

## University of Nova Gorica

### Self-evaluation report

#### Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association

## 1. INTRODUCTION

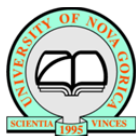
The self-evaluation report has been prepared by the self-evaluation group, composed of ten members: Prof. Dr. Iztok Arčon (Chairperson), Assist. Prof. Dr. Egon Pavlica, Assist. Prof. Dr. Peter Purg, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ana Toroš, Veronika Piccinini, Assist. Prof. Dr. Martina Bergant Marušič, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ingrid Petrič, Prof. Dr. Imre Cikajlo, Assist. Prof. Dr. Lorena Butinar (Quality Coordinators), and Deni Drnovšček, a student representative. All members are well-acquainted with the procedures, methods and strategies of quality assurance at the University of Nova Gorica (UNG). The quality assurance coordinators of individual UNG schools are by their function also members of the UNG Quality Assurance Committee. The Chairperson of the self-evaluation group, Prof. Dr. Iztok Arčon, is the President of the UNG Quality Assurance Committee.

The self-evaluation process was conducted in the period September – November 2014. The self-evaluation group met regularly every two weeks in formal meetings, where data collection and analysis for self-evaluation report were discussed. Members of the group were in regular contact with local faculty members, administrative staff, management structures and students, in particular with the President of the UNG Student Council and a student representative in the UNG Senate, Aleš Bogovič.

The SWOT analysis, coordinated by Assist. Prof. Dr. Peter Purg, was being conducted throughout September and October 2014 in three stages: firstly, after agreeing on such methodology in the University QA Committee, the Quality Coordinators of all University schools gathered cumulative inputs to all four categories from both local students and staff (stage 1). After reviewing all the results on University level, the Coordinators (stage 2) congested their local inputs into 2–3 elements per unit for each category, by including those which were either strongly agreed on in their local unit, or those which were importantly corresponding to other units' inputs. Their decisions were discussed in the QA Committee meeting to converge and condense related or repeated content items into generic articulations, relevant for the University as a whole. Finally, the QA Committee (stage 3) discussed each individual element, seeking consensus on its exact articulation. Then the joint SWOT table was sent to all units for final amendments that were edited and confirmed as final by consensus of the QA Committee.

The self-evaluation report including the SWOT analysis and the appendices were presented to the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Deans of schools and the Heads of research units, the Student Council, and all other members of UNG.

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## 2. UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA PRESENTATION

### Historic overview, status and structure of UNG

The University of Nova Gorica (UNG) is a non-state research-oriented and student-friendly university, at which knowledge is formed within a harmonious relationship between students and researchers and is successfully transferred to younger generations and into business environments. UNG's activity covers higher education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, extra-curricular educational activities, professional training of researchers, educational activities in specific professional fields, as well as scientific research and expert activities. It comprises seven schools and twelve research units. Research and expert activities are conducted at UNG laboratories and centres, while teaching activities are performed at UNG schools ([www.ung.si/en/](http://www.ung.si/en/)).

UNG started operating in the 1995/1996 academic year under the name Faculty of Environmental Sciences, which was, at the time, the first international postgraduate school in Slovenia, founded by the Municipality of Nova Gorica and the Jožef Stefan Institute from Ljubljana. Due to the introduction of new study programmes and the expansion of scholarly and research activities, the faculty was restructured in 1998 and renamed into the Nova Gorica Polytechnic. In the 2003/2004 academic year, the Nova Gorica Polytechnic gained another two co-founders. The pre-existing two founders were thus joined by the Municipality of Ajdovščina and the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU). The two new co-founders played an important role in the future development of the Nova Gorica Polytechnic. The Municipality of Ajdovščina undertook to provide the infrastructure required for the expansion of activities to the area of the Ajdovščina municipality, while the ZRC SAZU, being the largest Slovenian institute in the field of humanities, undertook to provide support and personnel for the development and implementation of new study programmes and research activities in the field of humanities. With the consent of the Council for Higher Education of the Republic of Slovenia, issued on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2006, the Nova Gorica Polytechnic acquired the status of university and was renamed into the University of Nova Gorica on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2006.

UNG is a private university institution. This status enables flexibility in its organisation and its operating, as well as faster adaptation to the demands of the modern society. On 15<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the University became a member of the European University Association (EUA), whereas in May 2011, it also became a member of the EUA Council for Doctoral Education. In 2010, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica approved of the membership of the University of Nova Gorica in the Magna Charta Universitatum association. UNG is also a member of the Slovenian Rectors' Conference, of the Danube Rectors' Conference and of the Alps Adriatic Rectors' Conference.

UNG pedagogical activities in the 2012/2013 academic year were conducted at seven schools: the School of Environmental Sciences, the School of Applied Sciences, the School of Humanities, the School of Engineering and Management, the Graduate School, the School for Viticulture and Enology, and the School of Arts. Research activities are conducted within six laboratories and six research centres (the Laboratory for Environmental Research, the

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Laboratory for Astroparticle Physics, the Laboratory of Organic Matter Physics, the Materials Research Laboratory, the Laboratory for Multiphase Processes, the Laboratory of Quantum Optics, the Wine Research Centre, the Centre for Atmospheric Research, the Centre for Systems and Information Technologies, the Centre for Biomedical Sciences and Engineering, the Research Centre for Humanities, and the Center for Cognitive Science of Language).

The organisational structure and the geographical context of UNG and its campuses are graphically presented in Appendices 1 and 2.

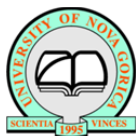
## Education

UNG offers undergraduate and graduate study programmes at seven schools ([www.ung.si/en/study/](http://www.ung.si/en/study/)). The **School of Environmental Sciences** offers the first- and second-level programmes *Environment*. The **School of Engineering and Management** offers the first- and second-level programmes *Engineering and Management*. The **School of Humanities** offers four study programmes: the first- and second-level study programmes *Slovene Studies*, the first-level programme *Cultural History* and the joint EU master (second-level) programme *Migration and Intercultural Relations*. The **School of Applied Sciences** offers two study programmes in natural sciences and technology, i.e. the first- and second-level programmes *Physics*. The **School for Viticulture and Enology** offers a professional higher education study programme *Viticulture and Enology* (first level). The **School of Arts** offers two programmes dealing with arts: the first-level study programme *Digital Arts and Practices* and the second-level programme *Media Arts and Practices*.

A particularity of the organisation in the UNG academic provision is the **Graduate School**, which hosts and carries out all UNG's doctoral study programmes (third level), regardless of their scientific discipline. In 2014 it offers seven doctoral programmes: *Environmental Sciences, Karstology, Physics, Humanities, Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage, Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology, Cognitive Science of Language*). Individual study programmes are closely linked to UNG's research laboratories and centres, and to other research institutions in Slovenia and abroad, which enables graduate students to conduct their research work required by their studies and to participate in international research activities and projects. Already when designing the third-level study programmes, great emphasis was placed on the modularity and interchangeability among individual UNG's doctoral programmes and other programmes in Slovenia as well as abroad. This enables doctoral students to benefit from a high proportion of elective courses and each doctoral student's study programme can be designed on an individual basis. Thus, the transfer of knowledge to younger generations is facilitated, and new knowledge is created through the harmonious cooperation of students, teaching staff and researchers in laboratories or other cooperating institutions.

The study requirements within all UNG study programmes are evaluated with credits under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System – ECTS, as stipulated by the national *Criteria for the Allocation of Credits to Study Programmes under ECTS*. The ECTS credit system is a transfer and accumulation system, based on the students' workload and learning outcomes for every study unit within the programme. It is used as the basis for the recognition

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of study requirements undertaken in Slovenia or abroad, and also enables students to choose the study contents within a programme more freely. The specificity of individual profiles of graduates in search for employment is evident from the Diploma Supplement, issued by UNG to all its graduates in both the Slovenian and the English languages.

