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## "Defense of Ukraine" degree program for future school teachers: a new element of ukrainian higher education

### Programa de grado "defensa de Ucrania" para futuros docentes escolares: un nuevo elemento de la educación superior ucraniana


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#### Abstract

The article examines various aspects of professional training of future teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" course for effective legal education among students. The key aspects in this process are the formation of practical skills, legal culture, socio-psychological and methodological readiness of teachers. Emphasis is placed on the use of modern technologies and interactive methods in pedagogical universities to develop



legal thinking and patriotic values. Several theoretical methods have been used in the course of research. In particular, the article extensively refers to empirical research methods, such as observation, comparison, and monitoring. Modern challenges in the field of national security of Ukraine require active participation of teachers in the formation of legal awareness of students. It is emphasised that successful teacher training requires not only knowledge of law, but also taking into account of individual characteristics and application of innovative pedagogical approaches. In general, the article points out the importance of providing teachers with the necessary competencies to educate Ukrainian citizens who consciously observe their duties and exercise their rights (freedoms).

**Keywords:** professional training, teachers, defense of Ukraine, legal education, legal culture, pedagogical technologies.

## Resumen

El artículo examina varios aspectos de la formación profesional de los futuros profesores del curso "Defensa de Ucrania" para una educación jurídica eficaz entre los estudiantes. Los aspectos clave en este proceso son la formación de habilidades prácticas, cultura jurídica, preparación sociopsicológica y metodológica de los docentes. Se hace hincapié en el uso de tecnologías modernas y métodos interactivos en las universidades pedagógicas para desarrollar el pensamiento jurídico y los valores patrióticos. En el curso de la investigación se han utilizado varios métodos teóricos. En particular, el artículo se refiere ampliamente a métodos de investigación empíricos, como la observación, la comparación y el seguimiento. Los desafíos modernos en el campo de la seguridad nacional de Ucrania requieren la participación activa de los profesores en la formación de la conciencia jurídica de los estudiantes. Se destaca que una formación docente exitosa requiere no sólo conocimientos de derecho, sino también tener en cuenta las características individuales y la aplicación de enfoques pedagógicos innovadores. En general, el artículo señala la importancia de dotar a los profesores de las competencias necesarias para educar a los ciudadanos ucranianos que cumplan conscientemente con sus deberes y ejerzan sus derechos (libertades).

**Palabras clave:** formación profesional, docentes, defensa de Ucrania, educación jurídica, cultura jurídica, tecnologías pedagógicas.

## 1. Introduction

National security has always been one of the key issues in the development of a nation, society. A social group which is not able to ensure its own national security is always on the verge of existential risks.

In the current context of changes in the geopolitical environment associated with the Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine, the emphasis on national security and defense of Ukraine makes the issue of comprehensive training of teachers of the course "Defense of Ukraine" ever more relevant. The academic attention to this issue is explained by the need to create a high level of legal awareness and readiness to work with high school students in general education institutions. Thus, formation of a high-level legal culture among future teachers becomes a guarantee of high-quality education for young Ukrainian citizens as members of a democratic state based on the rule of law principles.

When explaining the public need for a national defense academic program, one should keep in mind the key constitutional requirements, which serve as official background for the whole framework of national defense studies.

The Constitution of Ukraine defines protection of the Motherland as the primary duty of Ukrainian citizens, it being the most important function of the state. Human safety, life and health are recognized as the

highest social value in Ukraine. As defined in the main Law of the Land (Articles 17, 65), protection of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are the most important functions of the state, the top priority for Ukrainian people.

It is important to note here that the readiness of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to perform its functions largely depends on its personnel, in particular, the readiness of the youth for military service. Staffing by professional and motivated servicemen should be carried out in a single system which will cover initial preparation for national resistance in general secondary education institutions, training in the military education system and management of a serviceman's career, care for the preservation of life and health of personnel, proper social security of servicemen, their family members and persons released from military service in reserve and retirement, training of the military-trained reserve.

With national security being a top priority component of Ukrainian statehood at the moment, the reform of secondary and higher education models in this country involves modernization of the content of education, which should be based on competence-based and person-oriented approaches to learning, and most importantly, focus on the acquisition by students of such abilities and skills, which are necessary for a young person to successfully prove him- or herself in professional activities and in public life in general.

Considering the above-mentioned provisions, the purpose of this article is to illustrate some key principles and elements of preparing future teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" degree program within Ukrainian system of education, in particular, formation of legal culture and improvement of teaching methods in order to achieve significant academic results and future professional success.

