

## **ASPECTS OF IMPROVING THE PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHERS**

**Rakhimova Madina Khasanovna**

Lecturer, Asia International University Email: Madi.psixolog@gmail.com

**Abstract:** This article analyzes the theoretical and practical aspects of improving the professional competence of higher education teachers. The concept of professional competence and its components — pedagogical, methodological, communicative, innovative, and information-communication competencies — are discussed. The importance of continuous learning, self-development, mastering modern technologies, and using international experience in ensuring teachers' professional growth is emphasized. The research results serve to develop recommendations for improving the organization of professional development processes for teachers in the higher education system.

**Keywords:** higher education, teacher, professional competence, pedagogical skills, innovative approach, information technology, professional development, self-improvement, quality of education, lifelong learning.

### **Introduction**

In today's higher education system, improving the quality of education and preparing creative, competitive specialists who meet the requirements of the modern labor market greatly depends on the professional competence of teachers. A higher education teacher is not only a provider of knowledge but also a mentor who shapes students' independent thinking, research skills, and readiness for innovative activities. Therefore, it has become an urgent necessity to continuously enhance teachers' professional competence and prepare them to work effectively using modern pedagogical and information technologies.

Professional competence is a complex integrative concept that combines a teacher's theoretical knowledge, practical skills, pedagogical culture, and personal qualities. In the era of globalization and digital transformation, higher education teachers are expected to demonstrate innovative thinking, make sound decisions in problem situations, and organize the educational process using interactive methods. From this perspective, the main aspects of improving teachers' professional competence — pedagogical, communicative, information-communication, methodological, and innovative approaches — and their impact on the quality and effectiveness of education are the focus of this study.

### **Main Part**

The activity of a higher education teacher involves not only delivering knowledge but also

organizing a complex pedagogical process aimed at developing students' independent thinking, creativity, critical analysis, collaboration, and innovative abilities. Therefore, a teacher's professional competence is one of the key factors determining the effectiveness of the educational process.

### **The Concept and Structure of Professional Competence**

Professional competence refers to the set of knowledge, skills, abilities, personal qualities, and values required for effective professional activity. It includes the following components:

1. Pedagogical competence – the ability to effectively organize the educational process, design lessons, and evaluate results based on didactic principles.
2. Methodological competence – the skill to select appropriate teaching content and methods, use interactive approaches, and organize lessons creatively.
3. Communicative competence – the ability to communicate effectively with students, colleagues, and administrators, work collaboratively, and resolve issues through dialogue.
4. Information-communication competence – proficiency in using digital technologies, e-learning platforms, online resources, and distance education tools.
5. Innovative competence – the capacity to introduce new pedagogical technologies into practice, share experiences, and continuously improve professional performance on a scientific basis.

### **Main Directions for Improving Professional Competence**

Developing a teacher's professional competence is a continuous and systematic process. The following directions are crucial in this regard:

- Continuous education and professional development – improving qualifications through training courses, seminars, and online webinars to stay updated on modern educational trends.
- Self-development – engaging in independent study, research activities, and exploring innovations for personal and professional growth.
- Support for innovative activity – creating conditions for implementing new pedagogical technologies and applying advanced practices in teaching.
- Expanding the information-communication environment – increasing teachers' access to information through digital libraries, online databases, and virtual laboratories.
- Collaboration and experience sharing – fostering partnerships with local and international higher education institutions and encouraging participation in international projects.

### **Mechanisms for Assessing and Developing Competence in Higher Education**

Currently, various indicators are used in higher education to assess and enhance teachers' professional competence, such as: - teachers' research and publication activity, - participation in innovative projects, - analysis of students' feedback on teaching quality, - monitoring and external evaluation of the teaching process. These approaches help determine the dynamics of professional growth, develop individual improvement plans, and enhance the overall quality of education.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, improving the professional competence of higher education teachers is one of the key conditions for modernizing the education system. A modern teacher is not merely an instructor but a facilitator of students' creativity, critical thinking, and independent learning abilities.

The development of professional competence is achieved through lifelong education, self-improvement, the application of innovative technologies, utilization of international experience, and engagement in scientific research. Mastery of information and communication technologies and the ability to operate effectively in a digital learning environment have become essential indicators of modern professional excellence. Continuous improvement of teachers' professional competence enhances educational quality, fosters deeper knowledge and skills among students, and strengthens the competitiveness of higher education institutions. Therefore, every university should view the professional growth of its faculty as a strategic priority and implement systematic, research-based measures in this direction.

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