and expand professional networks.</p>
Organization of the Educational Process	<p>A blended format combining online and offline learning; a flexible system allowing students to create their own schedules by selecting courses from a proposed list in line with program requirements; diverse forms of class delivery;</p>

	prioritization of creative, productive tasks; provision of conditions for individual and group educational projects; use of active learning methods; variety in task selection; and opportunities for participation in research and practical events, including annual student academic conferences.
Internal Quality Assurance in Education	Monitoring the needs and demands of applicants based on the analysis of motivation letters, with results informing updates to educational content (e.g., introduction of courses such as “Transformational Pedagogy (Pedagogy of Change),” “Adult Education,” and “Trauma Pedagogy”); continuous improvement of curricula and programs with rapid responses to contemporary challenges; engagement of leading experts with international experience in teaching; ongoing professional development for instructors; adherence to Study Regulations for monitoring and assessing academic achievements; operation of a system to prevent and detect academic plagiarism; provision of necessary resources for the educational process; and development of information systems for effective management, methodological support, and transparency of UFU activities.
Social and Humanitarian Activities	Involvement of teachers and students in volunteer projects, community initiatives, and cultural-educational events.
Support for Graduate Employment	Conducting career training, coaching, and providing information on job opportunities. Engaging talented graduates in work at UFU serves as an example of effective personnel policy.
Uniqueness of UFU Pedagogical Studies	Preservation of pedagogical traditions established by distinguished UFU instructors who laid the foundations of Ukrainian pedagogy rooted in national values and Christian ethics, combined with support for innovations by modern instructors who create a space for transformational pedagogy. This fosters the agency of future educators, their self-reliance, creativity, social responsibility, and professional autonomy. The training focuses on inclusive education and psychological-pedagogical support for working with children who have experienced trauma, particularly in wartime conditions. Opportunities to acquire an additional specialization enhance interdisciplinarity and multifaceted learning. A sense of community preserves Ukrainian identity and culture, providing students with a “sense of home.” Multiculturalism is both a feature of the educational environment and an integral part of teacher training content.

A separate focus in the interview was given to the digitization of education and its impact on the quality of teacher training, which enabled the

conduction of a corresponding SWOT analysis (Table 2).

Table 2.

### SWOT Analysis of Teacher Training in the Context of Digitization

Strengths – Advantages, Positive Aspects	Weaknesses – Challenges, Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the continuity of the educational process during the COVID-19 pandemic, war, and other crisis situations;</li> <li>Opportunities for remote access for instructors and students;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital divides (between instructors, between students, and between instructors and students);</li> <li>Overburdening of instructors;</li> <li>Unstable internet connectivity;</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of blended learning possibilities;</li> <li>• Provision of individualized learning;</li> <li>• Continuous open access to educational and methodological resources;</li> <li>• Development and enhancement of digital competence among learners;</li> <li>• Promotion of inclusivity, ensuring access to education for individuals with disabilities and those in remote regions;</li> <li>• Greater opportunities for career guidance activities;</li> <li>• Increased efficiency in managing the educational process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of face-to-face interaction, leading to a reduced level of emotional connection between instructors and students;</li> <li>• Fatigue, psychological discomfort, and isolation of participants in the educational process.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b> – Prospects, Reserves, Solutions for Future Challenges</p>	<p><b>Threats</b> – Risks, Dangers, Potential Future Challenges</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a safe and comfortable digital educational environment;</li> <li>• Continuous professional development of instructors in the field of digital technologies;</li> <li>• Ensuring adherence to the principles and rules of academic integrity, including plagiarism checks for master’s theses and dissertations, and written confirmation of independent work by graduates;</li> <li>• Training learners to use artificial intelligence (AI) as a tool for environmentally responsible information handling;</li> <li>• Implementation of modern interactive pedagogical technologies, such as gamification and augmented reality;</li> <li>• Formative assessment of students’ academic achievements, focusing not only on final outcomes but also on the process of achieving them;</li> <li>• Achieving a balance between online and offline learning;</li> <li>• Introduction of modern online platforms, such as “Knowledge Academy” for UFU (Ukrainian Virtual University).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cyberattacks and information leaks;</li> <li>• Insufficient level of digital security;</li> <li>• Decreased student motivation and poorer assimilation of material;</li> <li>• Misuse of AI by students in completing assignments and writing papers;</li> <li>• Difficulty in monitoring students’ independent completion of tasks in an online environment;</li> <li>• Decline in students’ critical thinking and creativity;</li> <li>• Predominance of globalized content, posing a risk of losing national identity.</li> </ul>

