PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC

EVALUATION REPORT

EVALUATION WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON MANAGEMENT OF RESEARCH AND USE OF RESEARCH RESULTS

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Contents

1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of Palacký University Olomouc. The evaluation took place in 2018, based on a request from the Rector, Jaroslav Miller. The main objective of the evaluation with the IEP was to support the university in its efforts to introduce and develop a quality assurance system. This was due to an amendment to the Czech Higher Education Act allowing institutions to set up and approve study programmes in accredited fields of study. Aside from this, the university is currently preparing for a new law on "Support to Research, Development and Innovation" and was therefore particularly interested in an evaluation with special focus on management of research and the use of research results. Finally, Palacký University Olomouc was eager to learn where it stands in comparison with the results of its last IEP review that took place in 1998/1999.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of IEP are:
- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:
- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms

All aspects of the evaluation are guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:
- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

The evaluation with a special focus on management of research and use of research results uses the same IEP methodology, but pays special attention to the policy structures and

processes in place for supporting research activities at the institution, and how the institution manages to use the results of research in order to convert the knowledge resulting from research activities into socio-economic benefits.

1.2 Palacký University's profile

Palacký University Olomouc (UP) draws on a long history. It was founded in 1573 and is the second oldest university in the Czech Republic. It is located in Olomouc, the sixth largest city in the country with about 100 000 inhabitants. Palacký University Olomouc is one of 26 public higher education institutions (HEI) in the Czech Republic, of which 24 are universities.

UP considers itself to be a comprehensive and research-intensive university. It comprises eight faculties: St. Cyril and Methodius Faculty of Theology; the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry; the Faculty of Arts; the Faculty of Science; the Faculty of Physical Culture; the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Health Sciences. The largest faculties in student numbers are the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Science. The youngest faculties are the Faculty of Law, established in the 1990s, and the Faculty of Health Sciences, established in 2008. The university's Science and Technology Park has been in operation since 2000.

The university's buildings are spread over the city of Olomouc, many of them having been fully renovated, in the process of renovation or completely new. UP has invested considerably in its infrastructure over the last years, thus providing very satisfactory conditions both as a place for study and work.

UP offers around 152 study programmes at bachelor, master and doctoral level, which can be studied in different modes (either full-time or part-time/combined). Apart from study programmes conducted in Czech, the university has a large number of study programmes in other languages, most of them in English and with some programmes in German and Russian. Programmes in Czech are tuition free for the standard duration, plus a year, and irrespectively of the nationality of the student. Conversely, for programmes conducted in a foreign language, tuition fees are charged. Furthermore, the university offers language courses for students and staff as well as for the wider public, for example, programmes for continuing education and lifelong learning, including the University of Third Age for students aged over 50 years.

By the end of 2017, the university counted 20 396 enrolled students, of which 50% are studying for bachelor's degrees, 42% for master's degrees, and 8% in doctoral programmes. Student numbers have recently been decreasing, reflecting demographic changes with a significant drop in 19-year olds in the Czech Republic since 2012/2013. However, the university has grown considerably since the last review in 1999, having now almost twice as many students compared to the 11 000 students at the time. In 2016, there were a total of 3 201 students from 92 countries studying in Olomouc, of whom around 1 100 came from Slovakia. Other significant numbers of foreign students have come in recent years from the UK, Malaysia, Poland, Ukraine, Russia and Spain.

Out of the university's 2 758 staff, 1 563 are academic and research staff and 1 195 are administrative staff (all FTE, figures for 2016). Out of all the academic and research staff, 20% are professors or associate professors, of whom 74% are male and 26% female. The gender proportion among all academic and research staff is roughly 57% male and 43% female. The student/staff ratio is 16:1.

The UP is a university, which positions itself clearly as part of the European Higher Education Area. According to UP's Strategic Plan 2016-2020, the university's mission is "to maintain and develop knowledge, provide education, pursue independent scholarly research and artistic work, support adherence to the principles of rule of law and civil society, and play a key role in the cultural and educational development of human society". Its overall vision for 2016-2020 is "to remain a leading university in research, striving for a permanent position among the three most important universities in the Czech Republic and among the top 500 universities in the world". Regarding research and creative activities, UP specifies its vision by stating that it shall "focus on supporting excellence in the field of natural sciences and biomedicine with an emphasis on application outputs and interdisciplinary cooperation. It shall support and encourage research excellence in the humanities and social study fields with regard to the current socio-political and cultural needs".

For the implementation of the mission and vision, the Strategic Plan builds on 10 objectives: (1) high-quality study and education; (2) internationalisation of degree programmes; (3) high-quality scholarly and creative activities; (4) commercialisation of scholarly and research results; (5) international study and work environment; (6) building the brand; (7) efficient management system; (8) restructuring human resources management; (9) efficient, economical, energy-, eco- and user-friendly operations; and (10) implementation and development of new technologies.

UP has established several leading research centres, such as the Regional Centre of Advanced Technologies and Materials (RCPTM), the Centre of the Region Haná for Biotechnological and Agricultural Research (CRH), the Institute of Molecular and Translational Medicine (IMTM) or the Institute of Active Lifestyle (IAL). The team had the opportunity to visit some of these centres and was impressed by the high standard of the environment and of the results.

The main challenges faced by UP over the last decade have been instable framework conditions for public HEIs, with frequent changes in regulations, including the rules and the methodology of evaluating research results used as a basis for the calculation of state funding for research. Another challenge is to secure funding – not only due to the afore-mentioned decrease in potential students, but also knowing that funding for research and institutional development from EU operational programmes, in which the university has been very successful in recent years, will soon come to an end.

1.3 The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was carried out by a team mainly composed of representatives of the university management at central and faculty level, involving several vice-rectors, the head of the Rector's Office, the head of the Project Service, three analysts and a student representative from the Internal Assessment Board. Furthermore, the vice-deans of the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Physical Culture were part of the self-evaluation group, since the university had decided to conduct a deeper analysis for these two faculties during the self-evaluation process. Statistical data for the self-evaluation covered the period 2014-2016. The self-evaluation report was discussed with those vice-rectors who were not directly involved in the compilation and writing, as well as with the bursar and deans of the afore-mentioned two faculties. It was also discussed within the Internal Assessment Board and the Pedagogical Committee, the advisory body to the rector on study affairs comprising all vice-deans for study affairs at UP. Apart from these lines of discussion, the report was sent to all deans.

Overall, the self-evaluation report was well written and prepared. In particular, the team found the concluding chapter very helpful, which contained sound, self-critical reflections. The 36-page long report was accompanied by 27 annexes providing additional in-depth data and information, i.e. policies and regulations, the university's Constitution and Organisation Code as well as the current Strategic Plan, covering the period 2016-2020. Among the annexes, there was additional information on the two faculties for which the university wanted to look at more detail. Although the report and its annexes were very well organised, the team encountered some difficulties in making sense of the information given. This was mainly due to inconsistencies in terminology used and the way numbers and figures were presented.

The team found that UP did not take full advantage of the self-evaluation phase. Although the report was discussed within the leadership and main governance bodies and made available to each academic employee with interest in it, the team found that awareness of the report among staff members was rather low. The lack of student involvement during the self-evaluation phase was clearly a missed opportunity as will be discussed later. The self-evaluation report*,* together with the annexes, was sent to the evaluation team in February 2018*.* The visits of the evaluation team took place on *19-21 March* and on *21-24 May 2018*. During the site visits, the evaluation team met a vivid and ambitious university with a highly committed leadership and staff. It should be noted that due to an unexpected overlap of commitments the rector could not be in Olomouc during the first visit. This was handled with great diligence by the university leadership and administration.

In between the two visits the university provided the evaluation team with additional documentation.

The evaluation team (hereinafter named the team) consisted of:

- Öktem Vardar, former Rector, TED University, Turkey, team chair
- Jean-Pierre Gesson, former President, University of Poitiers, France

- Jordi Villà-Freixa, Vice-Rector for Research and Knowledge Transfer, Universitat de Vic – Universitat Central de Catalunya, Spain
- Linda Teikmane, doctoral student, Art Academy of Latvia, Latvia
- Lil Reif, expert for European and international RDI funding, Austrian Research Promotion Agency, Austria, team coordinator

The team thanks Rector Jaroslav Miller and the Vice-Rector for Study affairs Vít Zouhar for their warm welcome and kind hospitality. The team would like to thank the self-evaluation group for its work in preparing the self-evaluation report, and all staff, students and partners of UP for their time and openness in the discussions with the team during the site visits. Finally, the team would like to thank the head of the Rector's Office Rostislav Hladký and all colleagues involved in the organisation of the site visits for the excellent and efficient arrangements and their kind support throughout.

