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LEADING TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF DISTANCE EDUCATION IN GREAT BRITAIN

The paper is devoted to the analysis of trends in British distance education development. The paper presents the content, methodological and technological foundations of distance education in Great Britain. The main features of under-graduate training are defined. Educational programs of a number of British universities are presented. The main forms of assessment are identified. The ways in which information and education technologies are applied are also studied. The paper provides a comprehensive analysis of trends in the development of the British distance education system.

Introduction

A feature of the current stage of social development of Ukraine is the transition to new civilizational relations, which have radically changed the content and direction of educational processes. In these conditions, solving the problem of modernization of education in accordance with the needs of today becomes especially important. At the same time, the main task is to ensure the availability and quality of education, which is becoming global in the country. An important area of modernization of the education system is the use of organizational forms of learning associated with the use of new information technologies. Their introduction causes radical changes in the information educational environment, makes it more open and democratic.

In recent decades, the education systems of different countries (Australia, Great Britain, Spain, Germany, USA, etc.) have been working on implementation the principles and technologies of distance education without separation from the main activity, which is called distance education.

The theoretical foundations of distance education have been laid in the past decades, which mainly concern certain aspects of distance learning. At the same time, the considerable practical experience gained in British universities makes it possible to improve both its theoretical foundations

and organizational forms. The experience of British universities can be used in Ukraine, as the introduction of distance education in our country began in the 90s of the twentieth century.

Fundamental research in the field of distance education is the work of C. Wedemeyer, R. Dellings, D. Keegan, M. Moore, O. Peters. Peters, B. Holmberg and others.

1. Features of the content of distance education at British Universities

At the UK Open University, as at other UK universities, a person has an opportunity to receive the following qualification levels: Honours degrees, Integrated masters degree, Diploma of Higher Education, Certificate of Higher Education, Certificates, Undergraduate modules, Short courses, Masters degrees, Postgraduate diplomas, Postgraduate certificates, Postgraduate modules, Featured courses.

Consider in more detail the training programs for bachelors. The Open University of Great Britain offers five types of qualification levels from 120 specialties. A bachelor's degree is a generally accepted qualification of higher education. There are two types: a degree in a named subject and an open degree. Obtaining a degree in a named subject, the student studies his chosen subject, but may include in their studies several modules in other subjects. Almost all of these degrees are honors degrees. These degrees can be of four levels: 1 (the first – the highest level), 2.1. (upper second level), 2.2 (lower second) and 3 (lowest).

An open degree is the most popular degree at the Open University, awarded with or without honors, according to the needs and interests of students. Open qualification provides a flexible approach to obtaining a qualification, allows you to adapt learning to the needs and interests of the student. The student can combine different subjects according to their interests and choose a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree. To obtain an open degree, you must master 360 credits (120 credits for each year of study).

The basic degree is a short, professionally oriented course that allows you to become a specialist for a specific type of work. There are fewer requirements for a student who receives a basic degree than for a student who obtains an open degree or a degree in a specific subject. Most basic degrees are equivalent to higher education diplomas in Scotland. The basic degree certificates are developed in collaboration with employers to provide employees with professional and technical skills and are therefore highly valued in the UK labor market. After obtaining a basic

degree, a student can obtain an open degree by mastering another 120 credits of study material [42].

The diploma of higher education is issued after the first two years of study at the university under the basic program after mastering 240 credits. The certificate of higher education is issued after the first year of study at the university under the main program after mastering 120 credits.

Only after obtaining a bachelor's degree a graduate can apply for postgraduate study. At the Open University there are two types of postgraduate education with 80 qualifications: 1) training courses on specially prepared educational materials; 2) research courses, where students can obtain the title of master of research or doctorate, doing research work and doing the thesis. About 80% of the eighteen thousand postgraduate students choose courses with specially prepared study materials and work on obtaining a master's degree.

In postgraduate courses, students perform regular tasks and undergo a final assessment. There are three levels of postgraduate study: 1) certificate; 2) diploma; 3) master's degree. The postgraduate certificate provides for the mastering of 60 credits, the diploma – 120 credits. Obtaining a certificate and diploma is a completed qualification, but they can be the initial stages on the way to obtaining a master's degree. In order to obtain a master's degree, students must master 180 credits and carry out a small scientific study in the chosen specialty to consolidate and apply the acquired knowledge and skills [42].

At the Open University there is an opportunity to obtain the degree of Doctor of Science and Doctor of Philosophy. Today, 1,200 people at the university are doing their thesis. More than 250 graduate students work on dissertations on the Milton Keynes campus on a full-time basis, while others combine work with study. These graduate students are required to work on their thesis for at least sixteen hours a week. The period of study on this basis is twice as long. All graduate students have a research supervisor and access to the University Library, which is one of the largest in the UK. The University also awards two higher doctorates, the Doctor of Letters (DLitt) and the Doctor of Science (DSc) on the basis of published work. These qualifications are only open to graduates of the University, a graduate holding a degree validated by The Open University who is not otherwise eligible for registration with a degree-awarding institution, members of University staff of at least three years standing (including Associate Lecturers) and others with established links to the University.

