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# **STRATEGY FOR MANAGING DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT FORM OF EDUCATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

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The problem of implementing effective management practices in the context of organizing the distance learning process in modern conditions is becoming extremely relevant due to the limited access of certain categories of the population to the educational process as a result of martial law, the consequences of the destruction of educational and electricity infrastructure, etc. That is why the issue of forming comprehensive strategies for managing distance education needs to be addressed as a matter of priority.

The strategy of distance education management of a higher education institution provides for the development of internal organizational and economic mechanisms for ensuring effective planning, control, organization and motivation of key subjects of the educational process, aimed at meeting high quality requirements for the educational services provided, permanent improvement of technical and technological means of their implementation, building a stable system of communication with stakeholders.

Strategizing the processes of long-term functioning and development of the management system begins, first of all, with the formation of basic target vectors and relevant indicators of their practical implementation. In the context of considering the issue of strategizing the distance education management system in a higher education institution, the corresponding goal-setting complex has a number of specific features. That is why we propose to qualitatively differentiate the key target areas for the development of a distance education management strategy in accordance with their belonging to a specific time horizon for the implementation of the management strategy.



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***The objectives of the short-term time horizon of strategizing include:***

- 1) ensuring the completeness of material and technical support of higher education institutions, digitalization of directly educational, educational, organizational and administrative processes;
- 2) forecasting financial risks, searching for promising sources of attracting investment resources for the development of distance education infrastructure;
- 3) a proactive approach to external networking between other higher education institutions in terms of exchanging experience and deepening educational and scientific cooperation;
- 4) digitalization of methodological support of the educational process in the form of electronic courses using specialized digital educational platforms;
- 5) development of measures to counteract digital abuse, including dishonest use of artificial intelligence technologies, as a separate area of quality assurance of the distance educational process.

***The goals of the medium-term time horizon for strategizing distance education management of a higher education institution include:***

- 1) improving the internal information systems of the higher education institution, taking into account current challenges in the field of cybersecurity, guaranteeing the impossibility of unauthorized digital interference in the work of the relevant systems;
- 2) formation of a comprehensive system of motivational and psycho-emotional support for the subjects of the educational process in order to mitigate the consequences of limited social relationships in the course of the educational process;
- 3) development of incentive measures to encourage potential higher education applicants from abroad to enter a domestic higher education institution;



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- 4) ensuring the systematic involvement of parents in the educational process of higher education applicants, providing appropriate information and consulting support;
- 5) expanding cooperation between an educational institution and the private sector in terms of providing the latter with a competency-trained human resource.

***The objectives of the long-term time horizon of strategizing include:***

- 1) ensuring the continuity of technological renewal of security and virtual functioning of internal information systems of educational institutions, the implementation of systematic investment in the relevant areas of development;
- 2) expansion of existing educational programs in terms of possible forms of cooperation with other higher education institutions, creation of integrated platforms for distance education;
- 3) cultivation of an inclusive educational environment both from the point of view of applicants and directly from the point of view of the staff of higher education institutions, which should stimulate the processes of individualized development independent of physical or mental characteristics;
- 4) a proactive approach in communication with the relevant authorities in terms of developing modern regulatory support for the distance learning process, ensuring its flexibility, expanding the autonomy of educational institutions, implementing special grant funding projects, etc.

Fig. Figure 1 schematically presents the conceptual provisions of the strategy for managing distance education as a separate and independent form of education in a higher education institution. An appropriate management system is characterized by a high level of comprehensiveness and requires consistent and orderly implementation.

## STRATEGY FOR MANAGING DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT FORM OF EDUCATION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

### PURPOSE

formation of organizational and economic support for the practical implementation of the processes of current and long-term development of the distance form of organization of the educational process.

### PARTICIPANTS

Higher education institutions (object of practical implementation of distance forms of the educational process), higher education applicants (direct beneficiaries of educational services), state institutions and relevant departments (form the institutional environment for the regulation of the educational process, are interested in the development of national knowledge potential), legal entities of various forms of ownership and investors (institutions are interested in qualified human resources and innovative products of scientific activity), the public sector.

### FUNCTIONAL COMPONENTS

#### TECHNICAL COMPONENT

Determines the specifics of the implementation of strategic provisions for the development of distance education in terms of providing a higher education institution with a sufficient amount of technical equipment and relevant software products, on the basis of which educational, practice-oriented, control measures (specialized software products, access to educational platforms and services, means of virtual communication with higher education applicants) are put into practice.

