



KEY TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN GREAT BRITAIN

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Abstract

Relevance. The article provides a comprehensive analysis of the key trends in the development of the quality assurance system for vocational education and training (hereinafter – VET) in Great Britain. Particular attention is paid to the study of the balanced functioning of external regulatory control bodies and internal institutional mechanisms for VET quality assurance, which makes the study of Great Britain's experience important for improving the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine.

Objective: The objective of the article is to identify and analyze the key trends in the development of the VET quality assurance system in Great Britain and, based on the results obtained, to formulate practical recommendations for improving the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine.

Methods: analysis of legal and regulatory acts of the British government from 2000 to 2025, strategic documents, reports of leading regulatory bodies (Ofsted, Ofqual, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education), as well as scientific publications by leading British and European researchers in the field of educational policy – to systematize data on VET quality assurance; synthesis – to establish a holistic understanding of the key trends in VET quality assurance in Great Britain by combining theoretical and practical approaches; generalization – to formulate comprehensive conclusions and prepare practical recommendations for incorporating the progressive ideas of the British experience into the improvement of the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine.

Results: Based on the analysis of legal and regulatory acts of the British government, strategic documents, reports of leading regulatory bodies, and scientific publications by leading researchers in the field of educational policy, the key trends in the development of the VET quality assurance system in Great Britain have been identified and analyzed, and on this basis, practical recommendations for improving the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine have been formulated.

Conclusions: The British VET quality assurance system is in constant development, adapting to changing economic and social conditions with a clear focus on a competency-based approach and meeting the needs of employers. This is reflected in the following key trends: the introduction of an institutionally established mechanism for independent external quality control of VET; strengthening the incorporation of employers in the processes of developing technical qualifications and independent assessment of learning outcomes and graduate competencies; digitalization of VET quality monitoring and evaluation processes; systematic collection and analysis of data on the educational experience, employment, and subsequent career paths of graduates; and increased attention to the professional development of teaching staff at VET institutions. To improve the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine, it is recommended to: create a two-tier system of external quality control for vocational education based on institutional audit and validation of qualifications; institutionalize the leading role of employers in increasing the relevance of vocational education to labor market demands, awarding, and conferring qualifications; stimulate the integration of modern digital tools into the management of the educational process and the assessment of learning outcomes; introduce a comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of vocational education based on data analysis; and intensify the processes of standardization and professional development for vocational training teachers.

Keywords: *accreditation, Great Britain, quality assurance, assessment, vocational education and training, labor market, standards, trends.*

Introduction. Great Britain, with its developed economy and long-standing educational traditions, is a prime example of a country actively adapting its quality assurance system for vocational education and training (hereinafter - VET) to modern realities. The importance of VET for the economic development and social stability of Great Britain lies in its creation of a direct link between skills formation and market needs, ensuring increased labor productivity, income growth, and the development of small businesses. Empirical studies show that graduates of VET institutions are able to integrate quickly into economic activities, have a higher probability of employment, and their earnings are 7–19% higher than those who have not received such training (Esteves et al., 2020). This also contributes to the reduction of unemployment and poverty (Dixit Bajpai, 2023). Therefore, the constant review and improvement of VET quality assurance mechanisms is a priority for the British government and educational institutions. A thorough analysis of the British experience is methodologically valuable for national systems undergoing the modernization of their own vocational education sectors. The British system is an example of a hybrid model that strives for synergy between centralized state supervision, the institutional autonomy of VET providers, and the strategic involvement of employers in all stages of the educational cycle – from developing standards to assessing learning outcomes. This approach is characterized by an attempt to institutionalize the leading role of employers in shaping national VET policy and is key to enhancing the economic relevance and validity of vocational qualifications. The government's strategy is to create an ecosystem where educational programs respond directly to the dynamic needs of the labor market, which in turn contributes to increasing the productivity and competitiveness of the UK economy (CDI, 2021; Productivity.ac.uk, n.d.).

An important vector of research is the continuous evolution and adaptation of the British VET quality assurance system to changing economic realities, which is reflected in the introduction of innovative funding mechanisms and new educational standards. One of the large-scale experiments in this area was the introduction of the apprenticeship levy. This financial instrument

requires large companies with an annual payroll exceeding £3 million to transfer 0.5% of this amount to a special fund. The mechanism of the levy involves not just a fiscal burden, but the creation of a direct incentive for investment in human capital. Every employer who pays the levy gains access to a personal electronic account from which they can exclusively fund apprenticeship and training programs for their new or existing employees (Department for Education, 2024). This model fundamentally changes the funding paradigm, transforming employers from passive consumers of educational services into active clients and investors in skills development. The theoretical basis of this reform lies in the idea that direct financial involvement increases employers' demands on the quality of training and its relevance to real production needs, as detailed in reports from the parliamentary library (House of Commons Library, 2023). In parallel with financial reforms, there has been a significant transformation in the structure of qualifications themselves. Since 2020, technical qualifications known as T Levels have been introduced in Great Britain. They are positioned as a technical alternative to traditional academic qualifications (A Levels) and represent a third educational pathway for young people aged 16-19, alongside academic education and apprenticeships (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, 2022).

