

UNIVERSITY DONJA GORICA

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

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Team:

Öktem Vardar, Chair

Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal

Will Stringer

Andrée Sursock, Team Coordinator

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of University Donja Gorica. The European University Association's (EUA) Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated University Donja Gorica in 2014, with the report submitted to the University in June 2014.

This follow-up evaluation took place in the framework of the project "Higher Education and Research for Innovation and Competitiveness" (HERIC), implemented by the government of Montenegro with the overall objective to strengthen the quality and relevance of higher education and research in Montenegro.

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

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme and follow-up evaluation process

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

In line with the IEP philosophy as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure, and it is for the institution itself to set the agenda in the light of its experiences since the original evaluation. The institution is expected to submit its own self-evaluation report, which will describe the progress made, possibly indicating barriers to change.

The rationale is that the follow-up evaluation can assist the institution in evaluating the changes that have been made since the original evaluation: What was the impact of the original evaluation? What use has the institution made of the original evaluation report? How far has it been able to address the issues raised in the report? The follow-up evaluation is also an opportunity for the institution to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities.

As for the original evaluation, the all aspects of the follow-up process are also guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

The evaluation report examines the governance of the university, its quality culture, its activities in learning and teaching, research, service to society and internationalisation.

As required by the terms of reference for this project, this report also examines the use of three HERIC grants received by University Donja Gorica in chapters 3 and 5. The grants funded quality assurance activities, the PhD research hub and the development of an intellectual property rights policy.

1.2 University Donja Gorica's profile

The University Donja Gorica (UDG) was founded in 2010 as a private, non-profit university through the integration of five faculties. Today the university counts 12 faculties and about 2600 students, 2200 of whom are undergraduates.

UDG is committed to a liberal-arts education and to educating citizens who are engaged in their local and national community, understand global challenges and are problem solvers and risk takers. In addition to a range of undergraduate and masters' programmes, six faculties are allowed to confer doctoral degrees and three already do so.

UDG operates in a national context that is characterised by a number of threats and challenges. The legal framework is unstable and prescriptive; as such, it acts as a constraint on the ability of the university to chart its future. The declining demography and the attractiveness of higher education abroad result in a shrinking pool of potential students. High unemployment and the limited development of a knowledge economy reduce further the attractiveness of higher education as an avenue towards employment.

Despite those unfavourable circumstances, much progress has been achieved at UDG in the eight years since its establishment and the evaluation team was able to measure the distance travelled since the initial IEP evaluation in 2014. The university has stronger roots than four years ago. Although UDG is located in close proximity to the University of Montenegro (UM), the largest and only public university in the country, UDG has shown repeatedly both its capacity to take initiatives and its agility in seizing opportunities. Recently, the government decided to abolish undergraduate tuition fees at UM, thus putting a great deal of pressure on private universities such as UDG, which must further demonstrate their competitive advantages and their quality. The UDG leadership is keenly aware of those threats without feeling daunted by them. There is a sense of dynamism and "can-do" attitude that pervade in the university.

1.3 The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by the following group, which has disciplinary representativeness but did not include a student:

- Milica Vukotić, dean, Faculty for Information Systems and Technologies, co-coordinator of the self-evaluation group
- Sandra Tinaj, general manager, co-coordinator of the self-evaluation group
- Maja Drakić Grgur, dean, Faculty for International Economics, Finance and Business
- Nikoleta Tomović, coordinator, Humanistic Studies

- Marko Simeunović, assistant professor, Faculty for Information Systems and Technologies
- Tomo Popović, assistant professor, Faculty of Applied Sciences
- Tamara Radinović, CEO, Centre for Foreign Languages
- Nela Milosevic, assistant professor, Faculty of Applied Sciences – Mathematics
- Dragica Zugić, professor, Faculty of Philology – English Language and Literature
- Jelena Popović, coordinator, Faculty of Law

The self-evaluation group (SEG) divided different sections of the self-evaluation report amongst its members and revised the draft when all sections were collated. Their main difficulty was in collecting some key data, such as about the research activity of individual academic staff.

The IEP approach stresses that the self-evaluation process is crucial to any evaluation because it offers the opportunity for the institution to be self-reflective and to find solutions to the challenges and the weaknesses that are revealed by such a process. The UDG self-evaluation report (SER) was informative but could have benefited from a tighter structure and a more concise presentation. It was not as self-reflective as the team would have hoped and it identified relatively few weaknesses. However, the site visit compensated for those shortcomings to the extent that the discussions that were held during the visit were open, informative and productive.