## **2. Methodology**

Several theoretical methods have been used in the course of our research, including: general scientific analysis, synthesis, induction, and deduction. The modelling method was also used in the course of writing this article. A scientific model is a mentally represented or materially implemented system that adequately reflects the subject of pedagogical research and is capable of replacing it to the extent that studying the model allows obtaining new information about the object. The main advantage of such modelling is the integrity of information presentation.

In particular, the widely recognized method of comparative analyses has been used to demonstrate approaches toward introduction of patriotic/defense programs in schools and universities of various jurisdictions (Kamensky et al., 2023; Movchan et al, 2023).

The article extensively employs empirical research methods, such as observation, comparison, and monitoring. Based on the experience of the Berdyansk State Pedagogical University, the educational and professional program "Secondary Education (Defense of Ukraine)" of the master degree level has been examined and all such methods have been implemented. The purpose of this educational programme is to build professional competences of future teachers of the Defense of Ukraine in the institution of general secondary, vocational and technical higher education; preparing a teacher with in-depth fundamental knowledge of the Defense of Ukraine theory and skills, a competitive specialist who is able to build his/her activity on the basis of design, a creative approach, a high level of civic consciousness. The program has the following features: focus on the formation of educational, military-tactical, security-legal, and medical-tactical professional competencies in applicants; preparing future pedagogs to teach the subject "Defense of Ukraine" in the context of a deep understanding of the fundamentals of the normative and legal support for the protection of Ukraine, the legislation of Ukraine on military service, civil-military cooperation of Ukraine, legal-educational and national-patriotic work at an educational institution.

### 3. Literature review

The theoretical section of the paper is shaped by a systematic review of current literature and a synthesis of some of the researchers' experiences. Hrynevych, Linnik, Herczyński (2023) have elaborated on the state of education in Ukraine after the start of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. They describe obstacles and risks such as degradation of education, lack of security in schools, lack of funding for school development and textbook printing. They also wrote about the measures being taken in Ukraine to advance the education reform. A number of challenges remain, such as rebuilding destroyed schools, optimizing the school network in line with demographic changes, and organizing shelters in schools. Additional challenges include the promotion of digital technologies in schools, strengthening military and patriotic education within the subject "Defense of Ukraine", addressing learning gaps and providing psychological support at school (Hrynevych et al., 2023).

Several Ukrainian authors have previously underlined the need for the competitiveness of the higher education system in Ukraine and the prospects for further development of university education against the backdrop of the ongoing war with Russia. However, higher education institutions in Ukrainian cities have not lost their potential. In addition, universities have retained their intellectual potential, which can be supplemented by cooperation with the Western institutions (Kozinchuk et al., 2022).

The analysis of scientific research has demonstrated that the work of the teacher of the subject "Defense of Ukraine" with the component of legal education is poorly covered in modern pedagogical and legal literature. Several Ukrainian authors have developed only certain aspects of this topic. Thus, a more comprehensive approach in this field of academic research is required.

In particular, as V. Makhnovets makes a point, the issue of preparing a future teacher for the organization of legal educational work is extremely relevant in both theory and practice of professional education in the context of legal component of professional and pedagogical activity (Makhnovets, 2022). Thus, an argument can be made that legal courses should be a part of the national defense academic program, albeit in minimized format.

I. Knysh and her co-authors have examined the interconnected nature of the innovative activity of the teacher, which contribute to the improvement of higher education in generak. The authors have considered innovative educational technologies as a means of improving higher education and have proved their impact on the training of a modern professional in a highly competitive job market (Knysh et al., 2023). Indeed, innovative methods of learning also remain a big part of the "Defense of Ukraine" program, due to new security challenges that Ukraine currently faces.

Also, when talking about issues of the new academic program, such as "Defense of Ukraine", it is also relevant to cover aspects of the Doctrine of civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) in Ukraine. A group of Ukrainian researchers have recently studied, with reference to the comparative legal analyses, models of civil-military cooperation in Ukraine, NATO member countries and some other jurisdictions. Based on the results of their study, they have argued that Ukrainian CIMIC doctrine of the Central Command as a program document in a certain direction should focus on such areas as: development of a culture of mutual respect, trust and support between all involved military and non-military actors; promotion of patriotic education in Ukrainian society, protection of the rights and freedoms of members of the Central Election Commission; use of CIMIC units as a platform for civil-military contact and cooperation in eastern Ukraine, especially in the area of the Joint Forces Operation; promotion of legal guarantees of gender equality and equal opportunities for men and women in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (Lutsenko et al., 2021).