#### PERSONNEL COMPONENT

It covers the problems of forming the structure, composition and qualification parameters of human resources for the implementation of the strategy for managing the process of distance education, including ensuring the permanence of the processes of increasing the level of digital education of employees, periodic certification of the existing level of digital skills, taking into account the knowledge potential of the institution for the implementation of specific digital innovations in distance education.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENT

It provides for ensuring comprehensiveness in the implementation of the processes of planning, control, regulation and motivation of the subjects of strategic management of the development of distance education, including the achievement of clarity in the distribution of functional responsibilities, means and resources for the development of the educational environment of distance education, the clarity of target indicators and criteria for their achievement, established communication between participants.

#### REGULATORY COMPONENT

It provides for the organization of the process of development, approval and practical implementation of the internal regulations of the higher education institution in terms of the implementation of the distance education process, including the regulation of time frames, control tools, verified technical means, educational methods, job descriptions, etc., in order to avoid situationality and organizational entropy in terms of the functioning of the educational process.

### QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Strategizing basic approaches to the organization of the permanence of the internal monitoring system for compliance with the regulatory provisions for the implementation of the distance educational process, analysis of current legislative changes in the field of distance education regulation, prevention and counteraction to official abuse and various manifestations of academic dishonesty on the part of both the academic and student community.

### SYSTEM OF SUPPORT AND INTERACTION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

It includes a specified list of tools aimed at achieving systematic feedback processes between higher education institutions and stakeholders in terms of ways to improve and directly obtained results of the implementation of the strategy for managing the educational process of distance learning.

Figure 1. Strategy for managing distance education as a separate and independent form of education in a higher education institution



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***The key stages in the implementation of the distance education management strategy in a higher education institution are:***

1. ***Analysis of the current state of the internal and external educational environment***, which involves a thorough study of the current parameters of the state and dynamics of key performance indicators of the functioning of the educational institution (structural indicators of the composition of higher education applicants, staff of the higher education institution, the level of possession of basic digital skills, the state and quality of existing educational programs, the prevalence of academic dishonesty practices, etc.). This process allows you to objectively assess the current ability of an educational institution to qualitatively organize the process of distance education and its further strategizing.

2. ***Specification of target indicators of the distance education management strategy in a higher education institution***. Based on the results of the analysis of the internal educational potential of the institution, a system of goals is constructed (according to the main time horizons of strategizing), quantitative and qualitative indicators of their achievement are identified, potential scenarios for the organization of distance education are developed in accordance with the variability of external conjunctural conditions. This stage also includes basic resource allocation to ensure the implementation of strategies and sources of funding for relevant activities.

3. ***Planning of personnel and technical and technological support for distance education management in a higher education institution***, which provides for the analysis and reasonable calculation of parameters for ensuring the completeness of the implementation of the distance learning process, which should take into account, on the one hand, the planned volumes of educational services (the potential number of higher education students in distance learning), and on the other hand, the list of critical



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hardware and software products necessary for the establishment of a full-fledged educational process in the virtual space. It should be added that at this stage it is advisable to take into account the current knowledge potential of the human resource in terms of its possession of the necessary digital skills to use the previously mentioned software products, which in some cases may require the involvement of additional personnel or professional development activities.

**4. Formation of the regulatory and scientific-methodological framework for the implementation of the distance education management strategy in a higher education institution.** This stage requires the development of a comprehensive internal regulatory framework for the implementation of these processes, which regulates the main stages of the educational process, instrumental support (technical, software, methodological) for its implementation, distribution of responsibilities within internal departments, the amount of training load on staff, the system control measures and direct assessment of the effectiveness of applicants' training. An equally important aspect in this context is the methodological framework of the distance educational process, which has a number of significant differences compared to the traditional form of organization of the educational process, requires appropriate updating and enrichment with relevant technological tools, pedagogical practices, educational services, etc.

**5. Practical implementation of the distance education management strategy in a higher education institution, the permanence of monitoring procedures and the implementation of operational adjustment of management practices.** Within the framework of this stage, pre-regulated provisions of strategic management are implemented, which should be subject to constant monitoring according to a certain



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system of target and control performance indicators, with the possibility of taking corrective measures in conditions of external variability Environment.

