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**FORMATION OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCES
IN THE SYSTEM OF CONTINUING EDUCATION:
FORMAL, NON-FORMAL, INFORMAL AND DUAL EDUCATION**

***Annotation.** The question of formation of professional competences in the aspects of: formal, non-formal, informal and dual education (continuing education) has been raised. Methodology, modern scientific approaches, trends of this forms and their connection has been delighted. What are these types of professional development, their leading characteristics, preferences, minuses, advantages and*

disadvantages. Practical recommendations: how to combine different forms of education and build own learning path were given.

Key words: *worldwide educational space; formal, non-formal, informal and dual education; continuing education.*

Анотація. *Порушено питання формування професійних компетентностей в аспектах: формальної, неформальної, інформальної та дуальної освіти (безперервна освіта). Висвітлена методологія, сучасні наукові підходи, тенденції цих форм та їх поєднання. Що це за види професійного розвитку, їх провідні характеристики, переваги та недоліки. Надано практичні рекомендації: як поєднувати різні форми навчання та будувати власну траєкторію навчання.*

Ключові слова: *світовий освітній простір; формальна, неформальна, інформальна та дуальна освіта; безперервна освіта.*

Introduction. The state social policy on the formation of professional competences of social work specialists in the system of continuing education (formal, non-formal, informal and dual education) is implemented both in the intra-university environment and has a general social orientation. The social aspect is ensured by systematic, targeted activities for the implementation of socially oriented policies, primarily through the implementation of the basic principle of *lifelong learning*. The demand for lifelong learning in the 21st century is driven by several factors: unlimited access to information, rapid technological change, increased global interaction and the need for practical professional skills [1; 3, p. 58].

The aim of research is to reveal the formation of professional competencies in the system of continuing education: formal, non-formal, informal and dual education

Research Results. In line with the concepts of lifelong learning and the third mission of the University, the University provides a diversification of educational services to promote professional competences and collaborates with employment centers and other structures at national and local levels [5, p. 170].

Continuing education and training, professional development and lifelong learning are terms used to describe an educational or learning process that is a key component of success. The term 'lifelong learning' has several definitions, but one of the most comprehensive is: 'the process by which individuals who no longer attend an educational institution on a regular basis ... engage in coherent and organised activities with the conscious intention of acquiring information, knowledge and skills to identify or solve personal or societal problems'[3; 14, p. 182].

Professionals in the social sector rely on continuing education as a tool for career development, professional and personal enrichment, competence development and the provision of a highly qualified workforce capable of delivering social services at the appropriate level [10, p. 45].

The interest in distinguishing between 'formal, non-formal and informal learning' dates back to the 1960s (Norqvist & Leffler, 2017). At that time, there was a perception that education systems were not transforming to meet the changing conditions in society, so it was considered how learning needs could be met through different learning organisations [8; 9 p. 640]. This discussion is still relevant for a modern social worker. The modern social sector is developing so rapidly that professional knowledge often becomes outdated within a few years and needs to be updated. In response to today's challenges, the state has provided for the possibility of continuous learning in the new Education Act, according to which a professional has the opportunity to choose one of the types of lifelong learning – formal, non-formal or informal. What are these types of professional development? Which one to choose and how to combine them? (Table 1.1).

Researchers see the prospects for the combined use of formal, non-formal and informal education opportunities in the context of meta-formality and dual learning.