UDG received a very large number of recommendations in 2014; relatively few, however, were addressed explicitly in the 2018 SER. While the team does not expect that all recommendations are relevant or immediately feasible, it would have appreciated if many more recommendations had been discussed in the SER and comments provided on those that were sidestepped.

The self-evaluation report of the University Donja Gorica, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team on 12 March 2018, one month before the site visit. The evaluation team requested additional information, which was received on 5 April 2018. The visit of the evaluation team to the university took place from 9 to 12 April 2018.

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

- Öktem Vardar, former rector, TED University, Turkey, team chair
- Francesc Xavier Grau Vidal, former rector, University Rovira i Virgili, Spain
- Will Stringer, student, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, United Kingdom
- Andrée Sursock, senior adviser, European University Association (EUA), team coordinator

The team would like to thank the academic community of UDG for the good atmosphere that prevailed during the visit. Special thanks are extended to Rector Veselin Vukotić for his support and openness and to Prof. Milica Vukotić and General Manager Sandra Tinaj, co-

coordinators of the self-evaluation group, for the excellent organisation of the team's visit and the interest they took in ensuring that all its questions were answered.

2. Governance and institutional decision-making

The 2014 IEP evaluation report praised the university for its leadership, one that is fully supported by the community. The rector and his team devote much time to informing the community and discussing their vision, philosophy and major decisions. The visionary leadership and the participatory culture are still strong characteristics of UDG to this day.

Furthermore, the UDG leadership continues to be committed to ensuring that academic decisions are shielded from shareholders and are not influenced by commercial interest. This is an important feature that allows non-profit, private universities to function effectively as academic rather than commercial institutions.

Based on limited information, the finances of the university appeared to be good, although the budget is almost entirely based on student fees, supplemented with some projects and external funding grants (e.g. World Bank grant for laboratory equipment). The university has been able to generate a small surplus which has allowed it to repay faster the loan that was taken at its creation. About one-third of the annual budget goes to repay the loan and the university expects to have repaid it in full in eight or nine years.

The main university bodies include the Founders' Board, the Rector's Board, the Senate and the Council for Development. UDG received a range of recommendations in 2014 about the governance structures, three of which have been addressed:

- The 2014 evaluation report had identified a differential treatment between those deans who are at the helm of the five founding faculties and the others. In response, UDG has extended Senate membership to all the deans. In the view of the team, this is a positive change and the Senate works effectively as a governing academic board.
- Furthermore, UDG was advised in 2014 to ensure that Senate decisions are communicated to the university community. Now that all the deans are in the Senate, they are also required to report and discuss those decisions in their faculties. Formal Senate minutes, shared across the university, would enhance communication and transparency further.
- The 2014 evaluation report had identified student involvement in governance as a weakness. Progress has been made in this area. The student parliament is now functioning and there are procedures for elections. There is a clearer understanding that student representation is different from student clubs. However, the team found that the student representatives were not very active. The explanation that was given related to the small size of UDG and the fact that students have ready access to the university staff and do not feel an acute need for representation. In addition, the student parliament at the University of Montenegro is much more important by its size and longer history, which means that its students tend to be the national flagbearers of the students' demands in the country. Be this as it may, the team

believes that UDG student representatives would benefit from leadership training. This would be in line with UDG's teaching and learning philosophy which stresses active citizenship and entrepreneurship.

Other recommendations proposed in the 2014 evaluation report were not taken forward or were postponed because they were deemed to be impractical or costly at this stage in the development of UDG. This report does not review all of them but highlights four recommendations that deserve specific mention.

The first recommendation concerns the high number of faculties at UDG. The university was advised to suppress their autonomous status and to reduce their number. Neither recommendation has been addressed. As a private university UDG is not required by law to abolish faculty autonomy. However, it was and is still unclear to the team why UDG would choose to have autonomous faculties when, in reality, the university is quite centralised. Furthermore, instead of reducing faculties, the university decided to create three new ones. The team was told that the creation of the new faculties is linked to the legal framework, which requires specific groupings of disciplines. Given the agility of UDG in moving into niche study programmes, the team was told that this has led to an increase rather than a decrease in the number of faculties.

The current discussion at UDG, however, is to rationalise the programme offer and to reduce the number of units to the extent permitted by the law. The team is of the view that this is particularly important for both academic and financial reasons. Study programmes that face recruitment difficulties should be merged with others where possible. This would have positive incidence on both the finances of the university and on multi- and inter-disciplinarity. However, the team was surprised to learn that the goal is to reduce the number of faculties at the master level and wondered about the feasibility of such a scheme unless a graduate school is created to provide one umbrella structure for all master and doctoral students (cf. Chapter 5).