At the same time, despite the ambition and innovation of the reforms, the British VET system faces challenges and systemic limitations. One of the main problems remains the significant fragmentation of the educational landscape. There is a huge number of different qualifications, providers, and funding sources, which creates confusion both for young people trying to choose an educational path and for employers who find it difficult to navigate the value of a particular qualification (GOV.UK, n.d.). In addition, VET continues to face serious financial constraints. Although the apprenticeship levy has provided funding for large companies, the overall funding for the VET sector, which is the main provider, has seen significant cuts

over the last decade, negatively affecting its infrastructure, resources, and ability to attract highly qualified staff (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2025). This creates a paradoxical situation where the government introduces new standards, such as T Levels, but VET institutions do not always have sufficient resources for their quality implementation. The problem of recruiting and retaining teachers remains acute. The specificity of VET requires so-called "dual professionals" – specialists who possess both deep theoretical knowledge of their field and current industry experience, as well as pedagogical skills. Such personnel are scarce, as the salary level in the education sector often cannot compete with wages in industry (Edge Foundation, n.d.). Finally, there are significant discrepancies in the perception of VET quality among different stakeholders. Reports from the supervisory body Ofsted often record significant differences in the quality of educational services between different VET providers, and employers, especially representatives of small and medium-sized businesses, are not always satisfied with the level of graduate training or consider the apprenticeship system too bureaucratic (Ofsted, 2023).

For Ukraine, which is undergoing deep reforms in the field of education and striving for European integration (MES, 2021), studying the experience of Great Britain is a particularly valuable source for modernizing its own system of quality assurance in vocational education. The goal of current reforms in Ukraine is to update the vocational education system, as the existing one does not meet modern requirements, which is reflected in draft law No. 13107-d "On Vocational Education," supported by the Verkhovna Rada in its first reading (Vseosvita.ua, n.d.; MES, 2025). These reforms include the introduction of new terminology (e.g., "professional education" instead of "vocational-technical education," "student" instead of "pupil," "professional college" instead of "PTU"), strengthening the autonomy of institutions, introducing mechanisms for recognizing learning outcomes, and expanding cooperation with employers. The study of the British experience in VET quality assurance becomes particularly relevant in the context of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation into Ukraine. The state of war has caused significant challenges for vocational education, including the migration of students and teachers, problems with material resources, destruction and damage to educational institutions,

as well as difficulties in organizing the educational process, particularly distance learning (Radkevych, V., & Yershova, L., 2022; IMZO, 2022). In these conditions, there is an urgent need to support the transition of vocational education institutions to a green and digital economy, the development of lifelong learning, mentorship in the workplace, harmonization of credit systems, and the development of centers of vocational excellence (Confederation of Employers of Ukraine, 2022).

Ukraine's European integration also requires the harmonization of educational structures and the adoption of best practices. Key Ukrainian institutions, such as the State Service for Education Quality and the National Agency for Qualifications, already play an important role in ensuring the quality of vocational education and developing professional standards. Specifically, the State Service for Education Quality (2023) is responsible for implementing state policy in the field of education quality assurance, including the institutional audit of vocational education institutions, which assesses the educational environment, the system for assessing learners, pedagogical activities, and management processes. The National Agency for Qualifications (n.d.a) is one of the key players in creating the National Qualifications System and is responsible for developing methodology and coordinating the development of professional standards. Studying the British experience can provide valuable tools for strengthening their activities, particularly in involving employers in the development of professional standards, educational programs, creating flexible learning pathways, and procedures for the independent assessment of learning outcomes.

Sources. An analysis of scientific literature and official sources from 2000 to 2025 reveals a multifaceted and dynamic discussion on VET quality assurance in Great Britain. This period is characterized by a constant pursuit of improving the quality and value of VET, often with the aim of achieving "parity of esteem," which was a response to its historical undervaluation and underfunding compared to university education (King's College London, n.d.; Productivity.ac.uk, n.d.). The legislative regulation of VET quality assurance in Great Britain covers a set of acts that form the normative basis for its functioning. The main regulatory act for VET in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland is the Learning and Skills Act (United Kingdom, 2000), which establishes the powers of the Learning and Skills Council and the

relationship with Sector Skills Councils (Cedefop, 2005). Additionally, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2009) defines the status of bodies, including Ofqual, and regulates the qualifications that can be regulated by state bodies, including VET (GOV.UK, 2014). These acts allow for the formation of a system for accreditation and management of qualifications, ensuring the educational process complies with national standards.

