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## ANALYSIS OF THE DEFINITION OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IN UKRAINE AND GREAT BRITAIN IN THE ASPECT OF INTERNATIONALISATION OF EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**Vita Bezliudna**, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor, Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University.

ORCID: 0000-0002-4333-9026

E-mail: vitabz@ukr.net

**Olha Svyrydiuk**, Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Associate Professor, Associate Professor of the Department of Foreign Languages, Pavlo Tychyna Uman State Pedagogical University.

ORCID: 0000-0003-3954-397X

E-mail: zov2380@gmail.com

*The article analyses the definition of “international student” in Ukraine and Great Britain in the aspect of internalisation. It was found that British scientists prefer to use the term “international student”, because it better reflects the realities of globalisation, internationalisation and student academic mobility, which meets the modern needs of educational institutions and the international community. It is emphasized that the term “foreign student” remains the dominant term in Ukrainian education due to its legal certainty and established practice, however “international student” is also gradually coming into use, especially in the context of European integration and educational exchanges.*

**Keywords:** international students; foreign students; student youth; higher education institution (HEI); academic mobility; internalisation of education; globalisation; Great Britain.

## АНАЛІЗ ДЕФІНІЦІЇ «МІЖНАРОДНИЙ СТУДЕНТ» В УКРАЇНІ ТА ВЕЛИКІЙ БРИТАНІЇ В АСПЕКТІ ІНТЕРНАЦІОНАЛІЗАЦІЇ ЗАКЛАДІВ ОСВІТИ

**Віта Безлюдна**, доктор педагогічних наук, професор, професор кафедри іноземних мов, Уманський державний педагогічний університет імені Павла Тичини.

ORCID: 0000-0002-4333-9026

E-mail: vitabz@ukr.net

**Ольга Свиридюк**, кандидат педагогічних наук, доцент, доцент кафедри іноземних мов, Уманський державний педагогічний університет імені Павла Тичини.

ORCID: 0000-0003-3954-397X

E-mail: zov2380@gmail.com

*У статті проаналізовано дефініцію «міжнародний студент» в Україні та Великій Британії в аспекті інтернаціоналізації закладів освіти. З'ясовано, що міжнародний студент є не лише учасником процесу інтернаціоналізації, а й її каталізатором. Його академічна мобільність сприяє трансферу знань, міжкультурному обміну та підвищенню конкурентоспроможності університетів на світовому рівні. Підкреслено, що у свою чергу, розвиток інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти створює сприятливі умови для інтеграції міжнародних студентів у глобальний*

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освітній простір, що стимулює розвиток партнерських відносин між закладами освіти різних країн та сприяє взаємозбагаченню наукових і культурних традицій. Аналіз понад 20 українських та британських термінологічних джерел засвідчив відсутність усталеної дефініції виразів «іноземний студент» та «міжнародний студент». У більшості українських словників фіксується лише загальне визначення поняття «студент», тоді як лише в одному джерелі виявлено терміни «іноземні громадяни» та «іноземні працівники». Визначення понять «іноземний студент» і «міжнародний студент» зафіксовано у Національному освітньому глосарії: Вища освіта (2024) та Словнику новітніх освітянських термінів і понять (2021), що підкреслює їхню значущість у формуванні категорійного апарату дослідження інтернаціоналізації вищої освіти. Автори статті звертають увагу, що дефініція «міжнародний студент» не є загально поширеною, однак помічено поодинокі випадки її використання, переважно при перекладі зарубіжних джерел. З'ясовано, що британські вчені віддають перевагу використанню терміну «міжнародний студент», адже він краще відображає реалії глобалізації, інтернаціоналізації та студентської академічної мобільності, що відповідає сучасним потребам освітніх установ і міжнародної спільноти.

**Ключові слова:** міжнародний студент; іноземний студент; студентська молодь; заклади вищої освіти (ЗВО); академічна мобільність; інтернаціоналізація; глобалізація; Велика Британія.

