

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

PRE-EVENT QUESTIONNAIRE

Uniwersytet Gdański / University of Gdańsk

1) Which of your university’s original objectives (when applying for a 10% increase in funding) have been chosen to retain having received a lower funding level? How is progress being reviewed?

From the first group of objectives the following ones have been retained: 1, 2, 3, 5. They are implemented through a comprehensive Publication Program launched from the beginning of 2020. The progress is supervised by specially appointed evaluation team (144 applications have been funded). The objectives related to the expansion of access to specialized research equipment (8) were also retained through designing and planning the construction of a 60 Mio PLN University Research Centre.

In the second group the modified objective 1 was maintained by establishing a new Section of International Research Cooperation within the existing International Office (not an independent Centre as originally planned). Objective 3 has also been retained in this group by setting up a mini grants program (the first applications will be considered later this year), as well as objective 5 has in terms of continuous financial and HR support for International Research Agendas.

In the third group the tasks related to the internationalization and the integration of research elements into didactics were retained (3, 4, 9, 10). These ones are supervised by the vice-rector for education and the vice-rector for internationalization process.

In the last group, objectives 1 (core facility), 7 and 8 (IT support for HR and Virtual campus) were retained. The progress of work in this area is supervised by the vice-rector for IT development with the University of Gdańsk (UG) new IT team.

2) Which measures have been added, deleted or modified following the recommendation of the reviewers? What changes to university strategy and policy have been made in the light of evaluation and the outcome of the funding competition?

Reduced by merging and consolidating the previous 47 actions to 12. The implementation schedule of those was also changed to have better control over the monitoring of the progress. The scope

and research potential of the humanities was also re-examined and a new POB was defined in this field as well as the other two POBs were modified. The mobility and internationalization plans were also revised to make their implementation more realistic, also in the context of reduced pandemic-related mobility. Work was undertaken to prepare a detailed Internationalization Policy, together with a system for monitoring its indicators. Some of these tasks were also changed due to the development of the European University project, which led to 3 large grants in partnership with 5 other foreign universities. Elements related to the social responsibility of science and gender equality were also implemented in the strategy of UG (a strategic document was developed and issued in this respect).

3) Did the university change/reduce the Priority Research Areas (POBs)? What is the scope of such change?

After re-diagnosis of the humanities area, it was decided to appoint a new, interdisciplinary POB "Modern Gdańsk/Pomerania Identity Studies in History, Literature and Art". It will be a very good extension of the hitherto indicated areas. The achievements of UG scientists in this area are at a good level and this POB has a great chance to develop soon. POB "Intercultural Research" was also revised. Within this wide area, only those issues which are characterized by the highest scientific excellence and originality of the research subject matter have been identified. This POB has now been called "Applied Cross-Cultural Psychology and Sociology". This is the area from which the best-cited works of the social sciences at UG come from, where also most scientists raise funds. New Research Agenda (originally action 15) planned to be launched will cover this topic. It was decided also to combine "Marine and maritime research" and "Environmental research and technology" into one common POB.

4) What concrete measures has the university taken to encourage cutting edge research? What evidence can you provide of continuing promotion of research excellence at the highest levels of the university? Has this been achieved using alternative sources of funding, apart from the 2% subvention increase?

The most important measures taken are:

- (i) launching the Publication Program, which finances the costs of publishing and open to the best publications by scientists from the University of Gdansk. The program also launched a budget financing additional remuneration for authors of the best publications. The program will be continued in the coming years from 2% and the University's own resources,
- (ii) the commissioning of the project and financial assembly for the University Research Centre, which will act not only as a UG core facility but also as a place for special interventional research programs - e.g. related to biomedical or epidemic research. Value of the project 60 Mio PLN financed from University's own resources,

- (iii) launching the program of small grants for young scientists and advanced interventional research with preference for humanities and social sciences. Annual budget PLN 1.6 Mio PLN the program will be continued in the coming years from 2% and the University's own resources,
- (iv) (iv) establishing program of visiting professors financing short-term internships. 0.3 Mio. PLN financed from the university's own resources, European University related projects etc.,
- (v) (v) launching program of monitoring of scientific achievements and implementation of a system of forecasting scientific evaluation of the UG. Value of PLN 0.6 Mio PLN - financed from 2% and the university's own resources.

