



1st Progress Review Conference of the Universities participating in the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme

PRE-EVENT QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIwersytet Warszawski / UNIVERISTY OF WARSAW

- 1) What evidence can be provided for early cultural change within the university, following selection in the first round of IDUB (e.g. acceptance of an enhanced and widely held ambition to perform cutting edge research)? Which measures have been undertaken to date for creating, supporting and maintaining an atmosphere and attitude of change and positive development throughout the institution?

In the first implementation period of the IDUB at the UW, there is clear and consolidated acceptance for the necessity of transforming UW into a research-based university. It is crucial to focus on research activities with breakthrough potential in an international dimension, as well as smoothly transferring the latest research findings to the curriculum. This approach has been applied consistently from the beginning of the Program. As a result of the activities carried out thus far and above all through the creation of substantive and administrative principles for program completion, employees, doctoral candidates and undergraduates are being encouraged to carry out academic research and instruction in completely novel ways. Evidence can be shown in the following:

- accepting the form of funding allocation based on national and international competitions, for the realization of projects in the IDUB framework;
- detailing activities and projects which will be carried out in the IDUB framework, with effects that directly contribute to the objectives for raising the quality of research carried out at UW, and then publishing the results in the best journals and academic publishing houses;
- accepting the principles of employee recruitment to carry out activities and projects within the IDUB framework, through open and international competitions, led by committees with the involvement of scholars from outside the UW, who have recognized, international scientific achievements.

An environment for change is upheld through transparency in activities and by creating opportunities for including scholars who have not yet taken part in IDUB. On the basis of dialogue with the UW community, separate competition was created with packages (created on the basis of previously-defined projects, into activities) for new research teams whose concepts were cohesive with the objectives of IDUB, but which had not previously announced their intent to join (see IDUB website).

2) How is the implementation of the plan proposed by the university being governed? Who are the leaders of the implementation process? What are the measures for internal monitoring of progress in implementation of the plans?

IDUB was adjusted to the system of internal regulations issued by the Rector; these establish the management structure, among other things, and indicate those responsible for realizing the Program. A separate administrative body for the IDUB Program was positioned in the Office of Research Administration (BOB). Aside from the Rector, the key personnel in the management of the Program are the Principal Investigator (a function currently held by the Pro-Rector for Research) and the Program Coordinator, responsible for administrative management. The specialists who are realizing the Program have been divided into two groups: scholars who are researchers/lecturers -- responsible for completing research activities, and administrative workers responsible for carrying out activities in auxiliary and organizational capacities.

A Coordinating Committee, comprised of 15 people (with three representatives from each POB - Priority Research Area), has been created to oversee the substantive management of the Program. The Committee Chairperson is the Principal Investigator. There are plans to form a second Coordinating Committee for activities realized outside of the five Priority Research Areas.

IDUB is monitored internally, based on the following:

- Gantt chart;
- periodic reports;
- the SAP financing system which functions at the University.

3) What measures has the university undertaken to disseminate and promote the plan among the academic community?

Measures in this area have included:

- the organization of two open consultation meetings with the community (in January and February of 2020), concerning general principles of realizing the Program,
- the organization of five online informational meetings with opportunities to ask questions (in June and July of 2020), dedicated to the characteristics of the Priority Research Areas, as well as activities being realized beyond those; 600 people took part;
- the organization of meetings with research teams who were interested in becoming part of IDUB; more than 25 such meetings were held;

- the launching website for IDUB <https://inicjatywadoskonalosci.uw.edu.pl>, comprising a centralized information source about the Program;
- the launching of a subpage on the University website (<https://www.uw.edu.pl/badania/idub>) containing the most important information about the IDUB;
- informing the community through social media about activities being undertaken, using films and interviews.

4) What are the main measures taken by the university to improve the quality of university governance and management, including quality-enhancing organizational changes?

Within the IDUB it is possible to suggest and test out new institutional management projects, towards more effective research university operations. Above all, this concerns the process of supporting activities undertaken by individual scholars, as well as research teams, who have research potential for investigations with results that will be internationally recognized, but who need support at the initial stages of their work. It is crucial to guarantee the transparency of the competitions, on the basis of which funds are being allocated, while also ensuring that there is an appropriate selection committee to review applications. Building trust in these processes is particularly important.

