

## CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN TRAINING LAWYERS FOR UKRAINE'S EUROPEAN FUTURE

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**Abstract.** As Ukraine progresses toward European Union (EU) integration, the transformation of its legal education system has become a pivotal aspect of its alignment with EU standards. The training of legal professionals capable of navigating both Ukrainian and EU legal systems is essential to the implementation of directives, fostering cross-border cooperation, and maintaining the rule of law. However, this process faces challenges including the legacy of Ukraine's post-Soviet legal education, resource constraints, and the need for rapid modernization. By adopting international best practices, fostering partnerships, and integrating modern technologies, Ukraine has the opportunity to create a legal education framework that meets EU demands and empowers its lawyers to thrive in global contexts. This article aims to analyze the challenges and opportunities in training lawyers for Ukraine's European future. It seeks to compare Ukraine's legal education practices with those in EU countries, identify critical gaps, and propose actionable reforms to align Ukraine's legal training systems with EU standards. A comparative analysis methodology is employed, drawing insights from literature, policy documents, and case studies of EU member states and transitioning nations. The study systematically examines disparities in curriculum content, teaching methods, practical skill development, faculty expertise, resource access, ethical training, and employment market alignment. Both qualitative and quantitative data inform the recommendations for reform. The analysis reveals significant disparities between Ukraine and EU countries in legal education systems. Key findings include Ukraine's reliance on outdated curricula, limited practical training opportunities, inadequate faculty development, and fragmented ethical training. Conversely, EU countries emphasize dynamic, interdisciplinary curricula, robust practical skill development, and integrated ethical considerations, supported by advanced resources and technology. Despite these challenges, Ukraine's EU integration provides a unique opportunity to modernize its legal education system through international collaboration, leveraging technology, and implementing market-aligned reforms. Future studies should explore the long-term impact of implemented reforms on Ukraine's legal system and investigate strategies for sustaining educational alignment with rapidly evolving EU standards.

**Keywords:** legal education reform; Ukraine; EU integration; practical training in law; faculty development; ethical training; comparative legal systems; curriculum innovation; technology in legal education.

**JEL Classification:** I 23, I 24, I 28, K 10, K40

**Formulas:** 0; **fig.:** 1; **tabl.:** 2; **bibl.:** 16

**Introduction.** As Ukraine progresses on its path toward European Union integration, aligning its legal framework with EU standards has become a cornerstone of the nation's transformation. This alignment requires more than legislative reforms—it necessitates a new generation of legal professionals equipped to navigate the complexities of European law. The training of lawyers capable of operating within both Ukrainian and EU legal systems is essential for ensuring the smooth implementation of EU directives, fostering cross-border collaboration, and upholding the rule of law.

However, this task is not without its challenges. The legacy of Ukraine's post-Soviet legal education system, resource constraints, and the rapid pace of integration efforts present significant hurdles. Simultaneously, these challenges create opportunities for growth, innovation, and collaboration. By adopting best practices from EU member states, fostering international partnerships, and leveraging modern legal technologies, Ukraine has the potential to transform its legal education system and empower its lawyers to contribute meaningfully to the nation's European future.

This article explores the critical challenges and opportunities in training lawyers during this pivotal time, offering insights into how Ukraine can build a robust and adaptable legal profession that meets the demands of EU integration.

**Literature Review.** The training of legal professionals in the context of EU integration has been a subject of growing scholarly interest, particularly for countries undergoing transition from post-Soviet legal frameworks. Research highlights both the structural challenges and potential solutions in modernizing legal education to align with EU standards.

OECD (2021) provides case studies of best practices in faculty training, advocating for continuous professional development and cross-border exchanges. Such initiatives, as discussed by UNESCO (2023), can help educators integrate technology and modern methodologies into their teaching.

UNESCO (2023) outlines strategies for integrating technology into curricula, such as e-learning platforms, digital libraries, and AI-powered legal research tools. These strategies align with the findings of the European Commission (2022), which emphasizes harmonizing technological advancements across EU member states and neighboring countries like Ukraine.

The Council of Europe (2021) underscores the importance of addressing these disparities through targeted funding and capacity-building initiatives, ensuring that rural students have access to the same opportunities as their urban counterparts.

Valentyna Chuienko (2024) explored the role of international collaboration in advancing legal education, stressing the necessity of recognizing international educational law as an independent legal branch to enhance educational reforms.

Svitlana G. Holovko (2020) evaluated the prospects of implementing dual education systems in Ukraine, drawing comparisons with European practices to address economic crises and structural employment changes.

A pair of works addressed the challenges of mediation in Ukraine. Luiza Romanadze (2022) highlighted mediation as a critical tool for post-war restoration, advocating for enhanced public awareness and systemic integration. Meanwhile, Tatiana Kyselova (2017) analyzed the socio-legal dynamics influencing mediation's

slow adoption in Ukraine, including political instability and resource constraints.

