REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
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University of Nova Gorica

Graduate School

Quality monitoring, assessment and assurance

Report for academic year 2013/2014

Summary of the self-evaluation report
and
Assessment of current state and guidelines
(Strenghts, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement)

December 2014

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Summary of the self-evaluation report of the Graduate School

Summary

The Graduate School unites and carries out all postgraduate doctoral studies of the University of Nova Gorica, notwithstanding their study field. The range of studies is a broad one, and it includes fields from the natural sciences and technology to humantiies and interdisciplinary studies. In the academic year 2013/2014, the University of Nova Gorica carried out seven doctoral programmes, which have been prepared according to the Bologna declaration, at the third degree level (*Environmental Sciences, Karstology, Physics, Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures, Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage, Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology,* and *Linguistics*). There are 98 enrolled students at all programmes in this year, which shows a considerable interest in the graduate programmes offered by the School. The good news is a high percentage of foreign students (45%) who have enrolled the programmes; the percentage has increased in the 2014/15 academic year to 56%. There are many international study exchanges as well.

The Graduate School will continue to stick to its established vision, namely, to carry out University of Nova Gorica all doctoral study programmes within one school. The decision has proven to be a good and efficient one, since a unified and integrated graduate school provides opportunities for a wide range of choices and interdisciplinarity in creating individual doctoral study programmes. There are, at the same time, opportunities for exchanges with similar study programmes at other Slovene and foreign universities by means of the ECTS European credit system and the Erasmus programme, providing students with opportunities for a high level of mobility. A unifying feature of all study programmes of the Graduate School is their close connection with research units of the Universitiy of Nova Gorica or other research institutions in Slovenia and abroad. Graduate students can do their research work in these institutions and can join international research projects. In this way the students can, along with their professors, researchers and experts, efficiently create new knowledge and transfer it into practice within the entrepreneurial environment.

All programmes are carried out successfully, with good quality and efficiency, as is shown by the data on students' achievements related to their studies and individual research work. Students' average grades are, as a rule, very high, students pass their exams, as a rule, in their first taking of the exams, and the average period of study is relatively short. The achievements of the graduate studies can be seen from the successful defences of quality doctoral and masters theses, as well as from the numerous publications of students' research results in acclaimed international journals: 46 scientific and professional articles, 21 published conference contributions, 74 published conference abstracts, and 42 other scientific publications in the 2013/14 academic year. These figures do not include publications by students who have recently finished their studies and who are in the process of publishing works related to their doctoral and masters theses' researches. In the 2013/14 academic year, the University of Nova Gorica awarded two masters degrees and promoted 37 doctors of science. In the committee for the defence of masters or doctoral thesis, there is always one member from a foreign university, by which we aim to ensure comparability of quality of our masters and doctoral works with the established international standards. All these achievements undoubtedly show the quality and topicality of the studies' contents and teaching methods which we

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offer within the graduate study programmes.

In the 2013/14 academic year, the Graduate School's two programmes, Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology, and Physics, successfully passed all the procedures needed for the programmes' re-accreditation. On its 82th meeting of 18 September 2014, the National Accreditation Agency (NAKVIS) Council extended accreditation to the two programmes for the maximal period of seven years. In September 2014, the Graduate School submitted applications to NAKVIS for an extension of accreditation of the three doctoral programmes whose accreditation will have been due in the next academic year: Karstology, Environmental Sciences, and Humanities (before: Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures).

Environmental Sciences

In the 2013/14 academic year, we enrolled the fifth generation of students of the thrid level Environmental Sciences programme. As enrolment into scientific masters programme is not possible since the 2011/12 academic year, the enrolment of four students into year one was lower to a certain extent than in previous years, hence we cannot evaluate it as successful, though it was in second place concerning enrolements this academic year. We occupy the fourth position (of the total of seven programmes) concerning the number of all graduate students. Concerning success in examinations' grades, the students of the School of Environmental Sciences show slightly poorer results (an average of 9,0), which however does not imply a lower level of quality in students but rather is a reflection of the demanding criteria from professors.

In the 2013/14 academic year, the average length of study by the graduate students was substantially longer than in previous years, which is the result of the fact that some doctoral students have temporarily terminated their studies at the third degree level and were not financed by the National Research Agency (ARRS). At the same time, advancement from one year to another was poorer in the 2013/14 academic year, as advancement from year one to year two was 75% (compared to 83,3% in the preceeding year), while from year two to year three it was 60% (compared to 100% in the preceeding year). There is a visible tendency of a growing female population, which was 75% in the 2013/14 year, which is a little bit lower figure compared to the previous year (76,9%).

In this year, among year one enrolled students, there is a relatively high percentage of novice reseachers (approx. 75%). There is among these students one full-time foreign student, so we may say that international student exchanges are at a satisfactory level. In the last academic year, seven students completed their doctoral studies at the Environmental Sciences programme; there were no masters students in this year. Student surveys on teaching quality were done in the 2013/14 year as well. The surveys were carefully analysed and individual inteviews were done with lecturers. The School's facilities are well equipped and meet the needs for carrying out the graduate study programme in Environmental Sciences.

Physics

The third degree study programme in Physics is carried out in modules related to individual subjects (in terms of lectures and exams). The subjects are carried out, depending on the number of

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participants, in the form of either one-to-four week intensive courses at which the contents is transferred in lecture rooms, or in the form of individual tuition with contact hours with the lecturer; also, in some cases an individual distance-learning tuition may be used. Along with the organised contents, the students' study obligations include obligatory seminars and individual research work. Students may, in agreement with their mentors and the programme's scientific council, take their exams at other doctoral programmes of the university, or at related programmes at other universities in Slovenia or abroad. Along with educational exchanges, the study programme provides students with an opportunity to do research work at numerous local and foreign universities and research institutes. Our data show that the enrolment into the study programme is stable and continuous and that the majority of students come from abroad (there were 70% of foreign students in the academic 2013/14 year). Students attend all of the three modules: particle physics, materials physics, and physics of fluids. To monitor the quality of work and achievements, a student survey (which encompassed 6 students) was done in the 2013/14 academic year. In the same year, 6 students successfully completed their study with their doctoral dissertation at the Physics programme. On the basis of a detailed analysis of the available programme contents, offered within the Physics study programme, we are currently in the process of preparing a proposal to upgrade the curriculum in terms of offering more elective study contents.

Karstology

In this academic year, the work with students was, in accordance with the accepted programme, organised as individual work, in which almost all lecturers took part. The lecturers are acclaimed researchers in the national and international context and have good experience in both basic an applied research work on the market. Hence the lectureres are in a position to transfer to students fresh knowledge and experience, which they obtain with their work outside their research institution. There are two enrolled students in year one. Overall, there are 7 enrolled students, who have taken their exams with an average grade of 9,43. At the same time, the students' publications are an indication of their successful and independent research work. Also, some of the doctoral theses are supported by the economy sector. Students have taken part in international scientific meetings. The lectureres of the Karstology programme have paid visits to numerous universities and institutes around the world and have taken active participation in professional meetings. The programme has a continual co-operation with nuemrous foreign universities and foreign professionals take part as mentors and committee members within our programme. We intend to transfer knowledge to Asian students at our international laboratory (*Yunnan International Karst Environmental Laboratory*) at Yunnan University (Kunming, China). In June 2014, the University of Nova Gorica signed an agreement with Unesco concerning the foundation of Unesco Chair on Karst Education.

Humanities (before: Comparative study of ideas and cultures)

In the academic 2013/14 year, the graduate study programme in Comparative study of ideas and cultures, carried out in the premises of the Slovene Academy for Science and Art in Ljubljana, was conducted according to expectations. There were no new enrolled students to year one of the programme since we do not offer the modules of this programme any more. 7 students proceeded to

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year two of the programme, and 10 students to year three.

The programme was delivered in the form of regular lectures by home and invited foreign lectureres, seminar work and individual consultations, in two semesters. In the academic 2013/14 year, 20 home lectureres and 6 foreign lectureres took part in our programme. The emphasis in lectures was on interdisciplinary and comparative approach, and to historical, social and political contextualisation of issues. The lectures were public, intended for a wider interested public, and were very well attended. Students organised themselves on their own and led students' reading seminars at which they analysed a variety of scientific articles. Students have a continual access to professors.

In the academic 2013/14 year, the programme was renamed into the Humanities programme. Since October 2014 the programme has had two modules and has consequently been focused on two scientific fields: literary studies and migrations. Within the studies in the field of Literary sciences, students obtain appropriate, contemporary, methodological, theoretical and new media knowledge with which to study literature and social issues reflected in literary works. Within the studies of migrations, students obtain appropriate, contemporary methodological and theoretical knowledge for understanding the migration phenomena and facing contemporary migration processes and events. The remaining six initial modules have not been on offer since the academic 2012/13 year.

The Senate of the University of Nova Gorica has confirmed the proposal for changes at the third degree study programme in Comparative study of ideas and cultures; the two modules, Linguistics, and Migration and intercultural relations, have been added to the programme, and the graduate study programme has been renamed. The new name of the programme is „Humanities“.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

The study programme in *Economics and techniques for the conservation of the architectural and environmental heritage* was carrried out in the form of intensive one week lectures in the October to April period; during the lectures, the teaching contents of the subjects was covered almost entirely. At the same time, the programme was carried out in the form of individual study work and workshops at which the students of each year publicly presented their own individual work and discuss issues and challenges of their chosen theme, i.e., of their doctoral or masters dissertation. Within the individual study and distance learning, the students were able to analyse the study materials by using the lectures related audio and video films, which has considerably helped an increase in the level of interaction between students and professors. Along with intensive interdisciplinary lectures, this year we have also seen, as before, international workshops entitled *Strategic Urban Research* in co-operation with Free University of Amsterdam and Università Federico II in Naples; and the *Economics of Cultural heritage, New Perspectives* workshop in co-operation with the UNESCO Venice Office for Science and Culture in Europe. In co-operation with the Marco Polo System organisation and the partners of the EU HerMan project (Management of Cultural Heritage in the Central Europe Area), which manages the fortification complex in Marghera, we have organised lectures and workshops in situ.

The programme's strong international dimension, supported by the partner institutions and universities, along with the specifics of the working environment in Venice, represents an ideal working environment; this is expressed in students' achievements as well.

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Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

We have observed that there has been an increase in interest of home students for our programme. The study programme has been carried out successfully in accordance with the accredited programme. The emphasis is primarily on experimental laboratory work, which the basis for a successful doctoral dissertation. In the teaching process, we have used contemporary learning and teaching methods which encourage the future doctors of science to achieve better learning results such as: a thorough understanding of the scientific approach in the field of biosciences; development of independent thinking and critical evaluation; development of personal responsibility and decision-making abilities. As an addtional part of laboratory work, we have organised various scientific activities such as lectures, educational seminars and workshops. In the academic 2013//14 year, we saw, as in previous year, a number of invited lectures. There were also workshops in the form of critical and polemical discussions guided by professionals in the fields discussed. In this way the students weere able to obtain knowledge on contemporary issues within differenet scientific fields of the biosciences, and obtain important experience in critical evaluation of professional articles. The first year students attended a series of concise introductory lectures which covered the fundamental knowledge within the various fields of molecular biology. The educational process is carried out by professors and experienced professionals who actively take part in these fields. The knowledge testing and evaluating methods applied were in accordance with the set objectives and the programme's learning achievements. For purposes of work and achievements quality control, we have carried out a student survey. At the same time, by the ned of the academic year, we organised a presentation of the students' research work in front of a committee made of more experienced researchers in the field. The committee's critical comments and suggestions will be of help to the students' future work and hence represent a key element in scientific education.

On its 57th meeting of 14 May 2014, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica confirmed the changes related to the programme in Molecular genetics and biotechnology, with which we wanted to improve the quality of education at the programme. The major change in the organisation of the curriculum concerns the way in which the organised forms of studies are structured in each year of study. In year one, the organised forms of studies are increased to 26 ECTS (before: 20 ECTS); the student's research work is hence appropriately lowered to 34 ECTS. In year two, the ratio between the organised forms of study and research work has not changed. In year three, the organised forms of study is lowered to 14 ECTS (before: 20 ECTS) while the student's research work is increased to 16 ECTS. With this change, the students are able to devote more time to research work in their final year. At the same time, we have introduced new obligatory subjects (*Seminar I, Seminar II , Seminar III*) which will upgrade and strenghten the programme contents of the old subjects *Independent project work I, II, and III*. Also, some new elective courses were added, so as to modernise the programme in accordance with the latest trends in international researches in biomedicine and biotechnology. These new elective courses bring into the programme the most recent themes in biomedicine and biotechnology which so far have not been covered. This will emphasise the programme's interdisciplinarity and interconnectedness of scientific disciplines in biomedicine and biotechnology.

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Linguistics

Our doctoral programme has established itself within the community of internationally acknowledged scientific programmes in Cognitive Sciences. The programme has a great potential which could be realised once the financial sources for students are improved. A close connection of the programme with the reseach activity of the Centre for Language Cognitive Sciences provides our students with a good foundation for a successful career in the field of theoretical and experimental linguistics.

To improve the programme's quality, we introduced some structural and contents changes into the programme curriculum in year 2014. On its 56th meeting of 19 March 2014, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica confirmed the changes of the graduate study programme and agreed that the title of the Linguistics study programme is changed. The new name of the programme is ”Cognitive Sciences for Language”.

The self-evaluation report of the Graduate School and the summary have been drawn up by (in alphabetical order): Prof. Dr. Iztok Arčon, Prof. Dr. Anton Brancelj, Assist. Prof. Dr. Martina Bergant Marušič, Assist. Prof. Dr. Saša Dobričič, Prof. Dr. Elsa Fabbretti, Kristien Fauconnier, Assist. Prof. Dr. Martin Knez, Renata Kop, Nadja Lovec-Santaniello, Tea Stibilj Nemec, Prof. Dr. Samo Stanič, Prof. Dr. Artur Stepanov, Prof. Dr. Jelica Šumič Riha, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ana Toroš, Vanesa Valentinčič, Sabina Zelinšček.

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Assessment of current state and guidelines

EDUCATION, STUDY ACTIVITES
Implementation of study programmes

Assessment of current state and directives – year 2013/2014

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts

In year 2013/2014, we have established an intensive link between the programme and scientific research work so that the latter is now a part of the educational process (as an obligatory subject in years one and two). This part of the educational process is highly individual as the student, guided by his mentor, immediately takes part in more specific study or research contents related to his doctoral dissertation theme. This enables a timely completion of the study and is reflected in a higher quality level of doctoral dissertations. Apart from the research work, the study activities in year one are limited to one more obligatory subject in which the students gain a more general insight into the contemporary trends in Environmental Sciences. In year 2013/14, this practice has proved successful as has been confirmed by students in informal communication.

Weaknesses

Some students, particularly those who are not financed by the national agency for research (ARRS), find themselves without a mentor upon enrolling the programme. In this situation, a tutor is assigned to the student, the main task of the tutor being to guide the student in year one and help him choose a suitable mentor for his doctoral dissertation. This process may take some time, so this might be reflected in the level of intensity of the student's research work related to the doctoral dissertation. The situation can be partly mitigated if the student independently, or with the help of his tutor, finds the suitable topic for his research; at the same time, in year one, the student can deepen his knowledge through the subject *Contemporary trends in Environmental Sciences*, which also offers an opportunity for self-study (i.e. seminars).

Opportunities for improvement

Due to the newly established strategy of the graduate studies, which has been operative for two years now, it is, for the time being, difficult to suggest or envisage improvements. In any event, for students who are employed outside the University, it remains important that part of the programme is carried out through distance learning lectures (the Elluminate system). At the same time, efforts need to be taken to ensure that students do have their mentors in the very first months of their study, and that the mentors are fully confirmed as such.