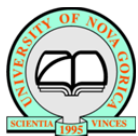
In 2004, UNG started with the redesign of all its undergraduate and graduate study programmes in accordance with the guidelines of the Bologna Declaration and (at that time new) Slovenian legislation on higher education. Simultaneously, UNG also started with the design of new Bologna-compatible study programmes. The implementation of the Bologna reform was set out comprehensively, including a coordinated preparation of programmes on all three Bologna levels of studies. At that time six first-level study programmes were designed, two of them being professional higher education study programmes, two second-level programmes and six third-level doctoral study programmes. The Bologna reform of all study programmes was completed in 2007. The implementation of the first Bologna study programmes began in 2005/2006.

The development of Bologna study programmes was conducted on the basis of a uniform UNG methodology. Special attention is devoted to effective organisation of the preparation of the diploma thesis in the last semester, so that students can complete their studies in the allocated time (in three years for the first-level programme, in two years for the second-level programme). The organisation of the third-level study programmes was also optimised, so that students could complete their studies within the allocated three-year period. However, already at that time UNG suggested to national authorities that the duration of the doctoral studies should, on the national level, be extended from three to four years, enabling doctoral students to perform more thorough and high-quality research work.

In 2013, UNG obtained EU and national funds for the project *Modernization of the quality assurance system and reform of programmes at the University of Nova Gorica*, which allowed the revision and reforms of all accredited and active (Bologna) study programmes to be conducted. The analysis of the contents and implementation of six first-level, five second-level and six third-level study programmes was performed. The relevance of the knowledge obtained and the competences achieved were analysed, whereby the opinions and experience of employers and graduates (acquired through the UNG Alumni Club and the Career Centre) were considered. The enrolment trends and labour market requirements, as well as the professional interests of the young population were taken into account. The student-centred teaching approach is implemented and promoted in the entire academic provision of UNG. In the revision process, the learning outcomes in the curricula were re-examined and redefined. The assignment of ECTS credits for individual pedagogic units was reassessed, taking into account the student workload and learning outcomes accordingly. The study rules and guidelines for all UNG study programmes were updated and standardised.

Particular attention was devoted to the update of the contents of the existing courses, the study objectives were defined in a more transparent manner, the methods of assessment were adapted accordingly, and the study programmes were updated in terms of the teaching methods used by introducing modern teaching methods. In addition, a larger share of project work and practical training performed by students was introduced in relation to ex-cathedra

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teaching. The tutorship system was introduced with the purpose of improving the quality and efficiency of learning, which shall consequently result in a better transition rate and reduced average duration of studies. Elements of distance learning and e-learning were introduced as a supplement to the existing organised forms of institutional teaching, making the studies more accessible and effective, also to special-needs students. An upgrade in the ICT equipment and its effective use for e-learning purposes are foreseen. Lifelong-learning contents were introduced into certain study programmes, so that they can be offered to the older population in search for new competences and knowledge enhancement due to the loss of their employment or due to their need for a new career pathway.

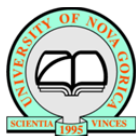
In the modernisation process, the principles of cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the implementation of study programmes were taken into consideration. UNG strived to introduce the changes without affecting the quality of the implementation as well as the anticipated study objectives and competences of students and graduates. Some examples of such rationalisation are: cyclical implementation of elective courses on a bi-annual basis (so that students of two generations can take these elective courses together); omitting the courses that are no longer up-to-date; joint implementation of certain study contents of related courses and joint provision of elective courses for several study programmes of the same level.

The number of academic staff by academic rank at each school for the past three years is given in Appendix 3. The total number of full-time and part-time employees at UNG in 2013 was 181. In addition, more than 100 associate professors from foreign or other Slovenian universities are occasionally included in academic activities as guest lecturers each year. The total number of students at all UNG study programmes in 2013/2014 was 548, of which about 20 % are international students. In doctoral programmes 56 % (out of 83 students in 2014) are international students. The trend of total number of UNG students has been in a modest decline since 2010, when their number was approximately 700. UNG strives for a 20 % increase in the total number of its students, and thus applies new active approaches to attract new students and increase the recognisability of the institution and its programme on a broader scale. The number of students including the male/female ratio, the student/staff ratio, time-to-graduation and transition rate for each school are listed in Appendix 4. (Numbers of graduates in first-, second- and third-level study programmes in Slovenia in the past three years are added for comparison.) All UNG programmes boast a very favourable student/staff ratio, typically less than 5. The enrolment in all programmes is limited to 40 or fewer students per programme per year to keep the student/staff ratio low, which allows a personalised teaching approach to all students and the maintenance of high-quality standards.

## Research

The University of Nova Gorica has been performing research in the field of natural-mathematical sciences (chemistry, physics, environmental protection), technical sciences (materials, process engineering, systems and cybernetics, energetics), biotechnical sciences (plant production and processing, biotechnology), humanities (linguistics, literary sciences, cultural sciences) and art (Appendix 5, [www.ung.si/en/research/](http://www.ung.si/en/research/) – list of UNG research units). UNG places particular focus on the development of multidisciplinary research areas, such as

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the following two new priority research fields new priority: material development and characterisation, and biomedicine and the research of the aging process.

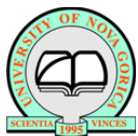
In December 2013, UNG had 181 employees (138 full-time and 43 part-time employees), of whom as many as 37 come from abroad. Among the employees, there are 100 doctors of science, 18 young researchers, 21 members of staff holding high education/master degree and 33 support staff members. In addition to that, the teaching activities of UNG study programmes are occasionally carried out (on a contract basis) by over 200 associate professors from foreign and other Slovenian universities, as well as by numerous researchers from other institutions, who act as supervisors of UNG doctoral students. UNG research activities are strongly connected to the pedagogic activities, as all professors and assistants are also researchers, employed in different research units, in addition to teaching at various UNG schools. The balance between the research work and the pedagogical activities performed by each academic staff member is normally 50%/50%. This is a special characteristic of UNG in comparison with other universities in the region. In this manner, UNG wishes to encourage its academic staff to perform high-quality research work and introduce latest scientific findings in the teaching process. UNG has constantly been striving for the high quality of its academic staff and has therefore set strict measures for appointment procedures.

In terms of research, the University of Nova Gorica has been closely cooperating with two of the most important research institutions in Slovenia; the Jožef Stefan Institute (IJS) and the the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU), which are two of UNG's associate research organisations and founders. UNG also fosters strong links with the international institutions where the members of the UNG Council come from – the Sincrotrone Trieste and the University of Turin (Italy), the University of Salzburg (Austria), the EPFL (Switzerland), and the Roskilde University (Denmark). Moreover, UNG has also signed cooperation agreements with further 31 partner institutions from 21 countries, which strengthens UNG's research and pedagogic activities and enables the establishment of links with a wider research community ([www.ung.si/en/about/cooperation\\_agreements/](http://www.ung.si/en/about/cooperation_agreements/) – list of partner institutions).

The University of Nova Gorica excels in research, which reflects in the successful obtaining of funding to carry out international research projects, as well as in the staff's numerous publications in esteemed scientific journals with a high-impact factor and in the high citation ratio of their scientific publications. In comparison with other institutions in Slovenia, UNG is the leading research institution in the number of citations per employee in the past ten-year period. Some of UNG researchers have received various awards for their research achievements. The list of the most important publications, projects, number of citations and the list of the recipients of awards for research achievements can be found in Appendix 5.

Outstanding research results and the international orientation of UNG are recognised as strenghts of UNG also within the following two recent international types of evaluation of UNG: the *Thomson Reuters Institutional Profiles* and the *U-Multirank EU project of evaluating and ranking of universities*. Both UNG profiles for 2014 are attached (App. 6, 7).

