

INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

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OVERVIEW



Institutional Autonomy and the Protection of Higher Education from Attack

Global Coalition to
Protect Education from Attack



1. Before the war
2. During the war
3. International support
4. Financial aspect
5. Educational aspect

UKRAINE: BEFORE THE WAR

A Sector in Transition: Between Reform and Vulnerability

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK AND REFORMS



Euromaidan (2014)

Law on higher education

Autonomy on 30% of the curricula, management of budget and election of leaders

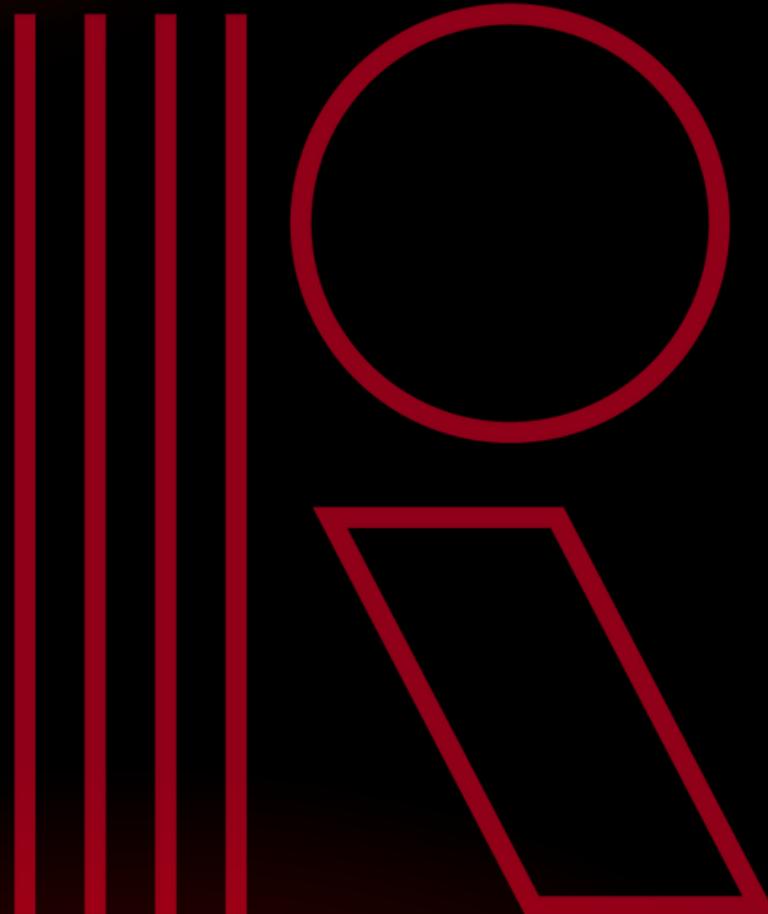
INTERNAL INITIATIVES

Eight universities piloted autonomy models with local focus, such as student-involved rector elections during a 2005 consortium.



INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

RENAISSANCE



Backed autonomy through the 2005 consortium and training.

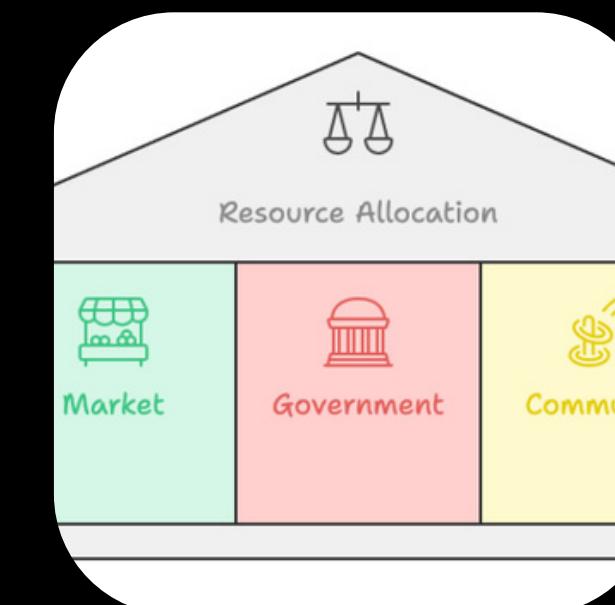
Ukrainian diaspora provided grants for programs on Ukrainian culture at Lviv National University.

Flexible research grants from foundations like Soros.