Based on the academic literature overview, we will argue that despite various attempts by Ukrainian authors to analyze challenges that the Ukrainian system of higher education currently faces, the "Defense of

Ukraine” academic program is not explained enough in Ukrainian scholarship; its importance for the new generation of Ukrainian teachers is not revealed sufficiently. Instead, this program should be viewed as not just an academic tool, but should rather be put in a broader context of national defense as the priority function of the modern Ukrainian state.

#### 4. Research results

##### **National defense as an academic discipline: international approach**

The modern world trend is that social institutions, government agencies, educational institutions as well as human rights organizations are increasingly required to take active steps in terms of the theory and practice of legal education, which, in turn, is an incentive to implement the rule of law and respect for human rights. However, without teachers’ readiness to absorb elements of legal education, this demand will not be met. All teachers of general education institutions should be able to successfully deliver legal education, but, as practice reveals, this is mostly done in history, law and the basics of national security and civil protection (in Ukraine, such school course is called “Defense of Ukraine”, while in the USA – “The Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC)”, in Poland – “Military Training Units”).

In particular, in Israel, a country, which has recently found itself in a similar to Ukrainian position of the “victim of military aggression”, the educational “Boundaries of Consent” Initiative originated from scholarship on the impact of mandatory service on Israeli society. Tailored for high school students, the Initiative underscores the significance of meaningful service in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), emphasizing its Zionist, security-oriented, and societal dimensions. It is based on the understanding that the IDF serves not only as a defense force but also as a prominent social mechanism, thus reducing societal disparities and fostering solidarity. This program is officially sanctioned by the Israel’s Ministry of Education. In addition, the Israel Defense and Security Forum (IDSF), which includes over 22,000 reserve officers and operatives from all branches of the Israeli security forces, dedicates significant efforts to engage the younger generation in adopting Zionist and security-focused perspectives aligned with the national security needs of the State of Israel and the Jewish people. This Forum’s educational program extends its influence to various audiences and institutions, including:

- 1) Pre-army preparatory programs: such initiatives aim to train the upcoming generation of Israeli leaders. Experienced IDSF members, well-versed in policy, security, and military matters, deliver lectures and share insights on various security related topics;
- 2) Academic institutions: IDSF student groups are active across Israeli universities and colleges, while conducting outreach and educational activities focused on national security;
- 3) High Schools and Youth Movements: IDSF has been developing activities tailored for high schools and youth groups, fostering an understanding of national security issues among the younger population (Israel Defense and Security Forum, 2023).

Based on such progressive academic experience in other nations, we can safely assume that Ukraine is hardly the pioneer on the national security educational ‘front’ and also that it is on the right track with creating its own academic curriculum in this vital field of state development.

In France and the United Kingdom, the components of the national system of military-patriotic education in general secondary education institutions are: initial military training; military training at training camps; training in the form of military games, hikes, etc. In addition, all British universities, as well as many polytechnic institutes and colleges, provide military training for junior officers for the Armed Forces of the country and military-patriotic education in state and public organizations (associations, clubs, circles, sports sections, etc.) (Ostapenko et al., 2022).

American commentators R. Curren and C. Dorn elaborate in their well written book on the key thesis that throughout history there have been numerous and varied endeavors to instill patriotism in American public schools. Those efforts have been grounded in diverse interpretations of patriotism, citizenship, and learning. The exploration of the history of patriotic education in schools yields both cautionary tales and positive insights. The authors argue that focus should be placed on cultivating civic virtue in schools, organized around three key components: civic intelligence, civic friendship, and civic competence. The book wraps up with an advocacy for global civic education, while also emphasizing the promotion of global civic friendship and cooperation (Curren & Dorn, 2018).

Though the above-mentioned treatise does not contain analyses of connection between patriotic upbringing and various national defense (quasi-military) courses within educational curriculum, we agree with the authors' point that national patriotic education is a good resource not only within any specific country but for the global community at large. History teaches that "healthy" patriotism, unlike twisted forms of ultranationalism, bring much more mutual understanding, peace and prosperity than the lack of such national virtue.

Reference to the national patriotic (national defense) courses in several world jurisdictions underlines the importance of both sharing new theoretical knowledge and expertise in the pedagogical field and also the importance of comparative research method. Indeed, as pointed out by many Ukraine authors, critical comparison allows to better understand exactly which principles and provisions work better in any given field of academic knowledge (Lutsenko et al., 2023).