Secondly, the 2014 evaluation report noted the existence of a single vice-rectorship (with no specific portfolio) and recommended that UDG creates three vice-rectorships, for teaching and learning, research and internationalisation. The team recognised the financial implications of this recommendation and suggested that UDG might want to think about establishing those posts in the future rather than right away. The situation has not changed since 2014.

Thirdly, the 2014 evaluation report noted the unusual composition of the Board of Founders, which includes the founders, the deans of the founding faculties, the president of the Students' Parliament and the head of finance. This composition is not equivalent to a Board of Trustees in private, non-profit universities. As is the practice in the USA and the UK, in general this board includes only external members; those members are independent of the university but committed to it and are ready to contribute some of their time or financial

resources to the advancement of the institution. The team was and is still of the view that UDG should think about forming such a Board of Trustees as soon as it is feasible.

Fourthly, the 2014 evaluation urged UDG to develop a strategy “with all the necessary components: priorities, timelines, responsibilities, resources, performance indicators and an accompanying detailed and realistic financial plan. This overall strategy would take into account the three missions of the university – teaching and learning, research and service to society – as well as internationalization.” This strategy would serve as the basis for developing the internal quality assurance framework. However, the team was told that there is great resistance in Montenegro to such a step which evokes past times where national strategic plans were ineffective.

The team of the 2018 evaluation maintains those four recommendations and urges the university to continue to think about them, at least for the long term.

Two additional issues linked to governance arose during the 2018 evaluation. The self-evaluation report included an organisation chart that was incomplete and showed imprecise reporting relationships; the team is of the view that this reflects lack of clarity in the governance of the university.

Furthermore, a Council for Development exists on paper but has been convened infrequently and not as a plenary group. The university statutes provide that this council includes 29 members who represent specific organisations or categories of stakeholders; the council is invested with competences that are not fit for such a body, such as deciding the strategy for the university (Article 34 of the university statutes).

To address all the points raised above, it is recommended that UDG:

1. Reduce the number of faculties and their autonomy in order to increase inter- and multi-disciplinarity and to reflect the actual centralised organisation of the university.
2. Create at least two vice-rectorships, for teaching and learning and for research. As a first step, the posts could be part-time and should have as a mission to develop their respective areas strategically.
3. Think about a timeframe for and feasibility of installing a more classic Board of Trustees.
4. Clarify the governance functions and links between the different bodies and units and represent this on a complete organisation chart, with clear reporting lines. Consider developing a long-term organisation chart for the university that would include offices and units that would be established in the future; such a chart would provide a path for the organisational development of the university.
5. Reduce the size of the Council for Development, change its status to an advisory body, convene it regularly (e.g., twice a year), with a formal agenda and minutes; and

transfer its statutory competences to a governing body, such as the future Board of Trustees.

6. A strategy document should be developed to serve as basis for the quality assurance framework and budget allocations. Such a document should identify, priorities, key performance indicators, milestones, activities and their owners. Progress should be monitored yearly.

3. Quality culture

The 2014 evaluation report noted that UDG had a few formal mechanisms for assuring quality such as survey questionnaires, tracer studies, and promotion criteria, and that, as a small institution, it relied on face-to-face contact and rapid resolution of problems as they emerged. The students had easy access to all staff in the university: academic and administrative staff, the deans and the rector. The report praised the approach but noted that it needed to be institutionalised and developed further. Specifically, the team made three recommendations, which were considered by UDG.

Firstly, the team recommended developing “quality assurance further, based on the ESG, and (giving) it as a primary responsibility to a vice-rector for teaching and learning. This vice-rector should be supported by a qualified staff member who understands how to analyse the data gathered through the information system in order to monitor activities and would be able to progress quality culture further.” Today, a small group led by a dean is responsible for this area and the team was told that the *Standards and Guidelines Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (ESG) have been used as a basis for developing the internal quality assurance framework. However, a number of elements of the ESG have not been addressed, such as the periodic review of study programmes.

The second recommendation emphasised the need to “Explain how results of QA processes are used to improve and review the quality of the student questionnaires.” Today, the internal quality assurance system is in the process of being totally redesigned and this recommendation is on hold.

