KANSALLINEN KOULUTUKSEN ARVIOINTIKESKUS
NATIONELLA CENTRET FÖR UTBILDNINGSUTVÄRDERING
FINNISH EDUCATION EVALUATION CENTRE

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

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1.2 The implementation of education

- Högskolans självvärdering

Procedures to ensure transparency in student selection

Admission and entry requirements and selection criteria for candidates in the case of limited enrolment are a compulsory component of every study programme. Enrolment conditions and selection criteria are defined by the ZViS, so universities have relatively little autonomy. Conditions and criteria are published in study programme information brochures and annual calls for enrolment, while information is also provided on various other occasions (open days, information days, individual consultations for candidates, etc.).

Secondary school students have access to an analysis of enrolment from previous academic years, where they can check which programmes had limited places in previous years and how many points successful candidates had. The points system is made public, and candidates can make their own calculations based on grades obtained and the possibility of enrolment in programmes with limited places.

Recognition of prior learning

Candidates' prior learning is recognised in the context of the application and admission process. Recognition of prior learning abroad is carried out pursuant to The Act on Evaluation and Recognition of Education.

Following enrolment in a programme, prior learning is evaluated on the basis of a request from the student and recognised on the basis of proof of the type and scope of knowledge obtained. In

some cases, prior learning can be recognised as an already completed unit of the study programme in which the student is enrolled.

Teaching methods that support target-oriented learning, encourage students to take an active role in the learning process and give feedback on their learning

Learning methods and assessment are defined by each course syllabus and adapted to the expected general and subject-specific competences. As well as lectures, teachers use guided discussions and encourage independent work by students, group work, practical work and the inclusion of students' experiences in the study process. Other methods of work include laboratory experiments, learning through research, problem-based learning and project work. To a lesser extent, some teachers also use flipped learning.

In recent years teachers have been rapidly introducing new learning methods and digital technologies to their teaching, in part as a reflection of intensive training in the use of modern methods and approaches to teaching (INOVUP project, e.g. Encouraging active and self-regulated learning – more in 3.2; Digital UL Centre, e.g. The use of ICT in the learning and teaching process). Numerous examples of UL Members encouraging the active involvement of students and use of ICT are given on the website. Through projects under the umbrella of the EUTOPIA Alliance, we play a part in creating learning communities that offer a wide range of forms of learning (e.g. negotiation simulations, student-led research projects) (for more, see Chapter 5).

Knowledge is assessed on an ongoing basis or at the end, with the help of written or oral examinations, individual assignments, and complemented by feedback on knowledge with the help of various forms of student participation (e.g. discussions, tutorials, teamwork, presentations of products, individual consultations, peer learning activities).

Connection to working life in the implementation of education

The integration of theory and practice is facilitated by:

- various forms of learning and teaching (e.g. problem-based learning, project assignments);
- practical training integrated into courses or in the form of individual courses (for more, see 1.1);
- participation in research projects, artistic projects and professional projects and extracurricular studies (e.g. student innovation projects for social benefit – for more, see 2.1, promotion of international individual research projects and other examples such as moot courts with simulations of trials (Faculty of Law), idea accelerators (Garaža at the Faculty of Computer and Information Science), concerts (Academy of Music) and many more);
- visits to employers, presentations of employers and alumni career paths (for more, see Chapter 2.3);

- doctoral students carry out research at UL Members and participating research institutes and clinics. The majority are involved in programmes and projects of the Slovenian Research and Inovation Agency (ARIS), EU research projects and research projects taking place in conjunction with industry.

Flexible study paths and mobility

The flexibility of study paths is made possible in the following ways:

- At least 10% elective courses within a study programme, of which at least 5% are from outside the study programme (in bachelor's and master's programmes), which can also include an extracurricular studies (for more, see 1.4).
- Mobility.
- Recognition of knowledge obtained in other environments and other forms. Extension of student status for justifiable reasons in special cases.
- Adaptations for students with special needs and statuses (with regard to their learning disabilities; special exam sessions for athletes; adaptations for students with mobility impairments; extra time for examinations; etc.).

Student exchanges between universities in Slovenia are regulated by two documents: the agreement and the procedure (in Slovene). Information days and other activities are organised at UL Members in order to promote international mobility. Recognition of courses completed abroad takes place on the basis of submitted proofs and a previously signed study agreement.

