UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

Reflective Analysis

November 2014

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Production of the Reflective Analysis

The preparation for the University of Iceland (UI) reflective analysis began, in effect, with the introduction of the Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education (QEF) in 2011. Indeed it is in the nature of the system that institution-led reviews at the subject level and Quality Board-led reviews at the institutional level are not separate components, but rather an organised whole. It was clear from the outset that the subject-level reviews were relevant not only to the structural units in question, but contributed as well to the institutional review of UI, and likewise that the institutional review would take the previous subject-level reviews into consideration.

Work on this institutional reflective analysis began in the beginning of 2014 when the University Council (UC) appointed a self-review team to oversee the institutional review and writing of the reflective analysis.

The self-review team began by submitting a draft overview of content and a work schedule, which was presented and discussed in the UC, in meetings between the rector and the school deans, in meetings of other UI management personnel, within the UC Quality Committee, the central administration and amongst student representatives. A five-person editorial board operated within the self-review team and under the authority of the pro-rector of science and academic affairs, working on a draft of the reflective analysis. Editing was in the hands of the UI director of quality management.

Numerous parties have submitted material and have been involved in individual parts of the report. These include personnel of the Division of Academic Affairs (DAA), the Division of Science and Innovation (DSI), the Graduate School (GS), the Division of Human Resources (DHR), the Division of Operations and Resources (DOR), the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the International Office (IO), and the Social Science Research Institute.

The draft of the reflective analysis was presented and discussed in the UC. An entire meeting of the University Forum (UF), attended by around 100 representatives of all groups within the University community, including more than 10 student representatives, was dedicated to this task. The draft analysis was introduced and then discussed in workgroups, led by self-review team members. A secretary recorded conclusions and suggestions. These comments and suggestions were taken into consideration for the final version of the report, approved by the UC on 13 November 2014.

Work on the reflective analysis was based on various data and information, which is frequently cited in the report, e.g. legislation and regulation, statistical information, information on finances and management, domestic and international comparative data, results from course evaluation surveys and satisfaction surveys amongst current and former students, institution-led subject level reviews, conclusions from focus groups amongst students and interviews with faculty heads and students who took part in the subject level reviews, data from the UC working committees and so forth.

The organisation and treatment of the reflective analysis is primarily based on the Quality Enhancement Handbook for Icelandic Higher Education.

Guide to the reference material

In order to facilitate access to the report, it is saved online as an electronic file with hyperlinks. Accompanying documents are saved in folders corresponding to the relevant sections of the reflective analysis. All files are in ‘read only’ versions and access to the website is limited, such that users must log in with a username and password.

Abbreviations

CTL	Centre for Teaching and Learning
DAA	Division of Academic Affairs
DHR	Division of Human Resources
DOR	Division of Operations and Resources
DSI	Division of Science and Innovation
EUA	European University Association
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GS	Graduate School of the University of Iceland
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IO	International Office
ISI	Institute for Scientific Information
IUE	Icelandic University of Education
LAT	Learning Aptitude Test for Higher Education
LO	Learning Outcomes
MESC	Ministry of Education, Science and Culture
NUS	Nordisk Universitets Samarbejde (Nordic University Association)
QA	Quality Assurance
QB	Quality Board of Icelandic Higher Education
QC	Quality Council
QEF	Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education
SC	Student Council
SENS	School of Engineering and Natural Sciences
SOE	School of Education
SOH	School of Humanities
SOHS	School of Health Sciences
SOSS	School of Social Sciences
UC	University Council
UF	University Forum
UI	University of Iceland
SCCC	University Student Counselling and Career Centre

Introduction from the rector

The University of Iceland aspires to provide excellent learning experience to students and awarding high standards of degrees. This mission is inevitably highly challenging. Managing quality is certainly one of the key issues involved and skillful shaping and management of quality assurance procedures is a continuous process. We can always learn from the outcome and we must never shy away from raising standards and plan future strategies to enhance both the learning experience of students and to improve working conditions for staff.

To this end, the introduction of the Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education in 2011, has been hugely beneficial. The framework has helped the University of Iceland to enhance its quality assurance procedures, ranging from institution-led reviews at the subject level to the reflective analysis presented here, and has generally raised awareness for safeguarding standards.

The production of this reflective analysis has indeed been a positive experience for the University of Iceland. It has given the institution a valuable opportunity to gather evidence of it‘s past performance and brought together the community within the institution – staff and students – in reflection on where we stand and in what direction we want to move. It has been my privilege and honor to oversee this work and to witness the dedication and determination of those involved to edge the institution forward towards an inspiring future.

Kristín Ingólfsdóttir

Rector

Message from the chair of the Student Council

This is the first publication of a University of Iceland reflective analysis that is based on the Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education. For students this is an important milestone. It formalises the quality culture that has been taking shape within the University especially in regards to teaching and learning. Integrated in a quality culture is of course the willingness to change, to improve. Formalisation of the willingness to change, in this case exhibited by the reflective analysis, is a big step forward.

It must also be noted that students had direct involvement, on every level, in the work on both the institution-led reviews at the subject level as well as the institution wide reflective analysis. This is of great importance since the student perspective is essential for a clear and honest picture of the University’s advantages and disadvantages.

The reflective analysis puts forth quantifiable measures and a further commitment by the University to improve teaching and learning. A reflective analysis gives us the chance to look up from our daily routines, assess our current situation and set goals for the future. Both the subject level reviews and the reflective analysis are perhaps a symbol of the possibilities that will open up for the University, if the quality of the student experience is at the forefront. For a University that seeks to expand its horizon, a quality enhancement framework is a critical component. Therefore I applaud this effort and the University of Iceland’s commitment to improve the quality of the student learning experience.

Ísak Rúnarsson

Chair of the Student Council

1. ABOUT UI

1.1 General introduction

The University of Iceland (UI) was founded on 17 June 1911. UI has now five academic schools, each comprising three to six faculties, with a total of 25 faculties. The academic schools are the School of Education (SOE), the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences (SENS), the School of Health Sciences (SOHS), the School of Humanities (SOH) and the School of Social Sciences (SOSS) (see Fig. 1.1). In addition UI operates a number of research and service institutions, offers continuing education for university graduates, communicates knowledge to the public and provides services to Icelandic society through various channels.