2. Governance and institutional decision-making

The above-mentioned 10 objectives of the Strategic Plan are defined by the university management leadership – the rectorate with the deans, vice-deans, and heads of university or faculty facilities. In preparing the Plan, the viewpoint and demands from external stakeholders were also included. The Strategic Plan lists per objective related measures from EU operational programmes run by the university and lists tools (altogether 41) and indicators for achieving these objectives. According to the university, the Strategic Plan should serve as an umbrella document under which faculties provide their yearly action plans, which are discussed at the Scientific Board of the UP, approved by the faculty senates and the Academic Senate of the University, followed by approval from the Board of Trustees.

In discussions with staff, the team often heard that excellent research is a priority for the institution and that UP wants to move towards more interdisciplinary collaboration in research, implying that this vision on research for the current period is well shared. With that in mind, the team found the mission statement of UP somewhat generic and suggests that these principle ideas that reflect the self-understanding of the university – excellence in research and interdisciplinary collaboration – should also be included in the mission statement. *Given the ambitions of UP, the team recommends that UP modifies its mission by placing more emphasis on purpose and priorities.*

Furthermore, the team noted that the 41 tools intended to implement the objectives are not prioritised, nor do they specify timelines, budget allocations or the people involved (one exception being timing and yearly budgets for infrastructure investments annexed to the Strategic Plan). The Strategic Plan includes almost no target figures for the objectives and tools. Similarly, the examples for yearly action plans given to the team are lists of intentions with no prioritisation, timelines, budget allocations, assigned persons or target figures. Constraints are not discussed, and the team could not identify signs of central acknowledgement or follow-up of annual progress or after the strategic period ends. For example, comparing the action plans from the Faculty of Science for 2016, 2017, 2018 for the first objective, very similar expressions are used throughout the three years.

Based on these observations, the team found that the strategic management of UP is rather weak. The Strategic Plan is too long and, more importantly, true planning documents are missing. It seems that it provides guidance, but actual strategies are set by the faculties through action plans, and this raises doubts about the effectiveness of the Strategic Plan in serving as an umbrella document at the level of faculties. The team is aware of the framework conditions of the Higher Education Act, which gives a high degree of autonomy to the individual faculties. However, the team is convinced that even within the existing structures, strategic management can be carried out more effectively and recommends UP, in particular, to *improve its strategic planning by setting priorities, target figures, timelines, and persons, and to make the transposition from the Strategic Plan to the faculty level more meaningful, including an overall form to follow up on the yearly action plans of the faculties.*

UP provided the team with a very long and detailed SWOT analysis, which was developed in 2014 and provided the basis for the development of the Strategic Plan 2016-2020. With that document in mind, the team felt that UP could *take more advantage of the SWOT analysis as a tool for institutional development and recommends modifying the SWOT analysis, by shortening it substantially towards a document to support the mission statements and, consequently, the Strategic Plan and its implementation.*

The self-governing academic bodies include the rector of UP, the Academic Senate, the Scientific Board, the Board of Trustees (sometimes referred to as Board of Directors) and the Internal Assessment Board of UP. The head of the university is the rector, who is elected by the Academic Senate. Faculties are led by the deans, who are elected by the Academic Senate of the respective faculty.

The Academic Senate of UP consists of 24 members, with three senators per faculty, two of whom are academic staff members and one a student member. The Academic Senate is constituted as a representative body and has its counterpart at faculty level. The Scientific Board is chaired by the rector, its members are appointed by the rector with at least one-third of the members coming from outside the university. It currently has 29 members, of whom 18 are external members, including rectors from other universities. The Scientific Board serves as a body to discuss the Strategic Plan and its implementation. It approves professorships as well as applications for institutional accreditation and the accreditation of procedures to grant professorships. In addition, the Scientific Board is involved in the development and quality assessment at UP.

The Board of Trustees is composed solely of figures from outside the university, who are appointed by the Ministry of Education but based on a consultation with the rector. In the case of UP, the Board of Trustees consists of 15 members and is seen as "an external instrument influencing UP management" (SER, p. 4). Its main purpose is to supervise and monitor the activities of UP, ensuring that these fit with the mission of UP and correspond also to public interests. It approves the Strategic Plan as well as the budget and the medium-term outlook of UP, both provided by the rector. Furthermore, the Board of Trustees expresses its views on matters brought up by the rector and offers its suggestions and views.

Another important body is the Internal Assessment Board, which was established based on an amendment to the Higher Education Act in 2016. Its main purpose is to ensure quality in teaching and learning, to manage accreditations, to prepare and approve rules for quality assurance and internal quality assessment for education, creative and other related activities. The Internal Assessment Board is also responsible for the approval of related methodical documents and the further development of the quality assurance system (SER, p. 3f.). It is composed of 15 members who are appointed by the rector and it is chaired by the rector, the vice-rector for study acting as a vice-chair. The chair of the Academic Senate must be a member of the Board. Of the remaining 12 members, four are proposed by the Academic Senate and must include a student representative, four are proposed by the Scientific Board, and four by the rector.

Apart from these boards and bodies, the SER mentions the existence of the Rector's Board (or "Rector's College"), serving as an advisory board for the Rector on "operational issues". It includes all vice-rectors and deans, the bursar, the head of Rector's Office, the chair of the Academic Senate, Directors of Central Units (Library, Computer and Communication Technologies Centre, Academic Sport Centre etc.), Director of the Halls of Residence and a student representative. During this evaluation, UP introduced some changes among the vice-rectors: it newly introduced a Vice-Rector for Strategic Planning and Quality, who is in charge of quality assurance at UP, previously coordinated by the Vice-Rector for Organisation and Development and the Vice-Rector for Study. The second change relates to research, for which two vice-rectors are in charge: the Vice-Rector for Science and Research and the Vice-Rector for Technology Transfer, the second now being changed to Vice-Rector for Strategy of Science and Research. Third, the Vice-Rector for Organisation and Development is now charged with the competences for doctoral studies, a field for which competences had not previously been clearly defined at central level, with the exception of study programme accreditation which is dealt with by the Vice-Rector of Study.

As a general comment at this point, it should be noted that the team questioned whether the approach of shared responsibilities among the various vice-rectors will be productive, since it is lacking a clear ownership for the agenda of developing "Science and Research". Also, the team found that this does not solve a general shortcoming in research management detected by the team, which is the absence of a dedicated research manager, a topic to which the team will return later.

The Pedagogical Committee (also Education Committee) is an advisory body to the rector on study affairs comprising all vice-deans for study affairs and chaired by the Vice-Rector for Study. According to the SER, this committee is also involved in quality assurance, for example in developing the questionnaires for the teaching assessment. Apart from this Committee, UP also has a Coordination Council for Lifelong Learning, which is an advisory body on lifelong learning issues (SER, p.2). UP mentions also a Coordination Council ("Grant council" in the new organisation chart on Research) to discuss projects under preparation for the EU Structural Funds in order to avoid duplication and to maximize the staff and material capacity of the faculties. Members are two vice-rectors involved in research, the bursar and Vice-Deans for Research and Development or Strategy. Depending on the scope of the calls, other specialists can be invited (SER, p. 9).

Several of the above-mentioned bodies, management positions and offices at the central level have their counterparts at the faculties (Deans' Board including Vice-Deans for Research, Education, Quality etc.), a Scientific Board at each faculty level, Academic Senate of the Faculty, offices for science and research, project development, international cooperation, centres for lifelong learning, language learning etc., sometimes described as "central units" at the faculty level). However, the team points to a general weakness in the governance at UP, which is a sometimes blurred picture of ownership, and *strongly recommends UP to ensure ownership of all major activities.*

The team is aware that the complexity of the organisational structure is mainly due to the Higher Education Act. However, bearing in mind the written information and the discussions during the site-visits, the team considers that there is room for improvement. As outlined above, the team found several overlaps and redundancies in responsibilities and a particular issue is the ownership to key strategic activities, which is sometimes hard to locate, even at the top management level. This question was also raised in the review of 1999, noting that "authorities and responsibilities at university level appear quite diffuse to outsiders". At that time, dominant faculties and a weak central university organisation were mentioned as a characteristic feature of Czech universities - conceptualised as opposed to the previous centralised system from communist times. Whatever the reason for keeping this structure, the team would like to remind UP of a statement from the previous review, that it is not an efficient organisation from the perspective of goal-oriented management and policy making, and that this is also not "desirable from a democratic perspective as no one can actually be held to account" (CRE Review 1999, p. 13).