Internationalisation of higher education institutions is an important aspect of the pedagogical universities' development, contributing to improving the quality of education and expanding opportunities for research and integration into the global educational space. International relations allow pedagogical universities to borrow advanced teaching and learning methods from other countries, integrate innovative approaches and adapt them to local conditions. The multi-vector internationalisation of HEI is the key to active cooperation with scientific institutions of the world, new opportunities for scientific publications, increasing the scientific potential of universities and developing innovative approaches in Pedagogy. Cooperation with foreign universities allows you to create joint curricula and courses, prepare Ukrainian students for the challenges of a globalised world, promotes the integration of international students in the educational process, which helps to create a favourable environment for intercultural communication, exchange of ideas and mutual learning [11].

This article aims to analyse the definition of “*international student*” in the context of the internationalisation of higher education institutions in Ukraine and the UK, emphasising a comparative approach.

The concept of an “*international student*” has been studied by various researchers, educational organizations, and analytical centres that examine student academic mobility in a global context. Notably, this issue has been explored by C. A. Rose-Redwood and R. Rose-Redwood (2023), E. Jones (2017), S. Lomer, as well as Y. Riaño and E. Piguet. Among Ukrainian researchers, there were studies of O. Bodnar (2021) [1], V. Humeniuk (2013) [2], D. Plynokos (2012) [8], V. Lazarenko, O. Slobodyan (2023) [5].

Internationalisation of education is one factor in the formation of the global space of higher education. It can be classified as external (international academic mobility) or internal (implementation of world standards, internationalisation of training courses, participation in international research programmes, intercultural communication, etc.) [10, p. 169; 7].

“National Educational Glossary: Higher Education” describes the definition of internationalisation: “In higher education, it is the process of integrating the educational, research and administrative activities of a higher education institution or scientific institution with an international component: of individual mobility (students, scientists, teachers,

administrative staff); creation of joint international educational and research programmes; formation of international academic standards for quality assurance; of institutional partnership, creation of educational and research consortia, associations” [6, p. 25].

The main components of the internationalisation of education are the development of international cooperation through academic exchange programmes (academic mobility of students and teachers), the introduction of ECTS, the simplification of the procedure for recognising educational documents, the development of programmes for international students’ training, the development of international cooperation in the scientific and research fields.

Among the forms of internationalisation of higher education, the academic mobility of students is distinguished, through which it is possible to receive education in the chosen direction of training in an educational institution of another country and the mobility of teachers based on the concept of international exchange of knowledge and experience; creation and implementation of joint research projects; export of educational services; internationalisation of curricula and programmes.

Accordingly, the academic mobility of student youth includes the promotion of educational programmes in foreign markets; opening branches in other countries; conclusion of cooperation agreements with local institutions of higher education; development of exchange programmes for students; creation of special programmes for international students; using distance learning technologies [3].

Therefore, an international student is not only a participant in the process of internationalisation, but also its catalyst. Its academic mobility promotes knowledge transfer, intercultural exchange and increased competitiveness of universities at the world level. In turn, the development of the internationalisation of higher education creates favourable conditions for the integration of international students into the global educational space, which stimulates the development of partnerships between educational institutions of different countries and contributes to the mutual enrichment of scientific and cultural traditions.

For a complete analysis of “*international student*”, it is advisable to consult terminological resources, normative legal acts, and studies published by Ukrainian and British researchers.

Analysis of more than 20 Ukrainian and British terminological sources showed the absence of a well-established definition of the terms “*foreign student*” and “*international student*”. Most Ukrainian dictionaries record only a general definition of the term “*student*”, while only one source identifies the terms “*foreign citizens*” and “*foreign workers*”. The definition of the concepts of “*foreign student*” and “*international student*” is fixed in the “National Educational Glossary: Higher Education” (2024) and the Dictionary of New Educational Terms and Concepts (2021), which emphasizes their importance in the formation of the categorical apparatus for the study of the internationalization of higher education.

