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Institutional Evaluation Programme

*Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and
Innovation in Romanian Universities Project*

WEST UNIVERSITY OF TIMISOARA

EVALUATION REPORT

APRIL 2013

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of West University of Timisoara. The evaluation took place in 2012 and 2013 in the framework of the project “Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities”, which aims at strengthening core elements of Romanian universities, such as their autonomy and administrative competences, by improving their quality assurance and management proficiency.

The evaluations are taking place within the context of major reforms in the Romanian higher education system, and specifically in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 Law on Education and the various related normative acts.

While the institutional evaluations are taking place in the context of an overall reform, each university is assessed by an independent IEP team, using the IEP methodology described below.

1.1. The 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 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 the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European 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 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.



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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. West University of Timisoara’s profile

West University of Timisoara (WUT) is a public university in Timisoara, which is the second largest city in Romania (approximately 300,000 inhabitants). It is located in the western part of Romania, in Timis County, one of the most dynamic economies and most developed regions in Romania with a very low unemployment rate (2%). Founded in 1944 by Royal Decree of King Mihail I as a higher institute for education and transformed into a university in 1962, WUT looks back at almost 70 years of history.

The WUT charter as well as the university's institutional strategic plan 2012 – 2016 and the self-evaluation report (SER) point towards the self understanding of WUT being a comprehensive university, with the overall mission of "advanced scientific research and education, generating and transferring knowledge to society" (SER 2012, p. 23), covering a wide range of scientific fields in research and teaching. This already gives some hints to the profile of WUT within the environment it is located: it is one out of four public universities in Timisoara, from which the other three are specialised universities (polytechnics, medicine, agriculture).

At present, the university has 11 faculties: arts and design; chemistry, biology and geography; law and administrative sciences; economics and business administration; physical education and sport; physics; letters, theology and history; mathematics and computation sciences; music; sociology, psychology and educational sciences; political sciences, philosophy and communication sciences. According to the self-evaluation report, WUT has been classified a "teaching and scientific research university". Its faculties offer 89 Bachelor programmes and 136 Master programmes, out of which 85% have been rated in the context of the national study programme evaluation exercise organised by ARACIS as "A" or "B".

Roughly 17,000 students are enrolled at WUT, out of which 67.5% are Bachelor students, 28.4% Master students and 4.5% enrolled in doctoral programmes (SER 2012). WUT currently employs 1 566 people, out of which 714 are academic staff, 441 vacant teaching positions and 411 non-academic staff (SER 2012, numbers from academic years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013).



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For the last two years, WUT was undergoing and still is in the process of change, a result of the coming into force of the new Romanian Educational Law in 2011 and consequently, internal processes of the reorganisation of both organisational units as well as decision-making processes, responsibilities etc. Furthermore, a new rector was elected in 2012, which also led to several changes at the level of vice-rectors, faculties (deans and vice-deans) and heads of departments.

According to WUT, the university is facing the following challenges at the moment:

- Drastic decline in student numbers for enrolment, due to demographic changes, school dropout rates as well as a decrease of public funding for higher education in Romania, but also due to the competition for students at a European level: In the academic year 2008/2009, 23,931 students were enrolled at WUT, decreasing in the last four years by almost 30%, having now reached 16,983 students.
- Decrease in the university's budget: as a result of the decrease in student numbers the university's budget has decreased; due to the allocation of funds based on student numbers, but also due to decreases in the fund itself allocated per student. In addition to decreases in public funding, there have been reductions in extra income through tuition fees from self-paying students.
- There has been a slight reduction in the number of academic staff actually in post over the period 2008/2009 to 2011/2012 but there has been a significant reduction in the number of posts that were declared as vacant.
- At national level, it can be observed that there is a quite turbulent environment, with an ongoing process of change, both in terms of economic crisis, but also in relation to the implementation of the new educational law.
- Many transformations occurred during the last years in the university's internal structure: for example, the transformation of chairs into departments, the establishment of the administrative council, new support units in order to meet the new demands and challenges for WUT. In sum, at WUT level, the new structures introduced in 2011 and 2012 are not yet stabilised.
- WUT recruits a high proportion of its students from Timisoara and the surrounding region. In recent years it has faced increasing competition from its local universities, in part due to these universities establishing programmes in new areas which are in direct competition to WUT's programmes. This impacts the level of competition for state funding as well as for paying students.
- Another challenge stated by WUT is that of securing the next generation of academic staff within an unfavourable environment: How to get back good students after their studies abroad or finish their studies, for example for a future career as academic staff at WUT?

Based on the self-evaluation report as well as information given during the site visits, the team notes that the current management team is trying to promote interdisciplinarity both in



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teaching and research, which could be understood as an approach to shape the profile of a large, comprehensive university within an increasing context of competition. Concrete activities the team were told about are the introduction of elective subjects to be chosen from faculties other than where the student is enrolled (starting in winter 2013) or the setting-up of an Institute of Advanced Environmental Research, an interdisciplinary research centre (also planned to start in 2013).

As far as the team could observe from SER and the site visits, WUT has established many close relationships with companies and cultural institutions in Timisoara and Timis county. Here, the team observed that lots of efforts are being carried out in order to increase the number of collaborations with external stakeholders (be it for internships, study programme development, delivering services outside the university etc.), but also to develop new forms of collaboration with external stakeholders.

Concluding this introductory chapter on WUT in general, the team would like to mention that it observed both a very enthusiastic faculty and students at WUT as well as an open and friendly atmosphere which obviously contributes to the institution's profile.

1.3 The evaluation process

This was the second time the university had undergone an IEP evaluation: in 2010, WUT had undergone an institutional evaluation based on a decision of the senate in 2009. Regarding this evaluation, occurring in the context of the project "Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities", it needs to be mentioned that there has been a misunderstanding regarding the format of this evaluation, as it is not being considered a follow-up evaluation from 2010 as expected by WUT management, but as an entirely new evaluation in the framework of the project mentioned above. Consequently, the self-evaluation report focuses on the recommendations from the first evaluation and how these have been addressed by the former and current management team (SER 2012, p. 3).

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by the self-evaluation group consisting of 12 representatives from all faculties of WUT, including student representatives. The group was supported by the Department of Quality Management (D.Q.M.) and the rector's office in order to collect all necessary data for the last three years. Contributions from the self-evaluation group were collected and a draft report was set up by the coordinator on this basis, which was then discussed during the team meetings, when the final analysis and conclusions were agreed on. The final version was presented in and approved by the senate.

