In the article analyzes the general methods for researching positioning strategies of leading universities in Western Europe. The main methods of scientific research revealed a method for studying the concepts and content of positioning of higher education institutions of leading universities in Western Europe; the relationship of educational and social services; communications; pricing. According to the author, the positioning strategy has an inter-scientific character, a constant process of self-development, self-regulation and self-healing of university positioning strategies, taking into account scientific and technological progress.

Based on the analysis of scientific literature, the author defines methodological approaches to the analysis of positioning strategies of leading universities in Western Europe, namely: general science, which includes systemic, synergetic, strategic, social-marketing, critically complex; specifically scientific - system-comparative, system-strategic, system-methodological, system-methodological, system-didactic, system-component analysis, system-integrable, system-internal communicative, system-communicative, system-parametric, system-perspective). She also identified signs of positioning strategies of leading universities in Western Europe and trends in the further development of positioning strategies in the context of updating higher education in Ukraine.

During the writing of the article, the researcher relied on the selected monographic and selective methods, as well as the method of the main array of positioning strategies of leading Western European universities for processing the analyzed literature at different stages.

An analysis of the work helped to determine methodological approaches to the analysis of positioning strategies of leading universities in Western Europe (general science - systemic, synergetic, strategic, socio-marketing, critically complex; specifically scientific - systemic-comparative, systemic-strategic, systemic-methodological, system-methodical, system-didactic, system-component analysis,
system-integrable, system-internal communicative, system-specific communicative, system-parametric sky, dark perspective SIS) symptoms positioning strategies of the leading universities of Western Europe; trends in the further development of positioning strategies in the context of updating higher education in Ukraine.

To study the content of periodicals, educational and scientific sites of leading European universities and students, materials of international conferences, we used the main array method.

The content of filling the blogs of scientists and teachers contains information not only about their activities and scientific works, but about the work of the faculty and the university where the author works. Therefore, there was a significant number of visitors who were interested in the activities of not only the teacher, but the institution itself. In accordance with this, this factor must be taken into account when developing a university positioning strategy, as one of the main ones.

The author analyzed the sites of Times Higher Education (THE), QS World University Rankings; The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU) of international university ratings, where the data were selected, with which the leading universities were compared, namely: academic reputation index; number of total students; number of international students; general citation of scientific publications; average annual number of scientific articles per member of the faculty.

After reviewing the information on the above sites, we can say that the reputation of higher education institutions increases or decreases depending on the testimony.

From the sites of THE World University Rankings, QS World University Rankings, The Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU), an academic reputation index was selected using a combined sample; number of total students; number of international students; general citation of scientific publications; average annual number of scientific articles per member of the faculty.

The combination of these methods during the study contributed to a thorough analysis of a significant amount of information, which allowed us to obtain unbiased objective conclusions.