UI was formed by a merger of the Theological Seminary (est. 1847), the School of Medicine (est. 1876) and the School of Law (est. 1908), which each formed a faculty, in addition to the newly established Faculty of Philosophy. Since its inception UI has developed from a professional school of four major programmes to a fully fledged research university offering a variety of academic and professional programmes at the undergraduate, Master's and doctoral levels. For most of the 20th century UI was the only comprehensive HEI in Iceland, and served as a centre of training and knowledge at most levels of Icelandic society. Being a national university and the only comprehensive international research university in Iceland, UI is still by far the largest higher education and research institution in the country with more than 2/3 of the total student population in Iceland.

UI is authorised to award doctoral degrees in all its fields of study and collaborates closely with many of the world's leading universities (see Sections 1.6 and 7). At the Master's and doctoral levels, there are several interdisciplinary programmes and various joint programmes with foreign universities. Several joint PhD degrees have been awarded with universities in Europe and the United States. The total number of students at the University (2013-2014) is about 13.800 (thereof about 1.100 international students). 9.300 students are at undergraduate level, 4.000 at Master's level and there are 500 doctoral students. Each year around 50 doctoral students graduate from the University.

Full-time staff members are 1.200 in total, thereof about 650 full-time academic staff.

The rector of UI (since 1st July 2005) is Dr. Kristín Ingólfsdóttir, Professor of Pharmaceutical Sciences.

According to the statutes of the Rectors' Conference in Iceland, the Rector of UI is its chair. The Rectors' Conference is a member of the European University Association (EUA) and the Association of Nordic University Rectors Conferences (NUS). UI is also a full institutional member of EUA. At present (2009-2015) the Rector of UI is a member of the EUA Board.

UI is a public institution administratively under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (MESC). It enjoys full autonomy in its activities and has self-determination in internal affairs. As a public institution, the University is subject to those requirements outlined in laws and regulations pertaining to the activities of the public sector, such as the Act on Administrative Procedure, no. 37/1993, the Act on the Rights and Obligations of State Employees, no. 70/1996, the Act on Information, no. 50/1996, the Act on Equal Status and Equal Rights of Women and Men, no. 126/2011, etc.

The University relocated to its present Main Building at Sæmundargata in 1940. The facilities have multiplied since then with significant additions in each decade. The newest addition to the main campus is the University Centre, opened on 1 December 2007.

Systematic and extensive policy-making has been conducted within the University, especially since 2000, notably within the context of the University Forum (UF) and the University Council (UC). The UF ratified the UI Policy on Science and Education in April 2001 and shaped central policies in various specific areas, such as a human resources policy, a policy on international communications, a policy on the development of postgraduate education, a quality assurance policy, an equal rights policy, a sustainability and environmental policy, a language policy, a policy on issues affecting disabled persons, an anti-discrimination policy, a code of ethics, a code of research ethics,[1] standards and requirements for the quality of doctoral programmes, etc.

The research activities of UI's academic staff have grown considerably in recent years and international criteria show that the impact of their research work has increased substantially. As a consequence, UI was ranked for the first time in 2011, and has since maintained its position, as one of the 300 best universities in the world in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

In 2007 a contract was signed between MESC and UI concerning education and research for the next five years. To a large degree the contract was based on the Policy of UI 2006-2011 and the policy of the Icelandic Science and Technology Policy Council. This contract marked a turning point in that it advanced the realisation of the UI strategy with solid financial support. The contract was contingent on criteria of performance and quality. Unfortunately the economic downturn in the autumn of 2008 seriously affected the continued financial support.

[1] See 'UI's code of research ethics' in Folder 1.

A new framework law on HEIs was enacted in 2006, the Act on HEIs, no. 63/2006, with the subsequent Regulation on the Accreditation of HEIs, no. 1067/2006. All the academic programmes of UI were accredited by external panels of foreign experts in the relevant fields during the implementation process 2006-2008. This was followed in 2008 by a new Act on Public HEIs, no. 85/2008, laying the ground for a radical change in the organisational structure of public universities, which in many aspects had been initiated by UI.

Accordingly, a new structure and governance system for UI came into force on 1 July 2008. At the same time the University merged with the Iceland University of Education (IUE).

The present contract for education and research between UI and MESC for the period 2012-2016 is based on the Policy of UI 2011-2016 (see Section 1.3.2). In addition, a special fund was established by the *Althingi* parliament on the occasion of the centennial anniversary of the University in 2011. The objective of the UI Centennial Fund is to strengthen research and innovation in the interests of Icelandic society and the nation (see Section 5.2).

UI works closely with key national institutions and companies regarding research and education. Important collaboration Institutions include the National University Hospital of Iceland, the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, the National Museum of Iceland, the Primary Health Care of the Capital Area, deCODE Genetics, the Icelandic Heart Association, Matís, the UI Institute for Experimental Pathology, etc.

UI has been an active participant in the Bologna Process from its beginning. As a HEI UI is a member of EUA, EUA Council for Doctoral Education (EUA-CDE), the Council of Graduate Schools in the US (CGS), OECD Higher Education Programme (IMHE) and Network of Universities from the Capitals of Europe (UNICA). In addition, UI schools and faculties participate in various academic and scientific associations.

1.2 Organisation and governance

1.2.1 Organisational structure

The organisational structure of UI is largely determined by the Act on Public HEIs, no. 85/2008. The act prescribes the administrative units and operating forms of public HEIs, with provisions on the UC, the rector, the UF, etc. Further provisions on the organisational structure of UI are specified in the Regulation for UI, no. 569/2009 approved by the UC.

UI is organised into schools, faculties, departments and institutions.

