

**European University Association
Institutional Evaluation Programme**

***TERNOPIL NATIONAL ECONOMIC UNIVERSITY
EVALUATION REPORT***

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Contents

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Institutional Evaluation Programme
- 1.2. Ternopil National Economic University and the national context
- 1.3. The Self-Evaluation process
- 1.4. The evaluation team (later Team)

2. Constraints and institutional norms

- 2.1. Governance and management
- 2.2. Teaching
- 2.3. Research
- 2.4. Resources

3. The capacity to change

4. Special focus: Internationalisation

5. Conclusion and recommendations

- 5.1. Academic capacity
 - 5.1.1. Internationalisation
 - 5.1.2. Teaching and learning
 - 5.1.3. Research
- 5.2. Strategic management
- 5.3. Quality management
- 5.4. Final Conclusions

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviews conducted by the IEP Team during the visits

Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the Ternopil National Economic University. The evaluation took place in the spring and summer 2009 in Ternopil, Ukraine. In this report, the Evaluation Team presents its observations and recommendations regarding the Ternopil National Economic University. The Team is sensitive to the constraints the University faces. Nevertheless it believes that the following recommendations will assist the University in pursuing changes that will allow it to continue to advance its goals and ambitions.

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.

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme 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 the 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 planning
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic planning as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is 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 it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2. Ternopil National Economic University and the national context

The Ternopil National Economic University is a specialised university located in the Western Ukrainian city of Ternopil. It was established in 1966 as a branch of the Finance and Economic Faculty of Kiev Institute of National Economy, and reached independent university status in 1971. Today, the University has the highest accreditation level of a National University and it offers higher education degrees at Bachelor, Specialist, and Master levels, as well as academic degrees of Candidate of Science and Doctor of Science. The University has 28,000 students, of whom two

thirds are part-time or extramural students, and one third full time. The University comprises eleven faculties, three research centres, four research laboratories and two research institutes. The University has 68 departments, and is located in several different campuses: the main campus in Ternopil, and four independent institutes in Vinnytsya, Ivano-Frankivsk, Chortkiv (Ukraine), and Yerevan (Armenia). Additionally the University has two branch faculties in Sambir and Novovolynsk, and it offers support for extramural students through its four educational and consultative centres around the country. The status as a national university reflects its high achievements, and also its higher budget. Ternopil National Economic University is ranked second amongst the four public universities specialising in economics: Kiev, Odessa, Kharkiv and Ternopil. In a recent ranking organised by a national newspaper the TNEU was ranked 3rd amongst the 70 higher education institutions in Western Ukraine.

The senior management team of the University comprises the Rector, and seven Vice-Rectors: four Vice-Rectors for education, the Vice-Rector for research, the Vice-Rector for humanitarian education, and the Vice-Rector for social and economic development, reporting to the Academic Board. The Academic Board is the supreme decision making body of the University and it consists of 56 members, including the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, the Deans, and representatives of staff and students.

1.3. The Self Evaluation Process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a self-evaluation team which was established by the Rector Professor Serhiy Yuriy in September 2008. The self-evaluation team was chaired by Vice-Rector Professor Hryhoriy Zhuravel, and comprised representatives of the school management, academic staff and students. The participation in the IEP was announced to all University members on the University website. Several different working groups were involved in preparing the different parts of the self-evaluation report, each chaired by a member of the self-evaluation team. The self-evaluation report was additionally discussed at meetings of the University Academic Board and also by those of the Faculties.

The Ternopil National Economic University chose internationalisation and research management as the two special foci for the evaluation.

The SER was an excellent document and of great use to the Team in providing the basic information on the structures and operations of the University, as well as in pointing out some of the immediate issues for further examination and discussion. The Team found the SER to be a very candid document, with great openness and perception concerning the strengths and opportunities, but also aware of the weaknesses and challenges facing the University. In addition to the SER, the Team had at their disposal additional material provided by the University regarding the operational environment of the University as well as its internal strategies.

1.4. The evaluation team (hereafter the Team)

The self-evaluation report of the Ternopil National Economic University along with the appendices was sent to the Team in February 2009. The visits of the evaluation team to the Ternopil National Economic University took place 4-6.3.2009 and 21-25.6.2009, respectively. In between the visits the Ternopil National Economic University provided the evaluation team with some additional documentation.

At various meetings the Team spoke with the Rector and Vice-Rectors, the self-evaluation team, the Academic Board, senior administrative staff, and the Deans of all the different faculties. The team visited some support units, research institutes and several faculties, and met with a number of representatives of staff, undergraduate and graduate students. Moreover, the Team had the opportunity to meet with some of the University's external partners. The discussions were open and candid. The Team was also able to visit other University facilities such as computer laboratories, dormitories and student health and sport facilities.

The evaluation team¹ consisted of:

- Professor Kerstin Norén, Rector of the Karlstad University, Sweden, Chair of the evaluation group
- Emeritus Professor Malcolm Cook, former deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter, UK
- Professor Jacques Lanares, Vice-Rector of the University of Lausanne, Switzerland
- Dr Terhi Nokkala, University of Surrey, UK, Secretary of the evaluation team (from Finland)

The Team would like to thank the Ternopil National Economic University, and especially its Rector Professor Serhiy Yuriy and his colleagues, for the open atmosphere in which all meetings and interviews took place, as well as for the detailed arrangements of the visits. The Team appreciated that every effort to accommodate their wishes was made and greatly enjoyed the cordial hospitality of the visits. Special thanks are due to the many interlocutors met during the visits, and the invaluable work of the Vice-Rector Professor Hryhoriy Zhuravel and Associate Professor Nataliya Lysa, who were very helpful in organising the two visits and in making available all the information asked for by the Team. The Team would also like to thank the interpreters provided by the University without whom the evaluation could not have taken place

2. Constraints and institutional norms

2.1. Governance and management

The Team noted that the University seems to be facing a situation of limited autonomy at all levels. First, the Ukrainian higher education system appears to be very centralised, with the Ministry of Education and Science having considerable control over the operational context of higher education institutions. The state budget funding for higher education institutions is allocated as line-item budgets, over which institutions themselves have little control. The Ministry also retains some control over self-generated budgets, for instance by approving budgets for contract research between universities and private companies; and the regional Treasury holds power over the internal allocation of the so-called "special funds", generated through tuition fees and other self-generated funding. The curriculum is also state-controlled to a large extent, with public authorities designing 50-75% of the curriculum. Additionally there are national regulations regarding the composition of the governance bodies and organisational structures.

