

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University  
NGO “Sustainable Development Landmarks”



## **BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**

**THE 1ST VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
ON SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION**

**December 11–13, 2020**

Ivano-Frankivsk  
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University  
2021

УДК 37.03(330.341)

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**SEVIC 2020:** Book of Abstracts of the 1st Virtual International Conference on Sustainable Education (December 11–13, 2020) / Ed. by Volodymyr Goshylyk. Ivano-Frankivsk, 2021. 77 p. 2 Mb. – Title from the Screen.

**ISBN 978-966-640-510-7**

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*This is the collection of original abstracts submitted to SEVIC 2020 – The 1st Virtual International Conference on Sustainable Education, organized by Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University and NGO “Sustainable Development Landmarks” on December 11–13, 2020. The suggested ideas form a strong basis for efficient cooperation of the relevant national and international stakeholders including government agencies, academic and educational institutions, parents, businesses, NGOs, experts, and other active representatives of the public.*

**УДК 37.03(330.341)**

***Authors are responsible for the content of the submitted materials.***

**ISBN 978-966-640-510-7**

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# UKRIANE AS HIGHER MEDICAL EDUCATION DESTINATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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## Introduction

Globalization and internationalization make a huge impact on the development of higher education in the world. The Bologna Process was started to modernise European higher education systems in accordance to these challenges. The Bologna Process aims at the harmonisation of academic standards and the mutual recognition of degrees across Europe in order to increase mobility and competitiveness. One of the results of these processes is increasing the international students' amount. They have to solve many problems in European higher education institutions: potential (fill the gap in human resource shortages), financial (an alternative source of profit in the condition of university autonomy), qualitative (provide educational service of high quality). According to the Bologna Process Implementation Report 2018, that presents the number of outward degree mobile students inside and outside the EHEA, around 810 000 students from the EHEA countries are studying abroad. Such big the EHEA countries as Germany, France, Ukraine and Italy show the highest numbers of outgoing mobile students. For Ukraine – it is 65% (European Commission, 2018, p. 255). Among the top 8 countries that cover half of the total outward mobility flows are Germany that accounts 12.3%, Ukraine – 7.7%, France – 7.5% and Italy – 6.5% of the outward mobile students within the EHEA (European Commission, 2018, p. 256).

In Ukraine we can observe the situation when since the entering the Bologna process in 2005 the international students' availability has become a part of national educational policy. The data for 2017 indicates that “64,000 foreigners attend universities in Ukraine. Despite war and economic uncertainty, international students flood into Ukraine every year. One of the appeals is a cheap education for starters. Even the typically pricey medical schools in Ukraine cost students only from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per year. In 2016, the top providers of foreign students to Ukrainian universities were Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, India, Nigeria, Morocco, Georgia, Jordan, Iraq, China and Uzbekistan” (Romanenko, 2017).

## Research Focus

The study focuses in particular on services for international medical students, because in Ukraine medicine as a field is more attractive for international students. Furthermore, this article focuses on several levels of analysis. First, there is an attempt to provide an overview of current state of play in national educational policy in the provision of international medical student services. The article also aims to shed light on the quantity of international medical students in Ukrainian medical HEIs. Moreover, the perspectives of the international medical students are presented and analysed in an effort to make sense of their needs, satisfaction and future career plans. The research questions were: What is a current situation with international medical students in Ukraine? Why do international students choose Ukraine for medical education? What are their preferences, needs or employment perspectives? How do international medical students find remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?

## Implementation and Participants

Two different quantitative student surveys were designed in Google Forms format and conducted online in Bogomolets National Medical University in 2019-2020. The first 10-question online questionnaire was administered online for about 100 first-year international medical students (at a random) in the beginning of academic year, September – October, 2019. This survey is based on responses from 60 first-year international medical students in Bogomolets National Medical University in 2019. The second online questionnaire was administered online for about 60 first-year international medical students (at a random) during the COVID-19 pandemic in March – May, 2020. The questionnaire was provided in English (it was responded by 40 students). These surveys allowed students to provide feedback on their country of origin, educational background, needs, preferences, experience, satisfaction with educational services at their host institution, ways of financing the study, and their future career plans, as well as their attitude to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Results