Within educational practice, the Education and Skills Act is in force, containing provisions on the general structure of VET, including rules for funding, accessibility of educational services, and student rights (United Kingdom Government, 2008). This act forms the basis for the management of VET for individuals, defining the responsibilities of ministries and relevant bodies. It enables the provision of mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the results of vocational training, interaction with employers, and transparent funding. At the level of professional qualifications, the regulatory framework includes the General Conditions of Recognition, which are regulated by Ofqual for all awarding organisations. These documents define procedures for accreditation, assessment standards, monitoring of awarding organisations, and their ability to meet market demands and national standards. In particular, the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act (Parliament of the United Kingdom, 2009) allows Ofqual to determine which qualifications can be regulated and provides the legal basis for implementing conditions for technical qualifications (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation, 2021). The regulation of VET quality also has a European foundation – the British system is influenced by EQAVET, but the integration of regulatory practice is carried out through national acts. And although the UK is no longer a member of the EU, the influence of EQAVET standards on the structure of Sector Skills Councils and national qualification frameworks is still present in British regulation (Gatsby Foundation, 2025). This allows for coherence between different parts of the system and social partners, particularly employers.

A significant portion of research interprets the evolution of quality assurance mechanisms in British VET based on the principles of New Public Management. The introduction of quasi-market mechanisms, increased external control, and standardization are seen as an attempt to enhance the

efficiency and accountability of the education sector. However, this approach inevitably caused tension between the demands of external accountability, realized through regulatory bodies, and the need to preserve the internal professional and institutional autonomy of VET institutions. This dichotomy has been the subject of sharp criticism from the academic community, which pointed to the risks of excessive bureaucratization and a potential shift in focus from deep educational processes to formal compliance with performance indicators (Policy and Society, 2014).

The financial dimension of the reforms is another central element of analysis in the scientific literature. Since the 2000s, the adult education sector has experienced a significant and prolonged reduction in public funding in real terms. A direct consequence of this policy was a substantial decrease in the number of learners obtaining state-funded qualifications. This caused serious concern among experts about the narrowing of access to lifelong learning, especially for the most vulnerable segments of the population, and the potential decline in the overall quality of educational services due to financial constraints on providers (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2025). Against this backdrop, the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017 was seen as an attempt to partially solve the funding problem and stimulate employers to invest in the development of apprenticeships. However, empirical studies record mixed consequences of this reform. Data analysis indicates a significant shift in focus from initial and intermediate-level programs to higher and master's level programs, which are often used for upskilling employees rather than for attracting young people to the labor market. Furthermore, the system has faced problems such as large amounts of unused funds in the levy pot by employers and, paradoxically, an overall decline in the number of new apprenticeship starts after the levy's introduction (Centre for Vocational Education Research, n.d.; HEPI, 2024).

The introduction of T Levels as new technical qualifications, intended to be the equivalent of academic A Levels, has also been the subject of close monitoring and analysis. Official reports from key oversight institutions, particularly the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the National Audit Office, have identified a number of serious challenges in the implementation phase of these programs. The main problems include: uneven quality of teaching for the theoretical component; difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified

teaching staff with current industry experience; systemic obstacles in finding a sufficient number of quality placements for mandatory work experience; and a low level of student satisfaction with certain courses. Moreover, studies record a significant percentage of student dropouts before completing the two-year course. A separate concern is the issue of financial efficiency: the initial costs for developing and implementing technical qualifications were substantial, yet the actual number of enrolled students turned out to be significantly lower than projected, calling into question the expediency of the investment (Powel & Foley, 2020). Thus, despite ambitious goals, the practical implementation of key reforms in the UK VET sector faces significant obstacles, requiring further deep analysis and adjustment of state educational policy.

Objective of the article: to identify and analyze the key trends in the development of the VET quality assurance system in Great Britain and, based on the results obtained, to formulate practical recommendations for improving the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine.

Methods: analysis of legal and regulatory acts of the British government from 2000 to 2025, strategic documents, reports of leading regulatory bodies (Ofsted, Ofqual, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education), as well as scientific publications by leading British and European researchers in the field of educational policy – to systematize data on VET quality assurance in Great Britain; synthesis – to establish a holistic understanding of the key trends in VET quality assurance in Great Britain by combining theoretical and practical approaches; generalization – to formulate comprehensive conclusions and prepare practical recommendations for incorporating the progressive ideas of the British experience into the improvement of the quality assurance system of vocational education in Ukraine.