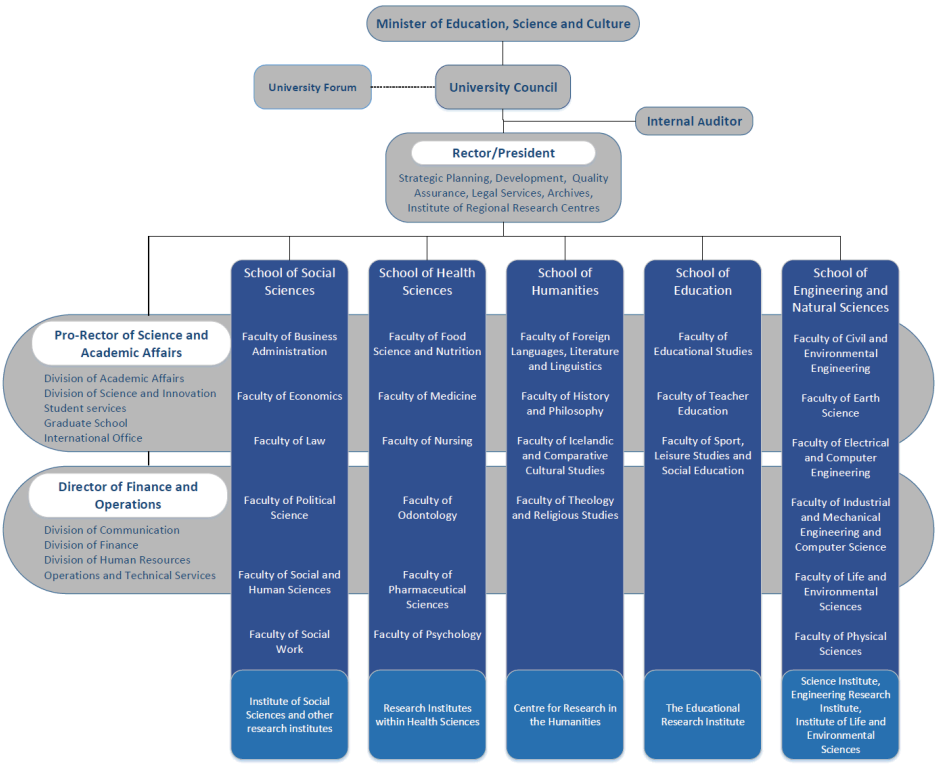


Fig. 1.1 Organisational chart of UI

1.2.2 Distribution of responsibilities

Strategic policy making, finances and operations are the core responsibility of the UC, which is the uppermost decision-making authority of the University. In broad terms responsibilities within UI are arranged between matters concerning science and academic affairs on the one hand and finance and operations on the other.

Science and academic affairs are the core responsibility of the schools, which are the UI key structural units within which teaching, research, administration and support services for the University are conducted and quality assurance (QA) is supervised. Each school consists of faculties, which are the basic academic units of the University. Faculties are responsible for teaching and research and for programmes of study and for conferring degrees upon graduation.

Various mechanisms contribute to QA of teaching, coordination of studies, teaching methods and assessment. These include faculty meetings, committee work, curriculum work, appraisal interviews, regular student surveys including course evaluations, student focus groups etc. An important venue for the continuum of plans, implementation, evaluation and follow-up is the course catalogue, which is revised annually well in advance of the next academic year (see Section 3.2.6).

Academic staff members are responsible for their research activities. They report their academic activities once a year and a special evaluation system is used to measure output and quality of research activities (see Section 5).

1.2.3 University Council

The governance of UI is entrusted to the UC and the rector. The rector is an *ex officio* member of the UC and serves as its president. In addition to the rector, and according to law, the UC comprises the following ten members appointed for a two-year term: three representatives from the academic community, appointed by the UF; two representatives appointed by the general association of students at the University; two representatives appointed by MESC; three representatives appointed by representatives already appointed to the UC.

The UC demarcates University policy, including overall teaching and research policy. Further the UC shapes the structural organisation of the University, conducts general supervision of University activities, school and institute operations and is responsible for ensuring that the University operates in compliance with legislation and official edicts. The University administration operates under the authority of the rector and the UC and an internal auditor operates under the auspices of the UC (position presently vacant).

The UC allocates funding for the University within the framework set by budgetary resources and other income. The UC supervises University operations, including accounting, handling of finances and cooperative agreements. The UC also supervises individual University institutions, shareholding companies, enterprises, funds and other University property.

The UC establishes regulations for the University as provided for in detail in the Act on Public HEIs, no. 85/2008 and rules on matters concerning the University, individual schools and institutions affiliated with the University, whether under the authority of the Council, schools or faculties.

The decisions of the UC are made in accordance with the Act on Public HEIs, no. 85/2008 and regulations based on the act, are final.

1.2.3.1 Standing committees of the UC

The following standing committees operate under the auspices of the UC and the rector: the Finance Committee, Quality Committee, Academic Affairs Committee, Science Committee, Equal Rights Committee and the Salaries Consultation Committee on Salary Issues. The arrangement of these committees is determined by their formal statement of duties, issued by the UC. Students have a representative in the QA Committee, Equal Rights Committee, Academic Affairs Committee and Science Committee. The committees have an advisory function in their specific areas, but a committee has neither executive nor decision-making powers unless specifically mentioned in its formal statement of duties. The committees play an important role in implementing University policy.[2]

1.2.3.2 Other committees

Other committees under the auspices of the UC or the rector are the Intellectual Property Committee, Complaints Committee regarding students' issues, Honorary Degrees Committee, Disability Commission, Ethics Committee, Sustainability and Environmental Awareness Committee, Building and Planning Committee, Scientific Ethics Committee and Health and Safety Committee. In addition, the UC or the rector appoints ad hoc committees for various different tasks.[3]

[2] See 'Role and function of UC committees' in Folder 1.

[3] See 'Role and function of other committees' in Folder 1.

1.2.4 University Forum

The UF is a consultative forum for the UI community as a whole to discuss policy, development and advancement of the University. This includes formulating and presenting the University's central research and educational policy, addressing various QA issues, etc.

The rector, deans of schools and heads of faculties are *ex officio* members of the UF. Other representatives, elected or nominated, are members of teaching staff and specialists from schools and University institutes, students (one student representative to every five representatives of other parties within the University), representatives from institutes operating under special legislation or with specific ties to the University, representatives from the Union of University Teachers and representatives of University administrative personnel. Members of the UC who are neither *ex officio* members nor elected representatives of the UF may sit on the UF and have the right to propose a motion, but they do not have the right to vote.

The rector calls and chairs UF meetings at least once per semester.