Christopher R. Kelley and Julija Kiršienė (2015) critiqued the inadequate emphasis on lawyer ethics in post-Soviet legal education, connecting it to widespread mistrust and systemic corruption in the legal profession.

Taras Z. Garasumiv et al. (2022) investigated gender equality within Ukraine's justice system, emphasizing the importance of integrating gender-sensitive policies to meet international standards.

The reviewed works collectively highlight the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in training lawyers for Ukraine's European future, with a focus on harmonizing domestic legal education with international standards, fostering ethical practices, and addressing systemic issues like gender equality and mediation. While outdated curricula, limited practical training, and regional disparities persist, international collaboration, technological integration, and ethical training offer pathways for alignment with global and EU standards. These reforms are essential for preparing Ukraine's legal professionals to navigate the complexities of European integration and global legal practice.

**Aim.** The aim of this article is to analyze the current challenges and opportunities in training lawyers for Ukraine's European future. It seeks to compare legal education practices in Ukraine and EU countries, identify the key gaps, and propose actionable recommendations to reform Ukraine's legal education system, ensuring alignment with EU standards and enhancing the readiness of Ukrainian legal professionals for cross-border and European integration challenges.

**Methodology.** This article employs a comparative analysis methodology, drawing on existing literature, expert insights, and best practices from EU countries. The study systematically examines differences in curriculum structure, teaching methodologies, practical training, faculty development, resource allocation, ethical training, and employment market alignment. The analysis is based on both quantitative and qualitative data, including academic studies, policy documents, and case studies of successful reform initiatives in legal education.

**Results.** The legal training system in Ukraine is undergoing significant transition, reflecting the country's broader reforms aimed at aligning with European Union (EU) standards. However, this process is marked by a combination of legacy challenges from the post-Soviet legal framework and emerging opportunities driven by EU integration.

Legal training in Ukraine and European Union (EU) countries diverges significantly in terms of curricula, teaching methodologies, resources, and practical opportunities. These differences highlight the challenges Ukraine faces in harmonizing its legal education system with EU standards as part of its integration process.

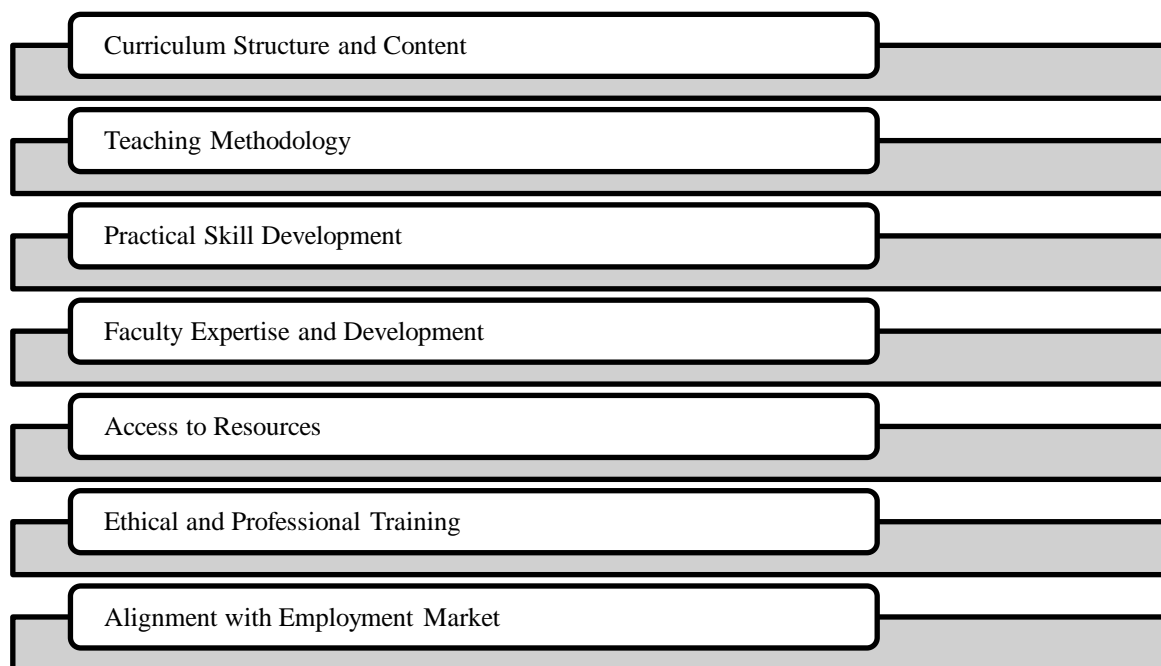
This article analyses the differences between the legal education systems in Ukraine and the EU countries (Figure 1).

**1. Curriculum structure and content.** In Ukraine, legal education often follows a highly structured and standardized program across institutions, with limited room for student choice or specialization. Undergraduate law programs generally have fixed course sequences, leaving little opportunity for students to pursue areas of interest or emerging legal fields. By contrast, many EU countries embrace modular systems that

allow for specialization and interdisciplinary studies.