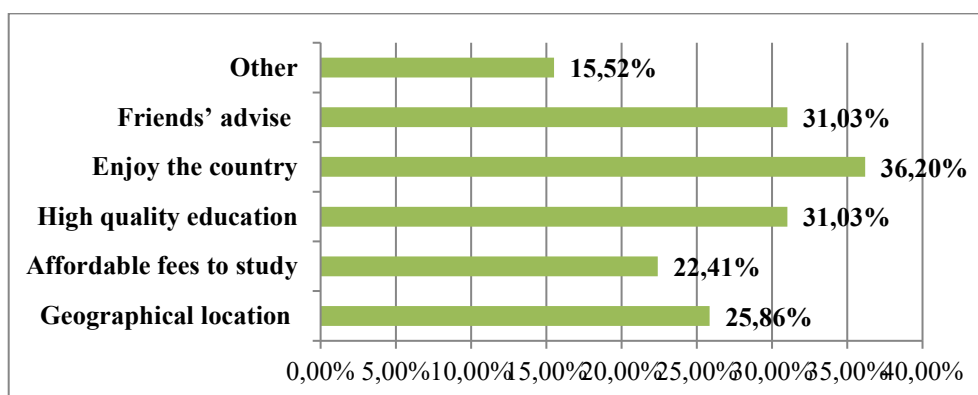
**International medical students' needs and perspectives on the eve of quarantine.** The trends in increasing international medical students' population in Ukraine focus our research on studying current needs (country of origin, educational background, course preferences, satisfaction, ways of study funding) and perspectives (future career plans) of international medical students in Bogomolets National Medical University. The trends in increasing the number of foreign students in Master and postgraduate programmes, taught in English were observed in that university. We strongly believe that the results of one university, situated in the capital of the country, can reflect the general situation in Ukraine. Thus, the survey conducted in Bogomolets National Medical University in 2019 found the following:

1. Enrolment of international students by origin shows that they mainly come from Asia, Africa and former Soviet Union Republics. Top countries of origin of international students are Iran, Egypt and Morocco.
2. Education background of international medical students shows that they have completed secondary education – they can speak foreign language (predominantly English (86,20%)) and are good at Maths (58,62% chose it for entrance interview). Among other subjects that international medical students choose for the interview for the university are Biology (51,72%) and Chemistry (41,38%).
3. The language of entrance interview was suggested in English and Ukrainian. English as a language for communication at the interview was chosen by those international medical students, who chose the course in English – 79,31% (46 respondents). Ukrainian for the interview was chosen by those international medical students, who chose the course in Ukrainian – 20,69% (12 respondents). That shows that English-taught courses are becoming more demanded by foreigners and need to be developed in future in Bogomolets National Medical University.
4. Ukraine as a country of international medical students' destination for higher medical or pharmaceutical education. Among the reasons of international students' choice of Ukraine as a place for study are enjoy the country (36,20%), high quality education and friends' advice (31,03%), geographical location (25,86%) (See Fig.1). That indicates that while choosing the country for education international students rely predominantly on the experience of the previous international students' population who are likely to have learned or have visited Ukraine before. They were and are satisfied with high quality medical education. Geographical

location of the country plays an important role either as it can be a good spot for further student or job mobility.

**Figure 1**

*Reasons of international students for higher medical education in Ukraine*

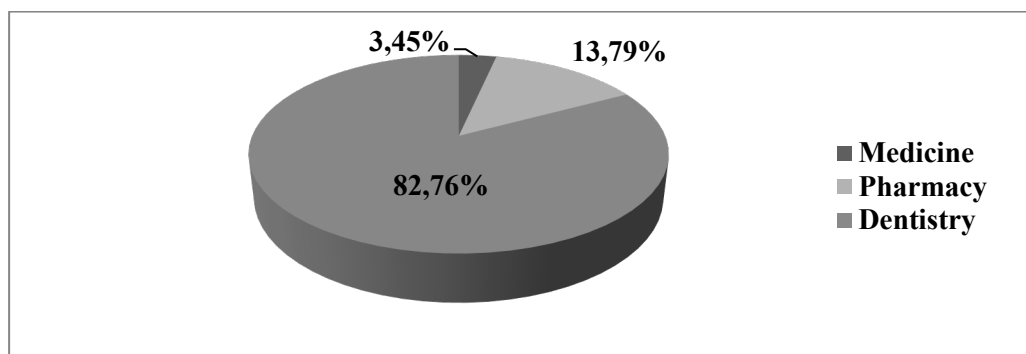


5. Bogomolets National Medical University as an institution of obtaining higher medical or pharmaceutical education by international students. Among the reasons of international students' choice of Bogomolets National Medical University as a place for study are the following: friends' advice (50%), high quality education (41,38%) and course information (20,70%), affordable fees of study (15,52%). That indicates that while choosing the country for education international students also rely predominantly on the experience of the previous international students' population who are likely to have learned in Bogomolets National Medical University before. They were and are satisfied with high quality medical education at that university. Course information plays an important role as well in attracting new international customers of educational medical service.

6. The most demanded programme by international medical students at Bogomolets National Medical University in 2019 is "Dentistry". Among such provided programmes as "Medicine", "Pharmacy" and "Dentistry" – the last was chosen by majority of respondents (82,76%) (See Fig.2).