In the “*Dictionary of Newest Educational Terms and Concepts*” (2021) [4], “*foreign students*” are defined as students without citizenship of the country in which they study:

- foreigners and stateless persons permanently residing in Ukraine, persons granted refugee status in Ukraine, and persons in need of additional or temporary protection.
- foreigners arriving to study in accordance with international treaties of Ukraine [4].

In the “National Educational Glossary: Higher Education” definitions are united by one definition, although it is worth noting that in the previous edition only the definition “foreign student” was presented. “*Foreign / International students*” are students who are not citizens or permanent residents of the country where they study. In many European Higher Education Area and Bologna Process (EHEA) countries and in international statistics, international students consider persons with any citizenship to have received a previous education in another country [6].

Thus, despite the long history of teaching foreign students in Ukraine and the UK, the analysis of terminological sources has shown that there is no single established definition of the terms “*foreign student*” and “*international student*”, which indicates insufficient unification of these concepts in domestic and foreign scientific discourse. Most Ukrainian dictionaries contain only a general definition of the term “*student*”, without specifying its status in the context of international academic mobility. According to these sources, the main criterion for classifying a person as foreign or international students is the lack of citizenship or permanent residence in the country of study.

The absence of an established terminological base in the domestic and foreign academic space indicates the need for further research and harmonization of the relevant definitions in the Ukrainian and British scientists’ studies.

In 2012, the Ukrainian scientist D. Plynkos carried out a comparative study of the definitions “*foreign student*” and “*international student*” and provided the author’s definition of “*foreign student*” – a citizen of another state who does not have the right of permanent residence on the territory of Ukraine, entered Ukraine for the purpose of study, and was enrolled in a higher educational institution [8, p. 256]. “*International Student*” is a general category that includes all students studying outside their home country and are considered international students in the country of study. At the same time, the category of international student includes both mobile and foreign students and serves as a general definition in world statistics [8, p. 257].

According to V. Humeniuk: “such an approach to the concept of “foreign student”, that is used only to identify those persons who are in Ukraine on a legal basis – a student visa and studying in one of the universities of the country, receiving higher education of a certain level excludes from the plane the concept of those foreigners, who study in the country temporarily, under exchange programmes, receive postgraduate education, for example medical, as well as a large group of foreigners. This leads to confusion in the statistical data on the number of foreign citizens receiving higher education in Ukraine, it does not allow to include in the rating characteristics of universities the total number of foreign students belonging to the type of international mobile students” [2].

Ukrainian researcher O. Bodnar prefers the definition of “*foreign student*” is a person, who has chosen another country for higher education, having previously obtained the level of secondary education in the country of origin, passed the stages of career guidance, the choice of a higher education institution, provided the necessary documents for official registration and obtaining a student visa at the diplomatic mission of the country of study, was enrolled in the training department, despite the fact that in his research he considers the definition of “international student”, which is used in European documents [1].

In the “Draft Strategy for the Development of Higher Education in Ukraine for 2021–2031” Ukrainian researchers V. Lazarenko, O. Slobodyan use both definitions in accordance

with the country of use in the field of migration policy of Ukraine, foreign students are considered as potentially the most integrated category of foreigners, which, provided access to the labour market, could become part of a mechanism that would allow flexible response to the needs of the labour market and meet the demand for labour. However, the use of such potential of foreign students is possible if immigration legislation is consistent with economic and demographic policies [5].

According to Ukrainian legislation, foreign students are considered as separate categories of people who have special conditions for admission, since they are not citizens of Ukraine, and, accordingly, different access to higher education in Ukraine. These include:

- 1) foreigners and stateless people permanently residing in Ukraine, and people with international protection (refugees and people in need of additional protection) – have the right to receive higher education at the level with the citizens of Ukraine (at the expense of the state budget).
- 2) Foreign Ukrainians (who do not live permanently in Ukraine) and foreigners who came to study in accordance with international agreements – for them every year a quota of one thousand places of state order is allocated.
- 3) Foreigners – who arrived in Ukraine to study – can study at the expense of individuals.
- 4) Foreign students who come to Ukraine within the framework of academic mobility [5].