Regarding the content and quality of the self-evaluation report, the evaluation team acknowledges it being open and very self critical, pointing out clearly some of the problems.



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One of the main criticisms from the team's viewpoint is that the report includes only a few analytical points. It could have been helpful to structure the report as mentioned in the guidelines provided by IEP. Then, the question on the "How" ("How is the institution trying to do it?") would have been further emphasized and made the report more comprehensive and thus even more useful for internal use and communication during these times of change. A SWOT analysis was missing in the self-evaluation report, but was provided at a later stage by the self-evaluation group, based on input from the faculties.

Also, there was some confusion among the IEP team about the different documents of reference and how the statements — be it missions or strategic and operational objectives — relate to each other, namely those given in the WUT charter, the strategic plan and the rector's management plan. The team learned from the coordinator of the self-evaluation group that this is a result of the changing environment at WUT at the moment, causing some inconsistencies in this respect because of the ongoing process of confirmation of the documents: for example, WUT's charter underwent two changes: first, due to the new legal situation (2011) and again only shortly after due to the new rectorate in 2012, the latter being already close to the preparation of the self-evaluation report and including changes in the mission statement of the university. In sum, there have been different changes at different levels and for different reasons and alignment of documents apparently will need some more time.

In general, the team had the impression that large parts of WUT's community (from the Council of Administration to academic staff and students) are familiar with the self-evaluation report, who agree that it reflects quite well the real situation of the university.

In the light of this evaluation being understood as a follow-up evaluation, the team wanted to know how the results of the last report have been used. According to the coordinator of the self-evaluation group, after the last evaluation a plan on activities was set up in 2010 and was approved by the senate later on. Parts of this plan are an integral part of the current rector's management plan, so there seems to be continuity in this respect, despite the changing environment.

The self-evaluation report of WUT was sent to the evaluation team in October 2012; after this, some additional documents (mainly, a translation of the charter, a more detailed chapter on quality assurance in the self-evaluation report) were provided shortly before the visit. The site visits of the evaluation team to Timisoara took place from 14 to 16 November 2012 and from 27 to 30 of January 2013, respectively. Between the visits WUT provided the team with some additional documentation on quality assurance and further information on the mechanisms of teaching and research evaluation, a translation of the rector's management contract and some clarifying information on the university's yearly budget.



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

- Öktem Vardar, Rector, TED University, Turkey, team chair
- Richard Lewis, former pro Vice-Chancellor, Open University, United Kingdom
- Antoni F. Tulla, former Vice-Rector of Economic Affairs and Administration, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain
- Olav Øye, student, Université libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
- Lil Reif, researcher, Danube University, Austria, team coordinator

During the two visits, the IEP team talked to approximately 90 staff members and 60 students from six different faculties, including larger faculties such as economics and business administration, political science, philosophy and communication science, faculty of sociology and psychology as well as small faculties like the physics, arts and design and music. Furthermore, the team had the chance to talk to representatives from research centres to support departments at central university level and to external stakeholders from cultural institutions and the business sector. These discussions together with all written information (self-evaluation report, appendixes, additional information) form the information basis of this report.

The team thanks Prof. Dr Marilen Pirtea, Rector of WUT, for inviting us and devoting his time to us. We would like to thank Prof. Dr Madalin Bunoiu, Vice-Rector for academic strategy, and his team for the very effective and smooth organisation and coordination of the visits. We thank Dr Dan Luches and the whole Department of Quality Management team as well as everybody who worked hard to prepare a good self-evaluation report and the additional information the team requested. Also, the team would like to thank all those who gave time to meet and have very open discussions with the IEP team.



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2. Governance and institutional decision-making

As mentioned, a new rector and management team were elected or appointed at WUT in 2012. According to the SER, the new management team holds a holistic view on education, research and administration, trying to integrate all the faculties, thus allowing a deeper collaboration and permeability between them, addressing one of the recommendations from the IEP evaluation in 2010 (SER 2012, p. 2).

Mission, strategic and operational objectives

According to WUT Charter adopted in 2011, the mission of the university is that of "advanced scientific research and education, generating and transferring knowledge to society"; also, WUT aims to "create an innovative environment for research, education, artistic creation, transferring competences to the society and offering consultancy for its economic and social partners" (SER 2012, p. 3-4; for extended version see WUT charter). In the team's viewpoint, the mission of WUT is not well defined in the sense that it will lead or steer the institution, as it is too broad and generic, not giving a strong clue of what the focus is.

Also, the team observed a high number of objectives, being either "objectives", "strategic objectives" or "operational objectives", depending on the document: within the charter, the mission is accompanied by 14 objectives (10 of which are also mentioned in the SER). Within the institutional strategic plan 2012 – 2016 (also described as the rector's "management plan", the basis on which the rector was elected), 11 strategic objectives linked to 10 strands of action like research, educational process, internationalisation, student relationship and services etc. are given. These 11 strategic objectives are accompanied by between 3 and 24 operational objectives each, which gives a total of 104 operational objectives. It should be noted that the objectives given in the charter as well as the 10 strands of action and 11 strategic objectives in the institutional management plan are listed without explicit prioritisation.

Based on the SER and the discussions during the site visits, it appears that "research" is the most important strand of action. For example, the SER mentions the strategic objective and operational objectives given for research within the institutional strategic plan, which is "the creation of a competitive research environment that would transform WUT as a pole of excellence focusing on knowledge, scientific research and artistic creation, directly impacting on teaching and on the rendered services to society". It also states that most human and financial resources of the university will be allotted for research and artistic creation in order to "meet the mission stated by the WUT, leading, eventually, to a higher ranking of the university" (SER page 4). There was no written document containing a prioritisation, but the team was told that a prioritisation was discussed and announced in the Council of Administration, which is 1) research, 2) internationalisation and 3) teaching and learning.



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However, during the site visits, the team gained the impression that there wasn't solid clarity about these three prioritised areas among WUT staff and students.