¹ The Team also originally had a student representative, Ms Angelika Striedinger from Austria, who, due to unfortunate circumstances, could not participate in either of the visits.

Because of the historical background of a highly-centralised decision-making process, this limited autonomy vis-à-vis the public authorities is replicated in the lines of management inside the University. The Academic Board has the ultimate decision-making powers on a wide variety of issues, ranging from broad strategic decisions down to individual financial assistance and scholarships. A similar top-heavy distribution of power remains between the faculties and departments. This makes for very unwieldy governance structures, which burden the strategic leadership of the institution with a large flow of operational issues that could be more efficiently dealt with at lower institutional levels

The University is going through a transitional phase in several respects. The impact of the Bologna Process that has been espoused by the University has led to a radical change in the educational process, from teaching-oriented to student-centred and learning-oriented education; and the research function is becoming a more important part of the University mission. The University is caught in the complex web of demands set on the one hand by the tight national regulations, and on the other hand by the pressures of increasingly competitive, internationalising labour markets. In such a transition period, the University has ambitious plans and commendable drive to make changes and move forward. However, it seemed to the evaluation team that there are no visible priorities set for the development of the University, and that the University is trying to do too many things too quickly. This causes confusion about the priorities amongst the staff and aggravates the resistance to change, which itself is often inevitable in a rapid transition process.

The Team also questions the rationale and wisdom of such an unwieldy organisational structure within a specialised institution with concentration on particular and precise areas of activity, with eleven faculties, 68 departments and several branch campuses and other distance units. Some of the faculties, such as the Faculty of Law, and the Faculty of Computer and Information Technologies have distinctive profiles, but others seem to be doing very similar things. The Team understands that this is by the University's own choice, rather than a precondition stipulated by legislation and it invites the University to give full consideration to the structure and to question whether it is the most effective and streamlined system for a modern university

2.2. Teaching

Ternopil National Economic University has a strong national reputation in education in its subject fields of economics, law and computer science. It is a popular place to study, and attracts students through this reputation. Applications to the University have increased in the past years, and the University has done a lot of good work to improve its teaching. In attracting students, the University offers two great benefits: it has increased the quality of its education and provides a comprehensive social protection programme aimed to foster students' well-being and empowerment. However, the team feels that the University is not making a full use of these improvements in its marketing to attract students. None of the students the Team spoke with said that they were aware of the social protection programme when deciding to apply for TNEU. Rather they said that they had chosen the University because of its reputation and because of recommendations from past and current students.

The University has been a pioneering institution in Ukraine in introducing changes in accordance to the Bologna Process, most notably a move from teaching-oriented to

learning-oriented education, and from class-based lectures to individual study. However, such a transition process, if implemented top-down, often causes uncertainty and confusion amongst students and staff, which may lead to tension and resistance to change. There seems to be no systematic pedagogical development regarding the Bologna Process, nor real support for staff to implement these changes, and the results seemed patchy across the institution.

The University has already taken some steps to introduce quality assessment. The quality of teaching is ensured by other teachers or the faculty Dean occasionally sitting in and listening to lectures given by teachers. The students the team spoke to in general felt that it was easy for them to raise any issues they might have with the curriculum or quality of teaching. There was also a procedure for them to file a formal complaint with the Dean regarding the quality of teaching, or if they felt their rights were being violated. However, the Team found no evidence that there is currently systematic anonymous evaluation of teaching by students. The University has designed a student feedback questionnaire that was seen by the Team but which had, however, not been implemented at the time of the Team's visits. Having one overarching student feedback form is an important step forward, but the Team feels that one form is not a sufficient tool for evaluating different teaching practices, learning methods and levels of education. As the University does not yet have systematic information about the quality of its education, there is no possibility of a feedback loop of quality improvement

The University offers three types of higher education degrees: Bachelor, Specialist and Master. Some of the faculties also offer the two scientific post-graduate degrees: Candidate of Science and Doctor of Science. The curriculum is largely determined by the state, which leaves little space for innovation in curriculum. The faculties make use of the expertise of teachers from other faculties by inviting them to teach in the faculty in question and thus supplement teaching given by its own teachers. However, it is not possible for students to take courses organised in other faculties. Although there is a move towards more individualised study arrangements, the norm for the moment is a majority of compulsory lectures, with compulsory class attendance.

The University has in recent years taken steps to introduce elements of e-learning to its curricula. Despite a difficult economic situation, TNEU manages to offer electronic resources that students met by the Team were quite happy with. Teachers could often be contacted by email, and some teachers distribute lecture notes and other learning material by the internet. However, the e-learning environment is a long way from being fully developed, although it would be especially useful for the University's large number of part-time or extramural students (over 18,000), who make up two thirds of the University's entire student population. E-learning arrangements have huge pedagogical potential, but specific pedagogical development is required for the full benefits of such arrangements to be realised. The staff would also require specific pedagogical training to support them in implementing student-centred learning and e-learning arrangements.

2.3. Research

It is common for the teaching and research tasks of a university to cause tensions for the management of time and resources for each mission. In the traditionally teaching-oriented culture of the Ternopil National Economic University, this tension is identifiable. The University wants to make the transition to a research-intensive

institution, while at the same time its education mission is in a state of flux. However, there are several obstacles to this ambition.

