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NEW PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN ARCHITECTURAL AND URBAN PLANNING EDUCATION DURING WARTIME: THE UKRAINIAN CONTEXT

The article examines the transformation of professional competencies in architectural and urban planning education under the conditions of wartime Ukraine. The study argues that the destruction of housing, infrastructure, public spaces, industrial territories and cultural heritage has changed not only the professional agenda of architects and urban planners, but also the expected learning outcomes of higher education programmes. A traditional object-oriented model of architectural education remains important for developing spatial thinking, composition, construction logic and design discipline; however, it is no longer sufficient when future professionals must work with damaged urban systems, community trauma, displacement, safety risks, memory of place and long-term reconstruction scenarios. The aim of the article is to identify and systematize the new groups of competencies that should be integrated into architectural and urban planning education in Ukraine in the context of post-war recovery. The methodology combines theoretical analysis of reflective practice, experiential learning, collaborative planning and urban resilience with pedagogical analysis of design studio content, curriculum logic and professional learning outcomes. The article proposes a framework of seven interconnected competency groups: reconstruction-oriented thinking, resilience and safety competence, participatory and community-oriented competence, interdisciplinary competence, digital and analytical competence, ethical and cultural competence, and project-management competence. The practical value of the study lies in its possible application to curriculum revision, reconstruction-oriented design studios, interdisciplinary workshops, methodological recommendations and university-community partnerships focused on the recovery of Ukrainian cities.

Key words: *architectural education, urban planning education, wartime Ukraine, post-war reconstruction, professional competencies, participatory planning, urban resilience, design studio, project management.*

(*статтю подано мовою оригіналу*)

The full-scale war against Ukraine has significantly changed the conditions in which architectural and urban planning education develops. Ukrainian cities are facing the destruction of housing, infrastructure, public spaces, industrial territories, cultural heritage and everyday urban networks. The Fifth Rapid Damage and Needs Assessment describes the war not only through the loss of separate buildings, but through systemic damage to social, economic, environmental and infrastructural foundations of recovery [1]. UNESCO also continues to verify damage to cultural sites in Ukraine, which means that reconstruction is inseparable from the preservation of memory, identity and historical continuity [2].

This is not only a technical problem. For architectural and urban planning education, the war has transformed the professional field itself. Future architects and planners are no longer being prepared only for the design of individual buildings, public spaces or master plans in relatively stable urban conditions. They are being prepared for a professional reality where destruction, uncertainty, displacement, emergency needs, ecological risks, damaged infrastructure and community trauma become part of the design brief. This does not cancel classical architectural competencies. Composition, function, construction, aesthetics, typology and spatial imagination remain essential. However, these competencies are no longer sufficient when the professional task is to rebuild a damaged city, reconnect fragmented communities, preserve heritage, support everyday safety and coordinate long-term post-war transformation.

The Ukrainian higher education system has demonstrated significant adaptability under wartime conditions. Universities reorganized learning processes, supported displaced students and teachers, combined online and offline formats and maintained institutional continuity under psychological and infrastructural pressure. For architecture and urban planning, this has a disciplinary meaning: students are learning inside the historical process that will define their future professional responsibilities.

The war is not an external background to education. It has become part of the content, context and responsibility of professional training.

The relevance of this article is connected with the need to rethink architectural and urban planning education as a system for preparing professionals for recovery. In many traditional educational models, the main result of studio work is a completed object: a building, public space, urban fragment or planning proposal. Wartime and post-war conditions require broader learning outcomes. A student should learn to read damaged urban systems, identify stakeholders, recognize vulnerability, work with data, understand risk, communicate with communities and make spatial decisions that are technically feasible and socially meaningful. Therefore, the article argues for a transition from a predominantly object-oriented model to a problem-oriented and reconstruction-oriented model of education.

The aim of the article is to identify and systematize new professional competencies that should be developed in architectural and urban planning education during wartime, with special attention to the Ukrainian context.

The object of the research is architectural and urban planning education in Ukrainian higher education institutions. The subject of the research is the transformation of professional competencies of future architects and urban planners under the influence of wartime and post-war reconstruction challenges.