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## Infrastructure

UNG currently has at its disposal enough premises for the implementation of pedagogical and research activities. The total surface area available to UNG for its activities in the following years is about 10,000 sq mt. However, UNG premises are dispersed over three different locations – campuses (Nova Gorica/Gorizia, Ajdovščina, Vipava), which is recognised as a weakness, especially in the implementation of pedagogical activities. UNG also rents premises in Venice in (the Santa Elena Monastery) for the special purpose of running the international doctoral study programme *Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage*, which is the result of a joint effort with the Università IUAV di Venezia. Certain other pedagogical and research activities of our doctoral programmes are also partly conducted at other locations at partner research institutions: on the premises of the Karst Research Institute in Postojna; at the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) in Trieste.

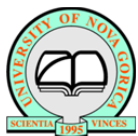
The geographical locations of the three campuses as well as the activities carried out at the campuses are presented graphically in Appendix 2. At the **Nova Gorica/Gorizia (I) campus**, a part of educational, research and other activities are performed at the premises at Vipavska 13 in Rožna Dolina, Nova Gorica, with a total surface area of about 2,000 sq mt. The building was provided for the activities of UNG by the Municipality of Nova Gorica and donated to the University in May 2010. The premises in this building are allocated to different UNG activities: research activities of several research units (the Laboratory for Environmental Research, the Laboratory for Astroparticle Physics, the Research Centre for Humanities and the Centre for Systems and Information Technologies, the Center for Cognitive Science of Language), as well as to the pedagogic activities of three schools (the School of Environmental Sciences, the School of Humanities, the Graduate School). The premises also house the Rectorate, the University Library, the Publisher of UNG, the Student Office, the International Office, as well as other University administration and support services.

The School of Engineering and Management is located on the premises in Gorizia (Italy) in Via della Croce 3, featuring a total of 1,500 sq mt of lecture rooms, laboratories and lecturers' offices. The renovation of the building was funded by its owner, the ALPE d. d. company, who have been leasing the building to UNG.

In 2012, the Province of Gorizia (Provincia di Gorizia) provided UNG with the premises at the Alvarez Palace (Via Armando Diaz 5) in the centre of Gorizia (Italy) with a total surface area of 1,100 sq mt. At the beginning of the 2012/2013 academic year, UNG moved all the activities of the School of Arts from the remote Ljubljana location to these premises.

In 2012, UNG obtained an 85-year lease on the Lanthieri Mansion in Vipava from the Vipava Municipality, measuring 1,900 sq mt. The building is under monument protection and has been renovated at high standards, enabling pedagogical and research activities to be carried out. The premises at the **Vipava campus** accommodate laboratories, lecture halls, a computer room, the Student Office, the School's Administrative Office and a wine-tasting room. The renovation project was approved in 2010 by the Ministry of Culture. The renovation works of the central part of the Mansion were completed at the end of 2012 and in 2014 the renovation of the rest of the Mansion is being performed. In late 2012, the School for Viticulture and

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Enology and two research units related to school's pedagogical activities, the Wine Research Centre and the Centre for Biomedical Sciences and Engineering, moved to these premises. A part of the building is dedicated to protocol purposes of UNG and hosts events such as diploma award ceremonies and promotions of PhDs, special public events (e.g. scientific evenings), scientific conferences and other social events.

UNG has also leased suitable agricultural land with vineyards in the vicinity of the Vipava campus (location of Podraga – Manče (7 ha)), needed for the implementation of the study programmes of the School for Viticulture and Enology. The first grape harvesting took place in September 2010.

In 2006, the Municipality of Ajdovščina donated a renovated building of 2,200 sq mt to the University of Nova Gorica. The premises at the **Ajdovščina campus** are utilised for teaching purposes by the School of Applied Science, and for research purposes by several research units (the Materials Research Laboratory, the Laboratory of Organic Matter Physics, the Laboratory for Multiphase Processes and the Laboratory of Quantum Optics). The ground floor has been renovated to enable the installation of large research equipment (UV-light source – CITIUS, electronic microscopes – SUNGREEN). The Otlica observatory with a LIDAR system for long-distance remote atmospheric monitoring and research, located on the Trnovska planota plateau above Ajdovščina, also forms part of the Ajdovščina campus.

In cooperation with its partner companies, UNG provided accommodation facilities (student dormitories) for students in Nova Gorica. However, there are no suitable accommodation facilities for students at Ajdovščina and Vipava campuses at the moment.

UNG has been striving to relocate its entire operation to one location, i.e. one campus. So far, a call for bids was published in 2013 to find a suitable location for the University campus within the Northern Primorska region. The UNG Governing Board set the criteria for the selection of the location on the basis of the received bids for securing a suitable building area, which would facilitate a favourable development of the University and the required infrastructure in the long run, including student dormitories. Several offers were obtained. The negotiations for the most appropriate location offered (in Vipava) are under way.

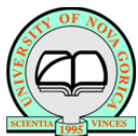
UNG has constantly been trying to improve the material conditions for the implementation of its study programmes (teaching equipment, laboratory equipment for practical work). Funds are mainly obtained through EU tenders.

## Funding

UNG understands its advantage in the dispersed financing of its activities. Therefore, its aim is to ensure that its financing does not depend on the state resources alone. An important proportion of funding thus needs to be obtained from international resources, local communities, the industrial sector, tuition fees, donations etc. UNG is the founder of the UNG Foundation. It is the only university foundation in Slovenia and one of the few in Europe. The purpose of the foundation is to raise donor funds the yield of which is spent on the growth and expansion of UNG and for the implementation of its activities.

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In 2013, the University of Nova Gorica obtained approximately 7.43 million Euros for its operations from different sources: funding of educational and research projects by the Ministry of Higher Education and by the Slovenian Research Agency, international and industrial projects, tuition fees, revenues of founders. The structure of incomes is as follows:

➤ Founder's obligations	2.2 %
➤ Research activity funds	61.2 %
○ Slovenian Research Agency Funds	29.9 %
○ EU and other international projects	33.3 %
○ Slovenian industrial projects	2.8 %
➤ Pedagogical activity funds	35.5 %
○ Ministry for Higher Education funds	29.8 %
○ Tuition fees	5.7 %
➤ Other	1.1 %

Data on research and teaching income of UNG for different scientific fields for past three years is attached in Appendix 8.

State funds for concessions and research activities that significantly decreased in 2012 are still critically scarce, preventing a favourable development of pedagogical and research activity. In view of the reduced state funds, the principles of cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the implementation of study programmes are taken into consideration. UNG aims to rationalise the organisation of programmes to reduce the costs of carrying out the study programmes, which, however, must not affect the quality of studies and the anticipated study objectives and competences of students and graduates. In September 2013, UNG obtained EU and state funds for the project *Modernization of the quality assurance system and reform of programmes at the University of Nova Gorica*, which enabled improvements in quality assurance, especially in the modernisation of information system, in the reform of programmes at UNG and in the modernisation of UNG quality assurance system.

UNG has been successful in obtaining several European research projects, resulting in additional funds for research. Since the state funding has decreased in the last two years, these European funds enabled better implementation of research and pedagogical activities. Through these European projects (SUNGREEN, CITIUS, Creative cores etc.), UNG was able to purchase several major pieces of research equipment in 2013. In the same year UNG received large private donations of research equipment for molecular biology of the Centre for Biomedical Sciences and Engineering and Wine Research Centre in Vipava.

The total budget of the CITIUS project is approximately 2.8 Mio Euros and is allocated for the establishment of the Interregional Centre of Ultrafast Photonic Technology for Spectroscopies. The aim of the SUNGREEN project is to promote innovative scientific approaches in the fields of environmental sciences and nanomaterials at UNG. The 4-Mio-Euros budget of the project is allocated to the recruitment of promising researchers, for the purchase of modern research equipment and for the establishment of links with the highest-quality research institutions in Europe. In addition, 25 other major international projects and

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numerous other small-scale national and international projects are currently being carried out. The International Office runs the central database on the research projects of all UNG units and provides administrative support for the implementation of international projects.

In spite of the fact that UNG is relatively small and thus cannot be equally competitive in applying to international calls, it has been extremely successful in applying for such research projects, which represent over 50 % of all research funds obtained. However, it has to be pointed out that the short-term nature of such financing of research activities exclusively through research projects impede the ongoing continuity of research and makes the assumed strategy of research work difficult to pursue, due to the ever-growing administrative demands in project management as well as due to the delays in receiving the funds from approved EU and national projects. Activities to ensure the long-term sources of funding research activities are foreseen, that is searching for strategic partners and donors.