The research activities of the University are somewhat modest for a university that is so specialised and that has high ambitions. The majority of the research output consists of publications in Ukrainian language journals or TNEU-edited English-language journals with limited international audience.

The amount of research also varies considerably between the different departments, although the strategy of the University emphasises the responsibility of all staff in research activities. Some of the units, such as the Research Institute of Intelligent Computer Systems (RIICS) have several international research projects with universities around the world, although overall the University's research focus seems to be on applied research especially with local partners, rather than basic or pure, blue skies research. The University has taken several steps to develop applied research tailored to the needs of the region and its enterprises. While this is admirable and important, it is not the area that will gain international recognition. The example of the RIICS is an excellent one and the University could well develop its own research activity based on the kind of template that is apparent in this Institute: international networking, European and international projects, publication in world-class journals, partnerships with research-intensive universities across the world, a staff that is fluent in English and that can present papers and introduce material in the English language.

Indeed, the lack of language proficiency in foreign languages, notably English, amongst most senior and many junior academics is a particular problem for conducting international collaborative research, and disseminating research results.

As with many of the other activities of the University, the research output seems to be hampered by the lack of financial resources. The highest quality international research requires more time and resources than are currently available. Although research is one of the priorities, the University does not have an explicit operational plan for its research strategy, or clearly set targets for individual and institutional research production. Research plans and targets should be drawn up across the University, individual by individual (from senior to junior staff), department by department, faculty by faculty, with regular evaluation of the success of these plans. At the moment, research seems to be a purely individual activity, based on individual interests, rather than an activity in which the entire University is moving in the same direction. Although research output is taken into account in renewing staff employment contracts, there are mixed messages about the extent to which there are incentives for research, and whether it is reflected in pay and in working conditions. There also seems to be a relatively small number of professors in the University, who should take a strong role in providing research leadership.

The University seems to be lacking a clear definition of what constitutes international research. There are many similar specialised institutions in the world that are truly research intensive, and the University should seek to follow their example: define the major journals in which research output should be published; seek means of gaining large research grants for individuals and research teams; organise and participate in the major conferences relating to their work; seek external evaluation by specialists in their research areas. Similarly, although the quantity of research output of individual staff members and departments is controlled by internal and external checks through annual reporting, there seems to be no systematic internal and external evaluation of the quality of research production. This is not something that can be done by an

individual within the University, but something that needs subject expertise of a very high level.

2.4. Resources

The University is operating in a difficult financial climate. The University's annual budget is approximately 12,4 million Euros, one third of which is government budget funding, and two thirds are self-generated funding. The average salary of a professor is €300/month; the rent for a family flat is, on average, €100/month, and student accommodation €15/month. The economic situation is made worse by the fact that Ukraine has been very severely hit by the current global economic crisis. This is reflected for example in the difficulties in acquiring research funding, and the increased economic problems of students. Considering that 67% of the University's income is self-generated, and primarily based on tuition fees, this may have a serious impact on the University.

The demographic situation also has an effect on the University and its funding. The age cohorts are going down, and in the beginning of 1990's there were particularly few children born. The Team also heard that there are plans to increase the school-leaving age by one year in 2012, which would affect the University's student intake for one year. Although some of the income can be recovered through part-time students and research work, the University's finances will inevitably be damaged by this situation.

Staff members work on variable term contracts of 1-5 years, with professors having up to 10-year contracts. The jobs are advertised primarily in Ukraine, and there does not seem to be a clear strategy for increasing the number of international staff. A university that is international will, naturally, have a number of staff from other countries.

The University has underdeveloped management information and feedback systems, which are not made full use of in terms of making systematic self-analysis in order to find out what is going on and where the University is in relation to its goals.

3. The capacity to change

The Ternopil National Economic University is in the middle of a challenging transition period. The Ukrainian higher education is changing as it moves towards compatibility with the Bologna Process. The University is facing a challenging and restrictive financial context. Internally the University is making a change from a primarily teaching-oriented to a research-intensive institution, and is trying to build itself an international profile. The Team strongly support TNEU's aspirations of becoming a more research-intensive and internationally oriented university, while continuing to improve the quality of its education, and provide services to the local community. The Team recognised the ambitions and motivation of the University and was convinced of its desire to change and move forward. It also recognised that there were many handicaps to overcome before its ambitions could be properly achieved. These include financial considerations, the lack of autonomy of the institution in a system that

is still state-controlled, lack of foreign language skills and lack of resource and expertise to develop the curriculum.

The constraints and challenges the Team sees in the operational context and current organisational practices of the University are listed above. The University also has many strengths, which the Team would specifically like to mention here. The University has an excellent national reputation, and is able to attract good students not just from Ternopil region, but also from all over Ukraine. The University has dedicated staff who are motivated for development; and enthusiastic students, who clearly value the education given by the University. The University has centralised, but democratic decision-making structures. It is very committed to the well-being of its staff and students, and offers a wide range of services to them. TNEU has been a pioneer on several occasions. This illustrates the willingness of the leadership to move forward. The candidness demonstrated in the self-evaluation report is no doubt a good starting point for change.

These provide an excellent, and necessary, foundation for the University's capacity to change. But these new developments mean a cultural change and a significant effort of persuasion and motivation will be required before this new vision is shared by the TNEU community. In order to achieve its goals, the University also needs a clearly defined, structured and prioritised medium to long term strategy, as well as specific policies for research, staff development and quality culture.

4. Special focus: internationalisation

Ternopil National Economic University chose internationalisation and research management as the two special foci of the evaluation. As research management has already been discussed in the above section on research, only internationalisation will be discussed here.