1.2.5 Rector

The rector is appointed by the Minister of Education, Science and Culture for a five-year term, in accordance with the UC's nomination, preceded by applications and subsequent general elections within the University community. In order to be eligible for the office of rector, applicants must have full professorial competence, leadership qualities and a clear and ambitious vision for the University, excellent communication skills and extensive experience of management and policy making. The UC determines which applicants meet the requirements for eligibility and if there is more than one applicant considered eligible general elections are held within UI, in which all staff members and students have voting rights.

The rector is the president of the UC, the head of the University's central administration and the University's ultimate representative and advocate in relation to individuals and institutions within and outside of the University. The rector presides over University operations, including recruitment and financial affairs within individual schools and institutions and initiates comprehensive policy-making by the UC on issues concerning the University. The rector is responsible for the realisation of University policy, overall QA and the University's relations with domestic and international partners.

Between UC meetings, the rector holds decision-making power in all University affairs.

The rector appoints a dean for each school, in accordance with the UC rules of procedure. The UC may authorise the rector to employ one or more pro-rectors. At present a pro-rector for science and academic affairs is employed.

1.2.6 Office of the Rector

The Office of the Rector oversees issues concerning central administration and organises meetings of the UC in cooperation with the Division of Academic Affairs (DAA), meetings of the UF, and regular weekly meetings between school deans and the rector. Furthermore, the office is responsible for QA, legal issues, regulations and rules. The office also handles the coordination of matters regarding policy making, development and advancement, negotiation of agreements, legal services, and fundraising for the University as a whole. The University Archive is under the auspices of the Office of the Rector.

Other duties of the Office of the Rector include relations with parliament, ministries, the private sector, other universities, university associations and research institutes (domestic and international), and representatives of foreign states and companies. In addition, the Office is responsible for organising various events such as graduation ceremonies, doctoral defences and staff acknowledgements, as well as symposia, conferences, lectures and other events hosted by the rector.

The UI Institute of Regional Research Centres is located at the Office of the Rector and manages the University's collaboration with local authorities, institutions, businesses and individuals in rural areas. Seven regional research centres are currently run by the Institute, located around Iceland.

1.2.7 Central administration

The central administration is divided into science and academic affairs on the one hand and finance and operations on the other. The role of the central administration is to enable schools, faculties, University institutes and University personnel to perform their duties in accordance with legislation and regulation for the University. The rector engages division heads and other central administration personnel.

The central administration divisions are: the Division of Operations and Resources (DOR), Division of Finance, Division of Academic Affairs (DAA), Division of Science and Innovation (DSI), Division of Human Resources (DHR) and Division of Marketing and Public Relations. The DAA and the DRI are under the authority of the pro-rector of science and academic affairs, as well as the UI Graduate School (GS) and the International Office (IO).[4]

[4] See 'Central administration' in Folder 1.

Other divisions fall under the authority of the director of finance and operations. The rector provides the head of each division with an official statement of duties.

1.2.8 University institutes

University institutes are variously under the auspices of the UC, a school or faculty, or special legislation. The UC decides on the creation of new institutes and the termination of existing institutes. The board of a school determines whether an institute is under the auspices of the school or a faculty. More detailed provisions are made for each institute in its specific regulation, approved by the UC. The organisation of University institutes is currently under revision.

1.2.8.1 Institutes under the auspices of the University Council

These are normally service institutes, operating according to specific regulations set by the UC on their role, facilities, organisation, direction, personnel, finances and other affairs as necessary. These institutes are the UI Institute for Continuing Education, the UI Computing Services, the UI Press and the UI Lottery (under a special law).

1.2.9 UI schools, faculties and departments

As previously mentioned, schools are the principal organisational units of UI and each school is in turn divided into faculties, which are the basic units of the University and which are responsible for teaching and research as well as providing teaching in individual subjects for the benefit of other schools and faculties where possible. Administration and support services operate within schools.

In organising study and research, the requirements of the relevant disciplines or programmes are also taken into consideration. In order to fulfil these requirements, a school may divide various components of a programme between faculties and appoint special boards of study, representing those faculties involved, to manage issues relating to the programme in a manner comparable to that which applies to interdisciplinary studies and joint programmes with other universities. Departments may, with the approval of the school governing board, be organised within faculties.

The division of responsibilities between the school dean and the faculties may in general terms be compared to the division of responsibilities between the rector/UC and the school dean.

1.2.9.1 School dean

Each school dean is appointed by the rector for a five-year term and acts under the rector's mandate. The dean is answerable to the rector and UC. The dean is head of the school, governs day-to-day operations, and acts as its academic leader and spokesperson. The dean is responsible for the implementation of University policy at the school level; unity and academic collaboration; relations with domestic and international partners; quality of teaching, research and service; administration and support services within the school; the finances and running of the school and institutes under its auspices; and human resources within the school.

The school dean rules on any disputes that may arise within the school and its institutes and addresses disciplinary matters concerning students within the school and other matters involving student violations of University rules.

The school dean regularly informs the rector of school performance in matters of teaching and learning, research and innovation, administration and collaboration with domestic and international partners, as well as of the school's contribution to society.

The school dean attends regular meetings with the rector and deans of other schools.

The required qualifications, responsibilities and tasks of the school dean are detailed in a formal statement of duties provided by the rector.

1.2.9.2 School board

The board of each school is comprised of the school dean, faculty heads and one student representative, nominated by student associations within the school for a one-year term. The main role of the school board is to address school-wide matters, including faculty decisions regarding study programmes on offer, faculty proposals for new programmes and enrolment restrictions for each academic year, where applicable. The board of a school makes proposals to the UC regarding amendments to existing regulation or new regulation concerning the organisation and operations of the school, its faculties and institutes, and confer honorary doctorates. The board of a school makes decisions regarding institutes and research centres established within the school and resolutions on contract research and teaching.

1.2.9.3 Faculties

Faculties operate within the domain of schools. Teaching, research, QA and administration are carried out within faculties, which are independent in internal matters, within the framework set by the University's general regulation, and are responsible for teaching, studies and the conferral of degrees.

