

Naumenko Svitlana

Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences (Ph.D.), Senior Researcher, Senior Researcher of the Monitoring and Assessment of the Quality of General Secondary Education Department of the Institute of Pedagogy of the NAES of Ukraine, Ukraine



FEATURES OF ADMISSION TO UNIVERSITIES OF UKRAINE IN 2022

***Abstract.** There will be changes for graduates of schools to enter to universities in Ukraine in 2022, due to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the imposition of martial law in Ukraine. Instead of the traditional at least four external independent assessment exams, students will take one national multi-subject test this year. The abstracts highlight the features of passing and conducting a national multi-subject test for admission to universities of Ukraine in 2022.*

***Keywords:** national multi-subject test; external independent assessment; Ukraine; martial law; Ukrainian language; mathematics; History of Ukraine.*

On February 24, 2022, martial law was imposed in Ukraine as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. Currently, martial law is extended until August 23, 2022. However, despite the martial law, from March 14, 2022, after the forced vacation (from February 24, 2022), the educational process was resumed in schools of Ukraine [1]. Depending on the security situation in a particular region, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (hereinafter – MES of Ukraine) recommended to conduct distance or mixed education concurrently joining temporarily internally displaced children, as well as those who were forced to go abroad with their parents.

Also in 2022, despite the war, exams for graduates of schools (11th grade) for admission to universities of Ukraine (for a bachelor's degree (first year)) will not be canceled. (These exams were not abolished in 2020 and in 2021, when the quarantine was introduced in Ukraine, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) After all, according to the statement of the MES of Ukraine, exams for graduates of schools for admission to the universities of Ukraine are the only objective tool for assessing the learning outcomes of students and is a mechanism for a transparent competition for university entrance and thus a prerequisite for admission to the university of

Ukraine [2]. The abolition of these exams creates significant corruption risks in university enrolment and is therefore unacceptable.

However, in 2022, due to martial law, admission to universities in Ukraine will have its own characteristics. Thus, this year, in contrast to the previous years, 11th grade graduates will pass not usual at least four external independent assessment exams (hereinafter – EIA), but one national multi-subject test (hereinafter – NMT). (In 2021, students had the right to pass EIA in a maximum of five subjects, of which four (Ukrainian language and literature, mathematics, history of Ukraine or a foreign language, and an exam of the student's choice) counted for them as results of state final certification (hereinafter – SFC) for the level of upper secondary education (ISCED level 2). In 2022, the results of the NMT will be used only for admission to the universities of Ukraine and will not be used as results of the SFC).

The NMT will contain three blocks of tasks in three subjects: Ukrainian language, mathematics and history of Ukraine. The choice of subjects for NMT, according to the Minister of Education and Science of Ukraine Serhii Shkarlet, has to do with the fact that "today the Ukrainian language is the defining subject of the Ukrainian genocode", Ukrainian language and mathematics were compulsory subjects during the SFC in Ukraine and "have the highest prognostic valence as to the possibility of studying in bachelor's programs", and in order "to obtain citizenship in any country you must pass an exam on the history of the state", therefore "if a Ukrainian does not know the history of Ukraine, then higher education is out of the question" [3].

Features of the NMT in comparison with the EIA will be:

– conducting it in the form of computer testing. (EIA has always been conducted in the form of blank (paper) testing.) However, NMT will be conducted not online, but in special temporary examination centers in safe areas (not in the occupied territories and not in areas where combat operations are taking place) in the premises of schools and universities, where the required number of computers / laptops will be available [4]. At the same time, each classroom will have 10-20 participants and an instructor, and each special temporary examination center will house no more than 50-55 people (for the ability to respond quickly to security

threats, including for the rapid transition of test participants to shelter during air raid). (EIA was conducted in centers that housed 250-360 people);

– conducting not only in Ukraine (in safe areas), but also in some European countries (at the leading universities and analogues of the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment) [5]. (EIA was conducted only on the territory of Ukraine.) This is done so that Ukrainian graduates of the 11th grade, who temporarily reside in European countries and do not have the opportunity to return to Ukraine, have the opportunity to pass the NMT and go to the universities of Ukraine. On the other hand, students living in the United States, Australia, or Asia will not be able to pass the NMT "due to the inability to arrange a time synchronization of the test process" [6]. After all, NMT will be held in Ukraine and European countries at the same time;

– holding three sessions: the main one (July 18 – August 10), the additional session (August 16 – 20) and the special session (indicative date from September 12 to 16). However, each test participant will be able to pass the exam only once [4]. (There will be no (appeals) against the procedure and results of the examination. That is, if for some reason, for example, due to inability to get to the temporary examination center because of the living in the temporarily occupied territory or in an active combat zone, or due to inability to complete the exam over the long-term air raid, etc., the student will not be able to pass the exam on the date set for him during the main session and he will be assigned a new date during the additional session. And if even then he / she does not pass the NMT, a new date during the special session will be set. At the same time, each participant one week prior learns about the date, time and place of the test on his / her information page. For security reasons, schedules on the time and place of testing will not be posted on the website of the Ukrainian Center for Educational Quality Assessment (hereinafter – UCEQA) and on the websites of its regional centers;