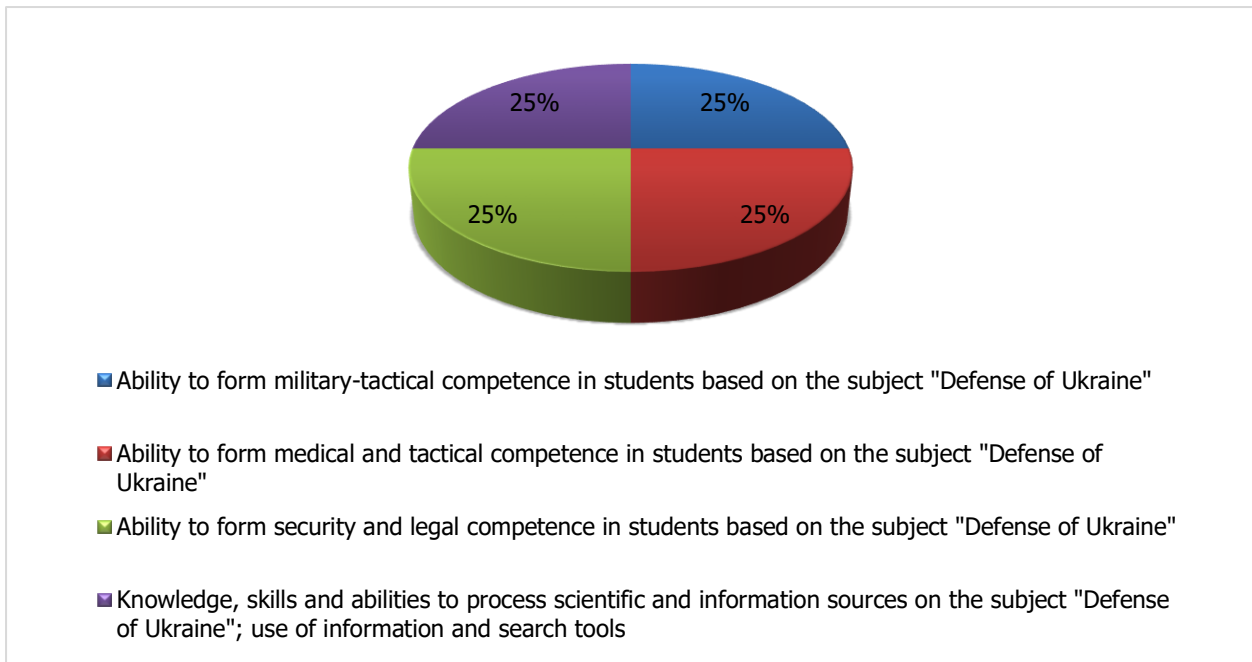
### **The concept of the "Defense of Ukraine" academic course: new challenges and new responses**

In Ukraine, the new compulsory course "Defense of Ukraine" is based on the current legislation of Ukraine and is studied in general secondary education institutions (schools) during the final 10th and 11th years of education, as well as during training sessions.

This updated subject (as a separate academic program) has been introduced in Ukraine in accordance with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated February 26, 2020 No. 143 (Resolution No. 143, 2020). The then Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine, Hanna Novosad, noted: "Our education followed the Soviet paradigm for a long time, and the old subject "Defense of the Fatherland" is one of the manifestations of this. It is wrong that in the fifth, almost sixth year of the war with Russia, we have still not managed to replace the completely Soviet name of the subject "Defense of the Fatherland" with "Defense of Ukraine". It's an important point, and I'm glad we finally made this change. Now, an equally important task is to improve the content of this subject and the material and technical support of schools." (Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, 2020).

In the historical perspective, the discussed academic program is directly related to the issue of national identity. Such phenomenon is extremely important for any modern society, being one of the factors that determine its vitality. A group of Ukrainian scholars have reached a sound conclusion that even during the time of significant socio-political, socio-economic, cultural and educational changes, when targeted leveling, standardization and ignoring of national interests of the person was carried out by the Soviet regime, the process of forming Ukrainian national identity and national intelligentsia continued (Pokhilko et al., 2020). Currently, curriculum of the "Defense of Ukraine" program includes two thematic plans (or curriculums). The first one (for boys) involves the study of the following sections: "Fundamentals of the National Security of Ukraine"; "Armed Forces of Ukraine in Defense of Ukraine"; "Drill and Applied Physical Training"; "Firearms Training"; "Tactical Training"; "Fundamentals of Civil Protection"; "First Aid". The second curriculum (for girls) is the "Basics of Medical Knowledge and First Aid"; "Basics of Civil Protection"; "International Humanitarian Law on the Protection of Civilians"; "First Aid in Combat".





**Figure 1.** Subject competence of future teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" course.

**Source:** authors' own research

The purpose of the course is to develop among students the vital knowledge, skills and abilities to defend Ukraine as well as act confidently in emergency situations, and also understanding of military-patriotic education as being an integral part of the national-patriotic education. Based on our comparative research, such academic goals are similar to the Israeli model of the high school patriotic education.

