

## ACADEMIC STAFF'S SOCIAL-PERSONAL DOMINANT ACTIVITY

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***Abstract.** The article deals with the social-personal competences of a modern academic staff, the content of which varies in the conditions of the modern world's transformations. The peculiarities of such teacher competences are characterized as socio-cultural, professional and personal responsibility, leadership, and civil. The results of such formations for the academic staff of 4 countries (Ukraine, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia) who are participants of the international project "High school teacher competence in change" No. 21720008 were presented. The project was carried out in 2018 with the financial support of the Visegrad Fund and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. The problem of developing socio-personal competences of academic staff's is connected with their ability to solve complex issues in various spheres independently and other spheres of activity on the basis of the creative usage of their own, social experience, solving cognitive, philosophical, moral, and communicative tasks. The article gives recommendations for improving the socio-personal dominant activity of academic staff.*

***Keywords:** activities of academic staff, competencies of academic staff, competence practices, socio-personal dominant, quality of training.*

### **Introduction**

In recent years, under the influence of globalization and regional change, the higher education sector has undergone a profound transformation worldwide. Along with the increasing number of students and the variety of forms and technologies of education, the education is becoming more differentiated, both from the organization of educational institutions and from the educational programs, and the human resources for their implementation. Changes in higher education are primarily related to the emergence of new specialties and specializations, the expectations of graduates about the specific status and role of their activity, as well as the competencies of academic staff that is directly to higher education teachers, who provide quality education. The same conclusion was reached by the European Commission for the Modernization of Higher Education. In its documents it states that "the quality of the reform and modernization of higher education in Europe depends on the competence and

motivation of teachers and researchers" (Modernizations of Higher Education in Europe [EACEA], 2017, 9-11, 14-15). Therefore, the conditions of modern society need to change the basic approaches to the activity of academic staff of higher education, to focus the educational process on the development of critical thinking, creativity and formation of those qualities that have a key meta-influence on determining its place in society and its professional pedagogical environment. Modern changes in the strategy of higher education institutions are aimed at the continuity of the educational process, self-improvement in the conditions of professional and pedagogical activity.

That is why changes in the professional competences of academic staff are irreversible. There is a need to conceptualize and harmonize the professional activities of academic staff in different countries. In this aspect, the social and personal component of a university teacher is a catalyst for the development of his other competences. The increasing role of pedagogical culture and ethics in contemporary education may be explained by broadening of the sphere of pedagogical influence in the society, which guides the individual to acquire lifelong education and promotes personal and spiritual development. The teacher of the university in his/her activities is constantly in a situation of cultural and moral choice, a dialogue of cultures, which obliges him/her to apply clear criteria in cognition, evaluation and to use of certain behaviors. This component of the competences of academic staff is characterized by the humanistic direction of pedagogical activity that influences the quality of education of the present.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the socio-personal competences of modern academic staff whose content is changing in the conditions of transformation of the modern world; to determine the meaningful content of the teachers' social-personal competences of the universities of four countries (Ukraine, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic); to explore the specific manifestations of these competences and to outline some aspects of their improvement in the context of the quality of higher education

The idea of the article is related to the results of the implementation of the project of the International Visegrad Fund on the topic "Competencies of academic staff in change" № 21720008 with the assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, which was performed by the Theory and History of Pedagogy Department of the Pedagogical Institute of Borys Grinchenko Kyiv University, (Ukraine), University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland), University of Ostrava (Czech Republic) and Matej Bel University in Banska Bystrica (Slovakia) in 2017-2018.

## **Methodology**

The methodological construction of diagnostic tools for researching the competences of academic staff in the age of change was based on world and national sources. The basis for the research was the researchers of the TUNING project on the structure of general competencies (instrumental, interpersonal, systemic), which should be owned by a university student. These competencies were taken as the basis and considered in three professional areas of academic staff: academic, professional-pedagogical, and social (Tuning Education Structures in Europe [TESU], 2018).