The third recommendation placed a “Focus on promoting quality culture as a shared responsibility by using the established practice of round tables to discuss quality assurance issues.” The tradition of organising round tables continues as strong as ever and is an important way to ensure that quality becomes the responsibility of everyone in the university. The round tables and the annual staff retreats, the “Cetinje dialogues”, serve to disseminate and share a quality culture. These are excellent good practices that have promoted great appreciation and awareness of the importance of internal quality assurance; pressures by the national accreditation system are pushing in the same direction in promoting internal quality mechanisms.

DGU-UDG won a HERIC grant to support internal quality assurance developments. The team found that progress had been achieved. A new information system had been developed although the university continues to struggle in producing accurate data and exploring and correcting any anomalies that might be generated. Indeed, complex information systems are difficult to operate and require expert IT support in order to generate reliable data. In addition, universities need at least one staff member who is capable of collecting, analysing and interpreting quantitative data.

The HERIC grant was also used to develop a wide range of indicators, 60 in total, to measure all aspects of the university. The university also lists nine surveys that it intends to use regularly. The list provided in the SER includes:

- Students assessment questionnaire
- Questionnaire for deans (or quality assurance coordinator appointed by dean) to provide relevant data at the faculty level
- Questionnaire for UDG General Manager (or Quality Assurance Coordinator appointed by General Manager) to provide relevant data at the level of University
- Questionnaire for UDG sports activities coordinator
- Questionnaire for UDG Center for Foreign Languages Coordinator
- Questionnaire for graduated students
- Questionnaire for academic staff
- Questionnaire for non-academic staff
- Questionnaire for employers of UDG students and UDG business partners

While the current tools that are being developed are useful, there is a need to supplement them with more mechanisms and processes in order to have a reliable quality assurance system and to link these mechanisms to the strategic orientation of the university. In this way, the internal quality assurance system would be devised to support the strategic aims of the institution (cf. Chapter 2, recommendation 6).

Furthermore, the quality assurance framework needs to identify the standards (quality level) that UDG wants to reach for each activity and attention should be paid to the use of the results so that improvement can be demonstrated. Indeed, all universities, particularly new, private institutions, need to gain the public's trust by demonstrating their added value. In this context, the team notes that the UDG website is not very informative or up-to-date and that the use of some terms in the English version is not consistent; this is somewhat contradictory to UDG's international aspirations.

At the moment, internal quality assurance at UDG is in transition and in a phase of development. Therefore, the team can only comment on future plans. The team notes that the university plans to use the 60 indicators to create competition amongst the faculties and the different units by ranking them based on their performance. The team would like to urge caution because rankings that capture the complexity of a faculty's or a unit's operation are difficult to construct and may create problems of compliance rather than a real commitment to reflect on weaknesses and design appropriate solutions. Furthermore, rankings are penalising because they tend to treat all disciplines in the same manner.

Based on progress to date, and taking into consideration the transitional stage in which the university is with respect to its internal quality assurance framework and its current thinking, the team recommends the following actions:

1. Strengthen staffing to support the information system in order to ensure that UDG gathers accurate figures about dropouts, completion rate, etc.
2. Data sets should be tracked on a yearly basis and analysed. This requires the assistance of a trained statistician who would be asked, as a first step, to analyse the data of the past eight years. This analysis could be used as a basis for the future data analyses and would provide UDG with a solid historical record of its development.
3. Select two or three universities that UDG would like to emulate (e.g. small, private liberal-arts colleges) and benchmark key aspects.
4. On the basis of those benchmarks, shorten the list of 60 indicators to a more manageable number of key performance indicators.
5. Set standards for all core activities and operational aspects, measure if standards have been achieved and analyse results.
6. Supplement the surveys and the standards with other internal quality assurance tools, using Part I of the ESG more closely than is currently the case. Those tools could include:
 - Establishing study programme boards (academic staff and students and possibly external stakeholders) to review study programmes and redesign them, as needed.
 - Analysing data on students: e.g. grades, completion rate, student/teacher ratio, etc.
 - Designing and implementing a policy on staff development to assist those who need support to improve their teaching.
7. Use the results for improvement, refrain from using rankings, and develop incentives rather than sanctions at this stage.
8. Publish UDG's internal quality assurance results and key figures on UDG's website. Revise the website and ensure the consistent use of terminology in the English version.

UDG has stressed a cultural approach to quality; it now needs to complement this with tools and processes (see, for example, Loukkola and Gover, 2015, p. 25).¹ However, the university is urged to be patient in developing its internal quality assurance mechanisms. It is a journey that typically takes three to five years.

