

## Formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying

Gulnara Akhmejanova<sup>a</sup>, Bulat Olzhabayev<sup>a</sup>, Roza Grigoryeva<sup>a</sup>,  
Zhanara Karibaeva<sup>a</sup>, Akmamyk Avilkhan<sup>a</sup>, Janat Sakenov<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>S. Toraighyrov Pavlodar State University, KAZAKHSTAN

### ABSTRACT

This article examines the scientific problem of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. The analysis has been conducted and the content of professional competence of legal specialty students has been substantiated. This work substantiates the role of elective courses in the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students. The process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying has been examined and justified. The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty in the elective courses studying has been methodologically proved and developed at the university conditions. The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students contains in its structure the main components: criteria, indicators, levels, which ensure the efficiency of the process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students. During the study, the efficacy of the developed model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying has been proved. The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying is recommended for use when developing educational programs.

### KEYWORDS

student, legal specialty, formation, professional competence,  
elective courses

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## 1. Introduction

Professional competence is an integrative quality, having wider contents and acting as a result of formed specific knowledge and skills, that is, what the graduate, such as legal specialty graduate should possess upon graduation. Professional competences, in turn, should be examined as components of competence which forms in the process of studying at the university a range of knowledge and skills that should be possessed (Asadullin, & Ivanov, 2004;

### CORRESPONDENCE

Gulnara Akhmejanova

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Berkimbaev *et al.*, 2012; Chown, 1994; Rakhimbekova *et al.*, 2015; Sundburg, 2001; Schantz, 2012). Professional competences are described using standards and criteria of tasks completion or behavioral standards, describing the active capabilities of a university graduate in a social context of professional activity. We must agree with the major opinion of researchers (Fernandez *et al.*, 2012; Hutchinson, 1994; Brown-Rice, & Furr, 2013; Kerimbaeva, 2012; Kosyanova, 2008; Sakenov *et al.*, 2012, Burger, 1973) that competence is an integrative characteristic of personality, which is a holistic, systemic set of qualities necessary for the successful implementation of activities in specific areas: the so-called competences, as well as the ability to effectively solve problematic situations and tasks that occur in all other spheres of its activity. In turn, the professional competency of legal specialty students is considered as the most important component of professional education, as an integral characteristic of personal and proactive qualities of the future legal expert, reflecting not only the level of knowledge, skills and experience, necessary to achieve the goals of professional activities, but also social and moral position of a person, professional competences of legal specialty students, which is a significant factor in allowing the graduate to adequately integrate into the social space, and doing legal activity of a certain kinds, to guide his or her impacts to the natural, social environment and different social relations. After graduation, a legal specialty graduate shall:

- Master basic legal courses according to his or her specialty, to have good theoretical proficiency.
- Be able to use legal concepts.
- Have skills of development of the legal information space.
- Have an active attitude to life as a student, a creative approach to his or her legal activity.
- Have computer skills and participation in legal Internet projects.
- Have knowledge of a foreign language.
- Have knowledge on legal etiquette, the culture of behavior.
- Know the culture of legal writing and speaking, properly express his or her thoughts, be able to present arguments in the support of his or her legal point of view.
- Have a notion on the rights and responsibilities of a lawyer for professional self-determination.
- Have knowledge and skills in the field of healthy lifestyle.
- Know the procedure of doing legal specialty activity and professional ethics.
- Have skills on taking on legal responsibility in relation to his or her own activities, be self-critical.

Modern academic specifics of educational programs of the university is reflected in the content of elective courses which provides the legal specialty student with the possibility of formation of professional skills and competences, legal activities sphere-oriented having regard to the needs of the community. Elective courses are chosen courses; their content allows to meet professional interests in accordance with personal inclinations. In turn, elective courses are the list of legal disciplines of learning approved by the educational organizations, included in the component of choice, of which the student forms his or her individual curriculum within the established credits. Elective inclinations provide

knowledge and skills for future lawyers, influence the formation of their professional competence as experts. It should be noted that until now, the problem of interrelation of elective courses with formation of professional competence of legal specialty students hasn't been widely examined. The analysis of the scientific research of Svistunov (2008), Zhaparova *et al.* (2013), Asenova *et al.* (2013), Day (1994), Kaminskaya, & Ratinov (1974), Kenenbaeva, & Tleulesova (2013), Kul'kov (2013), Nielsen (1994), Ponomarchuk (2011), Zippelius (2012) shows that the universities do not possess the sufficient level of scientific organization of educational process, contributing to the influence of elective courses on the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students. It has allowed to formulate the basic contradiction between the objective necessity of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students and the insufficient degree of theoretical bases status of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying in the higher education system. Thus, the goal of our research is to justify the process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying.