Entry requirements vary according to the research topic and/or specific studentships. The normal minimum entrance requirement is an upper

second class honours degree or masters degree, relevant to the proposed area of study, from a recognised higher education institution in the UK or other recognised degree-awarding body.

At the University of Oxford there is an opportunity to study for a basic professional degree, certificate, diploma of higher education and in the system of postgraduate education – a certificate, diploma, master's degree and doctor of philosophy [46].

The Institute of Continuing Education at Cambridge University also offers a variety of online courses. At the university you can remotely obtain a certificate and diploma of higher education, a master's degree [43]. It should be noted that Cambridge does not provide a remote opportunity to obtain a bachelor's degree. By registering on the website of the Institute of Postgraduate Education, the student has the opportunity to take a free demo course in the chosen specialization. In the number of courses offered, Cambridge loses significantly to Oxford. The main proposed areas here: the legal system of Great Britain and the European Union, ethics, history, English literature, basics of psychology and others.

The University of London does not offer a clearly defined curriculum. The system of correspondence or consultation, unlike the Open University, is not practiced. Using the provided study materials, students organize classes independently. Exam preparation can be done either independently or in accordance with curricula developed by the University of London or other colleges and universities.

Distance learning students at the University of London have the opportunity to choose the most convenient way for them to study: to study completely independently or to attend local educational institutions with which the university has appropriate agreements. Classes in these institutions are held in the evening or on weekends. Students have the opportunity to take exams at local educational institutions or via the Internet [45].

There is no need for distance learning students to come to London to study, except for a course that offers a bachelor's degree in international management. Students attend the inaugural session several times in London or Hong Kong, which has the largest branch of the University of London in the world. For many courses there are optional training sessions in London. Examinations take place via the Internet or in numerous examination centers located in most countries of the world.

It should be noted that British education is pragmatic. Unlike the so-called "encyclopedic" education systems, which are dominated by the

principle of compulsory study of a large number of disciplines, in the British education system the main thing is the development of professionalism of each individual, which indicates the democracy of higher education in Britain [15, p. 89].

Let us consider the new distance learning program at the University of London, which allows you to obtain Diploma in the Common Law. This program is provided by the London Intercollegiate School of Law (LISL) [6], which is an independent educational organization and provides academic support to students from the countries of ex Soviet Union studying for distance learning programs at the University of London. The London Interuniversity School of Law was created to improve the knowledge of a specialist in the field of law, to enable lawyers to obtain a high level of knowledge in the generally accepted, global format of legal education in England [16, p. 13]. The training is offered as part of a bachelor's degree program in law for those who wish to gain expertise in a common law jurisdiction that can significantly expand the applicant's existing qualifications. The program includes the study of four subjects, one of which is "Argumentation and Proof in Common Law"; elective subjects: "Criminal Law", "Fundamentals of Contract Law", "Public Law", "Tort Law", "Obligatory Law", "Land Law", "European Law", "Corporate Law", "Commercial Law", "Jurisprudence and Theory of Law", "International Public Law", "Intellectual Property". Thus, the student has the right to choose the number of subjects to be studied annually and the time of study: two subjects per year for 2 years or 1 subject for 4 years. The term of study in this program is from 2 to 5 years. At the end of each year in May – early June, students take written exams in the British Council, which are tested in London [6].

Upon completion of this course, the student may continue his studies to obtain a bachelor's degree in law from the University of London. A bachelor's degree in accounting and finance from the University of London provides an opportunity to learn accounting and auditing techniques, focus on computational skills for direct application, and look at a subject from a variety of perspectives, including international ones. The program of the course was developed by scientists of the departments of accounting and finance. Scientists of these departments are one of the world's leading groups for teaching and research in economic, institutional

At the Sheffield University [47], the course, after which a master's degree in health care is awarded, has the following study schedule: 1 semester (autumn of the first year of study): 1.1. Key issues in national and global health; 1.2. Epidemiology.

2nd semester (spring of the first year of study): 2.1. Introduction to statistics and critical evaluation; 2.2. Health promotion; 3rd semester (autumn of the second year of study): 3.1. A systematic approach to the evaluation of evidence; 3.2. Introduction to research methods; 4th semester (spring of the second year of study) 2 modules to choose from: 4.1. Using health policies to strengthen the nation's health; 4.2. Healthcare Management; 4.3. Prevention of infectious diseases. In addition, it is necessary to write a research on the selected topic (spring of the second year of study) and defend the work online in September of the third year of study. Note that those students who do not wish to engage in research work, have the opportunity to obtain a diploma by passing exams in the same disciplines.