Given the rector's mandate of four years as well as the present constraints, the high number of objectives has been questioned in the self-evaluation report, suggesting a smaller, feasible number of objectives to be undertaken in a qualitative manner. The team strongly supports this and recommends narrowing down and prioritising the mission and the objectives. Unless WUT decides what not to address it will be difficult to match ends and means. It should be noted, that the necessity to decrease objectives was recommended during the 2010 evaluation. With regards to the number of objectives and its communication within the institution, the different documents used for communicating objectives to WUT members should be made as coherent as possible in order to avoid confusion because of differences in the presentations of priorities, objectives and measures.

Another suggestion in this direction in the self-evaluation report is distributing the rector's managerial contract with the Senate among WUT staff, as it contains the main criteria that will be fulfilled by the end of the mandate (SER 2012, p. 5), which the team supports.

The importance of the relationships with external stakeholders for several reasons was emphasized by WUT both in the SER as well as during the site visits. The team observed that WUT has already established a wide network of contacts to external stakeholders and wishes to enlarge this basis. In the context of defining strategic objectives, the team recommends WUT to implement a mechanism to involve external stakeholders in order to ensure the university's future. This strongly relates to the mission statement of WUT of seeing the university deeply anchored in society.

Budget

Decreasing income in the field of teaching (both student numbers and state funding per budget place) introduced difficulties to university life. For example, the SER reports that income from study fees in 2011 has decreased by 27% compared to that of 2008. So far, WUT used its own financial reserves to cover the reduction because of changes in state funding. Furthermore, WUT tried to solve the situation with shifts in teaching loads, by ensuring full teaching loads also for academic staff members in management positions. In the team's viewpoint, this approach needs re-evaluation in the near future. Competitive higher education environment dictates that management team and academics with administrative duties should be recognised as performing one of the main activities of the university, rather than sacrificing temporarily.



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Other approaches to improve the financial basis of WUT are:

- To draw in as many paying students as possible to WUT: this includes both students from Romania and abroad. As for fee-paying students from Romania, WUT also envisages fostering postgraduate study programmes in areas of high demand.
- To sign partnerships with businesses and other funding institutions: faculties the team visited try to get financial support from outside by collaborating with companies or state organisations.
- To access foreign research grants, given the mission of WUT to focus on research.

One central question for WUT management is how to engage academic staff in the acquisition of research grants as well as into research with the resources given, as the framework of academic position, teaching load and related payments seems rather limiting. Possibilities to reduce costs are seen in reducing the number of curricula and the reduction of "vacant" staff.

Regarding the budgeting process, it was explained to the team that the budget is elaborated and negotiated within the council of administration, including the budgets of the faculties. The budget is then proposed to and approved by the Senate and subject to fine-tuning by the rector.

Based on the information given in the SER as well as through additional information requested after the first visit, income and spending figures remained unclear to the team. It was impossible to get a clear picture of the relative sizes of major expenditures in order to give recommendations. In the team's view, the university should be able to present its major sources of income and expenditures in 10-15 items in an unofficial, free format, understandable to external evaluators, to discuss routine versus discretionary/strategic funding activities.

However, there is a strong notion that the university faces financial difficulties and it is not clear if it has sufficient financial resources to achieve its many goals, given the constant battle for funds. In the team's view, the capacity for change highly depends on obtaining external funds.

To sum up, the team recommends WUT to ensure that it has an action plan with priorities, timing, responsibilities, performance indicators and an accompanying detailed and realistic financial plan which should be reviewed on an annual basis. In this respect, it should be ensured that the faculties' action plan is consistent with the WUT plan.



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Management principles at WUT

Concerning management principles applied in practice at WUT, the following approaches have been emphasized by the current rector, in the SER and in the institutional strategic plan:

- Approach of participatory management, shared responsibility
- Decentralisation, giving deans more power and responsibility — to force deans to assume their position as heads of their faculties, but with a strong managerial centre
- Clear communication structures, integrating the university between the different levels (rectorate, council of administration, faculties, senate)
- Performance-oriented management
- "Unity in diversity" (Institutional strategic plan, p. 6) — here, in the sense of applying the same principles to all faculties of WUT, again with the baseline of being a "comprehensive university".

Clarifying responsibilities, integration of interests, institutional communication culture

With the new law and the related changes in the organisational structure, but also due to the changes in the management team in 2012, clarification of roles and responsibilities is still ongoing at WUT, as it takes time to develop new procedures. Major changes the team has been told of are: the status of the president of the Senate, chairing the sessions of the Senate and not the Senate itself; and the role of deans as part of the leadership, assuming a high responsibility for their faculty. Management structures at WUT are the university Senate representing the academic community, being the highest forum of decision and deliberation at WUT; the Council of Administration which ensures the operative management under the lead of the rector, applying strategic decisions of the university Senate; furthermore, the Faculties' councils and the Departments' councils.

The Council of Administration — which includes the rector, all vice-rectors, the director of Administration, the head of the Doctoral Studies Council as well as the deans of all faculties and student representatives — is both defined and, as the team could observe, also perceived as the main management body of the university (managerial centre).

The following measures are taken in order to ensure a good, integrated communication between the Council of Administration and the faculties, thus emphasising the role and responsibility of the deans, but also the approach of participatory management:

- Meetings of the Council of Administration take place at different faculties on a rotating basis. Thus, the rector intends to be more in touch with the staff and students of the respective faculty, as after the meetings there is time for a get-together open to everybody (staff, students), giving the possibility to get in direct,



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personal touch with the Council of Administration, gain a better “feeling” or “understanding” of this body.

- Within the Council of Administration, vice-rectors assume a twofold role: In addition to their field of competency and responsibility (international affairs, academic strategy etc.), every vice-rector is appointed as communication delegate of the Council of Administration to the faculty council of a certain faculty (1, 2 or 3 faculties per vice-rector). Thus, vice-rectors are to some extent a double check in communicating decisions between the Council of Administration and the faculties. The aim is to assure that deans stand by what has been decided and with their participation in the Council of Administration. From the rectors point of view, the reason for this change is to raise the level of responsibility for the heads of faculties and departments, to make clearer who was/is involved in which decisions and needs to carry out the activities previously supported (instead of first voting for something and afterwards speaking/acting against it). This system seems to guarantee good information flows in both directions.
- The selection procedure of the deans is based on competition: after communicating their interest to candidate for deanship at their faculty, professors need at least 50% of support from the members of the council of their faculty. It is possible for the members of the faculty council to support several candidates. Every candidate with minimum 50% support from the council presents their plan on how to develop and manage the faculty to the rectorate. Selection criteria include: managerial skills, scientific recognition, candidate’s plans fitting in with the rector’s strategy. Thus, the rector intends to integrate interests of the central level with the interest of the faculties as well as to raise the sense of responsibility of deans, vice-deans and faculty members. With at least 50% of support from the faculty council, the rector wants to ensure the support of the dean within the faculty. Otherwise, according to the rector, it will be hard to work if colleagues do not support their dean.