## 2. Methods

Research methods: in order to address the set goal of justifying the process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, we used theoretical research methods: study and analysis of philosophical, sociological, and legal literature on the research problem of professional competence; of conceptual-terminological apparatus; of approaches of scientists to the studied problem of elective courses and professional competence; analysis, synthesis, comparison, generalization, modeling in the study of the process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. The methodological basis of the research is the contemporary theories and concepts of higher education; research on the formation of professionalism of the lawyer; research on the formation of lawyers' professional competency; the ideas of system, culturological, personal, active-based, humanistic, axiological, acmeological, legal approaches of higher education; the idea of subject activity of personality in the process of his or her activity; the development of technological approaches and variable technologies of higher education, provisions for elective courses, elective courses directory.

## 3. Results

The competence-based approach to legal education is active-based, so the item-by-item development in legal specialty students of the ability to carry out one or another mental or practical action becomes one of its important aspects. At that, it is important for students to have a view on the rights and duties of a legal expert for further professional self-determination. The student choosing a profession of a lawyer should clearly understand that almost any written document and made decision will involve consequences. It is also necessary to know the procedure of legal activity and professional ethics of the chosen legal specialty. One of the main



conditions of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty student in the process of learning should be his or her identity as a subject of educational activity whose objective is the gradual acquisition of knowledge, abilities and skills. Only self-organization, self-control will enable the student to become competent in received legal specialty. The analysis of research works of Pillai (2016), Fernandez *et al.* (2012), Ponomarchuk (2011), Ishanov, & Bekmambetova (2013), Gifford (1994), Kramsch (2006), Svistunov (2008), Warren (1973), Pillai (2016) allows us to assert that professional education evolves conditions, factors and variability of professional training of students. These studies provide a basis for the assertion that the elective courses affect the training of legal specialty students, the process of development and formation of their professional competence.

The professional competence of legal specialty students is a characteristic of professional, personal qualities of a student including professional competences, providing effective and expedient implementation of professional activity:

- To know current legislation and all other sources of law.
- To be able to combine public and private interests.
- To be able to allocate the liability for a specific incident.
- To know the law enforcement practice in general and litigation in particular.
- To be able to apply the law in the alleged circumstances and to freely navigate in its hierarchy.
- To be able to make agreements and documents of a procedural nature and be able to conduct their legal expertise.
- To have a clear view of the proceedings in judicial and extrajudicial proceedings.
- To be able to give qualified legal opinions and advice (Ponomarchuk, 2011; Svistunov, 2008; Burger, 1973).

This understanding of professional competence of future lawyers creates the scientific basis for the development of the content of elective courses as means of professional training of legal specialty students.

We propose the following criteria of professional competence of legal specialty students:

- content (quality of assimilation of legal knowledge, level of professional literacy, mastering of a complex of legal concepts, categories, and laws);
- motivational (qualities and properties of the personality, tolerance, psychological readiness for future activity as a lawyer);
- active-based (quality of mastering of legal actions, having a professional focus, existence of abilities of the rational labor organization, the use of legal knowledge in non-standard situations, skills of design, organization and implementation of professional activity of a future lawyer).

The levels of professional competence of legal specialty students: high, medium, low.

We identified a set of organizational conditions that enhance professional competence of legal specialty students:

- Quality training of legal specialty students.
- Qualitative composition of faculty legal specialty students.

- Quality of technology of teaching of elective courses (legal workshop, legal psychology, methodology of organization of work of the lawyer).
- Quality and monitoring of results of professional training of legal specialty students.

The process of studying of elective courses, we consider as the means of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students. Practically this is the activity aimed at disclosure and implementation of the above criteria, levels, conditions of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students.

