

University of Nova Gorica

Monitoring, assessment and quality assurance

Self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022

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1. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF NOVA GORICA

About the Foundation

The University of Nova Gorica (UNG) is a non-state, research-oriented and internationally active university, where knowledge is created in a harmonious relationship between students and researchers, and transferred to younger generations and the business environment.

UNG's activities include higher education at undergraduate and postgraduate level, complementary education, research training, education in specific fields of expertise, and scientific research and expertise. Research and expertise are carried out in UNG laboratories and centres, while teaching is carried out in the faculties and the Academy of Arts.

We started operating in the academic year 1995/1996 as the *School of Environmental Sciences*, the first international postgraduate school in Slovenia, founded by the *Municipality of Nova Gorica* and the *Jožef Stefan Institute* in Ljubljana. In 1998, due to the introduction of new study programmes and the expansion of scientific research activities, we were reorganised and renamed the *Polytechnic of Nova Gorica* (PNG). In the academic year 2003/2004, the Polytechnic gained two new co-founders. The Municipality of Ajdovščina and the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (ZRC SAZU) joined the existing co-founders, both of whom were important for the development of the Polytechnic at that time. The Municipality of Ajdovščina undertook to provide the infrastructure necessary for the expansion of activities in the Ajdovščina Municipality, while ZRC SAZU, as the largest Slovenian institute in the humanities, would provide support and staff for the development and implementation of new study programmes and research activities in the humanities. On 21 April 2006, the Polytechnic of Nova Gorica, on the basis of the consent of the Council of the Republic of Slovenia for Higher Education of 18 March 2006, acquired the status of a university and was renamed the University of Nova Gorica (UNG). UNG is a private university institution. On 15 January 2009, it became a member of the European University Association (EUA) and in May 2011 it became a member of the EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA Council for Doctoral Education). In 2010, the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica endorsed the membership of the University of Nova Gorica in the Magna Charta Universitatum. UNG is a member of the Rectors' Conference of the Republic of Slovenia (RKRS), the Danube Rectors' Conference (DRC) and the Alps-Adria Rectors' Conference (AARC). In 2016, the Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts (Slovenian ZRC SAZU) resigned as one of the founders of UNG. In 2019, the Municipality of Ajdovščina also resigned as one of the founders of UNG. The development path of the UNG is presented in more detail on its website: www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/zgodovina/, and in the publication published by the University on the occasion of its 25th anniversary: *The University of Nova Gorica and the Slovenian*

Academic Community, Ž. Oset, UNG Publishing House, 2020 (ISBN 978-961-7025-14-9).

In 2021/2022, teaching activities were carried out in the framework of six schools and one academy, namely: the School of Environmental Sciences, the School of Natural Sciences, the School of Humanities, the School of Engineering and Management, the Graduate School, the School of Viticulture and Enology and the Academy of Arts. A special feature in the organisation of the UNG study programmes is the Graduate School, which brings together and implements all the postgraduate doctoral study programmes (third cycle) of the University of Nova Gorica, regardless of their field of study: from natural sciences and engineering to humanities and interdisciplinary sciences.

Research activities at the University of Nova Gorica in 2021/2022 were carried out in the framework of four laboratories and six research centres (Laboratory for Environmental and Life Sciences, Laboratory for Physics of Organic Matter, Laboratory for Materials Research, Laboratory for Quantum Optics, Wine Research Centre, Centre for Atmospheric Research, Centre for Information Technologies and Applied Mathematics, Research Centre for Humanities, Centre for Cognitive Science of Language, Centre for Astrophysics and Cosmology).

Each year, the overall activities of the University of Nova Gorica are presented in the Report on the Activities of the University of Nova Gorica. The annual activity reports for the previous years are published on the website: <https://ung.si/en/university/annual-reports/> .

Organisation and functioning of the University

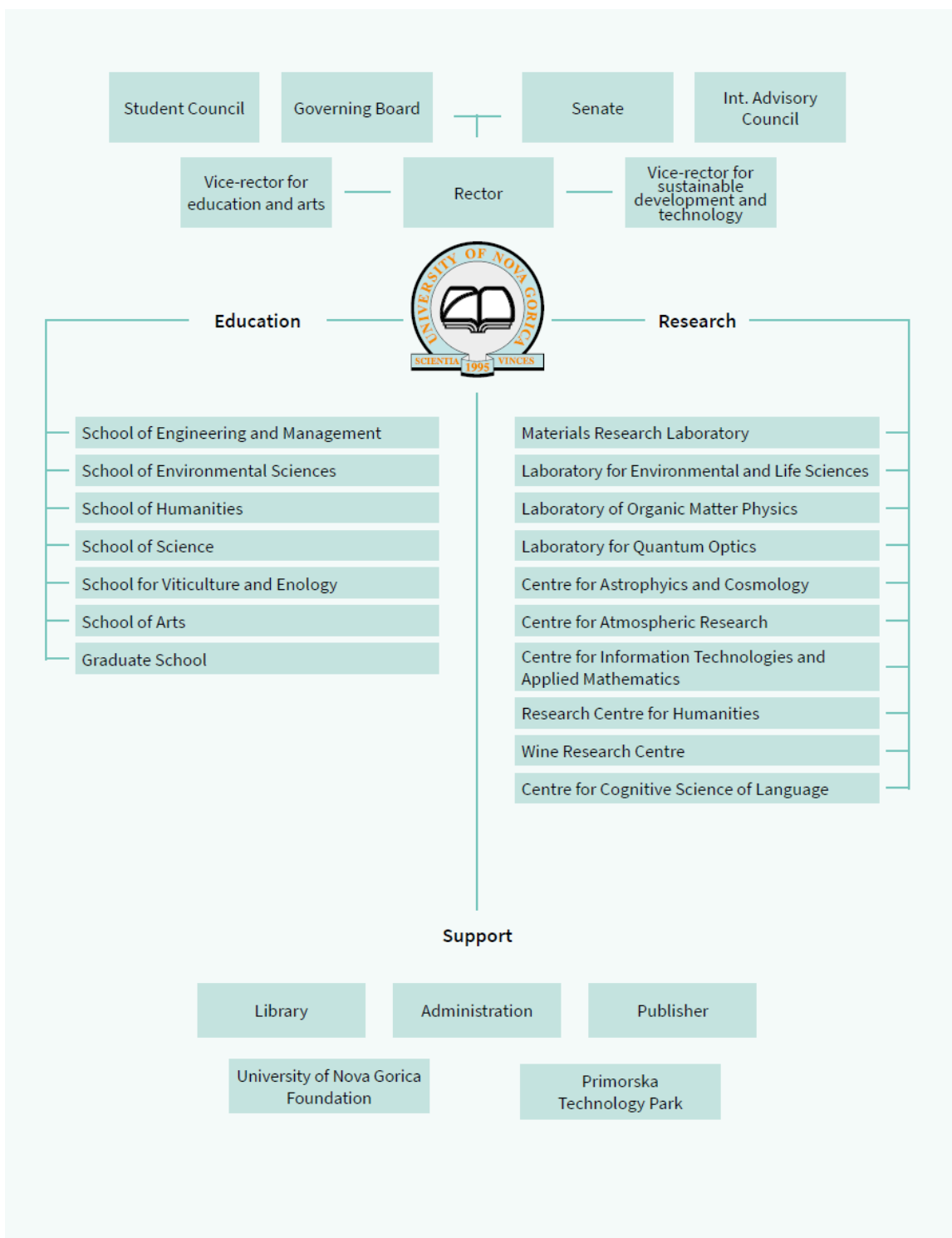
The organisation and functioning of the University is determined by the Statutes of UNG and other acts and regulations of the University, which are publicly available on the UNG website <https://ung.si/en/university/regulations/> .

The University's governing bodies are the University Senate, the Board of Governors, the International Council, the Rector and two Pro-Rectors, and the Student Council. The organs of the schools is the Senate of the school, the Academic Assembly of the school and the Dean, and, in the case of a school with several study programmes, the directors of the study programmes. The bodies of the Graduate School is the Dean, the programme directors and the scientific councils of the programmes. The Faculty of Graduate Studies does not have a Senate as a professional body. The powers of this body are exercised by the University Senate. Laboratories and centres are led by their respective heads.

The UNG Senate is the professional body of the University, which approves study programmes, programme guidelines for research work, determines the fulfilment of professional conditions for work and makes the selection of higher education teachers, scientific staff and higher education associates, awards teaching and scientific titles, determines the procedure and accepts the evaluation of doctoral theses, and performs other tasks. The University Senate is composed of higher education teachers appointed by the Governing Board on the proposal of the Rector from among the employees of the University and those who perform teaching and research work in other higher education and research organisations. All scientific disciplines and fields of expertise are equally represented in the University Senate. The Rector, the Deans of the Schools and the

Academy and representatives of the Student Council are members of the University Senate in their respective capacities. The representatives of the Student Council are appointed from among the students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes. They constitute at least one fifth of the members of the Senate. Meetings of the University Senate are convened and chaired by the Rector. The Vice-Rectors participate in the work of the University Senate without decision-making rights.

The Rules of Procedure of the University Senate determine the manner and procedure of decision-making, regulate the manner of convening and conducting meetings, and regulate other relationships that are substantially related to the manner and organisation of the work of the Senate.



Organisational structure of the University of Nova Gorica.

The Governing Board is the governing body of the University. It is composed of top experts in science, arts, technology and business in the fields related to the activity, as well as student representatives. All members of the Governing Board are nominated by the International Council and proposed for acceptance by both the Founders and the University. The Rector and the Vice-Rectors participate in the work of the Governing Board without the right to vote. The Board of Management of the University has the

power to decide on matters of a material nature and ensure the smooth material operation of the University, supervise the University's financial resources, consider planning documents and determine the financial plan and adopt the financial accounts, the Statutes and the Rules of the University with the prior consent of the University Senate, and to perform other tasks.

The Rules of Procedure of the Management Board of the University determine the manner and procedure of decision-making, regulate the manner of convening and conducting meetings, and regulate other relationships that are substantially related to the manner and organisation of the work of the Management Board.

The International Council is a consultative body of the University. It is composed of eminent experts in science and technology who are representatives of the Statutory Members of the University. Members of the International Council may be appointed individually or as representatives of the Statutory Members of the University. A Statutory Member of the University may be a domestic or foreign university or scientific institute which has an interest in the long-term development of the University and which ensures the involvement of the University in international scientific and educational activities. The aim of the International Council is to monitor the activities of the University, advise and assist in the formulation of the direction of development, to provide assistance and support to related scientific or research institutions, provide assistance and support in the integration of professional staff in the work of the University, advise on the planned status or other changes which have a long-term impact on the development of the University, advise and give their views on the selection of new Statutory Members, and provide their views prior to selecting and appointing the Rector of the University.

The Rector is the professional head and governing body and represents the University as its legal representative. The Rector is responsible for the implementation and coordination of educational and research activities, the business, organisation and legality of the University, the professional selection of higher education teachers, scientific staff and higher education associates involved in the activities of the University, the promotion of doctors of science, the conferment of the University awards, which are adopted by the Senate and the University's Board of Directors; and the performance of other duties, if provided for by law, the Statutes or the rules of the University. The Rector reports on his/her work to the Senate and the Governing Board of the University. The Rector is appointed by the Governing Board. The term of office of the Rector is four years. On expiry of the term of office, the same person may be reappointed to the post of Rector. The Rector may have one or more Vice-rectors to assist him or her in the field of higher education studies and research. The Vice-rector is appointed by the Rector. UNG has a Vice-Rector for education and the arts and a Vice-rector for sustainable development and technology.

The Student Council of the University of Nova Gorica is established by the Law on Higher Education and the Statutes of the University of Nova Gorica. The Student Council is composed of representatives of the students of the University of Nova Gorica. They are elected by the students of all Schools and the Academy of the University of Nova Gorica. The members of the Student Council are representatives of the students and are the only representatives of the students in the structure of the University of Nova Gorica. An overview of the activities of the UNG Student Council is presented on the following website: [/www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/vodstvo/studentski-svet](http://www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/vodstvo/studentski-svet).

Shared services and other support activities are organised at the university level. The UNG shared services include the Student office, the International and project office, the Career centre and Alumni club, the UNG University library, the UNG Publishing House and the UNG Quality commission. The UNG Accounting, Legal and human resources services, as well as other professional services, are also shared.

UNG has established the University of Nova Gorica Foundation, whose mission is to ensure the quality and continuous development of the activities carried out by UNG. It is the only university foundation in Slovenia and one of the few in Europe. The purpose of the Foundation is to raise donor funds, the proceeds of which are used for the growth of the University and the expansion and implementation of its activities.

We have also established a link with the world of economy by co-founding the Primorska Technology Park. The Park brings together technologically innovative companies to transfer development initiatives and expertise to the business environment. The University of Nova Gorica, through various courses in its study programmes, educates and encourages young researchers to get involved in the projects related to the field of economy. At the same time, the research units work together with business entities to develop new products and technologies that make use of the high quality expertise of researchers from the University's laboratories.

UNG and the Municipality of Nova Gorica (MONG) established the Centre for Green Technologies (CTZ) in 2022. The purpose of the Centre is to offer professional, educational, administrative and, above all, infrastructural support to advanced and innovative ideas in the field of green and sustainable innovations in their transition to widespread use in industry, agriculture, and in the urban and natural environment.

2. UNG MISSION, VISION AND DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Introduction

This chapter presents the mission, vision and long-term and medium-term development strategies of UNG, which the University adopted over the past period from 2016 to 2018. It also briefly presents the main long-term orientations of UNG and the short-term priority goals of UNG in 2023, as presented in the document *Plan for the implementation of the scientific, research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027* and in the document *UNG Annual work programme for 2023* approved by the UNG Senate at its regular 118th meeting on 22 February 2023.

A new UNG development strategy for the next five-year period will be prepared by the University in 2023, in line with the action plan detailed in Section 4.3. The preparation of guidelines for a five-year strategic plan for the development of education and research activities at UNG is underway, as well as the upgrading of the existing strategic document, which will include the definition of UNG's long-term strategy and goals, and of short-term action plans to achieve the set goals in all areas of UNG's activities. To this end, a UNG Strategic Consultation was organized on 20 February 2023 to review the mission, vision and strategy for the development of educational activities at the University. The Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of all Schools and the Academy, as well as the Heads of the UNG Research Units and representatives of the academic staff from the UNG Educational and Research Units, representatives of the UNG Quality Commission and the Schools Quality Coordinators, and representatives of the UNG administrative staff and support services took part in the consultation. The main objective of the meeting was to analyse the situation and prepare guidelines for the five-year strategic plan for the development of educational and research activities at UNG. Details on the implementation of the strategic consultation and the objectives set are presented in Section 4.2.

UNG Mission

The University of Nova Gorica believes that its mission is to create new knowledge in a harmonious relationship between students and researchers, to transfer this knowledge to younger generations and the business environment, and to ensure the highest possible employability of its graduates. Notwithstanding its non-state character, the University aims to ensure that its programmes are accessible to all social classes. It seeks to involve professors, researchers, experts and students in international research processes and projects. At the same time, it cultivates specific research and educational activities that strengthen the position of Slovenians on the westernmost ethnic border. Through a wide range of complementary and mutually enriching activities, it strives to achieve the highest level of quality in its educational and scientific research activities and to place them in an integrated way in the Primorska, Slovenian and international context.

Mission:

The University of Nova Gorica (UNG) is a private, research and internationally oriented university, which provides higher education at the undergraduate and graduate level as well as scientific research and expert activity. The University promotes innovative teaching approaches and develops teaching excellence at its contemporary study programmes. It provides a creative environment for researchers, professors and students, thereby enabling opportunities for top achievement results in the cutting-edge fields of science, technology and art. The University takes special care to promote multidisciplinary study programmes and research designed to build partnerships between industry and academia, to contribute in creating a better society both at local and global levels. The University strives to make its study programmes accessible to students of all backgrounds and to ensure a high level of employability of its graduates. The University is strongly oriented to international collaborations with similar institutions around the world, prepares joint international study programmes attracting national and international students, and fosters student and teacher exchange programmes with European and other universities. A choice of the language of study is adapted to this aim.

UNG Vision

The University of Nova Gorica aims to be a research and internationally renowned university, recognised in the region and beyond as a driving force for social development. It will develop pedagogical excellence through innovative teaching approaches in modern study programmes that will ensure a high level of employability for home and international students. It will implement its motto *Scientia vincet* (from knowledge to victory) by providing a creative environment for researchers, professors and students, thus enabling the achievement of cutting-edge results in breakthrough scientific, technological and artistic fields.

The UNG Vision was adopted by the UNG Senate at its Ordinary Session in March 2015.

UNG Long-Term Development Strategy (2016)

The University of Nova Gorica (UNG) aims to be a research and student-friendly university, where knowledge is created in a harmonious relationship between students, researchers and artists, and transferred to younger generations and the business environment.

Status

UNG is a private, non-profit university. This status allows it to organise itself and operate flexibly, and adapt more easily to the demands of modern society.