The team also found it quite challenging in this evaluation to understand the structure of the university's organisation, with its many different bodies, boards and offices, and how they relate to each other. The organisational charts and explanations in the self-evaluation report were only partly helpful here, mainly due to inconsistencies in the terminology used and missing links showing dependencies. For example, the chart on the organisational structure and the chart on the management structure of UP (SER, annex 2) as well as the new chart on research management depict some bodies as stand-alone, without any indication to where they relate within the structure. Although central to quality assurance (QA) and supposedly not only relevant for education, but also for research and administration / services, the Internal Assessment Board was missing in all the charts. In the team's view, the organisational charts should include all major boards and bodies as well as clear lines of relationships. For reporting it recommends that UP *improve its internal organisation in terms of presentation in organisational charts.*

The team also highly recommends UP to *review the boards and offices, seeking ways to diminish the number.* In particular, the team recommends UP to *integrate / centralise its quality management, strategic management and research management as far as possible.* In doing so, the team is convinced that this will lead to more efficiency and more effectiveness as it will also allow for greater synergy, helping to scale up UP's resources and good practices. Overall, the team felt that UP should *rethink the university's internal organisation towards a more managerial approach.* Thus, it will become easier to understand the institution from an outside perspective as it will also be beneficial to ensure shared views on what the university is intending to do. Finally, a leaner organisational and management structure would help to decrease redundancies and bureaucracy, and make more time for the actual work to be done.

Although students are represented in the different bodies of internal self-governance mentioned above, a student parliament does not exist at UP. The team was told by students, for example, that nor is there any mechanism of coordination or communication between student representatives from the faculty councils and the bodies at the central level. The

students that the team met were mainly aware of the variety of student associations at UP, with currently 32 student associations ranging from small organisations such as the student radio, newspapers or student theatre, to large international organisations, for example, AIESEC. However, the team learned that there is rarely cooperation between these associations, which also fits with the statement from the SER that "support, continuity, and activity across the associations is unsatisfactory" (SER, p. 5). Similarly, student participation during the development and discussion of the self-evaluation report was very limited, with one student from the Internal Assessment Board drafting a subsection, without the support or input from other students. *The team believes that both the student community and the university would largely benefit from establishing a joint student body and recommends the university to establish a student parliament.* With a more coordinated approach, the team feels that the student voice would be better heard than it has been to date. A student parliament would also serve as a method of training for students for the future, to discuss and determine their position. In addition, such a body could also serve as a mode to enhance communication and cooperation between the different faculties.

UP's income is derived from:

(a) grants and subsidies for teaching, science and research, which are obtained from the state budget, consisting of a fixed component and a performance component, a long-term conceptual development subsidy (research organisation development) and specific-purpose funds allocated under specific purpose aid for research, development and innovation and specific purpose means from EU programmes such as the Structural Funds;

(b) its own income generated from:

- tuition fees (for exceeding the standard length of studies or studying several programmes in succession; for degree programmes provided in other languages than Czech; charges for the U3A programmes and for LLL programmes),
- knowledge transfer (framed as contractual research, for courses provided to employees from the application sector, licence fees, advisory and consultancy),
- donations from national and foreign sources and other own income such as revenues from rental of buildings,
- student accommodation, dining, conferences etc. (SER p. 8f. and additional explanatory note on the budget).

UP will certainly follow up its income streams as formulated within the national system described above, but it needs to be acknowledged that the team spent a considerable amount of time in trying to understand the overall budget of the university. This was due to inconsistencies in the terminology used in the SER and the tables in the annexes as well as the complicated income structure and allocation practice, with tables mirroring the logics of different sources of income in a very detailed way.

The team thinks that for strategic management a budget would be more beneficial, reflecting more generalised income streams, e.g. (1) government contributions, (2) income from student tuition & fees, (3) research income, (4) income from service to society (StS)/ 3rd stream income and (5) donations. The budget figures according to this kind of logic reported by the university are shown in the graph below (Fig 1):

Fig 1. income, %
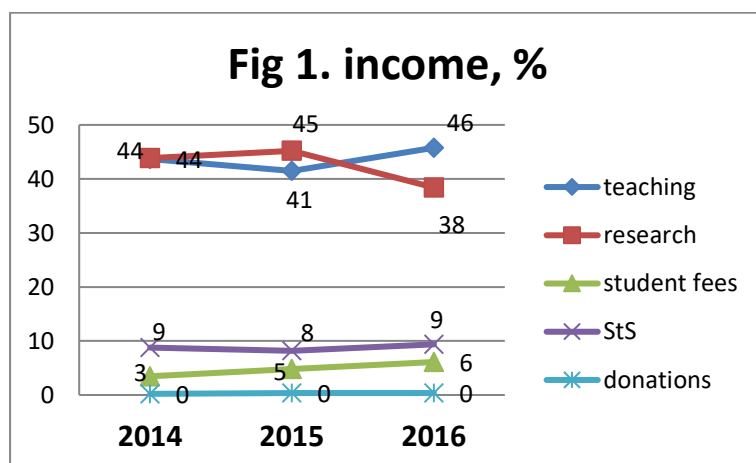
The university took some time to produce the figures in these income streams for three years which suggested that this type of budget analysis is not common. Based on that, the team recommends UP *to identify standard categories as above, following the income on such a basis over the years, making multi-annual analyses, and evaluating trends and relative budget shares reflecting institutional ambitions.* Tracing contributions to each of these categories (such as decomposition of the service to society income) may also be very instructive. Another issue worth noting is that UP may consider using Full Cost Accounting / Activity Based Costing technique to identify its competitive advantages accurately.

In terms of how the funds received are used, the university redistributes contributions from the state budget to the faculties. Regarding state funds for research organisation development, the team learned that UP has full competence on how to distribute these internally, which so far has been done exclusively based on bibliometric data from the previous research evaluation, indicating that resources are distributed among faculties based on their performance. These funds then become part of the faculty budget, where the faculty management can decide on the further distribution, based on methodologies at faculty level. However, the team learned that by 2019 a new approach should be in place for the internal allocation of funding which is currently under discussion and in which bibliometric data and peer review will be used (SER, p. 10f.) Faculties participate in the costs of all university activities based on a flat rate scheme.

UP states that it places high emphasis on the professional development and growth of its staff (SER, p.13). This is also reflected in the current strategic plan, where one of the objectives is the restructuring of HR management. UP has defined three tools in this area: (1) setting up the UP Career Code as a main tool for HR management covering all posts (academic, manager,

technical etc.), which should also include expectations on further education of all employees; (2) the systematisation of recruitment – avoiding random recruitment and addressing the widest group of applicants possible; (3) developing employee care and benefits.

Based on the examples provided, the team commends UP for organising staff development in a very supportive way. In the team's view, HR development should be a central concern for the university and faculty management alike, to provide excellent framework conditions for its staff to grow. In the SER it is stated that the university so far does not have a particular career system for science and research staff except for research centres within the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry, and that UP plans to include this topic in the objectives for the next period (SER, p. 14). The team found, however, that UP is striving already in the current strategic period for a more integrated approach, seeking to overcome fragmented practices, and encourages the university to firmly continue in this direction.

The team was particularly pleased to learn that the university has developed offers for its employees for their further education through the "UP Employer Continuing Education module", including courses on broadening teaching competences, IT skills, legal literacy and personality development. Furthermore, the team learned from discussions with staff that the university (or a faculty) provides staff trainings on how to work with students with special needs as well as a variety of language courses. The team learned that although offers can come from different entities, the coordination of these offers is located within the unit for lifelong learning. In this regard, the Head of the Lifelong Learning Office mentioned to the team that that it has been a challenge to bring all course offers open for staff under "one roof" – in the sense of integrating all offers from the different faculties within one web page and making it easier for staff to identify opportunities.

Overall, the team commends UP for all its achievements to date, bearing in mind that until only recently, UP did not have any particular offers on staff development in place (SWOT 2014, item 1.6T). The team understood that HR development in general is part of the responsibilities of the Vice-Rector for Organisation and Development, whereas the Lifelong Learning Office is under the supervision of the Vice-Rector of Studies. It remained unclear to the team which resources support HR management and development and how this relates to the units on staff development at the level of the faculties. Since the university depends greatly on the expertise and growth of its staff, the team encourages UP to *pay even more attention to this topic and ensure that it has recognisable structures to support academic and administrative staff in their development.* In particular, offers for staff development should also include training opportunities for leadership staff. The team was pleased to note that the objective "Efficient management system" of the current strategy mentions the increase of professional management skills of core units. Since UP places much emphasis on excellence in research, the university might find the process underlying the Human Resources Excellence in Research Award helpful for the development of a sound HR agenda.