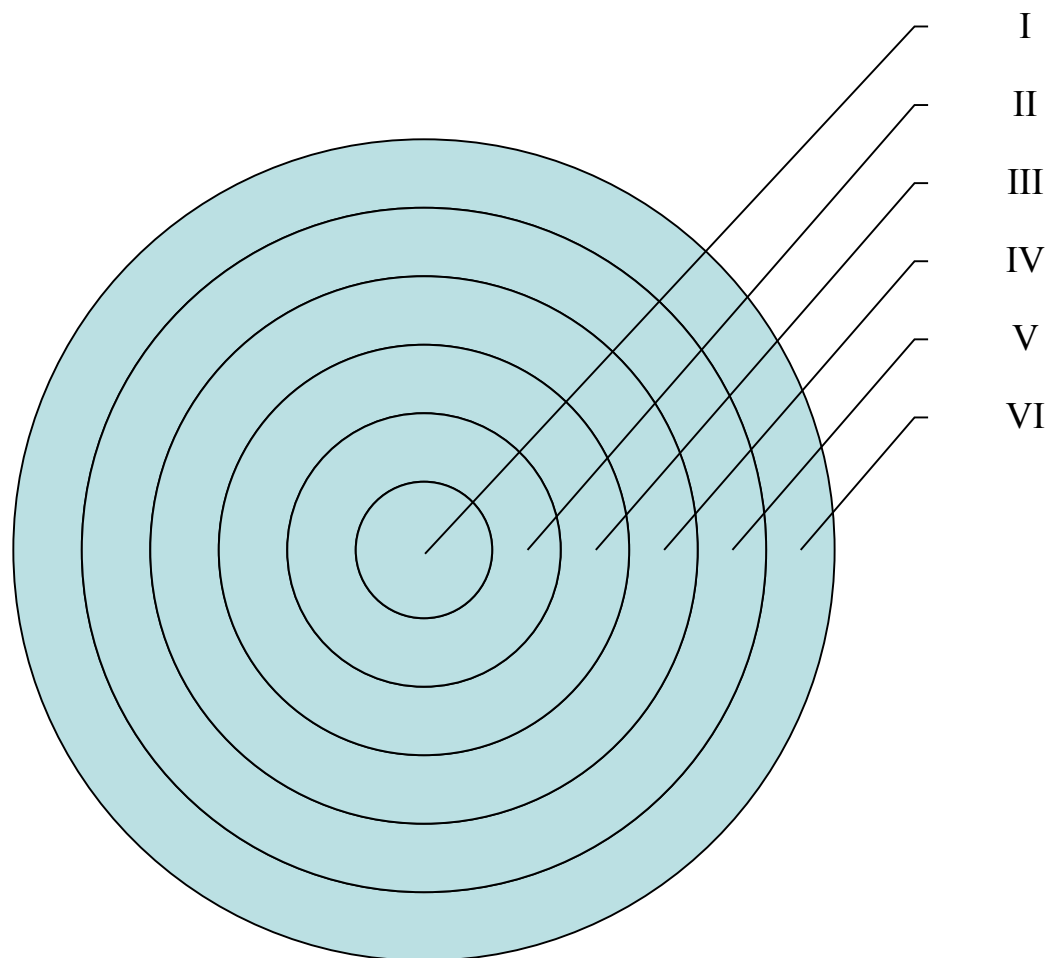
Thus, the organization of the process of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying involves the development of a model of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. The structure of the Model of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying includes the following components:

- Desired concept, professional competences of professional competence of legal specialty students.
- The criteria of professional competences of legal specialty students (meaningful, motivational, active-based).
- Levels of legal specialty students' professional competences: high, medium, low.
- A set of organizational conditions that increase the professional competencies of legal specialty students.

The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying represents the complete, interconnected process in which all components are directed on achievement of the ultimate goal – the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying.

### 3.1. Originality results

Thus, the scientific justification of the process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying prompted us to develop the original model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, containing the professional competence of legal specialty students in its structure and reflecting the required competences of students as future lawyers. A model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, developed by us, represents the complete, interconnected process in which all components are directed to the achievement of the desired goal – the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students, as a result of the development of elective courses: legal workshop, legal psychology, methodology of organization of work of the lawyer (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying

The explanation of Figure 1. The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. This model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying shows the main elements of the process of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying together:

I – Professional competences of legal specialty students (to know current legislation and all other sources of law; to be able to combine public and private interests; to be able to allocate the liability for a specific incident; to know the law enforcement practice in general and litigation in particular; to be able to apply the law in the alleged circumstances and to freely navigate in its

hierarchy; to be able to make agreements and documents of a procedural nature and be able to conduct their legal expertise; to have a clear view of the proceedings in judicial and extrajudicial proceedings; to be able to give qualified legal opinions and advice).

II – A complex of organizational conditions that enhance professional competences of students of the legal specialty (quality organization of professional training of students of the legal specialty; quality of the teachers of legal specialty students; quality of technology of teaching of elective courses (legal workshop, legal psychology, methodology of organization of work of the lawyer; quality and the monitoring of results of training of legal specialty students).