Results and Discussion. The quality of VET in Great Britain is defined as the ability of the system to enable individuals to achieve consistent outcomes in learning, personal development, and professional activity in line with the expectations of employers, the state, and society as a whole (Quality Assurance Agency, 2023). A central element is the focus on learning outcomes, which encompass not only technical competencies but also general skills, social adaptation, and career development (Cedfop, 2004). In addition, the quality of VET includes the

relevance of learning outcomes to labor market requirements and involves the participation of employers in the development of standards (Lain & Maginn, 2003). Such an approach, where quality is determined not only by internal academic criteria but also by the external effectiveness of graduates and the satisfaction of social partners, emphasizes the dynamic and multidimensional nature of this concept. However, the definition itself does not reveal the processes of VET quality assurance. In this context, it becomes important to study the key trends that reflect modern approaches to monitoring, evaluating, and improving the quality of the British VET quality assurance system.

Of scientific interest is the trend towards the introduction of an institutionally established mechanism for independent external quality control of VET, based on a two-tier model of external regulation. This institutional architecture consists of two key, though autonomous, organizations: the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual). The coordinated activities of these regulators have a decisive impact on the entire VET sector, shaping funding conditions, influencing reputation, and determining the very possibility of providers operating in the educational services market. The first level of control, represented by Ofsted, focuses on the quality of the educational process directly within institutions providing VET services. Its mandate extends to inspecting colleges, private training centers, and organizations implementing apprenticeship models. The basis for the audit is the Education Inspection Framework (EIF), which, after a significant update in 2019, shifted the focus from quantitative performance indicators to a qualitative expert examination of the content and implementation of educational programs (Ofsted, 2019). According to the EIF, inspectors analyze providers' activities against four criteria, with "quality of education" holding a central place. This criterion is viewed through the prism of three aspects: the validity of intent, the effectiveness of implementation, and the measurability of impact. This approach encourages educational institutions to concentrate on developing fundamental, labor-market-oriented learning content, rather than preparing for formal exams. The inspection procedure is multi-component and includes document analysis, observation of classes, and in-depth interviews with all stakeholders, including employers.

The final evaluation on a four-point scale ("outstanding," "good," "requires improvement," "inadequate") is public and has direct consequences for the provider, up to the risk of ceasing operations. Thus, Ofsted acts both as a controlling body and as a catalyst for institutional development. Complementing Ofsted's activities, the second level of control, carried out by Ofqual, focuses not on the learning process, but on the quality of the qualifications themselves. Ofqual's mission is to maintain standards and public confidence in the qualifications and assessment system in England. This body does not create qualifications but regulates the activities of accredited awarding organisations that develop and award them. Regulation is based on the normative document "General Conditions of Recognition," which governs the entire lifecycle of a qualification – from design to certification (Ofqual, 2022). Ofqual ensures that qualifications have clear objectives and reliable, valid assessment tools, and that their standards remain stable over time, which is a particularly challenging task in a dynamic labor market (Price, O'Donovan & Rust, 2007).

The interaction between Ofsted and Ofqual creates a comprehensive system of checks and balances that ensures the integrity of VET quality control. For example, the high-quality implementation of an educational program, positively assessed by Ofsted, does not compensate for the shortcomings of an outdated qualification, which is the responsibility of Ofqual. Conversely, an innovative qualification will not achieve its goal without a proper level of teaching at the provider, which is subject to Ofsted's monitoring. This synergy is critically important for new educational initiatives, where regulators collaborate with the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (2021). At the same time, the system is not without criticism: the high stakes of Ofsted inspections can create excessive pressure, leading to a narrowing of the educational content in favor of easily measurable outcomes. Despite this, the two-tier model of regulation remains a fundamental element of the UK VET system, supporting its transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to economic needs.

A reflection of the strategy to overcome the historical dichotomy between academic and vocational education (Department for Education, 2023) in the evolution of the UK's VET quality assurance system is the trend towards strengthening the incorporation of employers in the processes of

developing technical qualifications and the independent assessment of learning outcomes and graduate competencies. This approach presupposes that the determination of the content and structure of occupational standards is carried out not by educational institutions or state bodies, but directly by representatives of the relevant economic sectors. This trend can be seen as a response to long-standing criticism that the VET system operated with a certain disconnect from the real labor market, leading to the training of graduates with skills that did not always meet the current or future needs of the economy (Keep & James, 2012).

The new paradigm positions employers as active and full-fledged partners, whose involvement is institutionalized by a number of mechanisms that guarantee their decisive influence at all stages of the educational cycle and ensure a key aspect of quality – relevance. The central function in the process of institutionalizing this influence is assigned to the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE), an independent organization managed by business representatives. The creation of IfATE in 2017 was a key step towards delegating control over VET content to entities with a deep understanding of industry needs. IfATE is responsible for the development and approval of apprenticeship standards and the new T-Levels technical qualifications. The process of developing standards is an example of a demand-led system: the initiative to create a new standard comes from employers themselves, who form trailblazer groups and collectively define the set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that a competent employee should possess (Department for Education, 2021).