Each faculty handles general matters concerning subjects within the faculty, determines course material and modes of teaching and examinations, as well as the division of teaching duties between faculty

teaching staff. The faculty makes proposals to the school dean regarding the hiring of sessional teachers, necessary allocations of funds and new positions. Governance of faculties is in the hands of the faculty meeting, the faculty council where applicable, and the head of faculty. The faculty meeting has the highest authority in all matters pertaining to the faculty. A faculty meeting may delegate authority in specific matters or areas to the faculty council or faculty head.

Members of the faculty meeting include professors, associate professors, assistant professors, directors of research institutes under the auspices of the faculty and three representatives of the faculty's students, including both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The number of other student representatives is determined by the number of other voting members, three for the first twelve and one for each additional six. Care is taken to ensure that members of the faculty meeting include both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

1.2.9.4 Faculty head

The school dean selects a faculty head for a two-year term, in accordance with a nomination from the faculty meeting. The faculty head is answerable to the school dean, who provides the head with a formal statement of duties, in consultation with the rector. The faculty head is the academic leader of the faculty and is responsible, with the school dean, for faculty policy, organisation of study, quality of teaching and research, relations with collaborating partners and faculty finances and expenditure. The faculty head shall regularly inform the dean of faculty on performance in matters of teaching, research, QA, administration and collaboration with domestic and international partners, as well as of the faculty's contribution to society.

The faculty head sits on the school board and is the faculty's ultimate representative in relation to individuals and institutions within and outside of the University. The role, responsibilities and tasks of a faculty head are detailed in a formal statement of duties.

1.2.9.5 School assembly

The school assembly is a consultative forum for discussion on the internal business of the school. The dean chairs the school assembly under the authority of the rector. The dean, faculty heads, deputy faculty heads, heads of departments, directors of institutes under the authority of the school or its faculties and the managing director of the school are *ex officio* members of the assembly. Academic staff within faculties and school institutes are also members, elected by the faculties and institutes, in accordance with rules set by the school board. Two members of school administrative staff are also members of the assembly, elected by their peers and there is one elected student representative to every five representatives of other parties within the school.

The UC may seek the opinion of a school assembly on any subject concerning the activities of the school, its faculties and institutes. The school assembly elects school representatives to the UF and is competent to pass resolutions on matters that the assembly considers relevant to the interests of the school. However, decisions of the school dean, the school board, faculty heads or directors of University institutes may not be referred to the school assembly.

1.2.9.6 Institutes and research centres under the auspices of a school or faculty

The role of research institutes and centres is to secure the infrastructure for research and development in the relevant academic field, strengthen the relation between research and teaching, offer research services and provide postgraduate students with facilities and equipment for research training and experience in academic working practices. The institutes carry out service projects, provide advice and encourage close ties between the University, industry and society. With the consent of the school dean, faculties and institutes may undertake contract research and provide life-long learning for the public. In such cases the board of school must pass specific resolutions to be approved by the UC.

More detailed provisions are made for each institute in its specific regulation, i.e. concerning its role, board, personnel, facilities, finances, etc.

Measure

- ✓ *Over the next 2 years the pros and cons of the new organisational structure of the University established in 2008 will be evaluated.*

1.3 Mission and strategic objectives

In 2006 UI set itself the long-term goal of becoming a prominent university at the international level. Although this goal was ambitious, it was considered realistic on account of UI's success in the preceding years and more importantly, in light of the fact that the government pledged considerable financial support in the following 5 years to allow UI to implement its policy.

1.3.1 First stage: setting a long-term goal and the Policy of UI 2006-2011

The first stage in moving towards UI's long-term goal was the Policy of UI 2006-2011. The main objective of the policy was to achieve outstanding performance in the areas of research and innovation, education and teaching, human resources and responsibilities towards society and the world as well as

administration and support services. The policy contained over a hundred measurable and scheduled sub-objectives pertaining to the aforementioned areas of the University's operations.

In 2010, towards the end of the first stage of the policy, the University carried out a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of the policy, which showed that most goals had been reached and some even exceeded, such as the number of published academic articles, impact of research, the number of PhDs awarded and success in the area of applications to international competitive funds.

Numerous measures stipulated in the policy were implemented in the first stage. The UI research evaluation system was reviewed, a new hiring and promotion system was introduced with increased requirements made of applicants, the UC Quality Committee was established, cooperation with prominent foreign universities was strengthened, as were connections with industry, and systematic measures were implemented to attract talented students and improve the overall progression of students. UI and the Iceland University of Education (IUE) were merged in 2008 with the aim of enhancing teacher education and research in educational sciences.

1.3.2 Second stage: Policy of UI 2011-2016

In 2010 preparation commenced for the second stage in moving towards the University's long-term goal, and the Policy of UI 2011-2016 was approved by the UC in December 2011.

The new policy is primarily based on the older one, but increased emphasis is placed on quality of teaching, strengthening the infrastructure of UI operations and interdisciplinary projects in teaching, study and research. The primary themes of the policy are increased quality and better performance in research and innovation, international cooperation, dynamic postgraduate studies which meet international quality standards, integration of teaching and research at all levels of study, enhancement of human resources, job satisfaction of staff members, and social and global responsibility in the 21st century. Despite consecutive cuts in public funding since 2009, UI has succeeded in making progress on the basis of its policy as is discussed in several sections of this reflective analysis.

1.3.3 Evaluation and follow-up

The policy of UI is based on measurable objectives and performance criteria. This enables the University to systematically monitor performance and ensure follow-up. Since 2006, an annual written report has been composed each year for MESC on policy performance, which is reviewed at regular meetings of UI representatives with the Ministry.[5] The UI Centennial Fund is also performance based in a comparable way. Furthermore, every autumn the UC approves a work schedule for the next operating year and reviews the success of the previous work schedule. This schedule is based on the objectives of the policy of the University as a whole.[6] Finally, the success of policy implementation is regularly accounted for at the UF, in the UC, at meetings between the rector and school deans and at open meetings of the rector for UI staff and students.