Ukrainian students typically graduate with a general law degree, with minimal options for concentrating in fields like intellectual property, digital law, environmental law, or international arbitration. This lack of specialization hampers the ability of graduates to meet the growing demand for expertise in niche areas of law, particularly those critical to EU integration.

Unlike many EU programs that encourage or require students to take courses in economics, political science, sociology, or even technology, Ukrainian curricula remain narrowly focused on traditional legal subjects. This siloed approach limits the ability of graduates to understand the broader societal, economic, and technological contexts in which legal systems operate.



**Figure 1. The main aspects of comparing legal training in Ukraine and in EU countries**

*Sources: developed by author*

The rigidity of legal curricula in Ukraine often delays their responsiveness to legislative changes, particularly those driven by EU integration efforts. Key reforms such as the adoption of anti-corruption laws, judicial independence measures, or harmonization of trade regulations with EU standards are frequently not reflected in real-time within educational programs. This lag results in students graduating with knowledge that is already outdated.

By contrast, EU legal education systems are more agile, regularly revising curricula to reflect legislative developments, technological advancements, and global challenges. For example, topics such as GDPR compliance, climate change litigation, and artificial intelligence in law are now integral to many EU law programs.

In Ukraine, ethics and professional responsibility are often treated as secondary components of the curriculum, typically covered in brief standalone courses rather than integrated across the program. This fragmented approach fails to instill a deep sense of

ethical practice or prepare students for the complex moral challenges of modern legal work.

In contrast, EU law schools embed ethical considerations throughout the curriculum, emphasizing their importance in areas like corporate governance, human rights, and legal technology. Courses often include modules on professional conduct, the ethical implications of legal technology, and the societal role of lawyers, preparing students for ethical decision-making in diverse contexts.

Ukrainian legal education heavily prioritizes theoretical study over experiential learning. Students spend the majority of their time in classroom settings, with limited opportunities for hands-on application of legal principles. While theoretical knowledge is vital, it does not prepare students adequately for real-world challenges such as drafting legal documents, negotiating agreements, or advocating in court.

Experiential learning is a cornerstone of legal training in EU countries. Curricula often incorporate moot courts, simulated negotiations, and legal clinics where students gain practical skills by working on real cases under faculty supervision. These experiences not only enhance learning but also build confidence and professional readiness.

By addressing these areas, Ukraine can create a curriculum structure that not only aligns with EU standards but also prepares its legal graduates to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and dynamic legal landscape.

**2. Teaching methodology.** Teaching methodology plays a crucial role in shaping the competencies and mindset of future legal professionals. The differences between Ukraine and EU countries in this regard are stark, reflecting varying pedagogical priorities and resource availability.

In Ukraine, the dominant teaching format is lecture-based, with professors delivering information to students in a largely one-sided manner. While this approach ensures comprehensive coverage of theoretical content, it limits opportunities for active engagement, questioning, and debate. Students are rarely encouraged to interact during lectures, which curtails their ability to critically analyze legal principles or challenge assumptions. This passivity contrasts sharply with the participatory culture in EU classrooms. The lecture-centric model often leaves students reliant on memorized knowledge, rather than fostering an ability to apply legal concepts in dynamic, real-world situations.

Legal education in Ukraine places significant emphasis on rote learning, where students are expected to memorize large volumes of legal text, codes, and statutes. This method emphasizes knowledge retention over understanding and application, limiting the development of analytical, problem-solving, and decision-making skills critical for modern legal practice. Assessments often test students on their ability to recall statutes verbatim, rather than evaluating their comprehension, interpretation, or ability to argue legal positions.

Case studies, a staple of legal training in many countries, are infrequently used in Ukrainian legal education. Without case studies, students miss out on the opportunity to see how legal principles are applied in practice. This gap makes it difficult for them to grasp the nuances of real-world legal challenges. The absence of case analysis stifles

the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential for effective legal practice.

Adopting innovative teaching practices in Ukraine has been slow, due to institutional inertia and resource constraints. Experiential methods such as mock trials, group projects, and simulations are rare, despite their proven effectiveness in enhancing learning. Many faculty members adhere to conventional methods, viewing modern approaches as unnecessary or overly time-consuming.

Teaching in EU countries emphasizes interaction and active participation. Classes often include seminars, workshops, and group discussions, encouraging students to engage with the material and their peers. Students are encouraged to challenge perspectives, defend legal arguments, and engage in intellectual discourse, fostering critical thinking and adaptability. Professors often act as facilitators rather than lecturers, guiding discussions and ensuring students develop a nuanced understanding of legal principles.

Case studies are central to EU legal education, providing students with practical insights into the application of legal principles. By analyzing landmark cases and hypothetical scenarios, students gain a deeper understanding of how laws are interpreted and enforced. Case-based learning trains students to evaluate evidence, assess legal arguments, and craft persuasive positions.