For those students who do not have the opportunity to study for a diploma or master's degree, there is a program that leads to a health certificate. To do this, the student must master 60 credits by passing exams in two compulsory subjects: "Key issues in national and global health care"; "Epidemiology", and two electives from "Introduction to Statistics and Critical Evaluation", "Health Promotion", "Systematic Approach to Evaluation of Evidence", "Introduction to Research Methods", "Using Health Policy for strengthening the health of the nation", "Health Management", "Prevention of infectious diseases". Students who have a postgraduate certificate have the opportunity to continue their studies in order to obtain a diploma or master's degree.

Analysis of the content and forms of organization of bachelor's training in higher education in the UK provides an opportunity to identify the most important trends in bachelor's degree, which contribute to directing students to achieve a high strategic level of future professional activity [3, p. 122]: training of general specialists on an interdisciplinary basis; flexibility and mobility of curricula and programs; professional orientation of educational programs; individualization of training; successful combination of theoretical and practical training; constant improvement of organizational forms of education; involvement of experienced personnel in the training of specialists; computerization of the educational process; participation of students in research work.

2. Educational and methodical support of distance education

Teaching aids in the system of distance education are used in the presentation of the content of education, during the control and management of educational and cognitive activities of the student. In a higher education institution, the same material can be presented to

students by several teaching aids (printed, audio, video materials, etc.), each of which has its own didactic capabilities. The teacher must know these possibilities, be able to appropriately distribute educational material by various means, to form a set (case) of them as a system of educational information necessary to solve a set of didactic tasks [25, p. 73].

The objective need to create and implement a variety of learning tools based on distance technologies is due to the following reasons:

- the general need to form in the student the ability to self-study throughout life;
- the need to expand the possibility of communication between teacher and student;
- the focus of learning on the end result, which involves persistent independent work of the student to perform individual tasks to form the ability to use the acquired knowledge in their activities [2, p. 50].

Well-known researchers of distance education [7; 22; 24] call the following means of distance learning: textbooks, didactic audio and video training materials, computer training systems, virtual reality, online training materials, laboratory distance learning workshops, electronic libraries.

Textbooks are traditional textbooks, workbooks, teaching aids, reference books, dictionaries, textbooks and other printed publications. These tools are central in the system of distance education [8; 13, c. 39]. It should be noted that when developing didactic printed publications for distance learning, it is necessary to take into account its specifics. Textbooks and manuals must meet the following requirements: 1) be modularly structured; 2) the completeness of the content should be concluded in such a way as to minimize students' access to additional educational information; 3) it is necessary to have detailed instructions for studying the material and organizing independent work; 4) mandatory elements in the textbook should be control tasks, glossary, self-test questions with answers, training tasks [1; 10, p. 24].

Network educational materials, which are a network educational and methodological complex with advanced interactivity through the use of various functions of the Internet [7, p. 66].

This complex usually consists of the following blocks:

- organizational and methodological (includes information about the goals, objectives of the discipline; characteristics of the content of the initial program; the procedure and recommendations for studying the discipline through the complex; review of literature and reporting and

control, the order of interaction with the teacher. For psychological comfort of students module visualized, it is a recording of the founding lesson on video media. The content of the module is duplicated by a text file);

- information-educational (consists of modules made in hypermedia, which are equal to the educational topic. Each module is accompanied by texts for self-examination, and the whole block – the final test. Hypertext links in the text allow students to get acquainted with specially created e-textbook, Internet resources etc);

- final control is carried out by checking the final test, which is conducted by video conferencing or in person [1].

Computer educational systems are a means in which the subject area is reflected, the technology of its study is realized, conditions for realization of various kinds of educational activity are provided [7, p. 66]. At the present stage, computer training systems include electronic textbooks; directories and databases of educational value; task collections and situation generators; computer illustrations to support different types of activities.

Didactic audio and video teaching materials. The practice of using audio materials has shown the effectiveness of the use of audio lectures and instructional classes recorded on media, which allows you to master the material in a convenient place and at a comfortable pace [14, p. 107]. Lectures, instructional classes, illustrative material for printed publications, educational situational tasks can be presented in the form of video on optical media [11, p. 152; 22, p. 16].

Virtual reality as a means of non-contact information interaction is realized with the help of complex multimedia-operational environments that create the illusion of direct entry and the presence of real time in a stereoscopically represented "screen world" [24, p. 447]. Virtual reality is used in the educational process in solving constructive-graphic, artistic problems, in the study of graphic methods of modeling in the courses of engineering and computer graphics, in the organization of training of specialists in conditions as close as possible to reality. The following features are inherent in virtual reality: preliminary uncertainty of the virtual learning process for the subjects of interaction; uniqueness for each type of interaction of subjects; existence only during the interaction itself [24, p. 505].