### **3. MISSION, GOALS AND STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **Mission**

The University of Nova Gorica strives for the creation of new knowledge through a harmonious cooperation of students and researchers, and for the transfer of knowledge to younger generations and into the business environments. The mission of the University is also to provide high employability of its graduates. Regardless of the fact that UNG is a non-state institution, it aims to make its study programmes accessible to students of all backgrounds. By strongly supporting the participation of its teaching staff, researchers, experts and students in international research processes and projects, UNG also facilitates specific research and educational activities that strengthen the position of the Slovenians on the westernmost national border. With its wide range of activities that complement and enrich each other, the University of Nova Gorica aims to achieve the highest quality level of educational, scholarly and research activities, and their integration in the regional, Slovenian and international spheres.

#### **Vision statement**

The University of Nova Gorica aims to be a research, internationally established university, which will be recognised as a driving force of social development in the region and a wider context. With its innovative teaching approaches in both Slovene and English, the university aims to develop teaching excellence at its contemporary study programmes, thereby securing a high level of employability to home and international students.

The university will endorse its motto *Scientia vincet* („with knowledge to victory“) by providing a creative environment for researchers, professors and students, thereby enabling opportunities for top achievement results in the cutting-edge fields of science, technology and art.

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REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,  
SCIENCE AND SPORT**



## **Vision of development**

UNG strives to be a non-state, research- and student-friendly institution, where knowledge is created through the harmonious cooperation of students and researchers, and where knowledge is transferred to younger generations as well as applied into business environments.

## **Status**

UNG is a private university institution. This status enables flexibility in its organisation and operations, as well as faster adaptation to the demands of the modern society.

## **Internal organisation**

UNG is a compact university institution with strong internal connections. Research and expert work is conducted in its laboratories and centres. Schools are open units, at which the educational activities are performed by researchers and experts from different research units and external institutions. Therefore, UNG shall continue to develop a harmonious relation between experts and students from various academic and professional disciplines. UNG has been planning to relocate its activities to one location, to a campus on its own. Resources services are performed at the University level, which means that the operation of UNG is modelled rather upon a modern company, than upon that of a classic academic institution.

## **Research work**

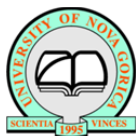
Research and expert work is the basis for the implementation of the educational process. Researchers at UNG devote special attention to their participation in international research processes and projects. It is expected from researchers and teaching staff that they are well-informed scientists and experts with international experience and broad knowledge. Therefore, the candidates wishing to obtain a permanent employment are required to have completed a post-doctoral training programme abroad.

## **Educational activities**

UNG aims to provide high-quality educational activities and to be internationally competitive. Thus, its academic staff are internationally renowned researchers or experts. The undergraduate and graduate studies should include as much research and practical activities as possible. Therefore, UNG strives for the optimum student-professor ratio in all its study programmes, and for the optimum ratio between research and educational work. It is expected, in the long run, that all disciplines will obtain the 1:1 ratio between teaching and research work. UNG particularly aims to include experts from industry in the educational process. Special attention will be devoted to international exchange programmes for students and professors. The teaching language, especially at graduate level, shall also be adapted accordingly. Regardless of its international orientation, UNG shall facilitate specific research and educational activities which will strengthen the position of the Slovenians on the westernmost national border.

## **Transfer of knowledge to business environment**

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Cooperation with industry and business environments is something all UNG employees strive for. It is in this manner that the conditions for the transfer of knowledge from academic institutions to business environments are created. Moreover, UNG and its activities will become more recognisable, resulting in better employment opportunities for UNG graduates. UNG was the initiator and one of the founders of the Primorska Technology Park that should, among other things, contribute to the creation of a more stimulating business environment for graduates with bachelor, master and doctoral degrees. UNG has also established the Industrial Liaison Office and the University Incubator.

### **Students**

UNG shall strive to attract the best students and provide them with optimum study conditions. UNG promotes student-centered learning approach, encouraging students' activity by giving them the option of shaping their courses, promoting tutorships, and carefully monitoring the progress of each individual student. Regardless of the fact that UNG is a non-state institution, it shall strive to make its study programmes accessible to students of all backgrounds through various scholarship programmes. The particularity of UNG shall be learning from practical problems. Therefore, students shall be included in practical and research work within the institution or at partner research institutions, at higher education institutions or in industry. UNG shall strive to provide high employability of its graduates. Therefore, it has established the UNG Career Centre, providing support for the students in search for employment. The objective of UNG is that 80 % of its graduates find employment in six months after completing their studies.

### **Finance**

UNG understands its advantage in dispersed financing of its activities. Therefore, its aim is to ensure that its financing does not depend on the state resources alone. An important proportion of funding thus needs to be obtained from international resources, local communities, the industrial sector, tuition fees, donations etc. UNG is the founder of the UNG Foundation. It is the only university foundation in Slovenia and one of the few in Europe. The purpose of the foundation is to raise donor funds the yield of which is allocated to the growth and expansion of UNG and for the implementation of its activities. In the following two decades, UNG shall strive for the funding provided by the UNG Foundation to represent 20 to 25 % of all the funding of UNG activities.

### **Strategic plan**

On 16<sup>th</sup> September 2009, the Senate of the University adopted The Programme of Activities of the University of Nova Gorica: development plan for period 2010–2025 (**Appendix 9**). The programme includes the presentation of the current situation, the development plan for the period of 2010–2015 and a vision of development for the long-term period of 2016–2025. In the future, UNG shall continue to focus its attention on the development of master and doctoral study programmes, and on scientific and research activities.

The short-term development strategy is annually reviewed and adopted by the University management (Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans and Heads of research units). For this purpose, the

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management gathers at dedicated meetings, in which the strategic development of UNG for the current year is discussed.

At the UNG Strategic Panel Session, held on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014, the main UNG strengths and weaknesses were discussed in view of the past year's strategic guidelines. An analysis of those activities from the past strategic plan which had already been implemented was made. On the basis of the findings, the measures for the improvement of UNG activities in the future were adopted. The tasks and activities are listed below. (One or more responsible persons were appointed for each activity and the schedule for the implementation of activities was determined).

**Short-term priorities:** to increase the enrolment in all study programmes; to increase UNG's recognisability in public; to construct a common university campus; to further develop lifelong-learning opportunities and enhance e-learning activities.

**UNG status changes:** to find a future strategic partner/donor for UNG – to find one major donor/investor; to attract at least two associated organisations.

### ***Pedagogical activity***

**Recruitment of students:** to identify new and better approaches to attract new students; to search for new students should become an issue and obligation of all UNG teachers, which should be formalised; motivated students should be attracted through individual approaches; individual contact should be established with talented secondary-school students – winners of various competitions; to attract students who are promising athletes; to publish the accounts of successful UNG students and graduates in the media; to expand the e-learning platform to all schools; to increase the enrolment in second- and third-level study programmes; to achieve a 20-per-cent increase in the number of UNG students; to increase the relative amount of international students to 60 % in doctoral programmes; to successfully lobby the government and other stakeholders to introduce changes of the Slovenian legislation regarding the limitations on the use of the English language in teaching, especially in second- and third-level study programmes.

**Excellence of programmes:** to increase the appeal of UNG study programmes; to upgrade the teaching aids used in tutorials and lectures; to introduce practical laboratory classes for individual study fields; to encourage the active participation of in lectures through interactive learning approaches.

**Expansion and changes in pedagogical activity:** to introduce a new pedagogic module as part of the Slovene Studies study programme; to prepare new second-level study programmes in the fields of materials, biomedicine, viticulture and fruit-growing; to prepare a new first- and second-level study programme in the Russian language; to establish a joint-degree study in the third-level study programmes with international partner universities; to review the possibilities of introducing new first- and second-level study programmes in the field of veterinary science.