In 2011, around the time that UI held a celebration on the occasion of its centenary, the news came in that the University had for the first time been included in one of the two most respected lists of the best universities in the world, the Times Higher Education World University Rankings. The University was ranked at 277, among the top 2% out of the world's 17.000 HEIs according to the list. A year later, the University had improved its standing on the list and was then placed at 271. For the 2014 list, the University is ranked at 270.[7]

Such international rankings are of course neither undisputed nor by themselves an absolute method for measuring the quality of a university's operations. Assessment is to a large extent based on performance in the areas of research and research-based postgraduate study, rather than on the quality of teaching and studies. Nevertheless, UI's success here is an important confirmation of the quality of the University's operations. This has strengthened UI's reputation at the domestic and international levels, and created new opportunities for UI regarding cooperation with many of the foremost universities in the world, not least in the areas of teaching and studies. In this way it has directly and indirectly contributed to the quality of teaching and raised the value of degrees held by the University's alumni.

1.3.4 Future developments

The current policy of UI applies until 2016, and preparation of a new policy should commence in the year 2015. However, it is worth noting that in the spring of 2015, a new rector will be elected and commissioned. The new rector, who takes office 1 July 2015, will most likely begin by forming a policy

[5] See 'Performance criteria for the UI Centennial Fund' in Folder 1.

[6] See 'Work schedule of the UC 2014-2015' in Folder 1.

[7] Counting universities in the Nordic countries only, UI is ranked at 13, behind the Karolinska Institute (Sweden, no. 44 in THE), Stockholm University (Sweden, no. 98), Uppsala University (Sweden, no. 98), the University of Helsinki (Finland, no. 103), Lund University (Sweden, no. 119), Technical University of Denmark (Denmark, no. 121), Royal Institute of Technology (Sweden, no. 126), Aarhus University (Denmark, no. 153), University of Copenhagen (Denmark, no. 160), University of Oslo (Norway, no. 186), University of Bergen (Norway, no. 223), and University of Gothenburg (Sweden, no. 242).

for the next years. The results of this reflective analysis and the subsequent report from the external review team will undoubtedly be of great use in this context.

1.4 Students

1.4.1 Enrolment

The number of students at UI has risen continuously since the enrolment of 45 students in 1911. In 2009 the number of enrolled students was 13.957 and has been more or less steady since then. Figure 1.2 displays the enrolment numbers from 1994 to 2013. The numbers represent the total number of students enrolled in the autumn of each year (usually 20 October). Since 1994 the number of female students relative to male students has increased. Women now constitute 2/3 of the student population.

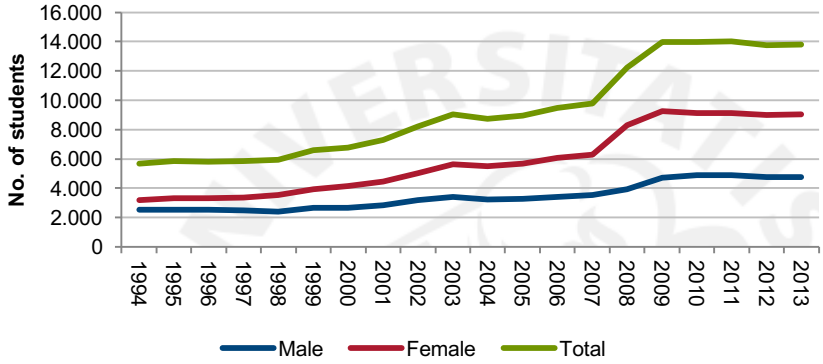


Fig. 1.2 Number of enrolled students at UI 1994-2013

The total number of enrolled students surpassed 13.000 for the first time in 2009. It has to be noted that, firstly, UI merged with Iceland IUE in July 2008, and secondly, following the economic downturn in Iceland in 2008, the University, in collaboration with the government encouraged people who had lost their jobs to enrol at UI. A record number of students enrolled in the fall of 2011, when 14.014 students were enrolled. Since then, the number of students has dropped slightly, but remains around 13.800.

	SOSS	SOHS	SOH	SOE	SENS	INT	TOTAL
2009	4.552	2.223	2.422	2.525	2.189	150	14.061
2010	4.554	2.275	2.520	2.370	2.174	172	14.065
2011	4.703	2.274	2.718	2.028	2.214	172	14.109
2012	4.519	2.295	2.555	2.064	2.212	185	13.830
2013	4.555	2.333	2.436	1.970	2.297	297	13.888

Table 1.1 Number of enrolled students at UI 2009-2013 by schools

The School of Social Sciences (SOSS) has the largest student population, 4.555 students in 2013 (see Table 1.1). The four remaining schools are roughly equal in size, ranging from 1.970 to 2.436 students in 2013. The number of students in the School of Health Sciences (SOHS) and the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences (SENS) has remained roughly the same since 2009. There has been a substantial decrease in enrolment numbers in the School of Education (SOE), from 2.525 in 2009 to 1.970 in 2013. In this respect it should be taken into account that there was a major change in teacher education in 2009, the programme (required for a teacher qualification in Iceland) being extended from three to five years (three years at cycle 1 + two years at cycle 2).

There has been a significant increase in interdisciplinary studies; enrolment numbers have increased by 98% from 2009 to 2013.

1.4.1.1 Enrolment by gender

Since 2009 the number of female students has been far greater than that of male students and the gender balance has since been stable, i.e. 66% female. However, there is a slight variation in gender balance of the five schools. In SOSS and SOH around 2/3 of the students are female (see Fig. 1.3). In SOHS and SOE the proportion of female students is far greater: roughly 80% are female. The only school with a majority (60%) of male students is SENS.