Internal organisation

UNG is a compact, internally strongly connected university. Research, artistic and professional work is carried out in laboratories, centres and institutes. The University's Schools and the Academy are open units in which researchers, artists and experts working in various research units and external institutions are involved in the field of education. In the coming years, the University will therefore strive to harmoniously bring together professionals and students from different scientific, artistic and professional disciplines. At the same time, the University will strive to relocate all its activities to one place or campus.

The joint services and all other services operate at the university level.

The University's business should be more like a modern company and less like a traditional academic institution.

Research work

Research and expertise are the basis for the educational process. The UNG researchers need to pay particular attention to their being involved in international research processes and projects. Researchers and teachers are expected to be broad-minded scholars and experts with international experience. Therefore, candidates for permanent employment are expected to have completed their postdoctoral training abroad.

Artistic work

Artistic work is inextricably linked to the educational work in the arts, and to the fields of science and business in which the University is otherwise active. That is why at the University's Academy of Arts we carry out the educational process at all levels as primarily a practical work of students and tutors; this is created through an actual production process, appropriately supported by theoretical, historical and critical competences. For this kind of work, in addition to cooperation with the active creators in the field of arts, we have also established strong links with cultural institutions in the field of film, theatre and fine arts or other distinguished artistic practices. Hence the University's Academy of Arts also acts as a creative producer in the educational process,

and with its artistic and other products and achievements it participates with great success at festivals and exhibitions, both in Slovenia and abroad.

Educational work

UNG aims to be a high-quality and internationally competitive higher education institution.

Higher education teachers can only be researchers, artists or experts who are widely or internationally recognised. Educational work with students should, as far as possible, include research and practical work at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. To this end, the University will strive for an optimal student-teacher ratio in all its study programmes and an optimal balance between research, artistic and educational work. In the long term, we expect all disciplines to achieve a 1:1 teaching/research ratio.

UNG will make a special effort to continuously involve business experts in the educational process.

Special attention will be paid to international links and exchanges of students and teachers. The choice of language of instruction, especially at the postgraduate level, will be adapted accordingly.

Notwithstanding its international orientation, the University will also cultivate specific research, artistic and pedagogical activities that will strengthen the position of Slovenians on the westernmost national border.

Transferring knowledge into the business environment

Collaboration with industry, cultural institutions and the business community is seen as an imperative for all UNG staff. In this way, the conditions for the transfer of knowledge from the academic institution to the business environment are created, the visibility of the University of Nova Gorica and its activities is increased, and the employment opportunities of graduates are improved.

UNG is the initiator and co-founder of the Primorska Technology Park, which, among other things, should make a key contribution to creating an entrepreneurial environment for the University's graduates, postgraduates and PhD students.

The University and the Municipality of Nova Gorica (MONG) have established the Centre for Green Technologies (CTZ). The purpose of the Centre is to offer professional, educational, administrative and, above all, infrastructural support to advanced and innovative ideas in the field of green and sustainable innovations in their transition to widespread use in industry, agriculture, and in the urban and natural environment.

Students

The University will continue its efforts to enrol the best students in its study programmes and provide them with optimal study conditions within the given opportunities. Notwithstanding its private character, the University will ensure that its programmes are accessible to all social classes through its scholarship programmes.

Learning from practical problems should be a distinctive feature of the University, and students are involved, as much as possible, in practical, research and artistic work within

the institution itself or in partner research, cultural and higher education institutions and industry.

The University will strive to maximise the employability of its graduates. To achieve this goal, the University aims to organise a dedicated job placement service so as to provide job placement assistance. The University aims to have a job placement rate of more than 80% within six months of graduation from a Bachelor's, Master's or PhD degree.

Finance

The University also sees its strength in the diversified way it finances its activities. It will therefore continue its efforts to ensure that its funding is not solely dependent on state funding. A significant proportion of the funding for its activities must come from international sources, local communities, industry, tuition fees, donations, etc.

The University is the founder of the University of Nova Gorica Foundation. It is the only university foundation in Slovenia and one of the few in Europe. The purpose of the Foundation is to raise donor funds to be used for the growth of the University and the expansion and implementation of its activities and scholarships for the University's students

Future developments

In the future, the University aims to give priority to the development of master's and doctoral programmes, as well as scientific research and artistic activities.

Strategy for the development of the arts at UNG (2016)

Arts education, artistic work and creation are provided at the University as part of the Arts Academy, which was accredited by NAKVIS in 2016.

Mission of the UNG Academy of Arts

The mission of the Academy of Arts of the University of Nova Gorica, which is also expressed in the slogan "We educate the community, we create connections", is to be an active, cultural and educational entity in the field of art, embedded in the local, regional and international environment.

We value the student as an independent and creative person who develops in a group and in the community. Through innovative approaches in teaching, research and production processes, we encourage the independent creative and academic work of students, who are guided by a diverse group of internationally renowned and excellent artists and teachers from different fields of art and accompanying practices. In order to carry out our mission successfully, we build this community with special attention. Teachers are chosen carefully, based on their excellence in contemporary practice as well as their academic standing and international profile. This ensures the high quality and relevance of the knowledge and skills we impart to our students. Project work and production networking in extra-curricular environments provide students with valuable experience of working on real and complex projects already during their studies. During their studies, students gain work experience and develop references in their chosen field. All this enables a smooth but quick transition into a professional production environment or further studies after graduation.

The Academy's core activities abide in and expand the diverse practices and uses of the arts, from the creative industries, through specific interactions with science and technology, to interdisciplinary media and production contexts.

The Vision of the UNG Academy of Arts

The Academy of Arts of the University of Nova Gorica continues the work of its predecessor, the School of Arts (founded in 2008), and its predecessor, the Famul Stuart School of Applied Arts (founded in 1994). In doing so, it continues a relatively long line of research into new forms and methods of art education that began at the same time as the formation of the new state of Slovenia. The third (and final) step of this line is the Academy of Arts, which explores art in its manifestations in contemporary society, interrogates it in relation to other segments of society, and creates conditions for the encounter of different fields of art and practice (at the intersection of fine arts, film and intermedia), creative industries, to the practices of everyday life and society, and, which is a special characteristic of all its transformations, and thus also of the new Academy of Arts of the University of Nova Gorica, is always actively exploring the potentials offered by this very distinct interdisciplinary environment it creates.

If the two predecessors had to prove over and over again that research, methods and programmes that intertwine such different fields outside the traditional framework are what supports this special quality, in the future of the newly created Academy we will work even more sovereignly towards all the set goals. Therefore, we will strengthen our

collaborations in the expanded fields of art, deepen the already established collaborations between art and science (which is made possible by the environment of the University of Nova Gorica), further expand our collaborations with partners who can support this research in a quality way and offer students a career path in the developing creative industries as well. Each of the predecessor institutions has also had a strong focus on the local environment, from its beginnings in Ljubljana to its move to Goriška. Here, the School of Arts has already established itself well in the border area, and with the Academy of Arts we want to go one step further: to become a regional linking entity, a collaborative, constructive member of the cultural life on the border, with close cooperation on both sides of the border. We intend to ride on the strong wave of international action that we have gradually built up over the last decade; its strongest potentials are only now opening up, in the new Euro-integrative and global dimensions of our action.

UNG Teaching Development Strategy (2018)

In the period up to 2025, while maintaining the highest quality in scientific research and artistic work, the University aims to focus additional attention and efforts on achieving the highest quality in higher education.

To this end, it has been introducing new study programmes for the professions of the future, unique in Slovenia and the wider academic area. Building on new approaches to teaching and an individual approach to students, the study programmes at UNG will provide the conditions for studies in which every student will be able to realise his or her ambitions and develop to the fullest extent his or her personal abilities and talents.

In designing the curricula for their study programmes, the schools primarily follow the desired and needed competences of the students, while in the delivery of the programmes they emphasise hybrid teaching methods, flipped and open learning, project work by students and practical training in real employment environments (companies, public and non-governmental organisations, support for start-up initiatives).

In this context, the University aims to ensure high-quality and effective promotion, and provide incentives for staff growth and further staff development through regular additional training.

Unique study programmes for the professions of tomorrow

The University regularly and systematically monitors trends in the domestic and international labour market and the availability of new and interesting study programmes worldwide. It uses both the available quantitative metrics (rankings, databases, etc.) and qualitative methods (feedback from successful alumni, international partners, etc.). It evaluates the profile of its programme offerings once a year in the light of available trends in individual disciplines and emerging interdisciplinary offerings.

New approaches to teaching

The University continuously integrates state-of-the-art teaching approaches into its pedagogical processes and continuously encourages its teaching staff to educate themselves in this field and introduce new teaching methods. In doing so, it strongly encourages student activity and independence, creating an atmosphere that facilitates effective study through the active participation of students in the teaching process. The management of the Schools and the Academy encourage their teaching staff to integrate ICT and multimedia into the educational process in a purposeful way. Higher education teachers and staff have been introducing problem-based learning, the philosophy of flipped learning, and blended learning into their lecture rooms.

The University supports and manages the acquisition of projects to upgrade relevant online and modern interactive tools that enable the production of digital content and blended learning. The University also promotes the hosting of distance learning by higher education teachers and experts, the preparation and delivery of lectures and, under appropriate conditions, remote examinations, and the creation of engaging and effective interactive online classrooms that enable the inclusion in the pedagogical process of

different vulnerable groups of students (or other knowledge users) who are unable to access education due to various constraints.

The University therefore aims to permanently provide a hybrid teaching mode, whereby students can simultaneously observe and actively participate in the study process via an online video-link, in addition to the students in the lecture room. This is intended for all students who, in emergency situations or for other reasons, are unable to attend the scheduled organised forms of study (lectures, tutorials, seminars) in the lecture rooms. The videoconferencing system allows a two-way communication. All students are also able to communicate remotely with their tutors and course instructors on a regular basis in tutorials and consultations via the videoconferencing system. All students have access to e-learning materials and assignments to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The assessment of knowledge, in the form of seminar presentations, oral examinations, diploma thesis, master thesis and doctoral dissertation defences, can also be provided remotely via the videoconferencing system, where appropriate.

An individual approach and the exercise of personal skills and talents

A student is understood as an individual who, in a multi-student study programme, develops his/her skills and talents and acquires knowledge not only according to the set competences of the programme, but also according to a personal career plan, which he/she develops at the beginning of his/her studies with the help of the Career Centre, the tutor professor and the school management. In the light of the student's personal career plan, the responsible staff regularly monitor the student's academic performance, guide him/her and look for opportunities for practical training related to his/her interests and talents. In the case of students with a special status, the personal career plan also includes an indication of the specific forms of study that enable a student athlete or a student with special needs to have the same opportunities to develop his/her talents and skills as those students who are free from restrictions as regards participation and attendance at lectures or tutorials.

Study programme content and student competences

Each school regularly evaluates and updates the content, structure and delivery of its study programmes. This process also involves students and external stakeholders (employers, representatives of the local and wider social environment). All proposals for changes and updates are based on the findings of programme analyses, which take into account the following factors:

- The relevance of the content of the existing programme and the integration of new knowledge acquired on the basis of scientific research, professional or artistic work and other achievements in the field of the study programme.
- Consistency and coherence of the objectives, competences or learning outcomes set out in the curricula with the objectives and competences of the study programme and its content, according to the type and level of study.
- The proposed changes are in line with the vision and development strategy of the respective School and the University.

- The relevance of the curriculum, teaching and student work methods and formats; the adequacy of knowledge assessment and examination, supporting the students to achieve the competences or learning outcomes intended by the programme.
- Relevance of study materials, introduction of study materials in electronic format for e-learning, distance learning or other forms of study adapted to the students with disabilities.
- Evaluating student workload, progression and completion.
- Verification and analysis of graduate employability. Identifying new skills and employment needs in the environment, labour market needs or society's objectives in terms of skills needs.

Quality and effective promotion

In promoting its study programmes, the University uses high-quality, modern, individual and responsive approaches, taking into account the specificities of different target groups and following the orientations of the other areas of the development strategy.

To attract talented and motivated students, the University provides an incentive-based scholarship policy, which it implements with the resources of, and in cooperation with, the University's Foundation, interested employers and its own resources.

Promotion is centrally coordinated by the University's Public Relations Office and the Student Enrolment Advisor, who provide high-quality professional support for activities to promote teaching, scholarly and artistic activities and achievements. They also actively cooperate with the professional staff in the teaching and research units. In this cooperation, the teaching units are responsible for the promotion of study programmes and the recruitment of the best possible students, maximising the involvement of their own staff and coordinating with the management of the research units the involvement of their staff in promotional activities.

Staff development

The University is developing an integrated staffing system that primarily follows the needs of the schools and ensures excellence in teaching, research and artistic work. In doing so, it will provide appropriate incentives to attract both promising young people and established scientists/artists - teachers.

The University provides incentives for the evaluation of teachers' performance in the habilitation criteria. For staff development, the University organises pedagogical education/refresher courses and encourages teaching staff to attend pedagogical education courses organised at other university institutions outside UNG.

The University takes measures to encourage its academic staff to perform their leadership functions as Deans and Programme Directors as effectively as possible, in particular by facilitating their staying in touch with research and artistic activities and by enabling them to become actively involved in research and artistic work beyond their term of office. The University also aims to systematically avoid the cases of dual functions (e.g. deans and heads of laboratories/centres) through more active recruitment and internal reorganisation (merging groups, centres). In order to reduce the administrative burden on

the colleagues in managerial positions, the University has been taking measures to actively support its managers and optimise the filling of managerial positions. In doing so, the University aims to balance the duration of a managerial function in a meaningful and individual way, according to the availability of its own staff who have appropriate experience and recruitment opportunities.

Implementation plan

In the period up to 2021, the central activity in the implementation of the UNG Strategy for Teaching and Learning (hereinafter referred to as the Strategy) will be the introduction and implementation of new approaches to teaching and the related curricular renewal, and individualised approach to teaching and learning. Simultaneously, new tools for distance e-learning and the use of ICT and multimedia in the educational process are introduced to facilitate and adapt access to educational content for international students and the students with special needs. Workshops and training sessions for all teaching staff will be organised to use the ICT tools in the teaching process and to introduce modern approaches in teaching. A more detailed presentation of the development of ICT-supported e-learning at the University is presented in Section 3.6.

At the same time, the University will provide high-quality professional support for the activities promoting pedagogical achievements and the study programmes, staff development through systematic and regular training (new teaching methods, promotion).

In the period 2020-2025, while maintaining the activities and the results of the Strategy from the previous period, the University aims to intensify its activities related to the new study programmes and will introduce incentive scholarship schemes for students.

To implement the Strategy, the University will prepare a more detailed timetable and appoint working groups to develop proposals for more concrete actions in specific areas, including the consideration of funding sources.

UNG Internationalisation Strategy (2016)

Internationalisation at UNG

In the field of internationalisation, UNG pursues its mission and vision, which set the central development goal of being a research and internationally renowned university, recognised as a driving force for social development in the region and beyond.

UNG has an International Council within its organisational structure, which is a consultative body of the University. It is composed of individual eminent experts in science and technology from foreign universities or scientific institutes, who advise on the long-term development of the University and ensure the University's involvement in international scientific and educational activities.

The University's international links in research and teaching are numerous. A list of [cooperation agreements](#), [consortium memberships](#), [association memberships](#), and [affiliated organisations](#) of the University of Nova Gorica are given on its website <https://ung.si/en/university/>.

To support and develop internationalisation, the University set up its International and Project Office as a support service in 2020. The Office is dedicated to managing and organising international activities and coordinating the University's international (and domestic) educational projects. It is intended for students, professors, researchers and other staff. It takes care of incoming and outgoing mobility under the Erasmus+ programme, Ceepus, Bilateral Scholarships and mobility carried out under various inter-institutional agreements or arrangements. It also supports the actual conclusion of inter-institutional agreements. A list of UNG's Erasmus+ with higher education institutions from programme and partner countries, as well as an overview of student and school mobility, is presented in section 3.6 and published on the University's website: <http://pung.ung.si/index.php?module=project>.

The Office also provides administrative support for calls for tenders and international projects. It is responsible for monitoring calls for tenders and for informing persons within UNG about open calls for tenders. The Office provides support to researchers and other staff in the preparation of applications for calls for proposals, mainly from a financial, administrative and legal-formal point of view. For ongoing projects, the office ensures the preparation of financial reports for international research projects and provides support and advice on project implementation.

In the field of research, the University's international involvement is clearly reflected in the large share of international research funding and the large number of international projects and collaborations led or involving UNG researchers. The international research commitment is also demonstrated by the numerous top scientific achievements and publications of UNG researchers in prestigious international scientific publications. The University's researchers should pay particular attention to their involvement in international research processes and projects. Researchers and teachers are expected to be broad-minded scientists and experts with international experience, and candidates for permanent positions are expected to have completed postdoctoral training abroad for a period of at least one year. All calls for available research or teaching positions are always open internationally and advertised in the wider international arena, thus ensuring

that the University attracts the best experts in the global international arena to develop new areas of research and study at the University, and to also introduce new topical content into the University's study programmes.