Improvements may be exepected in the organisation of the seminars (which are obligatory for students) and summer schools, which offer opportunities for deepening one's knowledge; these forms of study partially make up for the great number of elective contents that, in the past, used

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to divert a student's concentration from working on his doctoral thesis.

Physics

Strenghts

The study activities go smoothly within the study programme in Physics. Due to a good ratio between inside and outside university teachers and associates who take part in carrying out the programme, we have completed the academic year with no major difficulties. According to our doctoral students, one of the key strenghts of the programme lies in a strong connection with the university research units, the study's international character, and student exchanges with the partner institutions abroad.

Weaknesses

The major weaknesses concern student accommodation, lack of a unified university campus, and complicated legal procedures for foreign students to obtain permission to study in Slovenia. We also note a lack of elective contents in certain study fields.

Opportunities for improvement

Promotion of the study programme in Slovenia and abroad.

In our view, the most important promoters of the programme are the graduated doctoral students who are successful in their careers. Also, we intend to introduce some new elective contents, in line with the observations concerning the current needs at the programme.

Karstology

Strentgths

The programme is well established and, after a decade of a continuous work, is carried out smoothly in both Slovene and English. The programme is regularly advertised at various national and international events. On June 2014, the programme was named the UNESCO Chair on Karst Education.

Weaknesses

An important difficulty, rather than weakness, is a limitation concerning student enrolments due to modest sources of financial support for student study and research work. This does not apply only tor students coming from developing countries or the third world but also to students from the Western countries.

Opportunities for improvement

We aim to make the study in Karstology more familiar to Slovene and foreign students. We also plan a transfer of knowledge to Asian students at our Yunnan International Karst Environmental Laboratory at the Yunnan University (Kunmig, China).

We plan to further develop the programme in the context of laboratory researches.

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As the study programme was named the UNESCO Chair on Karst Education, we expect a higher level of interest in it.

Comparative studies of ideas and cultures

Strenghts:

The programme is carried out by a quality team of habilitated researchers.

Weaknesses: /

Opportunities for improvement: /

*The study programme in Humanities has been renewed in terms of its contents and academic staff members since October 2014. Possible weaknesses will have been noted down in the course of the 2014/15 academic year. In the 2014/15 academic year, we note a low number of enrolled students (3) in the programme, hence we aim to set up a strategy to approach the issue (promotion of the study programme in the national and international context).

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strenghts

The programme has been going on smoothly in line with the established practice. In year 2013/14, almost all contents of the lectures have been carried out. In this academic year, as before, we have carried out the lectures in a way so as to unite subjects and lecturers, which has proved to be very efficient form the point of view of the interdisciplinary coherence of the study contents, an increased level of interaction among the lecturers and the students alike.

The established strenghts: the programme's international basis, carrying out a one year joint professional programme, participation in international research and institutional networks in the field of heritage conservation.

An upgrade of the subjects contents, as planned within the *Upgrading the quality assurance system and renewing the programmes at the University of Nova Gorica* project, has been almost entirely carried out, respecting the defined programme and educational directives. Certain weaknesses related to the issue of downsizing the existing number of subjects and a systematic unification of the study contents of the two study fields encompassed by the programme will have been dealt with fully in the current academic year.

Weaknesses

The downsizing of the existing number of subjects and the unification of the study contents of the two study fields encompassed by the programme go slowly mostly due to a complicated harmonisation process with partner universities. A few course directors will be retired in the near future, so this may be an additional difficulty when tackling the planned upgrading and improvements of the educational programme.

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We observe that there is an increase in the number of students who do their studies while working part-time, which has a negative effect on fulfilling their study obligations, a timely completion of studies, and participation in research work. Hence we would need to do a systematic preparation of all internet-based lectures.
Despite the increasing level of international visibility of the programme, which can be seen from a great number of interested candidates, it is only a small number of students who eventually decide on enrolling the programme due to a lack of financial support for study.

Opportunities for improvement

In year 2014-15, we will carry out the planned improvements as they are defined in the *Upgrading the quality assurance system and renewing the programmes at the University of Nova Gorica* project, concerning those points which have not been covered so far.
A priority will be an implementation of the individual form of study and distance learning through strengthening the technical (audio-visual) conditions, as well as strengthening the systemic approach to and accessibility of study literature.
Joint lifelong learning workshops with the ICCROM organisation, within the EU Life Long Learning Programme.
Participation in and application to EU projects will be continued.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts

Based on students' proposals, we have added some new events (seminars of invited lecturers, student Journal club and workshops) to the academic calendar. At the same time, we have strenghtened bilateral teacher exchanges between ICGEB and the University of Nova Gorica within the context of seminars, workshops and doctoral dissertations. This has in turn encouraged student exchanges and has strenghtened the local academic environment with an international dimension.

Also, we have extended cooperation with the following institutions: International school of advanced studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy, and Lund University, Sweden.

Weaknesses

The programme's research team is still a relatively small.
Lack of sources for student scholarships and financial support limits the enrolment of home students.

Opportunities for improvement

To encourage interdisciplinary researches within the University of Nova Gorica.
We plan to secure scholarships funds through a joint approach of the two institutions, the University of Nova Gorica and ICGEB.
To increase the number of elective subjects on a specific theme.

Cognitive sciences of language (before: Linguistics)

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Strenghts

Flexibility and contemporaneous nature of the programme, an integral approach to education, and a stimulating environment for student research.

Weaknesses

Lack of funds for financing prospective stundets. The academic staff contie with their efforts to find alternative sources of funding for students.

Opportunities for improvement

We have prepared some structural changes to imrpove the quality of the programme. The new elective subjects will improve the students' skills to work with qualitative methods offered by the natural sciences. We also plan to modernise the programme offered by our academic associates so as to make it closer to the needs of the students.

Assessment of current state and directives – year 2012/2013

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts

In year 2012/2013, we have established an intensive link between the programme and scientific research work so that the latter is now a part of the educational process (as an obligatory subject in years one and two). This part of the educational process is highly individual as the student, guided by his mentor, immediately takes part in more specific study or research contents related to his doctoral dissertation theme. This enables a timely completion of the study and is reflected in a higher quality level of doctoral dissertations. Apart from the research work, the study activities in year one are limited to one more obligatory subject in which the students gain a more general insight into the contemporary trends in Environmental Sciences. By the end of the 2011/12 academic year, we organised an international summer school, which has now become a traditional school.

Weaknesses

As the newly established strategy of the graduate studies has been introduced this year, it is, for the time being, difficult to evaluate weaknesses. Choosing a mentor immediately upon enrolment gives an opportunity to the student to start his research within a specific field in the very early stage of studies. This approach may, to a certain extent, limit the student's more general education in the research field, yet this potential weakness can be mitigated in year one through the subject *Contemporary trends in Environmental Sciences,* which offers, among other things, an opportunity for self-study (i.e. seminars).

Some students, particularly those who are not financed by the national agency for research (ARRS), find themselves without a mentor upon enrolling the programme. In this situation, a tutor is assigned to the student, the main task of the tutor being to guide the student in year one and help him choose a suitable mentor for his doctoral dissertation. This process may take some

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time, and hence this might be reflected in the level of intensity of the student's research work related to the doctoral dissertation. The situation can be partly mitigated if the student independently, or with the help of his tutor, finds the suitable topic for his research; at the same time, in year one the student can deepen his knowledge through the subject Contemporary trends in Environmental Sciences, which also offers an opportunity for self-study (i.e. seminars).

Opportunities for improvement

Due to the newly established strategy of the graduate studies, it is, for the time being, difficult to suggest or envisage improvements. In any event, for students who are employed outside the University, it remains important that part of the programme is carried out through distance learning lectures (the Elluminate system). Improvements may be exepected in the organisation of seminars (which are obligatory for students) and summer schools, which offer opportunities for deepening one's knowledge; these forms of study partially make up for the great number of elective contents that, in the past, used to divert a student's concentration from working on his doctoral thesis.

Physics

Strenghts

The study activities go smoothly within the study programme in Physics. Due to a good ratio between inside and outside university teachers and associates who take part in carrying out the programme, we have completed the academic year with no major difficulties. We find that the educational process is appropriately founded within the study programme, which may be seen in the high quality level and international dimension of the doctoral dissertation of our students so far. According to our doctoral students, one of the key strenghts of the programme lies in working with small groups of students, a strong research component, and the international character of researches.

Weaknesses

The major weaknesses concern student accommodation, lack of a unified university campus, and complicated legal procedures for foreign students to obtain permission to study in Slovenia. Advancement: in the academic year 2012/2013, one student has dropped from the programme due to personal reasons (the student will continue his studies abroad).

Opportunities for improvement

Promotion of the study programme in Slovenia and abroad. In our view, the most important promoters of the programme are the graduated doctoral students who are successful in their careers.

We aim to complete the planned upgrade of the study programme; on the basis of analysis of the previous work, we will suitably adapt the study contents and the elective contents.

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Karstology

Strentgths

The programme is well established and, after a decade of a continuous work, is carried out smoothly in both Slovene and English. The programme is regularly advertised at various national and international events.

Weaknesses

A low level of the programme's visibility in Slovenia and abroad.

An important difficulty, rather than weakness, is a limitation concerning student enrolments due to modest sources of financial support for student study and research work. A specil interest in our programme comes from the prospective students from the developing countries or the third world countries.

Opportunities for improvement

We aim to make the study in Karstology more familiar to Slovene and foreign students. We also plan a transfer of knowledge to Asian students at our Yunnan International Karst Environmental Laboratory at the Yunnan University (Kunmig, China).

We plan to further develop the programme in the context of laboratory researches.

We plan to develop and introduce the following new subjects:
Karst in Asia; Development challenges on karst in Asia; Karst waters in Asia; and Speleobiology in Asia.

Comparative studies of ideas and cultures

Strenghts

The programme is carried out by a quality team of habilitated researchers;
the graduate programme is linked, both in terms of research and education, with foreign research and educational institutions;
regular and frequent lectures; an emphasis on the seminar work with students.

Weaknesses

Due to a small number of enrolled students, there is a lower number of lectures at certain modules;
a small number of full-time associates;
lack of funds for financing researchers, which implies a lower level of their participation in research activities.

Opportunities for improvement

To increase the number of full-time associates who would be able to take part in the study

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programme;
to increase the number of international exchanges of university teachers and associates;
to increase funds for financing student publications and student international exchanges.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strenghts

Since its foundation seven years ago, the programme has been going on smoothly in line with the established practice. In year 2012/13, almost all contents of the lectures have been carried out. In this academic year, as before, we have carried out the lectures in a way so as to unite subjects and lecturers, which has proved to be very efficient form the point of view of the interdisciplinary coherence of the study contents, an increased level of interaction among the lecturers and the students alike.

The established strenghts: the programme's international basis, carrying out a one year joint professional programme, participation in international research and institutional networks in the field of heritage conservation.

We have started a procedure whereby the study contents of some subjects may be upgraded.

Weaknesses

Too many subjects, which has proved to be unreasonable from the the point of view of implementation and an interdisciplinary harmonisation of the study contents.
In year 2012/13, we have observed, as before, a lack of interest in the *Techniques and Materials* study option, which has not allowed us to carry out the subjects which would ensure aquisition of all of the competences needed.
Due to lack of financial resources, in year 2012/13, as before, we were nt able to set up a project laboratory which would secure a continuous applied research work and a higehr level of employability of doctoral students in the home institution.

Opportunities for improvement

In year 2013-14, we aim to implement the planned upgradings and improvements, whiche were envisaged last year, and which are defined in the *Upgrading the quality assurance system and renewing the programmes at the University of Nova Gorica* project: to upgrade the study contents of subjects, cancel or unite the existing subjects, and, if needed, introduce new contents and subjects.
Interdisciplinary and joint implementation of the key contents of the two study options (*Economics and management, Materials and techniques*), with a clear definition of learning outcomes and an introduction of the tutorial system.
Joint implementation of some study contents which are in line with the needs of other doctoral programmes (eg. Cultural heritage and environment legislation, together with the doctoral studies in Environmental Sciences).
A priority will be an implementation of the individual form of study and distance learning through strengthening the technical (audio-visual) conditions, as well as strengthening the systemic approach to and accessibility of study literature.

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Joint lifelong learning workshops with the ICCROM organisation, within the EU Life Long Learning Programme.
Participation in and application to EU projects will be continued.

Molecural genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts

In this academic year, we have significantly improved the programme's infrastructure and scientific environment in the field of biomedicine and biotechnology within the University of Noav Gorica. Based on the students' suggestions, we have added some new events (seminars of invited lecturers, student Journal club and workshops) to the academic calendar. At the same time, we have strenghtened the bilateral teacher exchanges between ICGEB and the University of Nova Gorica within the context of seminars, workshops and doctoral dissertations. This has in turn encouraged student exchanges and has strenghtened the local academic environment with an international dimension. Also, we have extended our cooperation with the following institutions: International school of advanced studies (SISSA), Trieste, Italy, and Lund University, Sweden.

Weaknesses

The programme's research team is still a relatively small one within the home institution.
Lack of sources for student scholarships and financial support limits the enrolment of home students.

Opportunities for improvement

To encourage interdisciplinary researches within the University of Nova Gorica.
We plan to secure scholarships funds through a joint approach of the two institutions, the University of Nova Gorica and ICGEB. We envisage that a better motivation on the part of the students could be achieved by introducing awards for the best students.
To increase the number of elective subjects on a specific theme.

Linguistics

Strenghts

The programme is comprehensive and flexible, following, in its general aspect, the needs of international research community, as well as the more specific, modern trends in theoretical linguistics and cognitive sciences. Students can obtain a wholesome education which enables them to be well informed of the newest theoretical background and the various tools for experimental work. The programme contains a possibility to unite the expert knowledge of the core associates with the knowledge of the researchers from abroad, with which it would be able to ensure a stimulating environment for the next generation of researchers.

Weaknesses

The programme suffers due to a lack of funds for financing prospective students. This is a

serious and general problem for docroral students in the humanities and social sciences. The academic staff continue with their efforts to find alternative opportunities, so as to obtain funds from projects with which to we would be able to help financing students as well.

Opportunities for improvement

Currently we put a great deal of effort into the structural changes which would improve the quality of the programme, and increase local and international interest in the programme. We aim to introduce some new elective subjects which would improve the students' skills to work with qualitative methods offered by the natural sciences. We also plan to modernise the programme offered by our academic associates so as to make it closer to the needs of the students.

Assessment of current state 2011/12

Environmental Sciences (third level)

Strengths:

In addition to close association with scientific and research work, the main strength of the programme is its electiveness that enables students and their supervisors to select specific study contents that are related to their doctoral dissertation topics. This is reflected in timely completion of studies and high quality of doctoral dissertations. Study activities were performed as usually. In 2011-2012, the scope of the programme did not change significantly. This was mainly achieved through the organization of the international summer school that is becoming a tradition.

Weaknesses:

Lack of activity or involvement of some supervisors in the selection, preparation and implementation of study contents was observed. These supervisors leave students the discretion to fulfil their study requirements through joint study contents that are provided within the study programme (e.g. summer school) or within other UNG graduate programmes or programmes that are designed by other supervisors for their own students within the Selected Topics course.

Opportunities for improvement:

It is important for students that are employed outside UNG that a part of the programme is implemented through distance lectures, which is enabled by the Elluminate system. This form of programme implementation should be more frequently utilized in the future, and also used in the 3rd level programme, especially for seminars. The contents of elective courses should also be better coordinated so as to enable bigger groups and implementation of courses in the form of lectures or other active forms of learning in bigger groups. A bigger number of supervisors should be involved in the implementation of courses within the Selected Topics.