EU legal education prioritizes equipping students with practical skills that align with professional requirements. Students learn negotiation, advocacy, legal drafting, and dispute resolution techniques, ensuring they are workforce-ready upon graduation. Group projects and joint exercises foster collaboration, mirroring real-world legal practices.

Digital tools and platforms are widely used in EU classrooms, enhancing both the learning experience and professional preparedness. Virtual learning environments allow students to access materials, complete assignments, and engage with professors remotely. Students are introduced to cutting-edge legal technologies, such as e-discovery software, online dispute resolution tools, and artificial intelligence (AI) applications, ensuring they are prepared for the evolving legal landscape.

By embracing these reforms, Ukraine can narrow the gap in teaching methodologies and produce legal professionals capable of thriving in both domestic and European contexts.

**3. Practical skill development.** Practical skill development is a critical component of legal education, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and professional practice. However, Ukraine and EU countries approach this aspect of legal training very differently, leading to significant disparities in graduate readiness for the workforce.

Legal education in Ukraine is traditionally centered on theoretical knowledge, with little integration of practical training. Students primarily learn about legal principles, codes, and regulations through lectures and textbooks, without significant opportunities to apply this knowledge. Graduates often lack hands-on experience in legal research, advocacy, and client interaction, making it challenging for them to transition into professional roles immediately after graduation.

Legal clinics, where students provide supervised legal services to real clients, are rare in Ukrainian universities. These programs are typically limited to a handful of institutions and are often underfunded. Without exposure to real-world legal issues, students are unable to develop essential skills such as interviewing clients, drafting legal documents, and navigating judicial processes. Expanding legal clinics could not only benefit students but also increase access to legal assistance for underserved communities, particularly in rural areas.

Partnerships between universities and legal employers, such as law firms, courts, and government agencies, are underdeveloped in Ukraine. Students have fewer opportunities to network with practicing professionals or gain mentorship during their studies. Without internships, students miss critical experiences that teach them courtroom etiquette, negotiation techniques, and legal strategy.

While moot court competitions are a hallmark of legal training in many countries, they are not widely practiced in Ukraine. Moot courts allow students to simulate legal proceedings and practice advocacy, an essential skill for courtroom lawyers. The absence of this training leaves many Ukrainian graduates unprepared for litigation roles. Participating in moot courts can enhance students' confidence in public speaking and argumentation—skills that are undervalued in the current system.

EU legal education places significant emphasis on practical training, recognizing its importance in preparing students for the complexities of the legal profession. Courses are designed to develop practical competencies, such as drafting contracts, analyzing case law, and preparing legal briefs. This hands-on approach ensures students are job-ready upon graduation. EU programs balance theoretical knowledge with experiential learning, offering a comprehensive education that prepares students for diverse legal careers.

EU universities prioritize preparing students for the workplace by incorporating real-world scenarios into the curriculum. These exercises allow students to practice dispute resolution and develop problem-solving skills in controlled environments. Many EU law schools introduce students to tools like e-discovery software, online case management systems, and AI-powered legal research platforms.

In many EU countries, internships or apprenticeships are a requirement for graduation or bar admission. Universities collaborate with law firms, courts, and public agencies to provide structured, supervised internships. Internships often lead to full-time employment, helping students transition seamlessly into the workforce.

Legal clinics are an integral part of EU legal education, offering students opportunities to provide legal services to real clients under the supervision of faculty and practicing lawyers. Clinics teach students to interview clients, analyze cases, and develop legal strategies, all while fostering a sense of professional responsibility. Clinics often serve vulnerable populations, instilling in students a commitment to pro bono work and social justice.

By addressing these gaps, Ukraine can align its legal training with EU standards, producing lawyers who are not only knowledgeable but also skilled, adaptable, and ready to contribute to both the domestic and European legal landscapes.

**4. Faculty expertise and development.** Faculty expertise and development are

fundamental to the quality and effectiveness of legal education. In Ukraine, the challenges faced in this area contrast starkly with the strengths seen in EU countries, creating a significant gap in the training and preparation of law students.

Many Ukrainian law professors have limited or no direct experience with EU legal systems, international legal practices, or advanced pedagogical methods. Professors often lack familiarity with EU directives, regulations, and case law, which are critical for preparing students for Ukraine's integration into the European legal framework. Few faculty members have pursued advanced degrees or fellowships in EU countries, limiting their exposure to innovative teaching methods and interdisciplinary approaches. Opportunities for Ukrainian faculty to engage in international research collaborations or publish in global legal journals are rare, further restricting their academic and practical horizons.

The limited availability of professional development programs for faculty members hinders their ability to adapt to modern legal and educational standards. Funding shortages often prevent faculty from attending international conferences, training workshops, or exchange programs. Many professors rely on local networks and resources, which may not reflect the latest developments in EU or global legal systems. Without exposure to global trends, faculty members are less equipped to update course content or incorporate new areas of law into their teaching.

A reliance on traditional, lecture-based teaching methods persists among Ukrainian law professors. Many faculty members are reluctant to adopt interactive or experiential teaching practices, viewing them as unnecessary or incompatible with existing institutional norms. Professors often prioritize the transmission of legal codes and statutes over fostering critical thinking, analytical reasoning, or practical skills.

