

# AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

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## 2.1 Managing societal engagement and impact

### - HEI's self-assessment

UL devotes particular attention to keeping the general public informed about its activities and is developing innovative approaches to communicate the mission of a public university. It seeks synergies among the various offices of the Rectorate (responsible for knowledge transfer, students and alumni, research) and addresses various target groups in conjunction with UL Members:

- the domestic and international academic public and professional public (e.g. presentation of achievements, successful projects (ERC) and breakthrough innovations);
- industry (via the alumni network, the Chamber of Commerce, the Knowledge Transfer Office, etc.) (e.g. presentation of results, knowledge transfer etc.) and the local environment;
- politicians, the government, ministries, the national research agency, other decision-makers (e.g. in the form of public events, provision of information and participation in various working bodies of ministries) (purpose: understanding of and support for research, support for expert decision-making);
- young people (e.g. via departments at secondary schools and career guidance) (purpose: stimulating interest in science and art as well as vocational guidance);
- the general public (e.g. via public events, round-table discussions, publications in the daily press and electronic media) (purpose: understanding of and support for science and art, prevention of non-scientific concepts).

Information is also provided daily via the [website](#) and social networks ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and

[LinkedIn](#)), while online events are posted on [YouTube](#).

## Repository of the University of Ljubljana

UL develops its study and research programmes and determines the method of their provision in accordance with the principles of open science (more in 2.2). The [Statutes](#) also provide that written final work of studies must be published in electronic form and be publicly available via the [Repository of the UL](#) after the completion of studies. Peer-reviewed publications by teachers and researchers are also publicly accessible in the Repository, along with research data.

## Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 17)

UL is currently preparing a sustainable development strategy since we aim to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals and to raise awareness on sustainability issues. As part of this strategy, we will focus on three pillars of social participation by including content linked to sustainability goals in the educational process, orienting research in the direction of sustainability and placing a particular emphasis on the functioning of UL. At the same time, we wish to influence society through our actions and activities by adequately promoting these activities and highlighting UL's role as an important institution for the raising of awareness about the importance of sustainability.

## Impact of changes in the operating environment on the focus of activities

All changes in the operating environment are initially analysed by the competent offices of the Rectorate and then discussed by the College of the Rector, colleges of deans, vice-deans or secretaries, or the competent working bodies and decision-making bodies (UL Senate and/or UL Governing Board). The analyses differ depending on the type of event, e.g. proposals for changes in legislation are analysed with an assessment of the effects of changes on functioning, funding, capacities, etc., after which a response/opinion is drafted. The introduction of new technologies is studied through the competent committees of the UL Senate and potential trial deployment at selected member institutions or the Rectorate; changes and trends in the field of sustainable operation are added to current renovation and operation plans; etc.

## Promoting social impact in educational activities

UL addresses the needs of society, industry and the public sector using a variety of approaches (more in 2.2.) and uses the results of these activities to help define its future direction. UL members are constantly encouraged to renew and update curricula so that it is adapted to changes in society. UL is also reinforcing extracurricular activities which enable students to gain ECTS. In this way, we encourage the active participation of students in various fields (for more, see 1.4).

Through two programmes entitled Student Innovation Projects for Social Benefit and Creative

Path to Knowledge, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation and the European Social Fund have co-funded the implementation of projects through which students have been given an additional opportunity to gain practical experience while studying. Under the guidance of mentors, they have sought innovative solutions to the challenges of the industrial and non-industrial sectors in local and regional environments. UL has recognised the importance of such interdisciplinary student projects and also supports their implementation under the Development Pillar of Financing (RSF) 2021–2024.

In 2021, alongside student projects whose implementation is co-funded by the ministry under the ESS (European social fund), UL began implementing interdisciplinary Student projects for sustainable development, with the aim of promoting UL's participation and connection with the environment in the field of sustainable development and contributing to the achievement of SDGs, while at the same time giving students the opportunity to gain new knowledge, competences and practical experience during the course of their studies that will enable them to act in accordance with these goals. As part of the Recovery and Resilience plan, a renewal of higher education study programmes that will incorporate content from the field of sustainability is being prepared, as is a complete system of micro-credentials that will be offered by UL (more in 1.1). The system of micro-credentials will take its place alongside the existing three cycles leading to educational qualifications as a fourth pillar of education and will represent lifelong learning (LLL) at UL. More than 20 pilot projects for micro-credential programmes are currently in preparation.

Another current example is cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia, on the basis of which military modules have been designed for bachelor's study programmes. Slovenia does not have its own system of military education and training, so as part of an interdepartmental agreement a variety of educational content has been prepared for future members of Slovenia's Armed Forces with a range of qualification profiles.

Among the activities promoting social participation and influence is a project called [Modra fakulteta](#), which offers a variety of educational programmes and intergenerational activities to those over-60 and, with their help, researches age and ageing. In this way UL caters for the inclusion of older people in the social environment.

### **Strengths**

Strengthening the role of experts and scientific arguments in society, disseminating science-based knowledge; giving public responses to issues of societal relevance.

### **Enhancement areas**

Upgrade of the UL's communication through various communication tools: redesigning the UL website.

Proactive, strategic, and creative planning and implementation of the UL's communications activities (press conferences, publications, events, guided tours, etc.)

Establishing and improving structures and work processes and coordinating PR activities within the Rectorate and UL Members.

Strengthening the UL network with external stakeholders (NGOs, European and international partners)

Integrated, consistent, relevant, and effective communication from the UL, UL Members and staff to the community: develop an editorial policy for UL website and social media, redesign the UL's overall graphic identity.

Scientific and expertise-based activities in science communication.

Systematic and comprehensive follow-up of UL's contribution to the SDGs and development of a strategy in this area.