Physics

Strengths:

Study activities within the Physics and Characterization of Materials study programmes are conducted without any interruptions and problems. Due to a sufficient number of home and

external higher education teachers and associates, participating in the implementation of programme, the academic year was completed without any difficulties.

Weaknesses:

Transition rate in the first year: in 2011/2012, three students (two foreign and one Slovenian) withdrew from the study of Physics for personal reasons, while one did not manage to fulfil his/her study obligations due to unexpected duties at work.

Opportunities for improvement:

Student that was not able to fulfil his/her study obligations due to unexpected duties at work, will be allowed to attend lectures and sit for exams after re-enrolment.

Karstology

Strengths:

The programme is well-organized and after ten years of its implementation, it is conducted in Slovenian and English without major difficulties.

Weaknesses:

Low visibility of the programme in Slovenia and abroad.

An important problem, rather than weakness, is the limited number of students that can enrol, which is the consequence of lack of resources for scholarships or financial support provided for study and research work. This is an issue that is becoming increasingly relevant, since the interest of students from developing countries to enrol in the programme has been increasing.

Opportunities for improvement:

We would like to bring the study programme closer to Slovenian and foreign students. Transfer of knowledge to Asian students is anticipated at our International Karst Environmental Laboratory (Yunnan International Karst Environmental Laboratory, Kunming, China). Close cooperation between the Karstology programme and Yunnan University (Kunming, China) is planned, together with inclusion of Asian students in the Karstology study programme at UNG.
New courses are anticipated as follows:
-Karst in Asia;
-Development challenges on Karst in Asia;
-Karst waters in Asia.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

- quality group of habilitated researchers implementing the study programme;
- cooperation with foreign research and educational institutions in terms of research and education conducted in study modules;
- regular and frequent lectures, special emphasis on cooperation with students in their seminar work.

Weaknesses:

- fewer lectures in certain modules due to a lower number of enrolled students;
- low number of employed personnel;

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- lack of resources for research scholarships, resulting in less frequent inclusion of researchers in research activities.

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that will be included in the implementation of the study programme;
- increased number of international exchanges of higher education teachers and associates;
- more resources to support student publishing activity, and international engagement of students.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

- Due to a relatively small number of enrolled students that were mainly part-time students, the study programme was implemented in the form of intensive lectures, including several courses and professors. The entire contents of the course were presented. This type of programme implementation proved as very effective in terms of interdisciplinary coherence of contents and greater interaction between lecturers and students.
- Within the framework of intensive joint workshops that took place for a longer period of time and were more extensive than lectures, foreign lecturers were available to students as supervisors and tutors.
- Partial implementation of individual studies (audio and video records, bibliography, etc.) and student preparation prior to ex-cathedra lectures contributed to greater interaction between students and lecturers.
- Strengths: international character of the programme; implementation of joint one-year supplementary study programme; participation in international research and institutional networks in the field of heritage conservation.
- Involvement in EU projects for funding, which slightly increased the number of personnel with full-time employment.

Weaknesses:

- Joint implementation of courses showed certain incoherences and obsolescence of course contents.
- Too many subjects, which is irrational in terms of implementation and interdisciplinary coordination of the contents.
- Lack of interest in Techniques and Materials programme, resulting in deficient implementation of courses required for the effectiveness of the study programme and obtained competences.
- Lack of resources in 2011/2012 prevented the establishment of a project laboratory that would enable continued applied research activities and greater employability of persons with PhD at the very laboratory.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Changes in syllabus: modernization of study contents, elimination of certain courses,

integration of existing courses, introduction of new contents and courses.

- Interdisciplinary-joint implementation of key contents of both study branches (Economics and Management, Materials and Techniques) with clearly defined study results through the introduction of tutorship.
- Joint implementation of certain subjects that are lectured in other doctoral study programmes (e.g. legislation in the field of environment and cultural heritage could be presented in cooperation with doctoral study programme Environmental Sciences).
- Intensification of individual work and distance learning, prior to and following the lectures, which could be enabled through better technical conditions (audio-video) and systematization - availability of study literature.
- Participation in EU projects for financing and involvement of industry to acquire funds needed for the establishment of a project laboratory.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

- The programme is focused on the international research environment, whereby great emphasis is placed on research work. At the end of each academic year, students present their research work and thus obtain valuable feedback and support.
- Seminars held by visiting lecturers are of high quality, since they are conducted by leading experts, and encompass a wide scope of biological science.

Weaknesses:

Financial resources for the execution of seminars and research work at UNG are limited. Relatively small group within the parent institution. Limited resources for scholarships or financial support do not enable sufficient enrolment of Slovenian students. Pedagogical process is fragmented. Therefore, the implementation of the study programme and student attendance are difficult to monitor.

Opportunities for improvement:

The establishment of new Centre for Biomedical Sciences and Engineering will improve the possibilities of research work. We will try to meet this objective through facilitation of interdisciplinary research within UNG. We will try to obtain scholarship funds with a joint approach of both institutions - UNG and ICGEB. It is anticipated that higher student motivation could be achieved with the introduction of awards for the best students.

Linguistics

Strengths:

As was the case in the first year of the study programme implementation, our syllabus enables a wide-ranging education in general linguistics and a selection of a narrower field of specialization.

Weaknesses:

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A major weakness of the first-level study programme was the lack of a laboratory for psycholinguistic studies and studies of language acquisition that would provide doctoral students with experience in a branch of linguistics, which is gaining in its importance. In the last year, two professors began to work on a research project at UNG that is financed by ARRS, enabling our student to get to know the methodology required for work in laboratory. However, the laboratory still needs additional funds for better equipment.
A problem that is constantly arising is also a lack of financial resources for students within the field that is currently not included in the majority of external financial resources, such as Ad Futura.

Assessment of current state 2010/2011

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:
Study activities were performed as usually. In 2010-2011, the scope of the programme did not change significantly. This was mainly achieved with the introduction of international summer schools.

Weaknesses:
Due to the introduction of a third-level study programme with a low number of students in certain elective courses, the study programme is mainly implemented individually. Therefore, in 2009-2010, the scope of lectures decreased in comparison with previous years.

Opportunities for improvement:
It is important for students that are employed outside UNG that a part of the programme is implemented through distance lectures, which is enabled by the Elluminate system. This form of programme implementation should be more frequently utilized in the future, and also used in the 3rd level programme, especially for seminars. The contents of elective courses should also be better coordinated so as to enable bigger groups and implementation of courses in the form of lectures or other active forms of learning in bigger groups.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Strengths:
Study activities within the Physics and Characterization of Materials study programmes are conducted without any interruptions and problems. Due to a great number of home and external higher education teachers and associates, participating in the implementation of programme, the academic year was completed without any difficulties.

Karstology

Strengths:
Study activities within the Karstology programme were implemented without any interruptions.

Weaknesses:
The enrolment of students is limited due to a lack of resources for scholarships or financial support provided for study and research work. This is an issue that is becoming increasingly relevant, since the interest of students from developing countries to enrol in the programme has been increasing.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

- quality group of habilitated researchers implementing the study programme;
- cooperation with foreign research and educational institutions in terms of research and education conducted in study modules;
- regular and frequent lectures, special emphasis on cooperation with students in their seminar work.

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that will be included in the implementation of the study programme;
- increased number of international exchanges of higher education teachers and associates;
- more resources to support student publishing activity, and international engagement of students.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

- large number of external lecturers from internationally renowned universities and institutions;
- one-year supplementary programme that enables a selection of potential candidates for doctoral study programme, and provides candidates with the opportunity to evaluate their own interests as regards their continuation of studies;
- regular and numerous lectures;
- intensive seminar activity in cooperation with foreign lecturers and students;
- relevant participation in international networks and projects, and active cooperation with international institutions in the field of heritage protection.

Weaknesses:

- low number of employed personnel;
- lack of resources for research scholarships, resulting in less frequent inclusion of researchers in research activities.
- lack of promotion and cooperation on a national level.

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that would be included in the research and mentorship activities of the programme;
- establishment of a project laboratory that would enable doctoral students and employed

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associates to get involved in the applied research activities, performed at the very laboratory, and additional financial support.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

Students are able to perform their research work at UNG premises, in biotechnological companies or in partner research institution ICGEB, providing also personnel support in the implementation of the programme.

Weaknesses:

The enrolment of Slovenian students is limited due to a lack of resources for scholarships or financial support provided for study and research work.

Opportunities for improvement:

Study process could be improved with a greater number of seminars and practical training courses related to UNG, and with a greater number of lecturers and researchers active in the field of molecular biology and being suitable as supervisors for students in the programme.

Linguistics

Strengths:

The syllabus enables a wide-ranging education in general linguistics and a selection of a narrower field of specialization. Personnel consists of experts from individual fields that facilitate independent research and enable the student to observe the effect of her narrow field of study on other fields.

Weaknesses:

The programme does not have a laboratory for the study of language acquisition and psycholinguistics, disabling education in the field of theory. Resources for financial support of students of linguistics are limited, since the programme in linguistics is not among the traditional programmes that are provided with financial support, such as Ad Futura. This significantly affects the enrolment of students. Due to a lack of resources, there is a big difference between the number of people interested in the programme and the number of people that actually enrol in the programme.

Opportunities for improvement:

Establishment of laboratory for the study of language acquisition and research in psycholinguistics. For this purpose, the personnel has responded to public tender of ARRS 2011: Public tender for co-financing of research equipment.

Assessment of current state 2006/2010

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

Study activities were performed as usually.

Weaknesses:

Due to the introduction of a third-level study programme with a low number of students in

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certain elective courses, it is anticipated that the study programme will mainly be implemented individually. Therefore, in the past year, the scope of lectures decreased in comparison with previous years. This trend will continue in the next year.

Opportunities for improvement:

It is important for students that are employed outside UNG that a part of the programme is implemented through distance lectures, which is enabled by the Elluminate system. This form of programme implementation should be more frequently utilized in the future, and also used in the 3rd level programme, especially for seminars. The contents of elective courses should also be better coordinated so as to enable bigger groups and implementation of courses in the form of lectures or other active forms of learning in bigger groups.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Strengths:

Study activities within the Physics and Characterization of Materials study programmes are conducted without any interruptions and problems. Due to a great number of home and external higher education teachers and associates, participating in the implementation of programme, the academic year was completed without any difficulties.

Karstology

Strengths:

Study activities within the Karstology programme were implemented without any interruptions.

Weaknesses:

The enrolment of Slovenian students is limited due to a lack of resources for scholarships or financial support provided for study and research work.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

- quality group of habilitated researchers implementing the study programme;
- cooperation with foreign research and educational institutions in terms of research and education conducted in study modules;
- regular and frequent lectures, special emphasis on cooperation with students in their seminar work.

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that will be included in the implementation of the study programme;
- increased number of international exchanges of higher education teachers and associates;
- more resources to support student publishing activity, and international engagement of students.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

- large number of external lecturers from internationally renowned universities and

institutions;
- one-year supplementary programme that enables a selection of potential candidates for doctoral study programme, and provides candidates with the opportunity to evaluate their own interests as regards their continuation of studies;
- regular and numerous lectures;
- intensive seminar activity in cooperation with foreign lecturers and students;
- relevant participation in international networks and projects, and active cooperation with international institutions in the field of heritage protection.

Weaknesses:
- low number of employed personnel;
- lack of resources for research scholarships, resulting in less frequent inclusion of researchers in research activities.
- lack of promotion and cooperation within national research networks, projects and institutions in the field of heritage protection.

Opportunities for improvement:
- increased number of employed associates that would be included in the research and mentorship activities of the programme;
- establishment of a project laboratory that would enable doctoral students and employed associates to get involved in the applied research activities, performed at the very laboratory, and additional financial support.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

Students are able to perform their research work at UNG premises, in biotechnological companies or in partner research institution ICGEB, providing also personnel support in the implementation of the programme.

Weaknesses:

The enrolment of Slovenian students is limited due to a lack of resources for scholarships or financial support provided for study and research work.

Opportunities for improvement:

Study process could be improved with a greater number of seminars and practical training courses related to UNG, and with a greater number of lecturers and researchers active in the field of molecular biology and being suitable as supervisors for students in the programme.

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SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATE AND DIRECTIVES – YEAR 2013/2014

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts

In year 2013/2014, the carrying out of the study programme continued to be covered by a team of excellent professors and researchers in the field of environmental studies in Slovenia. Some of the academic staff members come from abroad, as outstanding professionals in their field. In this way, a close connection between teaching and research activities at a high international level is secured, including an access to the needed research infrastructure.

Weaknesses

The greater part of study process is still carried out only in Slovenia, as just a small number of doctoral students decide on doing part of their doctoral studies or work abroad. This issue lies within the responsibility of the mentors, who need not be always academic members of the University of Nova Gorica, so the School has no major influence on the issue, apart from giving recommendations.

Opportunities for improvement

To encourage students to do more actively, and for a longer period of time, part of their education or research work at foreign institutions, including both universities and institutes. This could be achieved by motivating the students' mentors so as to send their students abroad as well. For this purpose, a closer co-operation with mentors at individual institutions, at which researchers carry out their work, would be useful.

Physics

Strenghts

In terms of their expert knowledge and quality, the lecturers who teach at the study programme in Physics contiune to be considered suitable, with an appropriate ratio between home and visiting professors. The strenght of the study programme in Physics remains a high percentage of foreign students (70%) and foreign professors; in this way we are in a position to obtain access to experience from other research institutions, and from the industrial sector.

Weaknesses

We have not observed any notable weaknesses in the current academic year.

Opportunities for improvement

We see opportunities for improvement in an increased number of short-term visits by foreign professors, the programme's financial sources permitting.

Karstology

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Strenghts:

The studying process is carried out by distinguished and experienced researchers, auhtors of numerous scientific papers, discussions and publications with an international impact, including a variety of applied research papers on Karst studies. When needed, the work at the programme is also carried out by professors from foreign universities.

Weaknesses

The study process is carried out only in Slovenia. Too modest financial resources.

Opportunities for improvement

To prepare a suitable promotion of the UNESCO Chair on Karst Education.
A *Yunnan International Karst Environmental Laboratory* was set up at the Yunnan university (Kunming, China) so currently an educational cooperation between the respective schools is in preparation. The cooperation would ensure an easier transfer and cooperation between the universities and students.
To apply to a greater number of research calls (including international ones).
To increase the number of full-time professors at the School of Graduate Studies.

Comparative studies of ideas and cultures

Strenghts:

A quality team of habilitated researchers who carry out the programme.

Weaknesses: /

Opportunities for improvement: /

*The study programme in Humanities has been renewed in terms of its contents and academic staff members since October 2014. Possible weaknesses will have been noted down in the course of the 2014/15 academic year. In the 2014/15 academic year, we note a low number of enrolled students (3) in the programme, hence we aim to set up a strategy to approach the issue (promotion of the study programme in the national and international context).

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strenghts

An exclusively international foundation of the programme ensures its dynamic, research - oriented activities, and an immediate international visibility of the programme's teaching and research.
The programme's participation in EU projects has strenghtened the academic staff structure.

Weaknesses

Despite efforts to obtain new financial sources, in year 2013/14 we have seen a lack of full-time staff who would be able to cover a range of research, project and administrative activities

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needed for a quality carrying out of the programme.

Opportunities for improvement

We will continue with efforts to obtain EU projects to be able to finance research and project activities. These projects would ensure a continuation of international exchanges and participation of doctoral students in research and project activities.

We plan to set up a UNESCO Chair department in the field of interdisciplinary studies in the conservation of cultural heritage. A new cooperation agreement has been signed with the University of Fouzhu (China). We also plan to establish a study cooperation between the School of Architecture, University of Ljubljana, and the Graduate School, which would enable an easier process of transfer and cooperation among students between the two universities.