¹ Loukkola, T. and Gover, A (2015), *EUREQA Moments! Top Tips for Internal Quality Assurance*. Belgium: European University Association. UDG will find free access to a large number of publications on internal quality assurance on the EUA website: <http://www.eua.be/activities-services/publications/eua-reports-studies-and-occasional-papers.aspx>

4. Teaching and learning

A strong emphasis on teaching and learning activities was highlighted within the 2014 evaluation report, in particular the university's capacity to respond to the needs of stakeholders, its "Ideas and Characters" course sequence, and the leadership and active involvement of the rector in ensuring that students and staff understand and are committed to the liberal-arts approach promoted at UDG.

The 2018 visit showed much development in several areas. The university is housed in an attractive building, with room for expansion. Current construction projects include the "entrepreneurial nest" on the ground floor, the design of the whole top floor of the university and plans for student residences nearby. The university is now equipped with four new teaching laboratories, that have been well chosen to complement experimental science subjects (although an electronic engineering laboratory is missing). The laboratories provide equipment for teaching demonstration rather than for research experiments.

The university is very active in recruiting students; this is important due to the shrinking pool of high school leavers. For instance, UDG works with 25 high school maths teachers to identify their most talented students and coach them, at the cost of the university. They then admit them for undergraduate studies and promise to send them for their PhD to the USA so that they come back to teach in Montenegro.

UDG maintains its focus on a liberal-arts philosophy. The university proposes a core curriculum with transversal competences, including B2 linguistic competence, which is a high aspirational goal. Students sign a contract with the university when they come in, which spell out the required courses that they must take in order to graduate and are meant to instil a sense of responsibility in students. However, the team noted that few electives were available and that general education requirements were imposed rather than left to the discretion of students. In addition, undergraduate students have few opportunities to get involved in research activities or service learning². Both would be good additions to the practice-base part of the curricula and would easily fit with the UDG philosophy.

Learning outcomes are being identified and UDG follows the ECTS Guide and calculates ECTS based on student workload. While in 2014 internships did not receive ECTS, today, obligatory internships carry credit; of the 500 students who held internships in the period of 2015-17, 250 received ECTS. On the basis of interviews during the site visit, the team was satisfied that the procedure to integrate the internship into a course has been implemented. The team was concerned, however, about the extent to which a learning outcome approach has been implemented and about the difficulties of estimating student workload and making sure that

² Service learning refers to activities associated with regular courses, which provide students with opportunities to solve social problems, while earning ECTS (for instance, in a writing class, they would write a brochure for an NGO).

this is standardised across disciplines. The latter requires cooperation across the faculties and the capacity to adjust ECTS calculation between two accreditation cycles.

Student support services have evolved since 2014. A psychologist is now available when needed. UDG demonstrates an excellent focus on student with disabilities: UDG works with a national association to discuss the specific needs of individual students and train staff members to address their needs. Students continue to have easy access to academic staff and their deans; faculty coordinators have been recruited and provide additional support. Furthermore, UDG requires that students intending to drop out have an exit interview with their dean: this conversation turns into an advising session that can identify solutions and retain students in the university.

The students met by the team were unable to explain the appeal and complaint procedures, although, according to staff, the procedures are explained in a rulebook. Students gave the impression that it is very informal and that there is a need to institutionalise the procedures.

Although students were generally satisfied, they noted the high number of commuting professors who came to UDG for short periods and taught in a very condensed manner. The team also identified a number of issues, some of which have to do with the legal framework, such as the possibility of sitting for the same exam six times over a single academic year; the attendance policy, which requires students to attend 75% of a course, is waived for working students or to allow students to miss class to go to the language laboratory.

The team was told that 85% of UDG graduates find a job within three months. It found that, in general, UDG students were appreciated by employers for the following characteristics: they are more open to new experience and more practice oriented; their knowledge is up-to-date (based on international standards); they have English skills and they are more interested in learning than in just earning a degree; they demonstrate good character, are risk-takers and capable of taking initiatives.

UDG has some competitive advantages such as active, small-group teaching; practice-based learning (through 500 internships and the new laboratories); and the agility to occupy niche study programmes. However, the establishment of new programmes often leads to the creation of new faculties instead of looking for consolidation and integration (cf. Chapter 2, recommendation 1).

The following recommendations are meant to provide further ideas to develop teaching and learning at UDG.

1. Make sure that general and specific competences are considered when identifying learning outcomes; take into account the Bloom taxonomy to make sure that assessment schemes are designed in line with the learning outcomes and implemented.

