

POLICY FOR DEVELOPING ACADEMIC RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GDAŃSK FOR THE YEARS
2018–2024

The objective of the University of Gdańsk is that by the year 2025 all assessed units of the University achieve Category A and at least two Category A+.

The objective of the Policy for developing academic research is fully consistent with the Strategy for the development of the University of Gdańsk, mainly with regard to the conduct of academic research which enhances intellectual capital and promotes cooperation with the social and economic environment. This objective also remains consistent with the current national strategy for the development of science and innovation.

The implementation of the above strategic aim will be guaranteed not only through the continuous enhancement of the quality of academic research but also through the interdisciplinary and international character of this research in order to attain the highest level possible in all regards. This document specifies priority actions and suggests a preliminary catalogue of tools to assist in the implementation of this aim.

In addition, partial objectives within the closest parametrisation period (i.e. up to the year 2020), should also be defined. Strategic actions undertaken by the end of this period as part of the development of academic research at the University of Gdańsk (hereinafter referred to as the UG or the University) should result in A and A+ faculties retaining these categories and the remaining faculties advancing in status.

The UG will actively seek participation in programmes and competitions which assist the process of enhancing academic excellence. However, irrespective of the form of such assistance, it is necessary to devise a plan which will clearly specify aims with regard to increasing the quality of academic activity and to describing the actions through which these aims will be achieved in the period of the next few years. The Policy for developing UG academic research herein presented will form the basis for both the plan and the suggested actions, amongst which the following should be specified:

Evaluation of academic activity

The process of enhancing the quality of academic research conducted at the UG should be based upon a clear and ambitious internal evaluation system of employees' academic activity. The system will not only clearly define the University's expectations towards its employees with regard to research activity but will also become a tool enabling the selection and support of individuals and units of outstanding academic and intellectual potential. In view of the above, it is becoming necessary that a new, coherent system of periodic evaluation of academic activity be implemented at the UG by means of a Senate resolution. The system should explicitly define all the quantitative and qualitative results of the activity expected from employees of particular faculties during the assessment period, with regard to the specificity of domains and scientific disciplines. Apart from strictly academic activity, the system will also consider achievements connected with research and development work, the commercialisation of research and cooperation with businesses. Elements of the system which will quantitatively and qualitatively define UG employees' academic achievement may also be used to specify the requirements for academic promotion at the University.

Young researchers

The UG will undertake actions to provide the best undergraduate and doctoral students, as well as young research scientists at the start of their professional career, with conditions for conducting research and rapidly achieving independence. The UG will obtain additional funding as part of relevant operational programmes and regional funds, with a view to initiating a scholarship fund dedicated to the most outstanding young researchers (to finance, amongst other things, short-term foreign internships and/or annual scholarships). The UG will also promote the employment of the most outstanding graduates of doctoral studies in research posts and for a limited period, to enable them to prepare for and obtain their own grant (e.g. from the National Science Centre) and, consequently, to continue their research activity. The doctoral study programme will comprise mandatory subjects on preparing a publication in English, delivering a paper or presenting the results of research at conferences. As far as possible, the UG will continue to organise courses in writing academic articles in English for research and didactic staff.

Internationalisation of the University

At present the UG hosts two international research centres, operating as part of the International Research Agendas (IRA) programme of the Foundation for Polish Science. Within the next two years these centres will employ several dozen young researchers from all over the world. The University's strategic aim is to ensure the continuity of both projects and to further develop the research conducted. It is therefore necessary to formulate rules for ensuring that the most distinguished researchers involved in the IRA remain at the UG following the formal completion of both projects. The UG's current measures with regard to employing and involving foreigners in research and didactic activity call for ongoing support and for this reason will be continued, with new initiatives being undertaken in order to encourage foreign professors to undertake short-term academic and didactic internships at the University. To this effect, the UG will widely disseminate information on the possibilities of implementing and financing research in Poland (National Science Centre, Foundation for Polish Science, Polish National Agency for Academic Exchange) and making use of the research infrastructure. Furthermore, account should be taken of entrusting the management of newly created or existing units within each faculty (departments, laboratories) also to outstanding scientists from abroad, employed on the basis of three- or four-year contracts. In the short term, such an investment may prove beneficial in many aspects, not only through expanding the University's scientific output but also through grant-related revenue obtained by such scientists. The international dimension of the UG's academic activity will be created through the organisation of events of European and global standing. Although the UG holds numerous international conferences organised at the initiative of employees, its annual calendar of events does lack large cyclical events of significant media impact. One possibility would be to initiate a series of cyclically organised conferences entitled "Gdańsk academic meetings" to which the UG would invite outstanding representatives of science and winners of renowned international prizes (e.g. Nobel Prize, Fields Medal, Abel Prize, Nemmers Prize and others) and Polish prizes (Foundation for Polish Science Prize, literary awards etc.) to deliver lectures, meet the academic community and inspire other accompanying events. Given the prestige of such an event, the series might be entirely self-financed from sponsor funds.