As a last point, the team would like to raise the issue of workloads. The team learned that top leadership positions are often part-time, alongside obligations in teaching and research. The

team was told that the decision to minimise the workload in education and research while being in a leadership position is a personal decision. With all due respect to the capabilities of UP staff and its achievements so far, the team thinks that this limits the development of the institution considerably. Given the ambitions of the university, the team thinks that UP should change this practice and *minimise the workload of academic staff members in top leadership positions as far as possible, ideally towards full-time management positions.* The UP management would in this way have more resources for its aspirations reflecting the argument made in 1999 which stated that "leadership must be made professional - which means first of all by making time available for leadership" and "good administration is a condition for quality management" (CRE report 1999, S. 18).

3. Quality culture

One of the reasons for UP to undergo an IEP evaluation was to gain support in its efforts to introduce and develop a comprehensive quality assurance system. The driver for this was an amendment to the Higher Education Act, which introduced new rules for the accreditation and quality assurance and assessment of HEIs. HEIs could previously set up study programmes only if they were accredited by the Ministry of Education. Now an institution that has been granted an institutional accreditation can create and realise degree programmes in areas of study covered by this institutional accreditation, usually during a 10-year period. In order to receive institutional accreditation, universities need to set up an internal quality assurance and assessment system. The Act does not stipulate the form of the system, but defines some of the integral components, namely internal regulations defining the system and the establishment of a board for internal evaluation, which is a self-governing body overseeing the entire system and ensuring its functionality.

Both components are in place at UP: the university established an Internal Assessment Board (see chapter 2) and in October 2017 adopted internal regulations on the design of the system, "Rules for Quality Assurance and Internal Quality Assessment of Education, Creative and other related Activities at Palacký University Olomouc".

From discussions with staff, the team had the impression that an appreciation for the development of quality assurance exists at UP and that the university is proactively taking advantage of the higher level of autonomy and flexibility in programme design, which comes with the institutional accreditation. The team also noticed a widely shared understanding among staff of the specific needs of different disciplines regarding indicators for the evaluation of research quality and believes this to be a very conducive basis for wide discussions and the development of a sustainable system of quality assessment.

The team could see that UP links its quality assurance system with strategic management. The main evidence for this is the newly established position of Vice-Rector for Strategic Planning and Quality. This assignment also means that the coordination of QA is no longer split between two vice-rectors, which the team welcomes. Other signs can be found in the Strategic Plan, in particular the objective "Efficient management system" to enhance UP management, including strategic management, and where one of the tools is directly related to QAs.

The grand design for the system at UP is based on the EFQM model. The plan is to establish an integrated system for quality assessment and assurance with three aspects: (1) educational activities, (2) research and (3) other related activities. The system differentiates between seven levels ranging from employee, course level, study programme, field of education, department level, UP constituent unit level and UP in general. In view of the levels and groups involved, the team could see that the university is striving for a comprehensive system, indicating clearly aspects that quickly might be forgotten – i.e. administrative units and staff and lifelong learning programmes.

The assessment of teaching quality is mainly based on student feedback (questionnaires) and feedback from graduates and employers, although the latter has not yet been systematically established. Another important approach to assure quality in study programmes is the guarantor who would be a staff member responsible for the content and methodical quality of a degree programme, including its proper implementation. The guarantor is accountable to the head of the relevant department, the dean of their faculty and the Internal Assessment Board (SER, p. 18ff.) The assessment of quality of research is mainly based on the assessment of research results and for this UP uses the Methodology of Evaluation of Research Organisations, which is also the basis for allocating funding at UP. The team learned that the university is currently implementing the Information System HAP for the assessment of the research results of UP academic staff, since this has proven to be an easy tool. In addition to this, UP has also started to use the IN CITES analytical tool to compare performances among disciplines (SER, p. 20). With the exception of some research centres which have their own international scientific boards, UP does not have a peer review system in place and plans to include peer review for the assessment of faculties/research teams in the new evaluation system. The assessment of "related activities" covers university management and administration, support for infrastructure and information systems, library services, publishing and editorial activities, information and consultancy services, intellectual property and technology transfer services, accommodation and dining services and sports services. These will be evaluated at the level of the university using feedback from users and data linked to the services (SER, p. 21).

From the point of technical implementation, the Quality Assurance and Internal Quality Assessment will be supported by a quality information management system. For this, UP plans to make use of information systems already used for evaluation of results in education and research, to streamline and integrate them in order to keep the administrative burden at a minimum level. The team finds this to be a pragmatic and very positive approach which is partly in line with one of the recommendations in the previous chapter to integrate / centralise quality management. The team could also see that UP already has several instruments for the assessment of quality in place. In relation to this, the team thinks that at a certain point the university needs to *declare and describe clearly its internal QA tools and to ensure their proper integration throughout the structure of the university.* Typical QA tools, in addition to student surveys on courses and on study programmes, may include staff response to courses and study programmes, student progression data, monitoring of study programmes through statistical data, performance indicators, stakeholder platform minutes and surveys, graduate tracer studies, etc. From the SER and the discussions during the site-visits the team understood that this is also still work in progress. For example, the team learned that one question puzzling the university is the return rate of student feedback on courses, with very different experiences from faculties using paper-based feedback forms versus those relying on an IT solution. In this regard, the team would like to remind UP of an important perspective, that of the "assessors" to help make decisions and drive the process, as well as those responsible for implementing and their motivation and possible constraints. This is largely UP staff and to some extent students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders. The activities around collecting, analysing and reporting should be as efficient as possible, including the way in which the system

is described and how much time is required to understand it as well as linked applications. These activities should also be effective so in that it is obvious for students that they will benefit from the feedback.

The team also understood that UP is currently in the process of defining its standards and indicators for QA, based on a university-wide discussion. In this regard, the university should *ensure that it sets standards that encompass all areas – teaching and learning, research, service to society, governance / administration and internationalisation. For its teaching and learning standards (educational activities) in particular, the team recommends UP to base these on the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).* The team also recommends that UP observes carefully the activities of other institutions, to *benchmark and, as a next step, identify key performance indicators relevant for UP. Once set, the standards should be incorporated in the quality assurance processes and be monitored, if standards have been achieved. Results should be analysed based on evidence.* A crucial point in this process is to *follow up with action, so that results deriving from analytical work are actually used for improvement, closing the loop of the PDCA-cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act).* In this respect, the team was pleased to note that the description of the system indicates roles and responsibilities as a prerequisite for the functionality of the process. Finally, the university should take care to *publish UP's quality assurance results and key figures.* In doing so, the team thinks that UP should especially strive for transparent, easy to grasp information which is relevant and understandable also for outsiders. Accountability and transparency towards the public is an upcoming major issue, urging HEIs to be ready to show that they are worth the money and how they differ from other universities.

The team observed that the basic understanding of UP towards QA is that it is largely managed by the individual faculties, with methodological guidance and support from the relevant departments of the Rector's Office (SER, p. 18). Given the different units where data is collected and processed, *the team thinks that UP can improve its analytical work / collecting information for reporting and strategic planning, i.e. considering an office for institutional research as a service unit to the institution as a whole that supports the further development of quality and strategy.* Due to the decentralised organisational structure, it seems that the development and implementation of a comprehensive QA system will take time and effort and, once implemented, will still require coordination efforts. The team therefore thinks that an office for institutional research could help to assemble resources, harmonise processes, and enhance tools already in place, thus diminishing administrative burden and excessive coordination efforts.

4. Management of research and use of research results

In UP's vision for 2016-2020 it is stated that the university "shall focus on supporting excellence in the field of natural sciences and biomedicine with an emphasis on application outputs and interdisciplinary cooperation. It shall support and encourage research excellence in the humanities and social study fields with regard to the current socio-political and cultural needs". "High quality scholarly activities in research" is among the university's strategic objectives, with several linked projects, some of which are dedicated to the renewal of infrastructure and others to research topics, i.e. "Centre for interdisciplinary research on cultural plurality and migration", "Centre for translational research in molecular imaging". The main reference document at national level is the National Research, Development and Innovation Policy of the Czech Republic that sets out the main directions and is linked to it the Methodology of Evaluation of Research Organisations (SER, p.14).

Overall, the team congratulates the university on what it has achieved so far. It ranks among the five best research-intensive universities in the Czech Republic and has been very successful in receiving funding from national sources. Although the university states that it struggles with low success and participation rates in Horizon 2020, it has received its first ERC grantee and funding from the Marie Curie research fellowship programme. The team saw top level research units and state-of-the-art infrastructure, met internationally oriented researchers and was impressed by the high share of international co-publications (78%) and the high percentage of academic staff from abroad that UP has attracted (overall 11%, and in some units even much higher). The team could also clearly see UP's concept for its main lines of cooperation with external partners, mainly through the research centres, and in particular through the Science and Technology Park of the university. Although the overall share of the income from knowledge transfer is still relatively low (roughly 1%), UP has managed a 13% increase of contractual research in recent years.