So far the international activities of the University have understandably been quite limited. Nevertheless, the University has a range of international education and research cooperation projects with a limited number of international institutions around the world. The University currently has 34 international collaboration agreements with universities in 18 countries all over the world. The largest number of agreements, 11 out of 34, are with universities in neighbouring Poland. The international co-operation focuses mainly on reciprocal mobility of teachers and students, cooperation in developing new study programmes, textbooks and teaching materials, exchange of research experience and cooperation in research projects. The University also hosts annually approximately one hundred international degree students, mainly from the Middle East, Africa and Asia. In order to boost the internationalisation process, the University has implemented some of the features of the Bologna Process, such as more individual study processes. However, comprehensive implementation of all its features would require some changes in national regulations.

The University seeks to become a truly international university, with an international outlook in its education and research. Its international ambitions are hampered first and foremost by two issues: the overall lack of funding and the generally insufficient language proficiency. These two aspects together, lead to an inadequate networking with international partners. The lack of funding makes it difficult for staff members to participate in international conferences, which are typically the first steps in creating

international networks. Similarly, funds are not available for inviting international visitors to the University to provide broader perspectives in teaching and foster collaboration in research.

The Ukraine is currently not eligible for the Erasmus student exchange programme, which forms a considerable obstacle for the international student mobility in the institution. Instead, the University has been able to establish various bilateral mobility agreements, which provide great value for the students' education. However, in some cases these bilateral agreements benefit students only from particular faculties and not from the entire institution.

Lack of proficiency in foreign languages, especially English proficiency, among senior staff, but also among many junior staff and students, forms another great obstacle to the ambitions of the University in becoming a more international institution. The University has acknowledged this challenge and has taken steps to remedy the situation, first by providing English courses to its staff members and then, when that failed, by engaging those staff members already proficient in English to provide teaching in English. There are also some translation services available for staff, but those seem to be seriously under-resourced, and cannot provide sufficient support.

5. Conclusion and recommendations

5.1. Academic capacity

5.1.1. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is one of the key ambitions of the University, and it has already taken some steps, especially in some of its units, to enhance its international collaboration in education and research. However, several challenges remain, and we hope that the following points may help the University to advance its goals in internationalisation.

Strengthen the capacity of the International Office

The International Office is an office in the central administration, which should have the capacity to help the international activities of the University. The International Office should be responsible for negotiating university-wide international collaboration agreements, and should support agreements established by the faculties and departments. It should be able to provide guidance for students about their possibilities for study abroad, and about staff exchange opportunities and practises. The International Office, at the institutional level, should be the hub of international activities and information.

The Team suggests that the capacity of the International Office in TNEU should be strengthened to make best use of it in enhancing internationalisation, and in supporting the University once its international ambitions have been fulfilled. The University might consider hiring a full-time professional manager to supervise the work. The Office should continue to work in close cooperation with the academic staff interested in international activities. The staff of the international office might benefit from peer-learning and international benchmarking of its activities. Therefore The

Team recommends that they would visit such offices in other European countries and learn from best practices.

Establish a fund for international collaboration

Funding has been shown to be one of the greatest obstacles for the international activities. Considerably larger financial resources are required for developing international contacts. Funding would be required for participating in international conferences, for conducting study and benchmarking visits, and for inviting international visitors to the University to teach, give seminars and plan collaborative research projects. The University should consider establishing a strategic fund managed by the Rector, where funding would be available for fostering international collaboration. The University should also consider how to take better advantage of international funding sources and scholarships available for it, such as those in the context of the Marie Curie programme. This would be facilitated by establishing better support services for staff for applying for international grants. Many universities that are international and research intensive have a specific Research Office that will advise on grants and applications, read and comment on applications and cost applications sensibly and competitively.

Identify and support internationally orientated staff in faculties

There are several internationally oriented staff members in different faculties, who both have the required language skills, and have already established contacts with international colleagues. International collaboration is dependent on these contacts being nurtured and broadened. Approaching foreign universities without prior personal level contact is often futile. Therefore the Team recommends that the University takes steps to identify these people in different faculties and departments. They should be supported in their international activities, and made use of in creating further contacts. Some of the University's research units already benefit from broad international contact networks, and their success could provide an internal source of best practices for the entire institution to learn from. The University should define a list of research 'champions' who could visit other departments and faculties and advise them about how to proceed based on their own success.

Develop foreign language skills across the University

Solving the challenge presented by the lack of adequate language proficiency needs to be addressed in the entire University, as this is the key to the University achieving its international ambitions. Courses for staff to learn English, and other relevant foreign languages should be available, and staff should be given time to develop their proficiency. These courses should be made attractive and flexible to fit the working schedules. Language self-study could be supported by establishing up-to-date language laboratories, which would benefit both staff and students. Staff could be engaged in foreign language teaching to a greater extent than currently is the case. They could be partnered in teaching with the University's international visitors, to provide peer support. Special attention should be paid to the English skills of the English teachers themselves, who should periodically have the opportunity to update their own skills by study visits to foreign, preferably native English-speaking institutions.

The best way to learn foreign languages is to spend time in a native country of that language. Therefore all forms of study visits and exchange study for students, and foreign sabbaticals for staff should be encouraged.

Developing language proficiency could be built into the general staff development framework of the University. Staff contracts are renewed periodically, at which point overall professional progress can be evaluated and targets set for the next period. Language proficiency could be designated as one potential area for development, which would motivate the staff to enhance their skills.

Implement all aspects of the Bologna process

The Bologna process is the most significant development in European higher education of the last decade. Its aim is to create the European Higher Education Area by 2010, by facilitating the transparency and transferability of higher education degrees throughout Europe. The driving forces behind the Bologna Process are the need to enhance competitiveness, comparability and quality of European higher education, and to increase the employability and mobility of European graduates. The Bologna Process aims to increase the transferability and comparability of degrees, and thus mobility within Europe, by comparable two-tier degree structures, the Diploma Supplement, European Credit Transfer System, quality assurance mechanisms, and removing the social and economic barriers to mobility. Although the harmonised degree structure was perhaps the most emphasised element at the beginning of the process, the goals related to quality assurance, employability and learning outcomes are emerging as the new top priorities. The Team suggests the following procedures to take the implementation of the Bologna process further in TNEU.

