

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION AS A PRE-REQUISITE OF SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

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The period of independence of the Ukrainian state has witnessed identification of new priorities of development of education, formation of a legal base, and practical reforms of the educational branch on the basis of the Program of "Education. Ukraine of the XXI Century" adopted by the government. Its main aim is to create appropriate conditions for dynamic development and self-actualization of every personality, forming a generation capable of lifelong learning, and creating and developing values of civil society.

One of the structural components of education is postgraduate education. Its essence has been defined by the Ukrainian Law "On Higher Education" (cl. 10): "Postgraduate education is specialized improvement of education and professional training of the person through extension and renewal of the person's professional knowledge, skills and abilities or learning another specialty on the basis of the previously received educational and qualification level and practical experience". The system of postgraduate education is based on the concept of continuous learning. Its basic principles are consistency, continuity, individualization of learning, fundamentalization, humanization and humanitarization of education. Continuous education is an innovative principle of education relying on the psychological and pedagogical idea of personality formation. The main criteria of the concept of continuous education on the Ukrainian market of educational services are: (a) coverage of the entire human life by education; (b) continuity between individual stages and levels of education; (c) openness and flexibility of the educational system throughout life; (d) recognition of education based on the actual results rather than methods of receiving it; (e) ongoing encouragement of the personality for lifelong learning; (f) advanced character of education; (g) diversity of the learning content, means and methods; (h) availability of public mechanisms of stimulating the personality for lifelong learning.

At the contemporary stage of globalization of humanity, the use of distance learning technologies is one of the strategic areas of development and reforming of the educational system. Distance learning is considered to be a natural stage of evolution of the traditional educational system. Today distance learning is being actively introduced in the educational process of higher educational institutions of postgraduate education. The principal aim of distance learning is obtaining the possibility of studying for everybody willing to get a profession or second higher education, to improve one's qualification. Distance learning provides learners with teaching and learning aids, forms and keeps a catalogue of information resources, performs on-line testing, identifies learners and categorizes them, ensures interactive communication between the learner and the teacher, and provides the most complete information possible about the procedure of teaching the potential users.

The principal tasks of the contemporary stage of development of the system of distance continuous education on the Ukrainian market of educational services are: (a) awareness of the educational system administration, governing bodies, and academic teaching staff of the need and possibility of introducing distance learning in the national system of education; (b) creation of national, industry-specific, regional and local subsystems of distance learning and related telecommunication networks with access to the Internet; (c) development of teaching materials of distance learning and their certification; (d) creation of local telecommunication networks with access to educational institutions in the Internet and formation of their web-sites; (e) training of the relevant staff in distance learning.

The use of computer telecommunications is the basis of distance learning related to the growing possibilities of technical means of communication, namely computer technologies. Of special importance in the process of ensuring distance learning is human resourcing, which is implemented through a permanently operating system of staff retraining and qualification improvement of such categories as teaching and educational research staff of educational institutions, and specialists of information and communication technologies: engineers, programmers, system administrators, administrators of distance learning, managers and methods specialist in distance learning. Absolutely all specialists ensuring distance learning are to be certified and have relevant documents confirming their level of qualification.

A priority task in the process of management of the development of postgraduate education is creation of conditions for development, support and implementation of innovative processes increasing the quality of continuous education. This applies to all management structures and levels. Developing the system of continuous education is a priority area of innovative educational activities on the Ukrainian market of educational services and provides for continuity of the processes of education of all categories of employees of general, primary, secondary, higher and extended education. The system of continuous postgraduate education is to be proactive, and oriented towards a fully functional increase of the individual professional status of teachers. Development of the system of continuous education is a major area of innovative academic activities providing for continuity of the processes in the systems of general, primary, secondary, higher and extended education.

Continuous education is aimed at support of the competence-based development of one's personality. A modern person should have both certain knowledge and be able to search for the necessary information using diverse sources for on-going acquisition of new knowledge.

Translated from Russian by Znanije Central Translations Bureau