The research objectives are the following: to analyse theoretical approaches to professional education and reflective practice; to identify the challenges that wartime conditions create for architectural and urban planning education; to define key groups of competencies required for reconstruction; to examine how they can be integrated into design studios, curricula and practical formats; and to determine the role of higher education institutions in preparing specialists for the recovery of Ukrainian cities.

The methodological framework includes theoretical analysis, pedagogical analysis, comparative analysis, case-based reasoning and systematization. Theoretical analysis is used to interpret the concepts of reflective practice, experiential learning, collaborative planning and resilience. Pedagogical analysis helps define changes in learning outcomes, studio formats and assessment criteria. Comparative analysis distinguishes traditional object-oriented architectural education from reconstruction-oriented educational models. Case-based reasoning allows the article to connect competency groups with possible studio tasks, workshops and reconstruction scenarios. Systematization makes it possible to group the new competencies into several interconnected blocks rather than presenting them as separate skills.

Donald Schon’s concept of the reflective practitioner is especially relevant for architectural education because design activity cannot be reduced to the mechanical application of fixed rules. Architects and planners often work in unique, uncertain and conflictual situations where professional judgement is formed through reflection-in-action [4]. This idea becomes even more important during wartime. Standard solutions are often insufficient when the object of design is not a neutral site but a damaged, contested or socially vulnerable urban environment.

In this context, reflection is not a decorative intellectual skill. It is a professional necessity.

David Kolb’s theory of experiential learning complements this argument. Kolb describes learning as a cycle that includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation [5]. In architectural and urban planning education, this means that students should not only listen to lectures about reconstruction, but also work with real cases, urban data, field research, community needs, project constraints and alternative design scenarios. A reconstruction-oriented studio should create conditions in which students move from observation to interpretation, from interpretation to concept, from concept to tested proposal, and from proposal to critical revision. This is especially important in Ukraine because the educational process can be directly connected with real territories, real damage, real communities and real institutional needs.

Collaborative planning theory adds another important dimension. Patsy Healey interprets planning as a communicative and institutional process in which different actors, interests and forms of knowledge participate in the production of spatial decisions [6]. This approach is essential for post-war reconstruction, because recovery cannot be understood as a purely technical or administrative operation. It requires interaction between public authorities, professionals, local communities, investors, NGOs, heritage experts, engineers, psychologists, educators and users of urban space. In this sense, the architect or urban planner is not only an author of spatial form, but also a mediator, interpreter and coordinator of knowledge.

Participation should not be reduced to formal public approval. Sherry Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation remains useful because it reminds planners that participation may range from manipulation to citizen power [7]. In wartime and post-war reconstruction, this distinction is particularly important. Communities affected by destruction, displacement or loss should not be treated merely as sources of emotional stories or as passive recipients of professional decisions. Their local knowledge, everyday practices, memories, fears and priorities are part of the spatial problem. For this reason, architectural education should develop participatory competence not as an optional humanitarian addition, but as a core professional capacity.

Resilience theory is also important, although it must be used carefully. Davoudi warns that resilience may become either a useful bridging concept or an empty term if it is detached from social, political and spatial realities [8]. For Ukrainian urban education, resilience should not be interpreted as a slogan about the ability to survive. It should be understood as the capacity of urban systems, institutions and communities to maintain continuity, adapt to disruption and transform after crisis. This requires attention to infrastructure, safety, energy, accessibility, governance, public space, housing, heritage and social cohesion.

The UNESCO-UIA Charter for Architectural Education also supports a broader view of architectural training. It emphasizes the need to prepare architects who can respond to social, cultural, environmental, technical and ethical challenges [9]. This position is compatible with the Ukrainian wartime context, where the professional role of architects is expanding beyond formal design into research, coordination, reconstruction planning, communication and public responsibility.

Wartime Context and the Transformation of Professional Roles. The Ukrainian context makes the transformation of competencies especially visible. War damage is spatially uneven, but its consequences are systemic. Destroyed housing produces displacement and social fragmentation. Damaged energy infrastructure changes the logic of building autonomy and urban continuity. Attacks on public buildings and schools turn safety into a spatial design issue. Damage to historical centres and cultural objects raises questions of memory, restoration

and representation. The destruction of industrial territories and transport networks affects economic recovery, logistics and employment. The architect or urban planner must be able to understand these relationships rather than treat each object as an isolated design task.