In the field of teaching, the University's international engagement is reflected in the large number of international students. The proportion of international students at the University is above 50%. The international students come from thirty-nine different countries, both from Europe and from other continents. The University is also becoming an attractive environment for foreign scientists and professors, and the number of professionals from other countries is steadily increasing, currently reaching 47% of the total number of employees. In addition, more than 200 associate professors from foreign and national universities work with the University.

The University aims to further increase the share of international students and in recent years has stepped up the UNG Student Enrolment Advisor its education promotion among potential students abroad. The priority task of is to ensure the systematic promotion of the University's study programmes abroad, especially in priority areas (the Balkan countries, Slovenians living in Italy).

The University aims to ensure that its study programmes are internationally comparable in terms of quality and relevance to the international labour market. This ensures that its programmes are of interest to a wide range of international students. The University offers all of its study programmes to international students in English. It also organises English and Slovenian language courses for foreigners, facilitating the integration of foreigners into the Slovenian environment and their studies at the University. The University introduces e-learning methods, which also make it easier for foreign students to study, as they allow for an individual approach to teaching. In the doctoral programmes, where the proportion of foreign students is usually the highest, the programmes are conducted in English. The language of dissertation writing and defence is exclusively English, ensuring that all PhD students acquire the necessary linguistic competences during their studies to be able to confidently present the results of their research to the international scientific community and the wider public in English. Professors and experts from foreign universities and research institutions participate as lecturers and mentors of doctoral students. To ensure the quality of doctoral dissertations and comparability with established quality standards worldwide, uniform rules have been introduced stipulating that the doctoral thesis evaluation committee is composed of three members, at least two of whom must be from a foreign university. As a condition for admission to the dissertation defence, in addition to the applicable provisions of the programme, the student has to publish at least one scientific article in the field of his/her research in an international scientific journal with an impact factor.

The University's excellence in research and international orientation has been recognised in the international university rankings *U-Multirank*, *RUR* and *QS EECA Region University Rankings*. The results of these comparative assessments of universities from around the world show that the University of Nova Gorica performs well above average on a global scale. The scientific excellence of the University of Nova Gorica in the international arena has also been recognised and highlighted in the *European Commission's Report on the scientific production of European universities in the period 2007-2011*.

The international orientation of the University was also recognised by external experts in the EUA-IEP International Institutional Evaluation, which took place in 2015. Among the recommendations made to the University by the IEP expert team in their final report, they suggested that UNG further strengthen its internationalisation activities:

- develop a single internationalisation strategy covering all its areas of activity,
- increase the number of programmes taught in English and increase contact with English for students in all undergraduate programmes,
- increase the activity of the International Office in promoting the use of Erasmus+ and other international exchange and training opportunities for students and teachers.

The UNG Internationalisation Strategic Plan was prepared as part of the Action Plan for the implementation of the recommendations made by the experts of the EUA-IEP International Institutional Evaluation of University of Nova Gorica in 2015. The Action Plan was approved by the University Senate at its regular meeting in January 2016.

UNG Strategic Plan for Internationalisation

The internationalisation of the University remains one of its core concepts and the guiding strategic direction in all areas of its activities.

The University will further strengthen its international activities in various fields of action and ensure that the internationalisation strategy is harmonised with other of its strategic orientations. To this end, it will:

- increase the share of international students at all three levels of education, thus increasing the overall number of students;
- expand the international promotion of its study programmes to different groups of countries, where it will identify a greater potential interest of foreign students in studying at the University;
- involve internationally renowned professors and experts in the teaching process of all UNG programmes;
- increase the number of programmes taught in English;
- increase contact with English for students in all three levels of education;
- develop new approaches to teaching and a personalised approach to students, taking into account the linguistic and cultural diversity of international students;
- introduce e-learning tools for distance learning and the use of ICT and multimedia in the educational process, facilitating and adapting access to educational content for international students;
- ensure internationally comparable excellence in learning and teaching;
- ensure internationally comparable excellence in research;
- attract new European and other international research projects, which can help recruit new staff;

- ensure an adequate staffing structure for research and teaching staff at the University; researchers and teachers are expected to be broad-minded scientists and experts with international experience, and candidates for permanent positions are expected to have completed at least one year of postdoctoral training abroad;
- attract the best international experts in the global field to develop new areas of research and study at UNG and to integrate them into the teaching processes;
- ensure and promote the involvement of researchers and students in international research projects;
- encourage academic staff to pursue European and other international research, development and teaching projects;
- maintain a significant proportion of professors and experts from renowned foreign universities in the University's teaching and research activities; such collaborations are particularly crucial in doctoral programmes, where it is important to transfer new knowledge in various fields of science to younger generations very quickly;
- encourage national and international students and teachers to increase their international mobility and to make use of Erasmus+ and other opportunities for international exchanges and training of students and teachers, as well as for research and development activities;
- strengthen the activity of the International and Project Office in attracting new ERASMUS+ projects.

UNG Strategic and Action Plans (2023)

The Development Strategy is reviewed and adopted annually by the University's management and the heads of the UNG teaching and research units, taking into account the UNG's mission and vision for the University's development and the long-term strategic orientations.

The University's annual strategic consultations, attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of UNG's research units and other invited representatives of academic and administrative staff, identify the University's strengths and most pressing weaknesses in relation to the adopted strategic orientations. Those objectives not achieved in the previous year remain a priority for the next period. However, some of the strategic objectives are of a long-term nature and are therefore permanently among the priorities or orientations of the University and its research and teaching units. In addition, new orientations and strategic decisions are taken each year to improve the University's activities in the short and long term. Timelines are set and those responsible for the implementation of each activity are identified. The UNG management is responsible for verifying the implementation of the action plan. The achievement of the set objectives within the foreseen time is monitored in the framework of the Rector's weekly meetings in which all Deans and Heads of the Research units participate. The findings and action plans for the individual items in the strategic plan concerning the Schools and the Academy of Arts are presented in the Schools and the Academy's self-evaluation reports. The activities and results achieved concerning the University as a whole are discussed in this report in Chapter 4.

The main long-term orientations of UNG and the short-term priority objectives of UNG in 2023, as presented in the document *Plan for the implementation of scientific, research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027* and in the document *Annual work programme of UNG for 2023*, approved by the UNG Senate at its regular meeting on 22 February 2023, are briefly summarised below.

Long-term objectives

- UNG is among the world's best higher education and scientific research institutions in selected fields of activity.
- UNG is an active member of the International Alliance of Universities and the European ACROSS University.
- UNG is a promoter and an important part of scientific research and higher education cooperation in Slovenia.
- UNG is an initiator and an active partner of Slovenian educational and research institutions in establishing Slovenia as a centre of higher education and research recognised in Europe and beyond.
- As a regional and national centre, UNG contributes to the sustainable transformation of the Slovenian economy.
- UNG's positive local and national societal impact is recognised.

- UNG meets all European benchmarks for modern institutions, especially in the areas of equal opportunities and inclusion.
- UNG is a promoter of society's involvement in scientific research.

The following objectives are particularly important for the next five-year period:

- raising the quality of study programmes, adapting teaching content to address current societal issues;
- improving the teaching skills of staff, through regular attendance at relevant courses for senior staff and teachers;
- increasing the enrolment in the initial first year of the study programmes;
- providing a suitable infrastructure to concentrate higher education teaching activities in one place;
- integration into cross-border and international networks of study programmes, strengthening the ACROSS international alliance;
- developing and accrediting new study programmes, in cooperation with national and international universities and institutions;
- strengthening artistic activity;
- improving lifelong learning provision.

Short-term priority objectives in 2023

- quality delivery of existing teaching and research programmes;
- additional classroom equipment for hybrid study;
- completion of study programmes accredited for distance delivery;
- keeping equipment and teaching facilities up to date;
- introducing more direct contact between teaching staff and students;
- improving the premises and related conditions for the delivery of study programmes;
- improving students' competences for international competitiveness;
- promoting student mobility under Erasmus+ and increasing the proportion of students with international study experience;
- establishing student mobility within the ACROSS international network of universities;
- establishing the mobility of university staff within the ACROSS international network of universities;
- training for teaching staff in hybrid learning;
- greater involvement of business experts in the study process;

- establishing joint development centres between UNG and economic subjects;
- strengthening cooperation with research institutes and higher education institutions;
- improving student involvement in the quality assurance system;
- promoting studies for the STE(A)M careers of the future;
- increasing the number of students and the percentage of students completing their studies;
- regular and ongoing renewal of study programmes;
- increasing the number of study programmes with double or joint degrees with foreign universities;
- reducing the share of external providers in the teaching process;
- regulating the relationship between teaching and research staff;
- increasing the number of postdoctoral training opportunities abroad;
- employing top Slovenian scientists from abroad;
- roundtables and workshops on career planning, lectures, professional seminars and training;
- improving the promotion of study programmes at the national level;
- in cooperation with the Student Council, renewing extra-curricular activities for students.

3. QUALITY CARE

Introduction

Quality and international competitiveness in teaching and research are at the heart of the institution's commitment. UNG is continuously developing a culture of quality, establishing and maintaining a quality loop, refining procedures and strategies to ensure and continuously improve quality in all its activities in all its teaching and research units.

Monitoring, identification and quality assurance of the University's study programmes are organised in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and the acts adopted by the Council of the National Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Quality in Higher Education (NAKVIS): *Criteria for Accreditation and External Evaluation of Higher Education Institutions and Study Programmes*, *Criteria for Transitions between Study Programmes*, *Criteria for Credit Evaluation of Study Programmes according to ECTS*, *Minimum Standards for the Election to the Titles of Higher Education Teachers, Researchers and Higher Education Associates at Higher Education Institutions* and other acts.

The Rector, the Vice-Rector and other University's bodies are responsible for monitoring, assessing and ensuring quality at the University, in accordance with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education, the University's Statutes and other University's acts. The deans, directors of study programmes, senates, quality coordinators and other bodies of the schools or academies are responsible for monitoring, determining and ensuring the quality of study programmes and other activities at the University's Schools and the Academy, within the scope of their respective competences. Quality assurance of research work in the University's research units is the responsibility of the heads of the research units in accordance with their respective competences. All UNG staff and students, as well as other external stakeholders, are responsibly involved in quality assurance processes.

The UNG Quality Commission is responsible for the implementation of activities related to the monitoring, identification and assurance of quality at the University and for making proposals and initiatives for the development of a quality culture and the completion of procedures and strategies for the assurance and continuous improvement of quality at the University level, while the Schools and the Academy are responsible for their quality coordinators, who are also members of the UNG Quality Commission, within the framework of which they coordinate their activities. The UNG Quality Commission is a permanent expert commission of the Senate of the University of Nova Gorica. Its tasks and activities are defined in the *Rules of Procedure of the Quality Commission of the University of Nova Gorica*. The Commission reports on its work to the University Senate once a year.

Self-evaluation is a fundamental mechanism for monitoring, identifying and ensuring quality, for developing a culture of quality and for upgrading procedures and strategies for quality assurance and continuous quality improvement at the University. The University conducts self-evaluation according to a uniform methodology in all its teaching units and in the University as a whole on an annual basis. As part of the self-evaluation process, the University analyses its overall activities and achievements and

proposes measures for further development. The self-evaluation of the quality assurance of the implementation of study programmes is carried out annually at the University's Schools and the Academy. The evaluation of research work is carried out in the context of the entire University. It covers all UNG research units (UNG laboratories and centres).

At UNG, quality management is also embedded in the university's management structure. Key decisions in the day-to-day organisation and management of issues related to the quality of teaching and research are coordinated at university level. The University's Rector, the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of the Schools and the Academy and the Heads of the Research units play an important role in this process and regularly discuss and adopt the short-term development strategy. Regular weekly meetings of the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Deans and Heads of Research Units are held to address current issues related to the provision of human resources, material, space and other conditions and support activities necessary to ensure quality teaching and research in all the University's units. In this context, suggestions for improvement and remedying identified shortcomings are also continuously collected and the effects of the measures taken are monitored.

The teaching units regularly collect suggestions from teaching staff, support services, students and external stakeholders to improve the content and quality of the curriculum. Seminars and workshops for teaching staff are organised from time to time to address topical issues relevant to the quality of teaching. Training of teaching assistants is also organised from time to time.

The annual self-evaluation reports are a central element of the self-evaluation process. The self-evaluation report is prepared by each of the University's educational units (the Schools and the Academy). At the university level, an institutional self-evaluation report on the monitoring and quality assurance of the University's teaching and research work is prepared separately. The annual self-evaluation reports of the Schools and the Academy are adopted by the Senate of each School and the Academy. The University Report is considered by the UNG Senate.

The self-evaluation reports of the UNG Schools and the Academy and the report of the University as a whole are published annually on the UNG website and presented through this channel to all University staff, students and other stakeholders or the general public.

External quality assurance of the University's overall functioning is monitored through external evaluations in the process of the University's reaccreditation and through sample or emergency evaluations of programmes by NAKVIS, in accordance with the provisions of national legislation. External evaluation is one of the important tools in the process of improving the University's quality assurance system, contributing to the development of a quality culture at the University and to the development of the institution's own quality control. The reports produced by the expert teams in each external evaluation process, which identify strengths and examples of good practice, weaknesses and vulnerabilities or make recommendations for improvement and the elimination of any inconsistencies, are taken into account in the self-evaluation and quality assurance processes.

The self-evaluation process provides for short- and long-term actions to address identified shortcomings and weaknesses in order to ensure continuous quality improvement in all areas of operation and to maintain compliance with applicable legislation.

Quality assurance methodology

The monitoring and quality assurance methodology and self-evaluation procedures at the University are carried out in accordance with the UNG Unified Methodology, which is laid down in the UNG Quality Regulations adopted by the University's Senate. The UNG Quality Regulations set out the strategies and methodologies, procedures and mechanisms for monitoring, assessing and ensuring quality at the University and all of its Schools and the Academy. It defines the self-evaluation procedures. It defines the rules, responsibilities, modus operandi and quality monitoring and improvement measures to be followed by the University's competent bodies and all other stakeholders in quality monitoring and assurance.

The UNG Quality Rules are published on the the University's website:

<https://ung.si/en/university/quality-assurance/>

Structure of self-evaluation reports

Self-evaluation reports of Schools and Academy

The self-evaluation reports of the UNG Schools and the Academy are prepared according to a common methodology and follow the same structure, which is presented below. The reports cover all areas of the schools' and academy's activities.

The self-evaluation report of the Schools and the Academy present in a short and concise manner an analysis of the situation and the realisation of the set objectives from the previous academic year, with the aim of ensuring the tracking of development and progress in the realisation of the set objectives from the previous academic years. This is followed by an action plan based on the findings of the situation analysis. In this way, the self-evaluation report can be an effective tool both for developing or improving the functioning of the respective School or Academy and for ensuring the development of all study programmes.

The self-evaluation report of a School or Academy contains two parts: the Institutional self-evaluation report of the respective School or Academy as a whole, and the Programme self-evaluation report for each individual programme. The structure of the school's self-evaluation report is laid down in the UNG Quality Regulations.

At the University's Schools and the University's Academy, the quality coordinators are responsible for the coordination of data collection and for the coordination, compilation and preparation of the annual self-evaluation reports. They prepare the reports in cooperation with the Dean, the directors of the School's or Academy's study programmes, members of the Senate, all teaching staff in the study programmes, student representatives, the Schools or Academy's offices, the University's common services and other external stakeholders related to the School's or Academy's activities. In doing so, they follow the *Guidelines for the conduct of self-evaluation and the preparation of self-evaluation reports* as presented in the *UNG Quality Regulations*.

University self-evaluation report

The self-evaluation report of the University provides an overview of the performance of the University as a whole in all areas of its activities (mission, vision and strategic orientations of the University, internal organisation of the University and the internal system for monitoring and quality assurance, educational and research activities, cooperation with the social environment, financial management, human and material conditions, students at the University). The UNG self-evaluation also analyses the functioning of the University's common services and other support activities operating at the university level and supporting all teaching and research units (Student Office, Project and International Office, Career Centre, Alumni Club, UNG University Library, UNG Publishing House, UNG Quality Commission and other professional services). The research activities carried out by the University's research units and the University's research achievements are analysed in more detail in the annual UNG Activity Report.

The UNG Quality Commission is responsible for the preparation of the University's self-evaluation report and for collecting data relevant for the University's institutional self-evaluation analysis. It prepares the University's self-evaluation report in cooperation with the University's management, the UNG Student Council and the University's common services (Student Office, Project and International Office, Career Centre, Alumni Club, UNG University Library, UNG Publishing House, UNG Accounting, Legal and Human Resources Services, and other professional services).

The Quality Committee monitors, throughout the year, all the elements in all areas of quality assurance at the University that are covered in the University's self-evaluation report. It collects suggestions for improvement from the University management and the management of its teaching and research units, from the University's shared services and other staff, from the University's Student Council and student representatives on the University's bodies, and from other stakeholders.