**New pedagogical approaches:** to review the possibilities of introducing distance learning and life-long learning activities – to find strategic partners.

**Employability:** increase of employment rate of graduates to 80 % in the first six months after

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graduation, and to 90 % in the first 12 months after graduation.

**Research activity:** to introduce experimental linguistics; to commence the ICAR project.

**Balance between research and pedagogical activities:** to approach the desired 50/50-per-cent balance between each employed researcher's engagement in research work and, on the other hand, pedagogical activities; to decrease the share of external associates to below 30 %; to distribute the role of supervisor as evenly as possible among all the members of the teaching staff in first- and second-level programmes.

**Funding:** to lobby the government to obtain concessions for the entire university (not only partially for selected programmes) or to obtain concessions for the second-level programme Environment and the first-level programme Digital Arts; to increase the number of applications for EU projects; to establish a system of cooperation with industry and obtain at least two new industrial projects.

**Infrastructure:** to search for a suitable location and to commence the process of purchasing the property for the University campus.

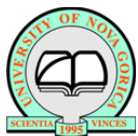
## 4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The bodies of the University are as follows: the Senate, the Governing Board, the International Council, the Rector, two Vice-Rectors and the Student Council. The bodies of the schools are the school Senate and the Dean. In case there are several study programmes conducted at the school, one of the bodies of the school is also the Study Programme Director. The bodies of the Graduate School are the Dean, Study Programme Directors and the Scientific Councils of the study programmes. The Graduate School does not have its own Senate. All its competences are assumed by the UNG Senate. UNG laboratories and centres are managed by Heads of laboratories and centres. The organisational structure is graphically presented in Appendix 1.

The UNG Senate is the University's professional body which approves of study programmes and programme directives for research work, ensures that professional conditions for activities are fulfilled and selects university teachers, scientific associates and higher education associates; it confers teaching and scientific titles, defines the respective PhD procedure, confirms the evaluations of doctoral theses and performs other duties. The UNG Senate consists of selected university teachers, employed either at the University or at any other higher education or research organisation; the teachers are proposed by the Rector and appointed by the Governing Board. All scientific disciplines and professional fields are equally represented in the UNG Senate. The Rector, Deans of schools and the representatives of the Student Council are by their position members of the UNG Senate. The representatives of the Student Council are appointed from the body of students attending undergraduate and graduate study programmes; the students' representatives shall make at least one fifth of the total number of Senate members. The UNG Senate has 14 members. The Senate meetings are called and headed by the Rector. Their Vice-Rectors take part in the activities of the Senate yet they do not possess the right of the decision-making.

The Governing Board is a governing body of the University. It consists of top experts in

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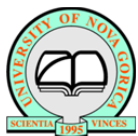
science, art, technology and economy and within the fields which are professionally related to the activities of the University, and of student representatives. The members appointed are considered to be highly responsible individuals. The proposal for the appointment of all members of the Governing Board is drawn up by the International Council, which addresses the founders as well as the University to accept the proposal. The Rector and the Vice-Rectors take part in the activities of the Governing board, yet they do not possess the right to vote. The Governing Board of the University is responsible for taking decisions related to material resources and for ensuring that the financial activities of the University run smoothly; it ensures appropriate allocation of the University's financial resources, discusses strategic documents, defines the financial plan and approves of the final budget; upon the prior consent of the UNG Senate it adopts the Statute and Rules of the University, and performs other tasks.

The International Council is the University's advisory body. Its members are distinguished experts from science, art and technology and are the representatives of the University's statutory members. They may be appointed individually or as representatives of the University's statutory members. A UNG statutory member may be a national or international university or a scientific institution which expresses an interest in the UNG's long-term development and ensures that UNG is actively involved in international scientific and teaching activities. The duties of the International Council are to monitor the activities of the University, to advise on and assist with the formulating of UNG's development strategies, to offer assistance and support in introducing the professional staff into the University's activities, to give views on the planned status or other changes that may have a long-term impact on UNG's development; to give advice and views on the selection of new statutory members, and to give preliminary views on the selection and appointment of the University's Rector.

The Rector is the University's chief professional and management body and the legal representative of the University. The Rector is in charge of carrying out and coordinating teaching and research activities, the University's management and organization; of ensuring the lawfulness of the University's conduct and carrying out a professional selection procedure of higher education teachers, scientific associates and higher education associates who participate in the University's activities. Moreover, the Rector is in charge of conferring PhD titles on respective candidates and of conferring UNG awards as agreed by the UNG Senate and the UNG Governing Board. The Rector reports on his/her work to the UNG Senate and to the UNG Governing Board. The Rector is appointed by the UNG Governing Board for a period of four years. After the tenure of the office expires, the same person is eligible to be reappointed to the position. The Rector may appoint one or more Vice-Rectors, who provide professional assistance in the fields of higher education studies and research work. In 2010, a Vice-Rectors for research and a Vice-Rector for education were appointed.

The Student Council consists of UNG student representatives, elected by the students of all UNG schools. The organisation, competences and duties of the Student Council are defined by the Slovenian Higher Education Act and the UNG Statute. The Student Council nominates student representatives in the Governing Board and in the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica, as well as in the Senates of individual UNG schools, and in the UNG Quality

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Assurance Committee. The student representatives in UNG bodies represent at least one fifth of the body's members. The main duties of the Student Council are to provide the competent UNG bodies with the opinions on matters regarding student rights and obligations, to provide the opinions on candidates for the position of Rector and Dean; to adopt and implement the UNG students' extracurricular activities programme in cooperation with the UNG student community; to communicate the students' opinions, proposals and complaints to competent UNG bodies, and thus to enable the students' voice to be heard.

Most of the administrative and support services are centralised; they operate on the University level and are thus common to all UNG units. The joint UNG services are: the Student Office, the International Office, the Industrial Liaison Office, the Career Centre, the Alumni Club, the UNG University Library, the Publisher of UNG and the Quality Assurance Committee. The accounting, legal and human resources services of UNG, as well as other specialist services are also common to all UNG units. Individual UNG schools have their own Administrative Offices.

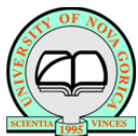
UNG has been strongly committed to fostering active cooperation with the economy. This is within the domain of the Industrial Liaison Office, which establishes links with the subjects in possession of the access to the capital, This shall enable the establishing of new companies dealing with the products and procedures which take advantage of the extensive expertise of the researchers from the UNG laboratories. UNG has also been fostering direct links with the economy through the projects run by the research and pedagogical units of UNG. Young researchers active in the industry have been studying in UNG doctoral programmes. The theses and projects of UNG's first- and second-level students are based on the problems identified in the industry. UNG is a co-founder of the Primorska Technology Park. The latter brings together technologically innovative businesses, facilitating the transfer of development initiatives and expertise into the business environments.

The International Office of the University of Nova Gorica provides a centralised form of international activity management, assists in international exchanges procedures and in the implementation of international projects. In addition, it is also dedicated to establishing and enhancing the cooperation with international institutions and supports the UNG's membership in various international networks. It serves UNG students, teaching staff, researchers and other UNG employees. It also runs a database of projects and the related data (financial data, monitoring of implementation activities, registry of partners). UNG is currently performing 25 large and numerous small-scale international projects, which are mostly of research nature. The International Office informs UNG researchers and other members of staff about all open calls and offers the applicants support in the application processes (especially from the financial, administrative and formal legal points of view). The International Office draws up financial reports for international research projects and offers various forms of support and counselling.

The UNG Student Office is dedicated to undergraduate and graduate students and to other subjects interested in obtaining the information about UNG study programmes. The Student Office offers UNG students and prospective students assistance with study issues as well as with extra-curricular activities. It has offices at the Nova Gorica campus and at the Vipava

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campus. The duties of the Student Office are to supply the information on and to assist with the enrolment procedures, to offer the information on the conditions of enrolment, on UNG study programmes, and other types of information related to studying at UNG; to manage the application and enrolment procedures; to organise and carry out the enrolment procedures; to issue certifications and diploma certificates; to manage and administrate student databases; to process and analyse the data concerning the studies; to manage the acknowledgement procedure of the education obtained abroad for the purpose of the candidates' wishes to pursue further studies and issue the respective decision acts.