A damaged city is not a blank site. This point is fundamental for education. A blank site can be approached as an abstract compositional field, while a damaged city requires diagnosis, interpretation and responsibility. It contains material remains, institutional constraints, environmental risks, legal questions, property conflicts, traumatic memories and multiple expectations of the future. In such conditions, students should be trained to ask better questions before proposing form: what should be restored, what should be transformed, how safety can be integrated without producing spaces of fear, and how temporary solutions can avoid becoming permanent low-quality environments.

The professional profile of architects and urban planners is therefore becoming more complex. Future specialists must be able to combine design thinking with systems thinking, spatial analysis with social analysis, technical knowledge with ethical judgement, and individual creativity with collective decision-making. They should understand public procurement, project phasing, stakeholder mapping, participatory tools, digital coordination and the logic of implementation. They should also be able to communicate with non-professional audiences, because reconstruction decisions directly affect people who may have experienced loss, displacement and uncertainty.

This does not mean that architectural education should become less architectural. On the contrary, it means that architecture must be taught as a more complete professional practice.

The proposed hypothesis is that architectural and urban planning education in wartime Ukraine should move from a predominantly object-oriented model to a problem-oriented and reconstruction-oriented model. In the object-oriented model, the main educational result is often a finished design object. The student demonstrates the ability to organize function, volume, facade, plan, section, composition and presentation. This model is useful for developing spatial imagination and design discipline, but it may become insufficient when the real professional problem is broader than the object itself.

In the problem-oriented model, the educational result is wider. The student learns to understand an urban situation, identify conflicts, define values, read social and infrastructural dependencies, formulate scenarios, communicate with stakeholders and propose spatial strategies that respond to real needs. The design object remains important, but it becomes part of a larger chain of reasoning. A housing project also becomes a question of return, affordability, safety, energy, services and neighbourhood recovery. A public space project also becomes a question of accessibility, trauma-sensitive design, air-raid safety, maintenance and governance. An industrial revitalization project also becomes a question of environmental risk, employment, heritage, investment and participation.

This shift changes the role of the design studio. The studio should remain the core of architectural education, but its content should become more reconstruction-oriented. Instead of abstract tasks disconnected from reality, students should work with damaged urban fragments, destroyed infrastructure, post-industrial territories, displaced communities, heritage objects, public spaces and neighbourhoods that require rethinking. Such studios may combine urban analysis, field research, mapping, stakeholder analysis, scenario planning, design proposals and evaluation of social impact. The studio becomes a laboratory of recovery.

The transformation described above can be systematized through seven interrelated competency groups. They are not isolated modules, and they should not be inserted into curricula as separate formal topics. Their value lies in their interaction. Reconstruction-oriented thinking is weak without resilience and safety competence. Participatory competence is ineffective without communication and ethical sensitivity. Digital competence is risky if it becomes detached from local knowledge and social needs. Project-management competence is incomplete if it ignores cultural values and community trust. Therefore, the competency framework should be understood as an integrated professional profile for architects and urban planners working in wartime and post-war recovery.

The first group may be defined as reconstruction-oriented thinking. It includes the ability to work not only with new construction, but also with recovery, repair, adaptation, reuse, renovation, revitalization and long-term transformation of damaged territories. In this model, students should understand reconstruction not as the simple replacement of what was destroyed, but as a strategic process of creating safer, more inclusive and more resilient urban environments. For example, students may analyse destroyed residential districts and propose adaptive reconstruction strategies that combine safety standards, energy efficiency, social infrastructure and preservation of local identity.

The second group is resilience and safety competence. Wartime has shown that urban space must be analysed through the categories of vulnerability, risk, protection and continuity of everyday life. Future architects and urban planners should understand the role of shelters, evacuation routes, critical infrastructure, energy autonomy, public space safety and flexible use of buildings. These issues should not be treated as secondary technical details. They have become part of the basic professional responsibility of spatial disciplines.

A shelter is not only an engineering object. It is also a social space, a psychological environment and a part of everyday urban logistics.