CHALLENGES TO AUTONOMY



Corruption in regional
universities



Unequal resource
access



Financial dependence
on the state

UKRAINE: DURING THE WAR

The Impact of Full-Scale War on Higher Education in Ukraine

Destruction, Displacement, and the Fight for Autonomy

Since February 2022, Ukraine's higher education system has suffered catastrophic damage

In total: 2,000+ educational institutions impacted, 300+ completely destroyed
63 universities heavily damaged or completely destroyed
Most affected regions: Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, Chernihiv



Зруйновані та пошкоджені заклади освіти в регіонах України

Область	Пошкоджено	Зруйновано	Область	Пошкоджено	Зруйновано
Вінницька	4	0	Миколаївська	246	33
Волинська	0	0	Одеська	81	0
Дніпропетровська	283	9	Полтавська	17	0
Донецька	770	160	Рівненська	2	0
Житомирська	126	1	Сумська	130	8
Закарпатська	0	0	Тернопільська	1	0
Запорізька	212	14	Харківська	579	51
Івано-Франківська	0	0	Херсонська	296	51
Київська	198	13	Хмельницька	5	0
Кіровоградська	9	0	Черкаська	11	0
Луганська	182	23	Чернівецька	0	0
Львівська	8	0	Чернігівська	144	2



Challenges of Ukrainian Higher Education in Times of War

Nadiya Ivanenko

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which began on February 24, 2022, has significantly impacted various aspects of Ukrainian society, with higher education facing unique and huge challenges. Educational institutions, forced to adapt to restrictions and threats of pandemic times, are now facing the task of guaranteeing safety, continuity, and accessibility of education in the most difficult circumstances of the ongoing military conflict. In the first days of the full-scale invasion, the educational process at higher education institutions (HEIs) was suspended, and a two-week vacation was announced. Many students and staff were forced to move to safer regions of Ukraine or beyond, and some actually remain in the temporarily occupied territories. During the 2022 relocation, 131 tertiary education institutions moved to other regions, with a total number of 91,000 students and over 11,000 faculty. These institutions are usually hosted in just a few rooms of their partner educational institutions. Meanwhile, faculty and students continue to work and study remotely, regardless of their physical location. According to available data, 665,000 higher education and school students (16 percent of the total number) and 25,000 educators (6 percent of the total number) left the territory of Ukraine. As of the start of the 2021–2022 academic year, over 76,000 foreign citizens from more than 150 countries were enrolled in Ukrainian HEIs, but with the outbreak of the full-scale war, most foreign students were forced to leave Ukraine.

According to the interactive map of the Ukrainian ministry of education and science, 3,798 education institutions have suffered bombing and shelling throughout the country since February 24, 2022, and 365 of them have been destroyed completely. 63 institutions of higher education were badly damaged or completely destroyed. The Mykolaiv, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv regions suffered the highest losses, with 25, 23, and 12 HEIs destroyed respectively.

The level of public funding of higher education was reduced by 10 percent after the start of the full-scale armed aggression. In 2022 and 2023, the ministry of education and science did not distribute performance-based funding, a policy instrument which was introduced in Ukraine in 2019. The lack of funding for the research activities at HEIs is considerable. In 2023, the ministry of education and science cut funding for fundamental (by nearly 60 percent) and applied research, scientific and technical development (by nearly 70 percent), and for all research by young scientists (by nearly 80 percent).

Abstract

Ukrainian higher education is facing unprecedented challenges due to Russia's ongoing military invasion of Ukraine. Universities are striving to adapt to the new realities, maintaining their commitment to providing quality education while prioritizing safety of all the participants of the educational process. Educational losses get worse and have a negative impact on the country's human capital and its economic well-being.

NUMBER 118 SPRING 2024

35

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FORCED DISPLACEMENT

In 2022, 131 institutions were relocated
91,000 students and 11,000 faculty members displaced

Some universities now operate in shared or minimal spaces within partner institutions

FINANCIAL PRESSURE

- State funding for higher education cut by 10%
- Some universities expect income losses of 60–70%
- Main reasons: budget reallocation to defense, drop in tuition revenue



THREATS TO UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY

- Growing control by executive authorities over education governance
- Academic mobility reduced to online formats
- Centralized admissions through National Multi-Subject Test (NMT)
- Human resource losses due to mobilization and evacuation
- Planned university mergers undermining local autonomy
- International donor aid may impose conditions on curriculum and research



MILITARY DRAFT POLICY & ACADEMIC FREEDOM



ACADEMIC CONTINUITY IN CRISIS

Students lose 1 in every 5 lessons on average due to air raid alerts



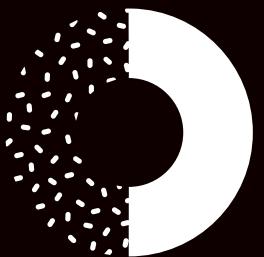
In Sumy region, up to 85% of class time lost

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

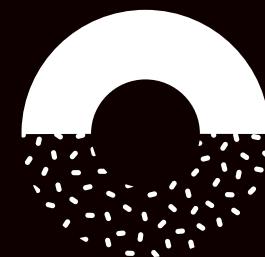
Beyond Borders, Beyond Limits: International Support as a Strategic Driver
for University Independence and Innovation

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

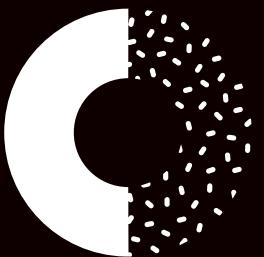
Why it matters?



