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«Education via Distance Learning and
other Pedagogical Challenges»

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4th International Scientific and Practical Internet Conference "Education via Distance Learning and other Pedagogical Challenges" is devoted to modern problems, tasks and innovations in pedagogical activity and education.

Topics:

- distance learning;
- psychological aspects of education during the war;
- innovative technologies in pedagogical activities;
- funding of education system;
- inclusive education;
- a portrait of a modern teacher;
- features and advantages of educational systems of the countries in the world;
- academic integrity;
- new Ukrainian school;
- modern trends of social work in the education system;
- practical cases in pedagogical activity;
- other general and special issues (the author notes).

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**STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AS A FACTOR IN ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF
THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESS: THE CASE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF FOOD
TECHNOLOGIES AT POLTAVA STATE AGRARIAN UNIVERSITY**

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Engaging stakeholders in the educational process today is emerging as one of the key conditions for improving the quality of training specialists and modernizing the system of higher education. Educational institutions can no longer exist as closed structures oriented solely toward internal resources and academic tradition. In the context of globalization, technological shifts, and European integration, they are transforming into open social systems where success depends on the effectiveness of interaction with all interested parties. For this reason, the issue of stakeholder engagement acquires not only theoretical but also practical significance, as it determines the ability of educational programs to meet the current challenges of society and the labor market.

The theory of stakeholders, which originated in the field of management, in the educational dimension allows us to view the university as an organization whose development is shaped by balancing the interests of students, faculty, employers, government bodies, public associations, and international partners. The educational program becomes the product of collective work, and the closer the connections between its participants, the more viable the result proves to be. This ensures that the educational process is no longer a one-way transmission of knowledge but evolves into a dynamic system of communication where the formation of competencies is aligned with real socio-economic demands.

The practical dimension of stakeholder involvement can be illustrated by the activities of the Department of Food Technologies at Poltava State Agrarian University. Here, a partnership system has been developed that encompasses representatives of academia, the industrial sector, regulatory bodies, and international institutions. One example of such cooperation was the discussion of the bachelor-level educational and professional program “Food Technologies” with Associate Professor Andrii Fariseiev from Oles Honchar Dnipro National University. The discussion touched upon the need to strengthen the practice-oriented component of training and to introduce elements of dual education, which demonstrated how external expertise contributes to improving the learning process. Such an experience confirms that even consultations with external scholars can stimulate a review of methodologies and the structure of programs.

Equally important is the role of international expertise. Poltava State Agrarian University involves foreign partners in the discussion of educational programs, making it possible to integrate global experience into the local educational space. For instance, Professor Stanka Damyanova from Angel Kanchev University of Ruse (Bulgaria) gave positive assessments of the selection of disciplines in the master’s program and emphasized the need to strengthen technological courses with HACCP principles. Cooperation with this researcher has a solid foundation, dating back to the

implementation of the European project NUTRILAB, which united universities in Ukraine and Bulgaria. Such interactions not only expand opportunities for academic mobility but also ensure the harmonization of training standards with European requirements.

An important aspect of cooperation is engagement with industrial enterprises. The Department of Food Technologies organizes field classes for students, allowing them to directly combine theoretical knowledge with practical skills. For example, during a visit to the State Laboratory of Veterinary and Sanitary Expertise No. 2 in Poltava, students learned about food quality control methods, explained by the laboratory head, Liudmyla Pochep. This experience demonstrated that stakeholders may include not only large industrial companies but also specialized institutions whose activities directly affect food safety. In this way, the formation of student competencies takes place not in isolation from the real sector but in close connection with it.

Special attention should also be given to large-scale scientific and practical events organized by the department. The holding of the Second International Conference «Innovative and Resource-Saving Technologies of Food Production» in 2024 confirmed the university's readiness to serve as a platform for communication between the academic community, industry, and the restaurant business. The participation of more than sixty representatives from different countries provided an opportunity not only to exchange scientific ideas but also to discuss prospects for joint research and development. Such conferences become a tool for building international partnerships that enhance the competitiveness of the educational institution.

It is also important to note the stakeholder reviews published on the official university website. Managers of leading food industry enterprises, including Poltava bakeries, the Globyno meat-processing plant, agricultural groups, as well as representatives of the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection and other state institutions, provide comments and proposals on the educational program. This form of feedback creates an effect of public expertise and makes it possible to assess the compliance of graduate training with market needs. Significantly, this process also involves representatives of other higher education institutions, such as Kharkiv State University of Food Technology and Trade and Sumy National Agrarian University, thereby fostering horizontal academic connections.

An analysis of the activities of the Department of Food Technologies at Poltava State Agrarian University demonstrates that stakeholders can play a multifunctional role: serving as sources of practical knowledge, acting as external experts, assisting in the formation of competencies, and opening new opportunities for international cooperation. Thanks to this, the educational process becomes more dynamic, adaptive, and aligned with modern realities. At the same time, the main condition for effectiveness is not formal involvement but the creation of genuine dialogue, where all parties have the opportunity to influence decision-making [1].

In conclusion, stakeholder engagement in education is a guarantee not only of the quality of graduate training but also of enhancing the social responsibility of higher education institutions. It strengthens trust between the university and society, integrates innovative approaches into teaching, and makes education an effective tool for sustainable development. The experience of Poltava State Agrarian University shows that active interaction with diverse categories of stakeholders creates added value for the educational process and shapes a development strategy capable of responding to both local and global challenges.

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