2. Increase electives and group them by broad subjects, such as psychology, philosophy (including religion, ethics), natural sciences, quantitative methods, etc. Explain the philosophy behind the breadth requirements (i.e., the structure of a major includes a specific percentage of disciplinary courses, electives and language requirements) and ask students to select their electives by broad subject areas.
3. Provide opportunities for the best students to get involved in research and create an honour's track.
4. Develop service learning as an addition to the practice-base part of the curricula and consider organising an annual "social market" where NGOs, business and local/national authorities would offer social challenges for students to solve.
5. Ensure that students are aware of the formal appeal and complaint procedures.
6. With respect to the language requirement, demonstrate how UDG has added value by showing the average entry and exit test results of students.

5. Research

The 2014 evaluation report focused on both research and doctoral education. The team focused the follow-up evaluation visit on doctoral education. It considered the research activities of UDG as reported in the SER and urges UDG to continue to consult the 2014 report for the recommendations concerning research.

The main findings of the 2018 evaluation include the following good practice:

- The doctoral admissions process is a committee responsibility rather than that of a single person.
- Given the small pool of potential applications, UDG does not recruit doctoral students every year to ensure quality recruitment.
- The university provides funding for attendance at international conferences upon request (but does not have a clear policy on this).
- Doctoral students are provided with opportunities for peer feedback on their work.
- The students sign a contract with their supervisor, which defines the rights and responsibilities of each party. This is very good practice that is often found in the most advanced research universities.
- Students have access to co-supervision, with at least one external supervisor.
- Minutes are recorded of every supervision meeting.
- UDG provides support to engage international guest professors to help staff with writing international grant proposals and publications.

UDG used a HERIC institutional improvement grant to create the PhD Research Hub, which will break the isolation of doctoral students and promote multi-disciplinarity. The Hub is located in the library and staffed by two full professors and one associate professor. It provides access to five databases but UDG has developed some cheaper solutions to ensure the sustainability of access after the life of the grant. UDG also developed a rulebook on intellectual property rights with support from the HERIC grant.

The team commend UDG for the Hub activities. Its potential is very good; it could evolve into either a doctoral school (doctorate students only) or a graduate school (both doctoral and master students), and thus be in line with European developments³. Those schools provide a focus for inter- and multi-disciplinarity, soft-skills training and quality assurance of the whole student cycle, from admission to conferral of the doctorate. In the case of UDG, it would provide a way of bringing together (and even rationalising) the postgraduate activities of different faculties.

However, despite those good practices, the following aspects require further attention:

³ The forthcoming EUA-CDE study on doctoral education in Europe found that doctoral schools are spreading in Europe: 29% of universities had doctoral schools in 2006 and 84.4% today.

- Doctoral students do not receive any systematic training in writing for grants or publication.
- Doctoral training is focused on preparing for academic careers. Therefore, there is no soft-skills development even though this is an important dimension of doctoral training, particularly if Montenegro were interested in developing a knowledge-based economy.
- Doctoral students do not receive funding and, therefore, work part-time on their research.
- The law requires that younger academic staff spend more time teaching than senior staff; this implies that not enough attention is paid to young researchers' careers.
- UDG does not have the data to show if research performance is decreasing, stagnating, or increasing.

The 2014 report recommended that UDG "Create the post of vice-rector for research who would be responsible for doctoral education, the supervision and training of thesis supervisors, and ensuring common standards and frameworks across the university. The vice-rector would be charged with promoting research through the development of a research strategy that would include the identification of key thematic areas, partners, milestones, sources of funding, etc." It also recommended funding "the conference attendance of doctoral candidates and the research active staff." Those two recommendations are included in the list below, which encourages UDG to develop the following aspects:

1. Soft-skills training for doctoral students to prepare them for non-academic careers.
2. An attendance policy for international conferences.
3. Professional support for grant proposal writing, reporting, etc. as the financial situation allows.
4. Financial support for doctoral students and attention to young researchers' careers.
5. Research policy, with clear priorities for the short- and long-term, supported by an overhead on research projects that would allow UDG to develop a research budget.
6. A vice-rectorship for research responsible for attending to the needs of researchers and creating a research environment in all faculties, not only those licensed for doing research.
7. Systematic and periodic measurement of the research activities of individual researchers and of the institution as a whole.

6. Service to society

The 2014 evaluation report praised UDG for its emphasis on entrepreneurship, its interest in responding to stakeholders' needs (for instance, by developing new study programmes), and its outreach to high schools. This is still the case today and the team commend UDG for its good engagement with society through its high school outreach, stress on entrepreneurship, and good ties to companies. UDG offers tuition-fee discounts to qualified students and devotes 400 000 EUR (13% of its budget) for this. The university is converting an attractive space to house the "entrepreneurial nest", which will incubate students' ideas. The external stakeholders with whom the team met were uniformly supportive and positive.