5) What progress has been made regarding establishment of a federation or merging with other institutions from the region, particularly in case of universities which received relevant recommendations?

In July this year, the University of Gdańsk (UG), together with the Medical University of Gdansk (MUG) and the Gdansk University of Technology (GUT), agreed and signed a joint letter of intent to establish the Union of Universities in Gdańsk. The letter also agreed on the Statute of the Union and its name - Fahrenheit University Union. The Statute set out the main tasks of the Union, which are most of all to prepare all three universities for the consolidation process. In August the Senates of the UG and the MUG unanimously passed resolutions to join the Union. In September the same resolution is going to be passed by the GUT Senate. This will make it possible to submit an application to the Minister of Science and Higher Education for the establishment of the Union. If the application is successful, the Union will begin functioning on October 1 of this year.

6) What steps is your university taking in order to increase the likelihood of enhanced levels of funding being secured in future rounds of the IDUB programme?

Within the European University's initiative, the research potential of the 6 universities - the European University of the Seas (SEA-EU) alliance has been mapped. On this basis a research agenda is being prepared for joint application for science grants (European funds). Within the cooperation of the SEA-EU alliance, 2 grants have already been obtained: reSEArch-EU (HORIZON2020) and SEA-EU-DOC (Erasmus+). International cooperation of both International Research Agendas constituting the core of 2 POBs (ICCVS in Centre for Biomedical and Molecular Research and ICTQT in Centre for Theoretical Quantum Technologies) is also being developed. Intensive application for research and equipment grants resulted in obtaining 5 equipment grants and more than 20 research grants financed from national and international sources (including one ERC grant). Within the framework of ICCVS, several agreements on close scientific cooperation with foreign research institutions have been concluded, among them: The University of Edinburgh, UK, INSERM, France, and John Hopkins University, USA.

UG is also a beneficiary of the "Industrial Doctorates" grant under the POB related to biomedical and molecular research. It will enable to intensify cooperation with life science companies. UG is planning to use the funds obtained from the sale of the UG real estate for the construction of University Research Centre enabling creation of specialized infrastructure for use during next epidemics (BSL-3+ class labs).

7) The worldwide impact of measures and limitations introduced as a consequence of the COVID-19 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?

As a consequence of the COVID19 pandemic the UG took the following steps:

Website for remote teaching during pandemic (all information about the possibilities of remote teaching, available tools, and necessary procedures) has been created.

MS Teams service has been widely promoted in an extraordinary mode under which:

- (i) procedure was prepared for granting permissions and creating teams for student groups and teachers using MS Forms, with all requirements for limiting access to personal data in accordance with the GDPR;
- (ii) dedicated team was created for all academic teachers, thanks to which everyone had instant and unrestricted access to almost 24/7 technical support, mutual support with the possibility to benefit from colleagues' experiences, training materials and technical messages;
- (iii) several online training courses have been organized with different skill levels, including technical training on how to use the tool and practical usage of MS Teams in teaching at UG;
- (iv) series of webinars was prepared and published on YouTube, which addressed the most important user needs.

Number of MS Forms templates were prepared in order to conduct surveys, collect data and perform tests.

Process of remote voting, both anonymous and open was developed for all kinds of university elections including the Rector.

Process of remote awarding degrees and defending of Masters' theses and Ph.D. theses in compliance with all applicable standards has been developed and remote defenses were carried out.

In the new academic year, most of the courses at UG will be held in a hybrid system. Only those that cannot be carried out remotely will be organized, e.g. laboratories, field classes, selected workshops or exercises. Lists of courses that must take place on UG premises are prepared at faculties in accordance with the specificity of the fields of study. Only first year students and foreigners will be allowed to stay in the student dormitories respecting the sanitary regime.