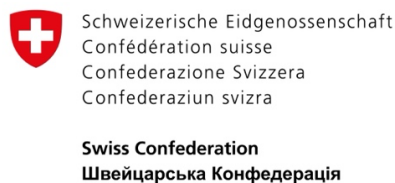


Professional Training for Civil Servants as a Guarantee of High-Quality State Policy

In this article, we analyse the current state of one of the areas of public administration reform, namely professional training for civil servants.

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Public participation is an integral part of the democratic policymaking process. Engaging stakeholders in discussions on pressing policy issues, including draft regulatory legal acts, allows them to voice their opinions, provide recommendations or comments, and fosters effective dialogue between state authorities and society. One of the [OECD/SIGMA Principles of Public Administration](#) stipulates that policy development should involve active consultations with key internal and external stakeholders, as well as the public.

Professional training for civil servants is both their right and their duty.¹

Civil servants play a leading role in ensuring the formulation and implementation of state policy, so improving the quality of their professional training is a key factor in modernising the public administration system. Based on continuous analysis of policy and law enforcement practices, they generate proposals for further development of state policy, formalise the ideas and strategic plans of the state's top leadership in documentary form (draft legal acts and other acts) and ensure the practical implementation of adopted decisions.

Therefore, the more motivated and professionally competent civil servants are, the higher the effectiveness of state policy and the likelihood of achieving the desired results.

The basis for changes in the professional training of civil servants is currently contained in the [Strategy for Public Administration Reform in Ukraine for 2022–2025](#) (hereinafter — the Strategy), which identifies several problems in professional training, such as:

- the system for forming and placing state orders for the training and advanced training of civil servants and local government employees is ineffective, which hinders the development of the postgraduate education market and creates unequal conditions for educational institutions of different forms of ownership;
- mechanisms for determining professional training needs do not meet current needs and do not contribute to the proactive development of the competencies of civil servants and local government employees;
- a significant proportion of civil servants and local government employees are unable to fully meet their training and advanced training needs;
- the content of training programmes does not correspond to the real challenges and needs of civil servants and local government employees;
- insufficient funding for the system of training and advanced training;
- the professional training system does not provide timely preparation for future challenges and strategic priorities in public administration development.

One of the tasks of the Strategy in the area of 'Professional Public Service and Human Resource Management' is to create a modern, comprehensive, mobile and flexible professional training system with a developed infrastructure, effective management and adequate resource potential.

¹ **Professional training** — the acquisition and improvement of professional knowledge, skills and abilities that ensure the appropriate level of professional qualification of a civil servant for their professional activities (paragraph 9, part 1, Article 2 of the Law of Ukraine 'On Civil Service').

The task for implementing the reform of the professional training system includes the following components:

- › identifying professional training needs;
- › forming, placing and executing state orders;
- › encouraging people to improve their professional competence;
- › ensuring the functioning and development of the market for the provision of educational services in the field of professional training;
- › monitoring and evaluating the quality of training.

The indicators used to assess progress in achieving results in this area of the Strategy are:

- percentage of civil servants who have undergone advanced training out of the total number of civil servants: in 2022 — 55%; in 2023 — 60%; in 2024 — 65%; in 2025 — 70%;
- the share of government spending on advanced training of civil servants and the wage bill: in 2022 — 1%; in 2023 — 1.5%; in 2024 — 1.75%; in 2025 — 2%.

The Strategy provides for the professional development of local government employees, but does not contain indicators for tracking progress in the training of this category of civil servants. [The Law of Ukraine 'On Service in Bodies of Local Self-Government'](#), adopted in 2023 (to enter into force after the abolition or termination of martial law), contains more specific provisions on the professional development of such persons, unlike the current [Law](#).

State of Play and Progress in Implementing the Reform

The active phase of reforming professional training for civil servants lasted from 2018 to 2022 and began with the Government's approval of the [Concept for Reforming the System of Professional Training of Civil Servants](#) and, subsequently, the [Action Plan](#) for its implementation. The **National Agency of Ukraine on Civil Service** (hereinafter — NAUCS) played a key role in these processes as the main developer of legislative changes in the area of 'Professional Public Service and Human Resource Management'.

In 2023, the NAUCS Coordination Council approved the [Strategy for the Development of the Professional Training System for Civil Servants until 2027](#), which contains a detailed description of the problems identified in the professional training of civil servants. In the same year, the Government approved the [Action Plan](#) for Professional Training until 2027.

Continuous professional training of civil servants and analysis of their training needs are based on the European [Principles of Public Administration developed by OECD/SIGMA](#) and is in line with the [Public Administration Reform Roadmap](#) within the framework of Ukraine's European integration aspirations.

Of the whole range of activities in the field of professional training for civil servants, the following are worth noting:

1. **The professional training of civil servants has, since 2025, been conducted under the educational and professional Master's degree programme** in speciality D4 'Public Governance and Administration' within the field 'Business, Administration and Law',² as well as under general (specialised) professional (certificate) or general (specialised) short-term advanced training programmes. Professional training can also be carried out through self-education or internships. According to the NAUCS annual monitoring studies on the achievement of the Strategy's indicators:
 1. in [2022](#), 56,737 civil servants underwent professional training (**33%**³ of those actually working, which is 22% less than the expected result);
 2. in [2023](#) — 74,417 civil servants (**46%**⁴ of those actually working, which is 14% less than the number planned in the indicator);
 3. in [2024](#), 63,053 civil servants (**43%**⁵ of those actually working, which is 22% less than the expected result).