III – Criteria of professional competence of legal specialty students (meaningful, motivational, active-based).

IV – Levels of professional competence of legal specialty students: high, medium, low.

V – Elective courses (legal workshop, legal psychology, the methodology of the organization of work of the lawyer): their content allows to meet professional interests in accordance with the content of the discipline and of personal and professional needs of students.

VI – The process of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying.

#### 4. Discussion

In order to test the effectiveness of the developed model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, we conducted the experiment. The experiment involved 22 students who were divided into the control (11 students) and experimental group (11 students). During the experiment, we used the methods of interviews with students, teachers, questionnaires, observation; method of generalization of independent characteristics; studying the products of creative activity of students; methods of mathematical and statistical data processing.

Elective courses were applied only in the experimental group. During experimental check of model of formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, including the analyzing of the dynamics of the attitude of students as future lawyers to the content of elective courses, we managed to do the following justification: Conducting of the ascertaining stage of experiment allowed us to conclude that there are no significant differences between the students in the control and experimental groups on selected criterion and the levels of professional competence of legal specialty students at the beginning of carrying out forming experiment.

The purpose of the formative experiment was to check in practice a solvency and efficiency of the model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. A significant difference between the control group (CG) and experimental group (EG) was the changing of nature and organization of educational activities of the latter due to the implementation of the model of the formation of professional competence of legal



specialty students in the elective courses studying. Further, the pedagogical interpretation of the results and determining the level of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, carried out with the use of point-rating control system, allowed us to identify a positive tendency of the increase in the level of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. This scientific statement is confirmed by the results of the analysis of students' performance in the experimental and control groups before and after the scientific experiment

The statistical analysis of the data obtained as the result of experiment gave the mathematical confirmation of the importance of the model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. As the comparative analysis of values for each of the investigated criteria showed, the components of the model have the greatest impact on the quality of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students as a whole (Table 1).

**Table 1-**The dynamics of the increase in the levels of the formation of professional competences of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying (%)

Level formation of professional competence of legal specialty students	Prior to the experiment, %		After the experiment, %	
	Control Group (CG)	Experimental Group (EG)	Control Group (CG)	Experimental Group (EG)
Low	30	30	29	3
Medium	62	62	63	65
High	8	8	8	32

The data given in Table 1 “The dynamics of the increase in the levels of the formation of professional competences of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying (%)” show that after the organization of experimental work in the experimental group were observed dynamics of high (24% increase) and average (3% increase) levels of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying, which confirms the effectiveness of the model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying and the effectiveness of the conducted pedagogical experiment. Thus, the experiment results proved that the developed model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying really leads to positive results in the dynamics if all components of this model are implemented in conjunction with the educational process of the University.



## 5. Conclusion

As a result of the conducted research, we studied and analyzed the scientific problem of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. We conducted analysis and substantiated the content of professional competence of legal specialty students. We proved that the professional competence of legal specialty students is a characteristic of professional and personal qualities of a student including professional competencies, providing effective and expedient implementation of professional activity, such as knowledge of current legislation and all other sources of law; the ability to combine public and private interests; the ability to allocate that liability for a specific incident; knowledge of law enforcement practice in general and litigation in particular; the skills to apply the law in the alleged circumstances and to freely navigate in its hierarchy; the ability to make agreements and documents of a procedural nature and to conduct their legal expertise; a clear view of the proceedings in judicial and extrajudicial proceedings; the ability to give qualified legal opinion and advice. We proved that this understanding of professional competence of future lawyers creates the scientific basis for the development of the content of elective courses as means of professional training of legal specialty students. In the process of research, we substantiated the value of elective courses in the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students. We proved that the elective courses (legal workshop, legal psychology, methods of organization of work of lawyer) diversify and expand the professional interests of legal specialty students, in accordance with the content of the discipline and of personal and professional needs of students. Our research substantially differs from the research of Kaminskaya, & Ratinov (1974), Nielsen (1994), Ponomarchuk (2011), Svistunov (2008), Zhaparova *et al.* (2013), Berkimbaev *et al.* (2012), Pillai (2016) by the fact that we have developed and introduced an original model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying in the conditions of the University. The model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying contains in its structure the main components: criteria, levels, conditions which provide the dynamics of efficiency of the process of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. In the process of conducted experiment, we proved and substantiated the viability, the usefulness and effectiveness of the developed model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying. In connection with the received positive results of the experiment, the model of the formation of professional competence of legal specialty students in the elective courses studying is recommended for using in the development of educational standards and programs of universities.

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