Student representatives in the University Senate, the Schools and Academy Senates and the UNG Quality Commission inform the University's Student Council and other students about decisions, strategies and activities for quality assurance or quality improvement, and ask for their suggestions for improvement. These suggestions are forwarded to the UNG Quality Commission.

The data for each area of activity are collected and forwarded to the Quality Commission by the relevant University's joint services and the secretariats of the teaching and research units and other services that support all teaching and research units (Student Office, Project and International Office, Career Centre, Alumni Club, UNG University Library, UNG Publishing, and other professional services). Data for all these areas of the University's activities are compiled for each academic year separately in a separate document entitled *Data for the University's self-evaluation report*, which contains all the necessary data relevant for the University's institutional self-evaluation analysis. The performance of the University and all its teaching and research units, support services, as well as significant events and achievements of the University in the previous academic year are presented in detail each year in the publication *Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica*, which is publicly available on the University's website in both Slovenian and English (www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/letna-porocila/). This report is prepared

by the Heads of the teaching and research units, the University's management and representatives of the University's support services.

The UNG Quality Commission, in cooperation with the University's management and its teaching and research units, prepares an analysis of the situation at the end of the year, based on the data collected. The analysis of the performance of the shared services is provided by the services themselves and forwarded to the UNG Quality Commission.

The self-evaluation report of the University presents a brief and concise analysis of the situation and the realisation of the objectives set in the previous academic year, with the aim of ensuring the tracking of developments and progress in the realisation of the objectives set in previous academic years. This is followed by an action plan based on the findings of the situation analysis. In this way, the self-evaluation report can be an effective tool for developing or improving the performance of the University as a whole.

The UNG Self-Evaluation Report is prepared annually, normally by the beginning of March, for the previous academic year. The report is considered and adopted by the University's Senate, normally at its regular meeting in March. The University's self-evaluation report is available on the University's website (<https://www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/kakovost/evalvacija/letna-porocila-evalvacije>) and presented through this channel to all University staff, students, other stakeholders and the general public.

The self-evaluation reports of the Schools and the Academy are prepared each year, usually by the beginning of March, for the previous academic year. The report is considered and adopted by the Senate of the respective School and the Academy at its regular meeting in March. The self-evaluation reports of the Schools and the Academy are available on the the University's website (<https://www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/kakovost/evalvacija/letna-porocila-evalvacije/>), and are presented to all University staff, students, other stakeholders and the general public.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION, REALISATION OF OBJECTIVES, ACTION PLANS

Analysis of the situation

The analysis of the situation of the University as a whole is prepared by the UNG Quality Commission in cooperation with the University's Rector and the Vice-Rectors. All areas relevant to the functioning of the University as a whole are analysed. The analysis is carried out by the UNG Quality Commission on the basis of data collected in a separate document entitled *Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022*, in the publication *Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022*, in the document *Plan for the implementation of the scientific research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027*, in the document *Annual work programme of the University of Nova Gorica for the year 2023*, and in the documents *Report of the UNG institutional evaluation in the context of the reaccreditation of the University of Nova Gorica in 2022* of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on the UNG reaccreditation 2022 received on 12 July 2022 by which the Council of the Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS) reaccredited the University of Nova Gorica (UNG) . Other documents are also taken into account, as listed separately in the individual chapters. The analysis also takes into account data obtained from interviews with the University's Rector and Vice-Rectors, Deans and Heads of Research Units, PhD programme directors, student representatives and other stakeholders. The situation analysis presents, in a concise and brief manner, the findings on the strengths and weaknesses of the University's organisation and functioning, as well as opportunities for improvement.

Achieving UNG's mission, vision and strategic orientations

(Source: document *Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022*, publication *Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022*, document *Plan for the implementation of scientific research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027*, document *Annual work programme of the University of Nova Gorica for the year 2023*, documents *Report of the UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022* of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 12 July 2022; the UNG Annual strategic consultations of 20 February 2023 attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the Research Units; the meetings of the UNG Senate and the UNG Governing Board; interviews of the UNG management and the management of the teaching and

research units with academic and administrative staff, representatives of support services (Student Office, Project and International Office, UNG Library, Alumni Club, Career Centre, Human resources, Legal and Accounting Services, UNG Quality Commission), student representatives and members of the UNG Student Council and external stakeholders.

The University's positioning in higher education and the wider social and European space, the substantive coherence of the mission, vision and strategy with the strategic plan, the feasibility and implementation of the objectives defined in the strategic plan, the feasibility and integrity of the strategic planning are evaluated.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Unique fields of study and study programmes, both in Slovenia and more widely.
- Above-average international cooperation and the university's focus on attracting international students and foreign guest lecturers.

Opportunities for improvement:

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- To define more clearly and concretely the long-term strategic development objectives and develop a methodology to measure their achievement. The achievement of the long-term strategic objectives should be linked to the short-term objectives, as the latter contribute to the implementation of the long-term strategic plan.
- Short-term (annual) objectives need to be aligned and linked to long-term strategic objectives, and their implementation and results need to be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis.

Quality standards partially met

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The current mission and vision do not allow for an adequate development of the University's educational activities, as the strategy for the development of this area is inconsistent. We recommend that an internal review of the mission, vision and strategy for the development of educational activities be carried out, involving all UNG stakeholders, and that an annual plan for the development of educational activities with clear and measurable objectives be adopted.

The action plan to remedy these shortcomings and non-compliance with the timetable is presented in Section 4.3. The implementation of the targets set and implemented by the end of February 2023 is presented in Section 4.2.

Evaluation of the internal organisation and functioning of the University as a whole

(Source: document Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022, publication Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022, UNG Statutes, Chapter 2 in this document "UNG Mission, Vision and Development Strategies", document UNG Institutional evaluation report in the context of UNG re-accreditation 2022 of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 12 July 2022; the UNG Annual strategic consultations of 20 February 2023, attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the Research Units; the meetings of the UNG Senate and the UNG Governing Board, interviews of the UNG management and the management of the teaching and research units and members of the UNG Quality Commission with academic and administrative staff, representatives of support services (Student Office, International Office, UNG Library, Alumni Club, Career Centre, Human resources, Legal and Accounting Services), student representatives and members of the UNG Student Council and external stakeholders.

The evaluation considers the issue of alignment of the University's strategic planning with its mission, national and European guidelines, its feasibility and comprehensiveness, and the adequacy of the way in which the implementation of strategic planning is verified.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Above-average quality of informal communication between academic and professional staff and students.
- High degree of parity among UNG member (schools/academy).

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Formal involvement of non-teaching staff in the institution's management and consultation. We see the possibility of involving the non-teaching staff in the preparation of strategic documents and their membership in the University governing bodies.
- Making the records of the meetings of the University's governing bodies public so as to increase the transparency and accountability of the institution.

Major deficiencies or non-compliances

Findings of the UNG 2022 institutional evaluation

- The structure of the UNG bodies is not in line with Article 20 of the Law on Higher Education (Slovenian ZViS), as the University does not have Student Councils in all its member units. Article 25 of the UNG Statute does not provide for a Student Council at the University's Graduate School.

- The members of the UNG Senate are appointed by the UNG Governing Board on the proposal of the Rector, which is in contradiction to Article 21 of the Law on Higher Education, which stipulates that the members of the University Senate are elected by the Senates of the University's member institutions. The Rector and the Deans of the University's member institutions are members of the UNG Senate by virtue of their functions.
- The University Senate is composed of 12 members, including 2 student representatives, representing 1/6 of the total number of Senate members. This is in contradiction to Article 21 of the Law on Higher Education and Article 26 of the UNG Statutes, which stipulate that student representatives must make up at least 1/5 of the Senate membership.
- The UNG Statutes do not provide for an Academic Assembly as an organ of the University, but only for Academic Assemblies at the individual member institutions of the University, which is contrary to Article 21a of the Law on Higher Education. Academic Assemblies do not function at the level of the University member institutions, even though one of their basic duties and tasks is electing the members of the Senate of the member institution.

The action plan to remedy these shortcomings and non-compliance with the timetable is presented in Section 4.3. The implementation of the targets set and implemented by February 2023 is presented in Section 4.2.

Evaluation of UNG research and artistic activities

*(Source: document **Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022**, publication **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, document **Plan for the implementation of scientific research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027**, document **Annual work programme of the University of Nova Gorica for 2023**, document **Report of UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022** of 15 March 2022 and the **NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on UNG 2022 reaccreditation** of 12 July 2022; the UNG Annual strategic consultation of 20 February 2023 attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the UNG academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the UNG Research Units; the meetings of the UNG Senate and the UNG Governing Board.*

The quality, development and progress of scientific, professional, research and artistic activities at the University are evaluated, as well as significant achievements (publications, patents, services, prizes, artistic works, awards, international and national scientific and applied projects) in the past year. The references from which this is evident

are indicated, i.e. international publications, citation, visibility, impact and applicability of scientific and artistic achievements, international and national evaluations of research and artistic work, research projects and programmes at UNG, etc.).

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- UNG demonstrates its quality in the scientific, professional, research and artistic fields and promotes its achievements and UNG researchers through its media channels.
- The integration of scientific research and education at the University is above average.
- Above-average research orientation of the university, especially in the engineering field, also integration of engineering/natural science concepts into study programmes in other fields, e.g. humanities, enology studies, etc.
- UNG International Awards for Research Excellence.

Additional UNG findings:

- The University of Nova Gorica and its partners were awarded €10 million in funding for the SMASH project in 2022 under the European Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND call. About half of it is donated from the European Commission, while the other half comes from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of the Republic of Slovenia. The University will act as the leading coordinating institution in the project. The theme of the project is machine learning in the sciences and humanities.
- The University of Nova Gorica has once again been ranked extremely high in the international Round University Ranking (RUR), at an impressive 228th place. In previous years, UNG also achieved very good rankings around 200th place, with an all-time high of 140th place in 2019. The top positions in this ranking are dominated by the best-known American (California Institute of Technology, Stanford University, Harvard University) and English universities (University of Oxford, University of Cambridge). The RUR ranking shows that the University of Nova Gorica is the best-ranked Slovenian university in all quality elements.
- In 2022, the UNG researchers were included in the Stanford rankings in the Stanford University list of the world's top researchers based on the impact of their publications. In terms of citations, prof. dr. Matjaž Valant, Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development and Technology and Head of the University's Materials Research Laboratory ranked an outstanding 554th in his field (Materials) out of nearly 316,000 researchers evaluated. Prof. dr. Mladen Franko and prof. dr. Ario De Marco from the Laboratory for Environmental and Life Sciences also made it into the top 2% of the most cited researchers in their fields from the University of Nova Gorica.

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The strategic objective of linking with industry can be strengthened by broadening the base of participating enterprises and involving them in concrete projects and research in the implementation of the teaching process.
- Achieving the planned knowledge transfers to business and organisations.

UNG's clarification: UNG recognises the importance of connecting with business and transferring knowledge to the economy and the social environment. This is one of UNG's long-term strategic orientations. On 1 December 2022, following the decisions of the Municipal Council of the Municipality of Nova Gorica (MONG) and the UNG Management Board, UNG and the Municipality of Nova Gorica (MONG) established the Centre for Green Technologies (CZT).

The purpose of the Green Technologies Centre is to offer professional, educational, administrative and, above all, infrastructural support to advanced and innovative ideas in the field of green and sustainable innovations in their transition to widespread use in industry, agriculture, urban and natural environments.

We expect the Green Technology Centre to grow into a very large hub that will contribute to the transition to a green sustainable economy in the region, as well as at the national level and beyond. The Centre is an institution that bridges the gap between the academic and research sectors and industry.

In order to strengthen and more effectively implement the strategic objectives of integration with economy, knowledge transfer to the economy and related activities, the University's Rector has appointed a Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development and Technology. One of his tasks is working with local and national economic subjects and the field of knowledge transfer.

In 2022, the University aims to establish School Councils at all its Schools and the Academy of Arts, which are consultative bodies of the Dean, composed of representatives of employers, research institutions, the economy, non-economic activities, administrative bodies, the public sector, the local environment, graduates of study programmes or other external stakeholders related to the activities of the School or the Academy. The task of the members of the Scientific Council is to assist and advise the Dean and Directors of the doctoral programmes as external consultants in taking strategic decisions in the development, updating and modification of study programmes; and in improving the cooperation of the Schools and the Academy with the economy and the local and wider social environment.

Evaluation of the delivery of study programmes and students' practical training

*(Source: document **Self-evaluation reports of the UNG Schools and the Academy of Arts for the academic year 2021/2022**, publication **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, document **Report of the institutional evaluation of UNG in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022** of 15 March 2022 and the **NAKVIS decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on reaccreditation of UNG 2022** of 12 July 2022.)*

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The University should think about the ways on how to train/consult with the mentors for practical training in enterprises.

UNG clarification

The UNG Quality Policy sets out the strategies and methodologies, procedures and mechanisms for monitoring, assessing and assuring quality at the University. It defines the self-evaluation procedures. It defines the rules, responsibilities, ways of operation, quality monitoring and improvement measures to be followed by the University's competent bodies and all other stakeholders in quality monitoring and assurance.

The UNG Quality Regulations also specify a uniform methodology for monitoring, identifying and ensuring quality at the University's study programmes, as well as a methodology for evaluating and updating the study programmes implemented within the individual Schools and the Academy. The UNG Quality Regulations also provide guidelines for their preparation and indicate the persons responsible for the implementation and supervision of the individual self-evaluation procedures and action plans. The Deans, Directors of study programmes, Senates and other bodies of the Schools and the Academy are responsible for monitoring, determining and ensuring the quality of the study programmes and other activities at the UNG Schools and the Academy, within the scope of their respective competences.

The evaluation of individual study programmes is presented in the self-evaluation reports of the Schools and the Academy. The self-evaluation reports of the University's Schools and the Academy are prepared according to a common methodology and follow the same structure as laid down in the UNG Quality Regulations. The self-evaluation report of a study programme also presents a chronology of the updating of the study programme. The Schools which offer higher professional study programmes that include practical education (School of Engineering and Management, School of Viticulture and Enology, Academy of Arts) also specifically evaluate the organisation and implementation of the practical education of students in the working environment. The evaluation assesses whether the practical training is well organised and delivered, and whether the resources to deliver it are provided.

Evaluating cooperation with the environment, employers and UNG alumni and monitoring the skills and employment needs of the environment

*(Source: document **Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022**, publication **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, document **Plan for the implementation of scientific research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027**, document **Annual work programme of the University of Nova Gorica for the year 2023**, document **Report of UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022** of 15 March 2022 and the **NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on UNG 2022 reaccreditation** of 12 July 2022; **UNG Annual strategic consultations** of 20 February 2023 attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the Research Units; meetings of the University's Senate and the UNG Governing Board, interviews of UNG management and UNG teaching units and members of the Quality Commission with representatives of the UNG Career Centre and the UNG Alumni Club; interviews of the alumni of the University study programmes; and interviews of the Deans and Directors of study programmes with members of the School Councils.*

The evaluation considers the University's cooperation with the environment, employers and graduates of the University's study programmes, the functioning of the UNG Career Centre and Alumni Club, the ways of monitoring the relevance of competences or learning outcomes in study programmes, their assessment and the use of the results, and the matching of student enrolments with the needs of graduates.)

Benefits

- An analysis of the employability of graduates at UNG as a whole and by School and at the Academy of Arts 6 months and 12 months after graduation, prepared according to the revised methodology in November 2022, shows that the proportion of unemployed graduates is very low across all UNG programmes. As a rule, 12 months after graduation, unemployment is less than 10%. The data cover graduates from 2018 onwards.

Opportunities for improvement:

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Monitoring skills and employment needs is mainly done through communication during students' practical training or through research activities. The University could establish more regular contacts with business representatives, including chambers of commerce, in order to be able to examine more quickly and effectively the needs of the changing labour market, while incorporating their input into quality assurance processes.
- The activities of the Career Centre depend heavily on external funding alongside the UNG project activities. This funding model does not guarantee the stability of staff and the breadth and diversity of the activities of the Centre itself. We invite

- the University to secure more stable sources of funding which would allow further development and expansion of the Career Centre's activities.
- The formal Alumni Club activity defines a number of activities, but in practice it has been shown that there is no motivation among the alumni to join the Alumni Club. We invite the University to find ways to motivate the alumni to join the Alumni Club.
 - The statistical targets that measure graduate employability are highly reductionist. In self-evaluation reports, too much emphasis is placed on the quantitative target of '80% employment after graduation'. We propose a more precise form of graduate tracking, which would also address the application of the skills acquired in the target employment sectors.

UNG Clarification: In 2022, the University established Schools Councils at all its Schools and the Academy of Arts, which are consultative bodies of the Dean, composed of representatives of employers, research institutions, the economy, non-economic activities, administrative bodies, the public sector, the local environment, study programmes or other external stakeholders related to the operation of the Schools and the Academy. This will enable us to establish more regular contacts with representatives from the economy and the wider social environment, which will allow us to monitor labour market needs more effectively and obtain feedback when preparing changes and updates of the study programmes. Members of the Schools' Councils will be involved in the quality assurance processes of the respective Schools and will help shape the School's development orientations.