Laboratory distance workshops. The use of such a tool is solved in two ways: the development and delivery of a special mobile kit ("case") to the student and providing remote access to laboratory facilities [1, p. 28].

The relevance of laboratory distance workshops is especially growing during the training of specialists for various technical fields, as the training of such specialists is determined not only by the study of certain theoretical material, but also by obtaining specific practical skills of laboratory research.

Let us consider the system of delivery of educational material at the Open University of Great Britain, which is based on independent study of textbooks, teaching materials, recommended reading (60% of study time), educational TV and radio programs (10%), work with a tutor or teacher (15%), performance of practical work, control written tasks (15%) [20, p. 134].

At the Open University with the beginning of the course, the student receives the course materials by mail. Materials include: specially designed textbooks and workbooks; online training materials; audio and video materials on optical media and course software; equipment for practical work, in particular, for scientific and technological training courses provided for rent.

These materials are provided free of charge to students, with the exception of equipment rental. The student gets access to course sites where there are additional resources. Sometimes a student needs to buy or borrow books from a local library, but the Open University strictly regulates possible additional tuition costs.

Printed materials are designed in such a way that the student has the opportunity to make notes, highlight sections, emphasize key points, make marks on the pages, add comments. The materials that the student receives by mail contain the following:

- the introductory booklet describes the individual package that the student receives and instructions on how to start studying. This booklet also indicates the tutor and his contact details;
- the student's guide provides information about the course, its construction and method of assessment. He also talks about the university, its policy and structure;
- the course calendar is created for most courses. It indicates the key points of the course, the sequence of exercises and tasks, the time allotted for their implementation. The student has the opportunity to agree with the tutor his personal schedule and key dates for sending the task for review;
- the tutorial contains useful tips and hints. The questionnaire of learning styles allows to learn how the student learns better. The textbook has a section on how to maximize the effectiveness of training;

Course materials. The student receives professionally composed and clearly presented materials necessary for academic success. They contain educational material in the form of lectures, but with the additional advantage of linking to sources of information and media support. The materials are designed specifically to ensure consistent learning with constant self-esteem. The student determines when he needs additional help and support;

- Package with test tasks. The student receives a package with test tasks, which contains all the tasks required for qualification. The only exception is an exam or project for a specific course. Exam tasks are not sent for security reasons. In the case when it is necessary to implement the project, full instruction and guidance for project implementation is sent [42]. Note that the student independently plans his / her study schedule using the course calendar.

Let us consider the teaching and methodological support at the University of London. Every academic year, university students receive study materials by mail, but if necessary, there is a possibility to receive them online. The study package that a student receives varies depending on the course. We found that a typical training package contains:

- Student's guide to paradigms and practical information on how to get to the exams; university contacts; information on the rules governing the structure and content of obtaining a degree or diploma;

- Handbook "Strategy of Success" contains information about learning techniques; planning independent classes; use of educational resources and preparation for exams; methods of searching for materials in the online library; a subject guide designed specifically for students by a leading college;

- textbooks in relevant disciplines;
- the program specification contains a description of the expected learning outcomes and ways to achieve these outcomes;

- examples of examination materials for the past years. For some courses there is a need to purchase additional textbooks [45].

The use of computers to ensure the management of the educational process by the student, the activation of his educational and cognitive activities became possible with the development of learning technologies. The implementation of such a methodological goal is the most promising in the context of world and domestic teaching practice [12, p. 75].

Thus, conditions are created for students to access the website of the course, where you can find additional resources: e-learning materials; digital recording of educational radio or television programs or audio

lectures; tasks for self-examination of progress and understanding of the material; university news; computer self-examination; access to the online library. Through the course website, the student has the opportunity to connect with other students around the world and participate in the global learning community [41].

Online collaboration with tutors and other students is a hallmark of postgraduate study. The student receives enhanced online support such as online conferences [32], tutorial-led discussion forums; online lectures; tasks for group work in collaboration with other students. It is possible to submit and defend term papers online and receive job reviews.

Graduate students are usually provided with a complete package of study materials. For most courses, graduate students and future masters have online access to a personal tutor who is a researcher at the University of London.

We've found that RDI's universities begin four times a year: in January, April, July, and October. At the beginning of the study, the student receives all the necessary training materials, which are provided in printed or electronic online, depending on the chosen specialty. The materials, developed at RDI's universities, provide consistent distance learning with ongoing online access to self-assessment materials and progress measurement tasks. In the process of learning the student can use the "online university", where he has access to the electronic library and course tasks; examination papers of previous years; he also participates in discussions with teachers and classmates. The student must devote from 8 to 15 hours per week. Unlike the Open University, RDI's university programs do not include field and summer school attendance, but full-time university exams are required. If a person lives abroad, his / her assessment takes place in numerous offices and RDI agencies in the world [40].