– passing only in Ukrainian. (Non-language EIA tests (history of Ukraine, mathematics, biology, geography, physics, chemistry) were translated into minority languages (Crimean Tatar, Moldovan, Polish, Russian, Romanian, Hungarian), on which the test participant was educated (on request);

– impossibility of creating special conditions for all test participants. Because of the format (computer-based testing), people with severe visual impairments will not be able to perform NMT. (The test notebooks (certification works) of EIA for these persons were printed in Braille);

– allotment of only 120 minutes for the test. (From 120 to 210 minutes were allotted for the EIA (depending on the subject and the level of its complexity) (basic or advanced));

– impossibility of choosing the items. NMT will contain three blocks of tasks in three subjects: Ukrainian language, mathematics and history of Ukraine. In total, there will be 60 tasks in NMT: on 20 test tasks for each subject;

– not posting test tasks that require a detailed answer. There will be 15 tasks in the Ukrainian language block with the choice of one correct answer from four or five options and 5 tasks for establishing compliance (4 "logical pairs"). The mathematics block has 14 tasks with the choice of one correct answer from the five proposed options, 4 tasks for establishing compliance (3 "logical pairs") and 2 tasks of open type with a short answer (unstructured tasks). The block on the history of Ukraine has 15 tasks with the choice of one correct answer from four options and 5 tasks to establish compliance (4 "logical pairs") [7]. That is, only in the mathematics block of NMT there will be test tasks of open type with a short answer and all other blocks have tasks closed type only;

– a limited range of topics. The block on the Ukrainian language will contain test tasks on the following language topics: "Phonetics. Graphics. Orthoepy. Spelling", "Lexicology. Phraseology", "Word structure. Word formation", "Morphology", "Syntax", "Stylistics", "Speech Development" [8]. (This block will not contain test tasks in Ukrainian literature, as in the EIA.) The mathematics block will cover all topics in algebra and geometry from the school course, namely: "Numbers and expressions", "Equations, inequalities and their systems", "Functions", "Random event probability, sample characteristics (average value), analysis of charts and graphs", "Planimetry", "Stereometry" [9]. The block on the history of Ukraine will include only tasks related to the historical period "History of Ukraine of 1914 – early XXI century" [10];

– obtaining results immediately after testing and transferring them to a rating scale of 100-200 points. (During the EIA, test notebooks (certification works) of each participant were first checked and then scores were set. The experts gathered after that to determine the threshold score of each exam and only then the results of students who passed the "threshold" were translated into a rating scale of 100-200 points.) During the NMT, each test task will be evaluated according to the scoring scheme: for each correct answer to the test task with the choice of one correct answer the student can get 1 point, for each correctly defined "logical pair" one can get also 1 point that is (for each test task for establishing compliance one can get maximum of 3 (in the block of mathematics) or 4 points (in the blocks of Ukrainian language and history of Ukraine), for each correct short answer 2 points are rewarded. The test participant will know the result (i.e. the number of points scored for correctly completed tasks) immediately after completing the NMT blocks. In total, the student will be able to get a maximum of 30 points for the block of tasks in mathematics, for the blocks of tasks in the Ukrainian language and history of Ukraine are 35 points for each could be given. The result of each block of tasks of the student will be translated into a scale of 100-200 points [4]. (UCEQA created tables of translation of test scores on Ukrainian language, mathematics and history of Ukraine NMT to the scale of 100-200 [11, p. 86]. One test score equals 100 test points of each test block under these tables. That is, it is enough for the student to give the correct answer to at least one test task to obtain a NMT result, for example, a task with one correct answer, and score at least one test score. At the same time, the different weights grades were set in the subjects of NMT for different specialties [11, p. 72-75]. For example, for admission to engineering specialties, the result in mathematics will be more important, for the humanities is the history of Ukraine [4].

However, NMT will be based exclusively on high-level and medical specialties and the budget [6]. If the participant does not pass the NMT, for example, due to inability to leave the dangerous area (combat zone or temporarily occupied territory) or for other reasons, they may enter universities in Ukraine on a contractual basis or in private institutions of higher education of Ukraine [6].

Thus, in 2022, 11th grade graduates of schools will pass a NMT to go to the universities in Ukraine. This test is not a complete substitute for EIA. But its format is very close to the EIA format and it does not include paper and complex logistics. NMT is a real mechanism of transparent competition for the universities in Ukraine in the conditions of martial law, which is very important now in this difficult time.

We hope that in 2023 graduates of the 11th grade of schools will pass an EIA to go to the universities of Ukraine, however, with some changes. We expect that the experience of organizing and conducting NMT will be a certain impetus for changes in the EIA and the creation of its new model in the near future.

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