The UNG University Library, located at the premises at Vipavska 13 (the Nova Gorica campus), was formally established in April 1998 and is the only university library in the Northern Primorska region. It is dedicated to all UNG students and employees, as well as to other individuals interested in the materials in the fields covered by the Library. The Library predominantly collects the materials from the fields of ecology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, economy, Slovene studies, viticulture and arts. Besides book lending services, the Library also offers online enquiries from publicly accessible databases, as well as inter-institutional book lending services in cases the Library itself is not in possession of the materials requested. The UNG Library currently owns approximately 16,000 monographs, 100 serial publications in printed form, 460 units of non-book materials (particularly CD-ROMs) and e-publications of scientific journals assessible via services such as ScienceDirect, Springer Link, APS Journals, EIFL Direct-databases EBSCOhost, ACS Publications, IOP – Institute of physics, JSTOR. In addition to that, the Library offers the access to databases such as Web of Science, CAB Direct, Food Science and Technology Abstracts (FSTA), MathSciNet. One of the important tasks that the Library performs is also the management of the bibliographies of UNG researchers and academic staff members. The Library is a full member of the COBISS Cooperative Online Bibliographic Systems and Services, and the Library catalogue (COBISS/OPAC) is accessible online.

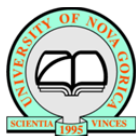
## 5. QUALITY ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

### **Strategies, methodologies and procedures of internal quality assurance at UNG**

Strategies, methodologies and procedures for monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality at UNG are defined in the **UNG Quality Assurance Manual**, which was adopted by the UNG Senate at its regular 51<sup>st</sup> session on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2013. The Manual also defines the self-evaluation procedures, rules, method of work and measures for monitoring and improving the quality, which are adhered to by UNG competent bodies and all other stakeholders in monitoring and assuring the quality. The Quality Assurance Manual represents an upgrade and the replacement of the former Methodology of monitoring and assurance of quality of pedagogical and research work at UNG.

Quality assurance and international competitiveness in the field of pedagogical and research activities are of primary consideration to which the institution is committed. UNG is a cosignatory to the Resolution of the Slovenian Rectors' Conference on the Commitment of Slovene Universities to Develop a Quality Culture (29<sup>th</sup> March 2012), and thus observes the

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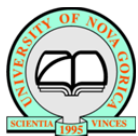
adopted objectives of the resolution. Moreover, the UNG Senate adopted a commitment that UNG would constantly develop its quality culture, work on the creation of quality brand, and update the procedures and the strategy for quality assurance and ensure constant improvement in the quality of all its activities. The quality assurance procedures involve all stakeholders, including students. The procedures, methods and strategies of quality assurance at UNG are defined in accordance with the national legislation (the Higher Education Act, and the acts adopted by the The Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA)), and in accordance with the recommended *European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance within higher education institutions (ESG)*. They are formally adopted by UNG competent bodies and published on the UNG website: [www.ung.si/en/about/quality-assurance/](http://www.ung.si/en/about/quality-assurance/)

Quality management at UNG is incorporated in the management of the university. The internal organisation and the management of UNG are similar to those of any modern company. The responsibility for the monitoring, assessing and assuring the quality at UNG is borne by the Rector of UNG, both Vice-Rectors, Deans of schools, and by Heads of UNG research units. Key decisions in the organisation and the management of issues related to the quality of pedagogical activities and research work are made at university level. Current issues regarding the personnel, material conditions, premises and other working conditions and support activities required for the assurance of high-quality pedagogical and research activities in all UNG units are discussed at regular weekly meetings attended by the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Deans and Heads of research units. Proposals for the improvement and elimination of the shortcomings identified are thus constantly collected, while the effects of the implemented measures are monitored. Short-term development strategy is annually reviewed and adopted by the university management (the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Deans and Heads of research units). For this purpose, the management gathers at a dedicated meeting in which the strategic development of UNG for the current year is discussed.

The quality assurance procedures involve all UNG employees and other stakeholders, including students. Students are involved in the process of monitoring and quality assurance on several levels. The cooperation between UNG and students is ensured through the operations of the UNG Student Council. Students have their representatives in the Governing Board, in the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica, as well as in the Senates of individual UNG schools, and in the UNG Quality Assurance Committee. All UNG students are directly involved in the monitoring and the assurance of quality of the pedagogical process through anonymous student surveys.

The UNG Quality Assurance Committee is responsible, at UNG level, for the implementation of activities related to the monitoring, assessment and quality assurance at UNG, and for presenting the proposals and initiatives for the development of quality culture and the updating of procedures and strategies, as well as for constant improvements of quality. At each UNG school, the responsibility for these activities is borne by the respective quality coordinator, who is, by his/her function, also a member of the University Quality Assurance Committee, within which the activities are coordinated. The UNG Quality Assurance Committee is a permanent expert committee of the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica.

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Self-evaluation is the primary mechanism for the monitoring, assessment and quality assurance, for the development of quality culture and the updating of procedures and strategies for quality assurance and the constant improvement in quality at UNG. Self-evaluation is conducted annually and according to a uniform methodology at all UNG units, and at the university as a whole, as defined and regulated by the UNG Quality Assurance Manual. The self-evaluation includes the analysis of activities and achievements, as well as the proposed measures for future development. The essential elements of self-evaluations are the annual self-evaluation reports. Self-evaluation reports are drawn up by each of the UNG schools, and a separate self-evaluation report is drawn up at the University level. All self-evaluation reports are published annually on the UNG website.

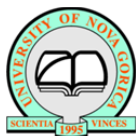
The evaluation of research work is conducted at the University level. It includes all UNG research units. UNG research activity is presented in detail in the UNG Annual report, published annually in printed and electronic forms. The report includes the activities and results of all research units within the University, both in the field of basic and applied research, the bibliography of their employees, international and domestic research programmes, projects and cooperation. The research work and pedagogical activities at UNG are closely linked to each other. UNG teaching staff is involved in the research work executed in laboratories, centres and institutes, or outside UNG, and vice versa, UNG researchers are involved in the pedagogical activities at UNG schools. Doctoral students are also included in the UNG research work. Material conditions and the quality of research work performed at UNG are monitored by the management and the Governing Board of UNG.

The external supervision of the quality of all UNG operations is conducted in the process of re-accreditation of UNG and its programmes by the SQAA, as defined by the provisions of the national legislation (The initial accreditation or re-accreditation of the institution and separately of all its study programs is granted for the maximum period of seven years. The accreditation procedure includes self-evaluation, external assessment and a report prepared by the international expert group, and the decision of the SQAA Council on granting the accreditation.) The external control of the quality of research work is conducted by the Slovenian Research Agency, and through supervision in international projects. The report, drawn up by a group of experts during the process of external evaluation, includes the strengths, examples of good practice, weaknesses and recommendations for improvement. All this is taken into consideration in the revision process of the internal quality assurance system. The process includes short-term and long-term measures for eliminating the shortcomings and weaknesses identified, with the purpose of ensuring constant improvement of quality in all areas of UNG operation.

### **Structure of self-evaluation reports**

The self-evaluation reports of individual UNG schools are drawn up on the basis of a uniform methodology and have the same structure, as described below. The reports describe the following: the operation of the higher education institution, data on its personnel, the implementation of educational activities into all study programmes provided, student activity, material conditions; the school's integration in the local community, the quality assurance, the school's innovation practices and its development orientation. The University's self-

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evaluation report contains an overview of the operations of the University as a whole. In addition, it also contains the analysis of the operations of UNG resources services and other support activities, implemented at the University level and providing support to UNG pedagogical and research units (the Student Office, the International Office, the Industrial Liaison Office, the Career Centre, the Alumni Club, the UNG University Library, the Publisher of UNG, the UNG Quality Assurance Committee, the accounting, legal and human resources services of UNG, and other resources services). The University's self-evaluation report also includes the summaries of self-evaluation reports of all UNG pedagogical units.