In general, it can be said that faculty members are well aware of the new management approaches, describing it as being different, more open and collegial (instead of plainly hierarchic). Also, the team observed a great amount of autonomy for the faculties and its government, which can be perceived as result of on-going decentralisation. During the side visits, the team gained the impression that mechanisms of collaboration between the different management structures and internal communication work well and find wide support by staff and students. In the team’s view, decision-making at WUT is organised in a very effective way, containing healthy elements of both collegial and managerial systems. It emulates search committees and appointment systems and goes well with current trends.



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Student participation in WUT governance

Student participation in governance seems to function well according to the observations and discussions the team had during the site visits. Students seem to be not only represented in all management structures and within the related commissions, but also encouraged to provide their perspective. From interviews with students, the team gained the impression that students know their representatives in the Senate and elsewhere or know at least that the Student Organisation of WUT (OSUT) has a representative in the relevant structure. From these students' perspective, there are no problems in reaching or communicating with the rector and his team as well as the deans, vice-deans and staff members.

Administration: support departments, decreasing bureaucracy, changing attitudes

In order to meet the abovementioned goals (increase in student numbers, increase of research grants), WUT has recently established new support departments at the central level to improve the services to the academic community (a department linking to schools, to attract the best school graduates to WUT; a department to support academic staff to apply for research grants at European level etc.). Faculty members the team interviewed are aware of these new structures, but mentioned that it is too early to say anything about it, as they have just recently started their activities. Also, it was reported from some faculties that they are also very active in approaching schools in order to attract students to their study programmes. It should be noted that most these new service structures are based on practice within single faculties. The team supports the university management team in its approach to make use of good practice within faculties and extend it to the university as a whole. The team would like to underline the importance of coordination between these activities and the new departments, so as to ensure that they can use their whole potential coming from synergies, but also in relation to overlapping areas (for example, department for international relations and department for accessing international research grants). This is also in order to assure that these departments help to diminish the reported administrative burden of academic staff, ensuring that there is less time spent on administrative issues and therefore, more time for teaching and research.

In relation to university administrative staff, the rector pointed out that professionalisation of university administrators is one of the burning issues. In order to improve the work of administrative staff, WUT organises student evaluations of administrative staff. As the team learned during the interviews with students, this exercise did have some impact on the administrative staff's attitudes towards students — in that they are now more supportive and positive.

Human resources development

As reported in the SER, a transparent, institutional human resources policy is not yet in place. Here, the self-evaluation team points out the importance of transparent and differentiated



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reward criteria in order not to lose young promising researchers. This is even more important as universities have the opportunity again to hire new academic staff, which has been restricted during previous years.

Material basis for mission – teaching & learning, research and creation, sports

In relation to the infrastructure of WUT, the SER reports that steps have been taken to improve the infrastructure of the university, but they are not yet completed. Shortages are observed regarding own sports facilities, canteens and the number of places in dormitories (SER 2012, p. 14).

Students reported that library services and opening hours were fine. Still, at some faculties there were complaints about the access to databases (for example, scientific journals) relevant for their research activities being limited due to financial constraints.

The team made diverse observations regarding classrooms relevant to student-centred learning, performance and quality in teaching and learning. Even though the state of classrooms, labs and computers was reported as being satisfactory, it should be noted that in some of the buildings the furniture is quite outdated, not suited to supporting an interactive, more student-centred learning environment (for example small group rooms with movable furniture). Also, better infrastructure is definitely needed in some cases, for example in the faculty of music. The team would like to use this example to emphasise the importance of good infrastructure for non-laboratory studies —in the case of music and performing arts there should be enough space for practice rooms with suitable acoustics, tuned instruments etc., all of which are central to the quality of teaching and learning, but easily forgotten compared to the quite obvious technical requirements of laboratory studies. The team was told that several measures in infrastructure are planned, for example a new building for the faculty of music; but also in relation to infrastructure for sports.

During the visits, the need for more dormitories was raised several times by students. Thus, the IEP team would like to underline it here, as it gained the impression that there is a link between available dorms and enrolment of new students coming from other places in Romania or abroad, who need a place to live. In the team's view, the provision of more dormitories should be a priority for WUT as well as for the city of Timisoara, as this is one of the premises for students to be able to come and study in Timisoara. In this context, it was also mentioned by the students that assistance from WUT in finding places for rent in the private sector would also be very much appreciated. According to students, an easy measure to start with could be providing a web based platform for housing. In the team's view, this form of assistance could become a concrete materialisation of some of the operational objectives in the field of student relationship and student services mentioned in the institutional strategic plan. Also, the provision of student canteens has been raised several times by students, as there are no student canteens at all so far. The team learned that WUT is currently establishing new canteens on the campus and welcomes these developments.



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During the visits, the team observed some constraints in the accessibility to buildings for students with special needs, but also observed infrastructure that was adapted for people with reduced mobility at some of the faculties we visited. The team recommends WUT to pay attention to the accessibility of university buildings for students and staff members with reduced mobility.



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3. Teaching and learning

It is stated in the SER that the student population (Bachelor and Master) decreased by 29% between 2008 and 2011, whereas the number of Bachelor programmes increased from 77% to 89%; that of Master programmes from 124 to 136. The team was told that there is a high and complex interdependency of state policies for state subsidies per student, academic promotion and the results from the evaluation of study fields, which makes it difficult to plan teaching and learning. Nevertheless, it is clear to the team that there are more programmes at WUT than it is possible to run properly. Also, the team was told that WUT plans to close 10 programmes, focusing on those which have been ineffective and lowly ranked, which do not bring added value or lack attractiveness. Furthermore, WUT's management plans to restructure the study programmes in order to better fit the needs of potential students and the labour market, thus becoming more attractive on the higher education market. The team supports this and recommends using this opportunity to look into the possibility to use staff time more effectively.