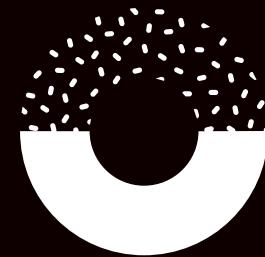
Reduces vulnerability to state budget cuts and political changes by providing alternative income streams like international grants, partnerships, and funds.



Offers a "buffer" against internal political pressure.



Facilitates integration into the global academic community, enabling adoption of best practices in management, educational standards, and research methodologies.



Connects universities to funding for innovative research and development.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

International support extends to expert assistance (e.g., consultations on reforms), joint research leading to shared publications, professional development opportunities for staff, and networking through international associations.

International support is a strategic investment in the sustainable development of higher education. It fosters long-term sustainability, innovation, and deeper integration into the European and global educational landscape.

While beneficial, some international grants may have specific conditions requiring adaptation of internal procedures. Transparency and accountability in fund use are crucial to maintaining partner trust.

FINANCIAL ASPECT

State funding

Europe and the Nordic countries: mostly funded through block grants allocated by the state, often based on historical budgets or formula funding tied to performance indicators. This model is about broad accessibility and reduces dependence on market-based revenues, but may lead to bureaucratic rigidity and underinvestment in research.

Anglo-American systems: decline in direct state funding and a shift toward competitive grants and tuition-based models. This ensures institutional entrepreneurship and diversified income streams, but it can increase inequalities and intensify market pressures.



FINANCIAL ASPECT

Tuition funding

Prominent in countries like the US, the UK, Australia, Japan. This model allows institutions greater budgetary autonomy and responsiveness to student demand, and often enables investments in infrastructure, faculty, and global competitiveness.

However, heavy reliance on tuition fees raises concerns regarding equity and accessibility.

FINANCIAL ASPECT

Private sector partnerships

These collaborations typically take the form of research contracts, technology transfer agreements, joint innovation centers, or industry-sponsored academic chairs. Money flows a lot into the research, which, consequently, gives job opportunities for graduates. Yet, no contract comes without conditions: corporate interests influence research agendas or even limit publication rights.



FINANCIAL ASPECT

Endowments and investments

Endowment is a big pot of money that usually comes from donations, and instead of just spending it, the university invests it. institutions like Harvard and Yale manage multibillion-dollar endowments, and that grants them quite a bit of autonomy. It is also about long-term income. Endowment income can enhance institutional autonomy, it may also lead to governance questions about resource allocation, intergenerational equity, and alignment with academic missions.

50+ FINANCIAL ASPECTS OF PARTNERSHIPS

International funding

Multilateral organizations such as the European Union, World Bank, and United Nations provide financial support to higher education institutions through grants, development programs, and collaborative research initiatives. For universities in the Global South, international funding—often through agencies like the World Bank or the African Development Bank—can help develop institutional capacity and infrastructure. However, reliance on external donors may raise issues of agenda-setting, dependency, and misalignment with local priorities, basically, the loss of autonomy.

BALANCING ACADEMIC FREEDOM VS. STATE CONTROL IN WAR TIME

RADICALIZATION



POLITICAL PRESSURE



IN WARTIME



Foundations of Russian Statehood to promote loyalty and suppress dissent.

- solidifying centralized authority



Relocation, digital platforms, and efforts to preserve intellectual independence.

- asserting sovereignty and resilience

Authoritarian regimes use education to enforce official narratives and suppress dissent

- Both Russia and Ukraine have revised curricula to reflect wartime goals
 - Russia: to strengthen centralized authority
 - Ukraine: to assert sovereignty and national resilience
- Study in Russia (Alavaa, 2024):
 - Surge in militarized patriotic education
 - Teachers pressured to follow state propaganda
 - Decline of academic freedom and space for dissent

Universities risk losing their role as critical, independent institutions

EDUCATION AS A TOOL OF IDEOLOGICAL WARFARE

ACADEMIC AUTONOMY VS STATE CONTROL

01

From Cold War campuses to modern ministries, even democracies have nudged academia through:

- Ideology-driven curricula
- Censorship under pressure
- Wartime educational agendas

02

Universities fight back with:

- Institutional safeguards
- Hybrid models

Is the compromise between state oversight and academic liberty necessarily different during conflict than in times of peace?



In times of war, universities autonomies are not simply tested on their resilience, they are redefined, compelled to confront the very essence of their purpose. Are they in support of free minds or are they state tools or something in between.

SUMMARIZATION

THANK YOU