The University is continuously working to secure internal funding for the operation of its Career Centre. The issue of funding for the Career Centres was also discussed at the Slovenian Rectors' Conference in September 2021. In early October 2021, a letter was sent to the Ministry of Higher Education and Science by the Slovenian Rectors' Conference requesting that the funding of the Career Centres be systematically regulated for all higher education institutions.

The UNG Alumni Club will continue its efforts to carry out activities for alumni and to encourage them to participate in the life of the Schools and the Academy. When reaching out to alumni, it is important to bear in mind that a significant number of them are abroad, which, of course, makes communication and interaction more difficult. Every year, the UNG Alumni Club organises various social events and joint meetings of students and alumni, which also provide an opportunity for exchanging professional views and proposals for improving the University's study programmes. Hence on 15 September 2022, the UNG Alumni Club organised a meeting of the University's alumni in Ajdovščina. The meeting brought together around 100 former students and their mentors and teachers. The participants were addressed by the University's Rector, who presented the activities and main challenges of the UNG development, and the President of the UNG Foundation, who presented the mission and activities of the UNG Foundation and called on the alumni to actively support the University's activities through donations to the UNG Foundation, either for the purpose of the University's development or for the purpose of scholarships for the University's students, which is one of the important missions of the UNG Foundation.

In order to be able to have a better co-operation with the University's graduates, which would also address the application of graduates' skills in target employment sectors, the UNG Alumni Club has developed a change in the method of tracking employment and employability of the graduates; the new approach uses similar methods of tracking employment and employability of graduates as implemented by the MoEYS in the eLearning. From the total number of graduates covered over the last three years, the proportion of graduates is analysed according to the following categories: those employed in the profession, those in employment, those unemployed, those continuing their studies, and those who are not verified or refuse to provide information. This will help us to interpret our data on employability, as well as to explain the employability figures provided by the MoEYS.

Evaluation of the UNG internal quality system

(Source: UNG Quality regulations, the University Rules of studies at the first, second and third levels, Annual self-evaluation reports of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and UNG as a whole, document Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022, the publication Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica in 2022, document Report of UNG institutional evaluation in the context of UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 - 5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 12 July 2022; the UNG Annual strategic meetings attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the Research Units; interviews of UNG management and teaching and research units with members of the UNG Quality Commission, study programme directors, with members of the Scientific Councils of the programmes, members of the Schools' Councils, course leaders of the study programmes, researchers in the research units, mentors, students, representatives of the University's services, representatives of the Career Centre and the Alumni Club; and interviews with the University's alumni and external stakeholders.

The functioning of the UNG internal quality system and the self-evaluation methodology and procedures is evaluated. The evaluation aims to verify whether the quality system facilitates and promotes the development and enables the conclusion of a quality circle in all areas of the University's activities, and whether it provides appropriate critical assessments of the situation, which supports the development of educational, scientific, professional, research and artistic activities and their contents.)

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Self-evaluation tools and methods need to be optimised against strategic objectives and appropriate realistic measures need to be taken, closely monitored and, where necessary, adapted to the continuous monitoring approach.

- Comprehensive self-evaluation reports require high-quality summaries to facilitate access to information for all university stakeholders. The self-evaluation report and its executive summary should contain clear information on the results of the actions implemented in previous reports, addressing limitations and weaknesses.
- Establishing internal procedures to determine the quality of non-teaching services and defining professional objectives and performance indicators for non-teaching staff.

Major deficiencies or non-compliances

Findings of the UNG 2022 institutional evaluation

- Inadequate quality loop system, as reflected in the non-conformities identified in the last/preliminary NAKVIS report, which have not been corrected.

The action plan to address these shortcomings or non-compliances and the plan to implement the recommendations for improvement with a timetable is presented in Section 4.3. The implementation of the targets set and implemented by February 2023 is presented in Section 4.2.

- **UNG Clarification:** In September 2022, the UNG Quality Commission prepared guidelines for the update of the *UNG Quality Regulations* and guidelines for the renewal of the self-evaluation reports and self-evaluation procedures of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the University as a whole. The guidelines were included in the UNG Action Plan to address identified non-conformities or major deficiencies, which was submitted by the University to the NAKVIS Council on 22 September 2022.

In December 2022, the UNG Quality Commission drafted a proposal for a revised UNG Quality Rules of Procedure and a revised structure for the self-evaluation reports of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the University as a whole, following the recommendations made by the experts in the institutional report for UNG during the UNG reaccreditation process; and in the reports of the NAKVIS evaluations of the individual UNG study programmes completed in 2022, including the external sample evaluations of two PhD programmes (Environmental Sciences, Karst Studies) in May 2022. The Commission also took into account the decision (No 6031 -5/2020/23) of 12 July 2022 by which the NAKVIS Council extended the accreditation of UNG.

The UNG Senate considered the proposal for the *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure* at its 117th Ordinary Session on 18 January 2023 and adopted the proposed *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure*.

The *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure* sets out the strategies and methodologies, procedures and mechanisms for monitoring, assessing and assuring quality at the University. It defines the self-evaluation procedures. It defines the rules,

responsibilities, ways of operation, quality monitoring and improvement measures to be followed by the University's responsible bodies and all other stakeholders in quality monitoring and assurance. The UNG Quality Procedure Manual also sets out the structure of the self-evaluation reports of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the University as a whole, provides guidelines for their preparation and indicates the persons responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the individual self-evaluation procedures and action plans.

The self-evaluation reports of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the University as a whole for 2021/2022 are prepared according to a common methodology and have the same (renewed) structure as laid down in the new *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure*.

Evaluation of UNG's communication concerning its study programmes and other activities to all stakeholders

*(Source: UNG websites and UNG social media presence, document **Self-evaluation reports of the UNG Schools and the Academy of Arts for the academic year 2021/2022**, document **Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022**, publication **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, document **Report on UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 15 March 2022**, and the **NAKVIS Decision (6031-5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 12 July 2022**; weekly Rector's meetings with the Vice-Rectors and Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and Heads of the Research Units; interviews of the UNG management and the teaching and research units, the UNG Quality Commission with the support services (UNG IT Service, Student Office, Projects and International Office, UNG Library, Alumni Club, Career Centre, Programmes offices) and with the students' representatives; results of student surveys on the information provided to the candidates prior to their enrolment.*

The accessibility, content, reliability, comprehensibility and accuracy of information on the University's activities, in particular information on the study programmes, their delivery and the University's scientific, professional, research and artistic activities are evaluated. The presentation of all University's activities on its websites, UNG's posts on social networks, direct communication to students, professors, external stakeholders and the general public are evaluated as well.)

Benefits

- The presentation of UNG, of all its teaching and research units and all UNG activities in Slovenian and English.
- The entire digital information system for students and staff is renewed and upgraded.
- Active use of social networks to inform the general public about all forms of UNG activities and important research achievements.

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The website information needs to be improved as appropriate, and effective procedures for reviewing and updating the website need to be put in place. Several cases of unclear or incomplete information and major security problems have been identified. This is particularly relevant when it comes to information on COVID-19, which is constantly changing. The information in English should be the same and within the same extent as on the Slovenian pages, as foreign students represent half of all students.

UNG Clarification

In January 2022, the University carried out a complete upgrade of its website (in Slovenian and English), with the aim of more effectively informing the students and the wider public about its activities. All Schools and the Academy of Arts have appointed persons responsible for keeping the information on the website up-to-date. At the University level, however, the common services (UNG Public Relations Office, UNG Alumni Club, UNG Student Enrolment Advisor) are responsible for public relations (through various channels, not only through the website).

Evaluation of UNG staffing conditions

*(Source: document **Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022**, publication **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, document **Plan for the implementation of scientific, research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica 2022-2027**, document **Annual work programme of the UNG for 2023**, document **Report on UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022** of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031-5/2020/23) on the UNG reaccreditation 2022 dated 12 July 2022; weekly Rector's meetings with the Vice-Rectors, Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and Heads of the Research Units; interviews of the UNG management with representatives of the academic staff, representatives of the UNG professional and administrative support services (secretariats of the research and teaching units, Student Office, Project and International Office, UNG University Library and Publishing House, Alumni Club, Career Centre), and with student representatives; results of student surveys to assess the quality of course delivery and surveys to assess study programmes.*

The evaluation considers the suitability of academic staff to carry out teaching activities in all study programmes, the suitability of habilitation criteria for academic staff, the career development opportunities for academic staff and the adequacy of the evaluation of the quality of their research, development or artistic work. The performance of non-teaching, professional and administrative staff support services and the opportunities offered by the University for the education and training of non-teaching staff are evaluated as well.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- A large number of national and international prizes and awards relative to the size of the university A large number of international experts and a high number of mobility of higher education teachers and researchers.

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Higher education teachers should be kept informed, as appropriate, concerning the results of student surveys.
- A comprehensive and systematic approach to the professional development of academic staff, including formal annual career interviews and annual development plans for all staff, needs to be established.
- In order to foster pedagogical development of higher education teachers, the University should draw up plans to establish criteria for pedagogical excellence.
- Formalised, transparent and well-defined procedures for resolving employee complaints need to be introduced.
- Around 5.5% of higher education teachers do not have any or relevant scientific publications and citations in the SICRIS database. This shortcoming is particularly worrying in the second and third cycle programmes. The University should ensure that the second and third level study providers meet the criteria of relevant scientific publications and citations.
- Habilitation procedures need to be completed within a reasonable timeframe (no longer than one year).
- The number of support staff is insufficient, given the volume of administrative and clerical work at the Schools.
- The Secretaries of the respective Schools and the Academy also do the work of a study and project office. We propose that the strategic plan for the development of administrative staff is upgraded accordingly in order to relieve the secretaries of the Schools and the Academy of some of his/her duties and responsibilities.
- A formal career development planning system for non-teaching staff and regular annual interviews with their supervisors.
- Providing opportunities for non-teaching staff to participate in training activities of their choice, in accordance with their needs as defined in their personal annual development plan.
- Setting up a training system for non-teaching staff; this would also benefit the quality of work at the University.

Quality standards partially met

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The UNG Habilitation Rules are very vague and loose. They contain a provision that the NAKVIS minimum criteria must be complied with, but later, when defining the individual criteria, the NAKVIS minimum criteria are not listed or presented in a transparent manner, which leads to a lack of transparency in the habilitation committee records and in the habilitation procedures themselves. The records of the habilitation committees show a lack of transparency in the

fulfilment of the quantitative and qualitative conditions, standards and criteria for election and appointment to titles.

- The reports (opinions) on candidates in the habilitation procedures are not uniformly structured and do not contain transparent information on compliance with the NAKVIS minimum standards. The reports (opinions) of the members of habilitation committees are often identical in content/text (copy/paste), which raises doubts about the adequacy of habilitation procedures. There is a need for a systemic regulation of the habilitation process and a proper structuring of the content of the expert opinions (reports), in a way that transparently presents the fulfilment of the NAKVIS minimum criteria.
- The criteria for the title of "adjunct professor" do not contain precise quantitative conditions and should be completed in order to make the fulfilment of the NAKVIS minimum quantitative criteria more transparent.
- Candidates must submit a pre-application form as a condition for applying for election and appointment. The pre-application is not defined in the UNG Habilitation Rules and there is a lack of transparency as to who assesses it and provides feedback to the candidate on its adequacy.
- There is no appropriate body/authorised person to review and ensure the higher quality and appropriateness of habilitation opinions (reports) on the candidate.
- The number of staff members who offer direct student support at the Schools and the Academy is not adequate in relation to the number of students and the scope of tasks of the staff in all the units of the Student Support Team (Article 13, Standard 9, NAKVIS Accreditation Criteria).

The action plan to remedy these shortcomings and non-compliance with the timetable is presented in Section 4.3. The implementation of the targets set and implemented by the end of February 2023 is presented in Section 4.2.

UNG Clarification

In May 2022, the UNG Rector appointed a working group to prepare a proposal for amendments to the *UNG Habilitation Rules*. Based on an analysis of the existing habilitation criteria (*Rules on Conditions and Procedures for the Promotion to the UNG Titles of Research Associates, Higher Education Teachers and Associates*) of 2021, the inconsistencies identified and recommendations for improvement, the working group prepared a proposal for amendments to the habilitation rules and procedures with the aim of eliminating the inconsistencies identified. The revised criteria will adequately implement the NAKVIS minimum criteria, more clearly define qualitative and quantitative indicators for election to all habilitation titles, and take into account other recommendations of the experts' group and the NAKVIS Council.

In February 2023, the group responsible for preparing the proposals for habilitation criteria submitted a proposal for new habilitation criteria for discussion and coordination at individual Schools and the Academy of Arts. In addition to the members of the working group, the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Directors of the

study programmes, the Heads of the research units, the members of the Quality Commission, the student representatives in the University, Schools and Academy's bodies, as well as the UNG Legal and Human Resources Service have all been involved in preparing the final draft of the habilitation criteria. The revised habilitation rules will be discussed and adopted by the UNG Senate and approved by the UNG Governing Board.

The proposal for the new criteria provides that the Schools and the Academy of Arts may, if necessary, add to the general conditions some specific conditions for election to a title in a particular habilitation field. The specific conditions for each School and the Academy of Arts will be adopted by the UNG Senate upon a proposal from the respective School Senate or the Academy Senate.

In addition to the UNG uniform habilitation criteria, additional supporting documents and technical guidance will be prepared to ensure the quality and consistency of the implementation of the habilitation rules and procedures. The following annexes to the uniform habilitation criteria are foreseen:

- List of habilitation fields, specifying the School and the Academy at which the procedure for the award of each title is to be carried out;
- Minimum standards for the election to the titles of higher education teachers, researchers and higher education associates at higher education institutions, adopted by the Council of Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (NAKVIS);
- Annexes of the Schools and the Academy, setting out additional minimum standards and criteria for election to particular titles for which the Schools and the Academy are responsible, which go beyond the minimum standards adopted by the NAKVIS Council;
- The criteria implementation guide (technical guide), which provides guidance to candidates on how to prepare their application for election, and to committee members on how to make an expert assessment of the candidate's eligibility for the relevant title.

The annexes (except for the NAKVIS Minimum Standards) are adopted by the UNG Senate upon the proposal of the School and the Academy Senates or the UNG Rector. The decision of the Senate to amend the annexes follow the same procedure as the uniform habilitation criteria and constitute an amendment to the Rules.

A special UNG professional habilitation committee, appointed by the UNG Rector, will be appointed to supervise the habilitation procedures. The UNG professional habilitation committee will verify the compliance of individual habilitation procedures with the UNG habilitation criteria and the accompanying acts of these criteria; completeness of the documentation of the habilitation applications, fulfillment of the minimum quantitative standards of the candidates for the habilitation title applied for; the quality and adequacy of the professional reports on the candidate submitted by the election committee members; and will perform other tasks as specified in the appointment decision.

In order to ensure that all habilitation procedures are carried out within a reasonable timeframe, as set out in the habilitation criteria, a business information system will be updated in 2023, which will also allow the monitoring of the individual steps in the

habilitation procedures via a link to the HR database. The introduction of such a system, with automatic reminders of deadlines, will make a significant contribution to ensuring that the habilitation procedures are carried out within the timeframe set out in the habilitation criteria. As a rule, habilitation procedures should not take more than six months.

The procedures for adequately informing higher education teachers of the results of student surveys are set out in the new UNG Quality Rules of Procedure. The results of the student surveys are evaluated annually and made public in the self-evaluation reports of the Schools and the Academy, for each study programme separately. In the case of the *Student survey for course quality assessment*, the results are presented publicly in an anonymous form. The individual results of these surveys are not public, but the Dean, the Director of the study programme and the School quality coordinator and the School or Academy Registrar's Office have access to the surveys for all courses. However, every teacher and teaching assistant has the right and duty to consult the results of the survey on his/her own work, and the course leader also has the right to consult the results of the surveys on the work of teaching assistants in his/her course. The results of these student surveys for their courses are forwarded to all teachers by the programme secretariat at the end of the academic year or at the end of the semester. The School quality coordinators are responsible for verifying that teachers are properly informed of the results of the surveys and report on this in the School's or Academy's self-evaluation report for each individual programme. It is foreseen that all teachers will also receive the results of their surveys via the renewed UNG information system.

In September 2022, a unified and systematic procedure for analysing and planning the teaching, research, development and administrative workload for each of the University's academic staff member is implemented at the university level. For this purpose, an annual personal work plan (APWP) for academic staff was introduced. The data for the plan are collected by the Deans and Heads of Research Units for all staff members in their units. The APWP data collected on all academic staff employed at the University are centrally collected and analysed by the University management and, on the basis of the resulting analyses, the orientations for the professional development of the academic staff are coordinated, together with the Deans and Heads of Research Units. In addition, the UNG Rector conducts formal annual career interviews with the non-academic staff employed by the University. Both are intended to establish and ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach to the career development of academic and non-academic staff.