In addition, other sources on the competencies of academic staff at world and national levels were analyzed: Delaney, J., Johnson, A., Johnson, T., & Treslan, D. (2010). Students perceptions of effective teaching in higher education; Kunter, M., Klusmann, U., Baumert, J., Richter, D., Voss, T., & Hachfeld. A. (2013). Professional Competence of Teachers: Effects on Instructional Quality and Student Development; Schleicher, A. (2016). Teaching Excellence through Professional Learning and Policy Reform; Blašková, M., Blaško, R., Jankalová, M., & Jankal, R. (2014). Key personality competencies of university teacher: comparison of requirements defined by teachers and/versus defined by students; Pieniążek, W., Przybył, C., Pacuska, M., Chojecki, J., Huras, P., Pałka, S., Ratajczak, J., & Rudolf, A. (2014). Analiza kwalifikacji i kompetencji kluczowych dla zwiększenia szans absolwentów na rynku pracy; Sierecka, A., & Pindor, K. (2012). Kompetencje i kwalifikacje zawodowe nauczycieli akademickich; Wronowska, G. (2013). Oczekiwania pracodawców wobec absolwentów szkół wyższych w Polsce jako przykład bariery wejścia na rynek pracy.

Therefore, this methodological approach made it possible to take into account the content of the general and partially subject competences referred into the TUNING Project and other scientific sources, to generalize the various activities, functions of academic staff and to define its competences. Areas of professional activity of university professors (academic, professional-pedagogical, social- personal) reflect its versatility and present a certain competency multiplicity, which allows to study the competences of academic staff as a managed and self-managed system. The quality of learning is supported by the processes of its provision, including the assessment of student learning and the academic staff development program.

On this theoretical basis, the diagnostic toolkit of the study was developed. They are questionnaires for interviewing academic staff and students in all four partner countries. The use of a research questionnaire proved to be the optimal methodological tool in the context of the need to compare data (at a later stage of the study for four partner countries of the international project).

## Research results

The initial questionnaire was created in collaboration with all project partners. It has its unique impact that fourteen identified competencies, combined by three profiles, were not used or described previously, and were created specifically for this research. General statistics on participation in the survey of teacher respondents are presented in Table 1.

The survey took place in Google form. The questionnaires underwent independent examination, which made it possible to correlate the results of the study. Statistical methods were used to process the obtained empirical data aimed at comparing teachers' competency profiles against Pearson criteria, as well as when comparing teachers' and students' profiles with Fisher criteria, in which case the Mann-Whitney-U test and the Venn diagram were used.

Table 1 The generation statistical data according to a sample of teachers

	Intotal	Men	Women	Age			Workexperience		
				25-40	41-55	56+	Upto10	11-20	21+
Ukraine	125	17	108	58	45	22	44	35	46
		13.6%	86.4%	46.4%	36.0%	17.6%	35.2%	28.0%	36.8%
Poland	63	15	48	22	31	10	19	23	21
		23.8%	76.2%	34.9%	49.2%	15.9%	30.2%	36.5%	33.3%
CzechRepublic	73	31	42	23	34	16	25	22	26
		42.5%	57.5%	31.5%	46.6%	21.9%	34.2%	30.1%	35.7%
Slovakia	67	18	49	24	21	22	17	21	29
		26.9%	73.1%	35.8%	31.3%	32.9%	25.4%	31.3%	43.3%
Intotal	328	81	247	127	131	70	105	101	122
		24.7%	75.3%	38.7%	39.9%	21.4%	32.0%	30.8%	37.2%

Source: Ownwork.

n=328

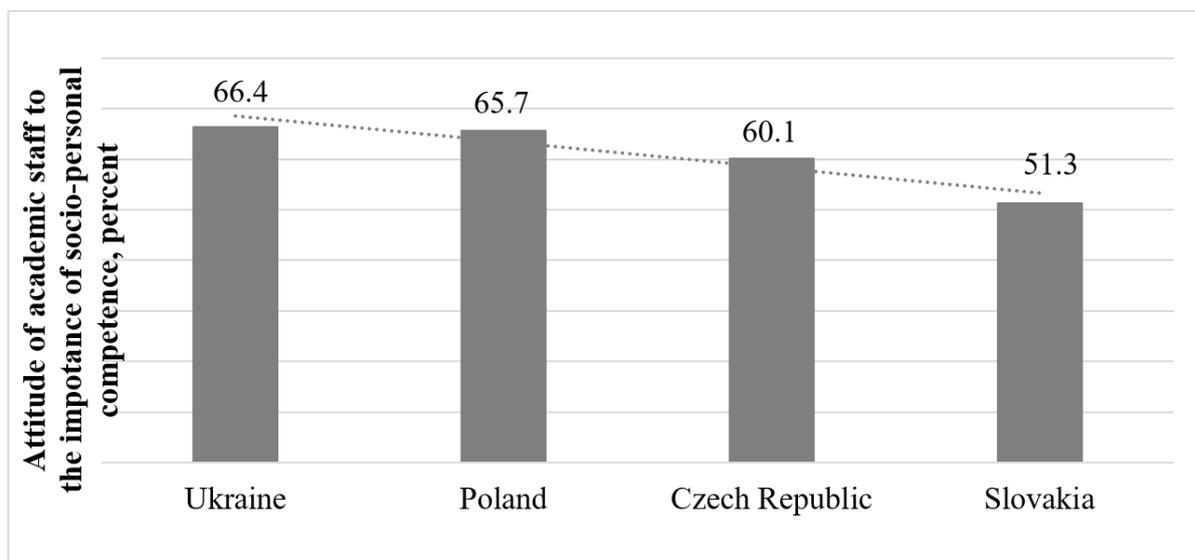
In total, 993 respondents from Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia participated in the survey. Of these, there are 328 teachers and 665 students.