Develop the partnership with the Ministry to move forward with Bologna implementation in Ukraine

The University has already taken steps to integrate some aspects of the Bologna Process, and in this it has been a pilot institution in Ukraine. It has accumulated valuable experience, which could benefit other Ukrainian higher education institutions as well. Therefore the Team would encourage the University to implement all Bologna elements wholeheartedly. Issues related to degree structures and credit systems require changes in national regulations. The Team encourages the University to establish a partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science to drive forward a comprehensive implementation of the Bologna Process in Ukraine.

Identify best practice in other countries and learn from others' mistakes

During the past ten years a lot of experience and research regarding Bologna Process, its implementation, best practices and bad experiences have been accumulated. Several guidebooks are available on the implementation of Bologna Process. The Team recommends that the University uses the various sources of information to identify best practice in Bologna implementation in other countries, and to learn from mistakes already made by others.

5.1.2. Teaching and learning

The University is already a strong institution in teaching and learning, with a good national reputation and staff that is dedicated to make advances in this area. The Team hopes that the following suggestions will make an already strong institution even stronger.

Disseminate best practice in teaching and learning across the University

Create a network of faculty learning consultants

As in many universities, the teaching staff at TNEU has not had specific training to teach in higher education and to adapt their teaching methods to the student-centred learning approach espoused by the Bologna Process.

Teaching in higher education is a profession that is mainly learned through experience and feedback. In that perspective, student evaluations of teaching are very powerful tools to help this process, provided that they are conceived and utilised to offer such feedback. But research on this topic and experiences show that this is not always sufficient and that additional support is required.

Given the need to offer teachers more opportunities to develop their teaching competencies, and also taking into account TNEU's limited resources, the Team proposes the creation a network of 'teaching consultants' in Faculties. The basic idea, which needs to be developed further, is to have in each Faculty some kind of 'teaching consultant,' meaning a teacher or member of the Faculty interested in teaching issues and who agrees to be trained and to help colleagues from its Faculty (for instance, to help them to find solutions when they are having difficulties or when problems arise in their teaching evaluations). This activity (training and counselling) would be taken into account in the teaching load (900 annual hours).

A teacher, who could be linked to a Vice Rector for Education, could be partly discharged from regular teaching and work on improving his or her knowledge of teaching skills to lead this network of teaching consultants (share his or her own expertise, invite external experts, organise workshops to share best practices inside the network and among all University teachers, gather resources on the web, keep track of the Bologna Process etc.).

Develop expertise in student-centred learning

Many European countries have considerable experience in developing student-centred learning and teaching practices. The team suggests that the University identify best practice in European institutions that are well advanced in the Bologna process, and seek advice and guidance from them.

Develop diversified teaching and learning methods

Develop assessment practices appropriate to the subject

In the student-centred learning towards which the University is moving, the educational emphasis is on the students' learning outcomes. Learning must develop different skills in students, which may be assessed in different ways and take into account the specific needs of each subject. Therefore the University should not prioritise any one assessment method over others. Essays, team exercises, learning

diaries, student projects and other forms of continuous assessment may contribute to better learning outcomes than cramming for an examination at the end of the academic year. Oral examinations may be useful supplement to written examinations. The Team encourages the University to embrace a broad range of different methods to assess student learning, tailored to the needs of each subject.

Consider using open access e-learning platforms to disseminate use of technology in teaching

E-learning is one of the significant pedagogical innovations of the past years. E-learning can support and supplement traditional class-based teaching, and e-learning platforms can facilitate dissemination of learning materials, both in written and audio/video form; they enable collaborative student work and on-line tutorials. They make learning schedules flexible and enable individual study plans. Student assessment methods, feedback to students on their coursework, and also student feedback on teaching can be incorporated into e-learning platforms. They provide significant benefits, especially for part-time and distance-learning students.

There are several open access e-learning platforms available, so the main cost does not lie in the platform application itself. However, the benefits of e-learning can only be accrued through a pedagogically thought-out and well-resourced system. E-learning should not be implemented as a cost-cutting system, because then its contribution will remain small. When implementing e-learning arrangements, adequate pedagogical and technical support should be made available for teachers developing e-learning courses and materials. The Team recommends that the University take concrete steps towards developing a comprehensive strategy for pedagogical development, not just for e-learning but also for moving further in the implementation of the student-centred learning aspects of the Bologna Process.

Take steps to introduce life-long learning arrangements

Due to the accelerating pace of change in the procedures and practices of industry, commerce and other sectors of economy, the knowledge and skills of the labour force need continuous updating. Offering various forms of life-long learning, such as professional development courses, or degree courses tailored to the needs of specific employers, has become an increasingly important task for universities around the world.

TNEU could take advantage of its relations with the regional and national economic sector and its strengths in applied research, to develop various life-long learning arrangements. This could be an opportunity to raise money for some other specific activities, such as internationalisation.

Develop the Evaluation of Teaching

Introduce University-wide student evaluation of teaching

To support the evolution of the programmes and develop a quality culture, a global approach to the evaluation of teaching has to be created. This global framework should include different levels of evaluation and specify the particular objectives of the evaluation (namely, the questions to be answered by this specific evaluation), the frequency, the tools, how the results are used, by whom, how and to whom the results

are communicated, and so on. The idea is to have a global view of the different kinds of evaluations regarding teaching.

Diversify the questionnaires

The University has prepared, although not fully implemented, a common questionnaire for student evaluation of teaching throughout the University. However, whilst the Team sees benefits in this, the questionnaires have to be relevant for the teaching being evaluated. The Team suggests that TNEU could consider introducing different questionnaires with specific purposes, in particular for practical teaching, such as labs or exercises, and for different levels of teaching, such as individual teaching, modules, different years of study, and different degrees, such as bachelor, master, etc.