Based on the staffing analysis, we have found that the ratio of administrative and clerical staff to total staff (including the staff who work with us and at other institutions) in 2020 is around 0.2, which is comparable to other universities based on publicly available data. Based on a review of the workload of all support staff, the workload of individual professional and administrative staff has been reassessed and measures have been taken to address the imbalances. The new business information system that the University aims to introduce in 2023 is expected to lead to a reduction of some tasks in the workload of administrative and professional staff.

Starting from the academic year 2022/2023, regular (bi-weekly) interviews between the University's management (Rector) and the heads of the common services (Student Office, project and International Office, Career Office, Human Resources, Accounting, Legal Service) have been introduced. The purpose of the interviews is to inform the

management of the current issues of each of the services and to resolve identified problems or opportunities for improvement on an ongoing basis. So far, some areas have been identified which, due to the high volume of tasks, would require additional staff support. The University has recruited additional staff to assist in the Human Resources Service and has made some reassignments between these the common services. A new distribution plan for the tasks of the Schools' secretaries has been implemented in order to bring some proper balance into their daily duties and responsibilities.

We plan to conduct an anonymous survey of all professional staff, primarily addressing staff satisfaction at work and suggestions for improvement. This will also be used to identify the needs for additional or improved support for research and teaching work, as well as any overburdening of individuals as a result of the support they provide.

The training of non-teaching staff is carried out regularly. The teaching staff prepare their training proposals at the start of the academic year, and some of these trainings are carried out outside the plan.

Evaluating student involvement in the quality assurance process, ensuring that students have the right conditions in which to study, and protecting students' rights

(Source: UNG quality regulations, documents Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022, Self-evaluation reports of the UNG Schools and the UNG Academy of Arts for the academic year 2021/2022, publications Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022, Annual work programme of the UNG for the year 2023, documents Report on UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (6031 - 5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 12 July 2022; the Rules of studies at the first, second and third levels; the interviews of the UNG management and the teaching and research units and the members of the UNG Quality Commission with the students' representatives; the results of the student surveys conducted in all study programmes; the meetings of the Senates of the Schools and the Academy, the UNG Senate and the UNG Board of Directors.

The evaluation assesses whether the university provides students with adequate conditions for quality studies, scientific, professional, research or artistic work, extracurricular activities, appropriate assistance and counseling, timely and effective information to students, monitoring of student satisfaction with the university services and student involvement in the quality assurance process. The evaluation also assesses the systemic arrangements for the protection of students' rights, the mechanisms for identifying and preventing discrimination against vulnerable groups of students, and discrimination on the basis of students' personal circumstances and beliefs. The participation of students in the formulation of the University's mission and strategic orientations, in the self-evaluation of the University and individual Schools and the

Academy of Arts, and in the evaluation and revision of the study programmes is evaluated as well.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Optimal student/professor ratio.
- Close contacts/links between professors and students.
- The students were very appreciative of the efforts and work of the professors during the epidemic.
- Students have many opportunities for employment through the practical training system, as well as many opportunities to participate in UNG research projects.
- Individual discussions and arrangements can be made according to the needs of individual students.
- High proportion (~50%) of international students enrolled and well integrated into the university environment.

Opportunities for improvement:

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The Career Centre should broaden its activities to better meet the needs of students, and it should advertise its activities more intensively among students.
- The institution should consider disbanding the tutoring programme. The current programme does not seem to meet the needs of the students, as it is being replaced by close informal links between students and professors.
- The institution should continue to analyse drop-out rates and more specifically envisage measures to prevent drop-out.
- UNG support services and their services could be made more accessible to students through promotional activities.
- There is a need to strengthen the networking of students for potential career opportunities through the Alumni Club.
- In terms of increased and reinforced publicity (UNG PR), students' achievements should be more visible.
- UNG should increase the opportunities for more choice in student catering and student accommodation.
- International students should also be able to pay their tuition fees in several installments, like their Slovenian counterparts.
- The range of extra-curricular activities should be expanded with activities that would promote the networking among students studying at different University's institutions and thus strengthen the students' sense of belonging to the University; especially as the students study at three different campuses. In this context, activities that would allow networking and exchange of views among the University's student representatives should be strengthened.
- Procedures for adapting study programmes to take into account the needs of students with special status should be properly monitored and documented. Adaptations for students with disabilities should be explicitly mentioned in the enrolment documentation (not only in terms of sports). Student involvement in the

habilitation procedures of higher education staff should be strengthened through the preparation of a written opinion on candidates (based on the results of student surveys).

- The University Student Council should ensure that its activities are formally regulated (through rules of procedure or regulations).
- Student representatives should be elected/voted for by the students themselves, based on the adoption of appropriate internal rules.
- Setting up an adequate student complaints system and initiating procedures to address possible discrimination against students before the respective authorities.
- Although students give feedback on the quality of their studies through various questionnaires, there is a need to encourage the participation of student representatives in the bodies and committees related to the strategic planning of UNG.
- The importance of discussing the results of student surveys among students needs to be reinforced, in order to improve the weakness of the feedback loop in terms of the quality circle. At the same time, the importance of giving feedback on student surveys should be formalised both at the School and the study programme level.
- Due to the small number of students and the poor response rate to student surveys, relying solely on the results of student surveys is unlikely to meet the needs of the institution. In this context, UNG should consider implementing additional forms of qualitative data collection with a structured and documented approach (e.g. in feedback interviews or workshops), and use the data obtained to improve the quality system.

Quality standards partially met

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- There is no formally adopted complaints system at UNG to address possible discrimination, and there is no defined responsibility for handling complaints. Without effective redress, the institution cannot protect the rights of students.

The action plan to remedy these shortcomings and non-compliance with the timetable is presented in Section 4.3. The implementation of the targets set and implemented by the end of February 2023 is presented in Section 4.2.

UNG Clarification

UNG has started to set up a system for filing complaints in case of possible discrimination. To this end, UNG adopted two documents in 2021, namely the *Gender equality plan - gender equality policy* and the *Gender equality plan - implementation strategy 2021*. The two documents are publicly available at: <https://www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/enake-moznosti/> In addition, an Equal Opportunities Coordinator has been appointed.

Confidential contact persons have been appointed for victims of discrimination or harassment to contact. They will be provided with appropriate training. The tasks of the confidential contact persons are:

- providing the victim with psychosocial support and assistance;

- talking to the victim in confidence, sharing information relevant to the victim and supporting the victim in finding appropriate solutions and measures when dealing with a report of sexual or other harassment or ill-treatment;
- being present, at the victim's request, when the victim is informally taking action and/or formally addressing sexual or other harassment and ill-treatment;
- having a confidential relationship with the victim, not discussing the content of their conversations with third parties, nor using the information obtained in confidential conversations in formal proceedings without the victim's consent.

In November 2022, the [*Policy on the definition and implementation of activities against sexual and other harassment and ill-treatment*](#) was adopted. The Policy was drafted by the Equal Opportunities Commission on 8 September 2022, approved by the Governing Board on 22 November 2022 and adopted by the UNG Rector on 30 November 2022.

The *Rules for granting the status of the student with special needs* and the update of the *Rules for granting the status of the student with special status* are in the final stages of preparation for consideration by the UNG bodies. The proposals have been prepared by the UNG Student Office.

In June 2022, the Graduate School prepared a proposal for the revised rules of study for all doctoral programmes taught at the Graduate School. In doing so, we have taken into account the recommendations made by experts during the model evaluations of two Graduate School's doctoral programmes (Environmental Sciences and Karst Studies), which took place in May 2022. In addition to the existing rules, the new *Rules of studies at the PhD programmes* include some missing general rules regulating and protecting the rights of students, following the example of the *Rules of studies at the first and second level programmes*, which have not been explicitly set out for the Graduate School so far (chapters 2. Enrolment, 3. Status, 4. Study Regulations 4.1 to 4.5). The rules of studies at the Graduate School were adopted by the UNG Senate at the regular meeting on 6 July 2022 and approved by the UNG Board of Governors in November 2022.

A revision of the *Rules of the first and second level studies* is under preparation, which will set out some of the missing general rules that regulate and protect students' rights.

Student representatives in all bodies are elected or appointed by the students themselves, within the organisation of the Student Council. In order to ensure more transparent and formalised procedures for the election or appointment of student representatives, the UNG Student Council will adopt its *Rules of procedure*. The UNG Management and the UNG Legal Service will provide professional assistance to the Student Council in the preparation of the Student Council's Rules of procedure.

At the UNG strategic consultation of 20 February 2023, guidelines were given for a renovation of the tutoring system, which would strengthen the support to students at all UNG study programmes. A working group was appointed to analyse and prepare a long-term strategy and concrete short-term measures to increase student enrolment while reducing student drop-out.

To strengthen the close informal connection between students and professors, the University, upon the proposal of the Rector, introduced the so-called UNG Breakfasts in February 2023, which are designed to bring together students from all three levels of

study, the management of the teaching and research units, all professors and researchers, and the administrative and support staff in an informal and relaxed setting. The objectives are also to foster networking and exchange of views among the students from different study programmes and student representatives in the UNG Student Council and in the various UNG bodies. The Breakfasts at UNG are organised regularly, at two-week intervals, at all three locations where the University's teaching and research activities are carried out (Vipava, Ajdovščina and Rožna dolina in Nova Gorica). The Breakfasts at UNG are organised at each of the locations by the Schools and the Academy that carry out their activities at that location.

In the academic year 2022/2023, regular meetings with representatives of the UNG Student Council were organised by the Vice-Rector for Education, with the aim of improving and expanding the range of extracurricular activities offered to students, promoting networking among students from different programmes of all UNG Schools and the Academy, thus fostering a sense of belonging to the University. The long-term goal is to move the delivery of UNG's pedagogical activities to a single campus, so that students are not dispersed among three separate campuses. Student residences are also foreseen on the site of the single campus to accommodate the students. In this way, with a greater concentration of students in one location, it will also be easier to increase the opportunities for a wider choice of student catering.

The new *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure* have renewed the procedures for involving the students in the quality monitoring and assurance process, with the aim of addressing the shortcomings of the feedback loop and establishing a quality circle. The *Quality Rules of Procedure* stipulate that students are involved in the process of monitoring and quality assurance of the study programmes at several levels. On the one hand, there is a cooperation between the University and the students through the UNG Student Council. Students are represented in the UNG Governing Board, the UNG Senate, the Senates of the individual Schools and the Academy, and the UNG Quality Commission.

At the same time, all UNG students are directly involved in monitoring and ensuring the quality of the pedagogical process through student surveys, and through conversations (interviews) with the management representatives of the Schools, the Academy or a respective study programme.

The conversations (interviews) with students are introduced as a compulsory part of the process for obtaining feedback from the students, and for providing the students with information on the results of the student surveys and the student interviews from previous years; and the actions taken on the basis of these feedback.

Due to the methodological reservations in analysing and evaluating the results of the student surveys in cases where the number of collected student responses is small and the results are not statistically significant or of questionable validity, the results of the surveys in such cases are used as a qualitative indicator that needs to be aligned with other tools for obtaining feedback; to this end, the Dean, the Programme Director or the School quality coordinator may organise conversations, or other forms of contact, with the students during the academic year so as to obtain additional feedback. The results of these interviews (suggestions and possible conclusions) will be included in the document *Data for the School or Academy's self-evaluation report* for each study programme separately, and will be used additionally, together with the results of the student surveys analyses, in the context of analysing the situation in each study programme.

The University is continuously working to strengthen the UNG Career Centre and to secure its internal funding. The issue of funding of the Career Centres was also discussed at the Slovenian Rectors' Conference in September 2021. In early October 2021, a letter was sent to the Ministry of Higher Education by the Slovenian Rectors' Conference, requesting that the funding of the Career Centres is systematically regulated for all higher education institutions.

In the academic year 2021/2022, the UNG Alumni Club continued its activities to increase the connection of the University and its students with the alumni, and to foster networking among the alumni. To this end, the Alumni Club organised several promotional activities and invited the alumni to participate in the events of the UNG Career Centre and the Schools and the Academy. On 15 September 2022, the UNG Alumni Club organised a UNG alumni reunion in Ajdovščina. The meeting brought together some 100 former students and their mentors, as well as UNG teachers and management and other UNG representatives. In order to have a better communication with the graduates, which would also address the application of the skills acquired by the graduates in target employment sectors, the UNG Alumni Club has prepared a change in the method of monitoring the employment and employability of UNG graduates; it uses similar methods of monitoring the employment and employability of graduates as implemented by the MoEYS in the eLearning.

In the academic year 2021/2022, the UNG Career Centre held talks and meetings with the Human resources departments of ten major companies in the region, with the aim of establishing, maintaining and improving the link between the university and the business environment, helping graduates to make their first contacts with companies and promoting the recruitment of young graduates. In the same academic year, the Career Centre also implemented a few activities, aimed at assisting and advising students on their career options, and raising awareness of the importance of timely career planning and lifelong learning.

Evaluation of UNG's material conditions

*(Source: document **Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022**, publications **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, **Annual work programme of UNG for 2023**, document **Report on UNG institutional evaluation in the framework of UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031-5/2020/23) on UNG 2022 reaccreditation of 12 July 2022**; the UNG annual strategic consultation attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the Research Units.*

The adequacy of the premises and equipment for the overall activities of the UNG is evaluated, i.e. for the pedagogical work and the quality of studies, for the needs of all study programmes conducted within the framework of the Schools and the Academy of Arts; for the implementation of research work conducted within the framework of the UNG research units, and the implementation of other activities necessary for the smooth functioning of the University as a whole.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The campuses have lecture rooms and facilities for the study process and research (research centres & laboratories), which simplifies mobile logistics for students.

Excellence

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- When it comes to excellence, we would like to point out the University's infrastructure in terms of ICT equipment and the implementation of hybrid and online teaching for students, including the dedicated MiTeam software support.
- Open access to the university repository is best practice.

Opportunities for improvement

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- In the context of processes and costs optimisation, which has been successfully implemented at the University, it would be useful to analyse the energy efficiency of university buildings and the possibility of making progress in this area.
- The technical infrastructure is adequate for the systems and processes implemented at the University. However, we suggest that procedures and rules should be standardised across the University; a contingency plan for security incidents should be developed to reduce the sources of risk.
- To make adjustments for the blind and partially sighted in the implementation of learning and research processes.
- To make all university facilities accessible to students with disabilities, in all locations.

UNG clarification

UNG has analysed the energy efficiency of the premises and in the first phase has already renovated the dilapidated heating system in the building at Vipavska 13 (Campus in Nova Gorica). The second phase of the energy renovation of the building would include the thermal insulation of the building and the replacement of windows. All buildings have the appropriate regulatory occupational safety procedures, a safety incident plan to ensure that risks are mitigated.

The University will continue its efforts to make accommodations for students with different forms of disabilities, to ensure that they have access to all university facilities, and can learn at all locations.

In September 2022, the University completed a comprehensive upgrade of its electronic information system, with the aim of providing effective ICT support to students, the Student Office, the Registries of the Schools, the Academy and other UNG support services, as well as to UNG academic and administrative staff in the delivery of study programmes.

UNG systematically promotes and develops new approaches to teaching and learning, using state-of-the-art technological and pedagogical approaches, with a strong emphasis on the active role of students, project work, integration with research processes, taking into account current societal needs and opening up to the international space. The University is developing e-learning activities in all its teaching units to further establish itself as a widely recognised provider of flexible, open, high quality, development-oriented and student-friendly education.

In 2022, the construction of ICT support for teaching and e-learning activities in all study programmes was completed. Full functionality has been achieved for both the MiTeam and Moodle platforms, which are provided by the University for the implementation and support of e-learning, the preparation of e-classrooms for all subjects at all study programmes, the implementation of live teaching activities in classrooms, or the implementation of the teaching process in combined or hybrid mode, or for distance learning. Adequate videoconferencing facilities are provided in all lecture rooms, as well as hardware and software for the system support of e-learning. The use of both platforms is well established both in the teaching process and in the organisation of conferences and distance meetings of researchers. MiTeam and Moodle complement each other in terms of functional possibilities, and each can also be used independently. Users are free to use one or the other platform, or a combination of both, according to their specific needs in the learning process or in the organisation of e-learning or distance conferences. The parallel use of the two platforms is technically aligned, as it allows an easy transition or connection between the two platforms. In 2023, the University strengthened its IT department in order to ensure the smooth operation of ICT equipment, and provide assistance in the use of ICT tools in the teaching process.

Evaluation of financial conditions for the functioning of UNG

(Source: Data for the UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2021, publication Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022, document Plan for the implementation of scientific, research and development activities of the University of Nova Gorica, 2022-2027, document Annual work programme of UNG for 2023, the Financial report of the University of Nova Gorica considered by this Senate and the UNG Management Board on the financial performance of the University, documents Report of the institutional evaluation of UNG in the framework of UNG reaccreditation of 2022 of 15 March 2022 and the NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 - 5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022 of 12 July 2022; UNG Annual strategic consultations of 20 February 2023, attended by the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans, the Heads of the UNG Research Units and other invited representatives of the academic and administrative staff and the UNG Quality Commission; the Rector's weekly meetings with the Vice-Rectors and the Deans of the Schools and the Academy of Arts and the Heads of the Research Units; the meetings of the UNG Senate and the UNG Governing Board.