Based on the results of professional training, civil servants are awarded credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (hereinafter — ECTS). During the year, a civil servant must earn at least one ECTS credit.⁶

2. **Civil servants undergo advanced training through general or special programmes approved by the NAUCS.** Advanced training can take various forms — full-time, distance learning or blended learning. As of 1 July 2025, the Register of Advanced Training Programmes approved by the NAUCS contains [2,149](#) programmes aimed at developing various competencies of civil servants. Compared to 2021–2023,

² Until 2025, the area of study 'Public Management and Administration' was identified by code 281 and belonged to field 28 'Public Management and Administration'.

³ The NAUCS analysed information on 99% (170,152) of civil servants out of the actual number (171,469) as of 1 January 2022.

⁴ The NAUCS analysed information on 98% (161,826) of civil servants out of the actual number (165,422) as of 1 January 2023.

⁵ The NAUCS analysed information on 99.7% (147,750) of civil servants out of the actual number (148,209) as of 1 January 2024.

⁶ Regulations on the system of professional training for civil servants, heads of local state administrations, their first deputies and deputies, local self-government officials and local council deputies: [Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 106 of 6 February 2019](#).

the Register has been updated in terms of both the areas covered by the programmes, taking into account the current needs of participants (e.g. regarding the specifics of European integration processes), and the list of education providers.⁷

The selection of programmes for each civil servant is based on the results of an annual assessment of their performance, which takes into account the tasks and key indicators of performance, efficiency, and quality of service, as well as self-assessment of their competencies and professional needs. According to [analytical materials from the NAUCS](#), in recent years, civil servants have expressed a need to improve their professional knowledge, particularly in the areas of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, cybersecurity, digital literacy, corruption prevention and integrity, gender equality, etc.

3. In accordance with the [Action Plan](#), the NAUCS conducts research on the state of the professional training system based on specific [indicators](#). Thus, according to [data on the monitoring of the quality of advanced training](#), more than half (54.8%) of the respondents participating in professional training (32,060)⁸ are completely satisfied with the match between supply and demand (in terms of training topics) in the market for advanced training education services; one third of respondents (34.7%) are partially satisfied; in total, 89.5% of respondents.
4. **A significant step forward in ensuring the accessibility of training for civil servants is the activity of the NAUCS in creating (2020) and continuously improving the [Knowledge Management Portal](#).** This digital product allows civil servants to familiarise themselves with the list and conditions of available educational programmes (using convenient filters), register for them and view information about completed programmes. In turn, education providers, lecturers and human resource management services can take advantage of other functionalities. Thanks to this Portal, local government employees also have the opportunity to improve their qualifications through general and specialised programmes in accessible formats.
5. In 2022, the [High School of Public Governance](#) (hereinafter — the High School) was established as a new type of postgraduate education institution aimed at the professional development and advanced training of civil servants.⁹ In fact, this institution was formed by [renaming](#) the Ukrainian School of Governance, and therefore, at the time of its launch, it already had a developed institutional and material base. The High School has [nine centres](#) responsible for different areas of activity (e.g.

⁷ For example, through programmes funded by international technical assistance.

⁸ A total of 32,060 people participated in the survey, including 29,153 civil servants, which represents 18% of the actual number of employees (158,091) as of 30 July 2024.

⁹ Persons holding political office, civil servants, heads of local state administrations, their first deputies and deputies, local government officials, and local council members.

development of management competencies; professional development in European and Euro-Atlantic integration; learning the official languages of the European Union; digitisation of professional training and development, etc.).

According to the High School, it provided advanced training for [23,730](#) civil servants in 2022; in 2023 — [21,793](#); in 2024 — [28,120](#).¹⁰

6. **Educational services in the field of professional training for civil servants are provided** by the High School of Public Governance, educational institutions, companies, institutions and organisations of any form of ownership that carry out educational activities in the field of professional training, international or foreign institutions and organisations that implement relevant programmes, international technical assistance projects and others registered on the [Knowledge Management Portal](#). As of July 2025, the Portal contains information on **175** education providers.
7. Since 2022, **the selection of education providers for the professional training of civil servants under the state order of the NAUCS** has been carried out automatically form on a competitive basis using the capabilities of the Knowledge Management Portal. According to [information](#) from the NAUCS, three such competitive procedures have already been conducted. On 12 July 2025, the NAUCS [announced](#) another competitive selection of educational service providers.

Reform Issues Remaining Unresolved

Despite obvious progress, there are a number of problematic issues in professional training reform that require special attention:

1. **Over the years, funding for professional training and advanced training of civil servants has remained uneven and insufficient.** The level of actual spending on training civil servants remains extremely low compared to the planned results. In 2022, government spending on training amounted to only [0.02%](#) of the annual wage bill; it was [0.03%](#) in 2023, and only in 2024 did it reach the pre-war level of [0.05%](#) (2021). As an alternative to state funding, civil servants can undergo training at the expense of local budgets, international technical assistance, or at their own expense.