The key purpose embodied in the "Defense of Ukraine" course is realised by a set of the following educational and training tasks: familiarising students with the basics of regulatory and legal support for the defense of Ukraine, civil protection of the population and personal security; awareness of the younger generation's duty to defend Ukraine in the event of a threat to the independence and territorial integrity of the state, etc.

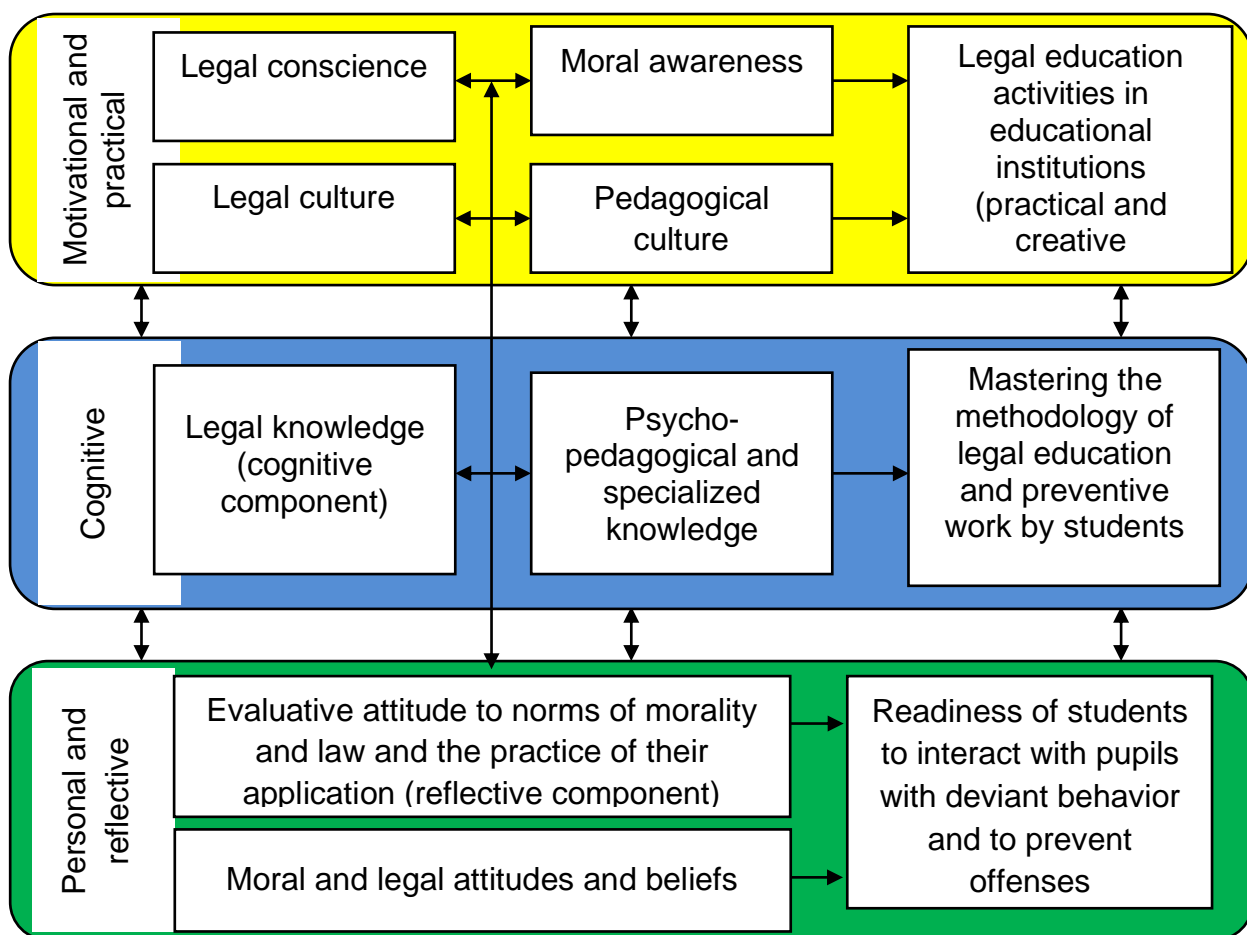
Reserve or retired officers with a university degree, who are motivated to teach high-quality classes, as well as graduates of pedagogical universities with a newly established degree in Defense of Ukraine, are appointed as teachers of the subject "Defense of Ukraine". Currently, military operations in Ukraine significantly limit the functioning of scientific and educational centres across the country (Kozinchuk et al., 2022). However, training for teachers should not stop, and many pedagogical universities in the south and east of Ukraine continue to operate primarily online.