An electronic document flow is used for most procedures. All of the competitions have their own electronic forms.

A new approach is being tested which involves decentralizing the management of projects carried out by individual entities, while also creating a set of centralized principles for the organization of competitions, the formation assessment committees, or scholar recruitment.

A research management group is being created, with the objective of supporting academics in obtaining, realizing, and closing international grants, which should increase their number while reducing the bureaucratic burden placed on employed researchers.

It is also essential to engage leaders of research communities in IDUB, they are part of the consulting body of the Program.

5) What are the main administrative measures taken by the university in the Priority Research Areas (POBs) including focusing and integration of research teams? What additional sources of research funding dedicated to POBs have been secured to date following success in the IDUB competition?

The Coordinating Committee mentioned above is the central body which ensures the integration of research teams in POBs and prevents duplication. Its key functions include the following:

- developing shared standards, among them good practices, for completing Activities and Projects;

- ensuring substantive coordination of the five POBs, so that Activities and Projects carried out in individual projects within the priority areas do not contain redundancies;
- recommending decisions to Project Managers, concerning changes in Activities and Projects, within the project frameworks of the POBs;
- exchanging information about completion levels in relation to IDUB outcome indicators, based upon reports by the Monitoring Team;
- fulfilling the function of a cooperative platform, particularly in information exchange on Activities and Projects within the frameworks of POBs.

Additionally, Management Committees function in the particular areas; their tasks include:

- exchanging information with Activity Managers about project realization and ensuring information flow within the priority area
- recommending a Principal Investigator for new projects in the priority area, informing of risks to completion, and implementing resolutions as recommended by the Principal Investigator
- preparing information for reporting on priority area Activities once a year, by the 30th of March.

At the time of completing the questionnaire, funding has not been obtained directly from other sources.

6) What consideration has been given to inter-institutional collaborations within Poland to enhance, for example, research that crosses traditional disciplinary boundaries? What progress has been made regarding establishment of a federation or merging with other institutions from the region, especially in case of universities which received relevant recommendations?

Collaboration among institutions, as part of IDUB, is facilitated through informing institutional partners of current activities, and where possible, inviting their participation. For instance, before the recent suspension of international travel, presentations on the IDUB program were given during seminars and international conferences, dedicated to management in academia and higher education. Concerning specific activities aimed at increasing inter-institutional collaboration and directed at creating interdisciplinary research teams, the following may be mentioned:

- conducting the first competition for "migrants for inter-university research teams, in the framework for strategic partnerships" (Action II.1.1), aimed at strengthening cooperation between the University and those in the 4EU+ Alliance. Five research teams were selected and are receiving grants. The projects are of a multidisciplinary, inter-institutional character. The next competition is planned for October 2020.
- finalizing work on a competition to form research teams and support existing groups, comprising employees of the University of Warsaw (UW) and the Medical University of Warsaw (WUM). The competition will be announced in September 2020.

7) What measures have been undertaken to identify, train, and support the next generation of international-quality researchers? How implementation of the IDUB plan contributed to enhancement of doctoral training, including recruitment to doctoral schools?

Doctoral candidates at UW are considered full participants in the Program. They may benefit from funding in the form of microgrants for accomplishing specific objectives, thereby supporting their potential for carrying out internationally recognized research programs. A pilot program (Action IV.2.1) is planned with 1-2 semester internships at the research universities, to create opportunities for broadening research topics, publishing findings, and creating leading research teams.

The commencement of a comprehensive support program for doctoral candidates at UW is planned for autumn of this year, in consultation with the doctoral candidates' self-governing body and the administration of the doctoral schools (Action IV.4.1); the program is intended for tertiary-level doctoral candidates and those within the doctoral schools. The main objective is to support Ph.D. candidates in the preparation of their dissertations, as well as in popularizing the findings of their research, through (among other activities) publication in recognized international journals and publishing houses. The action will include a dedicated path for doctoral candidates who are planning research projects in one of the five POBs.

Activities related to translating IDUB to the functioning of doctoral schools is planned for the beginning of 2021. It will consist in creating tools for supporting doctoral candidates who are working on projects related to the POBs.