Consider the delivery system of teaching materials at the University of Sheffield, in which they are delivered to students online by distance learning using high-quality web materials developed by health professionals at the University of Sheffield. In each module, students are given the opportunity to work in a group and with the help of university staff [47].

After enrolling in a university, a person is given a tutor and access to the University's Virtual Educational Environment, which allows the student to access all course materials and interact with other students and faculty. The content of the module is provided to students only in web format, by mail, unlike the Open University and the University of London, materials are not sent. Materials are provided in a variety of formats that are

designed to enhance the online learning experience. These include video and audio materials; screened; web lectures; guided reading and self-assessment materials; interactive collaboration tools. Materials are also available in formats for offline learning and mobile systems (iPad, iPhone, etc.). This makes the program more accessible, flexible and reduces student costs. At the University of Sheffield, unlike the Open University of Great Britain and other universities, there are no face-to-face classes in field schools or weekend schools; obtaining all knowledge, passing exams and defending a thesis are held exclusively online.

The program consists of a sequential system of blocks, each of which is given seven weeks to study. After studying the material of the block, the student is sent a task for assessment. To successfully complete the academic year, the student must pass all written assessments provided by the program, an important condition is that the transfer of the task to another year is impossible. Studying the unit involves working on the Internet, mastering educational material, performing independent exercises, online group work with other students, writing test assignments. Some of the tasks include mandatory interaction with other students, so there is a recommended schedule for working in groups to be effective. Within its framework, the student has considerable freedom of learning at a time convenient for him and at his own pace. Detailed information about the schedule of the unit is provided at registration, all course materials are provided via the Internet.

As for Oxford, in it, as in other British universities, students are assisted by tutors during their studies. In addition, they have the opportunity to use the conference mail system developed at the University of Oxford. Thanks to this system, students have the opportunity to discuss their problems with their classmates and course teachers. This system is an integral part of the course program and forms a kind of "virtual class". Each block includes a learning task, which must be submitted for evaluation in electronic form in a timely manner. As a rule, Oxford University programs do not provide for a formal written examination and attendance at Oxford, with the exception of PhD programs.

Some courses at the Institute of Continuing Education at Cambridge University are taught entirely online, while others include elements of full-time study, depending on which course the student chooses. Students participate in web discussions of educational material in the virtual educational environment of the university. Assessment is done by writing written works of 3000 characters and passing written online exams [43].

All curricula at UK universities are modularly structured. The module means a set of different forms of educational work and measures to

control the development of relevant competencies, which is ultimately assessed by a certain number of credits accrued to the student. The main elements of the module are credit, level of study, name of specialization, description of the content of training, requirements for assessment, terms of sessions and semesters. Additional elements are: classrooms, class time, consultation schedule, learning outcomes, etc.

The modular principle of teaching at the Open University involves the division of the discipline into logically closed blocks, called modules, in which there is both the study of new material and control measures to verify its mastery. The content and scope of the modules, in turn, vary depending on the profile and level differentiation of students and didactic goals. Due to this approach, it is possible to create individual training programs [21].

In the framework of distance learning, the module is a relatively independent integral part of the real educational process, which due to a single technological cycle combines content, formal procedural and effective modules [33]. The module contains one or more similar in content and fundamental in meaning concepts, laws, principles. Assimilation of the module usually begins with a review and instructional lecture. This is followed by individual independent educational work, consultations, then several group tutoring classes based on developed sources, which are used instead of traditional seminars and together constitute the content of the module [27].

Based on the study of British scientific sources [28; 30], we found that the student workload is measured by the credits needed to successfully complete a program of study or qualification – one credit is 10 hours. At the Open University, students are credited with credits only after successful completion of the module. For example, when studying a 60-credit module and successfully passing it, the student will be credited with a full 60 credits. Typically, 60 credits equals 600 hours of study over 9 months, which is about 16 hours per week.

It was found that obtaining a diploma with honors from the Open University involves the successful completion of 360 credits, a basic degree or diploma of higher education – 240 credits, a certificate of higher education – 120 credits. Most qualifications have one to three 120-credit stages. For example, a diploma with honors has three 120-credit stages; basic degree and diploma of higher education have two 120-credit stages; the certificate of higher education has one 120-credit stage.

Each stage consists of several modules that cover different aspects of the subject. Modules are also measured in credits and installed at different

“levels”. Levels show signs of relative complexity of modules and / or depth of learning. Most modules have a volume of 30 credits or 60 credits and are set at levels 1, 2 and 3, which can be equated to the first, second and third year of study at classical universities.

For a typical three-degree diploma with honors, the student must obtain:

- 120 credits at stage 1 with modules of 30 or 60 credits at level 1;
- 120 credits at stage 2 with modules of 30 or 60 credits at level 2;
- 120 credits in stage 3 with modules of 30 or 60 credits at level 3 [42].