If questionnaires are supposed to improve teaching, they must be created with this in mind. Questions should reflect the main factors involved in learning (e.g. clarity of objectives, structure, illustrations and examples, presentation and interaction, to name some relevant for *ex cathedra* teaching), but they should also reflect the priorities of the University. The questionnaire currently prepared already contains a great number of useful questions.

The University's definition of quality should be transposed through the questionnaires. (see recommendation about Global Concept on quality) In other words, the University or the teacher is telling the students 'If this is what the University wants to provide in this teaching (i.e., structure, clarity, interactions and so on), do you think that we have succeeded?'

The trend now is to create questionnaires with affirmative statements and for students to say to what extent they agree with them (e.g., 'The teacher is available to answers questions'). The answering scale is 'Agree,' 'Somewhat Agree' 'Somewhat Disagree,' 'Disagree,' and 'No Opinion.' This kind of scale appears to give more accurate answers because one does not have to interpret what "4-5" means as compared to '6-7.' Since the goal is not to measure but to identify the priorities for improvements, such a limited scale is sufficient. One has to keep in mind that these answers are never objective, that they are only the 'objectivation' of subjectivity. There are plenty of questionnaires available on the web.

The main issue is obviously not to evaluate the teacher but to improve the teaching. This implies that teachers are involved in the process and are motivated to use the results. Research on teaching evaluations suggests that teachers will do so if they get new information, give credit to this information and see how to use the results. Consequently, it helps to give teachers the opportunity to add one or two (free) questions for which they have a specific concern. If the students are sensitised to the purposes of evaluation and their role in the process, along with the clarification that students are not 'judging' the teachers but saying something about their expectations, it helps teachers greatly to give credit to evaluation results. In the same line and in accordance to international best practice, it is important to guarantee anonymity to students to get more useful answers.

Ensure feedback to students after their evaluation of teaching

Evaluation is not an end in itself but a support for the improvement of teaching and an accountability policy. Best practice is thus to give feedback to the students that have evaluated the teaching, whatever the type (individual, module, programme). This does

not have to be done in full detail, but should include the main issues raised by the evaluation. The teacher or the head of unit (module, programme and so on) should also take this opportunity to explain how he or she will take the evaluation into account or why he or she cannot change some aspects. This discussion is important to motivate students to answer the questionnaires carefully and also to develop a quality culture.

Work with the Ministry to develop more flexibility in the curriculum

The Team recognises that the Ukrainian legislation bestows a lot of power in curriculum development on the national bodies. Setting national standards for education is useful, especially from a consumer protection perspective, but strict curriculum design also restricts potential learning innovation and the rapid shifts required on the internationalising labour market. The Team therefore recommends that the University establishes a partnership with the Ministry of Education and Science, and other relevant national level bodies, to develop more flexibility in the curriculum.

5.1.3 Research

Research is the other main area on which the University seeks to advance in the future, by consolidating research activities across all units and all members of staff. The University already does a lot of good work with local enterprises in applied research aimed to solve concrete problems, but its record in international, highest quality research is patchy. The following recommendations are intended to help the University to make progress in this area.

Take a strategic development approach to research activity

Set institutional and individual targets for research process

In order to move forward with its target to enhance its research capacity and international research production, we recommend that the University take a more systematic approach to its research management. A more explicit research strategy should be formulated, and institutional and individual output targets should be set for research production, including which publication fora should be targeted. These targets should not be limited only to the quantity of the research output, but rather the quality of the output should take centre stage. These targets should be the subject of consensual negotiations between the Rector and the research units, as well as part of the employment contracts of staff. The Team also suggests that the University should become more selective about the research outputs included in the targets, e.g. by aiming at the most prestigious international journals in each field (rather than by publishing in locally-edited journals) even when they are in foreign languages. Only in this way does the University have a possibility of making its research known to a large audience abroad. The expertise of international collaboration partners should be made use of in identifying which international journals should be targeted.

Introduce appropriate mechanisms for internal and external evaluations of research outputs

Controlling the amount of research output through annual reports either inside the University, or by the Ministry of Education and Science, is not the equivalent of

systematically evaluating the quality of research. Only accurate information about research quality enables the University to know whether the set research targets are reached, to identify units of research excellence and reward them, and to offer support for those units possibly lagging behind. The Team recommends that the University establishes systematic internal and external evaluation mechanisms for research outputs. These should make use of the knowledge of the best experts in each area. In terms of external research evaluation, we recommend using international experts, as far as it is not prevented by language proficiency.

Prioritise areas of fundamental and applied research in order to attract external grants

As part of the process of making the existing research strategy more concrete and clearly operational, The Team recommends that the University should select a handful of areas both in fundamental and applied research, which it would set as priority areas for research on which scarce resources should be focussed. Building a clear research profile on specific strong research areas would also facilitate the process of applying for external research grants, which often are reliant on having the best excellence on that specific topic. There are very few Universities in the world where every unit is world class; the University needs to identify its research stars and develop those further before trying to spread its resources too thinly across the entire institution.

Create a strategic fund for innovative ideas

As discussed before, the lack of funding is a significant hindrance to conducting highest quality research. Developing large international research proposals is a time-consuming activity, which may be difficult to fit in with other responsibilities. Similarly, there may not always be easily identifiable funding sources available for innovative research. Therefore we recommend that the University establishes a centrally managed strategic fund (often called "Rector's fund" or "pump-priming fund") where resources would be available on competitive basis for the most deserving innovative research ideas, and for early stages of developing large research projects. Applications to the fund could either be made possible on a continuous basis, or within regular intervals, e.g. biannually. The University could either designate a specialist committee inside the University to make decisions about the funded projects, or invite external experts to evaluate the proposals.