The logical and structural scheme of the mechanism for managing distance education as a separate and independent form of education in a higher education institution reflects a conceptual model for the implementation of organizational and economic support for the systematic, consistent, quality and permanence of the implementation of the distance form of organization of the educational process in modern conditions (Fig. 2).





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**Purpose:** to ensure the consistency, consistency, quality and permanence of the implementation of the distance form of organization of the educational process in accordance with the established regulatory requirements, determined by current legislative provisions and criteria for the quality of education, stimulating the expansion of the knowledge potential of students, cultivating the prerequisites for the long-term development of a higher education institution.

**Subjects:** higher education institutions, higher education applicants, government agencies and relevant departments, legal entities of various forms of ownership and investors, the public sector, international educational institutions and organizations, and other stakeholders.

**Object:** management of the distance form of organization of the educational process in a higher education institution.

**Principles:** consistency and comprehensiveness, innovative orientation, flexibility and adaptability, digitalization of the educational environment, reduction of the digital divide, openness and transparency, humanization and inclusiveness.

#### REGULATORY SUPPORT

It includes the processes of development and qualitative coordination of current internal regulations for the organization of the educational process in a higher education institution with the specific needs of distance forms of educational interactions.

#### TECHNICAL SUPPORT

It provides a proactive approach to the implementation of technical renewal of the material base for the educational process in terms of technical means, software products, technologies, means of virtual communication in education.

#### MANAGEMENT TOOLS

1. The use of modern means of digital controlling, the completeness and effectiveness of the implementation of the distance educational process, including indicators of student success and counteraction to the phenomena of academic dishonesty and abuse of AI technologies.
2. Stimulating the expansion of knowledge potential and digital literacy both in terms of the software of the educational process and in terms of digital skills.
3. Development and integration into the educational process of comprehensive e-courses that allow to achieve flexibility and wider knowledge coverage of the educational process.
4. Application of educational gamification tools, interactive interaction and cross-platform learning in the distance educational process.
5. Involvement of progressive practices of motivating the student and teaching community to improve the processes of organizing distance forms of organization of the educational process.

#### MONITORING AND GUARANTEEING THE QUALITY OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS

Building an effective monitoring system within the framework of the management mechanism involves the prompt tracking of current legislative changes, as well as promising technological innovations in the field of achieving better results in the organization of distance forms of the educational process.

Formation of a clear system of criteria for the effectiveness and achievement of specific indicators of the quality of the distance educational process, as well as relevant instrumental support for the prevention and elimination of a possible range of negative phenomena of an organizational and economic nature.

#### COMMUNICATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

Development of systemic internal provisions for the identification of directions, means and forms of feedback from key groups of stakeholders in the context of the organization of distance forms of the educational process, as well as appropriate measures to respond to the existing needs and requests of the main stakeholders in this process, providing information support.

### MECHANISM OF DISTANCE EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AS A SEPARATE AND INDEPENDENT FORM OF EDUCATION IN A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Figure 2. Logical and Structural Scheme of the Mechanism for Managing Distance Education as a Separate and Independent Form of Education in a Higher Education Institution



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Separately, it is necessary to consider a set of principles that determine the features of the functioning of this management mechanism, regulating the guidelines in terms of ensuring proper management support and internal sustainability of the proposed conceptual model.

*The principle of consistency and comprehensiveness* is to ensure the managerial integrity and completeness of the organizational and administrative decisions made, which should generally take into account the interests of the main subjects of the distance education process and stakeholders, as well as prospectively assess their possible negative external effects, at the same time, the consistency of internal processes and the absence of contradictions in accordance with the established strategic priorities should be achieved.

*The principle of innovative orientation* provides for the establishment of an innovative digital vector for the development of the educational process in a higher education institution, which is reflected in the permanence of technical, technological and pedagogical innovations, the constant enrichment of distance education with progressive methods and tools of virtual space.

*The principle of flexibility and adaptability* covers the issue of the need to ensure the speed of prompt response of the management mechanism to possible changes in the external environment, the emergence of new technological products or means of organizing the educational process, moreover, this principle characterizes the general properties of the distance learning process as one that is focused on the problems, needs and challenges that the higher education applicant faces and requires an appropriate response from the educational institution.