At WUT, the three-cycle-system is applied at all levels. The same can be said for the use of ECTS. Unfortunately, the team could not obtain samples of curricula to get a picture on how the concept of learning outcomes is applied, thus it will not elaborate on them. Still, it should be noted that during interviews the concept of "learning outcomes" appeared at some faculties as not well known among faculty and student members. Thus, the team recommends WUT to take care of these issues as well as the relationship of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) – learning outcomes and ECTS/student workload and how these are aligned with teaching and assessment methods. The team was told that student workload and contact hours have been reduced during the last years, but the team feels that further reduction to less than 20 hours per week is needed.

Improving teaching and learning through research, didactical training and the use of ICT

The student organisation said that teaching and learning is moving very slowly towards more student-centred learning. In one interview, a student called the teaching methods "archaic". Several students said they wanted more methods that were based on learning by doing (instead of just reading texts and memorising facts).

As stated in the SER, WUT focuses on improving its results in research, which is expected to have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. According to the strategic objective to improve research it is stated in the institutional strategic plan: "the creation of a competitive research environment that would transform the WUT as a pole of excellence focusing on knowledge, scientific research and artistic creation, directly impacting on teaching and on the rendered services to society" (SER 2012 p. 4).



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The team understands that there is a direct link between research outputs and the evaluation of study programmes, with a direct impact on the funding of study programmes. Still, it remains unclear how research is supposed to guarantee high quality in teaching and learning. This should be elaborated further. However, as it has been discussed as the priority area for WUT at the moment, the team would like to stress that WUT should not improve research at the expense of teaching and learning.

Effective teaching has three major elements — the curricula, the teaching methodology and the assessment technique. The last two are undervalued in most universities. The team recommends that WUT looks into reducing one-way lecturing in favour of active/interactive methodologies which put the students at the centre of teaching activity and into criterion-referenced assessment techniques.

The SER reports that WUT management is focusing on the development and improvement of teaching skills by setting up a staff development centre. Also, academic staff will be encouraged to improve the teaching skills by following specific courses (SER 2012, p. 10-11). However, there was not much said about this during the site visits, seemingly these activities are still at the planning stage, but the team strongly supports WUT in doing so. Also, it would be highly reasonable to make much more use of internal expertise, such as that of the Department for Educational Sciences the enthusiasm of which the team witnessed.

Continuing university education

WUT considers continuing university and postgraduate education as a potential source for more income from study fees. Looking at WUT tables on full-time/part-time student numbers for the last years, it becomes obvious that there is a considerable potential for the growth of part-time studies as well as distance learning with the support of ICT in order to accommodate the students and their learning environment in such programmes. For this purpose, WUT just recently opened up the Department for University Continuing Education and Distance Learning, a central support unit for all faculties of WUT, to help them in the development of blended learning and distance learning. The team supports WUT in doing so, also in the light of the reduction of full-time students. During the site visits, the team wondered why not include existing expertise at WUT in HE didactics in order to assist faculties in the development of part-time studies or distance learning, both technically and didactically.

Programme development and link to the labour market

As mentioned already, WUT has established close links to employers and wishes to expand these partnerships for several purposes. As to teaching and learning, external stakeholders could play an important role when it comes to study programme development, providing insights from the labour market as well as internships or practical lectures to students. As to programme development, there are some examples at WUT on how to put this into practice, be it in the framework of a consultative council consisting of external stakeholders only, or as



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a board for programme development, which also includes two to three external stakeholders. The team considers these approaches excellent and encourages WUT to think of making this general practice in order to ensure that courses are relevant to practice.

Student drop-out

The average number of students per study programme is relatively low (BA level: 128 students for three years, MA level: 35 students for two years), the same can be observed for the student/teacher ratios (23 for all students at WUT and 15.7 at undergraduate level). Despite this, the dropout rates appear to be very high (mathematics 29%, 19%, 23%; even in physical education it is 11%, 19%, 39%). The SER states tutorship as one approach to decrease student dropout, which needs further improvement. Also, there is not yet a proven strategy to support students with lower grades to prevent their dropout, disabled students do not benefit from counselling or programme adaptations for their needs. The team suggests that WUT management carefully analyse the reasons for dropout. Dropout rates and time-to-degree should be monitored.

Career counselling and monitoring employability of graduates

The team noted that WUT is participating in the Trendence barometer, a yearly monitoring of the employability of its graduates, which can be used as a great resource to review study programmes in relation to the intended learning outcomes and qualification for the labour market. During interviews, some students questioned the match between student skills and the market needs. Also, students of several faculties mentioned the necessity of having more practical-oriented teaching.

As for career counselling, the team gained the impression that there are two units working at WUT (Department for career development, cultural, artistic, sport activities and talent acquisition, as stated in the organisational structure of WUT, a subordinated unit of the vice-rector for academic strategy; and the Centre for Psychological Counselling and career guidance). This should be further developed as well as it is important that students know about the existence of such services. The team recommends WUT to consider ways of providing more effective Career Advisory services.

More flexibility in programme content, language learning & students' involvement in research

Starting from winter semester 2013/2014, students are encouraged to choose subjects from a faculty other than their own, with a share of 5-10 ECTS (out of 60) per academic year). Thus, WUT wishes to put the objective to foster interdisciplinary studies into practice. The team welcomes and strongly supports this approach towards more flexible, elective-rich programme content. In addition to this, the team suggests to foster possibilities for language learning within WUT, in order to obtain greater benefits from the internet and related resources, including massive open online courses (MOOCs).



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At some faculties, students expressed their wish to be better prepared or more involved in research activities. As the team learnt, there are some good examples of this. Also, this meets the requirements of the research strategy and general provisions set out in the charter, mentioning explicitly students being involved in research activities. A clear statement on the link of research and teaching and learning is found in the research strategy of WUT 2012 – 2016, saying that study programmes at all levels in WUT will contain specific activities to prepare students for research; those interested will be involved in the research activities of the research units, as part of research grants. The team supports this approach, emphasising “all levels”, which is more open than it is stated in the institutional strategic plan, which specifies “students with remarkable performances in Master and PhD programmes can engage in scientific research activities”; which the team finds a very narrow approach. It would exclude Bachelor students and implies that only “remarkable” students should have anything to do with research.