Create incentives and opportunities for staff

Introduce more flexibility in schedules for academic staff

The academic staff has a large annual teaching load: approximately 3/5 of their time is dedicated to teaching. Teaching is spread evenly over the academic year, leaving little uninterrupted time for research. The Team recommends that the University should create more flexibility in the staff schedules. The year could be divided into time periods (e.g. two, three or four periods over the academic year) and one period per year designated as research time for each member of staff. During that period the staff member in question would not have to perform teaching duties, but would be able to concentrate on research, while other members of the given would bear greater responsibility for teaching. Each member of staff should be entitled to this research time, on condition that they are research active and productive and are meeting their

research targets. The head of the department would be responsible for allocating this research time within the department.

Provide translation services for the international dissemination of high quality research

All staff members should have access to translation services to facilitate dissemination of high quality research results in internationally recognised academic journals. Very poor language might hinder an article even getting to a review process, or at the least would be picked up as negative by the reviewers. The University should ensure that adequate in-house capacity for translation is available.

Identify ways of supporting candidates to write their doctoral theses

The Ukrainian system of higher education degrees requires considerable scientific output after a Candidate of Science degree (comparable with PhD) and a second thesis in order for an aspirant to get a Doctor of Science degree. This degree is required for being promoted to a professorial position. At the same time, the University has a very small number of professors, who are unevenly distributed between faculties. Some faculties only have one or two professors, which is not sufficient for fostering strong research leadership. The University should therefore find ways to support the different groups of staff already holding a Candidate of Science degree in moving forward to a Doctor of Science degree.

Young female staff members in particular may have considerable time constraints in combining work, family and doctoral research. Many universities have organised a day-care possibility for children of staff and students, enabling them to take more time for work and studies. This might be one way of easing the time constraints faced by the female TNEU staff.

Also various forms of peer support targeted at doctoral aspirants may be very useful: for instance small study groups and a regular seminar programme could be established, so that people could periodically present their work to a peer audience. Methodological support may also be useful.

Develop comprehensive training programmes for PhD (Candidate of Science) degree.

For a Candidate of Science, it is no longer sufficient just to be able to do research in their selected area. Contemporary research environments are increasingly complex: operating in international research arena and tendering for international projects require special skills. A comprehensive training programme could be made available also for those preparing for their Candidate of Science degree. PhD programmes offer a chance for the aspirants not just to develop their skills in research but also to make progress in various other transferable skills, such as pedagogical skills and project management skills.

Develop incentives for a gradual culture change to a more research-intensive university, e.g. sabbaticals

The University has previously been primarily a teaching-oriented institution, and is currently undergoing a transformation to a more research-intensive university. This requires a considerable cultural shift, which, unless properly executed, may take its

toll on the work morale of the staff, who may feel too many conflicting pressures on them without due increase in resources. Making Ternopil National Economic University a research-led institution requires that a feeling of ownership of the process is widely shared. We recommend that the University develop incentives to facilitate the transformation process.

The Team would, for example, recommend that the University initiate a procedure for sabbatical leave, whereby each staff member every seven years has a possibility to spend substantial time in another university-level institution doing research; and conversely, to encourage (inviting) academics from other countries on sabbatical leave to spend time in the University. Alternatively a system of granting unpaid leave of absence could be implemented, when the financial situation does not permit paid sabbatical leave.

5.2. Strategic management

Strategic management is the key to unlocking the capacity for change for the University. In its Self-evaluation report, the University recognizes its main weakness in this area: “Complicated multilevel organizational framework with different types of relations, complicated procedures of decision coordination and making, and limited functioning of the system for delegating authority”.

In order for the University to implement the other recommendations and achieve its vision, the University should foster its strategic management capacity and make sure that all the necessary tools and procedures are in place for the University to go forward successfully. The University would also prosper better if it were free from some governmental regulations. The Team hopes that the University will be able to establish a strategic partnership with relevant national and regional authorities to increase its institutional autonomy. Beyond that, the Team hopes that the following suggestions will be useful for the University’s thinking about its strategic management.

Enhance strategic management capacity

Establish a prioritised strategic plan with clearly defined milestones for the next 5-10 years

The University has plenty of good intentions in moving forward in several activity areas. However, in the current economic and regulatory environment it is unlikely that the University will be able to make advances in all areas at the same time. Therefore the Team recommends that the University establishes a prioritised strategic plan for the next 5-10 years. This strategic plan should outline the vision of the University as well as define the steps to be taken to achieve the mission. It should be clearly prioritised, with a time frame set for each of the individual goals. The plan should also list the milestones in implementing the various strategic measures.

The senior management of the University has a key role in designing and implementing such a plan. However, the plan is more likely to be embraced by the entire University community if the plan is based on negotiations with the different levels of the University.

International peer-learning is also important at the management level and therefore we suggest that the senior management team could benefit from benchmarking their practises with foreign universities.

Negotiate set targets for performance at all levels across the University and make full use of appropriate management information

In order to be able to implement its strategic plan, the University needs to set relevant targets regarding its activities and performance. For this purpose, the Team suggests that the University sets targets for performance at all its levels. These should be negotiated with the relevant staff, in order to ensure not just compliance, but a sense of ownership of the process.

Setting relevant targets and being able to follow whether those targets are reached also requires accurate, up-to-date information about inputs, outputs and processes regarding education, research and resources. It is vital for the University to be able to see how it is performing, and where the gaps in the strategy implementation are.

Foster a spirit of autonomy across the University

Encourage a spirit of autonomy and individual initiatives across the University

Across the world, universities are emphasising the entrepreneurial character of all units, staff and students in taking responsibility for their performance, work and studies. Such an entrepreneurial approach to academic life is in conflict with a traditional, centralised corporate culture, the remnants of which can still be detected in TNEU. The Team recommends that the University take steps to move from reactively responding to the requirements of external control to a proactive approach fostering individual initiative and a spirit of autonomy across the University. Staff members are best motivated by being able to realise their professional ambitions, whereas a top-down governance approach often hinders creativity and diminishes motivation.