The influence of employers is also extrapolated to the level of implementation of educational programs in educational institutions, which are obliged to actively cooperate with local businesses by creating advisory boards to adapt programs to the needs of the regional labor market (Johnston & Johnston, 2024), as well as through direct participation in training. Most important is the partnership in providing work placements, the quality of which is subject to careful verification during Ofsted inspections (2019). At the final stage, which consists of verifying learning outcomes, the influence of employers becomes crucial. In the apprenticeship system, it is the employer, together with the provider, who decides on the student's readiness for the independent end-point assessment (EPA). Employer satisfaction with the quality of graduate training, measured through regular national

surveys (Department for Education, 2023), is one of the key performance indicators for the entire system. Thus, this market-oriented model creates a powerful feedback mechanism that serves as a safeguard against the detachment of education from economic reality and is designed to ensure that investments in VET benefit both individuals and the UK economy as a whole. The most illustrative example of this approach is the implementation of T-Levels technical qualifications, which began in 2020 (NAO, 2025). This systemic reform led to the creation of a comprehensive quality model that covers all stages of the qualification lifecycle and functions in addition to the existing binary system of external regulation represented by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) and the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual).

At the heart of the integrated quality model for T-Levels lie fundamental principles: cooperation with employers to ensure content relevance, a combination of theoretical learning with prolonged practical experience, and reliable and independent mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes. The first principle is realized through the development of qualification content in close cooperation with real employers and industry associations, coordinated by an independent body – the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). Expert panels are created for each industry, which determine the necessary competencies for an entry-level specialist (Department for Education, 2023). This demand-driven approach ensures that educational programs meet the needs of the labor market and minimizes the risk of training specialists with irrelevant skills, which was identified as a chronic problem in the VET sector (Wolf, 2011). The structure of a T-Level, which includes a "core component" and an "occupational specialism," is approved by IfATE, creating a multi-level control system at the qualification design stage. The second principle is embodied through the unique dual structure of the program, which combines classroom learning with a mandatory and lengthy industry placement. The duration of this placement is at least 315 hours, ensuring the student's deep integration into the professional environment (Department for Education, 2024). This component not only allows for the application of theoretical knowledge in practice but also promotes the development of so-called "soft skills," which are difficult to cultivate in a classroom setting but are critically important for a future career (Chang, 2019). The quality of the placement itself is subject to careful monitoring by

educational providers. The third principle concerns the assessment system, designed to ensure maximum reliability and comprehensiveness. The assessment of both the "core component" and the "occupational specialism" is exclusively external. It is developed and verified not by the educational institution, but by an accredited awarding organisation, whose activities, in turn, are regulated by Ofqual to ensure the validity and reliability of the procedures (Ofqual, 2021). Thus, the integrated model for T-Levels is a complex ecosystem. Within it, there is constant interaction between IfATE, employers, colleges, and the regulators Ofqual (regarding qualification standards) and Ofsted (regarding the quality of program implementation). This synergy creates multi-level control that ensures content relevance, practical validity of learning, and the reliability of awarded qualifications.

The introduction of independent assessment of graduate competencies based on apprenticeship standards has fundamentally transformed the philosophy of quality control, making a transition from ongoing monitoring, carried out mainly by the education provider, to an objective and impartial verification of final learning outcomes by an independent organization. The central element of the apprenticeship system reform, which began in 2017, was a complete restructuring of the assessment model, consisting of a shift from the so-called "frameworks" system, where assessment was often conducted by the same provider that delivered the training, creating a potential conflict of interest and variability in standards (Fuller & Unwin, 2012), to a new model. This model is based on "apprenticeship standards," which are developed by groups of employers for specific occupations and clearly define the knowledge, skills, and behavioral competencies that a qualified specialist must possess, and it culminates in a mandatory, independent End-Point Assessment (EPA).

A key innovation is the "gateway" stage, at which the employer and the education provider jointly confirm the learner's readiness to undergo the final assessment. After the gateway, the EPA process is conducted by a completely independent End-Point Assessment Organisation (EPAO), which is subject to mandatory registration and approval by the regulator Ofqual, guaranteeing its competence and impartiality (Department for Education, 2021). The independence of the assessor is the cornerstone of the system, as their sole purpose is to objectively determine whether the apprentice's level of training meets the approved standard. The methods used

during the EPA are varied and are developed for each profession separately to ensure a valid check of competence, including practical demonstrations, professional discussions based on a portfolio to assess reflection and justification of decisions (Sluijsmans, Straetmans & van Merriënboer, 2008), as well as projects or tests. An important requirement is the "synoptic" nature of the assessment, meaning that tasks must require the apprentice to integrate and apply knowledge and skills from different parts of the program to solve a complex problem.