Competent profiles of academic staff include the following competences: *professional-pedagogical*: innovative, professional self-improvement, digital, communicative-interactive, management; *socio-personal*: socio-cultural, professional and personal responsibility, leadership, civic; *academic*: research, international cooperation, scientific PR, methodological, academic integrity.

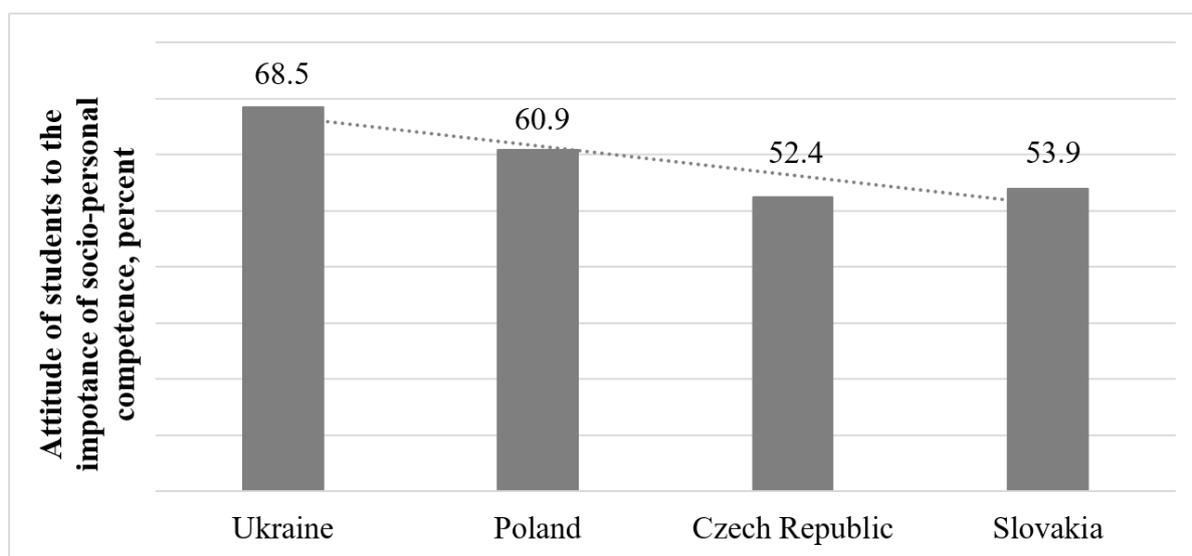
According to the results of the survey, the most significant competence profile for both teachers and students was "Socio-personal". The cumulative result on the attitude of academic staff to the significance (dominance) of socio-personal competences in professional activity is shown in Figure 1.

It should be noted that the most important competences of the socio-personal profile were for academic staff from Ukraine (66.4%), the lowest result was confirmed by colleagues from Slovakia. But it should be noted that for university teachers from all four countries, the results exceed 50%, which confirms the idea of the dominance of these competencies in the activities of modern academic staff. The correlate of the above results is the study of students' attitudes towards the importance (dominance) of socio-personal competences in the professional activity of academic staff shown in Figure 2.