Another element in the internationalisation of academic research is to increase the mobility of researchers, both through short conference trips as well as through regular academic internships. At the central level, University employees will receive assistance from International Office staff when arranging trips as part of grants, bilateral agreements or longer stays abroad.

Open access

The UG's research achievements should be disseminated even more effectively, both through the circulation of academic information as well as in national and international scientific circles. The primary objective is not only an ongoing increase of the number of publications in international journals but also a rise in their visibility and accessibility. In the case of Humanities and Social Sciences, the University will predominantly aim to increase the number of articles published in the most prestigious journals and also monographs published by the UG Publishing House and other prestigious national and international publishers. In the case of Natural and Exact Sciences, the UG will aim to increase the number of publications in high-scoring journals. Unique achievements will additionally be acknowledged through rewards and the financing of the publishing process or the open access mode. In order to increase the impact and accessibility of faculty academic journals, an internet journal platform with a repository and a system of central access to DOI numbers should be introduced. These actions will form part of the open access policy at the UG.

As the University obtains additional funding, resources distributed to particular faculties may be spent on the basis of a complete catalogue of costs resulting from the increase in the quality and visibility of UG scientific research (e.g. crediting the most prestigious authors, financing the open access mode for those works with the highest number of points, the cost of proofreading/translation of articles, and others). Regardless of financial profit, the most important works published by UG employees (according to criteria defined by each faculty) will be presented as outstanding achievements on the University's website, in the "University Newspaper" and as far as possible in the media. Outstanding academic achievements will also result in new prestigious honorary distinctions (diplomas, titles, medals) which, depending on their nature and dimension, will be successively established by the UG's Convention for Honorary Distinctions.

Support for research

One element in enhancing the quality of academic research conducted at the UG will be maintaining a rational relationship between the number of teaching hours and involvement in externally financed research activity. Regulations to this effect will consider the possibility of a temporary reduction in the teaching quota for the duration of a research project, depending on the extent of the project. Conducting modern academic research requires not only good research ideas and financial backing but also the ability to manage projects and research teams. For this reason, training sessions will be organised for research and didactic members of staff on the basics of management and managerial competences.

One element in establishing a culture of scientific quality at the UG will be making available so-called large research equipment, located across particular units of the University. A consolidated system of UG equipment management will be initiated, on the one hand eliminating the hitherto inappropriate practice which limited access, and on the other introducing clear rules for its use in scientific research or commercial work and with regard to financing maintenance, servicing and other technical issues in

order to ensure continued access to equipment. Moreover, the UG will undertake measures to obtain additional funding to cover expenses connected with the maintenance and operation of this equipment.

While the system of managing and providing administrative support for scientific projects at the UG functions effectively as regards both national and international projects, the number of international scientific projects secured and implemented by University researchers still fails to meet expectations. The UG faces the challenge of implementing a long-term programme of supporting and crediting research teams and researchers who apply for project funding from international funds and are successful in this regard. The programme will be based on a system of small grants in preparation for applying for ERC projects and on a policy of providing additional remuneration to heads of foreign grants whose project personnel costs will feed into the UG wage bill.

Cooperation with the immediate environment

In the near future, anticipated statutory changes will allow for the formation of federations of universities within jointly conducted scientific research or for jointly-managed doctoral schools. In this respect the UG's strategic partner is the Medical University of Gdańsk (MUG) with which it runs the Intercollegiate Faculty of Biotechnology. An essential component in the Policy for developing scientific research at the UG is therefore preparing the University to form a federation not only with the MUG but also with other universities or institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences with which the above-mentioned actions may be undertaken.

A crucial element in the UG's scientific policy in the coming years will be providing systemic support to broadly defined research and development activity with regard to cooperation with the economic environment through project and implementation work, protection of intellectual property and commercialisation of research results. UG employees' achievements in this area will be evaluated and rewarded in a manner similar to typical scientific activity. The UG will systematically increase spending on patent protection of the intellectual property of its employees. In this regard it will be crucial to introduce activities to coordinate and assist the work of units such as the Technology Transfer Centre, Centre for Analysis and Expertise and the UG's special purpose vehicle TechTransBalt.

The implementation of the above specific objectives, as defined in six key areas, will mean that advantage can be taken of any chance for development which arises. The adopted timeframe for basic units to implement actions towards achieving the highest academic level spans the period of two consecutive parametric assessment cycles (2017–2020 and 2020–2024). Firstly, this will allow the assumptions adopted to be critically verified three years hence (partial objectives) and, secondly, facilitate the potential introduction of corrections to the detailed actions, should the outcome of the subsequent parametrisation of particular units prove unsatisfactory. The implementation of the assumptions of the Policy for developing academic research at the UG will guarantee the University a permanent place amongst the best higher education institutions in Poland. The UG will become an open university in a twofold sense – on the one hand as a University open to students and researchers from abroad and on the other as a University which promotes the openness of its employees' research and academic achievement. The UG is set to become a location for internationally renowned scientific meetings, a location where high-quality scientific information is

exchanged and where we will at the same time cooperate with other universities and economic partners in order to put the potential of this research into practice.