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4. Research

As mentioned previously, improving research is the priority of the WUT leadership, conceived as a necessity, not an alternative, expected to bring income and prestige. As it reads in the strategic objectives of the institutional strategic plan: "Creating a competitive research environment at a national and international level, in order to transform WUT into a centre of excellence focused on generating knowledge through scientific research, development, innovation and artistic creation, with a direct impact on the quality of teaching and services provided for the socio-economic environment".

At WUT, research is carried out in different units (within departments, outside faculties, across faculties etc.), which provides some flexibility and thus, opportunities. Research at WUT is largely responding to the national system, accounting to the national system and rated good to excellent by the national system. Still, if looking at the institutional strategic plan and the research strategy provided to the team during the second visit, it can be said that it also reflects highly on the European Research Area and related research agendas as point of reference.

WUT already has a vice-rector in charge of research. The team recommends that this post is given the authority and the responsibility to act as the research manager whose primary duty is to boost research. It is vital to identify strong points — research foci — of WUT to be addressed as a major player in that subject area to draw large funds of international agencies. The research manager is expected to match the potential within the university to the external conditions and bridge the departments and the research centres.

As the team could observe during the visits, WUT is highly preoccupied with the question on how to improve the research performance of their academic staff, to sustain results already reached and, even more important, how to do better. It appeared to the team that the driving question at this moment is how to set incentives to attract a larger portion of academics to engage in research.

Challenges to promote research activities

While hard sciences have quite a strong research tradition, this cannot be said for the majority of WUT academic staff. The team was told that roughly only 30% of the teaching staff is research active. A second challenge is the overload of academic staff in teaching and administrative work, which decreases the chances to put efforts into research. Previously, not as much importance has been given to research, now WUT faces the problem on how to find and/or distribute time between research and teaching. Thirdly, the team was told that funding for research highly depends on national and international research grants; furthermore, research activities are seen as unpredictable in terms of income compared to teaching activities.



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Activities towards more research activities and results: How is the institution trying to do it?

Based on what the team has learned through SER and the site visits, WUT tries to change the situation by the following activities:

One important step is the monitoring of research potential and strategic areas. The team was told that WUT is currently preparing a framework in order to assess the research potential, thus clarifying strategically important research areas. From discussion with faculty members it needs to be mentioned that the evaluation of research potential should reflect on the diverse forms that research and artistic creation is carried out, as well as to integrate the diversity of output. During site visits staff members of some faculties mentioned that the evaluation of research activities seems to be highly driven by approaches from hard sciences. This puts high pressure on academic staff, but even more it is considered inadequate for doing research and sharing results in other fields (for example, arts, music, but also humanities). The team supports WUT's efforts in tackling the issue of identifying strategic research foci, emphasizing that WUT management should recognise that there are a number of models for research activities, not all of which involve external project funding. WUT should be aware of problem-focused, interdisciplinary research called Mode II. Due to the fact that national research assessment is slow (2007 results reported in SER), WUT should devise a more dynamic assessment of research at the institutional level.

Furthermore, WUT is reconsidering teaching and research loads. Here, the team would like to underline that the younger staff members need special attention, and for two reasons: first, they are less experienced in both research and teaching; second, it is harder for them to gain access to journals for publishing or applying for research grants as they are just starting to develop their networks and collecting experience in these activities. WUT plans to give higher teaching loads or other additional duties to academic staff not interested in doing research, thus balancing the workload between different academic profiles.

As applying for research funds is crucial, WUT has set up of the central support Department of Accession and Implementation of projects (PAID), directly bound to the vice-rector in charge of research. Another approach for stimulating further research activities is the return of 7.5% of overhead costs from research grants (until now, overhead costs from research grants have been kept at central university level). The team recommends to look further into possibilities of creating internal research funding (seed money), institutional incentives (matching funds), and supports provided like the abovementioned PAID department in order to make research activities more attractive and feasible for the academic staff. In addition to this, the team recommends to use goal-oriented staff mobility as well as attract researchers and teaching staff from other countries as well as other Romanian regions to ensure fresh perspectives on WUT's practices. Here, as it has been mentioned already in chapter 2, WUT should ensure a good coordination between the different support structures involved to use the whole



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potential from synergies (here Department for International Relations and the above mentioned Department PAID).

Planned for 2013, the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Environmental Studies “ICAM” will provide extensive labs and is supposed to give a new horizon for many scientists. It is also an example of how WUT is trying to promote research carried out by several disciplines working jointly, which the team recognises. Also, there are several examples of linking research and consultancy (archaeological issues, assessment of prisons), and the team recommends to keep these as viable options, as they provide an interesting source of income and services to society.



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5. Service to society

As it has been mentioned above, WUT sees its mission — generating and transferring knowledge to society, through research and education — deeply interlinked with the city of Timisoara, Timis county and Western Romania. The institutional strategic plan states as strategic objective for the area “WUT in society” that it firmly states the strategic role of WUT in the economic, social, cultural, civic and moral development of local, regional, national and international community. The SER states that WUT remains “deeply anchored in the society hosting scientific and social debates, concerts, exhibitions and is involved in promoting Timisoara as a European cultural capital” (SER 2012, p. 7).

During its visit, the team witnessed the strong links between the university and its surrounding society. There is a high esteem for WUTs’ role within the city and the region, which includes its role for the transborder DKMT Euro region together with Hungary and Serbia and the respective universities in Szeged and Novi Sad. The team could observe that WUT is seen as an important qualifying institution for workplaces in the region (for example, 70% of the school teachers in Timisoara are graduates from WUT). High importance is given to relationships with companies in the region. Furthermore, there are lots of links and seemingly very good relationships with public and private institutions (the team could see this especially in the field of culture). Interactive activities with society are diverse: internships, participation of representatives outside the university in the evaluation and development of study programmes, realisation of joint programmes, realisation of research programmes with or for partners from outside the university (for example a project with prisoners) and many more. One important area of collaboration is with the school sector, as WUT organises further education and didactical preparation for school teachers.

The team congratulates WUT for its strong commitment and obvious engagement with external stakeholders. In order to use the full potential of these strong links, recommendations given in relation to governance (chapter 2) and teaching and learning (chapter 3) should be repeated here: establish mechanisms involving external stakeholders for the strategic development of the university as well as for the further development of study programmes, thus ensuring that courses are relevant to practice.



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6. Quality culture

It is stated in the WUT charter that it aims to assume and promote the principle of quality in all the activities conducted, by developing and applying the evaluation procedures of these activities. (WUT Art. 8, h).