The third group is participatory and community-oriented competence. Reconstruction directly affects people who have experienced loss, displacement, trauma and uncertainty. Therefore, professional education should develop the ability to work with communities, collect local knowledge, organize public consultations, map stakeholder interests

Table 1

New professional competencies for architectural and urban planning education in wartime Ukraine

Competency group	Core meaning	Possible educational integration
Reconstruction-oriented thinking	Ability to work with repair, reuse, adaptation, revitalization, phased recovery and long-term transformation of damaged territories	Studios on damaged neighbourhoods, post-industrial areas, housing recovery and adaptive reuse strategies
Resilience and safety competence	Understanding vulnerability, risk, shelters, evacuation, infrastructure continuity, energy autonomy and flexible building use	Design briefs that integrate shelters, safe routes, backup systems, flexible public functions and risk analysis
Participatory and community-oriented competence	Ability to work with communities, collect local knowledge, identify conflicts and translate needs into spatial decisions	Stakeholder mapping, public consultation simulations, community workshops and participatory design exercises
Interdisciplinary competence	Cooperation with sociology, psychology, ecology, economics, engineering, public administration, heritage studies and project management	Joint workshops with other departments, problem-based assignments and integrated reconstruction scenarios
Digital and analytical competence	Use of GIS, BIM, remote sensing, digital mapping, damage assessment, scenario modelling and online coordination platforms	Urban data labs, digital mapping of damage, BIM-based reconstruction models and scenario dashboards
Ethical and cultural competence	Sensitivity to memory, trauma, heritage, identity, justice, representation and respect for local experience	Critical discussions on restoration, transformation, commemoration, heritage loss and preservation of traces of war
Project-management competence	Ability to understand phasing, resources, institutional coordination, communication, monitoring and implementation constraints	Studio projects with timelines, stakeholder matrices, budgets, risk registers and implementation roadmaps

and identify conflicts before they become obstacles to implementation. This competence is important because post-war reconstruction will require not only technically correct decisions, but also socially accepted and locally meaningful solutions. Urban planning students may participate in workshops with internally displaced persons, local residents, veterans, entrepreneurs or municipal representatives in order to identify priorities for neighbourhood regeneration and public space transformation.

The fourth group is interdisciplinary competence. The recovery of Ukrainian cities cannot be solved only within the boundaries of architecture or urban planning. It requires cooperation with sociology, economics, ecology, cultural heritage studies, public administration, psychology, engineering and project management. For this reason, architectural and urban planning education should include more interdisciplinary studios, joint workshops and problem-based assignments. Students need to understand how spatial decisions are connected with social processes, economic resources, environmental limits and institutional procedures.

The fifth group is digital and analytical competence. Modern reconstruction requires the ability to work with spatial data, GIS, BIM, digital mapping, remote sensing, damage assessment, visualization of scenarios and online collaboration platforms. Digital tools should not be used only for presentation. They should become instruments of analysis, coordination, communication and decision-making. UN-Habitat’s people-centred smart city approach is useful here because it stresses that digital technologies must support people, rights and local needs rather than become a purely technological agenda [10]. In architectural education, this means that students should learn to use digital platforms not as substitutes for thinking, but as tools for understanding complex spatial problems.

The sixth group is ethical and cultural competence. Architects and urban planners in wartime Ukraine work with places that may contain memory, trauma, loss and symbolic meaning. The reconstruction of destroyed buildings, historical centres, public spaces and industrial territories raises questions of identity, justice, heritage and respect for local experience. Education should therefore develop not only technical and design skills, but also ethical sensitivity. A professional must understand when reconstruction should restore, when it should transform, and when it should preserve traces of historical experience.

The seventh group is project-management competence. This group is often underestimated in architectural education, although reconstruction depends on phasing, resources, procurement, coordination, risk assessment, communication and monitoring. A good design proposal may fail if it has no implementation logic. For this reason, students should learn to translate spatial concepts into project roadmaps, understand the difference between immediate, medium-term and long-term interventions, and work with limited resources. This is especially relevant for post-war Ukraine, where reconstruction will involve state institutions, municipalities, international organizations, donors, private investors and local communities.