Dual learning is an educational approach that combines theoretical learning in educational institution and, at the same time, the acquisition of practical skills at an enterprise. This approach works on a 70/30 basis. Dual education began to spread in Germany, where it was introduced in the proportion of 30% theory and 70%

Table 1.1

Types of lifelong learning – formal, non-formal or informal

	Formal	Non-formal	Informal
Notion	is acquired in accordance with the licensed educational programmes of postgraduate education institutions and provides for the achievement of predefined learning outcomes by students. It expands and supplements the knowledge of the speciality acquired during higher education.	is usually acquired through educational programmes and does not provide for the award of state-recognised educational qualifications by level of education, but may lead to the award of vocational and/or partial educational qualifications. It helps to acquire the necessary knowledge quickly and in a timely manner in accordance with the needs of the 'here and now'.	involves the self-organised acquisition of certain competences, in particular in the course of everyday activities related to professional, social or other activities, family or leisure.
Leading characteristics	standardisation and normativity (formal education is provided in full compliance with clearly structured curricula with the obligatory presentation of an officially recognised document to the applicant); systematicity (the time duration of formal education is explained by the need for comprehensive mastery of the chosen speciality through algorithmic study of mandatory and elective components of educational programmes, as well as practical training); continuous control by public administration and reporting bodies	is organised but, unlike formal education, it is obtained in the free time of the applicant in the total or partial absence of regulatory requirements for the educational environment (state standards, curricula, etc.) and clearly regulated entry requirements for students (age and occupation). Instead of a universally recognised document, non-formal education provides the learner with a certificate, diploma, advanced training certificate, etc., which is recognised only locally/sectorally. A significant advantage of this type of education is the voluntary nature of its use.	Such learning activities are not necessarily focused, structured or documented, but contribute to the professional and personal development
Forms	Full-time (training courses, seminars, creative groups, workshops, etc.), distance (distance courses, online conferences, webinars, etc.), part-time (a combination of full-time and distance learning – part-time courses).	face-to-face (training courses, master classes, seminars, workshops, etc.), distance learning (distance courses, webinars).	one-off lectures, video tutorials, media consultations, communication with family, colleagues, reading professional journals, television, video, unplanned casual conversations.
Where we can get	postgraduate education institutions (mainly based on place of residence)	non-governmental institutions, individuals, distance learning platforms.	anywhere
Requirements for education establishments	None, as their work is not regulated by state authorities.	Such institutions are not required to have a licence, their programmes are not required there are details of official institutions	they do not exist

Minuses	insufficient mobility and situational irrelevance to the specific needs of the student target audience, the reasons for which lie in the high level of bureaucracy of the educational system and the inability of HEIs to create an individually oriented educational offer for each applicant; the likelihood of irrelevance of a certain amount of knowledge for the modern labour market, given the constant decrease in the half-life of the competence of specialists (aging of knowledge by at least 50% due to the emergence of more modern information); partial irrelevance of knowledge of applicants	the results are not always taken into account during certification; often social specialists are not informed about where they can improve their skills; information that does not meet the criteria of scientific validity and reliability; achieving loyalty of the target audience by using the possibilities of verbal marketing; providers of educational services compromise on their quality in favour of modernisation, universalisation and simplification; short-term unsystematic nature of educational services; time and institutional and personnel limitations of non-formal education do not allow achieving synergistic effect	the results cannot be taken into account during certification (exception – passing certification tests); excessiveness (from ‘excess’ – extreme, unusual manifestation of something), the vast majority of knowledge, skills and abilities of information education are acquired by a specialist as a result of a situation that acutely testifies to their absence, urgent need and indispensability (an element of risk for professional activity, since the specialist does not yet have the necessary professional tools); lack of fundamental prognosticity; lack of consistency [2; 4, p. 68].
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practice in the last century. Later, this approach was adopted in Europe, Canada, South Korea, and China [6; 7; 15, p. 368].

Advantages of dual education:

- Organisation of cooperation between politicians, business, and social partners;
- development of a legislative framework for recognising national standards of vocational education quality;
- involvement of qualified personnel from production in professional activities;
- conducting institutional research and consulting.

The dual form of education is only beginning to be implemented in the Ukrainian educational process. It is intended not only to establish effective cooperation between educational institutions and the labour market, but also to create realistic conditions for studying and implementing theoretical material in practice [13, p. 33].

