

## **Freshmen Adaptation to University Life**

### **Introduction**

One of the most important prerequisites for successful learning of freshmen is their timely adaptation to training in high school, regarded as the initial stage of their inclusion in a professional community. The first course may either become the fulcrum for a student or lead to different deformations in his/her behavior, communication, and training. The study at the first course influences a freshman's attitude to study and the future professional activity. Even those who perfectly graduated from high school do not immediately gain confidence in their abilities at the first course. The first failure often leads to frustration, loss of perspective, alienation, and passivity. The success of adaptation defines the further course of professional life. The complexity of adaptation in the transition from general to vocational education is not only in the change of the social environment, but also in the need to make a decision, the appearance of anxiety about the validity of self-determination, which for many is identical to finding the meaning of life. The first difficulties for a student are related to the new conditions of life and the primary socialization in high school.

Along with the assignment of the status of a student, young people face a number of difficulties: a new system of education, relationships with classmates and teachers, problems in social and domestic relations, independent life in the urban environment (for foreign students), lack of knowledge of the structure and principles of the University as well as opportunities for fulfillment in creativity, science, sports, and social life. The signs of unsuccessful adaptation can be seen in decreased efficiency, fatigue, drowsiness, headache, the dominance of depressed mood, increase in the level of anxiety, confusion, or, conversely, hyperactivity, accompanied by misconduct, absenteeism, and the lack of motivation of educational activity. The duration of the process of adaptation defines both current and upcoming students' progress.

## **Adaptation in Society**

### **Acquaintance with the New Team**

One of the important steps, which cannot be avoided, while studying at the university, is acquaintance and communication with the new team. The process of adaptation of students to a new team depends on the situation in the group, its psychological climate as well as on how comfortable a student feels during school hours and in situations of interaction with classmates and teachers. A study team has a dual structure: firstly, it is an object and the result of conscious and purposeful actions of teachers and curators, who determine many of its features; secondly, it is a relatively self-evolving phenomenon, which is subject to specific socio - psychological laws. The feature of the first-year student's group is that it is not an established team and there are no established and entrenched rules and norms of behavior. In this group, everyone is a new person for each member of a group. If at school, any student is known for many years, having a certain status, at the university he/she has the opportunity to get a completely new status and position in the team.

### **Contact with Teachers**

In addition to the acquaintance with the new team, a freshman should become acquainted with new teachers, and this process is not easy. A student has to find a certain approach to each teacher and understand his/her teaching style and attitude toward students. At school, each teacher is giving his/her subject for many years and during this period he/she forms personal relationship with each of his/her students. In turn, higher education is dominated by equal treatment of all students. A teacher's contact with the students is logical, psychological, and moral. A logical contact is the contact of teacher's and students' thoughts. A psychological contact is in the focus of students' attention in the perception and understanding a certain material, as well as in the internal mental and emotional activity in

response to a teacher and the information from incoming him/her. A moral contact provides cooperation between a teacher and students. In the absence of a contact, such as in situations of a conflict, cognitive process is either difficult, or even impossible.

### **Adaptation to the Learning Process**

The transition from class-lesson training system to a predominantly self-study often happens quite painful, and even with serious complications. Not all students cope with overcoming of the difficulties and quickly rebuild the usual forms of educational work. Undergraduate education has some significant differences compared with the school. Moreover, some school stereotypes of training activities are not suitable for high school study and in, some cases, are an obstacle for it. In this case, the previously learned skills might hinder the successful implementation of the follow-up and require some adjustment.

### **Adaptation to New Conditions of Life**

When becoming a student at the University, young people face significant changes in the conditions of their lives. The habitual way of the learning process is changing dramatically and there is a need to put up with the recent changes and get used to them. There are the following changes in a student's life:

- A new route to school;
- A new schedule and duration of lectures.

It is harder to adapt for nonresident students who should adapt not only to all the standard changes in their living conditions associated with admission to the university, since there is a difficult problem of living in a student dormitory or a renting apartment. Since the

settlement of a student in his/her the test on freedom begins. Leaving from parents, a student receives full freedom, virtually limitless since he/she can do and go whatever he/she wants. However, freedom is independence and responsibility as the duty to take care of oneself.

### **Strategies for Successful Adaptation**

As it is seen from the analysis, student adaptation to university education takes place on two levels, namely organizational and psychological. Many students have “difficulties of independent living, such as structuring their day, household chores, planning their economy and developing autonomous study skills.” In order to make adaptation successful, a student needs to work with both levels. At the organizational level, a student should properly organize his/her training regimen, allowing him/her to combine learning with leisure or work, if he/her earns. In this respect, time management and allocation of resources such as physical energy, psychological mood, and mental agility are particularly important. The psychological level of adaptation involves working with one’s psychological state in which the development of communication skills as well as skills of flexibility, pliability, and tractability towards other people are the basis for successful cooperation. If a student feels that he/she cannot cope with a problem, he/she should necessarily ask for help from qualified teachers who will not only indicate the right way in the process of adaptation, but also help pass it.

### **Conclusion**

Freshmen face a number of difficulties that characterize the process of adaptation to university education. The difficulties have both psychological and organizational characters. Psychological difficulties appear when meeting and communicating with classmates and new teachers, in a need to adapt to new living conditions (living in a dormitory, the route to school, etc.). Organizational difficulties occur as a result of a more complex system of

education, which requires students of a high level of skills of independent work. It involves the ability to properly manage their time and using resources. Given the characteristics of the process of adaptation, it is necessary to consider an integrated approach in order to make adaptation successful. Particular attention also should be paid to the help of experts, given that unsuccessful adaptation is the cause of serious problems in the study, which may even lead to expulsion from the university.