At the beginning of the academic year, a large-scale needs analysis survey of the university community will be carried out. Based on the results, a series of workshops, training sessions and meetings will be organized. The university has already established cooperation with leading international companies (Nature, Clarivate, Elsevier) that will provide high quality training for doctoral candidates and other university community members, aimed at improving the competences of all groups.

8) What progress has been made to date in implementing human resources development programmes and in recruitment of researchers (whether Polish citizens or not) from universities outside Poland?

Human resources development is integral to many of the planned objectives in the Program. By the end of 2020, activities in this area will be launched, among them a program for the development and improvement of "soft skills" for academic researchers (Action V.3.5). The target activities are in preparation, and the launch will take place in stages, starting from the beginning of 2020-21, taking the epidemiological situation into account.

Competition rules have been created for the processes of recruiting postdoctoral researchers and visiting professors. The first competitions have been announced and will be completed by the end of 2020.

The competition committees include scholars from foreign universities, with recognized academic achievements.

Information about the competitions will be published in a traditional form, and also on websites which are popular among researchers, such as ResearchGate and Academia.

Information about the competitions is also promoted by the scholars involved in the implementation of IDUB.

9) What specific steps have been taken and what progress in implementation of the plan has been made to date to enhance international engagement (e.g. research collaborations with foreign universities or research institutes)?

To increase the international engagement of the University's scholars, a competition for minigrants for intercollegiate research teams was announced under the Program, as part of strategic partnerships (Action II.1.1), which aim to enhance scientific collaboration between the University of Warsaw and universities of the 4EU+ Alliance. It resulted in the support of five teams of scientists implementing projects related to Flagship Area 2: "Europe in a changing world: understanding and engaging societies, economies, cultures and languages", on issues regarding the social, economic and cultural consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second competition under this Action will be launched in October 2020 and will concern all areas of scientific cooperation conducted by the 4EU+ Alliance.

There are advanced talks with the authorities of the University of Zurich, to establish interdisciplinary scientific teams whose aim would be, among other things, to submit applications under the Polish-Swiss science programs. Teams in the fields of law, political science, and chemistry will be established first. The contribution by UW will be financed through the Action aimed at strengthening collaboration with UW's strategic foreign partners. Within the framework of microgrants, paths have been opened for participation in study visits, research at academic institutions abroad. 120 microgrants have been issued and 17 just on the above-mentioned paths.

10) What kind of changes has the university initiated in the education system on undergraduate and graduate level?

The first action in this area is planned for September 2020. It will be a competition for the development of educational programs which are consistent with the Priority Research Areas. Conceptual work is currently underway.

Within the priority research framework, there are ongoing consultations concerning projects that would link educational programs with key research areas. Two of them have already been consulted within the University Teaching Council.

Work is also advanced on the implementation of Action III.3.1 ("Olympic scholarships"), which is addressed to winners and finalists of national tournaments, as well as participants in international tournaments. A letter about the planned launch of the Measure has been addressed to secondary schools in Warsaw and its vicinity.

At the beginning of 2021, the launch of an Action is planned, which aims to improve the transfer of research results to educational programs which are being implemented at the university level.

11) The worldwide impact of measures and limitations introduced as a consequence of the COVID19 pandemic should be taken into account in the implementation planning, and institutions should be driven by the will to maintain strategic development as planned. The good use of digital means of communication has a crucial role to play. Thus, universities should see to it that they are up to this challenge. What actions have been taken by your university in order to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on the implementation of the university development strategy?

Regarding COVID-19, the University has taken numerous measures to reduce the impact of the pandemic on the implementation of its ongoing development strategies:

- the Rector, through appropriate orders and announcements, has specified principles for the ongoing operations of the University, taking into account the current epidemiological threat;
- continuity of teaching activities has been maintained, and wherever possible, online communication tools for remote work have been introduced;
- continuity in University administrative services has been ensured, using online remote communication tools, e.g., by conducting meetings with teleconferencing applications;
- recommendations have been issued on ways to dispense with traditional (paper-based) forms of documentation where possible, on the use of electronic document flow (EDF), and on how to use digital equivalents with a certified electronic signature.

UW employees and doctoral candidates have a chance to undergo tests free of charge for SARS-CoV-2 antibodies (IgM, and IgG). It will be possible to get tested between 29 June and 26 September 2020.