

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

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2.2 Research, development and innovation activities as well as artistic activities with impact

- Högskolans självvärdering

As part of its strategy, UL has undertaken to offer support to researchers in the sciences and the arts in communicating the results of their work. UL promotes cooperation between academia, industry, decision-makers, and the non-governmental sector, which is reflected in a range of national, European and other projects.

Open Science

UL supports open science by incorporating open science principles in UL policy documents and by ensuring conditions that allow research to take place in accordance with open science principles. UL keeps researchers and other open science stakeholders regularly informed via news published on the [UL Open Science](#) website. For detailed information about open science at the UL, [see file](#).

UL Press

Academic publishing at UL members via the UL Press is rich and diverse (more in 2.4). We currently publish [51 open-access scholarly journals](#) covering all research fields. Authors are not subject to an article processing charge for publishing articles. In total UL publishes around 280 publications a year (monographs, textbooks, manuals, conference proceedings, etc.), which

places the UL Press among the three biggest publishing companies in Slovenia in terms of number of publications. More than half of the monographs published by the UL Press are open access, while all other books are available in the [online bookshop](#).

Research and development

With the [UL Researchers' Career Development Strategy 2012-2016](#) (in Slovene) and the adoption of an Implementation Action Plan, UL committed itself to establishing a centralised university-wide system for informing the academic and general public on an ongoing basis about research topics and research achievements. This commitment is realised via the [Research News](#) website (for more, see 2.4).

In 2022, UL participated in 186 long-term research programmes, 331 national research projects and 661 European and other international research and development projects, in the context of which new knowledge is disseminated within the global research community and communicated to various target groups and the general public. UL is the most successful institution in Slovenia when it comes to obtaining [European Research Council \(ERC\)](#) projects. Of the 22 approved ERC projects, UL is implementing 10 and cooperating in a further five. UL is also the member of The [Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities](#) with the largest number of projects in Horizon Europe Cluster 5. Many of UL's European research projects also include citizen science (e.g. [SPRINT - Sustainable Plant Production Transition](#) and [WeCount - Citizens Observing Urban Transport](#)).

The university as a whole implements numerous science communication activities to promote the social impact of research activities. UL was one of the organisers of the [first international conference on science communication](#) (in Slovene). Each year UL selects the 10 most outstanding research achievements and we also take part in [European Researchers' Night](#) (in Slovene) events. In conjunction with AGRFT, we produce a television programme called (*Spre*)govori znanost featuring conversations with UL researchers on some of the most urgent issues facing society. UL researchers also appear regularly on *Ugriznimo znanost*, a science programme broadcast by a national television station, with presentations and interviews. UL Members also carry out a range of activities to promote science and their research work.

The [UL Development Fund](#) (in Slovene) provides funding to help researchers improve the quality of their research and prepare excellent applications for project funding under the European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

Ethics and integrity in research

UL adopts a range of approaches to ensure ethics and integrity in research. The [UL Researchers' Code of Ethics](#) lays the foundations of ethical behaviour for teaching staff, researchers and

students. By signing a declaration, each individual accepts responsibility to identify ethical issues and obtain guidance or approval from the UL Member Ethics Committee. In the case of interdisciplinary research, researchers can apply for an assessment of the ethical suitability of planned research involving human subjects to the UL Human Research Ethics Committee.

There is also a regular UL framework programme of regular briefings of researchers on values and ethical principles, which is implemented at the level of UL members and through which researchers are also briefed on the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).

Reports of possible breaches of research integrity can be submitted by staff, students, and others to the UL Ethics Committee, which considers reports and oversees procedures to address breaches of research integrity.

Knowledge transfer

The [UL Knowledge Transfer Office](#) acts as a key intermediary link between academia and the industry, offering students and researchers services such as identifying potential innovations, legal advice, advice on IP protection strategies, liaison with industry partners and providing training. All relevant knowledge transfer processes relating to the transfer of university knowledge into the broader social context that are carried out at UL are presented in the [Knowledge Transfer Guide](#). Intellectual property management procedures at UL are regulated by the [Rules on the management of industrial property rights at the University of Ljubljana](#).

With the [UL Innovation Fund](#), UL directly (financially) promotes and encourages the development of university-based knowledge to levels of development suitable for transfer to society. The funds are intended for researchers who have technology or a solution for already identified challenges but lack sufficient resources for prototype development.

In 2022, UL acquired 20 innovations, filed 11 patent applications, and financed the development of four projects with the help of the Innovation Fund. Based on university knowledge, researchers established four spin-out companies. Compared to the previous year, the number of spin-out companies doubled.

Artistic activity

The recent establishment of the University Office for Artistic Activity follows the development area of the UL strategy by upgrading the support for the transfer of knowledge and arts to all spheres of social life. Through the [UL Arts Fund](#) (in Slovene), UL distributes funds to promote and support additional artistic creation by our students that goes beyond the work done in framework of study programmes. Special emphasis is placed on connecting the arts, sciences and social sciences, cooperation with external partners (public institutions, non-governmental organisations,

artistic associations, etc.) and the communicative nature of a project. UL considers the process to be successful, especially from the point of view of involving students in the community and recognising UL's artistic activity within the community.

UL also strengthens the social engagement and influence of artistic activity through cooperation with local and national institutions in the field of the arts and culture (presentation of activities at the [Cultural Bazaar](#), a national cross-sectoral project aimed at promoting arts and cultural education, the [Bobri Festival](#) (in Slovene), a Ljubljana-based festival of cultural and artistic education for children and youth, the [June in Ljubljana](#) (in Slovene) festival. UL has also started publishing [kULturnica](#) (in Slovene) a monthly online magazine dedicated to the arts and culture at UL, and UL has created accounts on social network dedicated to arts at UL. In collaboration with the Bank of Slovenia, UL has launched the [Mala Galerija BS](#) project, which is UL's main exhibition space dedicated to contemporary artistic and cultural practices and the presentation of works by our students.

UL sees opportunities for improvement in monitoring activities, especially through a more systematic overview of the field of artistic activity – in the form of indicators specific for the arts sector.

Strengths

Compliance of the Repository of the University of Ljubljana with international standards (e.g., the OpenAIRE guidelines). Established open science practices.

The publications are issued under the common name UL Press.

Successful engagement of UL researchers in many excellent international research projects.

The Human Research Ethics Committee ensures that interdisciplinary research adheres to ethical standards for research involving human subjects. Committee members include representatives from technical faculties who can review research involving users of new technologies.

Enhancement areas

Increase the number of publications and amount of research data stored in the Repository of the UL.

Complete integration of publishing activities under the UL Press label. Increasing the international visibility of UL Press publications.

Guided trainings for societal engagement in R&I for researchers. Researchers should be trained to involve societal stakeholders more in their research.

Increase administrative support for research and research projects.

UL is becoming increasingly important for knowledge transfer to the private sector and for fostering innovation among researchers, which is one of the key indicators of research impact.	Establish knowledge transfer trainings for doctoral students.
Establishment of an Innovation and Development Fund to provide financial and administrative support to researchers in the development of innovations.	Introduce support for non-technological innovations.
Increasing the number of spin-offs.	Enhancing artistic research.
The diversity of artistic fields and subfields, cooperation with local and national institutions in the field of arts and culture.	The indicators of excellence in the arts – modelled on internationally comparable higher education institutions
Involving students in the implementation of all artistic activities.	Establishment of the UL Cultural Heritage Register and its digitalisation Strengthening the discourse on the arts (creating a platform for reflection and debate on the arts, critical evaluation, and theoretical reflection, including the publication of student and pedagogical writings).