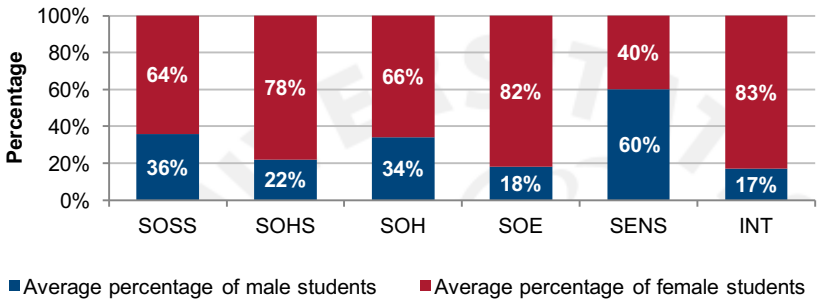


Fig. 1.3 Gender balance at UI 2009-2013 by schools

The gap between enrolment numbers of the genders is a matter of concern requiring further investigation, since currently 2/3 of the students are female. In some disciplines the gap is even more extreme, such as in the Faculty of Nursing which has only 7 male students out of 573 students in total. There are also cases in which male students are in the majority, such as in computer science where 302 out of 373 are male. Reasons for the gender gap are unclear. About 40% of graduates from upper secondary schools in Iceland are male, slightly higher than the percentage of UI male students (ca. 34%). This is not something that the higher education sector in Iceland can deal with on its own, and the issue requires far-reaching collaboration between the government and the Icelandic education system as a whole.

1.4.1.2 Enrolment by level of degree

As Table 1.2 shows, enrolment numbers at the Master's level have been on the rise. In 2009 there were 3.535 students enrolled at this level, in 2013 the number had risen by 18.4% to 4.186. The number of PhD students reached 456 in 2010 (31% increase from 2009) and has remained stable since. There has been a slight decrease in enrolment of undergraduate students from the record high 2009 numbers.

	Undergraduate	Master's	PhD	Total
2009	10.117	3.535	348	14.000
2010	9.855	3.752	456	14.063
2011	10.039	3.693	421	14.153
2012	9.592	3.825	444	13.861
2013	9.285	4.186	437	13.908

Table 1.2 Number of enrolled students at UI 2009-2013 by level of degree. (Please note that this table includes a slightly different total number of students for individual years than Table 1.1. This is due to technical registration issues).

1.4.1.3 Student population age structure

By far the largest group of students are 24 years old and younger (56% in 2013), followed by 25-29 years old (21% in 2013). Students below 30 years of age made up 77% of the student population in 2013, a ratio that has been reasonably stable for the period 2009-2013. The age distribution for Master's and PhD students can be seen on Tables 1.4 and 1.5. The relatively high age among Master's students may partly be explained by the fact that in January 2009 UI admitted a significant number of new Master's students due to the economic downturn (see further Section 6.6).

UI still seeks to attract younger students (< 25 years old) for its undergraduate programmes but the fact is that the average age of students graduating from upper secondary schools in Iceland is between 2-4 years higher than the OECD average. MESC has been working on reforms that include the shortening of upper secondary school programmes by one year. This would be a significant change for UI.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
< 24	52%	53%	54%	55%	56%
25-29	22%	21%	21%	21%	21%
30-39	15%	15%	15%	14%	14%
40-49	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%
50 >	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%

Table 1.3 Age distribution of undergraduate students 2009-2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
< 24	7%	8%	8%	10%	9%
25-29	28%	27%	28%	27%	28%
30-39	34%	34%	34%	32%	33%
40-49	21%	20%	20%	20%	20%
50 >	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%

Table 1.4 Age distribution of Master's students 2009-2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
< 24	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
25-29	23%	22%	21%	18%	16%
30-39	36%	37%	40%	43%	42%
40-49	21%	21%	19%	21%	22%
50 >	19%	19%	19%	17%	19%

Table 1.5 Age distribution of PhD students 2009-2013

In terms of the age at graduation from UI, the largest group is 30-39 years old, followed closely by 25-29 years old and 40 and older in 2013, respectively. One of UI's aims is to reduce the age at graduation and one possible course of action would be to make schools and faculties enforce rules on the maximum length of study. A systematic change, allowing specifically for registration in part-time study (not currently possible), might also make a difference, together with making a clear distinction between full-time and part-time students. This is mentioned in the Policy of UI 2011-2016 but has not been put into action (see also Section 3).

Measures

- ✓ *Enforce rules on the maximum length of study.*
- ✓ *Introduce a systematic change in the structure of programmes, allowing for formal part-time study (not currently possible), i.e., making a clear distinction between full-time and part-time students.*

1.5 Staff

1.5.1 Permanent staff

1.5.1.1 Academic staff

As seen in Tables 1.6, 1.7 and 1.8, the number of permanent academic staff (total number and FTE) has increased slightly from 2009, but has not matched the increase in the student population. The result of this is an unfavourable student-teacher ratio (above 20:1) and an increased workload for permanent staff (see Section 2.7.5).

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Professors	238	253	257	261	265
Associate professors	172	164	153	156	157
Assistant professors	158	146	141	150	152
Adjuncts	75	78	84	77	89
Other acad. staff	18	50	50	41	46
Total	661	691	685	685	709

Table 1.6 Total number of UI academic staff by type of position 2009-2013. (Staff members of the UI Science Institute with no teaching duties are included from 2010 and onwards).

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Professors	213	225	224	224	226
Associate professors	141	135	125	124	130
Assistant professors	136	126	121	128	127
Adjuncts	61	57	60	56	56
Total FTEs	551	563	553	550	560

Table 1.7 Total number of FTEs by type of position (prof., assoc. prof., assist. prof. and adjuncts) 2009-2013

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Students	13.957	13.981	14.014	13.737	13.782
Academic staff	643	641	635	644	663
Student/teacher ratio	22	22	22	21	21

Table 1.8 UI students/academic staff (prof., assoc. prof., assist. prof. and adjuncts) ratio 2009-2013

Gender balance figures for permanent academic staff in 2009 and 2013 show that the proportion of women has increased among assistant professors and other academic staff, although men are still in a majority among associate professors and full professors.