*The principle of digitalization of the educational environment* requires a higher education institution to ensure a proactive approach to the informatization of the educational process, to improve the relevant educational and administrative tools. It



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should be noted that digitalization processes cover not only the technical component of this mechanism, but also the personnel aspects of the organization of the distance educational process, because the essential basis of the latter lies in the plane of establishing remote interaction with virtual means of information communication, which, in turn, require the participants of the process to properly possess basic and specific professional digital skills.

*The principle of reducing the digital divide* requires higher education institutions to develop an internal digital infrastructure of knowledge, which, on the one hand, would cover the issues of certification of scientific and pedagogical workers, conducting specialized seminars, trainings, courses for acquiring digital competencies for professional purposes, etc., and on the other hand, the availability of similar activities for higher education applicants, the availability of thorough and understandable methodological materials for mastering the relevant digital ones Products.

*The principle of openness and transparency* determines the need to comply with the provisions of publicity and publicity in the organization of the distance process of educational activities by a higher education institution, which covers the issues of openness of the regulatory framework that regulates the relevant internal provisions, reliability and verification of digital platforms for the organization of distance learning, the formation of measures to counteract unfair practices in the context of the educational process as part of the scientific and pedagogical staff, as well as applicants, in terms of the use of digital technologies. An additional aspect of this principle is the importance of maintaining sustainable and open forms of communication with external stakeholders.

*The principle of humanization and inclusiveness* involves the construction of the structure, content and organizational provisions of the distance learning process in



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accordance with the needs of large groups of the population, regardless of physical, mental, racial and other characteristics, avoiding discriminatory practices and stimulating the development and maximization of the individual creative potential of all participants in the distance educational process.

A special place in the framework of the developed mechanism for managing distance education as a separate and independent form of education in a higher education institution is occupied by the subsystem of monitoring and guaranteeing the quality of the educational process, which is entrusted not only with control and supervisory functions, but also with applied aspects of identifying and timely prevention of potentially negative phenomena and risks.

***The key problematic aspects that may arise during the implementation of the distance education management mechanism, which is one of the areas of the monitoring subsystem, are the following:***

- ✓ differentiation of applicants' capabilities in ensuring complete access to the necessary technical resources and Internet connection as primary elements of the organization of distance learning;
- ✓ difficulties in meeting the educational needs of people with special educational problems;
- ✓ low level of motivation of students to master knowledge material in distance form, psychological limitations caused by the impossibility of direct personal contact between students and teachers;
- ✓ the problem of providing personalized and verified identification of the applicant in the course of the educational process of distance education;
- ✓ inability to predict the occurrence of technical problems among participants in the educational process during the relevant classes;



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- ✓ limited demonstration and proper assimilation of knowledge by applicants regarding skills of an exclusively practical nature;
- ✓ uneven mastery of basic level digital skills by applicants, which causes corresponding difficulties in ensuring the accessibility and assimilation of educational material;
- ✓ difficulties in maintaining discipline during training sessions and self-discipline skills developed by applicants in preparation for distance learning.

At the same time, the avoidance of the above problems and risks requires the establishment of effective internal communication interactions in the format of "higher education institution – applicant", which is directly related to the cultivation of a favorable learning environment of distance education, ***the main management directions of which within the framework of the developed mechanism are:***

- ✓ readiness of the scientific and pedagogical staff to ensure the flexibility and adaptability of the existing approaches to the organization of control measures and assessment of the success of applicants;
- ✓ ensuring clarity, structure and comprehensibility in the presentation of the basic requirements and organizational aspects of a particular educational course for applicants;
- ✓ support for consistency and regularity in terms of conducting distance classes and/or asynchronous forms of performance control as a factor in the development of skills for discipline and self-discipline in applicants;
- ✓ providing psychological support to applicants in the course of the distance educational process, development of additional methodological materials on advice on the organization of an individual learning environment by applicants;
- ✓ expanding the number of tasks of a creative and cognitive nature, involving applicants in educational tasks of a collective and/or group format of interaction,



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gamification of the educational process in order to increase the motivation and interest of applicants;

✓ expansion of the existing list of methodological support and profile materials in the direction of developing video lectures, interactive educational games, animated recordings, tests, comprehensive multidisciplinary courses using modern educational platforms.

Thus, the practical implementation of the proposed integrated system and management mechanism for organizational support for the implementation of the process of distance education in a higher education institution allows to build a systematic approach to planning, controlling, organizing and motivating the implementation of the distance learning process with a certain subsystem for monitoring and maintaining the quality of the educational process and taking into account the interests of a wide range of stakeholders.