Since 9 of the interviewees have experience obtaining higher education in Ukraine, 3 of them teach at Ukrainian higher education institutions (HEIs), and one participant is an expert on Ukrainian education, their opinions on the similarities and differences between studying at Ukrainian institutions and UFU are considered significant. Thus, the following

common features have been identified: adherence to the requirements of the Bologna education system, the application of a competency-based approach, a blended learning format, a general orientation toward the use of innovative pedagogical technologies, the digitalization of education, and measures for internal quality assurance in education. Key distinctions of the

UFU include a high level of academic freedom; rapid response to external challenges and the demands of learners; a preference for unconventional forms and methods of teaching; a flexible, individualized learning trajectory for students; an emphasis on creativity and innovation in independent work; greater autonomy for learners, described as “greater freedom and greater responsibility”; the absence of fixed study groups; openness of instructors to communication and their support; psychological comfort; high variability in the choice of academic disciplines; the opportunity to obtain a second specialization; and a different procedure for the preparation and defense of doctoral dissertations in philosophy.

The research findings have enabled the formulation of the following recommendations for Ukrainian higher pedagogical education institutions regarding the implementation of positive experiences from the UFU in fostering the agency of educators:

- Strengthen cooperation with European, particularly German, higher education institutions and research organizations to exchange experiences, publications, conduct scientific and practical events, and promote academic mobility for students and educators in the context of teacher training.

- Combine pedagogical traditions and innovations, drawing on the history of the higher education institution, supporting and encouraging progressive educators who are respected and recognized among students and colleagues and demonstrate high professional activity.

- Provide greater academic freedom for educators in choosing teaching methods and approaches to assessment.

- Ensure rapid updates to the content of academic disciplines, flexibility in curricula and programs, taking into account the needs and demands of applicants based on monitoring.

- Prevent duplication of content in disciplines both within higher education programs and with school subjects.

- Introduce courses on pedagogical ethics and the formation and development of teachers’ professional agency based on Ukrainian pedagogical traditions.

- Ensure comprehensive and systematic preparation of future educators to foster national identity in children.

- Train educators to work in multicultural environments, developing skills for interacting with representatives of different cultures and adapting to diverse educational contexts.

- Ensure transparent and genuine choices for students in selecting academic disciplines.

- Strengthen the comparative context of foreign, particularly European, pedagogical experiences within the content of academic disciplines and promote relevant student research.

- Integrate psychological and pedagogical support into teacher training, relevant to wartime and post-war recovery, to work with students experiencing stress or traumatic experiences.

- Ensure an interdisciplinary approach to preparing educators for creating inclusive environments by developing programs that combine modern positive practices from pedagogy, psychology, and social work, and include in teacher training the study of experiences working with Ukrainian migrant and refugee children in European countries, particularly Germany.

- Foster the readiness of future teachers to implement transformative pedagogy for deep learning and the development of critical thinking in students.

- Create opportunities for students to obtain a second specialization in related fields, enhancing the interdisciplinarity of pedagogical training and increasing graduates’ competitiveness in the labor market.

- Incorporate modern scientific-informational and methodological resources into the educational process, promoting the achievements of domestic and foreign pedagogical science.

- Systematically and comprehensively utilize the potential of the higher education institution’s library and archives in teacher training.

**Conclusions.** The UFU is a unique higher education institution that combines Ukrainian pedagogical traditions with European standards. Its historical journey underscores the importance of preserving academic freedom and national identity in the context of emigration. Prominent figures such as Ivan Mirchuk, Avgustyn Voloshyn, Hryhoriy Vashchenko, and others laid the foundation for the development of pedagogical studies focused on humanistic values and the formation of the Ukrainian educational ideal.