Student support at different stages of their studies, promotion of the well-being of students and equal treatment

All UL Members offer a wide range of assistance and advisory services. Student affairs offices at UL Members provide general assistance and advice to students. Other free services provided include:

- Student Ombudsman's Office and custodianship over the rights of students (promotion of principles of equality and inclusion, protection of dignity, respect for and tutelage of students' rights).
- Contact persons at all UL Members for students with special needs and special statuses offer useful information and support (funds to co-finance the purchase of equipment and devices; assistance with participation in international exchanges).
- Srčna UL campaign (financial support for students experiencing financial hardship).
- Tutelage (support with integration into studying and student life).
- UL Careers Centres and extracurricular studies (activities to develop competences not directly included in the study process).
- Careers advice for students.
- Psychosocial Counselling Service for students and staff.
- Study corners and introduction of learning ergonomics to the study process via

development measures.

Completing study programmes

Conditions for the completion of studies are a mandatory component of a study programme required by the ZViS, which also sets out the manner of completion of studies for each individual cycle, where a final written thesis is envisaged for master and doctoral programmes but is not compulsory for bachelor programmes. The method of completion is evaluated with ECTS credits. In programmes where a final thesis is envisaged as the completion of studies, this is regulated at UL Members by rules defining the format and length of the work, while its content is linked to advertised topics or topics selected by the student.

Strengths	Enhancement areas
Various forms and opportunities for student and staff mobility, especially at the international level.	Improve procedures for recognition of prior learning, especially informal and non-formal learning. The issue here is mainly related to certificates, which are not always adequate.
Transparency in the student selection and the completing study programmes.	Ensure flexible admission requirements in legislation or authorisation to higher education institutions to decide on admission requirements and the selection of candidates, regardless of the number of available places.
Establishment of a student ombudsman office; adoption of the Gender Equality Plan (NES) to ensure the implementation of equal opportunity and inclusion principles.	Develop procedures to promote flexible study paths at the national and international levels, and an information system to facilitate the choice of electives and greater interdisciplinarity.
A well-organised tutelage system. The Psychosocial Counselling Service for students and staff provides mental health support, which proved particularly necessary during the COVID pandemic.	Raise awareness of equality and inclusion among UL Members; encourage female students' participation in STEAM.
Successful integration of various different areas of activity and dissemination of results in the educational process.	Introduce new didactic approaches and knowledge facilitators. Strive for pedagogical excellence; develop new teaching and learning methods; promote student-centred learning and teaching.

1.2 The implementation of education

- Auditeringsgruppens bedömning

Transparent but inflexible admission system

The University of Ljubljana (UL) does not hold much influence over the admission of students to its various programmes on the undergraduate level. The process is transparent, based on the grades of prospective students with regulations set by the government. In its self-assessment, the UL indicated, the desire to work towards greater autonomy in student admissions. Enhanced autonomy in admissions and the right to decide on the selection process would enhance several other study-related processes at the university. In the long run, this could result in improved outcomes in terms of dropout rates and intended study durations (see discussion below).

There are university level procedure and criteria on the recognition of the knowledge and skills obtained through informal learning. According to the self-assessment, previously acquired competences are recognised in the context of the application and admission process and can be validated at the respective faculty. Recognition of studies abroad is granted in accordance with legislation. Based on the audit visit, there is room to improve procedures for the recognition of prior learning at the university.

Student-centred learning is promoted

The UL promotes active student engagement within the learning process. This approach advocates for active learning methods, such as group discussions, problem-based learning, flipped learning, and hands-on projects. Additionally, the UL encourages students to set their intended learning outcomes and develop individual study plans that encompass extra-curricular activities. Students can request exam reviews during teachers' open hours to receive feedback on their learning progress. The audit team recommends that students would also get feedback on assignments and exams digitally, allowing students to track their progress and make necessary improvements. Learning analytics could also be used more.

Teaching staff participating in the workshop talked about challenges with the new generation of students, the need to use various techniques to keep them motivated and to activate them. Students' great expectations for the teaching are not always coupled with the students' own input, stressing the need for student-centred approaches and emphasising also the students' own responsibility for their learning. In terms of teaching and learning, students participating in the audit workshop described only a few methods such as lectures, practical training, and group work. This could imply that either the teaching and learning methods are limited, or the students' awareness of the methods and their impact on their own learning could be improved. The audit team recommends that teachers enhance the students' awareness of teaching and learning methods, explain why they have chosen particular methods, and how they are supposed to facilitate student learning.