Each of the elements discussed in the self-evaluation reports is accompanied by the assessment of the current state and orientations, together with the strengths, weaknesses and the proposals for improvements.

The self-evaluation reports are published on the UNG website in Slovene and English:

[www.ung.si/en/about/quality-assurance/evaluation-reports/](http://www.ung.si/en/about/quality-assurance/evaluation-reports/)

(list of self-evaluation reports translated into English)

[www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/kakovost/evalvacija-pedagoskega-in-raziskovalnega-dela/](http://www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/kakovost/evalvacija-pedagoskega-in-raziskovalnega-dela/)

(list of reports in the Slovenian language)

### **Procedures for monitoring and assurance of quality (the circle of quality)**

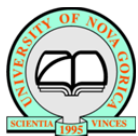
The procedures for monitoring and quality assurance are illustrated in the organisational chart, showing the UNG circle of quality (Appendix 10). The structure is multi-layered. The chart illustrates the relationships between various stakeholders that are included in the process of monitoring and quality assurance (students, teaching staff, the Heads of pedagogical units and of the University, resources services, external partners) in various procedures that are described in detail below.

#### *Preparation of self-evaluation reports of UNG schools:*

The responsibility for the preparation of self-evaluation reports at individual UNG schools is borne by their respective Quality Coordinators. The reports are drawn up in cooperation with the Dean, members of the school Senate, all teaching staff in all study programmes, student representatives, the school administrative office, resources services and other stakeholders.

The opinions of students regarding the quality of the studied contents and the implementation of the programme are obtained through five anonymous thematic surveys: the Course Evaluation Questionnaire for Students; the Study Programme Evaluation Questionnaire for Students; the Practical Training Evaluation Questionnaire for Students; the Questionnaire on Provision of Information to Candidates Prior to Enrolment; the Student Work Evaluation Form. The surveys are anonymous. Since 2014 they, have been carried out in electronic form to increase the efficiency of data collection and to automate the analysis. The analyses of all surveys are presented in the self-evaluation reports of individual schools. The reports are published and can thus be accessed by all students, UNG staff and other stakeholders. However, the results of individual Course Evaluation Questionnaires for Students are not public. The self-evaluation reports include the results of these surveys describing the quality

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of the lecturers' work in an anonymous form, i.e. the average grades of lecturers are presented without revealing the lecturers' names.

The Quality Coordinator monitors all the above-mentioned self-evaluation elements in all areas of quality assurance throughout the year. The management, employees, student representatives and other stakeholders provide the coordinator with the proposals for improvements. The Coordinator also attends the Senate meetings and holds regular meetings with the Dean in order to effectively coordinate the quality-related activities. The activities are documented in the Report on the monitoring of quality assurance procedures.

Twice a year, the Quality Coordinator reports to the UNG Quality Assurance Committee on the implementation of activities for monitoring and quality assurance, and on all important achievements and improvements, examples of good practices and observations regarding the current state and trends at the school. The UNG Quality Assurance Committee coordinates the work of all Quality Coordinators.

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Based on the activities monitored throughout the year, and based on their findings, the Quality Coordinator prepares an analysis of the present state in terms of each of the elements of the self-evaluation report. The analysis is done at the end of the year. The self-evaluation report thus includes the findings concerning the strengths and weaknesses of an individual school, as well as the proposals for future improvements.

The self-evaluation reports of pedagogical units are drawn up no later than by the end of November for the past academic year. The reports are then usually reviewed, edited and confirmed by the Senate of the school at its regular session.

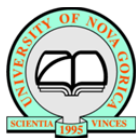
The Quality Coordinator provides the UNG Quality Assurance Committee with the summaries of self-evaluation reports of individual schools. These summaries are then included in the University's self-evaluation report. The Dean regularly informs all school employees about the resolutions, strategies and activities for the assurance or improvement of quality. The self-evaluation reports of individual UNG schools are published on the UNG website. Thus, the reports can be freely accessed by all employees, students, stakeholders and the general public.

Student representatives in the school Senate inform the Student Council and the students about the strategies and activities for quality assurance or any improvement of quality, and collect the proposals for improvements from students. These proposals are then submitted to the Dean, the school Senate and the Quality Coordinator.

#### *Preparation of a self-evaluation report of the university:*

The responsibility for the preparation of the University's self-evaluation report is borne by the UNG Quality Assurance Committee. The report is drawn up in cooperation with the

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University management, the UNG Student Council and the UNG support services (the Student Office, the International Office, the Career Centre, the Alumni Club, the UNG University Library and the Publisher of UNG, the accounting, legal and human resources services, and others).

The UNG Quality Assurance Committee monitors all the above-mentioned self-evaluation elements in all areas of quality assurance throughout the year. The proposals for improvements are submitted by the management, the resources services, the UNG employees, the UNG Student Council, the student representatives in UNG bodies, and by other stakeholders.

Based on the activities monitored throughout the year and on their findings, the Committee prepares an analysis of the situation for each of the elements of the self-evaluation report. The analysis is performed at the end of the year. The analysis of the operations of the support services is conducted by the services themselves, and submitted to the UNG Quality Assurance Committee. The self-evaluation report thus includes the findings concerning the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the proposals for future improvements.

The University's self-evaluation report of the university is published on the UNG website. It can be thus freely accessed by all employees, students, stakeholders and the general public.

The student representatives in the UNG Senate and the UNG Quality Assurance Committee inform the Student Council and students about the strategies and activities for quality assurance and any improvement in quality, and collect the possible proposals for improvements. These proposals are then submitted to the UNG Quality Assurance Committee.

### **Key elements in the quality assurance process**

An important element in the long-term assurance of quality of pedagogical activities and research work at UNG are common rules, adopted by the UNG Senate in the form of acts or rules, governing the operation of the entire university. The key rules and regulations concerning the realm of quality assurance at UNG are:

- Statute of the University of Nova Gorica;
- Regulations for the determination of conditions and appointment procedures for research and teaching positions at the University of Nova Gorica;
- Quality Assurance Manual of UNG;
- Rules of procedure of the Senate and Governing Board;
- Rules of procedure of the Quality Assurance Committee;
- Rules of procedure of the Student Committees at UNG schools;
- Rules for first, second and third level study programmes;
- Rules for recognition of ECTS credits;
- Regulations on UNG awards;
- English Language Requirements for Foreign Students;

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- UNG tutorship system.

The criteria for the appointment for teaching and research positions are significantly stricter than the national requirements in the respective minimum standards defined by the SQAA. A three-member international committee appointed by the UNG Senate is the responsible body competent to decide on the suitability of a candidate to be appointed and awarded a teaching and research title. UNG aims to recruit new top research and teaching staff from Slovenia and abroad, both the young and the already established researchers, who would become engaged in research and pedagogical activities at UNG. The calls for candidates to fill the available research and teaching positions at UNG always are always opened on the international scale. Candidates wishing to obtain permanent employment are required to have completed a post-doctoral training programme abroad in the minimum duration of one year. In 2014, foreign citizens represent more than 20 % of the University's academic staff.

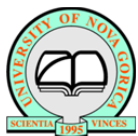
The rules include the measures for the assurance of quality and effectiveness of study programmes. To stimulate students to better perform in their studies, UNG awards the *Alumnus Primus* and the *Alumnus Optimus* awards to the best graduates of the first- and second-level programmes. The *Alumnus Primus* award is bestowed upon the students who regularly pass their examinations and are the first to graduate in their generation. The *Alumnus Optimus* award is bestowed upon the graduates who achieve the best average grade among all the students graduating in a certain academic year. UNG introduced the rule concerning the payment of examination fees on the basis of a progressive price scale for students who have not been able to pass the examinations for three times in a row. This measure should act as an incentive for students to better prepare for their examinations.