Regional disparities exacerbate the challenges faced by faculty in smaller or rural institutions. Professors at universities in major cities like Kyiv and Lviv have greater access to resources and development opportunities compared to those in smaller or rural areas. Skilled professors often move to urban institutions or seek opportunities abroad, leaving rural universities with less experienced faculty.

Faculty members in EU law schools often have international exposure, enhancing their ability to deliver high-quality, globally relevant legal education. Many professors hold advanced degrees from prestigious universities across Europe and beyond, bringing diverse perspectives to their teaching. Faculty members frequently have experience working in international law firms, EU institutions, or cross-border legal environments, providing practical insights to students. Professors often teach in multiple languages, reflecting the multilingual and multicultural nature of the EU legal system.

Continuous professional development is a cornerstone of faculty expertise in EU countries. Faculty members are encouraged to attend and present at international conferences, fostering the exchange of ideas and best practices. Universities and legal organizations provide regular training workshops on emerging legal trends, teaching methodologies, and technology integration. Professors actively engage in research, contributing to global legal scholarship and ensuring their teaching remains current and evidence-based.



EU law schools emphasize modern, student-centered teaching practices. Professors use seminars, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises to engage students and encourage critical thinking. Courses often integrate insights from economics, sociology, and political science, broadening students' understanding of legal issues. Faculty members incorporate digital tools, such as e-learning platforms, legal databases, and simulation software, into their teaching.

EU universities invest in faculty development through structured policies and resources. Professors are given opportunities for sabbaticals and funded fellowships to pursue research or professional development. Faculty often participate in joint programs with other EU institutions, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared learning.

By investing in faculty expertise and professional development, Ukraine can significantly enhance the quality of its legal education, equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in both domestic and EU contexts.

**5. Access to resources.** Access to resources is a vital component of quality legal education, directly influencing the depth and breadth of students' learning experiences. The availability and utilization of resources in Ukraine and EU countries differ significantly, highlighting gaps that must be addressed for Ukraine to align with European standards.

The majority of Ukrainian law schools still rely on printed textbooks and teaching aids that are outdated and fail to reflect current legal developments or international standards. Few textbooks include comprehensive discussions of EU laws, directives, and regulations, leaving students underprepared for cross-border legal practice. Textbooks are revised infrequently, resulting in a reliance on information that may no longer be applicable in the context of ongoing legal reforms or EU integration efforts. The lack of updated materials restricts students' ability to engage with contemporary legal challenges, such as digital transformation, climate change, or international trade disputes.

Law school libraries in Ukraine, particularly in regional universities, often lack the specialized legal resources and access to scholarly journals needed for advanced research. While some institutions in major cities like Kyiv and Lviv have relatively well-equipped libraries, rural universities face significant shortages. Most resources are available only in Ukrainian or Russian, with minimal access to English-language journals or books, limiting exposure to global legal scholarship. Few libraries provide access to digital databases like LexisNexis, Westlaw, or EU legal repositories, making it difficult for students and faculty to stay updated on international legal developments.

Digital tools and e-learning platforms are underutilized in Ukrainian legal education, hindering students' familiarity with modern legal practices. Students rarely have opportunities to use tools such as case management systems, legal research software, or AI-powered platforms, which are increasingly essential in legal practice. Many institutions lack the technological infrastructure needed to support digital learning, such as high-speed internet, computer labs, or online learning management systems. The pandemic exposed significant gaps in digital readiness, with many institutions struggling to transition to online learning.

Legal education in EU countries benefits from a wealth of resources that are regularly updated and readily accessible to students and faculty. University libraries are well-stocked with a wide range of books, journals, and case law materials, including those focused on international and EU law. Students and faculty have access to renowned legal databases such as LexisNexis, Westlaw, and HeinOnline, as well as specialized EU repositories like EUR-Lex and Curia. Libraries often participate in national or EU-wide networks, enabling resource-sharing and interlibrary loans.

EU law schools are leaders in integrating technology into the learning process, ensuring students are equipped with the skills needed for modern legal practice. Students are trained to use legal research tools, e-discovery platforms, and case management systems, preparing them for technology-driven environments. Virtual learning environments such as Moodle, Blackboard, or proprietary systems are widely used to facilitate coursework, assignments, and collaboration. Some universities incorporate simulation software for mock trials, negotiations, or legal drafting exercises, providing hands-on experience in a controlled setting.

EU institutions prioritize innovation in resource development and utilization, ensuring students have access to cutting-edge tools and knowledge. Teaching materials are frequently revised to include the latest legal and technological advancements, such as GDPR compliance, digital trade laws, or AI regulation. EU funding mechanisms, such as Erasmus+ and Horizon Europe, provide substantial financial support for resource development, research, and technological adoption.

By addressing these disparities and leveraging innovative solutions, Ukraine can significantly enhance the quality and accessibility of its legal education resources, better preparing students and faculty for integration into the European legal system.