The connection to the labour market is a core element of the UL's educational approach. This is

realised through internships with industry partners, guest lectures, and industry experts. Flexible study paths and mobility are actively promoted through international networks and activities such as the EUTOPIA network.

Procedures need to be improved for study completion

In several study programmes, the drop-out rate is over 50%. In some programmes, there are no graduates within the expected timeframe. The Slovenian student population is varied with a large proportion of the age group going to university. Based on the audit interviews, there are financial advantages for young people to have a university student status. It was mentioned that many young people seek the status without having the motivation to complete their studies, or that they do not want to graduate because they would need to give up the benefits. Some students take all the exams and courses for a degree, but then do not complete their master's thesis. Many students are already working at the end of their studies. The covid-19 period and mental health issues further lengthened the graduation times.

It was mentioned during the audit visit that teachers talked with students to get them to understand why completing their studies was important but considered that they did not have the means to make them graduate. Scheduling and requiring a certain level of attendance for passing a course were described in workshops as some efforts made to improve student attendance. There are still numerous internal improvements that could be made at the university. The audit team recommends that university-wide actions are taken to tackle dropouts and study times and ineffectiveness in the system.

Student wellbeing is supported through the tutoring system

The UL has an efficient system for supporting students' wellbeing, with each student having access to a tutor. Tutors are either advanced students or teachers who can provide academic guidance on matters related to courses and programmes. The tutoring system also serves international students and students with special needs. During the audit visit, the system was praised as highly valuable by students and academic staff members. Tutors report to the faculties' administration.

Student wellbeing is also considered by other actors. There are a student council and several different student organisations at the university, which receive funding directly from the state. According to the audit visit and self-assessment report, there are lots of programmes for student wellbeing at the university level, such as Tutelage support, the Srčna UL campaign, psychological counselling services, and "How are you feeling?" meetings. Students also have a mentor whose task is to encourage them to graduate. In doctoral studies, supervisors are mainly responsible for the welfare of doctoral students.

The equal treatment of students is a principle at the UL. There are regulations in place against non-discriminatory actions and these allow accommodations on diverse needs. Student ombudsmen are available to address any study-related issues, rights of students and equality,

inclusion, and dignity. They also give counselling to students and publish booklets for students. There is a gender equality plan to ensure the implementation of equal opportunities and inclusion principles. A special rector's fund for extracurricular activities, student conferences and sports are also offered. The UL has also declared itself to be a LGBTQ+ friendly university.

The university could further develop teachers' pedagogical training

Teaching methods and approaches are annually reviewed as part of the university's quality management procedures. Based on the audit visit, the university is committed to staying at the forefront of new pedagogical approaches. Several projects such as the INOVUP project have enabled interested academic staff to enhance the teachers' pedagogical skills, such as student-centred teaching and learning methods. The Centre for Pedagogical Training and the Digital UL Centre have been established to assist educators with digital techniques in teaching (see also Chapter 2.3).

According to the audit visit, a lot of pedagogical courses have been offered at the university level. An overarching programme for academic staff pedagogical training is still missing and there is no established model for the development of teachers' pedagogical competence. The university could benefit from creating a basic curriculum of pedagogical courses for all teachers and encouraging teachers to participate in pedagogical training in different ways. Several faculties appear to have incentive structures where promotions may depend on completing a set of courses. It is vital to include full professors in such initiatives to prevent older academic staff from being left out of these novel endeavours. Another area where a centralised approach to pedagogical training could be beneficial is in the context of supervising doctoral students. A university-wide review and provision of additional training would enhance supervisors' skills in effectively guiding and mentoring their students.

According to the audit visit, some of the course materials are outdated and no longer meet current requirements. It was mentioned that some lecturers do not update their knowledge enough. Each faculty also has a Moodle platform, but not all teachers are willing or able to use it. In the scenario where the intention is to become one of Europe's leading universities, the university should reinforce the teachers' incentive structure. This would help teachers to understand the importance of participating in continuing training and staying up to date with the newest global developments but also the university's own ambitions. Academic staff wished for more support and instructions and help from the UL to meet challenges concerning AI.