The training of educators at UFU addresses contemporary challenges, such as inclusive education, teaching migrant and refugee children, and modern approaches to instruction in schools and extracurricular educational institutions. The content of pedagogical studies includes a mandatory course on "Methodology of Writing Academic Papers"; profile-specific elective courses (10 courses for master's students, 7 advanced profile courses for doctoral students) offered within the program ("Philosophy of Education," "Features of the Development of Pedagogical Theories and Education in European Countries," "Comparative Pedagogy," "Strategies for Reforming General Secondary Education in Germany and Ukraine in the Second Half of the 20th Century – Early 21st Century (Comparative Context)," "Integration of Young Migrants and Refugees in German Educational Institutions: Challenges for Pedagogy," "Social Pedagogy and Social Work in Germany," "Inclusive Education," "Pedagogical Conflicts: Causes, Behavioral Strategies, Resolution," "School Didactics," "Pedagogical Technologies," "Learning Science: How to Teach Children and Learn Yourself?"); elective courses from other disciplines chosen by students (2 courses for master's students); courses for an additional specialization (4 courses for master's students, 2 courses for doctoral students); additional program requirements for master's students (writing an individual project, completing an internship, or choosing 1 course).

The distinctive features of the academic component of the studies include the fact that master's and doctoral students independently choose their research topic and supervisor; their preferences regarding the composition of the examination committee are taken into account; a comparative context is emphasized in research; both master's theses and doctoral dissertations are quantitatively evaluated, with the academic supervisor participating in the assessment; doctoral students have the option to choose the form of promotion (rigorosum or defense); there are no requirements for publications or preliminary result validation, but there is an opportunity to publish the work after defense, provided it references the place of defense and is approved by the academic supervisor and reviewers after revisions.

An analysis of the scientific-informational and educational-methodological support for master's and

doctoral pedagogy programs at UFU confirms an international context, with literature available in Ukrainian, English, and German, consideration of students' opportunities for independent search for useful and interesting publications, and a division of sources into mandatory and elective, similar to Ukrainian programs. Evidence of attention to the results of contemporary Ukrainian pedagogical research is the inclusion of works by scholars from the National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences of Ukraine in the recommended literature lists for psychological and pedagogical disciplines. The design of course curricula, their annotations, and syllabi is characterized by authorial approaches.

Key components of UFU's person-centered educational environment, which includes teacher training, are the library and archive, which provide daily information services to faculty and students worldwide; an electronic library is also operational. An analysis of dissertation topics stored in the archive indicates the development of philosophical-educational, historical-pedagogical, comparative-pedagogical, and psychological-pedagogical discourses.

A study of the specifics of the educational process for teacher training reveals that student engagement in classes is very high, with a predominant focus on exploratory learning. Instructors emphasize the applied aspects of using information, draw on students' experiences, provide relevant examples, pose problematic questions, encourage discussions, and tactfully guide them toward critical thinking, conclusions, and generalizations.

Content analysis of interviews with participants in the educational process allowed for the specification of learning objectives in light of contemporary challenges; identification of methodological approaches to teacher training (synergetic, competency-based, environmental, person-oriented, personological, andragogical, interdisciplinary, socio-constructivist, trauma-informed); characterization of: the instructor's role (facilitator, mentor, moderator, consultant), the student's role (active and proactive participant in the educational process), the nature of their interaction (subject-subject, partnership-based), learning motivation (creating a supportive educational environment that considers individual needs and

interests), organization of the educational process (flexible system, blended learning, variability in independent work, interactivity, project-based learning); internal quality assurance of education (monitoring the needs and demands of applicants and incorporating the results; continuous improvement of curricula and programs; rapid response to modern challenges; involvement of leading specialists with international experience in teaching; ongoing professional development for instructors; adherence to Study Regulations regarding the control and evaluation of academic achievements; operation of a system for preventing and detecting academic plagiarism, etc.), socio-humanitarian activities (involvement of faculty and students in volunteer projects, community initiatives, and cultural-educational events), and support for graduate employment (conducting career training, coaching, informing about job opportunities, and engaging talented graduates to work at UFU).

The results of the content analysis allowed identifying the following features of UFU's uniqueness: preservation of pedagogical traditions established by distinguished UFU educators and support for innovations by modern educators who create a space for transformative pedagogy; a focus on preparing for inclusive education, psychological-pedagogical support in working with children who have experienced traumatic events, particularly in wartime conditions; acquisition of an additional specialization, which fosters interdisciplinarity and

multifaceted learning; a sense of community that helps preserve Ukrainian identity and culture, providing students with a “sense of home”; and multiculturalism.