According to the SER and some additional material on quality management at WUT, the most important unit to assure quality at WUT lies in the Department for Quality Management (DQM). This central unit supports the entire quality management system of WUT, which means, in practice, coordination of evaluation activities carried out at the level of the faculties. The DQM is subordinated to the vice-rector for academic strategy. It comprises at present one director and four permanent employees. Its work is supported by:

- 11 commissions for quality management at each of the faculties, comprising members from the teaching staff, students and employers (altogether 101 people: 35 academic staff, 33 employers and 33 student representatives);
- Committee for quality management, academic evaluation and accreditation at WUT Senate and the
- Commission for Quality Evaluation and Assurance, which is a working team responsible for emerging problems regarding quality assurance at WUT level. It comprises six members (three teaching, one union representative, one employer, one student).

Many quality-related activities have been carried out since the establishment of DQM in 2008. For example, WUT conducts teaching evaluations each semester, in which all courses are evaluated by students. Another activity is the annual internal audit done at the level of the faculties and coordinated by the DQM. At present, the team was told that DQM is working on the second edition of WUT quality handbook in order to adapt it to the vision of the university's new management. Also in progress is the Quality Management System's Regulation of organisation and operation. Both documents comprise the framework of quality assurance at WUT and need to be approved by the Senate. Also, the team has been informed that attempts are being made to develop a code of quality.

In the light of the many activities, bodies and documents involved, the team found it difficult to understand how all the activities, structures and grids relate to each other. It seemed that there are many evaluations taking place, but ownership, leadership and coordination needs further improvements. It is clear that WUT has to meet the different requirements set out by the Ministry of Education and ARACIS. Still, the team wishes to emphasise in this respect what has been stated in the Berlin Communiqué of the Bologna Process: "The primary responsibility for QA in HE lies with each institution itself [...]". It is true that WUT has to be in line with ARACIS and related regulations — just to give an example — but WUT should further



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develop its own internal quality assurance system. Here, the team recommends the WUT to make use of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

As to evaluation procedures, these seemed somewhat mechanical with the main purpose to prepare documents for internal and external authorities. According to one from the DQM, estimate, about 75 percent of the work of the DQM is devoted to fulfilling reporting/procedural requirements set by ARACIS and/or other national regulation. This leaves little space for own initiatives. The rest of the work on quality assurance is devoted to the design and analysis of student questionnaires, mainly devoted to the quality of teaching staff, not reflecting for example on the students' own contribution towards more quality in teaching and learning. Furthermore, the team gained the impression that different approaches (and questionnaires) are used to evaluate quality of teaching and learning, but also for the evaluation of research at WUT (see example music and sociology).

To the IEP team it appeared that little effective use is made of the results of these questionnaires. Students receive little or no feedback from their completion of the questionnaires, or do not notice any changes. Therefore they might not take the completion of questionnaires seriously. The IEP team was not able to obtain specific examples on how WUT is "closing the loop", bringing improvement based on evaluations. This missing link from "check" to "act" has been reported by some of the students as well as some academic staff. The team learned from interviews with students that the national student union had fought to get the reports on the evaluations of professors published. This may be controversial, but one way of solving it could be to make evaluations less focused on the teacher, and instead refer to results of the course as a whole. This would also reflect the principle of academic staff and students being partners in quality assurance (Art. 7 of WUT charter).

The team learned that some faculties practice evaluation of teaching done by colleagues: this approach of peer evaluation in the field of teaching seemed very valuable and should be explored further, as it relates also to staff development, promotes networking and exchange of experiences between academic staff, being of high value for supporting younger colleagues and fostering a shared feeling of responsibility for the learning outcomes of study programmes.



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7. Internationalisation

Strategic objectives in the field of internationalisation are according to the SER: integration of WUT into international academic and research networks, internationalisation of study programmes, enhancing international communication and mobility, setting up partnerships with foreign universities, integration of WUT in international associations and consortia. During the second site visit the team was told that internationalisation is priority number 2 for the leadership. More concretely the team was told that WUT wants to attract more students from abroad (especially from EU countries), as it is seen as having potential to attract fee-paying students. Currently, WUT is developing an internationalisation policy.

The commitment exists: up to now, the Department for International Relations (DRI) comprises six staff members, supported by Erasmus coordinators at faculty level as it is practiced in many universities. The team has learned of at least one case where the faculty has established an office for international relations with coordinators at faculty and department levels, to give more ground to the many activities related to internationalisation. Also, the team was told that WUT has recruitment agents in India, Pakistan and some African countries. The number of partnership agreements signed with foreign universities increased by 64% from 2008 to 2011, having now reached a total of 275 bilateral agreements with universities from 26 countries.

Despite this, staff and student mobility has not changed much during the last four years. Here, the issue of pre-financing mobility, lack of information within WUT on possibilities for mobility and a lack of language skills are perceived by DRI as major limitations. It has been reported that information available on study programmes in languages other than Romanian is still lacking and the university needs to make information on study programmes, fees etc. accessible to students from abroad. Also, the SER describes that WUT has not fully used its potential to attract, for example Romanian speaking students from neighbouring countries. In order to attract more students from abroad, WUT intends to increase the number of study programmes which are taught in languages other than Romanian.

The team talked to both international students and international academic staff. The team learned that WUT offers Romanian language courses to foreign students preparing for studies at WUT, but also for one of the other public universities in Timisoara. Also, Romanian students expressed the need for support in language learning in order to prepare for studies at foreign universities and the SER refers to lacking language skills among the administrative staff for improved international communication. Despite all of this, there is no special structure facilitating language learning so far at WUT. The team recommends to improve opportunities for language learning in order to support students and staff to prepare for mobility.



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According to WUT management at central and faculty level, it has been said that the transferability and acceptance of the ECTS from abroad is ensured. Nevertheless, it appears to the team that further flexibility in curriculum design is necessary, as it had been mentioned in the self-evaluation report and from students that there still are cases where recognition of credits/learning outcomes from studies abroad is not granted. Some students therefore have to take additional exams. Also, some uncertainties have been reported by students on how and where the process of recognition is done, and who is responsible within WUT for this.