### Key learning components of the "Defense of Ukraine" program

Nowadays, the relevance of the complicated issue of the military-patriotic education in conditions of ideological and worldview confrontation have been caused by the situation in the country, which developed as a result of armed and informational aggression of Russia Federation against Ukraine. The officially proclaimed course of Ukraine on the Euro-Atlantic course integration, reformation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine according to NATO standards, challenges to preserve the integrity and statehood of Ukraine, consolidation of society to protect Ukraine from any forms of armed and information – those are the key factors, which determine societal request to improve effectiveness of military-patriotic education (Ostapenko et al., 2022).

A few program documents underline the need for a “Defense of Ukraine” academic course. Among them: Strategy of the national security of Ukraine (2020); Military Security Strategy of Ukraine (2021); National Doctrine of development of education of Ukraine in the 21st century; Concept of pre-conscription training and military-patriotic education of youth (2002); Concept of military-patriotic education in the Armed Forces of Ukraine (2010); Concept of national and patriotic education of children and youth (2015).

Based on the purpose of the subject “Defense of Ukraine”, the main feature of the professional training of future teachers is building their aptitude for a specific type of activity – legal education of students. In our opinion, the structural model of this professional quality includes three main components: 1) motivational and practical; 2) cognitive; 3) personal and reflective.



**Fig. 2.** A structural model of the future teacher’s readiness for legal education work.

The motivational and practical component includes internal positive attitudes of the future teacher towards learning and acquiring theoretical and practical skills (mastery of general ways of performing various activities, optimization of the sequence of selected activities). It includes legal and moral consciousness, legal and pedagogical culture, and the motivation to exercise legal education curriculum in educational environment.

Within this component, the key elements are legal conscience and legal culture. Without an adequate level of these two qualities introduced to the future teacher of defense of Ukraine, it is impossible to talk, in



turn, about their effective formation in students. Teachers need to focus on the formation of positive legal knowledge and psychological mechanisms of respect for law in the structure of legal consciousness in each student (for this, they will need high moral consciousness and pedagogical culture). In Ukraine, the motivation for active formation of legal consciousness and legal culture of all subjects of social relations should be constantly growing, since it is impossible to achieve the goal of building a civil society without them. The legal culture of citizens is the basis, the foundation of a new society. After all, citizens are the only factor in the creation and maintenance of the state and the rule of law, bringing the Constitution of Ukraine and national legislation into effect. Successful solution of these tasks depends on many factors, but mostly on the level of legal education and upbringing of the country's population (Sharavara, 2015).

The cognitive component includes legal, psychological and pedagogical, methodological and special knowledge of the teacher.

With regard to legal knowledge, it is clear that teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" course are not lawyers or even teachers of history and jurisprudence. However, they should possess basic knowledge of the constitutional rights and obligations of Ukrainian citizens, as well as national security and defense law.

When developing their own tailored curriculum for the "Defense of Ukraine" degree at pedagogical universities, due attention should be paid to a block of legal courses, since such curriculum is interdisciplinary in its nature. For example, the curriculum for such degree at Berdyansk State Pedagogical University (currently relocated to the regional city of Zaporizhzhia because of the war) includes the following courses: "Actual Problems of National Security and Defense of Ukraine", "Methods of Legal Education in an Educational Institution", "Civil-Military Cooperation in Ukraine", "Criminal Liability of Military Personnel". The curriculum also provides for practical training (security and legal). When taken together, these components make it possible to professionally prepare future teachers of the subject "Defense of Ukraine" for the legal education of students, albeit on a limited scale. The full list of courses is presented in the table below.

**Table 1.**

*List of components of the educational and professional program and their logical sequence*

<b>№</b>	<b>Components of the study programme (academic disciplines)</b>	<b>Number of ECTS credits</b>	<b>Form of final control</b>
1.	Philosophy of education	3	Credit
2.	Military pedagogy and psychology	3	Credit
3.	History of international relations	3	Credit
4.	Actual problems of national security and defence of Ukraine	5	Exam
5.	Actual problems of drill, fire and tactical training	3	Exam
6.	Topical aspects of tactical medicine	3	Exam
7.	Pedagogy of specialised and higher education	3	Credit
8.	Methods of legal education in educational institutions	4	Exam
9.	Civil-military cooperation of Ukraine	3	Exam
10.	Criminal liability of military personnel	3	Credit
11.	Modelling the process of teaching the discipline "Defense of Ukraine"	6	Exam, course work
12.	Methods of the national and patriotic education of youth	3	Credit
13.	Practical session (medical and tactical)	6	Credit
14.	Practical session (security and legal)	6	Credit
15.	Practical session in an educational institution	6	Credit
<b>Total amount of mandatory components:</b>		<b>6</b>	

Source: Educational and Professional Program "Secondary Education (Berdyansk State Pedagogical University, 2023).