The 2014 evaluation report made three recommendations. Firstly, it suggested that service to society should benefit from a strategy "based on identified areas of expertise. This strategy should include creating a UDG brand and a public relation strategy (including the use of social media)." UDG has been actively pursuing the public relation aspect of this recommendation, but the strategy is still missing.

Secondly, it recommended strengthening the Council for Development "with the ultimate goal to support UDG in becoming a central actor in the development of the city and the country through its teaching, consultancy and research activities." The team learnt that the Council for Development is a large body of 29 members and that its statutory competences are very broad for this type of advisory group; it made a recommendation regarding this body in the governance section of this report (cf. Chapter 2, recommendation 5).

Thirdly, the 2014 report mentioned the long-term need to develop lifelong learning provision and a knowledge transfer office. This has not been addressed yet and the team was told that there is no demand for lifelong learning activities. In the experience of the team, however, once lifelong learning provisions are made available, this creates an appetite in the public for this type of opportunities.

Therefore, the team renew those recommendations:

1. Develop a policy for the "service to society" area, with targets and key performance indicators.
2. Develop lifelong learning provision.
3. Develop third-stream funding through activities such as knowledge transfer, some tailored lifelong learning provision based on contracts with about ten companies that UDG would identify, and consultancy activities (for instance by using the new food technology laboratory to support the wine industry).
4. Engage with external stakeholders systematically.

7. Internationalisation

Internationalisation has become a high priority for UDG, as a way of improving the overall quality of the university, specifically by providing its students with the possibility to develop global understanding and its staff with professional development opportunities.

As a result, internationalisation activities have intensified; international relationships are more numerous and over a wider geographical area, albeit with two main geographical targets: Europe and China. Nevertheless, about 300 students have gone to the USA, based on a cooperation with the US embassy. Mobility periods are supported by UDG or business sponsors; international internships are available (e.g., in Croatia, France, Slovenia, USA) and all students are required to study two foreign languages.

The university had been interested in establishing partnerships with China; China's strategy to develop university partnerships associated with its "Belt and Road" action plan has now offered partnership opportunities that UDG has seized promptly.

At the same time, UDG is attentive to "internationalisation at home". In line with its main goal to prepare students for an unknown future, students are exposed to international issues through a variety of cultural and sports activities. Two annual events are organised: an international scientific conference and an entrepreneurial conference with international business. Furthermore, during their studies, students are exposed to international guest lecturers.

In 2014, the team met with one administrative staff support to discuss internationalisation. Therefore, it recommended that UDG appoints either a vice-rector in charge of this area, or if this is not feasible, to "consider having the deans in each faculty be responsible for developing the international portfolio in their faculty or appointing a vice-dean in charge of this area." This has not happened but, during the 2018 evaluation, the team met with five academic staff, who could report on important advances in this area and showed commitment to internationalisation.

The university is commended for having won an Erasmus+ grant of 1 million EUR for the enhancement of study programmes in Public Health Law, Health Management, Health Economics and Health Informatics in Montenegro (PH-ELIM). UDG is leading this project, which also includes the University of Heidelberg (Germany).

The 2014 report also recommended the development of "an internationalisation strategy with clear rationales, specific geographical targets, milestones, key performance indicators, etc. This strategy needs to be linked with the overall institutional strategy and to support it." During the 2018 evaluation, the team found that UDG demonstrates good agility in seizing openings, but that the university is mostly opportunistic rather than strategic.

The team recommends the development of a one-page policy to articulate UDG's internationalisation vision. It should be concise and identify priorities (which activities for

students and for staff, where in the world and for what purposes) and it should be conceived as a roadmap for the university rather than as a marketing document.

8. Conclusions

UDG is a university focused on liberal-arts education, citizenship and entrepreneurship. It has a distinctive profile and shows continued dynamism and commitment to develop and improve. Its development in the past eight years has shown consistency of vision and capacity to seize opportunities. The university is currently engaged in developing its internal quality assurance mechanisms and has strengthened its international positioning.

A number of recommendations have been made in this report, the most important of which are to develop a strategy and to focus on institutionalising a range of processes. UDG needs to focus on what it would look like in the future. Taking those steps will ensure that the development of the institution is not dependant on individual staff but can survive any staff change. In the team's view, this is the key challenge at this stage in the history of UDG.