We will continue to include outisde associates and partner universities into joint projects an teaching activities (joint international workshops, conferences, etc.), which would help to additionally cut organisational costs, and would enable a higher degree of participation of foreign lecturers, notwithstanding their employment status.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts

Students have an opportunity to carry out their research work at the university premises, biotechnological companies or at ICGEB, a partner research institution, which also offers academic staff support in carrying out the programme.

A significant number of foreign lecturers who come from internationally acclaimed universities and institutions, and who are thus able to transfer their knowledge to students, relying on their immediate academic environment.

Weaknesses

An insufficient degree of involvement of the academic staff into the more general academic life and activities. A limited number of mentors at the university.

Opportunities for improvement

To improve cooperation between researchers of related laboratories at the university, and a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary researches.
A greater number of home professors, who, at the same time, would be able to act as mentors to home students.
Also, we see opportunities for improvement in an increased number of seminars and practical courses related to the University of Nova Gorica programmes.
To establish the tutorial system of study.

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Linguistics

Strenghts:

Home and foreign professors who teach at the programme are internationally distinguished experts in their fields. A harmonious ratio between the home and foreign lecturers provides for a versatile and balanced transfer of knowledge to students.

Weaknesses:

The issue of financing student tuition fees has been a strong one in this academic year as well. We note that there has been an increase in interest by foreign students in our programme, yet a lack of sufficient funds to finance their studies is a serious obstacle for enrolment.

Opportunities for improvement:

We continue to actively seek alternative sources of financing our prospective students. This includes applying to research projects, as these may enable students to be in the position of assistants and take part in international teaching initiatives.

Assessment of current state – year 2012/2013

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts

In year 2012/2013, the carrying out of the study programme continued to be covered by a team of outstandingt professors and researchers in the field of environmental studies in Slovenia. Some of the academic staff members come from abroad, as outstanding professionals in their field. In this way, a close connection between teaching and research activities at a high international level is secured, including an access to the needed research infrastructure.

Weaknesses

The greater part of study process is still carried out only in Slovenia, as just a small number of doctoral students decide on doing part of their doctoral studies or work abroad.

Opportunities for improvement

To encourage students to do more actively, and for a longer period of time, part of their education or research work at foreign institutions, including both universities and institutes. This could be achieved by motivating the students' mentors so as to send their students abroad as well.

Physics

Strenghts

In terms of their expert knowledge and quality, the lecturers who teach at the study programme in Physics are considered highly suitable; the availability of home professors has increased,

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though this has not affected the number of foreign professors at the programme. The strenght of the study programme in Physics remains a high percentage of foreign students (70%) and foreign professors; in this way we are in a position to obtain access to experience from other research institutions, and from the industrial sector.

Weaknesses

We have not observed any notable weaknesses in the current academic year.

Opportunities for improvement

We see opportunities for improvement in an increased number of short-term visits by foreign professors, the programme's financial sources permitting.

Karstology

Strenghts:

The studying process is carried out by distinguished and experienced researchers, auhtors of numerous scientific papers, discussions and publications with an international impact, including a variety of applied research papers on Karst studies. When needed, the work at the programme is also carried out by professors from foreign universities.

Weaknesses

The study process is carried out only in Slovenia. Too modest financial resources.

Opportunities for improvement

In cooperation with the Graduate School, we plan to establish the UNESCO Chair on Karst Education.
A *Yunnan International Karst Environmental Laboratory* was set up at the Yunnan university (Kunming, China); currently an educational cooperation between the respective schools is in preparation. The cooperation would ensure an easier transfer and cooperation between the two universities and their students.
To apply to a greater number of research calls (including international ones).
To increase the number of full-time professors at the School of Graduate Studies.

Comparative studies of ideas and cultures

Strenghts:

A quality team of habilitated researchers who carry out the programme;
research and educational links between the graduate programme modules with foreign research and educational institutions.

Weaknesses:

Insufficient number of full-time academic staff members

Opportunities for improvement:

To increase the number of full-time academic staff members, who would be able to take part

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in the programme;
to increase the number of international exchanges of university teachers and scientific associates.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strenghts

An established international foundation of the programme, both from the point of view of student participants and lecturers, which ensures the programme's international visibility, and a high quality teaching and research activities.
The programme is included in three EU regional projects, which has partially strenghtened the academic staff structure.

Weaknesses

In year 2012/13, we have seen a lack of full-time staff who would be able to cover a range of research, project and administrative activities needed for a quality carrying out of the programme.

Opportunities for improvement

We will continue with efforts to obtain EU projects to be able to finance research and project activities.

We will continue to include outisde associates and partner universities into joint projects an teaching activities (joint international workshops, conferences, etc.), which would help to additionally cut organisational costs, and would enable a higher degree of participation of foreign lecturers, notwithstanding their employment status.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts

A significant number of foreign lecturers who come from internationally acclaimed universities and institutions, and who are thus able to transfer their knowledge to students, relying on their immediate academic environment.

Weaknesses

An insufficient degree of involvement of the academic staff into the more general academic life and activities. A limited number of mentors at the university.

Opportunities for improvement

To improve cooperation between researchers of related laboratories at the university, and a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary researches.
A greater number of home professors, who, at the same time, would be able to act as mentors to home students.
To establish the tutorial system of study.

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Linguistics

Strenghts

Home and foreign professors who teach at the programme are internationally distinguished experts in their fields. A harmonious ratio between the home and foreign lecturers provides for a versatile and balanced transfer of knowledge to students, and an ability to follow up a student's general and more specialised interests in linguistics.

Weaknesses

We need to overcome a lack of financial resources for financing our dcotoral students and increase the number of enrolments, which would make the programme more efficient.

Opportunities for improvement

We will continue to actively seek sources of financing our prospective doctoral students through research initiatives of our academic associates.

Assessment of current state 2011/2012

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

The study programme is implemented by the most renowned professors and researchers from the field of environment in Slovenia, as well as by established experts from abroad. They are the ones that enable involvement in international research activities on a high level, as well as access to required research infrastructure.

Opportunities for improvement:

Involvement of the most prominent internationally renowned Slovenian experts from the field of environment must remain a priority also in the future.

Physics

Strengths:

Lecturers in the Physics study programme are excellent in terms of their expertise and quality of their lectures. In the last year, their excellence also improved in terms of their availability, resulting from the establishment of new laboratories at UNG. One of the advantages of the Physics study programme is the high proportion of foreign students and lecturers, bringing with them the experience from other research institutions and industry.

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Weaknesses:

Weaknesses observed in the past year have been eliminated.

Opportunities for improvement:

The programme could be improved with a greater number of short-term visits of foreign lecturers, which depends on the financial capability of the programme.

Karstology

Strengths:

The educational process is conducted by established and internationally experienced researchers, authors of numerous papers and monographs with international visibility. When required, programme is implemented by professors from foreign universities.

Weaknesses:

The study process takes place only in Slovenia.

Limited financial resources.

Only one person employed at FPŠ.

Opportunities for improvement:

Together with FPŠ, we anticipate close cooperation with Yunnan University (Kunming, China), enabling easier transfer and cooperation of students from both faculties.

Application to as many (also international) tenders as possible.

Increased number of teachers with full-time employment at FPŠ.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

- quality group of habilitated researchers implementing the study programme;
- cooperation with foreign research and educational institutions in terms of research and education conducted in study modules;

Weaknesses:

- low number of employed personnel;

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that will be included in the implementation of the study programme;
- increased number of international exchanges of higher education teachers and associates;

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental

Heritage

Strengths:

- The programme is internationally oriented, both in terms of enrolled students and lecturers - visiting professors, which is an important advantage in view of exchange of research activities and performance of pedagogical work.
- Pedagogical personnel consists of the most prominent experts at the international level.
- The programme was a part of three EU projects of cross-border cooperation that were approved in 2011/12 (SEE-SUSTCULT, Interreg 4C-AT FORT, Interreg 3A-PRATICONS), which will increase the employability of students and the visibility of programme in the future.

Weaknesses:

- Also in 2011/12, there was a lack of personnel with full-time employment that would conduct research, project and administrative activities, required for quality implementation of the programme.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Considering the decreasing financial resources on the national level and consequently also lower employability, the activities in the field of EU projects will have to be intensified to provide funds for research and project activities, including partner institutions and visiting teachers.
- External associates and partner universities will continue to be included in joint project and pedagogical activities (joint international workshops, conferences, etc.), which will further cut organizational costs and increase the involvement of foreign lecturers, regardless of their employment status.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

A large number of external lecturers from internationally renowned universities and institutions, providing students with knowledge and experience directly from their environment.

Weaknesses:

Insufficient inclusion of personnel in general academic life and activities. Limited number of supervisors at UNG.

Opportunities for improvement:

Better cooperation between researchers of related laboratories at UNG and more emphasis on interdisciplinary research activities. Larger number of home lecturers that could also act as supervisors in research work of our students. Establishment of tutorship system.

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Linguistics

Strengths:

All professors working within the programme are internationally renowned experts in their respective fields.

Opportunities for improvement:

Employment of an expert for experimental linguistics and one for phonology.

Assessment of current state 2010/2011
Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

The study programme is implemented by the most renowned professors and researchers from the field of environment in Slovenia, as well as by established experts from abroad. They are the ones that enable involvement in international research activities on a high level, as well as access to required research infrastructure.

Opportunities for improvement:

Involvement of the most prominent internationally renowned Slovenian experts from the field of environment must remain a priority also in the future.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Strengths:

Lecturers in the study programmes are excellent in terms of their expertise and quality of their lectures, while they are satisfactory when it comes to their availability. There is a large proportion of foreign students and lecturers in the programmes, which is an additional advantage, since they bring with them experience from other research institutions and industry.

Opportunities for improvement:

In terms of availability of lecturers, there are still some opportunities for improvement.

Karstology

Strengths:

The programme is implemented by a variety of highly qualified lecturers that are also researchers. Their work is complemented by visiting professors from foreign universities. There is a large proportion of foreign students enrolled in the programme.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

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- quality group of habilitated researchers implementing the study programme;
- cooperation with foreign research and educational institutions in terms of research and education conducted in study modules;

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that will be included in the implementation of the study programme;
- increased number of international exchanges of higher education teachers and associates;

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

Expertise and quality of international lecturers: a large number of contractual lecturers from internationally renowned universities and institutions, providing students with knowledge and experience directly from their environment.

Relevant participation of staff in some international networks and projects, and active cooperation with international institutions in the field of heritage protection.

Weaknesses:

Poor availability of personnel with full-time employment, especially on a national level, and thus exclusion from the national network of research projects.

Opportunities for improvement:

Due to limited financial resources, a greater number of staff with full-time employment could not be achieved. However, the inclusion and availability of external associates for mentorship was increased through their involvement in joint project activities.

Project laboratory for involvement of doctoral students and employment of staff was not yet formally established. However, invitations to Landscape Biennial of the Canary Islands and the Venice Architecture Biennale where the first project activity of the laboratory will be presented, are a great opportunity for the actual establishment of the lab.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

A large number of external lecturers from internationally renowned universities and institutions, providing students with knowledge and experience directly from their environment.

Opportunities for improvement:

Larger number of home lecturers that could also act as supervisors in research work of our students.

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Linguistics

Strengths:

All professors are active members of the international linguistic community and international research exchanges.

Opportunities for improvement:

Employment of an expert for experimental linguistics.

Assessment of current state 2006 - 2010

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

The study programme is implemented by the most renowned professors and researchers from the field of environment in Slovenia, as well as by established experts from abroad. They are the ones that enable involvement in international research activities on a high level, as well as access to required research infrastructure.

Opportunities for improvement:

Involvement of the most prominent internationally renowned Slovenian experts from the field of environment must remain a priority also in the future.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Strengths:

Lecturers in the study programmes are excellent in terms of their expertise and quality of their lectures, while they are satisfactory when it comes to their availability. There is a large proportion of foreign students and lecturers in the programmes, which is an additional advantage, since they bring with them experience from other research institutions and industry.

Opportunities for improvement:

In terms of availability of lecturers, there are still some opportunities for improvement.

Karstology

Strengths:

The programme is implemented by a variety of highly qualified lecturers that are also researchers. Their work is complemented by visiting professors from foreign universities. There is a large proportion of foreign students enrolled in the programme.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

- quality group of habilitated researchers implementing the study programme;

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- cooperation with foreign research and educational institutions in terms of research and education conducted in study modules;

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that will be included in the implementation of the study programme;
- increased number of international exchanges of higher education teachers and associates;

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

- a large number of contractual lecturers from internationally renowned universities and institutions, providing students with knowledge and experience directly from their environment;
- one-year supplementary programme that enables a selection of potential candidates for doctoral study programme, and provides candidates with the opportunity to evaluate their own interests as regards their continuation of studies;
- relevant participation in international networks and projects, and active cooperation with international institutions in the field of heritage protection.

Weaknesses:

- low number of employed personnel;
- lack of resources for research scholarships, resulting in less frequent inclusion of researchers in research activities;
- lack of promotion and cooperation within national research networks, projects and institutions in the field of heritage protection.

Opportunities for improvement:

- increased number of employed associates that would be included in the research and mentorship activities of the programme;
- establishment of a project laboratory that would enable doctoral students and employed associates to get involved in the applied research activities, performed at the very laboratory, and additional financial support.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

A large number of external lecturers from internationally renowned universities and institutions, providing students with knowledge and experience directly from their environment.

Opportunities for improvement:

Larger number of home lecturers that could also act as supervisors in research work of our students.

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STUDENTS AT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
ASSESMENT OF CURRENT STATE AND DIRECTIVES

Assessment of current state – year 2013/2014

Strenghts

All programmes are conducted successfully, in a high-quality manner and effectively, which is visible in the success of students in their studies and individual research work. The students' average grades are generally very high, students pass exams on their first attempt, and the average study period is relatively short. The efficiency of graduate studies is reflected in successful defences of high-quality master and doctoral theses, and in numerous publications of student research results in reputable international journals. In years 2013 and 2014, we note 46 scientific and professional articles, 21 published contributions at conferences, 74 published conference proceedings, and 42 other scientific publications, which is almost two times more than in the previous year.

The committee for the assessment of a master's or doctoral dissertation always consists of one member from a foreign university. It is in this manner that the quality of master's and doctoral degrees is comparable to standards established throughout the world. The above mentioned accomplishments bear witness to the quality and topicality of our contents and teaching methods, offered in our graduate study programmes.

Student surveys show that lecturers do their teaching work very well. According to the students' views, lectures in all study programmes were interesting, and were delivered in a comprehensible manner; the lectures, according to the students' views, stimulated them to think about the presented subject matter and to do independent study. Students are satisfied with the attitude of lecturers towards them. The professor's average grade ranges between 3 and 5, and is generally above 4. Over the last three academic years, the quality of lectures has remained high or even increased. There are no major deviations between individual study programmes. In this academic year we have introduced the electronic system of student survey, which has resulted in a greater number of filled questionnaires.

Weaknesses

The small number of students and completed questionnaires do not enable a statistically adequate representation of the quality of individual lectures. Collection of data concerning the student workload tby means of the Student Work Evaluation Form has proved, in some cases, as inefficient, since it is difficult for students to make a realistic assessment of their workload, especially for those units of their study programme that are not carried out as organised forms of study. In some cases it turns out that the students do not understand the questionnaire. We find that there are difficulties to collect data on student workload, since students need to complete the respective questionnaire after they have completed their course obligations, whereby the activities of the course were carried out throughout the academic year.

Opportunities for improvement

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A decrease in the number of enrolled students into year one has ceased; the main reason is that the old scientific masters programmes are not carried out any more. The university's and Graduate School's strategic policy is to increase activities to attract most talented and motivated students for doctoral studies from all over the world. There are more than 50% of foreign students at the Graduate School. In the future we aim to increase the number of foreign students and hence to emphasise the international character of the Graduate School.