Increase delegation of operational decisions to lower levels

In a highly centralised system, the highest decision making body, which should be able to focus on making important strategic decisions, easily gets slowed down by a range of day-to-day operational decisions. The Team therefore recommends that the University increase the delegation of operational decisions to relevant lower levels, thus allowing the higher decision-making bodies, such as the Academic Board, deans and faculty boards, to focus more on leading the University and the work in their specific areas.

As compared to European practice, the involvement of students in governance could also be developed. It is quite frequent in European universities to have 10-20% of students in representative bodies.

Consider establishing larger units to create synergies and efficiency of scale

An ongoing trend around Europe has been to bring smaller faculties and departments together into larger units, in order on the one hand to create academically stronger units, able to compete for students and research grants, and on the other hand to make more efficient use of the resources for administrative and support functions.

The University currently has eleven faculties, 68 departments and a number of research laboratories, as well as some branch campuses and distance units around Ukraine. The Team has understood that the Ukrainian legislation requires a specific department to be established for each study direction and speciality; however, it seems that the number of faculties is dependent on the University's own decision.

From an external perspective, it seems that the interest areas for many of the faculties are relatively close to each other, and that some of the faculties only have one or two professors. Yet they all require certain amount of administrative resource. The Team feels that the University should take a closer look at whether bringing some of those units together into larger entities would bring efficiencies of scale in use of scarce resources, and also create critical mass and synergies for research and education. It may feel that the present senior management team is too large for the University at its present size and that it hinders speed and creativity.

Introduce an agreed framework for staff development

The most important resource for any university is its staff members. They are the ones producing the university output, and in many cases are responsible for bringing in a significant amount of its external funding. The expertise of the staff is therefore something that the University should cherish. TNEU has introduced staff employment contracts, which are renewed periodically. In these contracts the staff performance can be evaluated. However, the Team feels that currently the full potential of these contracts is not being used. The Team recommends that the University introduce an agreed framework for staff development and appraisal. This should include clear policy and procedures to ensure that the staff members are able to develop their skills and competencies, and should list the relevant practices and evaluation criteria. For maximum legitimacy, it should be widely agreed across all categories of staff.

Based on this framework, individual targets can be negotiated with staff regarding their research performance, teaching, pedagogical skills and language proficiency. Annual development discussions with line managers could be used to follow up on the achievement of agreed targets, and to agree upon future training needs.

5.3. Quality management

It is important for the entire institution to embrace an overarching quality culture. This entails the ownership of quality processes at the departmental level, not just a top-down implementation of quality guidelines. The following suggestions are intended to help the University to develop a comprehensive approach to its quality management.

Prepare a global quality concept for the institution

Prepare a global quality concept in line with the European Standards and Guidelines; make it public on the University website

The University has already taken several steps towards ensuring the quality of its various activities. However, it seems to lack an overall concept of what counts as quality in the different areas of activity, and from which quality measures should spring. The Team therefore recommends that the University prepares, in cooperation with relevant bodies, a global quality concept for the institution.

The European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) are one of the focal points of the Bologna Process. They were adopted by the different parties and beneficiaries of the Bologna Process (European Ministers of Higher Education, and the associations representing universities and other higher education institutions, as well as students and national quality assurance agencies) at the Bergen ministerial meeting in 2005. The guidelines outline the basis for internal and external quality assurance in higher

education institutions, as well as for quality assurance agencies. The document can be found on the internet. The Team recommends that the University makes full use of this document in preparing its quality concept.

Introduce systematic quality processes and develop appropriate tools with full reference to the ESG

The Team recommends that this quality concept should be operationalised in a set of systematic quality processes with full reference to the European Standards and Guidelines. This would entail guidelines concerning e.g. approval monitoring and periodic review of programmes, assessment of students, quality assurance of teaching staff, learning resources and student support. These guidelines should also cover the internal information systems, and the public information the University gives on its activities to the general public.

Consider the establishment of a central quality unit at the university level to drive forward the quality agenda.

In order to be able to implement this comprehensive quality agenda successfully, the Team suggests that the University establishes a specialised quality office to coordinate the quality processes across the University, and advise other staff members and students on quality issues. The staff of this quality office should liaise with quality offices in other universities across Europe. They should also consider visits to other universities to benchmark the activities of the quality office.

5.4. Final Conclusions

Coming to the end of the report, the Team wishes to express its sincere thanks once more to the people of the Ternopil National Economic University for their generous hospitality, and the excellent arrangements provided, which made the two visits a challenging and delightful, although very intensive, experience. It has been a privilege and joy to meet so many enthusiastic and highly committed people. We have been impressed with what the University has been able to achieve with very limited resources amidst a challenging transition period. The University excels in the commitment and warm atmosphere of the institution, and the dedication of its staff and students. The Team hopes that this report will contribute to the internal process of making the University an even better institution, to take best advantage of its opportunities and to tackle the challenges that lie ahead.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Interviews conducted by the IEP Team during the visits

First visit

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Mykhaylo Mats, Head of the Main Department of State Treasury of Ukraine in Ternopil Region

Yaroslav Karpyk, CEO, Open Joint Stock Company "ORION"

Mykola Stelmah, Head of Ternopil Regional Branch of Open Joint Stock Company "Raiffeisen Bank Aval"

Mykola Kolomiyets, First Deputy Head, Court of Appeal in Ternopil Region

Valeriy Shcherbyna, Head of State Tax Administration in Ternopil Region

Vadym Hmarov, Head of Ternopil Customs

Zenoviy Novoselskyy, Deputy Mayor for Financing in Ternopil, Head of the Finance and Budget Department

Vasyl Kravets, Head of the Department of International Relations, Foreign Economic and Investment Activity, Ternopil Regional State Administration

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Vasyl Tkachuk, Candidate of Economic Sciences, Associate Professor, Faculty of Banking Business;

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Andriy Lychka, Head of Projections and Marketing Department;

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Volodymyr Kashytskyy, Head of Judicial Department

Valeriy Pysmenny, Research management

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