Based on the SWOT analysis, the strengths, challenges, opportunities, and risks of teacher training in the context of digitalization were identified. Emphasis is placed on the following ways to address challenges in the future: creating a safe and comfortable digital educational environment; continuous professional development of educators in the field of digital technologies; ensuring adherence to the principles and rules of academic integrity; training students to use AI as a tool for environmentally responsible information handling; implementing modern interactive pedagogical technologies, including gamification and augmented reality; formative assessment of students' academic achievements; balancing online and offline learning; and introducing modern online platforms.

The results of the research project under the DAAD program “Analysis of Pedagogical Studies at the Ukrainian Free University” indicate the formation of self-reliant educators capable of supporting national identity, critical thinking, implementing innovative approaches, and working in a multicultural environment. This underscores the significance of UFU's experience for the development of Ukrainian pedagogy amid global challenges and European integration, as reflected in the formulated recommendations.

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# АНАЛІЗ ПЕДАГОГІЧНИХ СТУДІЙ УКРАЇНСЬКОГО ВІЛЬНОГО УНІВЕРСИТЕТУ В НІМЕЧЧИНІ

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## Реферат:

*Актуальність* дослідження зумовлена потребою в самозарадних педагогах, які вміють працювати з дітьми і молоддю із різним ступенем травмованості і стресу, та важливістю вивчення позитивного досвіду підготовки таких педагогів Українському вільному університеті (Мюнхен, Німеччина) з метою його імплементації в систему освіти України.

*Мета:* дослідити особливості освітнього дизайну підготовки педагогів за магістерською і докторською програмами Українського вільного університету (далі: УВУ), сформулювати рекомендації для українських закладів вищої педагогічної освіти щодо імплементації позитивного досвіду розвитку суб'єктності педагогів в УВУ.

*Методи:* аналіз наукових джерел з проблеми дослідження, змісту відповідних документів, навчально-методичного забезпечення, контент-аналіз, SWOT-аналіз, спостереження, інтерв'ювання, систематизація та узагальнення – для визначення особливостей структури педагогічної освіти та формулювання рекомендацій щодо урахування позитивних практик УВУ у підготовці педагогів в Україні за магістерськими та докторськими програмами.

*Результати:* у культурно-історичному ракурсі визначено, що УВУ є першим і єдиним українським закладом вищої освіти за кордоном, одним із найстаріших приватних університетів Німеччини, відповідає вимогам до німецьких університетів щодо поєднання наукових досліджень з освітою, залучення студентів до наукової діяльності, дотримується принципів західної університетської освіти, особливості педагогічних студій УВУ визначаються історією їх становлення та розвитку; в інформаційно-змістовому ракурсі проаналізовано освітню і наукову складові педагогічних студій, науково-інформаційне та навчально-методичне забезпечення курсів магістерської та докторської підготовки з педагогіки, роль бібліотеки і архіву для розвитку освітнього середовища; у суб'єктно-процесуальному ракурсі досліджено властивості освітнього процесу підготовки педагогів, здійснено контент-аналіз його ключових особливостей, SWOT-аналіз підготовки педагогів в умовах цифровізації.

*Висновки.* Український Вільний Університет є унікальним закладом освіти, що поєднує українські педагогічні традиції з європейськими стандартами. Його історичний шлях демонструє важливість збереження академічної свободи та національної ідентичності в умовах еміграції, а його видатні постаті заклали фундамент для розвитку педагогічних студій, орієнтованих на гуманістичні цінності та формування українського виховного ідеалу. Ознаками унікальності УВУ є збереження педагогічних традицій та підтримка інновацій сучасних викладачів, які створюють простір трансформаційної педагогіки; спрямованість підготовки на інклюзивну освіту, психолого-педагогічну підтримку у роботі з дітьми, які зазнали травматичного досвіду, особливо в умовах війни; отримання додаткової спеціальності; мультикультурність. Результати дослідницького проєкту за програмою DAAD «Аналіз педагогічних студій Українського вільного університету» свідчать про формування самозарадних педагогів, здатних до підтримки національної ідентичності, критичного мислення, запровадження інноваційних підходів та роботи в мультикультурному середовищі, що підтверджує значущість досвіду УВУ для розвитку української педагогіки в умовах глобальних викликів та європейської інтеграції та відображено у сформульованих рекомендаціях.

**Ключові слова:** Український вільний університет, педагогічні студії, трансформаційна педагогіка, позитивний досвід, розвиток суб'єктності педагога.

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