

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LJUBLJANA

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3.1 Using the quality system in strategic management

- Korkeakoulun itsearviointi

Using the quality system in the management and implementation of the strategy

In 2020 the UL began drawing up a new strategy, the [University of Ljubljana Strategy 2022-2027](#), which is currently being implemented. The process of preparing the strategy brought together members of the UL academic community, representatives of trade unions and a large number of external stakeholders with the aim of devising development activities that would help consolidate UL as a recognised and established academic institution in Europe. After the new strategy was approved by the UL Senate, UL Members were invited to integrate the UL strategic objectives into their own. An action plan was also prepared as the basis for developing further activities, along with a plan for monitoring implementation and achievement of the objectives.

The [quality assurance system](#) covers all key activities at UL. The Work Programme encompasses regular annual UL planning. Business and Quality Assurance Report includes regular [annual UL self-evaluation](#) (see Figure 1). Both documents are connected to the strategic objectives and area-specific strategic activities. As part of annual business reporting, UL chiefly monitors fulfilment of the annual plan, which is drawn up on the basis of the strategy guidelines. The self-evaluation findings are included in the [Business and Quality Assurance report](#) drafted at each UL Member, at the Rectorate and for the whole UL. At UL level, data is collected from UL Members and other sources (internal and external databases). Using a uniform methodology, this data is converted into indicators for whole UL and for individual UL Members; this ensures that values are measured uniformly and can be compared across UL Members.



Figure 1. Annual self-evaluation process of UL

In UL self-evaluation, special emphasis is placed on monitoring fulfilment of the measures set, and the UL has introduced a UL reporting application to support the monitoring process (for more, see 1.4). UL also provides annual training for staff at the Rectorate and at UL Members on strategic planning and the proper formulation of measures. This further strengthens the planning process (e.g. [formulation of measures to improve business processes at UL Members](#)) (in Slovene). Prior to every reporting round, the university organises a workshop for UL Members' contact persons at which we present any changes to the UL self-evaluation process. The planning and self-evaluation process is continuously updated to ensure that the process is coherent and effective.

[Interim evaluations](#) of the UL strategy enable us to acquire multiannual insight of the status of fulfilment of the strategy (2012–2016 and 2017–2020 have been evaluated). During this evaluation period, one year after approval of the strategy, a strategic meeting of all UL Member deans was held to identify, for each UL Member: a) how they had contributed to realisation of the UL strategic objectives in the past year; b) which activities they would carry out in support of the realisation of the objectives in the next two years; c) which systemic measures the Rectorate would have to take in support of UL Members' strategic plans.

The establishment of a department for supporting strategic management within the University

Quality Assurance Office and Strategic Management Support in 2023 will ensure that additional focus is placed in future on monitoring strategy implementation at UL level.

Ensuring staff members are aware of the connection between their own work and the university's strategic objectives

The UL strategy has been made public. A variety of stakeholders were involved in formulating the strategy. The Third-Generation Balanced Scorecard method was applied as the basic approach to strategy development. Carefully structured, it began by identifying key stakeholders' expectations. Eighteen interviews were held at the Rectorate (rector, rector's assistants, vice-rectors, chair of the UL Governing Board, secretary-general, secretary-general's assistants and other leading staff), along with 27 interviews with UL Member heads (deans, vice-deans). The analytical findings from the 45 interviews were a starting point for the strategic workshops, which were attended by an average of 30–35 UL Member representatives (deans, vice-deans, secretaries, other representatives). In the initial part of the process, we worked with more than 4,000 stakeholders (staff, students and representatives of the wider society in the humanities, art, education, healthcare, business, agriculture, sport, public administration and R&D) to address some of the most important sustainable challenges (social, environmental and economic). This formed the basis for the production of a materiality matrix, which has played a major role in guiding development of the new strategy. For more information on formulation of the strategy, see [UL Strategy 2022-2027](#) (Annex 1: The process of drawing up the University of Ljubljana Strategy, 2022-2027, page 36).

UL leadership have prepared a workshop for UL Member deans at which agreements on key strategic issues of future UL operations are adopted and a strategy implementation action plan drafted.

Staff are involved in formulating the work programme, which includes strategic objectives in their respective areas; they also take part in self-evaluations of their activities during the preparation of the Business and Quality Assurance Report and of the self-evaluation reports for study programmes. The key points of the strategy will be shown in the UL reporting application and therefore always available to view. Annual reporting will also be aligned with the points of the strategy.

Strengths

A modern and methodically thought-out strategy development process.

An inclusive process for development of the Materiality Matrix, vision and strategy.

Enhancement areas

Increasing the visibility of the UL's strategic goals to employees to further align planning and implementation activities with strategic goals.

Integrating data sources and developing a platform for data collection, analysis and reporting to support strategic management.

Strategic goals are used for annual planning, monitoring and improvement.

Better aligning strategic goals, selection and implementation of development pillar of financing (RSF) projects with the quality system, to achieve greater synergies in implementing activities and pursuing strategic goals.

UL Members follow carefully managed processes to cascade strategic goals.

Stronger alignment of the UL Business and Quality Assurance Report with the Materiality Matrix, Strategic Goals, and Development and Support Areas of the UL Strategy.