Curriculum and Design Studio Integration. The proposed competencies require changes in curriculum structure and teaching methods. A reconstruction-oriented curriculum should not be limited to adding one course about war damage or post-war recovery. Instead, it should gradually integrate recovery logic into design studios, urban planning courses, technology modules, history and theory courses, professional practice, research methodology and project management. This integration can be vertical, when competencies develop from introductory courses to diploma projects, and horizontal, when several disciplines work on one shared problem from different perspectives.

The design studio is the main place where this integration can become visible. A first-year studio may introduce spatial observation through exercises on safety, accessibility and public space use. A second-year studio may work with adaptive reuse or temporary structures for community needs. A third-year studio may focus on damaged neighbourhoods, housing recovery or educational facilities with shelter functions. A fourth-year urban planning studio may analyse a post-industrial territory, transport node or public centre affected by war-related transformation. A master's studio may combine research, participation, digital analysis, economic logic and architectural proposal into a reconstruction strategy.

Assessment criteria should also change. If the studio is problem-oriented, evaluation cannot be based only on visual presentation, formal composition or completeness of drawings. It should also consider the quality of analysis, clarity of the problem statement, adequacy of stakeholder mapping, realism of phasing, ethical awareness, resilience logic, digital evidence and capacity to explain decisions to different audiences. A visually impressive project may be weak if it ignores social vulnerability, safety or implementation constraints. Conversely, a modest formal proposal may have high professional value if it is contextually precise, participatory, resilient and feasible.

Interdisciplinary workshops are especially promising. Architecture students may cooperate with students of sociology, psychology, economics, civil engineering, public administration and project management. A workshop on school reconstruction, for example, may combine spatial design, child psychology, inclusive education, shelter requirements, energy efficiency, community participation and budget phasing. A workshop on industrial revitalization may combine heritage analysis, contamination risk, economic reuse, participation, governance and implementation logic. Such formats help students understand that real reconstruction problems do not follow the boundaries of university departments.

International cooperation is another important component. Wartime reconstruction increasingly involves foreign experts, humanitarian organizations, European institutions and international donors. The New European Bauhaus capacity-building initiative for Ukraine illustrates the importance of connecting sustainability, inclusion, aesthetics and practical assistance for municipalities involved in reconstruction [11]. For Ukrainian universities, this logic can be translated into joint studios, international critiques, bilingual project presentations, open educational resources and partnerships with municipalities. It also strengthens the need for soft skills and intercultural communication.

Soft skills are not soft in this context. Communication, negotiation, public presentation, teamwork, conflict mediation and emotional intelligence become hard professional requirements when architects work with communities that experienced war. A student should be able to present a project to a professor, but also to explain it to a local community, a municipal official, an engineer, a donor representative or a person who lost their home. This requires clear language, respect, patience and the ability to listen. Therefore, architectural education should include more public reviews, role-play consultations, teamwork formats, reflective diaries and exercises in professional communication.

The proposed competency framework does not mean that all universities should adopt one identical curriculum. Ukrainian higher education institutions have different traditions, resources, regional contexts and academic strengths. Some universities may focus more on urban planning, some on architectural design, some on engineering integration, some on heritage, some on digital technologies. The framework is therefore not a rigid standard. It is a conceptual tool that can help institutions examine whether their programmes prepare students for the professional reality of reconstruction.

One possible risk is the overload of architectural education. If every new challenge becomes a separate course, curricula may become fragmented and ineffective. For this reason, the article proposes integration rather than accumulation. Reconstruction-oriented thinking should be embedded in design tasks. Participatory competence should be connected with real studio processes. Digital tools should serve analysis and coordination. Ethical questions should appear in discussions of actual design decisions. Project management should be linked with the feasibility of proposals. In this way, new competencies do not destroy the logic of architectural education; they update it.

Another risk is the instrumentalization of wartime experience. Universities should not use destruction only as a dramatic theme for student projects. Working with damaged territories and affected communities requires ethical care, data sensitivity and respect for people's experience. Student projects should avoid superficial aestheticization of ruins or trauma. They should be based on responsible research, careful communication and awareness of limits. Not every real community problem should be turned into a student task without preparation. Teachers should create safe educational conditions and clear methodological boundaries.

At the same time, avoiding real problems would also be irresponsible. Architectural and urban planning education cannot remain detached from the reconstruction of Ukraine. The country will need professionals who understand not only how to design, but also why, for whom, under what constraints and with what long-term consequences. This is where the scientific and practical value of educational transformation becomes visible.