In the academic literature, researchers generally define the importance of pedagogical knowledge as a methodological foundation and a direct tool for pedagogical activity. In order to understand the essence of pedagogical knowledge, the functions of professional knowledge, such as ontological, orientation, evaluation, which, in our opinion, form the basis of readiness, become of great importance.

The ontological aspect of professional and pedagogical readiness is its methodological foundation and determines, first of all, a multifaceted theoretical level of knowledge that ensures the teacher's awareness of the essence of pedagogical phenomena and facts on the basis of mastering pedagogical ideas, concepts, laws, principles through mastering the categorical apparatus of professional and pedagogical concepts and terms. Theoretical and methodological pedagogical knowledge is more generalized and broadly transferable than subject knowledge, and at the same time serves as a tool for the reliability of the teacher's practical and transformational activity.

The orientation aspect of professional and pedagogical readiness is represented by both scientific and life-specific empirical knowledge, which mainly becomes the basis for decision-making, building a system of appropriate actions and operations. By mastering the system of knowledge, the student develops his/her conceptual and categorical apparatus, through the prism of which pedagogical situations are perceived and interpreted and which becomes an effective means of pedagogical activity based on the mechanism of transformation of theoretical knowledge, generalised concepts and categories into practical pedagogical solutions based on the learned principles, criteria, models, etc. The breadth of the categorical range, the nature and level of mastery of the student's conceptual apparatus are important components and indicators of readiness.

Special knowledge (competences) of a teacher reflects the specifics of a particular pedagogical activity. We consider the special competences of a future teacher of defense of Ukraine as the implementation of key competences in educational, legal and managerial activities.

### **Pedagogical methods and techniques for the new program: scholarly comments**

Professional training of teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" course should involve active use of various pedagogical technologies aimed at developing legal thinking and fostering patriotic feelings. Modern teaching methods enable creation of situations which stimulate interest in legal issues and support active participation of students in the education of civic consciousness.

In particular, M. Sydorkina proposes to use the technology by means of developing civic competence by actualization of social interest. Such pedagogical technology is aimed at achieving the following results: future teachers' awareness of their own strategies of interaction with other people; their choice of constructive interaction and communication; increased awareness of future teachers of themselves as members of communities and society, as well as their own role in development; increased sense of community of future teachers with other members of society; actualisation of the sense of responsibility for the welfare of the community and society; increased ability of future teachers to promote the development of a sense of civic responsibility (Poznyak et al., 2022). The results of an international study of civic education in Chile, Colombia, and Mexico reveal that teachers' practices and attitudes are related to students' civic outcomes (Treviño et al., 2017).

Sivers, Dukhnevych, Osadko recommend the use of various socio-psychological technologies to promote formation of political and legal consciousness: creation of problem situations (problem lecture as a tool for the formation of political and legal competence); project-based (course design as a way to improve political and legal competence of the individual); discussion and game-based (use of group discussions and role-playing games in the process of forming political and legal competence); World Café technology serves as a good tool for forming a common problem field and solving urgent problems; Open Space technology for

solving urgent political and legal issues; case technology (cases in the structure of political and legal competence formation; training (training on the formation of political and legal competence of youth) (Sivers et al., 2017).

In her teaching guide, N. Cherepovska describes in detail innovative means of developing patriotism in the digital age, which can also be used in the course of educating future teachers of the Defense of Ukraine course. This manual presents reflective methods as a tool for developing youth patriotism and their patriotic activity in the modern interactive information space. The author notes that innovative tools based on the principle of reflection contribute not only to the development of mental formations of the individual, such as patriotic and legal self-awareness, but also to the development of the functions of information patriotism for the implementation of constructive patriotic activity in the interactive environment (Cherepovska, 2023).

Innovative educational technologies, such as distance learning technology, are relevant and necessary, they require greater self-organization, provide an opportunity to choose their rhythm of education, provide students with the opportunity to carry out high-quality continuous independent work, provide opportunities for self-expression, and establish information culture among students. Such technology improves the content of carrying out and performing laboratory and practical tasks, systematizes materials, provides an opportunity at any convenient time to acquire knowledge in a professional field, and also enhances professional skills in the course of academic career. Innovative technologies contribute to education seekers in mobilizing forces for focused education, professional orientation of the individual, formation of creativity of education seekers. Such technologies increase motivation to work, orient students to create their own, potentially unique, methods of academic activity (Knysh et al., 2023).

