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## **COLLABORATION OF HEIs OF UKRAINE AND GREAT BRITAIN IN A TIME OF WAR**

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Bath Spa University (United Kingdom) has been building partnerships and friendships in Ukraine for many years. The University has learned much about Ukraine’s history, culture, and language, and has come to appreciate the depth and sincerity of the Ukrainian people’s commitment to democratic values and a peaceful, sustainable future for their country. The brutal invasion by Russia last year has brought such heartbreak and sorrow, but it has also demonstrated Ukraine’s extraordinary strength, resilience, and bravery in the face of unwarranted aggression.

Bath Spa University and Academician Stepan Demianchuk International university of Economics and Humanities have been working together since 2018. The first joint project was *DESTIN: Journalism Education for Democracy in Ukraine: Developing Standards, Integrity and Professionalism*, a Capacity Building project funded by Erasmus+ which involved 20 partners, including 10 Ukrainian universities.

*DESTIN Project*

The DESTIN project (2018–22) aimed to transform the environment for journalism in Ukraine by working with university departments, employers, and other key stakeholders to ensure that higher education programmes better matched the needs of

students, the media sector, and democratic society more generally. The project explicitly aligned with the goals of the Bologna process as it aimed to make Ukraine's higher education system for journalism more compatible with European norms, to strengthen the relevant quality assurance mechanisms, to increase the international opportunities for students and staff, and to improve employability for journalism graduates.

Following the launch of the project in November 2018, the project partners gathered at Bath Spa University (Bath, UK) to meet, discuss the project goals and activities, and to share insights about journalism in Ukraine and the EU. International University of Economics and Humanities representatives were in attendance. Later in 2019, project participants met in Kyiv at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv for a reporting conference attended to learn about best practice in curriculum development and how to adapt of European pedagogical models for journalism and media education in Ukraine.

International University of Economics and Humanities were also among the representatives who participated in international 'field trips' to learn about best practice at two leading EU journalism schools, Linnaeus University (Kalmar, Sweden) and Adam Mickiewicz University (Poznan, Poland). In December 2019 project participants from the Ukrainian universities met in Kyiv at the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv for a curriculum development training workshop led by EU partners.

It is testament to the strength and resilience of the DESTIN partners, especially those in Ukraine, that despite the twin horrors of a global pandemic and a brutal invasion the project nonetheless completed nearly everything that it set out to do in 2018, and even, in certain ways, went beyond the original goals. It took a year longer than planned but its achievements are remarkable by any measure. Most notably, it designed *and* launched 20 new and revised BA and MA journalism and media degree programmes across Ukraine, meaning that hundreds of students have already benefitted from the project: in 2021/22, 601 BA and 255 MA students enrolled in programmes that DESTIN had directly shaped; in 2022/23, 494 BA and 244 MA students enrolled. In addition, the project launched seventeen online 'media literacy' courses aimed at the Ukrainian public; published 'National Methodological Guidelines' for BA and MA Journalism programmes that have been shared by the Ministry of Education and Science with universities across Ukraine; created the Ukrainian Forum for Educators in Media and Journalism; and developed a dual-diploma Polish-Ukrainian MA programme in journalism, launched in September 2022. The project website, <https://www.destin-project.info/en/> provides a wealth of material and resources related to the DESTIN project.

#### *Twining Project*

In June 2022 Bath Spa University and International University of Economics and Humanities joined together in a 'Twin for Hope' partnership, supported by Universities UK and Cormack Consultancy. The 'Twin for Hope' initiative aims to ensure that Ukraine's universities not only survive but emerge stronger from the war, allowing them to play a critical role in post-war reconstruction. The similar histories, characteristics, and ambitions of the two universities made them ideal partners and the partnership has allowed them to learn from each other, to plan new and exciting projects and activities

together, and to strengthen ties of friendship and cooperation through the development of academic, cultural and personal exchange.

В основі проєкту закладено дух солідарності, освіти та співчуття, які підкріплюються довгостроковими амбіціями з боку обох партнерів. Колектив Університету Бат Спа переслідує інтереси в сфері освіти, гуманітарних наук та бізнесу, що вилилися у прагнення зміцнення дослідницького та інноваційного потенціалу нашого університету через стратегічну підтримку та проведення спільних досліджень у різних наукових сферах. Планується запуск навчання дослідницьким навичкам для викладачів МEGУ та програми підготовки лідерів. Громадська робота Музею миру в ході реалізації проєкту буде посилена для покращення добробуту дітей та молоді, в тому числі й через активну громадську роботу.

Most notably, this included the awarding of funding from Research England and UK Research and Innovation to support a project, “I Vote for Peace: Collaboration and Compassion in a Time of War.” This project, which began in April 2023, will produce an agreed collaborative research and innovation strategy and action plan, co-authored research papers, training workshops for Ukrainian researchers, and a leadership and resilience training programme. It also supports International University of Economics and Humanities’s Museum of Peace, by providing much needed equipment as well as contributing to the ‘I vote for Peace’ public reading event on 28 April 2023. These readings, mostly by students, acknowledged the pain of what Ukraine has experienced over the past year, and included contributions from many international partners, including Bath Spa University: overall, twenty foreign partners from 13 countries expressed their support and condolences to the Ukrainian people who are defending their independence in the fight against the Russian occupier, and more than 250 students from 29 secondary schools in Ukraine and 13 representatives of foreign students sent their essays and poems to participate.

2023 marks the 30th anniversary of the founding of Academician Stepan Demianchuk International University of Economics and Humanities, and staff and students at Bath Spa University are proud to stand in solidarity and support with their friends and colleagues at the International University of Economics and Humanities, and across Ukraine as a whole.

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## **PARTICIPATION AND POSITIONALITY IN THE POSTDIGITAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION RESEARCH COMMUNITY**

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In this short paper we introduce a global, interdisciplinary body of research and impact that is critically examining information systems, data and technologies as they intersect with all aspects of human life. This research has developed since the launch of the Springer Postdigital Science and Education (PDSE) journal in 2018, therefore we invite you to celebrate with the editorial team the last 5 years of diverse, critical contributions to PDSE and to think about how your own research might connect with this context and community.

Firstly, we will focus on how the establishing of the journal and a later book series has been at the centre of growing an active worldwide cross-disciplinary research community where both collective participation and individual positionalities have flourished. At the same time, we explain how the term 'postdigital' is a flawed but useful concept, with no universal definition, that has worked very well as a critical focal point for growing a substantial body of knowledge and inclusive research activity. Whilst we cannot reference every article or book chapter that has helped to grow PDSE, we will