The modules studied depend on the chosen qualification. Most qualifications offer a choice of “route” of study. The student chooses the “route” of study, in the process of registration for the selected qualification and at each stage of his “route” choosing one or another module.

Many “routes” are designed so that the student has the opportunity to move to another after the first year of study, while learning more in-depth information on the chosen topic.

In the UK, there is the possibility of moving from one university to another throughout your studies. There are several requirements for transfer to the Open University [34]. If an applicant for an Open University qualification has a fourth or higher level of NVQ, SVQ, CQFW or QCF qualification framework, he / she is enrolled in the Open University qualification. If the applicant has level 1, 2 or 3, he cannot be equated to any level of the Open University. It is possible to equate the qualification of the Open University to the standards of the European Union, which, as in Ukraine, has a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The ECTS system does not take into account the academic level, so it is impossible to make a direct comparison. However, in total, 60 Open University credits will be equal to 30 ECTS credits. This enrollment is carried out by the Credit Transfer Center.

The Open University program assumes that the student will get 60 credits each year and receive a bachelor’s degree, having mastered 360 credits in 6 years.

A student can obtain a master’s degree by mastering 180 credits in 3 years. “Training intensity” with 60 credits in one year is called full-time training. There is part-time study, where a student earns only 30 credits each academic year.

It is found that, as a rule, one credit corresponds to ten hours of study, a fifteen-hour open module and a fifteen-hour short online module require approximately 150 hours of study, and 30 and 60 credit modules cover 300 and 600 hours of study, respectively.

Approximately 60–80% of this time is devoted to the study of module materials, and the remaining time – to independent learning, generalization, analysis and repetition of the study. The number of hours spent each week varies during the study of the module, as the time spent on the task is greater than the time required to study the materials of the module or work related to audiovisual or online activities. During the module, students also have weekly days off, which they can take as needed.

At the University of Essex, the minimum credit utilization rate is 30 credits per year and the maximum is 90. The maximum term given to a student for a basic degree is 6 years, and for a bachelor's degree is 9 years [44]. Distance learning at the University of Essex requires 10 to 15 hours of study per week.

To obtain a bachelor's degree from the University of London, a student can study from 3 to 8 years. As a rule, a student studies from 1 to 5 years to obtain a diploma of higher education. In order to complete the study in the shortest possible time, the university recommends devoting 20 hours a week to independent study. To obtain a master's degree, a person studies from 2 to 5 years; from 6 months to 5 years should be spent on obtaining diplomas and certificates in postgraduate studies with the allocation of 10 to 20 teaching hours per week, in order to complete their research in the shortest possible time [45].

It should be noted that the problem of checking and quality control of education at all stages of the educational process is one of the most important in creating an effective system of distance education in the UK. Universities that use distance learning pay a lot of attention to this issue. Intermediate control, intermediate and final certification of higher education institutions are carried out by traditional methods or with the use of electronic means that provide identification [14, p. 114].

The academic performance of students of the Open University is checked in the form of written works at the end of the course and is compared with the current testing, in order to obtain the final result of the knowledge test. [26].

Ongoing evaluation usually consists of tasks that the tutor checks, computer-scanned tasks or interactive tasks [42]. Based on the processed material [29; 31] established that the examination component may be an exam, written work (dissertation, project or portfolio) or it may include both an exam and another type of work – written or oral. The exam is an examination component for most courses in the form of written work, which usually lasts three hours. Exam questions are always unfamiliar to the student, but the student receives an example of exam tasks in advance

in order to be able to get acquainted with the appearance of the letter with questions, type of tasks and questions that will be on the exam.

All language majors with a diploma or degree have both a written and an oral exam. For students of some courses there is an opportunity to receive exam questions of previous years in the Student Community of the Open University.

If, as a result of studying the course, the student is required to submit a written work instead of (or together) with the exam, the student is sent the final date by which the work must be submitted to the university. This can be a project, report, portfolio or end of module evaluation (EMA). The student receives all the conditions for submitting a job to the university in six weeks. It is possible to postpone the date of submission of written work for review, but this issue is decided by the Senate.

At the University of London, according to the training program, students take a number of written tests and intermediate written exams, which are checked by teachers in London on time according to the relevant standards and returned to students with individual comments and recommendations via computer network.

Tests are performed throughout the year in each subject. Intermediate exams are held several times a year in order to determine and form the knowledge required for the final exams. University of London policy requires that 70% of the total assessment of student achievement be in the form of written formal examinations. Exams are held once a year in May – June in local examination centers in one hundred and eighty countries. To move on to the next course, the student takes a three-hour written exam, after each semester – a two-hour exam. For some courses, such as “Introduction to Information Systems”, “Independent Geographical Research”, “Software – Theory and Application”, the course work and the course project are credited as a written exam. Postgraduate study requires writing scientific, term papers and reports on research projects. Assessment standards for distance and full-time students are the same. The exams are held in more than six hundred examination centers in local Ministries of Education and in the offices of the British Council around the world. After checking the exam papers, the student receives reports or comments from the examiners, which give him an idea of the level of mastery of the material [45].