The quality of the EPA process itself is ensured by a multi-stage control system: the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) is responsible for developing and approving standards and assessment plans, Ofqual regulates the activities of EPAOs, and an additional level of oversight is the External Quality Assurance (EQA) system, within which specialized providers check the work of EPAOs (Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education, 2022). Thus, this multi-layered control mechanism – from the development of the standard by employers to the independent EPA and external quality assurance – creates a reliable basis for trust in the apprenticeship system and guarantees that the qualification obtained by a graduate is a true mark of quality.

An important trend that significantly transforms assessment methods and simultaneously sets new standards for VET quality, alongside structural and institutional reforms, is the digitalization of VET quality monitoring and assessment processes. This process performs a dualistic function: on the one hand, it provides tools for more effective, transparent, and prompt monitoring of the educational process and verification of learning outcomes, and on the other hand, it itself becomes an object of quality control, as the quality of digital pedagogy and the development of digital skills in students have become key indicators of the effectiveness of educational programs. This trend, significantly accelerated by the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic, has forced regulators, providers, and awarding organisations to reconsider traditional approaches and integrate digital solutions into the core of their activities. One of the key directions is the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs), which, with the help of learning analytics, allow for real-time tracking of student engagement, enabling proactive intervention and the provision of targeted support at early stages (Ferguson, 2012). In addition,

VLEs centralize the processes of submitting and assessing work, creating a clear and transparent digital trail that significantly simplifies internal and external verification procedures.

Particularly revolutionary has been the introduction of e-portfolios, which allow for the collection of evidence of professional competence in various forms, making the assessment process more authentic and holistic (Di Silvestro & Nadir, 2021). From a quality assurance perspective, e-portfolios provide an unprecedented level of transparency, creating a comprehensive audit trail accessible to all stakeholders, which increases the reliability and objectivity of the assessment process. At the same time, the development of technology places new demands on the VET system itself, where digital skills have become a fundamental competence. In response, national standards for Essential Digital Skills have been introduced (Department for Education, 2019), and organizations like Jisc (n.d) are developing digital capability frameworks to support the sector. Regulators, particularly Ofsted, have adapted their inspection programs, paying significant attention to how pedagogically soundly technologies are used to modernize educational programs and the impact they have on the quality of learning.

Another important trend transforming approaches to VET quality assurance in Great Britain is the systematic collection and analysis of data on the educational experience, employment, and subsequent career trajectory of graduates. This trend reflects a fundamental shift in the conceptualization of quality, moving the focus from the analysis of resources and processes to final outcomes and their impact on students. The modern paradigm is based on the logic that an educational program cannot be considered high-quality if students are not satisfied with their learning and do not achieve positive results after its completion. Thus, the systematic collection and analysis of data on experience and employment are a central element for both the internal improvement of providers and the external quality control of VET.

One of the key mechanisms is the collection of data on the educational experience of graduates through national and local surveys of their satisfaction with their learning achievements. The results of these surveys are public and serve as an important indicator for Ofsted inspectors, as low scores can signal systemic problems (Gibbons & Silva, 2011). The regulator Ofsted also integrates this approach into its practice through so-called

"deep dives," a central element of which is direct dialogue with groups of students without the presence of teaching staff. This allows for an unbiased picture of their experience and verifies how well the stated educational intentions correspond to reality (Ofsted, 2019). If the educational experience is an indicator of the quality of the educational process, then post-completion outcomes are an indicator of its effectiveness. Therefore, the collection and analysis of data on the employment and further educational trajectory of graduates are an integral part of the VET quality assurance system. Government and funding bodies require VET providers to track the career successes of their graduates, as these indicators are key to assessing the effectiveness of public investment in this educational sector (HM Treasury, 2021). A provider whose graduates demonstrate consistently high results in the labor market is considered to be of higher quality. In addition, this data is used to inform prospective students and allows providers to adjust the content of VET programs in collaboration with employers. Thus, the comprehensive use of data – from subjective satisfaction to objective employment indicators – creates a reliable, results-oriented VET quality assurance system in Great Britain, at the center of which is the success of each individual.

A key trend in ensuring VET quality in Great Britain is the increased attention to the professional development of teaching staff in VET institutions. Recognizing that even the most perfect standards cannot be implemented without highly qualified teachers and trainers, the VET quality system views the teacher as a central agent of change. This trend is realized through the development of unified professional standards and the creation of an infrastructure for the continuous professional development of educators. The foundation for standardizing teaching quality is the professional standards developed by the Education and Training Foundation (2022). They outline three key areas of activity: professional values, knowledge, and skills, emphasizing the dual identity of the VET teacher as an expert in their professional field and in pedagogy. These standards serve as a benchmark for teacher education programs and as criteria for assessing teaching quality during Ofsted inspections.