Thus, the study of the peculiarities of professional training of future teachers of the course "Defense of Ukraine" in legal education reveals a wide range of tasks and challenges facing higher education in Ukraine. It is the teacher, on whom the State entrusts the fulfilment of the social demand for legal education of the younger generation, who should be a model of positive legal consciousness and behaviour, by properly implementing legal "backup" of his/her professional activities (Makhnovets, 2022).

Specificity of the "Defense of Ukraine" academic program is determined not only by the need to transfer knowledge about the national security and defense, but also by the emphasis on the formation of a high level of legal culture in the mindsets of future teachers. The primary task is to create a system of methods and techniques aimed at developing progressive legal thinking. It is important to take into account individual characteristics of students and their prior knowledge in the field of law. Pedagogical technologies which trigger student participation are most effective in this context. Project technology, role-playing games, business simulations, and the wide use of case method contribute to deep learning of the material and the development of skills in solving various legal problems. In addition, it is necessary to focus on the development of analytical thinking and critical understanding of the legal aspects of Ukraine's defense, which currently remains the pressing issue for the statehood itself.

One of the elements of the personal/reflective component of the proposed model is the students' readiness to interact with students with deviant behaviour and to prevent various violations. Social disorientation is a very serious obstacle to the formation of legal awareness. In order to overcome such barrier, not only economic improvement in the country is needed. It also requires intensive public legal education (Bieliauskaite & Slapkauskas, 2015). In this sense, it is especially important to improve the process of forming value orientations of students of pedagogical universities, since there is not only a direct opportunity to prevent deviations in the youth environment through adequately formed life positions, but also to form the knowledge base of a new generation of teachers, educators, school psychologists to work with children prone to deviations and their parents. Family counselling programs are seen as very promising interventions, which have the potential to reduce the likelihood of youth involvement in crime and violence (Stahlberg et al., 2022).

The current challenges in the field of national security require future teachers to take an active part in shaping students' legal self-awareness. Effective teachers' training for legal education involves the use of interactive methods, such as collective games, trainings and group projects. It is also important to take into account the socio-cultural characteristics of students and adapt teaching methods to their needs. A teacher's psychological readiness to teach the subject "Defense of Ukraine" is determined by his or her attitude to the importance of the topic, emotional stability and readiness to resolve conflict situations, which inevitably emerge. Understanding educational psychology and the use of methods to influence motivation contribute to the formation of a positive attitude of students towards this subject. General education and pedagogical practices reveal that an important component of successful teacher training is the use of innovative methods, such as virtual reality and online learning. The introduction of modern technologies into the educational process helps to create extensive and engaging academic content for the "Defense of Ukraine" program, thus ensuring high quality education and compliance with the requirements of a modern society, which is based on patriotic values and democratic principles of governance.

To summarize the results section of this article, we would like to make the following observation. Based on the analyses of foreign approach, proposed content of the course and its curriculum at one Ukrainian university, as well as pedagogical methods and techniques for the new program, as reflected in various scholarly papers, the "Defense of Ukraine" academic program should be developed further in order to address various security challenges that Ukraine currently faces. Academic knowledge of future teachers can and should become a potent tool to fight current and future crimes of aggression against the democratic state.

### Limitations

Despite the theoretical background of our study and the empirical data provided, we are of the opinion that further in-depth analyses of both goals and content of the "Defense of Ukraine" program is required. As we have made a point in the literature review section of the article, only fragmentary aspects of this academic course curriculum have been previously studied. Thus, when considering the ongoing security situation in Ukraine and the key points of the system of higher education in the XXI century, much more scholarly efforts should be put into the research of what should be studied within this academic program, and also how it should be studied. The content and methodology are key aspects here.

### 5. Conclusions

This article has examined some ground principles and content features of educating future teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" course. The structural model of future teachers' readiness for this specific type of professional activity is defined. The modelling of the process of preparing applicants for higher pedagogical education is intended to determine the priority areas of such training; to ensure the systematic approach and integrity of training in the context of the processes of modernisation and development of higher pedagogical education. The use of such structural model in the process of training students for educational work involves the use of innovative didactic technologies and changes in the content of pedagogical education model.

Based on the results of our study, we conclude that effective professional training of teachers of the "Defense of Ukraine" course requires a comprehensive approach, which should include individual characteristics of students and also employment of modern teaching methods. Providing future teachers with the necessary theoretical knowledge as well as a set of practical skills in the field of constitutional law, legal education and national security is an important aspect of both forming civic consciousness and promoting patriotic values among the younger generation. Time has come, at least for Ukraine, to strengthen national patriotism as well as legal culture and the ability to educate and defend those virtues.

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