Summary of the recommendations

Governance

1. Reduce the number of faculties and their autonomy in order to increase inter- and multi-disciplinarity and to reflect the actual centralised organisation of the university.
2. Create at least two vice-rectorships, for teaching and learning and for research. As a first step, the posts could be part-time and should have as a mission to develop their respective areas strategically.
3. Think about a timeframe for and feasibility of installing a more classic Board of Trustees.
4. Clarify the governance functions and links between the different bodies and units and represent this on a complete organisation chart, with clear reporting lines. Consider developing a long-term organisation chart for the university that would include offices and units that would be established in the future; such a chart would provide a path for the organisational development of the university.
5. Reduce the size of the Council for Development, change its status to an advisory body, convene it regularly (e.g., twice a year), with a formal agenda and minutes; and transfer its statutory competences to a governing body, such as the future Board of Trustees.
6. A strategy document should be developed to serve as basis for the quality assurance framework and budget allocations. Such a document should identify, priorities, key performance indicators, milestones, activities and their owners. Progress should be monitored yearly.

Quality Culture

1. Strengthen staffing to support the information system in order to ensure that UDG gathers accurate figures about dropouts, completion rate, etc.
2. Data sets should be tracked on a yearly basis and analysed. This requires the assistance of a trained statistician who would be asked, as a first step, to analyse the data of the past eight years. This analysis could be used as a basis for the future data analyses and would provide UDG with a solid historical record of its development.
3. Select two or three universities that UDG would like to emulate (e.g. small, private liberal-arts colleges) and benchmark key aspects.
4. On the basis of those benchmarks, shorten the list of 60 indicators to a more manageable number of key performance indicators.
5. Set standards for all core activities and operational aspects, measure if standards have been achieved and analyse results.
6. Supplement the surveys and the standards with other internal quality assurance tools, using Part I of the ESG more closely than is currently the case. Those tools could include:
 - Establishing study programme boards (academic staff and students and possibly external stakeholders) to review study programmes and redesign them, as needed.
 - Analysing data on students: e.g. grades, completion rate, student/teacher ratio, etc.
 - Designing and implementing a policy on staff development to assist those who need support to improve their teaching.
7. Use the results for improvement, refrain from using rankings, and develop incentives rather than sanctions at this stage.
8. Publish UDG's internal quality assurance results and key figures on UDG's website. Revise the website and ensure the consistent use of terminology in the English version.

Teaching and learning

1. Make sure that general and specific competences are considered when identifying learning outcomes; take into account the Bloom taxonomy to make sure that assessment schemes are designed in line with the learning outcomes and implemented.
2. Increase electives and group them by broad subjects, such as psychology, philosophy (including religion, ethics), natural sciences, quantitative methods, etc. Explain the

philosophy behind the breadth requirements (i.e., the structure of a major includes a specific percentage of disciplinary courses, electives and language requirements) and ask students to select their electives by broad subject areas.

3. Provide opportunities for the best students to get involved in research and create an honour's track.
4. Develop service learning as an addition to the practice-base part of the curricula and consider organising an annual "social market" where NGOs, business and local/national authorities would offer social challenges for students to solve.
5. Ensure that students are aware of the formal appeal and complaint procedures.
6. With respect to the language requirement, demonstrate how UDG had added value by showing the average entry and exit test results of students.

Research

It is recommended that UDG develop:

1. Soft-skills training for doctoral students to prepare them for non-academic careers.
2. An attendance policy for international conferences.
3. Professional support for grant proposal writing, reporting, etc. as the financial situation allows.
4. Financial support for doctoral students and attention to young researchers' careers.
5. Research policy, with clear priorities for the short- and long-term, supported by an overhead on research projects that would allow UDG to develop a research budget.
6. A vice-rectorship for research responsible for attending to the needs of researchers and creating a research environment in all faculties, not only those licensed for doing research.
7. Systematic and periodic measurement of the research activities of individual researchers and of the institution as a whole.

Service to society

1. Develop a policy for the "service to society" area, with targets and key performance indicators.
2. Develop lifelong learning provision.
3. Develop third-stream funding through activities such as knowledge transfer, some tailored lifelong learning provision based on contracts with about ten

companies that UDG would identify, and consultancy activities (for instance by using the new food technology laboratory to support the wine industry).

4. Engage with external stakeholders systematically.

Internationalisation

A one-page policy to articulate UDG's internationalisation vision should be developed. It should be concise and identify priorities (which activities for students and for staff, where in the world and for what purposes) and it should be conceived as a roadmap for the university rather than as a marketing document.