An important mechanism for the formal recognition of teachers' qualifications is the "Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills" (QTLS) status, awarded by the Society for Education and Training (2023). Obtaining this status requires

teachers to gather evidence of compliance with professional standards and to engage in deep reflection on their own educational practice. QTLS status, legally equivalent to "Qualified Teacher Status" (QTS), enhances the prestige of VET teachers and creates a clear career path for them. Ensuring teaching quality is also impossible without a system of continuous professional development (CPD) for educators. The Education and Training Foundation develops a wide range of relevant programs, and a quality VET provider must have its own internal CPD strategy that includes mentoring, training, and support for participation in various activities. The effectiveness of this system is one of the key aspects assessed during an Ofsted inspection under the "Leadership and Management" criterion, where it is checked whether the leadership of the VET institution creates a culture of professional growth for teachers and whether the CPD system has a real impact on improving the quality of teaching (Ofsted, 2019).

Conclusions. The quality of VET in Great Britain is a multidimensional concept that goes beyond traditional academic criteria. It is primarily defined by the system's ability to ensure that students achieve sustainable positive results in their learning, personal development, and professional activities. The central element of this approach is a focus on final outcomes that meet the expectations of employers, the state, and society as a whole. A fundamental condition for quality is the alignment of standards with the current demands of the labor market, which is achieved through the systemic participation of employers in their development, as well as by external effectiveness, confirmed by the successful employment of graduates and the satisfaction of all social partners.

Overall, the key trends in the development of the VET quality assurance system in Great Britain demonstrate a fundamental shift towards creating a market-oriented, transparent, and accountable ecosystem. The main goal of this transformation is to ensure that VET is as relevant as possible to the needs of the economy, and that its results are objectively measurable and trustworthy for both students and employers. This system is based on several key principles: transferring control over the content of education from the state to employers through institutions like IfATE, which ensures the alignment of standards with real market requirements; introducing independent control mechanisms, such as the two-tier system of regulators (Ofsted and Ofqual) and the independent

end-point assessment of learning outcomes (EPA), which eliminates conflicts of interest and increases objectivity; shifting the focus from analyzing the learning process to the independent assessment of graduate competencies, using data on their employment and satisfaction with their studies as key indicators of VET quality. The success of these reforms is supported by continuous investment in improving the professionalism of teaching staff and the active implementation of digital tools for monitoring and assessing VET quality.

The results of the analysis of key trends in the development of the VET quality assurance system in Great Britain allow for the formulation of a number of practical recommendations for Ukraine, aimed at creating a more flexible, transparent, and labor market-oriented vocational education system, which is critically important for the country's post-war recovery:

- **firstly**, *it is recommended to create a two-tier system of external quality assurance for vocational education based on institutional audit and validation of qualifications.* For this, it is advisable to consider the possibility of strengthening the activities of two independent agencies analogous to the British institutions Ofsted and Ofqual. The division of powers between them would look as follows: one agency would conduct inspections and evaluate the quality of educational activities and management processes in vocational education institutions; the second agency would focus on the development, validation, and monitoring of the compliance of professional standards and qualifications with labor market requirements. Such a model would ensure the objectivity of control, eliminate potential conflicts of interest, and form a comprehensive accountability system in which the quality of the educational process and the quality of qualifications are separate but interrelated objects of evaluation;

- **secondly**, *the leading role of employers in increasing the relevance of vocational education to labor market demands, and in the awarding and conferring of qualifications, should be institutionalized.* For vocational education in Ukraine to meet the dynamic demands of the labor market, a systemic transition is necessary: to transfer decisive powers in shaping the content of training and standards directly to employers. This is not just about involving business in discussions, but about creating permanent institutional mechanisms where industry representatives themselves determine what a modern specialist should be. A key step should be

the creation in Ukraine of an independent agency or sectoral councils for professional qualifications, analogous to the British Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE). Representatives from business must play a leading role in the management and decision-making of such a structure. These bodies should have the authority to develop and approve professional standards that will become a mandatory basis for the development of all educational programs in vocational education institutions. The activities of such agencies will guarantee that graduates will possess the very skills that are in demand in the modern labor market, not those that have been traditionally taught for years. In parallel, the system of awarding and conferring qualifications must also be reformed. A gradual but steady transition to a model of independent awarding of qualifications is recommended, especially for key skilled trades. This means that the examination will be conducted not by the vocational education institution itself, but by an independent qualification center, accredited with the participation of employers. This will increase trust in educational documents, unify assessment standards nationwide, and avoid potential conflicts of interest.

