

DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF SOFT SKILLS WHILE FORMING FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMPETENCY OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN TOURISM, HOTEL AND RESTAURANT INDUSTRY AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

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The article covers the issues associated with implementation of the competency approach in the professional training of students in higher education in tourism, hotel and restaurant business and international business, namely the development and assessment of soft skills while forming the foreign language competency. International studies on the relevance of higher education regarding labor market requirements have been analyzed, as well as basic global skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, leadership, self-management and social responsibility, have been considered.

Since it is of great importance to bridge the gap between the current skill-set of graduates and relevant requirements of the labor market, development of soft skills, also referred to as 21st century skills, or transferable skills, should become a compulsory component of the modern specialists' training since there is high demand for them according to the latest studies. The peculiarities of development and assessment of soft skills as well as general recommendations have also been defined. The application of the recommendations concerning proper assessment of soft skills has been shown with forming the foreign language competency and setting the criteria for assessing students' collaboration skills while working on a case study taken as an example.

It has been substantiated that development of soft skills can be naturally integrated in the educational process for particular specialties, for example tourism, hotel and restaurant business, and international business, through such subjects as Business English and English for Specific Purposes, which can give rise to active adaptation and further implementation of teaching and learning methods and techniques beyond the language subjects. Foreign experience in developing soft skills in teaching English as a foreign language has been generalized, with the prospect of expanding the expertise to other subjects in the general and professional training cycles taking into account the peculiarities of particular specialties.

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