The team sees the potential of WUT and recognises the efforts carried out in order to improve student and staff mobility, integrating it into the other objectives and activities of WUT. In addition to measures mentioned above, the team recommends WUT to monitor graduate destinations and study programmes systematically, to benchmark with other universities from abroad and set objectives for international presence (percentage of students, academic staff or researchers, grants obtained through international sources etc.). Also, it is recommended to use feedback from mobile students and researchers (both incoming and outgoing) in order to promote mobility and further develop and improve the work of the DRI.



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8. Conclusion

Concluding: Capacity for change

The team sees that the new rector and his team would like to improve changes in order to make WUT more competitive and more efficient, something which could also be observed in some faculties we visited. According to the interviews with faculty members and students, it can be said that leadership exists and has a wide support within the university, that internal communication is good and serving as an important basis to develop the university further. Also, the mechanisms of collaboration between the different management structures seem to work very well at WUT and have acceptance within the institution; it is felt that with the new management team the base of decision-making has been enlarged. Debate, communication and open discussions make the faculty and students feeling part of the change.

Furthermore, the decision-making appeared effective to the team. Although the terminology used is decentralisation and increasing authority of deans and heads of departments, it contains healthy elements of both collegial and managerial systems. It emulates search committees and appointment systems and goes well with current trends. The assignment of vice-rectors to each faculty improves communication between the central and faculty level, thus integrating different interests. The same goes for the approach of holding meetings of the Council of Administration at the faculties on rotational basis.

The team was somewhat concerned with the high relevance put on research, with less emphasis placed on quality in teaching and learning. As a comprehensive university located in the western part of Romania, WUT also has a high responsibility for high quality study programmes; after all, this is also one of the sources for funding. Thus, high quality teaching should also be seen as something that helps to gain both income and prestige for the institution, especially, if it comes to the field of university continuing or postgraduate education. This is also of importance as the change towards more research activities among academic staff will certainly take some time.

Strategic management and change is possible only if the legal and administrative environment is supportive of autonomous initiatives of the university leadership. WUT will benefit from a system-wide increase in institutional autonomy, accompanied by a high level of accountability. The heavy load imposed on WUT by ARACIS does place considerable constraints on the university's capacity to improve its internal quality assurance measures.

To sum up the team would like to share one final observation: it observed an impressive team spirit both among staff and students, which might reveal to be one or even the driving engine for the university's future success.



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Summary of recommendations

Governance and institutional decision-making

- (1) Mission and objectives should be narrowed down and prioritised. Unless WUT decides what not to address, it will be difficult to match ends and means.
- (2) Mechanisms should be established in order to ensure the university's strategic future, involving external stakeholders.
- (3) WUT should ensure that it has an action plan with priorities, timing, responsibilities, resources, performance indicators and an accompanying detailed and realistic financial plan and should be reviewed on an annual basis.
- (4) Faculties' action plan should be consistent with WUT plan.
- (5) Planning infrastructure should pay attention to non-laboratory studies.
- (6) Drastic lack of dormitories is affecting enrolment numbers and should be a priority for WUT as well as for the city of Timisoara.
- (7) Attention should be given to the accessibility of university buildings for students and staff with reduced mobility.

Teaching and learning

- (8) Reduce the number of study programmes. Avoid overlaps in study programmes and courses. WUT should look into the possibility of using staff time more effectively.
- (9) Ensure ECTS credits reflect student workloads.
- (10) Analyse learning outcomes carefully, and reflect in particular on the difference between knowledge (repetition of facts/theories/practices) and skills (the student's ability to analyse/apply the knowledge to a given situation/problem).
- (11) Ensure that the emphasis on research is not at the expense of T&L.
- (12) Reduce one-way lecturing in favour of active/interactive methodologies which put the students at the centre of teaching activity. Use criterion-referenced assessment techniques.
- (13) Introduce a faculty development programme to enhance teaching competencies of the existing faculty to shift from teaching to learning.
- (14) Especially in the light of the reduction of full-time students, the university should consider the opportunities of increasing its part-time provision.
- (15) Make courses relevant to practice.
- (16) WUT management should carefully analyse the reasons for dropout. Dropout rates and time-to-degree should be monitored.
- (17) WUT should consider ways of providing more effective Career Advisory services.



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- (18) Improve language-learning opportunities in order to obtain greater benefits from the internet and related resources, including MOOCs.
- (19) Prepare all students for research, and involve students in research, so that they at least get acquainted with research processes of not in research content. Here, some good examples already exist and WUT can make use of them.

Research

- (20) Focusing/concentrating/choosing strategic areas may be a possible solution for the university. Vice-rector for research should assume a proactive role in this process.
- (21) Be aware of problem-focused, interdisciplinary research called Mode II research (Gibbons). Also, the university should recognise that there are a number of models for research activities, not all of which involve external project funding.
- (22) National research assessment is slow (2007 results reported in SER); therefore, more dynamic assessment at the institutional level should be devised.
- (23) Create internal research funding (seed money), institutional incentives (matching funds), supports like project writing/grant applications office (PAID) and make the implementation transparent.
- (24) Try to attract researchers and teaching staff from other countries (and other Romanian regions) and use goal-oriented staff mobility, in order to get fresh perspectives on the WUT's practices, and thus avoid inbreeding.
- (25) Consultancy as a source of income and providing service to society (archaeological issues, assessment of prisons) should be kept as viable options.

Quality culture

- (26) Quality Assurance requires an "overall design" and "operational guidelines". As to the overall design, consideration needs to be given both to compliance to standards and fitness for purpose.
- (27) Institutional, systematic monitoring of teaching quality is needed rather than relying on the self pride of academics. Not only the "use" of evaluation/assessment exercise but also its impact (consequences) should be emphasised. Quality assessment should lead to quality enhancement. Use European Standards and Guidelines on a systematic basis for quality assurance of the work and activities in WUT.
- (28) WUT should review its current system of the use of student questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers. Make sure that all quality activities follow the "closed loop" principle ("plan – do – check – act"). In particular, make sure that student questionnaires for every course lead to change, or give the students an explanation of why their feedback from questionnaires will not/cannot be followed up.



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Internationalisation

- (29) Improve the opportunities of language learning in order to support students and staff to prepare for mobility.
- (30) Monitor graduate destinations and study programmes systematically.
- (31) Benchmark with international institutions. Set objectives for international presence (% of students, academic staff or researchers, grants obtained through international sources).
- (32) Use feedback from mobile students and researcher to further develop and improve international activities.