- **thirdly**, *it is proposed to stimulate the integration of modern digital tools into the management of the educational process and the assessment of learning outcomes.* A key role in this is played by the use of virtual learning environments (VLEs) and, especially, e-portfolios, which ensure transparency and authenticity in monitoring learning progress. This approach allows for the systematization of evidence of students' mastery of practical skills in multimedia formats, thus creating an objective and verifiable database. This digital trail is a reliable basis for conducting both internal and external audits of the quality of vocational education;

- **fourthly**, *it is necessary to introduce a comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of vocational education based on data analysis.* It is proposed to create a nationwide system for the systematic collection and analysis of information covering the educational experience of learners and their subsequent career trajectories. The mechanism will include regular surveys on graduate satisfaction with the quality of educational services and monitoring of their employment indicators in the long term (over several years). The publication of aggregated data in open access will perform three key functions: for applicants: it will provide an

opportunity to make a more informed choice of educational and professional trajectory; for vocational education institutions: it will create an incentive for the continuous improvement of educational programs and increase their competitiveness; for the state: it will provide objective criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of investments in the field of vocational education;

- **fifthly**, it is advisable to intensify the processes of standardization and professional development for vocational training teachers. It is

recommended to develop and approve at the national level professional standards for teachers and industrial training masters of vocational education institutions. These standards should become the normative basis that defines an exhaustive list of competencies necessary for successful professional activity. Based on the approved standards, a transparent and logical certification system should be built, and programs for the continuous professional development of vocational training teachers should be developed.

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КЛЮЧОВІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ РОЗВИТКУ СИСТЕМИ ЗАБЕЗПЕЧЕННЯ ЯКОСТІ ПРОФЕСІЙНОЇ ОСВІТИ І ПІДГОТОВКИ У ВЕЛИКІЙ БРИТАНІЇ

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Реферат:

Актуальність у статті здійснено комплексний аналіз ключових тенденцій розвитку системи забезпечення якості професійної освіти і підготовки (далі – ПОП) у Великій Британії. Особливу увагу приділено дослідженню збалансованого функціонування зовнішніх регуляторних органів контролю та внутрішніх інституційних механізмів забезпечення якості ПОП, що робить вивчення досвіду Великої Британії важливим для вдосконалення системи забезпечення якості професійної освіти в Україні.

Метою статті є визначення й аналіз ключових тенденцій розвитку системи забезпечення якості ПОП у Великій Британії та на основі отриманих результатів формування практичних рекомендацій для вдосконалення системи забезпечення якості професійної освіти в Україні.

Методи: аналіз нормативно-правових актів британського уряду з 2000 по 2025рр., стратегічних документів, звітів провідних регуляторних органів (Ofsted, Ofqual, Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education), а також наукових публікацій провідних британських та європейських дослідників у галузі освітньої політики – для систематизації даних щодо забезпечення якості ПОП; синтез – для встановлення цілісного уявлення про ключові тенденції забезпечення якості ПОП у Великій Британії шляхом поєднання теоретичних і практичних підходів; узагальнення – для формування комплексних висновків і підготовки практичних рекомендацій щодо врахування прогресивних ідей британського досвіду у вдосконаленні системи забезпечення якості професійної освіти в Україні.

Результати: на основі аналізу нормативно-правових актів британського уряду, стратегічних документів, звітів провідних регуляторних органів, а також наукових публікацій провідних дослідників у галузі освітньої політики визначено й проаналізовано ключові тенденції розвитку системи забезпечення якості ПОП у Великій Британії та на цій основі сформульовано практичні рекомендації для вдосконалення системи забезпечення якості професійної освіти в Україні.

Висновки: британська система забезпечення якості ПОП перебуває у постійному розвитку, адаптуючись до змінних економічних і соціальних умов із чіткою орієнтацією на компетентнісний підхід та задоволення потреб роботодавців. Це відображено у таких ключових тенденціях: запровадження інституційно закріпленого механізму незалежного зовнішнього контролю якості ПОП; посилення інкорпорації роботодавців у процеси розроблення технічних кваліфікацій і незалежного оцінювання результатів навчання та компетентностей випускників; цифровізація процесів моніторингу та оцінювання якості ПОП; здійснення систематичного збору та аналізу даних про освітній досвід, працевлаштування та подальшу кар'єрну траєкторію випускників; посилена увага до професійного розвитку педагогічного персоналу закладів ПОП. Для вдосконалення системи забезпечення якості професійної освіти в Україні рекомендується: створення дворівневої системи зовнішнього контролю якості професійної освіти на основі інституційного аудиту та валідації кваліфікацій; інституціоналізація провідної ролі роботодавців у підвищенні релевантності професійної освіти вимогам ринку праці, присудженні та присвоєнні кваліфікацій; стимулювання інтеграції сучасних цифрових інструментів в управління освітнім процесом та оцінювання результатів навчання; запровадження комплексної системи моніторингу якості професійної освіти на основі аналізу даних; активізація процесів стандартизації та професійного розвитку педагогів професійного навчання.

Ключові слова: акредитація, Велика Британія, забезпечення якості, оцінювання, професійна освіта і підготовка, ринок праці, стандарти, тенденції.

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