We will continue to ensure student mobility and a close co-operation with the university's research units and other research organisations in the country and abroad, so as to provide opportunities to students to take part in a quality research work.

At the third degree doctoral programmes, we will continue to actively take care of the good conditions for student research work and an optimal realisation of the organised forms of study, so as to enable students to complete their studies within the prescribed period of three years. We will ensure that individual programme directors, and administration offices, actively encourage students to evaluate study programmes and lecturers.

Assessment of current state - years 2012/2013

Strenghts

All programmes are conducted successfully, in a high-quality manner and effectively, which is visible in the success of students in their studies and individual research work. The students' average grades are generally very high, students pass exams on their first attempt, and the average study period is relatively short. The efficiency of graduate studies is reflected in successful defences of high-quality master and doctoral theses, and in numerous publications of student research results in reputable international journals. In years 2012 and 2013, we note 23 scientific and professional articles, 10 published contributions at conferences, 54 published conference proceedings, and 48 other scientific publications, which is in total a little bit lower figure than in the previous year.

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Student surveys show that lecturers do their teaching work very well. According to the students' views, lectures in all study programmes were interesting, and were delivered in a comprehensible manner; the lectures, according to the students' views, stimulated them to think about the presented subject matter and to do independent study. Students are satisfied with the attitude of lecturers towards them. The professor's average grade ranges between 3 and 5, and is generally above 4. Over the last three academic years, the quality of lectures has remained high or even increased. There are no major deviations between individual study programmes.

Weaknesses

The small number of students and completed questionnaires do not enable a statistically adequate representation of the quality of individual lectures. At the same, it is not possible to ensure the anonymous nature of the questionnaire. Data collection concerning the student workload by means of the Student Work Evaluation Form has proved, in some cases, as unsatisfactory, since it is difficult for students to make a realistic assessment of their workload, especially for those units of their study programme that are not carried out as organised forms of study. In some cases it turns out that the students do not understand the questionnaire. We find that there are difficulties in collect ingdata on student workload, since students need to complete the respective questionnaire after they have completed their course obligations, whereby the activities of the course were carried out throughout the academic year.

Opportunities for improvement

A decrease in the number of enrolled students into year one continues, the main reason being that the old scientific masters programmes are not carried out any more. The university's and Graduate School's strategic policy is to increase activities to attract most talented and motivated students for doctoral studies from all over the world. There are more than 50% of foreign students at the Graduate School. In the future we aim to increase the number of foreign students and hence to emphasise the international character of the Graduate School.

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At the third degree doctoral programmes, we will continue to actively take care of the good conditions for student research work and an optimal realisation of the organised forms of study, so as to enable students to complete their studies within the prescribed period of three years. We will ensure that individual programme directors, and administration offices, actively encourage students to evaluate study programmes and lecturers.

To ensure a high quality level of knowledge in doctoral students, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica, on its 47th regular meeting of 9 November 2012, agreed that the Conditions for defence of doctoral dissertation at the Graduate School doctoral study programmes were amended with the following: „As a condition for his or her dissertation defense, the student must obtain, apart from the existing prerequisites at the respective study programme, grade 8 or more at all subjects which he has taken within his study programme, the subjects being graded with the existing grade system.“ Similarly, the conditions for doctoral dissertation defense are taken into consideration in the procedure of recognising ECTS points for the study contents which the student had taken prior to his enrolment to the Graduate School programme. Hence only those subjects in which the student had achieved 70% of the maximal grade could be recognised; that is, at least the grade 8, according to the established 1 to 10 grade ladder, which is valid in Slovenia. The amendments are valid from the academic 2012/2013 year onwards.

We will seek new possibilities for a more efficient data collection on students' workload, so as to obtain more realistic results. For these purposes, in year 2011, an electronic survey was prepared, which the students were asked to fill in after taking their exams, via the electronic system at the university's web pages. The access to the survey is on an individual basis, in the same way as the students have access to their grades. The questionnaire may be answered only for those subjects the student has passed, that is, has successfully completed all obligations. In the academic 2013/14

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year, we plan to renew the electronic surveys, and to adapt them to the different forms of studies and different study programmes, so as to make them more comprehensible to students.

Assessment of current state 2010/12

Strengths:

All programmes are conducted successfully, in a high-quality manner and effectively, which is visible in success of students in their studies and individual research work. Average grades of students are generally very high, students pass exams on their first attempt, and the average study period is relatively short. The effectiveness of graduate studies is reflected in successful defences of high-quality master and doctoral theses, and in numerous publications of student research results in reputable international journals: 47 scientific and professional articles, 47 papers at conferences, 86 published proceedings from conferences, and 50 other scientific publications in years 2010 and 2011. This number increased in 2012, namely to 97 scientific and professional articles, 58 papers at conferences, 86 published proceedings from conferences, and 64 other scientific publications.

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Student surveys show that lecturers perform their pedagogical work well. Students believe that lectures in all study programmes were given in an interesting and comprehensible manner. They also stimulated students to think about the presented subject matter, and to self-study. Students are satisfied with the attitude of lecturers towards them. The average grade ranges between 3 and 5, and is generally above 4. In the last three academic years, the quality of lectures has remained high or even increased. There are no major deviations between individual study programmes.

Weaknesses:

Due to a small number of students in individual study programmes, it is very difficult to provide anonymity of student surveys. The small number of students and completed surveys do not enable a statistically adequate representation of the quality of individual lectures. Collection of data

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regarding student workload through Student Work Evaluation Form proved in some case as inefficient, since it is very difficult for students to make a realistic assessment of their workload, especially for those units of study programme that are not provided in an organized manner. It is very difficult to collect data on student workload, since students need to complete the respective questionnaire after they have completed their course obligations, whereby the activities of the course were implemented throughout the academic year.

Opportunities for improvement:

The number of enrolled students decreased in the period of 2011 and 2012. The main reason for low enrolment is the fact that old master's programmes are no longer implemented. FPŠ and UNG must increase their activities to attract the most talented and motivated students for doctoral studies from all over the world. There are more than 50 % of foreign students at FPŠ. We would like to increase the proportion of foreign students in the future, and thus emphasize the international nature of FPŠ.

We will continue to enable student mobility and close cooperation with UNG research units and other research organizations in Slovenia and abroad, so that our students will be able to perform high-quality research work.

In third-level doctoral programmes, we will provide good conditions for research work of students and for optimum implementation of the organized forms of study, so that students could complete their studies within the specified period of three years. Directors and school office of individual study programmes will get actively involved in encouraging students to evaluate study programmes and lecturers.

In order to ensure high quality knowledge of doctoral students, the Senate of UNG decided at its regular 47th session on 7 November 2012 to amend the Conditions for dissertation defence in doctoral study programmes of the Graduate School as follows: »The student may proceed to his doctoral dissertation defence only if he has obtained grade 8 or more in each subject taken within the respective study programme, the subjects being graded according to the existing grading system.The conditions for dissertation defence shall also be considered in the process of recognition of ECTS credits for those studying contents the student has obtained before entering a doctoral study programme at FPŠ. This means that only those subjects in which the student has achieved at least 70% of the highest grade will be recognised; the 70% being at least grade 8 according to the existing Slovenian grading system from 1 to 10. The amendments have been in effect since the beginning of academic year 2012/2013.

We will seek possibilities of a more effective collection of data regarding student workload that would provide us with realistic results. Therefore, an electronic form of the survey was introduced in 2011 to enable students to complete the survey after taking their exam through an electronic system at UNG website. Students can assess the survey individually, as is the case with access to grades. They can only complete surveys for courses where they already took the exam or successfully met all their study obligations.

Strengths:

All programmes are conducted successfully, in a high-quality manner and effectively, which is visible in success of students in their studies and individual research work. Average grades of students are generally very high, students pass exams on their first attempt, and the average study period is relatively short. The effectiveness of graduate studies is reflected in successful defences of high-quality master and doctoral theses, and in numerous publications of student research results in reputable international journals: 44 scientific and professional articles, 23 papers at conferences, 64 published proceedings from conferences, and 130 other scientific publications in years 2008 and 2009. 45 scientific and professional articles, 26 papers at conferences, 59 published proceedings from conferences, and 21 other scientific publications in years 2009 and 2010. The number of publications has been constant over the years, or may have even been increasing.

The committee for the assessment of a master's or doctoral dissertation always consists of one member from a foreign university. It is in this manner that the quality of master's and doctoral degrees is comparable to standards established throughout the world. The above mentioned accomplishments bear witness to the quality and topicality of our contents and teaching methods, provided in our graduate study programmes.

Student surveys show that lecturers perform their pedagogical work well. Students believe that lectures in all study programmes were given in an interesting and comprehensible manner. They also stimulated students to think about the presented subject matter, and to self-study. Students are satisfied with the attitude of lecturers towards them. The average grade for a lecturer ranges between 3 and 5, and exceeds 4 for most lecturers(Characterization of Materials, Physics, Intercultural Studies – Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures, Karstology).

In 2004, the Alumni Club was established to connect all graduates with bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from all UNG study programmes. It is through members of the club that we get feedback on the employment of graduates and on the applicability of knowledge obtained during their studies at UNG. Graduate study programmes at the Graduate School are generally attended by students who are employed as young researchers at UNG or in industry. Data to date also shows that all students have employment after they complete their studies. Some of them continue their work at research institutions, including UNG, while others retain or obtain employment in industry.

Weaknesses:

Collection of data regarding student workload through Student Work Evaluation Form proved in some case as inefficient, since it is very difficult for students to make a realistic assessment of their workload, especially for those units of study programme that are not provided in an organized manner. It is very difficult to collect data on student workload, since students need to complete the respective questionnaire after they have completed their course obligations, whereby the activities of the course were implemented throughout the academic year.

Opportunities for improvement:

We will continue to enable student mobility and close cooperation with UNG research units and

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other research organizations in Slovenia and abroad, so that our students will be able to perform high-quality research work.

In third-level doctoral programmes, we will provide good conditions for research work of students and for optimum implementation of the organized forms of study, so that students could complete their studies within the specified period of three years.

We will seek possibilities of a more effective collection of data regarding student workload that would provide us with realistic results.

Special attention is devoted to the monitoring of the employment of graduates and the compilation of information from graduates on the applicability of obtained knowledge in the labour market.

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PREMISES AND EQUIPMENT FOR EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATTE AND DIRECTIVES – YEAR 2013/2014

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts:

We find that in year 2013/2014 the infrastructural conditions (facilities and equipment) are, in their current state, satisfactory for carrying out the programme in Environmental Sciences. Most of the students do their research work at the university's research laboratories in Nova Gorica as well as at the National institute for biology in Ljubljana, where students have very good conditions for research work. Considering the number of participants, the lecture rooms available at the university's location are suitable both in terms of size and technical equipment available.

Weaknesses:

Students living in Ljubljana find it at times difficul to attend lectures or seminars as they spend a lot of their time travelling to our university locations. The situation may be particularly difficult in times of bad weather (snow, the burja wind). Also, due to somewhat limiting conditions imposed by the national agency for research (ARRS), we may see a decrease in the number of new enrolled students in the coming years.

Opportunities for improvement:

An increase in the number of enrolled students would depend on the activities of individual mentors, as well as on investments into promotional activities. Students from far away or dislocated locations may participate in our seminars by using digital technologies.

Physics

Strenghts:

We find that in year 2013/2014 the infrastructural conditions (facilities and equipment) are, in their current state, satisfactory for carrying out the programme in Physics. Students do their research work in the university research laboratories, located in Nova Gorica and Ajdovščina, as well as in partner laboratories in Slovenia and abroad.

Weaknesses:

Due to the dislocation of laboratories, there are, at times, difficulties in coordinating the lectures; also, a connection among the various sub-fields, encompassed within the programme, is less than desirable.

Opportunities for improvement:

The real improvements will be possible with the building of the new campus premises; also, the situation would significantly improve with an increase in the number of enrolled students.

Karstology

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Strenghts:

The current condition is suitable to the number of enrolled students and there are good facilities and equipment for carrying out the programme. The advantages of a smaller group of students lie in the opportunities for a closer communication with professors and for a closer cooperation when it comes to field and laboratory work. Students have an opportunity to stay, free of charge, in an apartment owned by the Institute.

Weaknesses:

We have not observed any notable weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We have renewed the programme, canceled some less topical subjects, and introduced some new subjects.

Comparative study of ideas and cultures

Strenghts: /

Weaknesses: /

Opportunities for improvement:

*The study programme in Humanities has been renewed in terms of its contents and academic staff members since October 2014. Possible weaknesses will have been noted down in the course of the 2014/15 academic year. In the 2014/15 academic year, we note a low number of enrolled students (3) in the programme, hence we aim to set up a strategy to approach the issue (promotion of the study programme in the national and international context).

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strenghts:

The facilities and equipment available in our Venice location provide a good, suitable and attractive environment for studies and research.
The established co-operation with public institutions and universities in Venice has given us access to one of the biggest European libraries in the field of architecture, urbanism and economics of culture. The co-operation with the *Centro Studi per la Pace* and the *International Academy for Environmental Sciences* has provided our students with opportunities to use suitable accommodation; this has been of particular help to first year students.

Weaknesses:

Lack of appropriate video-audio equipment for material preparation, needed for distance learning.
A better access to foreign electronic libraries is needed.

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Opportunities for improvement:

Student overnight accommodation to be strenghtened.

An envisaged co-operation with the Josef Stefan Institute, within the Opening up Slovenia project, could enable us to prepare educational material for distance learning.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts:

The newly established Centre for biomedical sciences and engineering, with a team of seven researchers, is an important gain for strenghtening the molecular-biological sciences at the University. The same applies to the recent expansion of the Centre for wine research in genomics. The vicinity of the strong research centres, ICGEB and SISSA, enables teaching exchanges and better research opportunities for students. A cooperation established with the University of Lund and the Geneco Institute will give impetus to the research work in the field of environmental genomics.

Weaknesses:

Though good facilities for students' research work are available, the work has nevertheless been limited by a lack of financial sources.

Opportunities for improvement:

Within the new Centre, there are strong opportunities for an efficient development of basic and applied researches in the field of molecular genetics and biotechnology.

Linguistics

Strenghts:

We have good infrastructural conditions for carrying out theoretical disciplines. Currently, we are in the process of preparing a laboratory that would be available to students who would like to do experimental researches.

Weaknesses:

We would need additional funds for purchasing specialised equipment for behavioural researches and linguistic experiments.

Opportunities for improvement:

We are in the process of considering applications to local and international infrastructural projects that would help improve the material foundation of the programme.

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Assessment of current state and directives – year 2012/2013

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts:

We find that the infrastructural conditions (facilities and equipment) are, in their current state, satisfactory for carrying out the programme in Environmental Sciences. Most of the students do their research work at the university's research laboratories in Nova Gorica and at the National institute for biology in Ljubljana, where students have very good conditions for research work. Considering the number of participants, the lecture rooms available at the university's location are suitable both in terms of size and technical equipment available.

Weaknesses:

Students living in Ljubljana find it at times difficul to attend lectures or seminars as they spend a lot of their time travelling to our university locations. The situation may be particularly difficult in times of bad weather (snow, the burja wind).

Opportunities for improvement:

An increase in the number of enrolled students would depend on the activities of individual mentors, as well as on investments into promotional activities. Concerning students from far away or dislocated locations, we will propose that in 50% of our seminars they participate by means of digital technologies.

Physics

Strenghts:

We find that the infrastructural conditions (facilities and equipment) are, in their current state, satisfactory for carrying out the programme in Physics, and that since the academic 2011/2012 year there have been no changes related to the issue.