The correlation of the results of the student survey also confirms the idea that the socio-personal competences of academic staff are dominant in their professional activities. Yes, students from all participating countries consider these competencies to be important for university professors (more than 50%). Students from Poland and the Czech Republic showed no significant decrease in results, but they can be considered as a certain statistical error. At the same time, in Slovakia, students' demand for teachers regarding these competencies increased by 2.6%.



*Figure 1 Attitude of academic staff to the importance of socio-personal competences in professional activity*



*Figure 2 Attitude of students to the importance (dominance) of socio-personal competences of academic staff for the efficiency of professional activity*

Thus, social and personal competences as a dominant activity of academic staff in the dimensions of teachers and students are a complex of psychological and personal formations, value orientations regarding their own abilities, needs, ability to realize their potential in a professional and social environment, which directly affects educational process.

Let us dwell in more detail on the characteristics of the structure of the socio-personal profile of the competences of academic staff. Recall that it defines the following competencies: socio-cultural, professional-personal responsibility, leadership, civic. According to the researchers, it is this set of competences of the university teacher in the social and personal sphere that is a necessary basis for ensuring the realization of numerous production functions of the teacher, development of his professional competencies. The results of the assessment of the development of the above competencies of academic staff are presented in Table 2.

Let's take a closer look at the survey results in all four countries for each profile item. Socio-cultural competence (pedagogical culture and ethics) is noted as an important component in the activities of academic staff in all partner countries: from the highest of 69.4% in Ukraine; 63.5% in Poland and 58.8% in the Czech Republic and 56.3% in Slovakia. The competence of professional and personal responsibility of academic staff (professional decision-making and responsibility for their consequences) shows the highest results in the survey among the four profile positions: 77.9% - Ukraine, 73.5% - Poland, 68.5% - Czech Republic and 56, 3% - Slovakia.

*Table 2 Socio-personal competences of academic staff  
(through the eyes of academic staff)*

No	Competences	Ukraine, %	Poland, %	Czech Republic, %	Slovakia, %
1.	Pedagogical culture and ethics	69.4	63.5	58.8	56.3
2.	Professional decision-making and responsibility for their consequences	77.9	73.5	68.5	57.2
3.	Leadership qualities	61.9	63.0	59.8	51.2
4.	Civic position	56.4	62,7	54.1	40.3
5.	The average meaning	66.4	65.7	60.1	51.3

Source: Ownwork.

n=328

Interesting, in our view, are the results of a study on leadership competence of academic staff in all partner countries. Leadership in education determines the social and educational dimension of the management of the educational system, its links and components, first of all - the social and educational activities of the educational institution. The position of a university lecturer, both internally and externally, depends on objective conditions as well as on the professional and life experience of the individual. By the nature of the teacher's activity it is possible to define a universal leader who is inherent in: principle, initiative, collectivism, self-confidence, ability to show organizational and scientific and technical abilities, desire to systematically increase professional level and pedagogical skill. This competence, while characterizing the teacher as a leader in the learning process, at the same time emphasizes the universal nature of his skills. The results of the survey on this position show approximately the same attitude of higher education teachers in the four partner countries: 63.0% - in Poland; 61.9 in Ukraine; 59.8% - in the Czech Republic and 51.2 - in Slovakia.

With regard to the civic position of academic staff, it involves the direction of the educational process on the formation of citizenship in students, the enrichment of spiritual, national, linguistic culture of the individual, the broad involvement of young people in civic values and their knowledge in the process of professional education. The importance of the civic position of a university teacher is conditioned by its social role and place in the formation of civic values of the individual. After all, the task of academic staff is to develop a civic culture in the future specialist by providing him with the knowledge necessary for existence and effective functioning in a modern society.

A modern student– a citizen of a democratic society must have a necessary minimum of knowledge, skills, attitudes, approaches and commitment to the ideals and values that underpin a democratic civil society. This competence characterizes the teacher as a highly cultured person who is aware of his / her purpose in the modern society, understands the civil rights and obligations and current legislation of his / her country. The results of the survey of teachers in this position show the following: from the highest 62.7 - in Poland; and less than 56.4 in Ukraine; 54.1% - in the Czech Republic and 40.3% - in Slovakia.

Ukraine has recently adopted a European vector for the development of society and education in particular, that is why the process of transforming the education system and activities of academic staff depends largely on external factors. In his/her professional work, the university teacher demonstrates his/her personal attitude to changes in society, education and reforms in general. It is the development of the leadership and civic components of the professional competence of the academic staff that is of great importance in this process, making it a socially active personality.