¹⁰ The data were obtained from annual reports on the performance of the High School by summing up the number of civil servants of central executive authorities (hereinafter — CEAs) and local executive authorities (hereinafter — LEAs) who upgraded their qualifications in the respective year: in 2022 — 23,028 employees of CEAs and 702 employees of LEAs; in 2023 — 20,683 employees of CEAs and 1,110 employees of LEAs; in 2024 — 25,188 employees of CEAs and 2,932 employees of LEAs.

The savings made by governmental authorities on the training of their employees may be linked to the desire to allocate these funds to remuneration and thus minimise staff turnover. However, this does not reduce the burden on the state budget. In particular, in 2024, the NAUCS spent [over UAH 50 million](#) on the advanced training of 47,925 employees, including 45,421 civil servants (i.e., [72%](#) of the total number of civil servants who underwent training).

2. **There is a limited number of free advanced training programmes for this many civil servants.** [According to](#) the Knowledge Management Portal, there are **570** free advanced training programmes (all types combined) for civil servants, but only **12** of them are open for registration. Some programmes have restrictions on participation by target groups (e.g. category A, human resources management employees, remuneration group, etc.). In practice, civil servants are actually forced to 'hunt' for free programmes, and if they fail, they have to pay for training out of their own pockets. There is another way out of this situation: in order to obtain the required number of ECTS credits, civil servants choose any available free courses, regardless of their relevance or practical value. And then the process of professional training and advanced training becomes formal.
3. **The relevance and timeliness of the topics offered by education providers for advanced training still do not meet expectations, especially given the specifics of certain areas of state policy.** As already mentioned, one-tenth of the respondents participating in professional training [believe](#) that providers do not offer the necessary topics for advanced training.
4. **During 2021–2024, and especially under martial law, the remote format of advanced training for civil servants remains a priority (within 93%).** At the same time, participants note that training activities take place mainly during working hours, and they often have to combine participation in the training process with the performance of their professional duties. Management does not exempt such employees from work for the duration of the training. As a result, civil servants are forced to either perform work tasks outside of working hours or be less than fully engaged in training, which undermines their effectiveness.
5. The remote format of training can potentially affect its quality, as noted in the [Strategy itself](#). Factors such as rolling blackouts, instability or lack of access to the Internet hinder civil servants in acquiring knowledge. In addition, during the monitoring of the quality of advanced training for 2021–2023, the [NAUCS found](#) that 27% of civil servants surveyed (8,851 people) did not have the technical capabilities for training (computer equipment with the necessary accessories — camera, speaker, or headphones).

6. **Even high achievements in acquiring new knowledge and applying it in practice are, in most cases, not a guarantee of higher pay or career advancement for civil servants.** It all comes down to the need to complete an individual professional development programme for the relevant year.
7. **The current [Law No. 5499-VI](#) limits the list of providers of NAUCS state-funded education services to educational institutions and scientific institutions owned by the state or municipalities, which makes it impossible for education providers of other forms of ownership to participate in the competition.** As a result, the potential for competitiveness and quality development of the professional training system is reduced. In 2021, Parliament adopted as a basis government draft law [No. 5467](#) in the first reading, which was supposed to resolve this issue, but in 2023, this draft law was withdrawn from consideration.

As a result, the problematic issues described above have a negative impact on the motivation of civil servants to participate in professional training and, in the broader perspective, on the quality of state policy as a whole.

Recommendations

The professional training of civil servants needs to be further developed with due regard to the following measures:

1. Increasing the number of training programmes available to civil servants free of charge, in particular by expanding the capabilities of the High School.
2. Timely updating of the list of topics for special programmes for civil servants, taking into account changes in legislation, trends in state policy and the conditions of martial law.
3. Conducting explanatory work and joint meetings between the NAUCS and heads of governmental authorities on:
 - 1) the need to increase the volume of such authorities' own expenditures, as well as to attract other sources of funding for employee training;
 - 2) providing civil servants with the opportunity to improve their qualifications (in accordance with an approved individual professional development programme) while taking a break from their official duties, within the time frame provided for in the training programme, in particular by reducing the workload of civil servants for the period of advanced training, so that such training is not merely formal;

- 3) providing civil servants with the necessary technical equipment (at least for the period of training), especially those working in territorial offices.
4. Gradual annual increase in state funding for professional training of civil servants under the relevant NAUCS programme in the State Budget of Ukraine.
5. Amending [Law No. 5499-VI](#), in particular regarding the possibility for educational institutions, companies and organisations of various forms of ownership to participate in competitions for the provision of educational services under the state order of the NAUCS. Such changes will contribute to increased competition between education providers and, accordingly, to an improvement in the quality of professional training programmes for civil servants. At the same time, civil servants themselves will have more opportunities to meet their educational needs owing to a wider choice of training programmes and education providers.