The evaluation considers whether adequate and stable financial resources are ensured for the implementation and further development of the University's activities.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- Ability to raise finance through research and projects.

UNG findings:

The University sees its advantage in the way its activities are financed. It is therefore working hard to ensure that its funding does not rely solely on public funds from the Ministry of Higher Education and the Slovenian Research Agency. The University receives a significant share of its funding from international sources, local communities, industry, tuition fees, donations, etc. The University is the founder of the UNG Foundation. The purpose of the Foundation is to raise donor funds, the proceeds of which are used for the growth of the University, the expansion and implementation of its activities, and to provide scholarships for UNG students.

The UNG Foundation doubled the value of donations raised in 2022 compared to 2021, with individual donations accounting for 80% of the funds raised. Unfortunately, the share of corporate donations is only 20%. As much as 60% of the funds donated are intended for scholarships for the University's students. This is also reflected in the fact that in the academic year 2022/2023, the UNG Foundation is planning to offer three additional scholarships to the University's students; one from the Talented Students Fund and two from the "Matija Franko" Scholarship Fund for student athletes.

UNG regularly receives sufficient funding to carry out its teaching and research activities. The total funding received has been increasing over the years. With the introduction of a stable funding method by the line ministry in 2022, the University has gained a better, long-term financial stability. Among the new research projects, the University has secured funding of €10 million for the SMASH project, with partners in the European Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions COFUND call for proposals in 2022. The project will fund 50 international postdoctoral fellows to carry out their research at five Slovenian institutions, including the University of Ljubljana, the Jožef Stefan Institute, the Slovenian Environment Agency and the Institute of Information Sciences (IZUM). The increase in revenues over the last three years has led to better conditions for the overall functioning of the University, allowing for new recruitments and the expansion of activities.

Opportunities for improvement:

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- To increase funding for the promotion of studies.

UNG clarification

UNG is aware of the importance of promoting its study programmes both in Slovenia and in the wider world and has been devoting a great deal of attention to this. We will follow

the suggestion of the expert group and work towards securing more funding for all activities related to promotion.

The University has created the post of *Student Enrolment Advisor*, and the resources for this purpose, with the aim of bringing together under one umbrella all the activities related to increasing student enrolment.

In January 2022, the University carried out a substantial redesign of its website pages (in Slovenian and English), with the aim of more effectively informing students and the wider public about its activities.

At the UNG strategic consultation of 20 February 2023, a working group was appointed to analyse the situation and prepare a long-term strategy and concrete short-term measures for the promotion of UNG studies, with the aim of increasing student enrolment at UNG study programmes. The working group will address the issue of promotion in a wholesome manner, and propose activities and approaches to improve the promotion of all UNG activities.

Evaluation of the UNG University Library and Publishing House

*(Source: document **Data for UNG self-evaluation report for the academic year 2021/2022**, publication **Report on the work of the University of Nova Gorica 2022**, documents **Report of UNG institutional evaluation as part of UNG reaccreditation 2022** of 15 March 2022 and the **NAKVIS Decision (No. 6031 -5/2020/23) on UNG reaccreditation 2022** of 12 July 2022; interviews of the representatives of the UNG Quality Commission and UNG management with the heads of the University Library and the UNG Publishing House; students' views obtained through student surveys and interviews with students.*

The evaluation considers the adequacy of the library's stock and the suitability of study, professional and scientific literature, accessibility of materials, bibliographic information support and access to databases, assistance and advice available in the library, and development of library activities.)

Benefits

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- An open and freely accessible UNG repository is an excellent university practice.
- The library staff is very responsive to users' requests and needs.

Opportunities for improvement:

UNG institutional evaluation findings

- The library's holdings need to be supplemented with the materials in the field of humanities.
- The library is less accessible to students from the schools at other locations.

UNG clarification

The University Library of the University of Nova Gorica acquires materials by having professors, researchers and students propose materials to the library for acquisition. In the last five years, all the proposals for the acquisition of materials have been implemented. The percentage of humanities materials purchased in relation to the total number of materials purchased has varied between 30 and 55 per cent over the last five years.

The Library will continue to work well with the university staff and encourage professors and researchers to make suggestions for the acquisition of literature. This year, we expect to see the library's website updated with subject-specific reading lists, so that we have a better overview of the coverage of relevant material in each subject area.

At the University Library of the University of Nova Gorica, all the material in the physical form has been catalogued. Users who work in locations other than the library can search the catalogue and order materials from the library by e-mail. An in-house courier service will deliver the material to the desired location within the same day, or at the latest the next day. During an epidemic, materials were also sent by post to students' home addresses. The electronic access to the material is provided through login and remote access. In 2021, a reading room was set up at the Vipava site. There are also two computers for searching the material. This problem would be solved definitively by moving all the schools and the library to one location. As this solution is not feasible in the near future, we will continue our efforts to provide literature as efficiently as possible to the students in remote locations, and inform them about the possibilities of ordering literature and remote access.

Realisation of the targets set in the previous academic year (by February 2023)

(The evaluation of the achievement of the targets set in the previous report is prepared by the UNG Quality Commission. It is considered which of the objectives set in the previous self-evaluation report have been achieved, whether they have been achieved in full, which objectives are still in the process of being achieved, which have not been achieved, the reasons for not achieving some of the objectives and the new deadlines for achieving them, if given; and if some objectives are still viewed as relevant.)

- In September 2022, the UNG Quality Commission prepared guidelines for the update of the *UNG Quality Regulations* and guidelines for the renewal of the self-evaluation reports and self-evaluation procedures of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the the University as a whole. The guidelines were included in the UNG Action Plan to address identified non-conformities or major deficiencies, which was submitted by the University to the NAKVIS Council on 22 September 2022.

In December 2022, the UNG Quality Commission drafted a proposal for the revised UNG Quality Rules of Procedure, following the recommendations made by the experts in the UNG Institutional Report during the UNG reaccreditation process, and in the reports of the NAKVIS evaluations of the individual UNG study programmes completed in 2022, including the external sample evaluations of two PhD programmes (*Environmental Sciences, Karst Studies*) in May 2022. The Commission also took into account the decision (No 6031 -5/2020/23) of 12 July 2022 by which the NAKVIS Council extended the University's accreditation..

This document outlines the University's quality assurance strategies, the procedures and mechanisms for monitoring, assessing and assuring quality at the University, and the self-evaluation procedures. It defines the rules, responsibilities, ways of operation, quality monitoring and improvement measures to be followed by the University's responsible bodies and all other stakeholders in quality monitoring and assurance.

On 18 January 2023, the UNG Senate, at its 117th Ordinary Session, considered and adopted the proposal for the revised UNG Quality Rules of Procedure.

- The self-evaluation reports of the Schools, the Academy of Arts and the University as a whole for 2021/2022 are prepared according to a common methodology and have the same (renewed) structure as laid down in the new *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure* ([*Quality assurance manual of UNG*](#)).

On 20 February 2023, a UNG Strategic Consultation was organised to review the mission, vision and strategy for the development of education and research at the University. The Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of all Schools and the Academy, the Heads of the Research Units and representatives of the academic staff from the Education and Research Units, representatives of the UNG Quality Commission and the School Quality Coordinators, as well as representatives of administrative staff and support services participated in the consultation.

The main objectives of the consultation were:

- Analysis of the current state of affairs with an overview of the University's mission, vision and development strategy.
- Analysis of the state of the art in pedagogical approaches and modern teaching methods; integration of the study programmes and research; strategies to increase student enrolment at all University's study programmes; staffing policy and criteria for habilitation for teaching, research and artistic duties of the University academic staff; staffing strengthening of the administrative support services for research and teaching activities; strategy for the new infrastructure and development of the three University campuses, strategy for the promotion of the University and its study programmes and research activities; international and domestic cooperation of the University in the field of teaching and research; the University's cooperation with other Slovenian and foreign universities and research institutions; the integration of the University into the European Association of Universities ACROSS; the infrastructure problems and the search for long-term solutions, in cooperation with the local communities in the region, in the entire area of the three University campuses (the Municipality of Nova Gorica, and the municipalities of Ajdovščina and Vipava).
- Preparation of guidelines for a five-year strategic plan for the development of education and research activities at the University; upgrading the existing strategic document, including the definition of UNG's strategy, long-term goals and short-term action plans to achieve the set goals in all the above-mentioned areas.

Working groups have been appointed to prepare strategy documents and action plans with clearly defined actions, indicators and milestones for each of the areas addressed. Deadlines have been set for the preparation of these documents and guidelines, within the framework of the timelines presented in the Action Plan to address the non-conformities or major deficiencies identified in the decision on UNG accreditation renewal (section 4.3.1).

- UNG has started to set up a system for filing complaints in case of possible discrimination. To this end, the University adopted two documents in 2021, namely the *Gender equality plan - gender equality policy* and the *Gender equality plan - implementation strategy 2021*. The two documents are publicly available at <https://ung.si/en/university/equality/>. In addition, an Equal Opportunities Coordinator has been appointed. Confidential contact persons have been appointed for victims of discrimination or harassment to contact. The primary tasks of the confidential contact persons have been defined. These persons are provided with appropriate training.
- In November 2022, the [*Policy on the definition and implementation of activities against sexual and other harassment and ill-treatment*](#) was adopted. The Policy was drafted by the Equal Opportunities Commission on 8 September 2022, approved by the Governing Board on 22 November 2022 and adopted by the UNG Rector on 30 November 2022.
- *The rules for granting the status of the student with special needs and the update of the Rules for granting the status of the student with special status are in the final stages of preparation for consideration by the UNG bodies. The proposals have been prepared by the UNG Student Office.*
- In order to strengthen and more effectively implement the strategic objectives of integration with the economy and knowledge transfer to the economy and related activities, the UNG Rector has appointed a Vice-Rector for Sustainable Development and Technology. In addition, the University established Councils at all its Schools and the Academy of Arts in 2022; the Councils are the consultative bodies of the Dean, composed of representatives of employers, research institutions, business, non-economic activities, administrative bodies, the public sector, the local environment, graduates of study programmes or other external stakeholders related to the activities of the School or the Academy. The task of the members of the Scientific Council is to assist and advise the Dean and the Directors of the doctoral programmes as external consultants in taking strategic decisions in the development, updating and modification of study programmes; and in improving the cooperation of the Schools or the Academy with the economy, the local and wider social environment.
- In order to have a better communication with the graduates, the UNG Alumni Club prepared a change in the method of monitoring the employment and employability of UNG graduates in 2022; the method foresees the use of similar methods of monitoring the employment and employability of graduates as

implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science in the eLearning. From the total number of graduates covered over the last three years, the proportion of graduates is analysed according to the following categories: those employed in the profession, those in employment, those not in employment and those continuing their studies. The proportion of graduates who refuse to provide information on their employment or who are unavailable for analysis is also provided. In this way, it is possible to better interpret the data on the employability of our graduates.

- In January 2022, the University carried out a comprehensive redesign of its website (in Slovenian and English), with the aim of more effectively informing students and the wider public about its activities. All Schools and the Academy of Arts have appointed the persons responsible for keeping the information on the website up-to-date. At the University level, however, the common services (UNG Public Relations Office, UNG Alumni Club, UNG Student Enrolment Advisor) are responsible for public relations (through various channels, not only through the website).
- In September 2022, the University completed a comprehensive upgrade of its electronic information system, with the aim of providing effective ICT support to students, the Student Office, the Registries of the Schools, the Academy and other support services, as well as to the academic and administrative staff in the delivery of study programmes.
- In 2022, the construction of ICT support for teaching and e-learning activities in all study programmes was completed. Full functionality has been achieved for both the MiTeam and Moodle platforms, which are provided by the University for the implementation and support of e-learning, preparation of e-classrooms for all subjects in all study programmes at the University, the implementation of live teaching activities in classrooms, or the implementation of pedagogical process in combined or hybrid mode, or distance learning. Adequate videoconferencing facilities are provided in all lecture rooms, as well as hardware and software for system support of e-learning. The use of the two platforms is well established both in the teaching process and the organisation of conferences and distance meetings of researchers. MiTeam and Moodle complement each other in terms of functional possibilities, but they can also be used independently. Users are free to use one or the other platform or a combination of both, according to their specific needs in the learning process or in the organisation of e-learning or distance conferences. The parallel use of the two platforms is technically harmonised, as it allows an easy transition or connection between the two platforms. In 2023, the University strengthened its IT department in order to ensure the smooth operation of ICT equipment and provide assistance in the use of ICT tools in the teaching process.

In doing so, the University has followed the guidelines for the introduction of new, modern approaches to learning and teaching in all its study programmes, which also include the use of information and communication technology and multimedia in the educational process, and realised the related strategic goals in the development of pedagogical activities. The University systematically promotes and develops new approaches to teaching and learning, using the most modern technological and pedagogical approaches, with a strong emphasis on the active role of students, project work, integration with research processes, taking into account current social needs and opening up to the international space. The University has been developing e-learning activities to further establish itself as a widely recognised provider of flexible, open, high quality, development-oriented and student-friendly education.

- In May 2022, the Rector of UNG appointed a working group to draft amendments for the *UNG Habilitation Rules*. Based on an analysis of the existing habilitation criteria (Rules on conditions and procedures for the promotion to the titles of research associates, higher education teachers and Associates of UNG) of 2021, the inconsistencies identified and recommendations for improvement, the working group drafted a proposal for amendments to the habilitation rules and procedures, with the aim of eliminating the inconsistencies identified. The revised criteria will adequately implement the NAKVIS minimum criteria, more clearly define the qualitative and quantitative indicators for election to all habilitation titles, and take into account other recommendations of the expert group and the NAKVIS Council.

In February 2023, the draft criteria were submitted for alignment to the individual Schools and the Academy of Arts.

- In September 2022, a unified and systematic procedure for the analysis and planning of the teaching, research, development and administrative workload for each of the University's academic staff member is being established and implemented at the University level. For this purpose, an Annual personal work plan (APWP) for academic staff was introduced. The data for the APWP are collected by the Deans and Heads of research units for all staff members in their units. The APWP data collected on all academic staff employed at the University are centrally collected and analysed by the University management and, on the basis of the resulting analyses, the orientations for the professional development of the academic staff are coordinated, together with the Deans and Heads of research units. In addition, the Rector conducts formal annual career interviews with the non-academic staff employed by the University. Both are intended to establish and ensure a comprehensive and systematic approach to the career development of academic and non-academic staff.

- Starting from the academic year 2022/2023, regular (bi-weekly) interviews between the University's management (Rector) and the heads of the common services (Student Office, Project and International Office, Career Office, Human Resources, Accounting, Legal Service) have been introduced. The interviews are aimed at informing the management of the current issues of each of the services and at resolving identified problems or opportunities for improvement on an ongoing basis. So far, some areas have been identified which, due to the high volume of tasks, require additional staff support. The University has recruited additional staff to assist in the Human Resources department, and has made some reassignments between these common services. The secretaries of the Schools provide the information necessary for a study and project office, but do not perform the duties of such offices.
- On 6 July 2022, at its regular session, the UNG Senate adopted the revised *Rules of studies at the doctoral programmes* of the Graduate School. In November 2022, the UNG Governing Board approved the *Rules of studies at the doctoral programmes of the Graduate School*. The new *Rules of studies at the doctoral programmes* prepared by the Graduate School include, in addition to the existing rules, some missing general rules regulating and protecting the rights of students, following the example of the *Rules of studies for first- and second-level programmes*, which have not been explicitly defined for the Graduate School so far (chapters: 2. Enrolment, 3. Status, 4. Study Regulations from 4.1 to 4.5).
- To strengthen a close, informal connection between students and professors, the University, at the suggestion of the Rector, introduced in February 2023 the so-called **UNG Breakfasts**, which are designed to bring together students of all three levels of study, the management, professors and researchers of the University's teaching and research units, and the administrative and support staff in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. The aim is also to promote networking and exchange of views between the students from different study programmes and the student representatives in the UNG Student Council and various UNG bodies.

Action plans for improvement and development and to address weaknesses

(The Action Plan is prepared by the UNG Quality Commission in cooperation with the management of the University and its teaching and research units. The objectives to be achieved and the necessary measures to be taken to achieve them are set out, with specific and clear indicators and deadlines, and the bodies responsible for implementation are identified, so that the annual implementation of the action plan can be monitored. The implementation of the Action Plan is monitored by the UNG Quality Commission in cooperation with the University's management.)