In order to ensure the quality of doctoral dissertations and their comparability with the globally-established quality standards, uniform study rules have been adopted for all doctoral programmes. These rules define that the Committee for the Assessment of a Doctoral Dissertation consists of three members, of which at least one has to be a representative of a foreign university, and one of another Slovenian university. All members have to be habilitated higher education teachers with appropriate academic titles. Only habilitated teachers or researchers or experts holding a doctoral degree can act as mentors to students in doctoral study programmes. The mentor cannot be a member of the Committee for the Assessment of the Doctoral Dissertation. Doctoral students may proceed to their dissertation defence only upon having obtained grade 8 or higher in each course taken within the respective study programme (on the 1–10 grading system scale). Doctoral students are strongly encouraged to publish their scientific results in international scientific journals with a high impact factor. The bibliography of doctoral students is regularly monitored, showing that each student publishes at least one scientific paper during the course of studies.

The enrolment in the first year of studies is limited in all study programmes. Thus, the optimum number of students in view of the number of teaching staff members is guaranteed and practical classes can be carried out in small groups.

In professional higher education study programmes, special attention is devoted to the monitoring of the quality of the students' practical training in enterprises, and to the fostering of a harmonious relationship between the mentor at the higher education institution, the

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student and the mentor in the enterprise during students' practical training. The latter is conducted on the basis of contracts on practical training concluded with partner enterprises.

Special attention is devoted to the monitoring of the employment of graduates and to collecting the information from UNG graduates on the applicability of obtained knowledge in the labour market. The objective of all UNG study programmes is to achieve and retain a high employment rate (above 80 %), which was regularly achieved in the past years. However, due to economic crisis the domestic labour market is becoming increasingly saturated even for niche profiles, so constant efforts are foreseen to overcome these threats. Since the 2010/2011 academic year, the Career Centre has been providing support to graduates in finding their first employment.

The Alumni Club at UNG was established to bring together all graduates with bachelor, master and doctoral degrees obtained at any UNG study programme. The members of the UNG Alumni Club are an important source of information on the employment of graduates and on the applicability of knowledge obtained during their studies at UNG. Some of this information is also collected through surveys in enterprises where students carry out their practical training.

Some members of the UNG academic staff are actively involved in the process of the assurance of quality of higher education in Slovenia, acting as external experts of the SQAA, as representatives in various government and other bodies at the national level, in the Slovenian Rectors' Conference and in the national group of promoters of the Bologna process in Slovenia.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

The University of Nova Gorica (UNG) is a private, research-oriented university, founded by two Slovenian research institutes (the Jožef Stefan Institute and the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts) and two Slovenian municipalities. UNG's activity includes providing higher education on the undergraduate and graduate levels, as well as scientific research and expert activity. It comprises seven schools and twelve research units. UNG is a research-oriented and student-friendly university aiming to provide the highest-quality education on undergraduate and graduate levels and to perform scientific research competitive in an international context. It encourages the comprehensive integration of knowledge and research findings into local, national and international spheres. UNG strongly promotes international collaboration with similar institutions worldwide and fosters student and teacher exchange programmes with the European and other universities. UNG researchers and members of teaching staff are internationally recognised scientists participating in international research projects. UNG promotes multidisciplinary study programmes and research, designed to build partnerships between industry and academia. UNG aims to ensure high employability of its graduates so that at least 80 % of its bachelor, master or doctoral students would find employment within six months from graduation..

The internal organisational structure of UNG is designed to support the mission of a research-based and internationally-oriented university. UNG is a compact university institution with

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strong internal connections, at which research and expert work is conducted in its laboratories and centres. Schools are open units at which educational activities are performed by researchers and experts from different research units and partner institutions. UNG strives to reach an ideal balance of 50 % of research work and 50 % of pedagogical activities performed by each employed researcher. The operation of UNG is similar to that of any modern company.

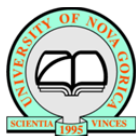
UNG premises are dispersed over four different locations (Nova Gorica, Gorizia, Ajdovščina, Vipava), which is recognised as a weakness that may hinder further development of the University. In the last years, the UNG's goal has been to build a common University campus and thus to relocate the University's entire operation to a single location. This shall enable fast development of the University and provide the required infrastructure, including the student accommodation facilities and thus also contribute to the welfare of students.

The strategic goal of UNG is to constantly improve the quality of education by updating the existing study programmes, introducing new courses and programmes, developing custom e-learning possibilities and long-life learning opportunities, and above all to ensure pedagogical excellence. Significant efforts and activities are undertaken to attract more motivated and talented students from Slovenia and abroad. In doctoral study programmes the goal is to enrol more than 50 % of international students. UNG strives to provide high employability of its graduates with the objective that at least 80 % of its graduates would find employment within six months after completing their studies. This mission has so far been accomplished, but due to the increasingly saturated domestic labour market even for niche profiles and stagnating industry and business activities in the region, specific measures are foreseen to overcome these threats.

Quality assurance and international competitiveness in the field of pedagogical and research activities are of primary consideration of UNG – the latter has an accurately defined mission and vision of its operations, and has adopted a clear strategy for the attainment of these objectives. The UNG Senate adopted the decision that UNG shall constantly develop its quality culture, establish a quality brand, update the procedures and the strategy for the assurance of quality and its constant improvement across all activities, and take into consideration the recommendations on compliance with the European standards and guidelines for internal quality assurance (ESG). Quality assurance procedures at UNG involve all stakeholders, particularly focusing on students. Key decisions in the organisation and management of issues related to the quality of pedagogical and research work are made at the University level. An important role in the quality assurance is played by the Rector of UNG, both Vice-Rectors, Deans of schools, and by Heads of research units, who review and adopt the short-term development strategy. The University is a cosignatory to the Resolution of the Slovenian Rectors' Conference on the Commitment of Slovene Universities to Develop a Quality Culture, and thus observes the adopted objectives of the resolution.

In the past three years, UNG has strengthened its activities to further develop quality assurance and quality management in the frame of the dedicated project titled *Modernization of the quality assurance system and reform of programmes at the University of Nova Gorica (2012–2015)*, partly funded by the European Union, which includes four activities:

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- the modernisation of the UNG quality assurance system and related internal acts and procedures;
- the modernisation and the upgrade of the existing UNG information system and the implementation of e-learning elements;
- the evaluation and renovation of all UNG study programmes;
- the external international evaluation of UNG by the EUA-IEP.

The strategies, methodologies and procedures for the monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality at UNG are defined in the UNG Quality Manual, adopted by the UNG Senate on 11th July 2013. The monitoring, assessment and assurance of quality of UNG study programmes are implemented in accordance with the Higher Education Act and the acts adopted by the Council of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (SQAA).

The Higher Education Act stipulates that every university and higher education institution in Slovenia should acquire accreditation for its operation every seven years, and in addition, every study programme has to be re-accredited every seven years. In 2012, UNG submitted the application for the re-accreditation of the university, as required by the existing legislation. A group of experts appointed by the Council of SQAA conducted an external institutional evaluation of UNG in May 2013, and communicated its opinions to the Council of SQAA. On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013, the Council adopted the decision that UNG is granted the re-accreditation for the maximum possible period of seven years. Through a similar procedure UNG applied in the past three years for the re-accreditation of those study programmes whose seven-year period expired. For all these study programmes UNG acquired the re-accreditation for the maximum possible period of seven years.

The UNG quality monitoring is also conducted by international organisations. UNG has been included in the project *Thomson Reuters Institutional Profiles* since 2011. The Thomson Reuters Institutional Profile for UNG for 2014 is appended to this report. From 2013 onwards, UNG has been participating in the *U-Multirank* EU project of evaluating and ranking of universities. The institutional profile of UNG created within the *U-Multirank* project in 2014 is appended. They both indicate the institution's strengths and weaknesses within an international context. The results of both monitorings are used in the decision-making processes and in planning the strategic management of UNG.

Nova Gorica, 5th December 2014