**6. Ethical and professional training.** Ethical and professional training forms the backbone of a legal practitioner's career, influencing their integrity, decision-making, and ability to uphold the rule of law. The treatment of ethics and professional conduct in legal education differs greatly between Ukraine and EU countries, reflecting systemic challenges and cultural norms.

In Ukraine, ethical and professional training is often marginalized, treated as a secondary or peripheral component of legal education. Courses on legal ethics, when offered, are typically standalone and theoretical, rather than integrated throughout the curriculum. This approach fails to instill a consistent emphasis on ethical considerations in various legal contexts. Ethical training tends to focus narrowly on compliance with procedural rules, overlooking broader issues such as conflicts of interest, social justice, or the ethical implications of new technologies in law.

Students rarely have opportunities to practice ethical decision-making in simulated or real-world scenarios. Curricula often omit case studies or moot courts that challenge students to navigate ethical complexities, such as attorney-client confidentiality, whistleblowing, or balancing legal duties with moral obligations. The underdevelopment of legal clinics in Ukraine further limits students' exposure to the ethical challenges of representing real clients.

The prevalence of corruption within the legal education system itself undermines efforts to instill ethical values. Instances of bribery for grades, admissions, or degrees

weaken the credibility of legal training and set a poor ethical precedent for future lawyers. The normalization of such practices perpetuates a cycle of ethical indifference, where students enter the legal profession without a strong commitment to integrity. The association of corruption with the legal profession damages public trust in both legal education and the justice system.

There is often a disconnect between the ethical standards taught in law schools and the realities of legal practice in Ukraine. Young lawyers may face pressure to conform to unethical practices within legal institutions, further eroding their commitment to professional responsibility. A lack of visible role models or mentors who prioritize ethics makes it difficult for students to internalize and practice professional values.

Legal ethics and professional responsibility are integral to the curriculum in EU countries, reflecting the importance of these values in maintaining public trust and the rule of law. Ethical considerations are woven throughout courses, ensuring students understand the relevance of ethics in every aspect of legal practice, from contract law to human rights. Ethical training often incorporates perspectives from philosophy, sociology, and political science, providing a well-rounded understanding of moral obligations and societal impacts.

EU legal education emphasizes the application of ethical principles in real-world contexts. Students engage with case studies, moot courts, and role-playing exercises that challenge them to address ethical dilemmas, such as handling conflicts of interest or ensuring fair representation. Legal clinics in EU law schools emphasize ethical conduct in client interactions, teaching students how to navigate real-life challenges while upholding professional standards.

EU countries place a high value on fostering a culture of integrity within legal education and practice. Faculty and practicing lawyers actively mentor students, demonstrating the importance of ethical behavior and professionalism. Strict adherence to ethical codes established by national and EU-wide bar associations reinforces the importance of integrity and accountability.

EU legal education addresses contemporary ethical challenges arising from technological advancements and societal changes. Courses often explore issues such as data privacy, AI in law, and cybersecurity, equipping students to handle the ethical implications of modern legal practices. Many programs emphasize the ethical dimensions of protecting human rights, particularly in international law and humanitarian contexts.

By prioritizing ethical and professional training, Ukraine can not only enhance the quality of its legal education but also strengthen public trust in its justice system and align more closely with EU values of accountability and integrity.

**7. Alignment with employment market.** Alignment between legal education and the employment market is a critical factor in ensuring graduates can transition seamlessly into professional roles. Significant differences exist between Ukraine and EU countries in terms of job market responsiveness, skill development, and career outcomes.

Ukraine produces a disproportionately high number of law graduates each year

relative to market demand. The number of legal positions available in law firms, government agencies, and corporations is insufficient to absorb the annual influx of graduates. Many law graduates end up in unrelated fields, leading to a loss of specialized talent and dissatisfaction among young professionals. The oversaturation diminishes the perceived value of a law degree, making it less attractive to top-performing students and contributing to skill dilution within the profession.

Legal education in Ukraine often fails to equip graduates with the skills and competencies demanded by modern employers. The focus on theoretical knowledge over practical training leaves graduates ill-prepared for the real-world demands of legal practice. Students are not exposed to legal tech tools like case management software, e-discovery platforms, or AI-powered legal research systems, which are increasingly critical in legal professions. A lack of training in international and EU law limits opportunities for graduates to work in multinational organizations or cross-border legal roles.

Ukrainian law programs typically provide a general legal education without pathways for specialization in high-demand fields. Graduates find it challenging to enter niche markets, such as intellectual property law, environmental law, or arbitration, which require specialized knowledge and skills. Emerging fields like technology law, data protection, and compliance are largely absent from Ukrainian curricula, further reducing employability in modern legal contexts.

The collaboration between legal education institutions and industry stakeholders in Ukraine is underdeveloped. Universities rarely engage with law firms, corporations, or government bodies to understand their hiring needs and align curricula accordingly. Students often lack access to structured internships or apprenticeships that could bridge the gap between education and employment.