The team observed that UP has a thorough system in place for assessing its research, providing detailed data on funding, publications and cooperation, and is able to describe its position in the national and international research landscape as is well shown. The university closely monitors its standing in various international rankings and its performance against the main Czech universities, which is sensible given the afore-mentioned vision of UP to be among the best three in the Czech Republic and in the best 500 worldwide. The team especially acknowledges that UP has managed to design the system in a way to provide data on its research performance, which is sufficiently flexible to respond to the often-changing methodologies used by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport for assessment. The team also commends the university for being aware that it needs to mainstream its processes and in particular for the efforts to keep the generation and processing of data as efficient as possible for all involved. The need for further unification of the system so as to reduce the administrative burden was also raised during discussions with staff and the team encourages UP to keep this in mind when further elaborating the information system of the university.

It is stated in the SER that all faculties have developed their priority themes for research, which were provided in annex 3 of the SER. However, the information provided in the annex did not reflect the priorities, such as "Cultural plurality and migration", "Translational research in molecular imaging", defined in the Strategic Plan. As a result, the team found that this information, together with the Strategic Plan, shows a scattered picture of which research topics UP really wishes to promote and which should be prioritised. All in all, the team's impression is that the university takes a bottom-up approach in the definition of its research strategy, with little institutional steering and only some steering at national level. However, the team believes that *UP should choose its priorities and focus areas towards real priorities in research excellence.* The vision on research cited above is a good point of departure, since it includes underlying principles such as "application outputs", "interdisciplinary collaboration" or "socio-political and cultural needs", which should be followed by a selection process.

The team learned that UP locates "research" within research centres or science centres, or "outside", i.e. "in specific areas of the faculties" (SER, p 15f.) which is somewhat curious since the university specifies itself as a research university, expecting all its staff to be involved in research. However, from an organisational point of view, the team was told that research centres or institutes are embedded within the faculty and although they are focused on "research", they are also linked to the educational activities of the faculty in which they are located, mainly through doctoral education, but also for master programmes. The team wondered about the differentiation made between "research centres" and "science centres" (which sometimes are also called "science-research centres") but understood that this is due to the source of funding.

However, the team would like to comment on the communication of priority areas or excellent research areas and refer to a statement in the SER that UP lacks a concept regarding the communication of R&D results as well as comprehensive information and promotion materials, with poor communication of results and fragmentation (SER, p. 33). The team found that UP communicates its research excellence through its organisational structure (research centres, faculties, departments) rather than through the research itself or of the interest society may place on the outcomes of such research. For example, the afore-mentioned difference between "research centres" and "science centres" might be relevant for internal organisational or budgetary reasons. However, from the outside, it is rather the work done that is of interest and why it is relevant, and the team suggests that UP should concentrate on this aspect when communicating its research priorities / areas of research excellence instead of organising information into areas of research in structural units. While acknowledging the achievements made so far, the team strongly encourages UP to *take steps in further developing and striving in particular for transparent, easy-to-grasp communication of its activities to the public.* In the team's view, the topic of accountability and transparency towards the public is an upcoming major issue, urging HEIs to be ready to show that they are worth the investment and how they differ from other universities.

The team could see that UP is trying to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration, especially through research centres. Otherwise, the team did not find much evidence on how the

university really wants to achieve more interdisciplinary collaboration. Regarding this, UP states that "the wide range of scholarly disciplines, typical of UP, encourages interdisciplinary research and forms the basis for outstanding results of basic research" (SER, p. 15). While it is true that a range of disciplines is a precondition for interdisciplinary collaboration, the team would like to add that their mere existence does not automatically lead to interdisciplinary collaboration - especially considering the size of UP, its location in several buildings and that it operates on a decentralised governance model. Instead of relying on the hope that interdisciplinary cooperation will be automatic, the team believes that UP should *consider developing mechanisms to drive interdisciplinary and collaborative research in a more generalised manner, build teams, scale up and catalyse.* In particular, the team sees unused potential within and between faculties, where atomised research efforts could be collected. In this sense, the hierarchical structure of the organisation (faculties and departments) does not help, nor does positioning interdisciplinary research or achieving global societal goals, which emphasises the need for transversal programmes for research that encompass several structures in common goals and specific funding and governance.

As mentioned, UP has recently introduced some changes at central level to the competences of leadership involved in management of research. This change was mainly made due to UP's low success and participation rate in Horizon 2020 projects and now the Vice-Rector for Science and Research is responsible for research funding and assessment from Czech funds, overseeing the above-mentioned UP Grant Council (also "Coordination Council") and the University Press Editorial Committee. The Vice-Rector for Strategy of Science and Research concentrates on European research funding and is responsible for the knowledge and technology transfer and supervises the activities of the Science and Technology Park of UP.

Several of the bodies, management positions and offices at the central level have their counterparts in the faculties, resulting in "central units of the faculty" versus "departments", "institutes" or other faculty establishments such as "research centres". For example, the Faculty of Science has among its several "central offices" both a Research Office and a Project Management Office to support the work of the departments and research centres. Similarly, the Faculty of Physical Culture has a Science and Research Office and a Project Management and Development Office. Within research centres, this division of work can go even further, again with the same split between research departments and a management section comprising sub-units, for example a department of education and HR, a department for knowledge transfer etc. Although communication between the offices at the central university level and those at the level of faculties are supposedly functional, the team would like to question again the approach of having service units with central functionalities repeated at all levels, especially in view of the efficiency and effectiveness of support for research. Hence, *UP should consider the integration / centralisation of its research management, especially in relation to support services, to scale up resources and good practice.*

In the team's view, many of the weaknesses mentioned in the SWOT analysis and in the SER are linked to the absence of a dedicated research manager at the university level (for example, SWOT, section 12, 13 and 16). The team observed a rather passive research management

approach, which was service oriented, bottom-up and with little institutional steering. The result is that many people, positions and offices are involved at several levels. A "proactive research management", whereby a "master mind" concerned with the weaknesses and threats and who would eventually hold responsibility for enhancing research at UP, would be important. The team therefore recommends UP to *develop a proactive research management, led by one research manager.* This person would have subsidiary offices to run daily needs and routine operations, but also other offices to look into new areas, novel approaches, high-potential initiatives and comparative advantage zones, and would also take care of horizontal aspects such as open science, gender, or bioethics. The team also felt that UP should *benchmark with international institutions, using its international network to learn from others.*

Following up on what has already been said in chapter 2, the team would like to add a specific comment on the research budget. Research-intensive universities closely follow variations in their research budget. This is especially true regarding the amount of and balance between non-competitive government allocations, competitive national research funds and international research funds which are monitored to introduce supporting strategies in due time. UP funding has been plotted as in fig 2.

Fig 2. research income, %
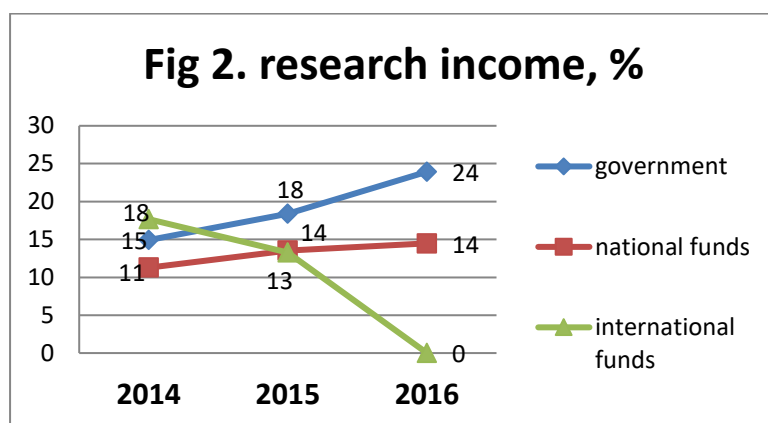
The team is not aware of any discussion on how satisfying or threatening these variations are, whether UP needs drastic changes or slow improvements, or who is responsible for evaluating such balances between different income sources. Therefore, the team thinks that it is advisable for UP to *follow research income, to analyse the trends in the past and formulate expectations for the near future to improve institutional research policies.*

Regarding support mechanisms for academic staff development, reference in the SER is first made to the habilitation, supported through research internships abroad, participating in conferences and support for research activities. Furthermore, UP provides support to young academics and doctoral students through the participation in projects led by highly experienced academics or through project funding for the support of student projects (master and doctoral level), covering costs for conference participation, study trips, literature and technical equipment as well as costs for publishing monographs. UP has also launched a Junior Grant for researchers, to enable them to develop their own scientific programme, to set up their own group and laboratories, or have international postdoctoral experience. The grant is

awarded based on an open competition, in three broad areas (natural sciences, mathematics and informatics; medical sciences and biomedicine; humanities and social sciences) and worth 40 000 - 160 000 EUR per year based. The team finds this to be a very good example for UP's efforts to support researchers in their development. UP has also set up several prizes to acknowledge achievements in research, for example, the Rector's prize for outstanding monographs, the Dean's prize for excellent publications or some prizes awarded by specific faculties such as the Dean's prize for professional development at the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry.