Weaknesses:

Due to the dislocation of laboratories, there are, at times, difficulties in coordinating the lectures; also, a connection among the various sub-fields, encompassed within the programme, is less than desirable.

Opportunities for improvement:

We are aware of the weaknesses due to the university's premises dislocation, and we actively approach this issue at the level of the university as a whole.

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Karstology

Strenghts:

The current condition is suitable to the number of enrolled students and there are good facilities and equipment for carrying out the programme. The advantages of a smaller group of students lie in the opportunities for a closer communication with professors and for a closer cooperation when it comes to field and laboratory work. Students have an opportunity to stay, free of charge, in an apartment of the Institute.

Opportunities for improvement:

We plan to renew the programme, cancel some less topical subjects, and introduce some new subjects.

Comparative study of ideas and cultures

Strenghts:

The renovation of premises of the Scientific Research Institute of the Slovene Academy of Sciences and Art (ZRC SAZU) has secured suitable premises and equipment for students.

Students have access to literature in the SAZU library and the libraries of the research institutes of ZRC SAZU.

Weaknesses:

Poor availability of night accommodation for students.

Opportunities for improvement:

An increase in the number of students would require purchasing computer equipment needed for research work, and additional study literature..
To gain access to a greater number of foreign electronic libraries.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strenghts:

The established co-operation with public institutions and universities in Venice, which have a long tradition of carrying out programmes in the field of cultural heritage protection, provides students with ideal conditions for studying and career. The co-operation with the *Centro Studi per la Pace* and the *International Academy for Environmental Sciences* has provided our students with opportunities to use suitable accommodation.

Weaknesses:

Lack of appropriate video-audio equipment for material preparation, needed for distance learning.
A better access to foreign electronic libraries is needed.

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Opportunities for improvement:

Student overnight accommodation to be strenghtened.

Though the programme is well provided with a good equipment for carrying out the subjects and organisation of international simposia, there is still a lack of premises and ICT infrastructure for introducing project applied laboratories.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts:

The newly established Centre for biomedical sciences and engineering, with a team of seven researchers, is an important gain for strenghtening the molecular-biological sciences at the University. The same applies to the recent expansion of the Centre for wine research in genomics. The vicinity of the strong research centres, ICGEB and SISSA, enables teaching exchanges and better research opportunities for students. A cooperation established with the University of Lund and the Geneco Institute will give impetus to the research work in the field of environmental genomics.

Weaknesses:

Though good facilities for students' research work are available, the work has nevertheless been limited by deficient financial sources.

Opportunities for improvement:

Within the new Centre, there are strong opportunities for an efficient development of basic and applied researches in the field of molecular genetics and biotechnology.

Linguistics

Strenghts:

The programme has good facilities for theoretical subjects, presentations and organisation of workshops within the doctoral programme.

Opportunities for improvement:

We need to secure finances for purchasing modern equipment at the psycholinguistic laboratory, so as to provide students with opportunities for experimental work in the near future.

Physics

Strengths:

It has been established that the infrastructural conditions (premises and equipment) for the implementation of the Physics study programme are adequate. Students perform their research work in UNG research laboratories in Nova Gorica and Ajdovščina, and in partner laboratories

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around the world and in Slovenia.

Weaknesses:

Due to different locations of laboratories, it is sometimes difficult to coordinate lectures and to connect individual sub-fields, encompassed in the study programme.

Opportunities for improvement:

Improvements, especially in case of further increase in enrolment, will be brought about by new premises, particularly by a central UNG campus.

Karstology

Strengths:

Current situation suffices the number of enrolled students, so premises and equipment are adequate for the implementation of the graduate programme.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

- renovation of ZRC SAZU premises provided students with adequate premises and equipment;
- students can access the SAZU library and other libraries of ZRC SAZU research institutes.

Weaknesses:

- poor availability of overnight accommodation for students.

Opportunities for improvement:

- the increased number of students will bring about requirements for additional computer equipment needed for research work, and requirements for additional literature;
- students should be enabled access to a greater number of electronic foreign libraries.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

- Essential role in the implementation of the programme is played by the premises in Venice. Specific working environment of the city of Venice in terms of architectural heritage protection and complexity of the Venetian lagoon ecosystem, provides an ideal territory for direct confrontation with issues relevant for the effectiveness of study results.
- Long cooperation with public institutions and universities in Venice that have a long tradition of implementing programmes in the field of cultural heritage protection, provides students with ideal conditions for their studies and career.

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Weaknesses:

- High cost of accommodation - lack of affordable overnight accommodation for students and lecturers.
- Video-audio equipment for the preparation of materials needed for distance learning should be of better quality.

Opportunities for improvement:

Better visibility of the programme enabled closer cooperation with local institutions that could help us acquire additional premises for student accommodation.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

The newly established Centre for Biomedical Sciences and Engineering with seven researchers is an important acquisition that will strengthen the molecular and biological sciences at UNG. The same goes for the expansion of research at Wine Research Centre to the field of genomics. Close proximity of research centres ICGEB and SISSA enables the exchange of lecturers and better research opportunities for students.

Weaknesses:

Although premises for research activities of students are adequate, their work is still hindered by lack of financial resources.

Opportunities for improvement:

Basic and applied research in molecular genetics and biotechnology could be accelerated within the new Centre.

Linguistics

Strengths:

Programme is sufficiently equipped for theoretical courses, presentations and organization of workshops within the doctoral programme.

Opportunities for improvement:

Financial resources for modern equipment needed for a psycholinguistic laboratory must be acquired, so that students will be able to conduct experimental work.

Assessment of current state 2010/2011

Strengths

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Premises and equipment for the implementation of graduate study programmes are adequate. A part of the Lanthieri Mansion in Vipava, where there will be additional premises for the implementation of Graduate School programmes, is being renovated.

Weaknesses

Despite additional student dormitories, there is still a lack of accommodation facilities for doctoral students.

Opportunities for improvement:

We will try to address this issue within the university development plan as soon as possible. In the long run, FPŠ programmes will also be implemented within the central university campus.

Assessment of state 2006-2010

Strengths

Premises and equipment for the implementation of graduate study programmes are adequate. A renovation of a part of the Lanthieri Mansion in Vipava is anticipated for the following years. There will namely be additional premises for the implementation of Graduate School programmes.

Weaknesses

Poor availability of overnight accommodation for students.

Opportunities for improvement:

We will try to address this issue within the university development plan as soon as possible. In the long run, FPŠ programmes will also be implemented within the central university campus. An increased number of students will also require additional laboratory facilities for research work, and some basic equipment for pedagogical activities will have to be bought.

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FINANCING STUDY ACTIVITIES

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATE AND DIRECTIVES – YEARS 2011 - 2014

Strengths:

The Graduate School finances have been obtained from tuition fees. The funds are sufficient for the implementation of the programmes. The co-financing of doctoral students is done via the innovative scheme, in which the students are financed directly. Students pay the total amount of their tuition fees to the School; on the basis of this initial payment, a part of the paid tuition fee, or its entire amount, is then reimbursed to them. A similar procedure is applied for Ad futura scholarships receivers and for novice researchers.

Weaknesses:

In 2010, the co-financing of graduate studies, enabled through the scheme of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology over the last ten years, ceased. We find that the scheme contributed to the development of graduate and new third-level doctoral study programmes. Although the co-financing was provided for each academic year separately and on the basis of a public tender, it represented a long-term and financially stable support to doctoral students. Without this financial support, the enrolment in doctoral programmes would have been lower. A significant share of doctoral students that were not able to acquire funds as young researchers or AdFutura scholarship holders would not be able to enrol in master's or doctoral studies. The scheme also contributed to inclusion of foreign students in our graduate study programmes. In order to enable development and international competitiveness of doctoral programmes in Slovenia, a scholarship scheme should be provided in the future. Otherwise, Slovenian and foreign students interested in our doctoral programmes will decide to enrol in doctoral programmes outside Slovenia due to financial reasons.

Currently, there is no stable long-term source of public funds for co-financing doctoral study programmes. In years 2010 to 2014, the innovative scheme of co-financing is seen as an interim solution. The scheme has been dealing with significant problems of formal nature for two successive years, resulting in delays in its implementation. Tight time limits that the Innovative scheme places on students to finish their doctoral studies pose a serious problem to students who are already employed (whereby their work is not related to the research within their doctoral studies, as is the case with novice researchers). We have noticed that, due to these time limitations, an increasing number of candidates has not decided to enrol doctoral programmes. Consequently, the number of enrolled students at the Graduate School was slightly lower than over the past years.

In the long run, additional funds for constructing and equipping the premises at the new university campus will have to be secured for the Graduate School and its programmes.

Opportunities for improvement:

Financial resources for the construction and equipment of premises and research laboratories

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will have to be provided within the new University campus, so as to enable doctoral students to conduct their research work there during their studies.

In order to enable development and international competitiveness of doctoral programmes in Slovenia, a new, long-term , stable scholarship scheme should be provided for doctoral students in the future. In this way the University would become interesting for foreign students as well. At the same, and more specifically, we may be able to attract more talented young people from the less developed countries (the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and other parts of the world).

The university's policy is to make its doctoral study programmes accessible to all students who show interest and talent in research work, regardless of their social status. Hence we offer a variety of scholarship schemes that help home and foreign students with co-financing their studies. In 2011/12, additional scholarships for doctoral students were provided from a special university fund, along with scholarships from the Innovative scheme, offered by the University and the national Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology.

To ensure a higher level of quality in its doctoral programmes, the University's Management Board has increased tuition fees at all of its doctoral programmes (to the amount of 4,000 EUR). The new tuition fee rate is valid from the academic 2011/12 year onwards.

Assessment for the years 2006-2010

Strengths:

The Graduate School receives financial resources through tuition fees and funds from the Ministry. These funds suffice for the implementation of programmes.

Weaknesses:

A relatively small proportion of public funds even decreased in this academic year due to the already mentioned shortfall of funds from the Ministry for third-level study programmes. This year, the co-financing of graduate studies that took place in the last ten years through the scheme of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology ceased. Currently, there is no stable long-term source of public funds for co-financing of doctoral study programmes.

Additional funds for the construction and equipment of premises at the new university campus will have to be provided for the Graduate School programmes.

Opportunities for improvement:

Financial resources for the construction and equipment of premises and research laboratories will have to be provided within the new UNG university campus, so as to enable doctoral students to conduct their research work there during their studies.

In order to enable development and international competitiveness of doctoral programmes in Slovenia, a new, long-term scholarship scheme should be provided for doctoral students in the future. It is in this manner that UNG will become interesting for foreign students as well. We will be able to attract more talented young people from less developed countries (the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and from other parts of the world).

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APPLIED AND RESEARCH ACTIVITIES, CO-OPERATION WITH INDUSTRY

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATE AND DIRECTIVES – YEAR 2013/2014

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts:

In year 2013-2014, we continued with our policy of developmental activities and applied research, as had already been planned in the previous periods. In the programme as well as in practice, we encourage and follow the recommendations of the relevant national ministry; the recommendations are related to a establishing closer links between industry and other final users on one hand, and the University as a carrier of the educational process, on the other hand. This type of co-operation can ensure more opportunities to students to have a successful career, especially to those students who, after their postgraduate studies, seek employment outside the academic context. In this year, we created some study programmes whose individual nature was more intensified so that students may be able to adapt more easily and quickly to the requirements of the final users. This approach will ensure that the graduate students may quickly become involved in the new working environments and employers.

Weaknesses:

The existing practice has proved successful, hence we have not observed any notable weaknesses:

Opportunities for improvement:

We consider that the current situation may be improved with an increased co-operation with the economy sector and management offices for purposes of joint projects, professional consultancy and opportunities for employment of new doctors of science.

Physics

Strenghts:

The industrial cooperation of the research activities done within the study programme in Physics is highly successful; compared to the previous year, it has been upgraded with an application of joint projects related to the employment of new doctors of science.

Weaknesses:

We have not observed any notable weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We would like to increase our cooperation with the high-level technology companies, for purposes of opportunities for joint projects which would ensure additional finances, and for increasing opportunities of employment of the new doctors of science.

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Karstology

Strenghts:

There have been more applied research opportunities for students in their doctoral dissertations: some researches are related to the futher development of Karstology as a science and as such they contain new insights and new data which are valuable for the related sciences as well (geomorphology, geology, biology, ecology, physics); others have an immediate application, such as, for example, a research into the transfer of toxic elements into the karst inland (this is important for the safety of the karst water, and for the preparation of safety regulations), protection and suitable management of tourist caves, evaluation of the state of the karst surface and underground territory.

Weaknesses:

We have not observed any notable weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We see opportunities for improvement in providing better information for prospective students.

Comparative studies of ideas and cultures

Strenghts: /

Weaknesses: /

Opportunities for improvement:

*The study programme in Humanities has been renewed in terms of its contents and academic staff members since October 2014. Possible weaknesses will have been noted down in the course of the 2014/15 academic year. In the 2014/15 academic year., we note a low number of enrolled students (3) in the programme, hence we aim to set up a strategy to approach the issue (promotion of the study programme in the national and international context). At the same time, we will set up a strategy related to the issue of increasing the co-operation of the study programme in Humanites with the national and international institutions.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Cooperation with the local institutions (IAES, the city of Venice, Marco Polo Systems, UNESCO Venice office, ICCROM) and the connection with the social environment have been satisfactory. Activities and involvement of the new doctors of science in the working environment have been upgraded with applications to joint EU projects related to employment opportunities for the new doctors of science.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

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Strenghts:

A good response of the biotechnological sector concerning research offers and co-operation in carying out the study programme activities.

Weaknesses:

Limited financial sources and specific funds for co-operation with industry.

Opportunities for improvement:

A more efficient co-operation with industry.

Linguistics

Strenghts:

The strenght of the programme lies in its academic focus; the programme educates students to become intellectuals in different fields of linguistic science. Due to the highly theoretical foundation of the programme, opportunities for co-operationwith industry are limited. Despite the limitations, the programme lecturers co-operate with various non-academic organisations, such as SlovIK and the national Ministry for education and science.

Weaknesses:

The field of computer linguistics needs to be strenghtened; this would open up various new opportunities for student co-operation with companies which deal with speech issues, computer translation, man – computer interactions, and related fields.

Opportunities for improvement:

We aim to establish co-operation with national and international companies in the field of IT intelligence. This would provide students with opportunities to have practical training, in case they decide to specialise in computer linguistics.

Assessment of current state – year 2012/2013

Environmental sciences

Strenghts:

In year 2012-2013, we continued with our policy of developmental activities and applied research, as had already been planned in the previous periods. In the programme as well as in practice, we encourage and follow the recommendations of the relevant national ministry; the recommendations are related to a establishing closer links between industry and other final users on one hand, and the University as a carrier of the educational process, on the other hand. The link of the study programme with the industrial sector and other users is reflected in the research activities of the students who, on one hand, are employed outside the University and who work on real life issues and projects in the field of environment in their companies, or who, on the other hand, are nove researchers at the University and have financial support from

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the economy sector or take part in research work in the applied projects carried out by the University. This type of co-operation can ensure more opportunities to students to have a successful career, especially to those students who, after their postgraduate studies, seek employment outside the academic context. In the coming period we aim to create study programmes whose individual nature will be more intensified so that students may be able to adapt more easily and quickly to the requirements of the final users. This approach would ensure that the graduate students may quickly become involved in the new working environments of their employers.

Physics

Strenghts:

The industrial cooperation of the research activities done within the study programme in Physics is highly successful; compared to the previous year, it has been upgraded with applications to joint projects related to the employment of new doctors of science.

Weaknesses:

We have not observed any notable weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We would like to increase our cooperation with the high-level technology companies, for purposes of opportunities for joint projects which would ensure additional finances, and for increasing opportunities of employment of the new doctors of science.