A significant number of skilled Ukrainian law graduates seek opportunities abroad due to limited prospects at home. The migration of talent exacerbates shortages of qualified legal professionals, particularly in rural and less-developed regions. The loss of legal expertise negatively affects Ukraine's ability to build robust legal institutions and drive economic growth.

Legal education in EU countries is designed to meet the evolving needs of the employment market. Universities frequently collaborate with employers to design curricula that reflect current trends and skills demands. Programs emphasize competencies such as legal drafting, negotiation, advocacy, and problem-solving, ensuring graduates are prepared for professional roles. Career services, mentorship programs, and alumni networks are integral to helping students transition from education to employment.

EU legal education offers numerous opportunities for students to specialize in areas aligned with market demands. Modular systems allow students to focus on high-demand fields such as intellectual property, international arbitration, competition law, and human rights law. Programs increasingly include courses on technology law, AI regulation, and environmental law, reflecting the priorities of modern legal practice. Specialization enhances the employability of EU graduates in international and cross-border legal roles.

EU legal education integrates legal technology into training, ensuring graduates are adept at using the tools necessary for modern practice. Students are trained to use software for legal research, case management, and contract analysis, which are standard in most legal professions. Programs explore the ethical and practical implications of emerging technologies, such as blockchain, AI, and data protection, preparing students for future challenges.

In many EU countries, internships or apprenticeships are mandatory for law students, bridging the gap between education and practice. Structured internships with law firms, courts, and corporate legal departments allow students to gain practical experience and build professional networks. Students apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, developing the confidence and competence needed for employment. Internships often lead to job offers, ensuring a seamless transition from education to the workforce.

EU law schools prepare students for international and cross-border legal roles through training in EU law, international law, and multilingual education. Graduates are well-equipped to work for global organizations, international courts, or multinational corporations. Exposure to diverse legal systems and cultural contexts enhances adaptability and global employability.

The table 1 presents the main differences in approaches to training lawyers in Ukraine and EU countries.

**Table 1. Comparison of legal education in Ukraine and EU countries**

Aspect	Ukraine	EU Countries
Curriculum Structure and Content	Focused on national laws; minimal EU law and international content; rooted in Soviet traditions; static and inflexible.	Includes EU law and international content; interdisciplinary and dynamic; updated regularly to reflect global trends.
Teaching Methodology	Lecture-centric; memorization-based learning; limited interactive methods or case studies; resistance to innovation.	Interactive and participatory methods; emphasis on case-based learning; competency-focused; integrates technology.
Practical Skill Development	Emphasis on theory; few legal clinics; minimal internships; weak moot court culture.	Strong focus on practical skills; mandatory internships; robust clinical programs; well-developed moot court culture.
Faculty Expertise and Development	Limited international exposure; few professional development opportunities; traditional teaching styles.	Global experience among faculty; continuous development; use of modern pedagogical techniques.
Access to Resources	Outdated materials; limited library resources; insufficient access to digital tools and databases.	Comprehensive and up-to-date resources; access to legal databases and digital tools; emphasis on innovation.
Ethical and Professional Training	Minimal focus on ethics; instances of academic dishonesty and corruption in education undermine integrity.	Ethical training is integrated across the curriculum; emphasis on integrity and professional responsibility.
Alignment with Employment Market	Oversaturated job market; skill mismatches with employer demands; limited specialization opportunities.	Market-oriented training; opportunities for specialization; alignment with employer needs; global readiness.

*Sources: developed by author*

The differences between legal training in Ukraine and EU countries highlight the challenges Ukraine faces in aligning its system with European standards. EU countries focus on practical skills, international exposure, and modernized curricula, supported

by advanced resources and technology. In contrast, Ukraine's system remains rooted in theory, with limited practical training and outdated methodologies. Addressing these disparities will require systemic reform, increased funding, and collaboration with EU partners to prepare Ukrainian lawyers for the demands of European integration.

By addressing these disparities and aligning legal education with employment market demands, Ukraine can ensure its graduates are well-prepared for domestic and international roles, contributing to the country's economic growth and EU integration.

**Main recommendations for reforming legal education in Ukraine.** Based on the detailed insights provided, the recommendations for reform in Ukraine's legal education system can be organized into six broad categories: curriculum reform, practical training, faculty development, resource enhancement, ethical and professional training, and employment market alignment. Each category addresses critical gaps and offers actionable steps to bring Ukraine's legal education closer to EU standards.

Table 2 presents the main recommendations for reform in Ukraine in approaches to training lawyers in accordance with EU requirements.