**Figure 2**

*Demanded programmes by international medical students*



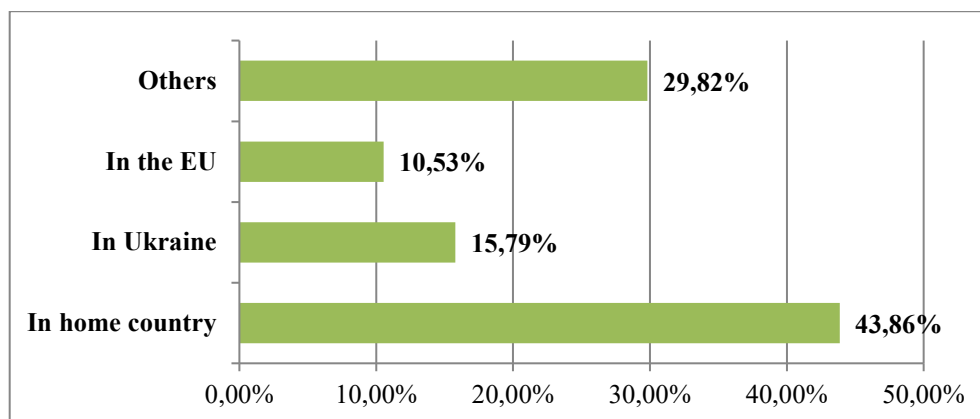
7. The way to finance the study by international medical students is predominantly parent's money (87,72%). Personal savings takes only 5,26%. Such ways as student grants (3,51%) and state funding (1,75%) are less common.

8. The future career plans of international medical students show that the majority of them are planning to come back home and be employed there (43,86%), while 29,82% of respondents have other plans. It is important to note, that 15,79% of respondents consider Ukraine as their

future place of employment. The EU as a future work destination attracts minority of respondents – 10,53% (See Fig.3).

**Figure 3**

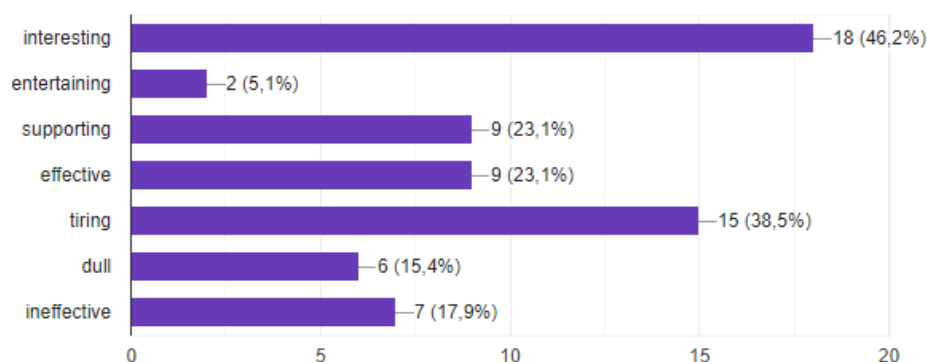
*Career plans of international medical students*



**International medical students' attitude to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.** The era of the COVID-19 pandemic brings new challenges to higher education and training. It “has upended medical education” (Miller, 2020). Student mobility appears at a risk of blocking. Digitally-based learning has become the only alternative to continue education during the quarantine. International medical students had to quickly transit from traditional to digitally-based learning. This experience for some of them (20,5% of the respondents) was new and unexpected. Thus, to investigate the international medical students' attitude to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic another survey was provided in spring 2020. The survey shows that the first-year international medical students' attitude to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic is more positive than negative. The majority of respondents find it interesting (46,2%), supporting (23,1%) and effective (23,1%), while minority of respondents find remote learning tiring (38,5%), ineffective (17,9%) and dull (15,4%) (see Fig. 4).

**Figure 4**

*International medical students' attitude to remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic*



## Conclusion

The findings of the study show that on the eve of quarantine Ukraine has become not only one of the biggest suppliers of international students to the European Union in the EHEA, but it is also a host country for international students primarily from Asia and Africa. Ukraine as a study destination attracts international medical students, first, by high quality education and then, by affordable tuition fees. English-taught programmes are becoming more demanded by international medical students. Some of them even consider Ukraine as a place of future employment. Remote learning provided by university during the COVID-19 pandemic does not impact negative the educational process at medical university. In conclusion we should say, that due to increasing international students' population in national medical universities their current needs and perspectives demand regular monitoring and special researches from universities and government. We believe that these measures will make benefits in international university strategy and national educational policy coordination.

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**Наукове електронне видання**

**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS OF THE 1ST VIRTUAL  
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE  
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**ЗБІРНИК ТЕЗ ПЕРШОЇ ВІРТУАЛЬНОЇ МІЖНАРОДНОЇ  
КОНФЕРЕНЦІЇ ЗІ СТАЛОЇ ОСВІТИ SEVIC 2020  
(11–13 грудня 2020 р.)**

Головний редактор *В.М. Головач*

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*Свідоцтво суб'єкта видавничої справи ДК № 2718 від 12.12.2006*

**ISBN 978-966-640-510-7**