Karstology

Strenghts:

There have been more applied research opportunities for students in their doctoral dissertations: some researches are related to the futher development of Karstology as a science and as such they contain new insights and new data which are useful for the related sciences as well (geomorphology, geology, biology, ecology, physics); others have an immediate application, such as, for example, a research into the transfer of pollutants into the karst inland (this is important for the safety of the karst water, and for the preparation of safety regulations), protection and suitable management of tourist caves, evaluation of the state of the karst surface and underground territory. In year 2012/2013, we took part in the international Slovenia – Italy and Slovenia – Croatia projects.

Comparative study of ideas and cultures

The study programme is, to a large extent, grounded in funadmental research work, providing a basis for the applied activities.

Research for dcotoral themes is valuable for further scientific development in the fields of philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, archeology, history, cultural history, and ethnology; the research contains new insights and data valuable for the related sciences and can be immediately applied in health protection, tourism development, migration policy development, opportunities for

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cultural heritage expansion and protection, art manifestations, and so on.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

The established co-operation with local institutions and links with the social environment is satisfactory; they are carried out within the three EU regional projects which were approved in year 2011/12 (SEE-SUSTCULT, Interreg 4C-AT FORT, Interreg 3A-PRATICONS).

In this year, we aim to introduce some forms of lifelong learning, primarily with the ICCROM organisation, which would strengthen our link with the social environment and the economy sector and would enable us to set up a project laboratory.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strengths:

Students take active participation in applied projects in industry and in local »spin-off« companies. Over the past year we have focused on activities related to technology transfer abd patenting. The activities will be also be of help to students in establishing contacts with employers, and may make it easier for them to establish a carrer path in the field of biotechnology.

Weaknesses:

Difficulties in establishing research projects connected to the economy sector.

Opportunities for improvement:

We see opportunities for improvement in providing better information to students on knowledge transfer to industry, patents, and related issues. Applied activities could be improved by organising more seminars related to the applied issues.

Linguistics

Weaknesses:
Linguistics is a theoretical field the application of which to non-academic, non-research and non-educational fields is limited. Still, some opportunities are offered by applied and experimental linguistics, so we will aim to shift some of our efforts into this direction.

Opportunities for improvement:
The „Language and cognitive sciences“ research group, with which the programme is associated with, will work within a five year project timeline; the work is concerned with the psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspect of multilingualism. In relation to this research theme, we expect to be able to find opportunities to connect our research results with the non-academic institutions which would show their interest.

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ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATE AND GUIDELINES 2011/2012

Environmental Sciences

Cooperation of study programmes with the industry and other users is reflected in research activities of students employed outside UNG who are faced with actual issues and environment-related projects. It is also reflected in research activities of some young researchers at UNG that come from industry or work on applied projects, implemented by UNG. In 2011-2012, we focused on the latter segment through involvement in projects of cross-border cooperation between Slovenia and Italy, bringing additional funds and better research infrastructure, as well as enabling better career for students that would like to find employment outside the academic sphere.

Physics

It has been established that cooperation between industry and research activities within the Physics study programme has been good.
We would like to facilitate cooperation with high-tech enterprises that would bring joint projects and additional funding, as well as increase the possibility of employment of new doctors of science in suitable corporate organizations.

Karstology

Students have various possibilities of research for their doctoral dissertations: some research works could be useful for further development of karstology science, some come up with new findings and information, useful also for related sciences (geomorphology, hydrology, geology, biology, physics), while others can be directly utilized, such as understanding of the transfer of pollutants into Karst interior (important for the protection of Karst waters, for the preparation of regulations), protection and adequate regulation of tourist caves, assessment of the status of Karst surface and underground.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

The programme is mainly founded on basic research work, which is the basis for applied activities. Research conducted for doctoral dissertations can be useful for further development of science in the field of philosophy, linguistics, anthropology, archaeology, history, cultural history and ethnology, some come up with new findings and information, useful also for related sciences, while others can be directly utilized for the protection of health, development of tourism, etc.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Cooperation with local institutions and community has been good and long-standing. In the last year, this cooperation was especially close due to three EU projects of cross-border cooperation, which were approved in 2011/12 (SEE-SUSTCULT, Interreg 4C-AT FORT, Interreg 3A-PRATICONS).
The relationship with the social environment and industry shall be strengthened through the introduction of lifelong learning, through supplementary programmes that will be organized when necessary and in cooperation with public institutions and industry.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

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Students are actively involved in applied projects in industry and local "spin-off" companies. Opportunities for improvements lie in a more effective provision of information to students regarding the transfer of knowledge into the industry, regarding patentability, etc. Orientation towards applied activities could be facilitated through a greater number of seminars from this field.

Linguistics

The programme is focused on educating experts in larger theoretical fields of linguistics that can be found within the influential framework of generative linguistics. This enables students that complete their doctoral studies an academic career in Slovenia and abroad. If the programme will succeed in the establishment of an experimental department, the opportunities for their employment in IT companies and hospitals shall increase.

Assessment of current state 2010/2011

Environmental Sciences

Cooperation of study programmes with the industry is reflected in research activities of students employed outside UNG who are faced with actual issues and environment-related projects. It is also reflected in research activities of some young researchers at UNG that come from industry or work on applied projects, implemented by UNG. In the future, we would like to focus on the latter segment that would bring additional funds and better research infrastructure, as well as enable more opportunities for career of students that would like to find employment outside the academic sphere.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Cooperation between the study programme in Physics and Characterization of Materials, and social environment has been good. The building where the two programmes are implemented has been given to the University by the Municipality of Ajdovščina, being also its co-founder. The programmes are closely linked with the local industry, since some of its lecturers work as researchers in high-tech enterprises. The enrolment in the study of technical sciences and interest in them could be increased through cooperation with these companies at the presentations of professions, where companies could express their interest for these professions. Improvements in this direction shall be sought in the future as well.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Cooperation of the programme with local institutions has been good. Premises where the programme is implemented have been provided by the Municipality of Venice, which cooperates with the programme on European project SUSTCULT and Ad Fort. The programme has long been cooperating with organization Marco Polo Systems in the field of Cultural Heritage Management. A three-year cooperation with the Venetian Region on project “Istria e Dalmazia”, “Siti fortificati e Repubblica Serenissima in Istria” is still ongoing.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

The programme is mainly founded on basic research work, which is the basis for applied activities. Opportunities for improvement lie in closer cooperation with the industry, especially in terms of student education that could conduct their research activities in various biotechnological companies.

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Karstology

Students have various possibilities of research for their doctoral dissertations: some research works could be "useful" for further development of karstology science, some come up with new findings and information, useful also for related sciences (geomorphology, hydrology, geology), while others can be directly utilized, such as understanding of the transfer of pollutants into Karst interior (important for the protection of Karst waters, for the preparation of regulations), or protection and adequate regulation of tourist caves.

Linguistics

The programme is focused on educating experts in larger theoretical fields of linguistics that can be found within the influential framework of generative linguistics. This enables students that complete their doctoral studies an academic career in Slovenia and abroad. If the programme will succeed in the establishment of an experimental department, the opportunities for their employment in IT companies and hospitals shall increase.

Assessment of state 2006-2010

Environmental Sciences

Cooperation of study programmes with the industry is reflected in research activities of students employed outside UNG who are faced with actual issues and environment-related projects. It is also reflected in research activities of some young researchers at UNG that come from industry or work on applied projects, implemented by UNG.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Cooperation of the School of Applied Sciences (FAN) with social environment is good. The building where the two programmes are implemented has been given to the University by the Municipality of Ajdovščina, being also its co-founder. The programmes are closely linked with the local industry, since some of its lecturers work as researchers in high-tech enterprises. The enrolment in the study of technical sciences and interest in them could be increased through cooperation with these companies at the presentations of professions, where companies could express their interest for these professions.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Cooperation of the programme with local institutions has been good. Premises where the programme is implemented have been provided by the Municipality of Venice, which cooperates with the programme on European projects SUSTCULT (in the second stage) and Strategic Project Italy-Slovenia, GEC, Cultural Heritage Protection in the northern part of the area (in the second stage). A three-year cooperation with the Venetian Region on project “Istria e Dalmazia”, “Siti fortificati e Repubblica Serenissima in Istria” is still ongoing.

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STUDENTS' INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH WORK

ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT STATE AND DIRECTIVES – YEAR 2013/2014

Environmental Sciences

Stenghts:

In the academic 2013-2014 year, students had an opportunity to do their research work within the national research programmes and projects at the University of Nova Gorica and at the partner institutions, as well as within international and bilateral projects. Most students had their own projects within the MR programme. This type of co-operation provides them with an opportunity to use appropriate research equipment. Students have access to research equipment on the basis of agreements and the university's joint ventures with other research institutions in Slovenia. In comparison to the previous year, the conditions have remained essentially unchanged.

Weaknesses:

In year 20132014 we did not observe major weaknesses. Students were able to do their independent research work relatively smoothly. Minor complications occured due to temporary failures of the instruments or due to some measurements or analyses for which there were no suitable equipment in the national laboratories. The problems of this type were solved by means of inter-laboratory agreements on equipment use.

Opportunities for improvement:

The unification of all research equipment at the future university campus is one of the key priorities; this will eliminate the current dispersion and dislocation of the research units and will ensure a more continuous work in cases of equipment failures or shortages.

Physics

Strengths:

Our evaluation is that, due to a strong international involvement of the laboratories and centres which take part in the Physics programme, the students' individual research work is at the very top of research activities at the international level, which is evidenced from their publications, during their studies, in scientific publications with a high impact factor.

Weaknesses:

In this academic year we have not observed any major weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We see opportunities for improvement in obtaining greater financial funds for students' international activities and for research equipment intended for university student use.

Karstology

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Strengths:

The students of this programme can do their research work in numerous and various national and international research projects as well as in other activities related to Karstology (teaching, consultancy, organisation of educational courses).

Weaknesses:

We have not observed any major weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We see opportunities for improvement in obtaining greater financial funds.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strenghts: /

Weaknesses: /

Opportunities for improvement:

*The study programme in Humanities has been renewed in terms of its contents and academic staff members since October 2014. Possible weaknesses will have been noted down in the course of the 2014/15 academic year. In the 2014/15 academic year., we note a low number of enrolled students (3) in the programme, hence aim to set up a strategy to approach the issue (promotion of the study programme in the national and international context).

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

Students' involvement in research activities which we do with partner universities and institutions is continual and unchanged.

Students' involvement in the preparation and performance of European research projects.

Our international research community, which directs the programme, ensures an exchange of research experiences and scientific discussions at the highest level.

Weaknesses:

The full time researchers need to be strenghtened with additional efforts to obtain research projects.

Due to lack of financial sources at some of the partnet institutions, some of the planned mutual activities could not be carried out fully.

Opportunities for improvement:

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To strenghten the existing co-operation and research activities (to renew agreements on co-operation with partner universities).

To continue project activities so as to obtain greater financial funds for international research co-operation.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts:

The emphasised dimension of independent research work, with a yearly evaluation of success and directions for further work. Open opportunities for obtaining experience in an international research community, excahnge of research experiences and scientific discussions. Care for the university's scientific excellence. Interdisciplinary projects.

Weaknesses:

There have been some difficulties in a regular follow up of the students' work. Limited financial opportunities for development of research activities and access to the university's laboratories.

Opportunities for improvement:

Setting up a tutorial system so as to be able to have an improved supervision of the research work. Involvement of mentors into an annual evaluation of the research work. Additional research scholarships.

Linguistics

Strenghts:

An active involvement of students into the individual research work from the very start is a distinguishing characteristics of the programme. Also, students are involved in the research activities of the Centre for Cognitive science of language. A strong research background of home and international professors sets high criteria for students' research work and acts as a motivating factor to become independent and creative thinkers who will be willing to work in the advanced fields of formal linguistics and language cognitive sciences.

Weaknesses:

The recurring issue of a lack of sufficient financial resources needed for student research work hampers a recruiting of a auitable number of students who would be able to use the strong research potential of the programme.

Opportunities for improvement:

An improved financial income would enable an increase in the enroled number of good and

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motivated students.

Assessment of current state of afairs – year 2012/2013

Environmental Sciences

Strenghts:

In year 2012-2013, the conditions for individual research work were secured within the national research programmes and projects at the university an the participating institutions, as well as within international and bilateral projects. This has enabled a greater use of research equipment. Students have access to the equipment on the basis of agreements and and the university's joint ventures with other research institutions in Slovenia. In comparison to the previous year, the conditions have remained essentially unchanged.

Opportunities for improvement:

The unification of all research equipment at the future university campus is one of the key priorities; this would eliminate the current dispersion and dislocation of the research units and would ensure better conditions for research work. We would welcome a sinergy and a more intensive co-operation among the institutions at which the student research work takes place, or may take place in the near future.

Physics

Strengths:

Our evaluation is that, due to a strong international involvement of the laboratories and centres which take part in the Physics programme, the students' individual research work is at the very top of research activities at the international level, which is evidenced from their publications, during their studies, in scientific publications with a high impact factor.

Weaknesses:

In this academic year we have not observed any major weaknesses.

Opportunities for improvement:

We see opportunities for improvement in obtaining greater financial funds for students' international activities and for research equipment intended for university student use.
nities for improvement:

Karstology

Strengths:

The students of this programme can do their research work in numerous and various national and international research projects as well as in other activities related to Karstology (teaching,

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consultancy, organisation of educational courses).

Opportunities for improvement:

We see opportunities for improvement in obtaining greater financial funds.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strenghts:

Students' involvement in research programmes is appropriate, the research work has been done successfully.

Weaknesses:

An increased number of enrolled students would enable a better involvement of students in international discussions in the suitable fields of the research work.

Opportunities for improvement:

With an increase in research funds, there would be an increase in students involved in the research programmes, particularly of the students from years two and three.
We have not observed any specific weaknesses in the field of individual work, yet we will continue with efforts to have highly focused international research and a good co-operation with foreign higher education institutions and research institutions.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

The international foundation of the programme makes it possible for the students to be involved in research activities which we do with partner universities and institutions.

Co-operation within the European research projects has been strenghtened.

Weaknesses:
The full time researchers need strenghtening.

Due to lack of financial sources at some of the partnet institutions, some of the planned mutual activities could not be carried out fully.

Opportunities for improvement:

To strenghten the existing co-operation and research activities (to renew agreements on co-operation with partner universities). To continue project activities so as to obtain greater financial funds for international research co-operation.

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

Strenghts:

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The emphasised dimension of independent research work, with a yearly evaluation of success and directions for further work. Open opportunities for obtaining experience in an international research community, exchange of research experiences and scientific discussions. Care to establish the university's scientific excellence. Interdisciplinary projects.

Weaknesses:

There have been some difficulties in a regular follow up of the students' work. Limited financial opportunities for development of research activities and access to the university's laboratories.

Opportunities for improvement:

Setting up a tutorial system so as to improve supervision of research work. Involvement of mentors into an annual evaluation of the research work.

Linguistics

Strenghts:

One of our students has had a high achievement in this year; her work has been well received at a number of international conferences. The student has presented parts of her doctoral dissertation at FASL (Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics) conference in Hamilton, Canada; at Olomouc Linguistics Colloquium (OLINCO 2013) in Czech Republic; at the fifth Österreichische Studierenden-Konferenz der Linguistik (Fifth Austrian Student's Conference of Linguistics) in Austria; at SinFonIJA 6 conference in Niš, Serbia. At the same time, the student has published four papers in conference proceedings, while the fifth paper has recently been submitted and accepted for publication.

Weaknesses:

Our programme offers opportunities for a greater number of doctoral students, so more efforts will need to be done into strategies to attract new students.