The team is very positive with regard to the emphasis UP puts on support mechanisms for younger staff and was pleased to see that the university leadership is aware of the necessity to provide the best framework conditions to its staff so that they can carry out excellent research. The team saw that UP is taking first steps regarding digitization in research and encourages UP to continue in this direction. For example, the Strategic Plan mentions a project to create infrastructure for the development of digital humanities. Another example is the training portfolio provided by the UP library, including not only the "classical" sessions on how to search and use databases, but also on citation software and open access to trainings to explain review processes.

At the same time, there is still room for improvement, in particular regarding doctoral studies. This is an area where UP itself identified the "gravest shortcomings", explained in the SER to be a result of the ambiguously defined competences among vice-rectors, since doctoral studies concern both education and research, and clearly doctoral studies were not among the competences of any of the vice-rectors. Meanwhile, the Vice-Rector for Organisation and Development has been charged with doctoral studies. The team however feels that doctoral studies form an integral part of research and suggests that UP should *address PhD training in research.*

The team was surprised by the high number of PhD programmes offered at UP and the rationale remained unclear to the team. According to the annual report 2016, out of its 332 study programmes, 167 are PhD programmes, of which 89 can be studied full-time and 78 in combined mode. However, the student enrolment and graduate data showed "only" 63 PhD programmes – the largest shares of which are at the Faculty of Arts (16) and the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry (25), on which one staff member commented "a PhD programme for almost every organ". Additional data showed that 141 PhD candidates graduated in 2016, which the team found very little given the overall number of doctoral students enrolled (1 717 in 2016, and 1 591 in 2017). This will be taken up in the next chapter.

The team was under the impression that the situation of doctoral students varies greatly between the faculties in terms of funding, supervision, level of engagement in the faculty and opportunities to communicate with other researchers, including PhD students. From discussions with doctoral students, the team learned that doctoral studies are mainly anchored within the faculties and sometimes even within departments, and from their perspective, mechanisms to see and learn from each other would be much appreciated, for example

through more general courses across faculties or the university. The team was told that doctoral students who are employed by UP share offices but are bound to the period of their contract and thus, bound to the unit, therefore not providing the opportunity to meet PhD students from other units. Students would also appreciate more guidance on job opportunities once they have graduated.

The team saw that there are good examples for doctoral education at some faculties, including a "cotutelle" model, mainly in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Science. However, the overall picture is that UP does not provide a community for its doctoral students, neither is it being explored or even discovered as a way to enhance interdisciplinary collaboration. As the team sees it, doctoral education is a field where UP should take the opportunity of developing research and human resources in a more generalised, coordinated manner. In view of the graduation rate versus enrolled doctoral students and, given the varying support for students in the different faculties in terms of funding and guidance, this also suggests that action should be taken in this area. The team *recommends making doctoral education a central topic at UP, and creating a community for PhD students, for example, by setting up a Doctoral School with clear rules, joint supervision, research training etc.).* UP could consult the activities of the EUA Council for Doctoral Education for inspiration, for example through publications gathering best practice all over Europe. The 2016 publication "Taking Salzburg Forward: Implementation and new challenges" could serve as a helpful starting point to work on doctoral education at UP, since it highlights the most important aspects and issues of which universities should be aware and tend towards today, as for example the case of digitization.

5. Teaching and learning

The university's vision related to Teaching and Learning is to "provide its students with top-level knowledge and experience of its teachers and research workers in order to enable them to acquire and apply the findings of the entire field of study of their choice and transform them into new possibilities for themselves, their community and the entire world." Furthermore, as can be seen in chapter 3, the strategy outlines the establishment of "a new system for efficient quality monitoring and improvement in the field of education with the aim of achieving institutional accreditation". The vision also makes clear that UP aims to be an inclusive university, focusing on equal conditions for all students, and in particular for those with specific educational needs or from socially or ethnically disadvantaged backgrounds. At the same time, UP wants to provide systematic support to talented and outstanding students, and to work systematically on reducing the drop-out rates.

UP has dedicated one objective to "high-quality study and education", covering nine "tools" which concentrate greatly on curriculum design:

- more practical training and internships backed by a central administration and contract management with partners;
- further development of LLL programmes;
- analysis of duplicate degree programmes and fields of study and decision on continuation;
- development of fields of studies related to fields of research excellence in master and doctoral programmes;
- development of fields of study which are unique or rare in the Czech Republic but needed socially or with permanent demand from the labour market;
- more involvement of students from master and doctoral students in research activities;
- further development of advice and support for students with special needs;
- development of summer schools and workshops.

The team met satisfied students, who are proud of their university, as well as faculty members with individual self-esteem and academic pride. As mentioned earlier, many buildings have been renovated or newly built, making the study environment very pleasant. The team observed close links between students and staff and commends the UP for the open and supportive atmosphere among students with both academic and administrative staff. The overall ratio between student and academic staff is around 16:1 and thus, very good; across faculties, the ratio is between 8:1 and 28:1. The university has an online system with all relevant information on study programmes in place (STAG), through which the whole study process is managed. Being a public university, the study programmes of UP, if delivered in Czech, are free – whereas programmes provided in foreign languages raise tuition fees which are set in the constitution, varying between 750 and 11 800 EUR per academic year, but the majority of programmes range from between 1 000 and 4 000 EUR.

Overall, the team congratulates the university for the services and resources it provides to its students, including a range of services and support for students with special needs. The team was particularly pleased by the efforts made by the library and the IT services to secure good support to students. It is also important to mention the generally very good opening hours of the UP library, which even provides a space to study that is open 24 hours/day. This is very popular among students, some of whom suggested that this space could be expanded. The team was impressed by the attitude and professionalism of the library and IT services and although this has already been mentioned in relation to research, the team would like to repeat here that it was pleased to see that UP is taking steps to provide the best framework conditions in relation to the digitization of education.

The team was pleased to note that UP places much emphasis on research contributing to the contents of study programmes, as well as on providing opportunities for students to participate in research by various means. This is possible at all levels, not only for doctoral students, and the team found several components that illustrated this aspect in the SER and during the site visits.

The numbers given in the SER and in the annual report for 2016 suggest the existence of 332 study programmes in all (67 bachelor, 21 master, 77 continuing master, 167 PhD), but actually adding the same study programmes in different modes of study (full-time or distance/combined studies, which is a particularity in the Czech Republic to combine full-time mode and distance towards "combined mode"). If counting only programme numbers in full-time mode, the number is 200 study programmes. In a different document with numbers on students enrolled and graduates per programme, the existence of 152 study programmes (41 bachelor, 7 master, 41 continuing master, 63 PhD) is noted. The annual report 2016 puts forward an even higher number, that in addition to the 332 study programmes, there are 84 programmes in foreign languages – or an additional 53 programmes, if only counting those in full-time mode (annual report 2016, p. 21). Overall, the numbers of programmes as such and the rationale of why there are so many programmes remained unclear to the team. On posing the question during the site visits, one answer was that sometimes programmes from one faculty are duplicated with another for opportunistic reasons, which indicates little central guidance.

The team recommends UP to *take the institutional accreditation as an opportunity to reduce the number of study programmes, to integrate existing programmes, also in the sense of innovating them.* In view of the Strategic Plan, the team could see clearly that UP has already identified institutional accreditation as a means of reviewing its programme portfolio. In this context, UP mentions explicitly the need for more cooperation between faculties. Since the driving argument is that of efficiency, the team would like to add that greater cooperation between faculties would also be helpful for innovative study programme design in terms of content, if this is not driven by a discipline perspective, but with emerging research topics or new job profiles in mind. The team was pleased to note that among the actions to reach the objective "high quality study and education" is to have more practical training included in curricula and that the university has already defined the development of a central system for

the administration of practical trainings including contractual relationships. From the report it was evident to the team that UP is monitoring the employability of its graduates and is making efforts to enhance their employability – not only through curricula, but also in providing career development services to its students as well as an alumni club, which the team applauds.