**Table 2. Systematic recommendations for reform in Ukraine**

Category	Key Recommendations
Curriculum Reform	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduce modular curricula to allow specialization.</li> <li>2. Make EU and international law central to legal education.</li> <li>3. Enhance practical training via internships, moot courts, and clinics.</li> <li>4. Regularly update curricula to reflect legislative and global trends.</li> <li>5. Foster interdisciplinary collaboration with other fields.</li> </ol>
Teaching Methodology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopt case-based learning and hypothetical scenarios.</li> <li>2. Transition to interactive teaching methods like seminars and debates.</li> <li>3. Expand experiential learning through simulations and clinical programs.</li> <li>4. Leverage technology for modern teaching methods.</li> <li>5. Support faculty development in innovative methodologies.</li> </ol>
Practical Skill Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand legal clinics in major universities.</li> <li>2. Strengthen internship programs with formal employer partnerships.</li> <li>3. Create a national network of moot court competitions.</li> <li>4. Mandate practical components like internships or clinics for graduation.</li> </ol>
Faculty Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase faculty participation in international exchange programs.</li> <li>2. Establish training centers for modern pedagogy and EU law.</li> <li>3. Collaborate with EU institutions for joint training and research.</li> <li>4. Use grants and awards to incentivize innovative teaching.</li> <li>5. Reduce regional disparities in faculty development opportunities.</li> </ol>
Resource Development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Modernize library collections with contemporary and multilingual texts.</li> <li>2. Provide digital access to global legal databases and journals.</li> <li>3. Enhance technological infrastructure with e-learning platforms.</li> <li>4. Introduce training on legal technology tools and software.</li> <li>5. Bridge resource disparities between urban and rural universities.</li> </ol>
Ethical and Professional Training	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Integrate ethics consistently across legal education curricula.</li> <li>2. Develop practical ethical training through case studies and clinics.</li> <li>3. Implement anti-corruption measures in universities.</li> <li>4. Address modern ethical challenges like AI and data privacy.</li> <li>5. Foster a culture of integrity through mentorship programs.</li> </ol>
Market Alignment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Revise curricula to meet employer needs with practical and tech skills.</li> <li>2. Promote specialization in high-demand fields like IP and arbitration.</li> <li>3. Foster industry collaboration for internships and mentorship.</li> <li>4. Address oversaturation of law graduates by aligning admissions with demand.</li> <li>5. Invest in career services and encourage opportunities in underserved regions.</li> </ol>

Sources: developed by author

These reforms aim to transform Ukraine's legal education system into one that is modern, practical, and aligned with EU standards. By addressing gaps in curricula, training, faculty development, resources, ethics, and market alignment, Ukraine can equip its legal professionals to thrive in both domestic and international contexts, paving the way for successful integration into the European Union.

**Discussion.** The training of lawyers in Ukraine faces numerous challenges, largely stemming from its post-Soviet legacy, resource constraints, and lack of alignment with EU legal education practices. Key findings include:

- *Curriculum structure and content.* Ukrainian curricula focus heavily on theoretical knowledge, with limited coverage of EU law and international subjects. In contrast, EU countries emphasize dynamic, interdisciplinary curricula that adapt to global trends and include emerging fields such as technology law and environmental law.

- *Teaching methodologies.* Ukrainian legal education relies on lecture-centric and rote learning approaches, whereas EU countries favor interactive, participatory, and case-based learning methods that foster critical thinking and problem-solving.

- *Practical training.* Ukraine offers limited opportunities for experiential learning, such as legal clinics, internships, and moot courts. EU countries integrate these practical components into curricula, ensuring students are job-ready upon graduation.

- *Faculty expertise and development.* Ukrainian faculty often lack international exposure and access to professional development opportunities, leading to outdated teaching practices. EU faculty benefit from global experience, continuous training, and interdisciplinary approaches.

- *Access to resources.* Resource disparities are significant in Ukraine, with outdated textbooks, limited access to legal databases, and inadequate technological infrastructure. EU institutions prioritize up-to-date resources and cutting-edge technology integration.

- *Ethical and professional training.* Ethical training in Ukraine is fragmented and insufficiently integrated into curricula. EU countries embed ethics throughout legal education, emphasizing integrity, accountability, and modern ethical challenges.

- *Employment market alignment.* Ukraine's oversaturation of law graduates and lack of specialization contrasts with the market-oriented training and specialization opportunities provided in EU countries, which align with employer needs and global trends.

Despite these challenges, Ukraine's ongoing EU integration offers a unique opportunity to modernize its legal education system. Recommendations for reform include adopting modular curricula, enhancing faculty development, expanding practical training opportunities, modernizing resources, and fostering industry collaboration. These measures can bridge the gap between Ukrainian and EU legal education practices, preparing Ukrainian lawyers for competitive roles in both domestic and international contexts.

**Conclusion.** Aligning Ukraine's legal education system with EU standards is essential for the country's European integration and the professional readiness of its legal workforce. The identified challenges—ranging from outdated curricula and

limited practical training to resource constraints and ethical training gaps—underscore the need for systemic reform. By implementing the proposed recommendations, Ukraine can create a robust, adaptive, and internationally competitive legal education framework. This transformation will not only empower Ukrainian lawyers to navigate complex legal landscapes but also strengthen the nation's legal and institutional alignment with the European Union.

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