Let us focus on more important personal competences that influence the professional image of the teacher.

An important correlator of the results of the academic staff survey of on the socio-personal profile was the corresponding survey of students. A comparison of the opinions of teachers and students regarding the importance of each competency can be seen in the following tables.

Although academic staff believe that the ethics is very important for professional work, students are not so convinced. If we cited above the examples that the largest number of university teachers in all four partner countries argued that adherence to the rules of professional ethics was very important, then students did not attach such importance to this component. The only exception is the students' opinions regarding the need for a tolerant attitude of the teacher during the educational process towards the students (Figure 3).

Teachers' and students' views on understanding the social importance and high responsibility of professional and pedagogical activity, openness to communication, striving for understanding and solving difficult situations, decision making and responsibility for successes and failures in the educational process were not statistically different.

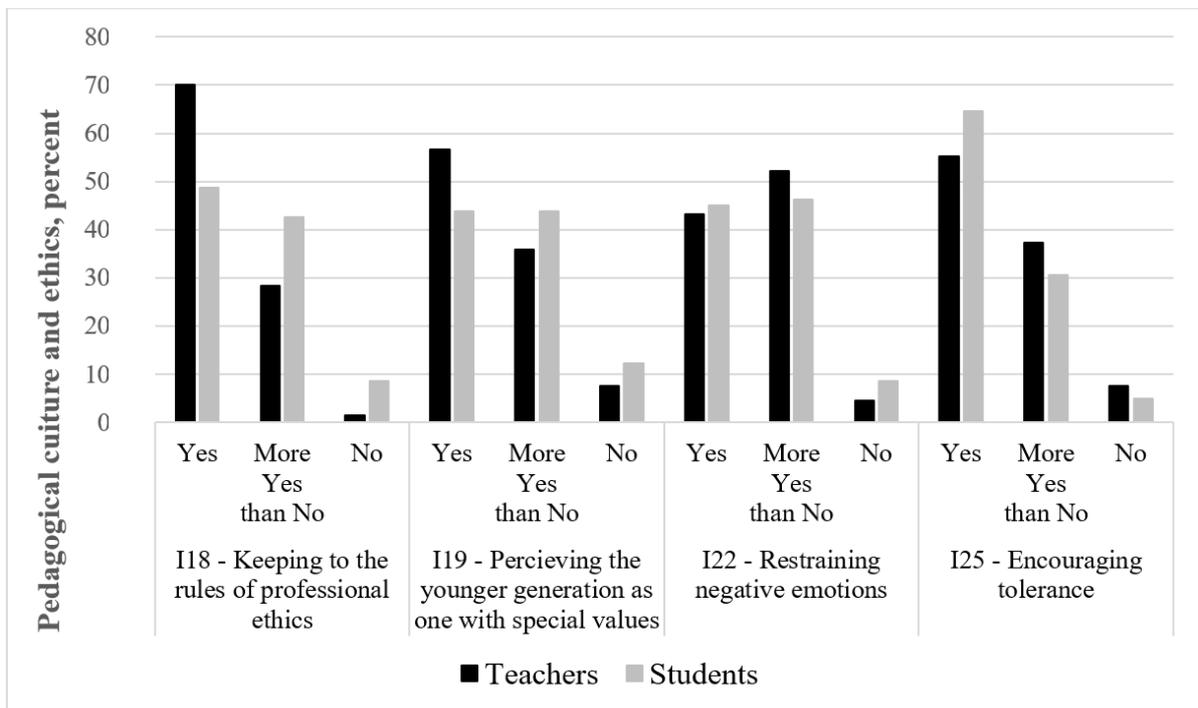


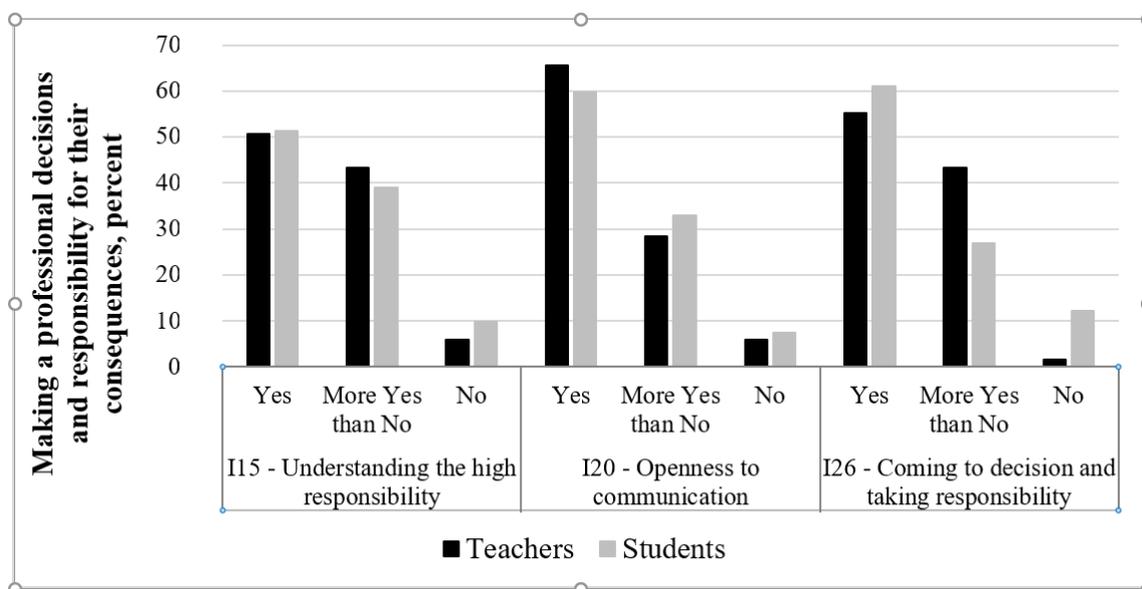
Figure 3 Comparison of teachers' and students' opinions on the importance of pedagogical culture and ethics

The opinions of academic staff and students are very similar. Both groups are convinced that academic staff should understand the social importance of pedagogical activity and their responsibility for it. Both teachers and students are convinced that being open to communication and dealing with difficult situations is a very important competence for academic staff. Moreover, almost all teachers believe that they are responsible for the success and failure of their professional activities. However, some students argue that teachers should not be held responsible for their success or failure (Figure 4).

The research made it possible to identify the main tendencies and features of socio-personal development of academic staff in the current conditions:

- the main feature of the academic staff is its functioning in a complex system of "person-to-person" relations, which is inherently rather conservative, cumulative, and although it requires constant change and development, but it is extremely difficult;
- under the influence of globalization and the development of information technology, society's demands on education and academic staff are changing faster than reforms and changes in the educational sphere are underway;
- the main trend of today is the task of harmonizing these processes, bringing them closer together, narrowing the gap between the