At the University of Essex, students do not take oral exams. Knowledge testing takes place through online discussion of educational material with the curator, completion of written assignments and writing projects. Each written paper submitted for review is entered into the university’s virtual

learning environment so that the tutor has direct access to the papers for evaluation.

3. Information technology as a means of implementing distance education

In recent decades, decades of development of computer technology and the Internet, distance education in the UK is developing rapidly. Educational institutions of various forms of ownership provide students with the opportunity to receive educational services remotely, using information and communication technologies. We believe that the use of computer technology in distance education allows you to optimize the learning process, combine the benefits of traditional learning technologies with the capabilities of information technology, to develop the cognitive activity of the student; forms a motivational, emotional, communicative environment; provides the formation of a holistic perception and understanding of processes and phenomena on the basis of broad involvement of data banks, free access to information sources, processing of large amounts of information; allows you to independently achieve educational goals by visualizing the process of solving the problem, the rapid search for information in solving educational and cognitive tasks [18, p. 13].

The use of information and educational technologies provides intensification and actualization of the educational process on the basis of solving the following main tasks:

- identification and use of incentives to enhance cognitive activity through the use of various information technologies, selected depending on the individual characteristics of the student;
- deepening interdisciplinary links in solving problems in various subject areas through the use of such modern information processing tools as computer modeling, technologies of local and network databases and knowledge [41, p. 85];
- active participation of the student in the design and further updating of its educational trajectory, which provides a personality-oriented approach in the organization of the learning process [17, p. 234].

The development of information technologies that open up new learning opportunities is influencing changes in the distance education system. Thanks to modern computer technology and the Internet, people now have access to information servers around the world and communicate in real time. Today, the so-called Moore's Law continues to apply, according to which the productivity of electronic computers doubles every year and a half [39].

Information technologies open students access to fundamentally new sources of information, increase the efficiency of learning and independent work, provide unique opportunities for communication and creativity, acquisition and fixation of professional skills, allow the implementation of advanced forms and methods of distance learning.

Information and educational technology tools provide teachers working in the system of distance education, the opportunity to quickly update the content of learning and design a learning environment in accordance with the emergence of new knowledge and technologies. Information technology frees the teacher from the routine activities inherent in traditional teaching, related to the presentation of educational material and the development of skills and abilities.

In distance learning universities in the UK, computers are used for the following purposes:

- to provide opportunities to provide training materials in various formats, such as text, graphics, audio and video, for exercises and experiments;
- for learning using materials recorded on CDs, access to databases and other sources of information on the Internet;
- to provide ways of communication between students, teachers (e-mail, teleconferences, chats) [37].

The use of the Internet as a means of providing interactive communication between students and representatives of the educational institution plays an important role in the education system of the Open University. Students receive study materials online, take exams through a global network. All university courses have their own website, which helps the student to plan and organize studies, allows to participate in the work of the world's largest community of the university. For most courses, the student must spend two or more sessions per week on the university's computer network. In 2005, the Openlearn virtual learning environment (Openlearn) was launched and later developed at the Open University in the United Kingdom, based on the Moodle open source resource, which received a grant for this development in 2006 from the Hewlett Foundation.

The virtual educational environment aims at free access for students and staff of the university to the electronic system and participation in discussions and course work, and for the general public – the opportunity to learn independently through free access to course materials.

TV and radio broadcasts play an important role in the educational process of the Open University. The Open University has been working closely with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) since its

inception. It was found that each training course is accompanied by telecasting on three levels, the main of which is the intermediate level. The low level exists for the repetition of the passed material, and the high level is professionally oriented, it provides deeper knowledge of the subject being studied [36].

The personal computer and Skype negotiation system are most often used in distance education. Teachers pay special attention to the First Class and Lotus Notes systems, which are used in business schools and in preparation for social events [35, p. 33].

At the University of London, upon entering the institution, the student has access to the Internet resources needed for study: the University of London Library, which has an archive of five million scientific journals and a large number of e-books; to the database of legislation of Great Britain, the USA, the European Union and other jurisdictions, such as Westlaw, LexisNexis Professional; to the Virtual Learning Environment, which provides students with e-learning materials, video lectures, audiovisual tutorials, online self-assessment tasks, expert advice, access to discussion forums with other students around the world studying in this program.

The virtual learning environment provides an opportunity for collective learning [23]. Working in a virtual learning environment, the student learns to form their own point of view. In the process of reading and listening to online lectures there is a passive transfer of information and knowledge. This form of education allows you to organize a flexible learning schedule, while working on different topics [19, p. 20].