In reviewing and innovating curricula, the team further encourages the university to *provide students with a maximum amount and a broader variety of "real" elective courses in the curricula, the so-called part C.* This recommendation is based on the sample curricula provided which gave the impression that content of curricula is largely predefined with very little opportunities for students to make their own choices. From discussions with staff the team understood that in bachelor programmes, 60% of the contents are obligatory and in master programmes 40%; the rest can be used for elective and free elective courses. If the team understood correctly, the number of free electives is rather small (around 10% of the curriculum). However, the team would like to emphasise that there are apparently already opportunities for more flexibility in the curriculum. However, when this was discussed with the staff, the team understood that the free electives available to students at another faculty are not promoted by providing information or recommended by the programme guarantor or the academic staff in general, so that students can actually understand the range of opportunities and make their own selections as far as possible. Attractive and easily available depth and breadth categories to choose from would enrich the curricula.

In considering the curricula and the profile of the university, the team wondered whether UP had ever considered skills related to IT and digitization more prominently for a variety of curricula, since this is an important aspect in many areas. One question, for example, could be if the project on Digital Humanities mentioned in the Strategic Plan would also feed back into curricula within the Faculty of Arts.

Attention was drawn to the high drop-out rate which accounts for 49% at bachelor and 29% at master levels. When this was raised in discussions with staff, one explanation given to the team was that students change from one programme to another. If that is the case, one option could be to give students more flexibility in switching from one programme to another to ensure that any credits are not lost and that UP might make maximum use of the C-courses. Although the Strategic Plan states that UP wants to address this, the team could not identify information in the plan on how the institution intends to do so. Within the sample annual plans provided to the team, the plans of one faculty show that reasons are studied, but the outcomes are left open, suggesting keeping drop-out low through a high demand of study programmes. While acknowledging the efforts of one faculty, the team thinks that this topic should be addressed in a more centralised and systematic manner, as the strategy suggests.

Based on two sample programmes provided, the team could see that learning outcomes per se are available, although the level of achievement through the appropriate choice of verb (Bloom's taxonomy) is lacking and should be improved with a clearly itemised list. It was not clear to the team whether there is a scheme showing how the learning outcomes will be achieved and through which activities. Nor was it clear to the team if the university has an

assessment scheme, in particular at the programme level. How would the institution be able to check that transferable skills, which are not bound to a certain subject, are developed throughout the journey? Is it the programme guarantor who oversees this? How is this assessed? The development of a matrix could help (rows listing learning outcomes, and columns describing various assessment schemes, when/by whom/ how it will be carried out). The team also noted that in the samples given, there was no information on ECTS. While being aware that these considerations are based on very limited evidence, the team suggests that UP *takes a closer look at the assessment of learning outcomes at programme level.*

The team was not sure how UP acts as an institution to *promote innovative approaches in teaching and learning.* The team learned that there are, for example, offers for working with students with special needs, but are there staff training activities regarding higher education didactics available and used? The Strategic Plan states under the first objective that state-of-the-art teaching methods using ICT should be supported through the innovation of degree programmes, which the team finds commendable. However, the team suggests that UP *facilitates this process by providing adequate support for teaching staff to develop these skills, to link the development of innovative approaches with resources for staff development.* In the team's view, this should be support provided at central level, from which all staff members can benefit.

6. Service to society

It is not very clear to the team how UP actually understands service to society. The Strategic Plan of UP mentions it in its overall mission as "Third role of the University", a set of activities in the field of cultural events, social life and healthy lifestyle; to create conditions for the development of creative industry and to increase public awareness of scholarly, research and creative activities through new educational opportunities. In addition to that, the SER also includes activities around the "public role" of the university, which the team also understood as relevant to the university's understanding to Service to Society. This role is realised through participation in several committees for strategic development of the city and the region, such as the Regional Innovation Strategy for Smart Specialisation, the Olomouc Integrated Territorial Investments strategy and in the OK4Inovace, a consortium of legal entities founded in 2011 to implement the Regional Innovation Strategy of the Olomouc Region. In addition to that, the public role also includes cooperation projects with local institutions and businesses in the field of pre-application research and long-term inter-departmental cooperation, as well as through the promotion of Olomouc being a university city, stimulating cooperation between UP and the city of Olomouc, or, last but not least, cooperation with the Olomouc Teaching Hospital or the Academia Film Olomouc Festival. In discussions with staff, some stated that a central service to society consists in the delivery of high quality education and research. The team recommends that UP *reflects on UP's service to society policy in the form of a short and concise statement. It needs to be documented what the relevant components of service to society for UP (social awareness and contributions (free services), technology & knowledge transfer (paid), facility management (rent, lab service, paid), life-long learning (paid)) are, and how organisation mechanisms, strategies and enhancement frameworks related to these are formulated and managed.*

Leaving this point aside, the team saw UP as a university with high ambitions to influence public policy and debate and with a rich set of activities where the university engages with its surroundings, mainly acting in a "third role". The team was impressed by the wide range of events UP runs itself or is involved in to promote the popularisation of science among the public, but also to influence with its knowledge on society. The most prominent activities are the children's university and the programmes of lifelong learning and continuing education, including the University of Third Age (U3A). Other activities include the Fort of Science and the yearly film festival "Academia Film Olomouc". The SER gives evidence of a large variety of activities engaging with schools, i.e. the Green Camp, Natural Science and Mathematical Kangaroo, European Space Agency events, mock courses, and examples of charity work or activities for talented school students to participate in research projects. Also mentioned are offers to learn languages, which are also open for the public and widely used.

As the team understands, many of these offers are either free of charge or generate only small amounts of income, which brings the team back to an observation made on the general income of the university. UP generates only 1% of its income from knowledge transfer, which includes the lifelong learning programmes as well as contractual research which could also be seen as a form of service for society. The team therefore suggests to *capitalise more on the activities of*

the university, and to make an effort to evaluate and measure (capitalise) the social impact of the university as a method to track the evolution of its Science to Society services.

This is even more true since the team observed that UP is well aware of the variety of its stakeholders and has established a broad network and good relationships with them. In particular, the team noted that UP is taking steps to enhance its work with alumni and in doing so, it plans to include its "foreign alumni" as well, which the team noted positively. Another interesting approach is the plan to use UP as a hub for coordinating and enhancing also the international cooperation of the city of Olomouc and the region – which to the team is evidence that UP staff and leadership are thinking about the values it can bring to its stakeholders. In the view of the team, UP could capitalise more on external stakeholders such as alumni, the Board of Trustees etc., and encourages UP to *identify the values of UP without being afraid to commercialise and capitalise more on its external stakeholders than is the case so far.*

Overall, the team gained the impression that UP is still very much orientated towards input-output and for this reason the team recommends that UP *at institutional level moves its orientation towards outcome and impact. In particular, the team thinks that UP should undertake more efforts to promote knowledge and technology transfer, spin-offs, contract research, and outcomes in general – teaching and learning, research outcomes.*

7. Internationalisation

For 2016-2020 the vision states that UP intends to provide systematic support for foreign students, helping them to integrate as well into the academic life at UP as into society in general. Two objectives are directly linked to internationalisation: "international study and work environment" and "internationalisation of degree programmes", but some related elements could also be found in other objectives. Internationalisation is one of the few areas where the team could find an explicitly formulated target of having more than 10% of foreign students by 2020.

The team could clearly see that Internationalisation is one of the priority areas of UP, most prominently visible in the results. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, UP has many degree programmes in foreign languages in place as well as eight double/joint degree programmes. UP also states that it seeks to expand short-term programmes and in particular summer schools which would be attractive to foreign students, where UP still sees much room for improvement and which is also included as a tool in the Strategic Plan (but not indicating goals). Regarding the language of instruction, the team noted positively that the approach here is not just a neither-nor position on programmes in a foreign language or in Czech, but that "Czech programmes" also have parts that are provided in another language. Another evidence of the good work done so far is the high percentage of staff members from abroad (11%) and the team heard that they feel well accepted and integrated at UP.

The percentage of students from abroad is also high (9.1% in 2016 and during the site visit this was already around 10%). The team however noted that the figures do not include students from Slovakia: they account for roughly 6% of the student population and are treated as extra, due to their proximity to the Czech Republic. If UP would include these students, the percentage would be over 15% of the student population, meaning that it would have already reached its aim in the Strategic Plan. The numbers of in- and outgoing staff show a tendency towards outgoing, but at the same time indicate that UP is aware of this and has improved numbers largely since 2014 both in terms of incoming staff and students.

From a management perspective, UP has a Vice-Rector for International Affairs, backed by an International Affairs Division with around 8-9 full-time staff plus extra staff working part-time, and international offices at faculty level. The team learned that the work of the International Affairs Division so far has been split in a) an office for International Affairs, which supports staff mainly in partnerships and educational projects, but does not provide project management support; and b) an office for International Strategy, to inform management backed with data on the position of the university rankings. The actual support and services for foreign staff are provided by the international offices at the faculties.