- development of society's requirements for the quality of education and the level of training of academic staff to accomplish modern tasks;
- to achieve this harmonization (or at least to rhythmize these processes) is possible only through the combination of variability and invariance in the activities of academic staff and constant self-improvement.



*Figure 4 Comparison of teachers' and students' opinions on the importance of pedagogical culture and ethics*

Invariance in the activities of the teacher is the basis of variability. Human values, recognition of the principles and norms of academic ethics, creativity and responsibility, the need for self-development enable development of the teacher's behavioral, personal and cognitive qualities, effective self-realization in his/her professional activity, achievement of his own acme-position.

In this context, it is important to clearly define your own invariant and variant orientations for professional activity and development. Variability is always needed by a professional, because it allows to overcome stereotypes, enables a creative approach to the business, encourages self-analysis, self-improvement, the search for new technologies and methods in professional activity. Modernization of modern higher education is not possible without variability.

In the light of the above, we propose to include elements of introspection in the system of training of academic staff, which helps to strengthen its external context and communication with all subjects of the educational process.

## Conclusions

Constant monitoring and analysis of socio-personal competences are very important for the formation of academic staff in today's changing world. Students' assessment of the teacher's activity gives an objective picture, in which sometimes the dominance of the professional component over the socio-personal leads to a decrease in the quality of the educational process. It is possible to achieve the balance of these components through monitoring and psychological and pedagogical support of the teacher's social and personal development. In order to achieve this goal, trainings in the module "Competent Practices" should be introduced. They are aimed at developing the basic competencies of the teacher: leadership, ethics, communication, tolerance, etc., and on the exchange of innovative experience, introduction of new educational technologies into the educational process, research methods. Effective implementation of this module can be ensured by appropriate e-learning materials and an online platform for scientific and methodological support for the professional activities of academic staff.

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