The scientific value of the article lies in the systematization of professional competencies required in architectural and urban planning education during wartime. The article connects educational transformation with the wider challenges of post-war reconstruction, urban resilience, participation, digitalization, ethics and professional responsibility. It offers a conceptual framework for discussing how wartime conditions reshape the training of architects and urban planners in Ukraine.

The practical value is related to the possible application of the proposed framework in curriculum development, design studio programmes, interdisciplinary workshops, methodological recommendations and educational projects

focused on the recovery of Ukrainian cities. Universities may use it to review existing courses, identify missing competencies, update learning outcomes, develop reconstruction-oriented studio briefs and strengthen cooperation with municipalities and communities. For teachers, it can help formulate studio briefs and assessment criteria. For students, it clarifies the professional profile expected in wartime and post-war practice.

Conclusions. Wartime has created not only a crisis for Ukrainian higher education, but also a reason to rethink the professional formation of architects and urban planners. The recovery of Ukrainian cities requires specialists who can combine design competence, analytical thinking, digital literacy, ethical responsibility, community engagement and the ability to work in uncertain conditions.

The article argues that architectural and urban planning education in Ukraine should move from a predominantly object-oriented model toward a problem-oriented and reconstruction-oriented model. This transition does not reject traditional architectural competencies. It expands them. The architect of wartime and post-war Ukraine must remain a designer, but also become a researcher, mediator, analyst, coordinator and responsible participant in public recovery.

The proposed competency framework includes reconstruction-oriented thinking, resilience and safety competence, participatory and community-oriented competence, interdisciplinary competence, digital and analytical competence, ethical and cultural competence, and project-management competence. These competencies should be integrated into design studios, curricula, workshops and university-community partnerships.

In this sense, architectural and urban planning education becomes one of the instruments of Ukraine’s future recovery and directly shapes the quality of decisions through which Ukrainian cities will be rebuilt, transformed and reimagined.

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Балалаєв М. М., Паніна О. В. Нові професійні компетентності в архітектурній та містобудівній освіті під час війни: український контекст

У статті розглянуто трансформацію професійних компетентностей в архітектурній та містобудівній освіті України в умовах повномасштабної війни. Вихідною позицією дослідження є теза про те, що руйнування житла, інфраструктури, громадських просторів, промислових територій і об'єктів культурної спадщини змінює сам зміст професійної підготовки майбутніх архітекторів та урбаністів. Традиційна модель, зосереджена переважно на формуванні проєктного об'єкта, залишається такою ж важливою, проте вже не є достатньою для роботи з пошкодженими міськими системами, соціальною вразливістю, безпековими ризиками, пам'яттю місця та контекстом довгострокових сценаріїв відновлення. Мета статті полягає у визначенні й систематизації нових груп компетентностей, необхідних для освітніх програм архітектурного та містобудівного спрямування в контексті післявоєнної реконструкції України. Методологія поєднує теоретичний аналіз концепцій рефлексивної практики, досвідного навчання, колаборативного планування та міської стійкості з педагогічним аналізом змісту дизайн-студії й освітніх результатів. Особливу увагу приділено переходу від об'єктно орієнтованої логіки навчання до проблемно орієнтованої моделі, у якій студент працює не лише з формою, а й із контекстом, користувачами, інституційними обмеженнями, етапністю реалізації та суспільною відповідальністю проєктного рішення. Запропоновано рамку з семи взаємопов'язаних компетентнісних блоків: реконструкційно орієнтоване мислення, компетентність стійкості та безпеки, партисипативна й громадоорієнтована компетентність, міждисциплінарна компетентність, цифрова й аналітична компетентність, етико-культурна компетентність і проєктно-управлінська компетентність. Практична цінність роботи полягає у можливості використання цієї рамки для оновлення навчальних планів, студійних завдань, міждисциплінарних воркшопів і партнерств університетів із громадами та муніципалітетами, залученими до відновлення українських міст.

Ключові слова: *архітектурна освіта, містобудівна освіта, воєнний час, Україна, післявоєнне відновлення, професійні компетентності, партисипативне планування, міська стійкість, дизайн-студія.*

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