Assessment of current state 2011/2012

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

Individual research work is enabled through domestic research projects and projects at UNG and participating institutions, as well as through international and bilateral projects. This also provides students with better research equipment. Students can access the equipment on the basis of agreements and joint investments of UNG and other research institutions in Slovenia.

Opportunities for improvement:

Bringing together all research equipment to one place, central campus, is one of our priorities, so as to do away with dispersion of research units. This will provide even better conditions for research work.

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Physics

Strengths:

It has been established that, due to strong international integration of laboratories and centres operating within the Physics study programme, individual research work of students is at the very top of global research activity, proven by students' publications in scientific journals with high impact factors.

Opportunities for improvement:

Opportunities for improvement lie in increased financial resources for student international activities and for research equipment intended for students.

Karstology

Strengths:

Students are involved in various domestic (pertaining to their home countries) and international research projects, as well as in other Karst-related activities (teaching, counselling, organization of training courses).

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

Inclusion of students in research projects is adequate, research work is conducted successfully.

Weaknesses:

Higher enrolment of students would enable stronger engagement of students in international discussions in their respective fields of research work.

Opportunities for improvement:

Increased financial resources would result in a higher number of students enrolled in programmes, especially students of senior years.

No profound weaknesses have been observed in the field of individual work. However, we shall strive for stronger international integration of research, and for close cooperation with foreign higher education and research institutions.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

International nature of the programme enables constant inclusion of students in research activities, conducted in cooperation with partner universities and institutions.

Weaknesses:

The number of researchers with full-time employment should be increased.

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Opportunities for improvement:

Enhancement of the already established cooperation relationships and research activities (agreements on cooperation and research activities with partner institutions are being renewed).

Stronger involvement in European research projects.

Enhancement of new research activities together with the University of Hamburg in the field of economy and game theories with Center for Conflict Resolutions.

Introduction of new research activities in cooperation with Free University of Amsterdam in the field of economic evaluation methodology and strategic planning is anticipated.

Introduction of new research activities conducted in cooperation with the Milan Polytechnic University, University of Leuven and Paris University La Sorbonne in the field of preventive maintenance and architectural heritage management.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

Emphasis on individual research work with annual performance assessment and guidelines for future work. Open opportunities for gaining experience in the international research community, exchange of research experience and scientific discussions.

Weaknesses:

Irregular monitoring of student research work. Limited financial capabilities for development of research activities and access to UNG laboratories.

Opportunities for improvement:

Establishment of tutorship system that would enable better monitoring of research work. Inclusion of mentors in annual performance assessment.

Linguistics

Strengths:

In addition to project work, the student performs high-quality theoretical research that was presented at four international conferences with the outside assessment procedure (SinFonIJA 5 Vienna, Austria; Formal Approaches to Slavic Linguistics (FASL 21) in Bloomington, Indiana; Generative Linguistics in Poland 7 in Wroclaw, Poland, and IV. Österreichische Studierendenkonferenz der Linguistik/IV. Austrian Students' Conference of Linguistics. Innsbruck, Austria). Her papers have also been submitted for publication in jounrals and conference proceedings.

Weaknesses:

The programme is facing the issue of low enrolment due to a lack of financial resources for doctoral students. The level of expertise of staff enables training of a higher number of experts from the field.

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Opportunities for improvement:

Higher number of research projects.

Assessment of current state 2010/2011

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

Individual research work is enabled through domestic research projects and projects at UNG and participating institutions, as well as through international and bilateral projects. This also provides students with better research equipment. Students can access the equipment on the basis of agreements and joint investments of UNG and other research institutions in Slovenia.

Opportunities for improvement:

Improvements could be achieved through better utilization of equipment in UNG research units, which are now dispersed and therefore disable good use of equipment. Therefore, bringing together all research equipment to one university campus is our priority.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

Strengths:

Individual research work in programmes Characterization of Materials and Physics is of key importance. Students are normally included in a larger (in the field of astroparticle physics also international) research group, placing their research activities at the very top of global research in this field, which is a great advantage. Research laboratories included in the pedagogical process work on a large number of bilateral projects, enabling students to perform research work in laboratories all over the world and providing them with international experience.

Opportunities for improvement:

No profound weaknesses have been observed in the field of individual work. However, we shall strive for stronger international integration of research, and for close cooperation with industry.

Comparative Studies of Ideas and Cultures

Strengths:

Inclusion of students in research projects is adequate, research work is conducted successfully.

Opportunities for improvement:

Increased financial resources would result in a higher number of students enrolled in programmes, especially students of senior years.

Karstology

Strengths:

All students are involved in various domestic (pertaining to their home countries) and international research projects, as well as in other Karst-related activities (teaching, counselling, organization of training courses).

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Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

Students are involved in research projects managed and financially supported by foreign research agencies and institutions.

Opportunities for improvement:

Involvement of students in national research projects should be increased.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

All students are involved in various domestic and international research projects at UNG, ICGEB or in industry.

Opportunities for improvement:

Scope of research topics could be increased through the employment of additional researchers from various fields of molecular biology and biotechnology, and through co-financing of student research work.

Linguistics

Strengths:

Due to a favourable ratio between the number of students and professors, we have managed to create excellent conditions for performance of student research in any field of linguistics. This is reflected in the fact that our first-year student prepared an abstract that was presented at an international conference.

Weaknesses:

Higher enrolment rate would enable an exchange of ideas and discussion among students, resulting in better education.

Opportunities for improvement:

Encouragement of students who are interested in linguistics to enrol in the programme.

Assessment of state 2006-2010

Environmental Sciences

Strengths:

Individual research work is enabled through domestic research projects and projects at UNG and participating institutions, as well as through international and bilateral projects. This also provides students with better research equipment. Students can access the equipment on the basis of agreements and joint investments of UNG and other research institutions in Slovenia.

Opportunities for improvement:

Improvements could be achieved through better utilization of equipment in UNG research units, which are now dispersed and therefore disable good use of equipment. Therefore, bringing together all research equipment to one university campus is our priority.

Physics and Characterization of Materials

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Strengths:

Inclusion of students in research projects is adequate, research work is conducted successfully.

Opportunities for improvement:

Increased financial resources would result in a higher number of students enrolled in programmes, especially students of senior years.

Karstology

Strengths:

All students are involved in various domestic and international research projects.

Economics and Techniques for the Conservation of the Architectural and Environmental Heritage

Strengths:

Students are involved in research projects managed and financially supported by foreign research agencies and institutions.

Opportunities for improvement:

Involvement of students in national research projects should be increased.

Molecular Genetics and Biotechnology

Strengths:

All students are involved in various domestic and international research projects at UNG, ICGEB or in industry.

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ACTION PLAN FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT AT THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

In the period 10 to 11 April 2014, a group of experts appointed by the National Agency for higher education quality (NAKVIS) performed all the activities needed in their evaluation work related to the re-accreditation of the two programmes offered by the Graduate School: Physics and Molecular biology and biotechnology. In its report, the experts group stated their findings as well as advantages and opportunities for improvement. The report states that no incongruences have been found. On the basis of the report, the Senate of NAKVIS, on its 82th meeting of 18 September 2014, extended accreditation to the two programmes for the maximal period of time, i.e. seven years.

Here we state the measures with which we have eliminated the observed shortcomings, that is, we hereby give an action plan for eliminating the observed incongruences.

Ad 1) Organisation and performance of prorgrammes

MEASURE 1:
In accordance with the recommendations of the experts group that the Graduate School modernise the teaching plans of some of its subjects and improve the documentation of the teaching plans, we have modernised all of the teaching plans within the two programmes in Physics and Molecular genetics and biotechnology and have thus eliminated the observed shortcomings.

The modernisation of the two programmes was accepted and confirmed by the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica on its 57th meeting of 14 May 2014. All amendments and addenda were published on the webpages of the Graduate School: (http://www.ung.si/sl/studij/fakulteta-za-podiplomski-studij/studij/).

MEASURE 2:

Molecular genetics and biotechnology

The Senate of the University of Nova Gorica on its 57th meeting of 14 May 2014 confirmed the following changes, related to the recommended opportunities for improvement, of the graduate thrid degree study programme in Molecular genetics and biotechnology:

a) The three old elective courses *Individual project work I, II and III* are withdrawn, and new elective courses *Seminar I, II in III* are introduced.
b) Four new elective courses are introduced: *Medical biotechnology, Regenerative medicine and stem cell technologies, Patents and innovations in biotechnology*, and *Plant biotechnology.*
c) The elective course *Practical or theoretical course III* is withdrawn.
d) Change within the internal structure of the obligatory subject *Basics in molecular biology and biotechnology.*
e) Changes within the internal structure, and of the lecturer in charge, of the elective courses *Practical or theoretical course I and II.*
f) Reorganisation of study contents in each study year..

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g) Change of the existing grading system „pass/fail“ and introduction of the numerical grading system with the scale from 1 to 10 in subjects *Seminar I, II and III,* and in all elective courses.

Justification concerning the changes of the syllabus:

The major change in the organisation of the curriculum concerns the way in which the organised forms of studies are structured in each year of study. In year one, the organised forms of studies are increased to 26 ECTS (before: 20 ECTS); the student's research work is hence appropriately lowered to 34 ECTS. In year two, the ratio between the organised forms of study and research work has not changed. In year three, the organised forms of study is lowered to 14 ECTS (before: 20 ECTS) while the student's research work is increased to 16 ECTS. With this change, the students are able to devote more time to research work in their final year.

The introduction of the new obligatory subjects (*Seminar I, Seminar II , Seminar III*) will upgrade and strenghten the programme contents of the old subjects *Independent project work I, II, and III,* which were based on the written report on the student's work and the theme of the student's doctoral dissertation. The students will be able to strongly develop scientific communication skills, good presentation skills and scientific discussion skills. The proposed obligatory subjects will enable students to obtain skills related to knowledge transfer and efficient presentation of scientific achievements within a wider social context. The strongest emphasis related to these skills is in year one, in which students obtain knowledge on efficient communication in knowledge. In years two and three, the knowledge is strenghtened and upgraded. At the same time, the proposed new subjects, unlike the old ones, remain within the responsibility of the course director (and not he mentor). In this way, a professor will be able to have a coherent assessment of competence development in an individual student.

The new elective courses represent an upgrading of the programme in accordance with the trends in international researches in biomedicine and biotechnology. The new subjects are based on the existing expert knowledge of the university's associates and were chosen in co-operation with ICGEB, a partner institution. With the new elective courses, we increase the number of course directors coming from the university itself. This number has been increased by changing the course director of the subjects *Practical or theoretical course I and II,* which will be from now on led by professor Elsa Fabbretti, a full-time professor at our university.

In order to have an appropriate assessment of students' achievements and their learning outcomes, the existing grading system „pass/fail“ is changed and the numerical grading system with the scale from 1 to 10 in subjects *Seminar I, II and III,* and in all elective courses, is introduced. According to the Graduate School study regulations, in order to be able to apply for the defence of doctoral dissertation, the student must have at least grade 8 in all subjects which have the proposed grading system. With this measure, the grading system and conditions for the defence of doctoral dissertation at the third degree programme Molecular genetics and biotechnology are harmonised with other doctoral programmes at the Graduate School, in accordance with the recommendations of the experts group in their report.

The existing classification of the study programme remains unchanged and is in accordance with

the recommendations given by the experts groups (ISCED: 42 – sciences on live nature; Klasius-P: larger field – natural sciences (4); Frascati – natural - mathematical sciences and biotechnological sciences).

All changes are published on the university's website: (http://www.ung.si/sl/studij/fakulteta-za-podiplomski-studij/studij/3MG/).

MEASURE 3:

Physics

In the future development of the study programme in Physics, we will take into consideration the recommendation to increase our offer of new (elective) subjects. Up to now, the Graduate School has introduced six new elective subjects into the programme since the time of first accreditation. Also, in Novemebr 2012 the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica accepted the regulations entitled „Procedures for approving the taking of examinations outside the enrolled third degree doctoral study programme, within other programmes at the Graduate School or at doctoral programmes outside the University of Nova Gorica“; the document defines the following:

„The student, enrolled in any of the third degree doctoral programmes at the University of Nova Gorica Graduate School, may, during his studies, do the elective part of the organised forms of study obligations also outside his study programme.

The student may choose the elective subjects at other study programmes within the Graduate School, in the total number of 30 ECTS points.

Within this elective choice (up to 30 ECTS), the student may also choose subjects within other accredited doctoral programmes at other universities in Slovenia or abroad, and this up to the total max number of 24 ECTS, which is 40% of the 60 ECTS intended for the organised forms of study. Out of these 24 ECTS, the student may, within the elective contents, obtain some forms of knowledge at summer schools or at other programmes whose studying units are not evaluated according to the ECTS system, and this up to the total number of 10 ECTS, which is the range of free elective choice define by legislation for the organised forms of study.“

The purpose of these regulations is precisely to increase the number of elective study contents within all doctoral programmes of the Graduate School, so that students may, in agreement with their mentors, choose those elective contents which are most suitable for their research field.

It is envisaged that a few more elective subjects are introduced so that each of the programme's parts may have a greater elective choice.

Action plan for implementating other recommendations

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The Graduate School will continue with its efforts to shorten the average time needed to complete doctoral studies. The programme's directors and scienitifc council will present this issue to all mentors, and potential mentors, and will advise that mentors, in their preparation of research themes for doctoral students, respect the extremely short time framework at disposal for completing doctoral studies (three years), as defined by legislation; and that mentors adjust the offered themes and the organisation of the research work performance within the framework of the proposed themes, and this in such a way so as to preserve the quality of the student's research work and the quality of dissertations. For this purpose, the themes of the seminras will be carefully selected so that they may be suitably connected, as far as possible, to students' research fields.

Ad 2) Issues related to the university – social context link, Ad 3) Activities of the higher education institution, Ad 4) Human resources, Ad 6) Material conditions, Ad 7) Quality assurance:

MEASURE:
Within the Graduate School's self-evaluation procedures and their improvements, we will take into consideration the proposed elaboration of a strategy specific for the School itself, with appropriate indicators and questionaires. We will apply the already implemented tools and methodology of the existing quality assurance system, as defined in the University's Quality Assurance Manual:

The coordinator for quality issues suprevises, in the course of a year, all elements in all fields of quality assuarnce which are covered in the self-evaluation report. The coordinator collects suggestions for improvement from the management team, all associates and staff members, students representatives at the respective school or academy, as well as from other parties who take part in the work of the institution; the coordinator has regular meetings with the dean so that he may effectively adjust his activities related to quality assurance. The coordinator documents the activities in the „Annual report on supervision of quality assurance procedures". Each activity stated and supervised in the Activities Chart has a clearly defined objective; defined, measurable and relevant indicators bound within a clearly defined time framework. There is a person responsible for each activity and its performance. An analysis of the activities can be found in the self-evaluation report of a respective school and/or the University as a whole. The reports contain clear and concise findings related to advantages (significant successes, good practice examples), weak points (unsolved or new problems), and suggestions for improvement in the coming period.

In accordance with the definitions of the University's Quality Assurance Manual, the Graduate School will continue to ensure that all participants of the study programme (including students, professors and employers) are actively involved in the processes of quality assurance, in fulfilling the Graduate School's vision and strategy, with a special reference to those of the third degree programme in Molecular genetics and biotechnology, and Physics. An additional support in obtaining feedback information from employers will be given by the University's Career centre and Alumni club, which take care of analysing the employability of graduated students and the needs of the job market. In accordance with its strategy, the university will continue with its efforts to join new national and international projects in which doctoral students may take part. The university

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asks the Student council, on a regular basis, to nominate an appropriate number of students in the university's organs and schools so as to be able to use their rights and actively participate in the activities of the afore mentioned organs. The university will continue to support, as much as possible, the students' involvement and active participation in all of the university's organs, in accordance with the provisions of the the University's Statue.

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