By the way, the dual form of study is paid. This is a prerequisite in Europe. That is, the student goes to a real paid job. Earnings usually depend on the contract and agreements between the employee and the employer. At the same time, the student does not just receive money, but gains the most concentrated and useful knowledge that relates directly to his or her speciality. Thus, the main advantages of such

training include, above all, practical experience. Students are given the opportunity to try their hand and understand the correctness of their choice of profession. Changing your specialisation or choosing another one while you are still studying is a more painless and costly process than retraining a ready-made specialist with a diploma.

The alternation of theory and practice motivates students to master basic knowledge – they already know where and how to apply it. The disadvantages of dual education include the lack of fundamental knowledge typical of classical higher education. Relatively low salaries, compared to those of ‘efficient’ employees. The intense schedule of such studies is also difficult for the vast majority of students. Although companies and organisations provide holidays, students are still studying and cannot fully relax during this time. Nevertheless, the dual education system is an efficient and effective form of education and reveals the potential of capable, motivated and organised students who are waiting for career development and self-realisation [11; 12, p. 720].

Thus, the dual (practice-oriented) form of education is a kind of symbiosis between formal education and the labour market due to the fact that employers are given the function of providing services, which allows them to influence the process of professional training of their potential employees – to make proposals in the course of arranging the variable component of educational programmes, to participate in the work of qualification commissions, to be present during the defence of course/diploma/master's theses, to provide students with the opportunity to undergo internships [18, p. 58]. The above initiatives, inherent in dual form, not only contribute to solving the problem of further employment, but also proactively activate the need to form important components of the ‘specialist brand’ – the ‘practitioner image’ (through practical reinforcement of professional competencies outside the university) and the ‘scientist image’ (through expanding opportunities for applied research).

In the Ukrainian higher education system, two models of dual education can be conditionally distinguished: the model with integrated practical training and the model with integrated professional activity. The former involves a synthesis of 3-4

year students' and master's degree students' education at an HEI and training at an enterprise (in an organisation, creative team/association, etc.) in a proportion and sequence established taking into account the specifics of the social speciality of the students and the relevant capabilities of the enterprise/organisation, etc. The second model is aimed at applicants who have already received professional pre-university or first higher education, so this model focuses on the opportunities to combine professional activities at an enterprise (in an organisation, creative team/association, etc.) with formal education in an HEI in order to enhance their own competitiveness in their existing social speciality or for the purpose of motivated/forced re-profiling of a specialist to continue working at an enterprise/organisation, etc. [18, p. 58]. Even taking into account the undeniable advantages of the dual form of education for all three parties (students, academic staff of higher education institutions and representatives of partner enterprises), there are several reasons for a biased negative or at least distrustful attitude towards it. On the part of HEI specialists, this attitude is caused by the risks of losing workload and reducing the staff of the department as a result of transferring a large share of ECTS credits from classroom to 'entrepreneurial' training, as well as fears of losing control over the educational process due to its 'imbalance' by the emergence of new elements that are discordant with the main elements, as well as due to the advisory and corrective intervention of partner company representatives. In turn, external stakeholders have a biased negative or distrustful attitude towards dual education projects due primarily to the lack of optimised and mentally acceptable mechanisms for resolving bureaucratic nuances, the models of which should be borrowed from the international experience of providing this form of education [13, p. 32].

Conclusions and practical recommendations: How to combine formal, non-formal and informal education and build your own learning path [17, p. 281]:

1. Register for advanced training courses at a postgraduate education institution in your place of residence (in today's competitive environment, they offer interesting and useful events and training materials).

2. Follow announcements on social media, subscribe to news from non-

governmental organisations that provide teacher training, attend public events such as conferences and workshops. Make a list for yourself (or even better, add it to your calendar!) of events (trainings, distance learning courses, etc.) that will provide you with the maximum of the necessary knowledge and skills [16, p. 275].

3. Make a list of skills (competences) that you would like to master in the future to become an even greater professional in your field. Download textbooks, video tutorials, buy the necessary literature and start learning.

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