The team learned that UP is currently restructuring its service structure for international affairs and is developing a Centre for International Cooperation. The intention is to establish a comprehensive contact and communication space, the main task of which is to coordinate and cover at central level all relevant components of UP and to be in charge of the

internationalisation strategies, development of methodologies, and provide services to all units – in particular mobility administration, marketing, student recruitment and service for foreign UP graduates. Interestingly, the Centre also is supposed to coordinate cooperation between UP, the Region of Olomouc and the City of Olomouc and other entities regarding international activities, which the team appreciates in the overall concept. Since the centre will coordinate all relevant units, including central units and faculties, student organisations, the Confucius Institute etc., the team sees it as good example of pooling resources for the benefit of the institution as a whole. This can serve as a useful example for other areas where the team mentioned UP should integrate its activities.

With these findings in view, the team would like to pay tribute to the remarkable results UP has achieved. It was clear to the team that the university has not only developed a comprehensive idea of what internationalisation for UP entails, but that it has also the capacity to put its aspirations and plans into action. Given the university's ambitions, the team feels that in the future, UP should strive to *conceptualise internationalisation as an integral part of all major activities,* which in fact is a more thorough continuation of the activities already taking place or starting.

Another observation relates to the monitoring and analytical work on internationalisation. Based on the documents provided, the team could see that UP has good knowledge of student and staff mobility and seems in general to trace its internationalisation activities very well. However, when it comes to the presentation of data, the team observed a similar pattern as with the budget figures, that is a very detailed, somewhat fragmented way of showing results, orientated along the many different sources of funding, making it hard for the reader to grasp the general picture and trends, and especially for those coming from outside. The respective section in the annual report is here a case in point and the team did not find many targets figures. The team recommends that UP starts to *monitor and analyse systematically mobility, international students, international cooperation etc. against institutional targets and trends. In doing so, the university should overcome fragmented approaches.*

Finally, the team commends UP for the high value it gives to linguistic competences, drawing on the concept of a multilingual university, which the team found credible and well reflected in the Strategic Plan. The main activities are offers for developing language skills among staff and students and by providing all relevant information for foreign staff and students in English for their proper integration. The team understood that the main structure for developing linguistic skills is the UPlift language school based at the Faculty of Arts, providing courses to all staff and students from UP and, aside UPlift, some faculties have their own language centres. The team questioned whether the activities of small units at faculty level are an efficient way of organising language learning and recommends UP to *centralise language learning by pooling resources to make it more effective and more efficient.*

8. Conclusion

Many of the recommendations in this report have the same underlying topic which is centralisation / integration, also a central theme in 1998/1999. At the time, the review ended with the statement that UP "can and should become more than the sum of its seven faculties" (CRE, ibd., p. 24). The team would like to end this report by reinforcing this statement and encouraging UP to address the issue of fragmentation more actively.

The team is confident that UP has favourable conditions for this. The team met a visionary and proactive leadership with ambitions to lead a debate on the Czech higher education system, a highly qualified and dedicated academic and administrative staff, concerned with the development of the university, and it observed a collegial, constructive and open atmosphere. From discussions with deans and vice-deans, the team gained the impression that faculty leadership is open to more methodological support from the central level. The team talked to students who enjoy studying at UP with its pleasant and inspiring environment for study and work. According to the team, this provides a favourable climate for discussions about the further development of the university, which mirrors a value set in the Strategic Plan for the academic life at UP to "create a varied, ethical, intellectually lively and friendly university environment supporting critical discussion about current issues in societal development". As the team could also see, the university has been able to raise or attract young staff who are gradually stepping into leadership positions, which means that the university has managed to solve the major concern in 1999 of ageing staff.

A last comment should be made concerning the university's positioning and its ambitions to be continuously among the three best universities in the Czech Republic and among the top 500 worldwide. From discussions with staff and leadership alike, the main references related to the other top Czech universities, whereas little was said about universities abroad, as a comparison for UP. The team therefore encourages UP to identify institutions it would like to learn from, to look for excellent management approaches abroad as a source for inspiration that suits the needs and particular profile of UP. Publications from EUA regarding quality assurance or doctoral education can serve as a good starting point.

The team wishes UP luck for all its activities in the years to come and hopes that its staff and leadership continue firmly, and in the best sense with the further integration of the institution, to tap its full potential.

Summary of the recommendations

Governance

1. Consider modifying UP's mission by moving it more towards purpose and priorities.

2. Improve strategic planning by setting priorities, targeting figures, timelines and persons. Make the transposition from the Strategic Plan to the faculty level more meaningful, including an overall form to follow up on the yearly action plans of the faculties.

3. Take more advantage of the SWOT analysis as a tool for institutional development. Shorten it substantially to a document to support the mission statements and consequently, the Strategic Plan and its implementation.

4. Ensure ownership of all major activities.

5. Improve the presentation of internal organisation through organisational charts.

6. Rethink the university's internal organisation towards a more managerial approach. Review the boards and offices, seeking ways to diminish their abundance. Integrate / centralise quality management, research management and strategic management as far as possible.

7. Identify standard categories of income streams, follow the income on this basis over the years and make multi-annual analyses. Evaluate trends and relative budget shares reflecting institutional ambitions. UP may consider using Full Cost Accounting / Activity Based Costing technique to identify its competitive advantages accurately.

8. Establish a student parliament.

9. Place even more attention on HR development and ensure that it has recognisable structures to support academic and administrative staff in their development.

10. Minimise the workload of academic staff members in top-leadership positions as far as possible, ideally towards full-time management positions.

Quality Culture

11. Declare and describe clearly internal QA tools and ensure their proper integration throughout the structure of the university.

12. Set and incorporate the standards in all areas – teaching and learning, research, service to society, governance / administration and internationalisation. For its teaching and learning standards (educational activities) in particular, the team recommends UP to base these on the Standards and Guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

13. Benchmark and identify key performance indicators and include them in the quality assurance processes, monitor them and use results for improvements, closing the loop of the PDCA-cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act).

14. Publish UP's quality assurance results and key figures.

15. Improve analytical work / collecting information for reporting and strategic planning, i.e. considering an office for institutional research, understood as a service unit to the institution as a whole that supports the further development of quality and strategy.

Management of Research

16. Choose priorities and focus areas - towards real priorities in research excellence.

17. Strive for easy-to-grasp communication of research activities to the public.

18. Think of mechanisms to drive interdisciplinary and collaborative research in a more generalised manner, build teams, scale up and catalyse.

19. Consider the integration / centralisation of UP's research management, especially in relation to support services, to scale up resources and good practice.

20. Develop a proactive research management, led by one research manager.

21. Benchmark with international institutions, using UP's international network UP to learn from them.

22. Follow research income. Analyse the trends of UP's research budget in the past and formulate expectations for the near future to improve institutional research policies.

23. Address PhD training within research. Make doctoral education a central topic at UP to create a community for PhD students – for example, in setting up a Doctoral School with clear rules, joint supervision, research training, etc.)

Teaching and Learning

24. Take the institutional accreditation as an opportunity to reduce the number of study programmes, to integrate existing programmes, also in the sense of innovating them.

25. Provide students with a maximum amount and a broader variety of "real" elective courses in the curricula.

26. Ensure the assessment of learning outcomes at programme level.

27. Promote innovative approaches in teaching and learning and facilitate this process by providing adequate support for teaching staff to develop related skills, to link the development of innovative approaches with resources for staff development at central level, from which all staff members can benefit.

Service to Society

28. Reflect on UP's Service to Society policy in the form of a short and concise statement. What are the relevant components of Service to Society for UP (social awareness and contributions (free services), technology & knowledge transfer (paid), facility management (rent, lab service, paid), lifelong learning (paid)) and how organisation, mechanisms, strategies and enhancement frameworks related to these are formulated and managed, need to be documented.

29. Capitalise more on the activities of the university, make an effort to evaluate and measure (capitalise) the social impact of the university as a method to track the evolution of its Science to Society services. Identify the values of UP without being afraid to commercialise and capitalise more on UP's external stakeholders than is the case so far.

30. Move from input / output orientation towards Outcome and Impact. Undertake more efforts to promote knowledge and technology transfer, spin-offs, contract research, outcomes in general – teaching and learning, research outcomes.

Internationalisation

31. Strive further to conceptualise internationalisation as an integral part of all major activities.

32. Monitor and analyse systematically mobility, international students, international cooperation etc. against institutional targets, trends. Overcome fragmented approaches.

33. Centralise language learning – in the sense of pooling resources, to make it more effective and more efficient.