Action plan to address the non-conformities or major deficiencies identified in the UNG accreditation renewal decision

On 12 July 2022, we received a decision (No.6031 -5/2020/23) by which the Council of Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (NAKVIS) extended the accreditation of the University of Nova Gorica (UNG) for a period of 3 years. In the decision, the NAKVIS Council decided that the University has to remedy the following major deficiencies or non-conformities within two years of the finality of the decision:

- define a mission and vision and adopt a 3-5 year plan for the development of educational activities with clear and measurable objectives;
- align the structure, functioning and method of appointment of members of the bodies with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education (Slovenian ZviS);
- through internal quality assurance processes, to establish a closed quality loop resulting in the correction of identified non-conformities arising from external evaluations;
- formalise habilitation rules and procedures;
- ensure adequate staffing levels and scope of tasks for direct support to students at UNG member institutions;
- set up a complaints system to protect students' rights;
- address identified non-compliances or major deficiencies related to the internal quality assurance system at the level of the study programmes.

The NAKVIS Council requested the University to develop a plan to remedy the identified non-compliances or major deficiencies within two months from the finalisation of the decision (i.e. by 11 October 2022). The plan should contain the measures and related tasks to remedy the non-conformities or serious deficiencies, the institutions responsible for the implementation of the measures and tasks and the precise deadlines for their implementation within a specified timeframe of two years from the finality of the decision.

Below is an action plan to address the non-conformities or major deficiencies identified in the decision to renew UNG's accreditation. In these processes, we will also take into account the recommendations for improvement made by the expert team in the UNG Institutional report, following its first visit to the University between 31 May and 4 June 2021, and in the individual evaluation reports of the six study programmes (Environmental Sciences first and second degree programmes, Engineering and Management first and second degree programmes, Media Arts and Practices second degree programme, Viticulture and Enology first degree programme). The recommendations of the experts made during the external sample evaluation of two doctoral programmes (*Environmental Sciences*, *Karst Studies*), following their visit to the University on 3 to 4 May 2022 and 21 to 23 May 2022, will also be taken into consideration.

The action plan to address the non-conformities or major deficiencies identified in the decision to renew UNG's accreditation, presented below, was sent by UNG to NAKVIS on 22 September 2022.

1. Define a mission and vision and adopt a 3-5 year plan for the development of educational activities with clear and measurable objectives.

In the period up to 2025, the University will have focused additional attention and efforts on achieving the highest quality also in the field of higher education, while maintaining the highest quality in the field of scientific research and artistic work. To this end, a detailed analysis of the situation will be prepared and, based on the findings, a five-year development plan, aligned with the UNG mission and vision, will be prepared and updated. Particular attention will be paid to the strategy for the development of educational activities at the University, which are closely intertwined with the University's development of research activities. Clear and measurable objectives will be set. All UNG stakeholders will be involved in the process.

A timetable for revising UNG mission and vision and preparing a five-year plan for the development of educational activities:

- **By December 2022**, we will have organised a consultation at UNG to review the *mission, vision and strategy for the development of the education sector*. The main objective of the consultation will be to prepare guidelines for a five-year plan for the development of educational activities at the University. The Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of all Schools and the Academy, and the Heads of the University's Research Units will participate in the consultation.
- Coordination and collection of proposals will take place within the UNG teaching and research units **until March 2023**. The process will involve all stakeholders (teachers, researchers, students, external stakeholders - members of the Schools' Councils, Student, Legal, Project and International offices, the Career Centre and Alumni Club, and other UNG support services).

- **By June 2023**, a coordinated five-year plan for the development of UNG's educational activities will have been in place, with a clearly defined UNG vision and mission.
- **In July 2023**, the UNG Education Development Proposal will be considered and adopted by the UNG Senate.
- **By September 2023**, the proposal for the development of UNG's educational activities will have been considered and adopted by the UNG Governing Board.

2. Align the structure, functioning and appointment of members of the bodies with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education.

The UNG management, in cooperation with the relevant professional services and bodies, will prepare a proposal for amendments to the Statutes, with the aim of eliminating the identified inconsistencies relating to the structure, functioning and method of appointment of members of UNG bodies. This will take into account both the proposals for the elimination of inconsistencies in the Decision, the Law on Higher Education and the University's organisational structure..

A timetable for bringing the structure, functioning and appointment of the members of the bodies into line with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education:

- The proposed amendments to the UNG Statutes will have been considered and adopted by the UNG Senate **by February 2023**.
- The proposed amendments to the UNG Statutes will have been considered and adopted by the UNG Governing Board **by November 2023**.

3. Formalise habilitation rules and procedures.

In May 2022, the UNG Rector appointed a working group to prepare a proposal for amendments to the *UNG Habilitation Rules*. Based on an analysis of the existing habilitation criteria (*Rules on Conditions and Procedures for the Promotion to the Titles of Research Associates, Higher Education Teachers and Associates of UNG*) of 2021, the inconsistencies identified and recommendations for improvement, the working group will prepare a proposal for amendments to the habilitation rules and procedures, with the aim of eliminating the inconsistencies identified. The revised criteria will adequately implement the NAKVIS minimum criteria, more clearly define the qualitative and quantitative indicators for election to all habilitation titles, and take into account other recommendations of the expert group and the NAKVIS Council.

Guidance will be provided to ensure the adequacy of the expert reports provided by the members of the international selection committee (normally one member from UNG, one member from another Slovenian university and one member from a reputable foreign university), how to structure the content of the expert opinions so that they clearly present both the fulfilment of the NAKVIS minimum criteria and the UNG additional criteria,

and clearly justify the professional judgement of each member of the committee on the suitability of the candidate for the proposed habilitation title.

To ensure that all habilitation procedures are carried out within a reasonable time, we will analyse election procedures that take longer than the prescribed time limit. In 2023, we will update our business information system, which will also allow us to monitor the individual steps in the habilitation procedures via a link to the human resources database. We believe that the introduction of such a system, with automatic reminders of deadlines, will make a significant contribution to ensuring that the habilitation procedures are carried out within the expected timeframe. As a rule, habilitation procedures should not take more than six months.

A timetable for the resolution of discrepancies related to habilitation rules and procedures:

- **By December 2022**, a working group will have prepared a proposal for changes to the habilitation rules and procedures. The proposal will be submitted to the Rector's meeting sessions for coordination, which will include, in addition to the Rector and the two Vice-Rectors, the Deans of all Schools and the Academy of Arts, the Heads of the UNG Research Units, and the UNG Office of Legal, Human Resources and General Affairs.
- The UNG Senate will consider and adopt the aligned proposal for amendments to the habilitation rules in **March 2023**.
- **In May 2023**, the UNG Governing Board will consider and adopt the aligned proposal for amendments to the habilitation rules.

4. *Establish a complaints system that protects students' rights*

We have started to put in place a system to ensure equality and prevent discrimination. To this end, the University has adopted two documents, namely the *Gender equality plan - gender equality policy* and the *Gender equality plan - implementation strategy 2021*. The two documents are publicly available at <https://www.ung.si/sl/o-univerzi/enake-moznosti/>. In addition, an Equal Opportunities Coordinator was appointed in November 2021 and an Equal Opportunities Commission was appointed in May 2022.

The implementation strategy foresees the adoption of internal documents to address unlawful discrimination, harassment or victimisation. A draft policy on the definition and implementation of activities against sexual and other harassment and ill-treatment at UNG is currently being drafted and will also apply to UNG students. According to the document, the University will, among other things, designate confidential persons to whom victims of harassment can turn.

The rules for granting special needs and special student status are also under preparation. The student representatives in all bodies are elected or appointed by the students themselves, as organised by the Student Council. This is evident in Article 32 (par 6) of the Statutes (.... "one student representative appointed by the Student Council from among the students of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes") and Article 46 (par

4) of the Statutes (... "and student representatives appointed by the UNG Student Council"). However, in order to make this system of election/appointment of student representatives more transparent, the Student Council will adopt its rules of procedure.

A timetable to set up a complaints system to protect students' rights:

- **By October 2022**, the Equal Opportunities Commission, together with the Equal Opportunities Coordinator, will have prepared a policy proposal on the definition and implementation of activities against sexual and other harassment and ill-treatment, including all activities to prevent harassment of female and male students.
- **By March 2023**, the UNG Senate will have considered and adopted the aligned draft rules.
- **By May 2023**, the UNG Board will have considered and adopted the aligned draft rules.
- **By March 2023**, the UNG Student Council, with the assistance of the University, will have drawn up its rules of procedure.
- **By May 2023**, an aligned proposal of the rules will have been discussed and adopted by the UNG Student Council.
- **By September 2023**, the UNG Student Council will have drafted an act on the organisation of extra-curricular activities.
- **By October 2023**, the UNG Student Council will have considered and adopted the act on the organisation of extra-curricular activities.

5. *Ensure adequate staffing levels and scope of tasks to directly support students at member universities.*

The UNG management will regularly review the responsibilities and workload of all support staff on an annual basis. We will re-evaluate the amount of work through the measures mentioned below. Since the academic year 2021/2022, we have started regular (bi-weekly) interviews of the UNG management (Rector) with the heads of the professional services (Student Office, Project and International Project, Career Office, Human Resources, Accounting, Legal Service). At these meetings, the current problems of each of the departments are discussed and resolved on an ongoing basis. Also at these meetings, we have already identified some areas which, due to the high volume of tasks, need additional staff support. This year, one person has been recruited in the HR department to provide additional support.

A timetable to address the disparities in staffing levels and the scope of direct student support tasks in the University's institutions:

- **By December 2022**, the UNG management will have prepared a new distribution plan for the administrative staff of the Schools and the Academy of Arts, taking into account their recommendations. In addition, we will conduct an anonymous survey of all colleagues, primarily addressing their job satisfaction and suggestions for improvement. At the same time, we will conduct an inquiry into the need for additional or improved support for research and teaching work, and an inquiry into the potential overload of support.
- **In January 2023**, reassignments will be made to relieve staff members in the services where overload is identified.
- A training plan for non-teaching staff will have been in place **by March 2023**.
- **By July 2023**, a new business information system will have been in place at UNG, which will simplify some administrative procedures, relieving administrative and professional staff of some tasks, and allowing a more detailed monitoring of the workload of individual staff members.

6. Establishing a closed quality loop, which will result in the correction of identified non-conformities resulting from external evaluations through internal quality assurance processes and the correction of identified non-conformities or major deficiencies related to the internal quality assurance system at the level of the study programmes.

In order to address the above-mentioned shortcomings and inconsistencies related to the *internal quality assurance processes* and the procedures and implementation of the self-evaluation of study programmes and the structure and content of self-evaluation reports, the UNG Quality Commission, in line with its authority, at its 52nd meeting on 7 June 2022, proposed guidelines for amendments and changes to the procedures for improving the internal system for monitoring and ensuring the quality of the programmes and the programmatic and institutional self-evaluation at the University, with the aim of ensuring the closing of the loop of quality in all areas of the University's activities. In preparing the renewal, the Commission will follow the recommendations made by the experts in the University's institutional report and in the evaluation reports of the individual study programmes. At this point, we would like to point out some of the guidelines adopted so far by the UNG Quality Commission.

Guidelines for the redesign of self-evaluation reports and self-evaluation procedures:

The study programme self-evaluation reports will be prepared separately for each study programme and will be integrated into the institutional self-evaluation report of the

School or the Academy implementing the programme. The key findings and action plans of the self-evaluations of all the study programmes of the respective School or the Academy will be summarised in the joint self-evaluation report of the School or the Academy as a whole. The key findings and action plans of the Schools and the Academy will be summarised in the self-evaluation report of the University as a whole.

All self-evaluation reports will consist of two parts. The first, more comprehensive part will contain all the necessary data relevant for the self-evaluation analysis of the School or the Academy study programmes and for the institutional self-evaluation of the School and the Academy. The second, shorter and more concise, substantive key part of the self-evaluation report will first present the situation analysis and then the action plan drawn up on the basis of the findings of the situation analysis. In this way, we will ensure that the self-evaluation reports are effective tools both for institutional development or improvement and for ensuring the development of all study programmes.

The self-evaluation of the respective study programme will provide an analysis of the situation and findings for the previous academic year, based on the relevant data collected for all areas of assessment, in a concise and transparent manner. Based on the analysis of the situation, an action plan for the next academic year (or longer period) will be presented, containing the objectives and the necessary measures for their realisation, with concrete and clear indicators and deadlines against which their annual achievement can be measured. The implementation of the objectives set in the previous academic year will be evaluated annually as part of the analysis of the situation for the current academic year, which will ensure that developments and progress in the implementation of the objectives set in previous academic years are tracked.

These reports will therefore clearly show all the steps involved in implementing improvements and correcting weaknesses, from the identification of deficiencies, through the proposal for improvements with a corresponding timetable and the responsible authority in charge of implementation, to the final implementation report. The reports will therefore be an effective tool in the quality assurance cycle (analysis-action plan-implementation-action-verification cycle).

In developing action plans, it is important to ensure that short-term objectives are aligned with the mission and vision, the long-term strategic objectives of the University and the specific long-term strategic orientations of the Schools and the Academy.

All stakeholders directly related to the study programme or to the functioning of the Schools, the Academy or the University as a whole (students, professors, non-teaching staff and professional services of the Schools, the Academy and the University, programme leaders and programme scientific councils, Schools or Academy quality coordinators, the UNG Quality Commission, Deans of the Schools and the Academy, UNG management and external stakeholders) will be directly involved in the preparation of the annual programme and institutional self-evaluation reports.

All stakeholders, as well as the general public, will be informed of the key results of the self-evaluation, i.e. the situation analysis and the action plans, which will be prepared in a short and concise form, following the above-mentioned guidelines, in order to ensure efficient, rapid, clear and transparent information. The results of the student surveys will also be communicated to all teachers to assess the performance of their courses through the University's renewed IT system. All stakeholders will be informed through several

parallel channels, both directly and through the websites of the study programmes, the Schools and the Academy, on which the annual reports will be published.

Particular attention will be paid to optimising the feedback and suggestions from students in the self-evaluation processes. In order to increase the proportion of students who give their views and evaluations through student surveys and raise the students' awareness of the importance of their participation in the quality assurance processes and the improvement of the study programmes, the Schools and the Academy, at the level of individual study programmes, will organise once a year (prior to the start of the student surveys) information activities for students on the findings of the student surveys from the previous years and on the measures taken by the Schools and the Academy on the basis of the student comments and recommendations for improvement.

Taking into account that the number of students in most study programmes is small, in addition to regular student surveys, feedback from students will also be sought through direct conversations with the students by the management representatives of the Schools, the Academy or study programmes. Direct conversations with all students in a study programme will be organised at least once a year. The findings and suggestions of the students obtained during such conversations will also be formally written down in the records of the meetings and used in the self-evaluation report in the situation analysis, in combination with the results obtained from the anonymous student surveys.

To improve cooperation with external stakeholders, the Schools' Councils were established in May 2022 at all UNG Schools and the Academy, to which external advisors are appointed (representatives of employers, research institutions, business, non-economic activities, the public sector, the local environment, graduates of the study programmes or other external stakeholders in the study programmes), whose task is to advise and assist the management of the Schools, the Academy and the study programmes in taking strategic decisions in the development of the Schools or the Academy, and updating and modifying the existing study programmes and planning the new ones. The meetings with the members of the Schools' Councils will be organised at least once a year by the management of the Schools, the Academy or the study programmes. The findings and suggestions of the members of the Schools' Councils will also be formally written down in the records of the meetings and used in the self-evaluation process for analysing the situation and formulating action plans.

The UNG Quality Commission will, in line with its authority, monitor the implementation of the Annual Action Plans and, where appropriate, make recommendations to the management of the Schools, the Academy and the University, with a view to ensuring that the quality loop is closed in all areas of the University's activities.

A timetable for implementing changes and correcting non-conformities related to internal quality assurance processes:

- **By January 2023**, the UNG Quality Commission will have prepared a proposal for amendments and updates to the UNG Quality Rules of Procedure and will have submitted a proposal to the UNG Senate for considering and adopting the revised *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure*. This document outlines the University's

quality assurance strategies, the procedures and mechanisms for monitoring, identifying and ensuring quality at the University, and the self-evaluation procedures. It defines the rules, responsibilities, ways of operation, quality monitoring and improvement measures to be followed by the University's responsible bodies and all other stakeholders in quality monitoring and assurance.

At the same time, the Commission will prepare a detailed proposal for a revised structure and content of the UNG annual self-evaluation report and the annual self-evaluation reports of the UNG Schools, Academy and all their study programmes, with a view to ensuring a more transparent and effective quality loop. The study programmes and institutional reports will be prepared according to a common methodology with a common structure, as will be defined in the revised *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure*.

- **In January 2023**, the UNG Senate will consider and adopt a proposal for the revised UNG Quality Rules of Procedure ([Quality assurance manual of UNG](#)).
- **By the end of April 2023**, the study programme self-evaluations and institutional self-evaluations of the Schools, the Academy and the University as a whole will have been carried out for the academic year 2021/2022, according to the revised procedures set out in the revised *UNG Quality Rules of Procedure*.
- **In May 2023**, the Senates of the Schools and Academy will consider and adopt the their self-evaluation reports. The UNG Senate will consider and adopt the self-evaluation report of the University and the Graduate School.