The University of London has a state-of-the-art search and query system for the efficient use of library resources. Note that students have the opportunity to use the University Senate Library, which has in its reserves a significant number of printed and online books, including historical and antique; newspapers and digital archives; historical maps and materials on the history of the University of London. The student is provided with a special student e-mail address, which provides a reliable and secure channel of communication with the university. At the beginning of the academic year, students are sent manuals, methodological advice for each subject, materials for practical work.

Most universities in the UK, as well as other world-renowned educational institutions, provide free online access to their e-learning materials [9, p. 71]. This significantly expands the base of distance learning manuals. Connecting electronic catalogs of libraries of educational institutions to the Internet makes it possible to search for the necessary literature in the library collections of other universities.

Thus, distance education contributes to the adaptation of society to new market conditions. The classroom system is no longer able to provide the

mass of learning that is needed in today's world. The information revolution caused a revolution in education, which consists in the transition from book culture to electronic [20, p. 60]. The purpose of education today is not the assimilation of an ever-increasing amount of knowledge, but the transfer, generation of information in exchange for information. Thus, the transition in education from knowledge to information restores the status of the teacher as the author of the transmitted material [5, p. 26].

In connection with the expansion of computerization of the educational process, the information content of network servers and effective management of the process of acquiring knowledge are the main and, at the same time, the most difficult tasks in creating information and educational environments in computer networks [4, p. 19].

Apple iTunes U was launched on May 30, 2007, a free educational service designed to store and open access to educational audio and video materials for students and anyone interested in accessing the Internet. All the universities that participated in this project received their own sections on iTunes U, where they now publish lecture courses, language lessons, laboratory experiments, sports chronicles and video tours of the campuses. University College London (UCL), the Open University of the United Kingdom and Trinity College Dublin are lecturing in the iTunes online store [38].

To start using the iTunes U service, a person must have a computer running iTunes, knowledge of English (most lectures are in English), and an account in the iTunes Store.

Recently, the prestigious British universities of Oxford and Cambridge joined the iTunes U project and published hundreds of thousands of educational audio and video materials [38]. The University of Cambridge plans to publish lectures free of charge by all its Nobel laureates, and the University of Oxford will publish more than 150 hours of video and audio recordings of lectures by its most famous alumni and professors. Speeches by historians, lectures on the fundamentals of physics and chemistry, etc. are being prepared for publication.

According to Apple statistics, today more than 1,000 universities are actively involved in iTunes U. The most "fruitful" is the Open University of Great Britain, with which Apple also cooperates in other projects. Downloads from the Open University reached 30 million, Oxford University – 10 million.

British educational institutions, participants in the program, in most cases make access to their materials free, but some restrict public access to certain members of certain communities. In particular, Apple itself

publishes recordings of Worldwide Developer Conference sessions in iTunes U – they can be used free of charge only by registered developers.

The Open University of Great Britain became the first educational institution in the world in terms of the number of downloads, with more than a quarter of a million downloads per week. "I am happy that the popularity of the Open University in iTunes U is constantly growing. Said Martin Bean, Vice Chancellor of the Open University. – At the heart of our success in iTunes U are original materials related to popular University programs. Students can use them in their studies, and enthusiastic people around the world can receive these materials absolutely free of charge. "

We believe that the organizational and pedagogical conditions for the development of distance education depend on the dynamics of information technology. With the emergence and application of powerful technical capabilities, appropriate telecommunications channels and the Internet, distance education in the UK has become widespread.

Conclusion

The study found that a feature of the management system of higher distance education in the UK is a significant autonomy of higher education institutions.

At UK universities, students receive printed study materials by mail and online distance learning using high-quality web materials. In distance education in the United Kingdom, there is a clear trend towards individualisation of student learning, which is based on the method of modules, which are mainly composed using computers and a virtual educational environment of the university. The use of a modular system in education allows to take into account the inclinations and interests of each student, his intellectual and physical characteristics (disability, military service, imprisonment, etc.).

A feature of British distance education is the lack of a strict time frame, which allows the student to move forward in learning at a speed that corresponds to his individual abilities. Many universities have a flexible study schedule, for example, at the Open University of Great Britain you can get a bachelor's degree in 3 to 6 years, at the University of Essex from 3 to 9 years, in London from 3 to 8 years.

The system of distance education in the UK provides: strict requirements for full mastering of educational material and the possibility of transition to the study of new material only after successful mastering of the previous one; possibility of independent choice of educational disciplines from the ones offered by the university and independent drawing up of the schedule (program) of study; important role of written

works, writing by students of a large number of tests, individual and group projects, essays, portfolios, course projects, scientific works, etc.

Reducing of stressful situations and psychological overloads that result from students being limited in time due to passing exams during their studies are the benefits of student learning individualizing.

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