Despite the above-mentioned studies, it should be noted that Ukrainian scientists more often use the term “*foreign student*” and only in isolated cases there are definitions of “*international student*”, which is due to several factors: traditions and established practice; legal aspect; context of the post-Soviet space [9].

However, in some scientific circles and international training programmes, such as Erasmus +, Ukrainian scientists begin to use the term “*international student*” more often, which is explained by Ukraine’s active involvement in the globalization of education and integration into the European educational space. The term “*international*” emphasizes participation in the global processes of student academic mobility, which includes not only foreign students, but also exchanges, cooperation between countries and universities.

Summarising, in the Ukrainian scientific environment, “*foreign student*” remains the dominant term in Ukrainian education due to its legal certainty and established practice, but “*international student*” also gradually comes into use, especially in the context of European integration and educational exchanges.

The legal definition of “*international student*” in the UK differs significantly from that in the US, Canada and Australia, not least because UK citizenship is not a guarantee of “*home*” student status. The Government of the United Kingdom has two main criteria for distinguishing between “*home*” and “*international*” students: (1) immigration status (right of residence or indefinite residence permit) and (2) a three-year period of residence (with some exceptions). As explained in a recent UK House of Commons study report, “students who do not meet any of these criteria may be classified as international students, even if they are British citizens” [3, p. 24].

British researcher E. Jones criticized the problems inherent in the overly simplified binary classification of students as “*home*” or “*international*”. Such classifications often rely heavily on citizenship, nationality, and visa status as problematic measurement tools, causing

a sense of “*otherness*” and homogenization of those considered “*non-British*”, while erasing or ignoring the cultural identity and migration history of those classified as “*home*” [7, p. 933].

Scientists Y. Riaño, E. Piguet believe that international students are generally defined as having left their country of origin and moved to another country for the purpose of study and are usually divided into two groups: those who move abroad to complete a degree (degree mobility), and those who move for a short-term study exchange (credit mobility) [14].

According to the Census 2021 “The international student population in England and Wales”, an international student is defined as someone who was a usual resident in England and Wales and meets all the following criteria:

- in full-time education;
- non-UK-born;
- non-UK passport holder;
- aged 17 years or over upon most recent arrival in the UK;
- aged 18 years or over on Census Day [23].

In 2023, the Office for Students, (OfS), the regulator for higher education in England, published the definition of “international students”. International students are from outside the UK who come to study at institutions in England, or who study with English institutions at local campuses or via distance learning while resident abroad [24].

Meanwhile, British researchers are gradually moving away from the use of the terms “overseas student” and “foreign student” in favour of “international student” due to several key reasons regarding modern language norms, inclusivity and internationalisation policies. The definition “international student” is preferred because it accurately depicts the realities of globalisation, internationalisation and student academic mobility while also meeting the modern requirements of educational institutions and the international community.

To sum up this paper analyses the concept of an “international student” within the context of the internationalisation of higher education in Ukraine and the UK, employing a comparative approach. While the term has been explored by various researchers and institutions, there remains a lack of a unified definition. In Ukraine, legal and academic sources often prefer the term “foreign student,” is primarily used in legal and policy documents, reflecting a preference for distinguishing students based on citizenship whereas the UK applies a broader definition, influenced by immigration and residency status.

Meanwhile, the internationalisation of education fosters global academic integration, further research and harmonisation of definitions are needed to ensure consistency in policy and statistical reporting. Understanding the evolving terminology is essential for developing inclusive educational strategies and enhancing student mobility in a global context.

We see our further research in the analysis of definitions of social and pedagogical support in terminological and regulatory sources, studies of Ukrainian and British researchers.

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