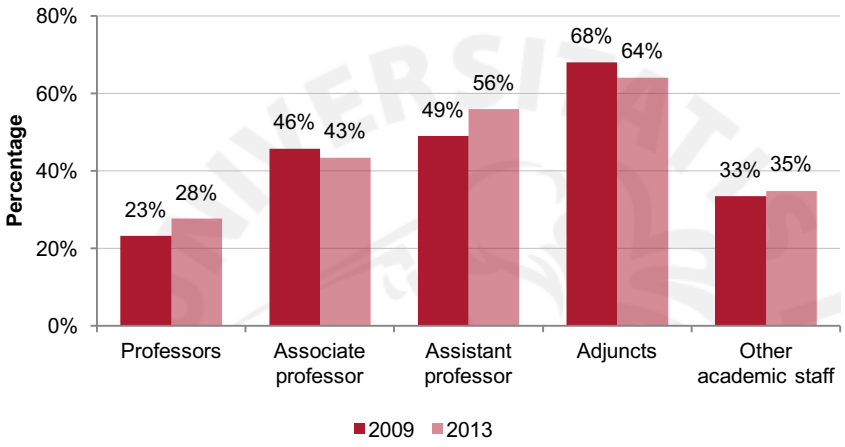


Fig. 1.4 Proportion of females holding academic jobs by type of job 2009 and 2013

Figure 1.5 shows that the average age for permanent male academic staff is slightly higher than for female academic staff, 54.6 and 52.5 years, respectively. However, the average age for individual schools is somewhat different, being highest in SOE and lowest in SENS. Furthermore, the average age between genders in different schools varies, i.e., in SENS, SOH and SOHS. Slow recruitment during the last several years, especially since the economic downturn in 2008, has led to a general high average age for permanent academic staff. The impact of this trend, in combination with rising student numbers, is discussed further in Section 2.7. On the other hand, it is important to mention that the UI Centennial Fund has made recruitment possible to some degree under these difficult circumstances (see Section 5.2.).

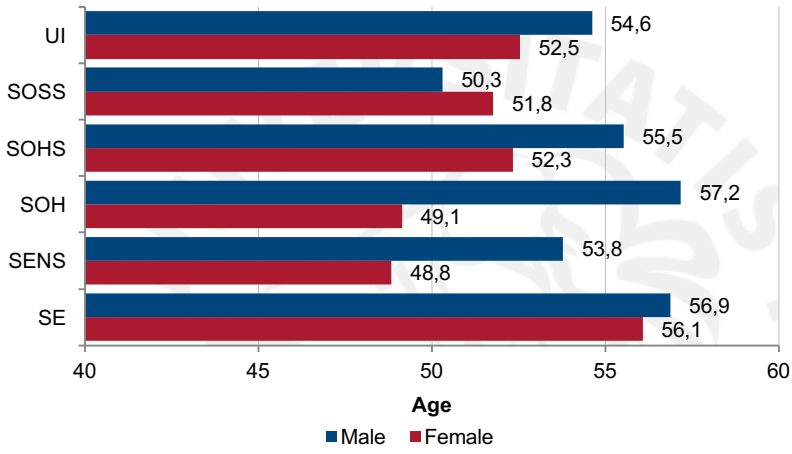


Fig. 1.5 UI academic staff (prof., assoc. prof. and assist. prof.) average age by school and gender in 2011

Figure 1.6 shows that the proportion of permanent academic staff holding a PhD has been rising steadily and is now almost 80%. Only in a few disciplines is the proportion lower, such as in law and medicine.

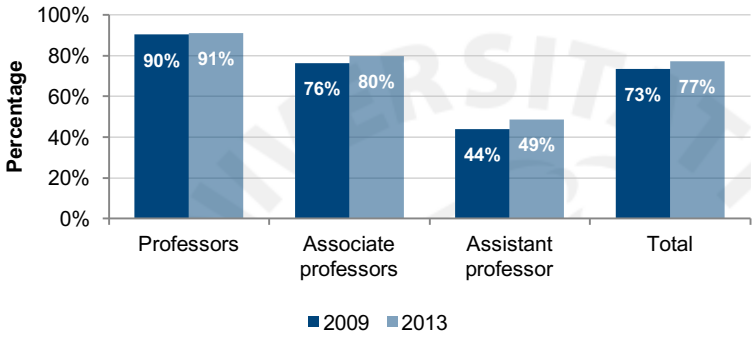


Fig. 1.6 UI academic staff (prof., assoc. prof. and assist. prof.) holding a PhD 2009-2013

Figure 1.7 shows that the proportion of international academic staff grew from the turn of the century up until 2012, when it went down a little. However, the number of international applications for new academic positions is growing at a faster rate than this. Therefore, this trend will result in a steadily growing internationalisation among permanent academic staff.

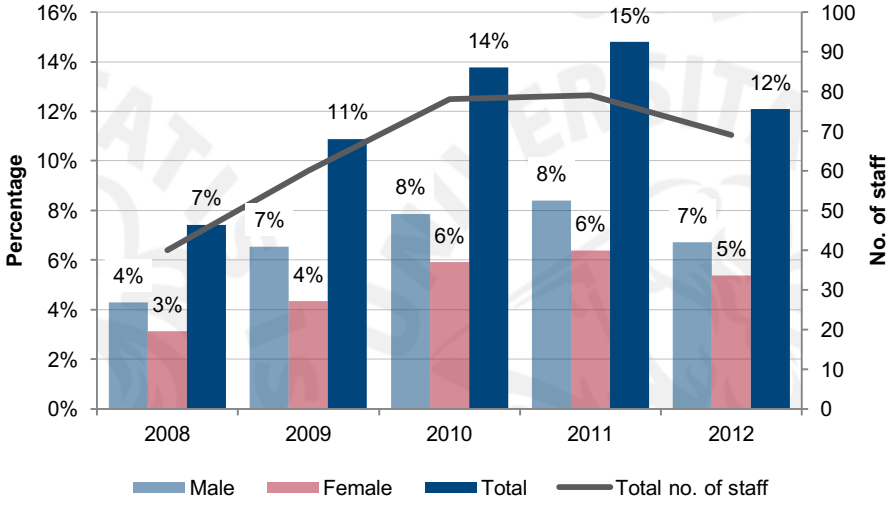


Fig. 1.7 Total number and percentage of foreign nationality staff of total UI academic staff 2008-2012

1.5.1.2 Other staff

The next table and figures show a rapid growth in the number of researchers (without teaching duties). These are, e.g., post-docs and many of them are appointed by the UI Centennial Fund (see Section 5.2). As mentioned above in the case of permanent academic staff, there has been no substantial increase in the number of administrative and support staff.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Admin. and support	415	425	418	406	424
Researchers	183	267	283	277	327
Total	598	692	701	683	751

Table 1.9 UI other staff (researchers and administrative and supporting staff) 2009-2013

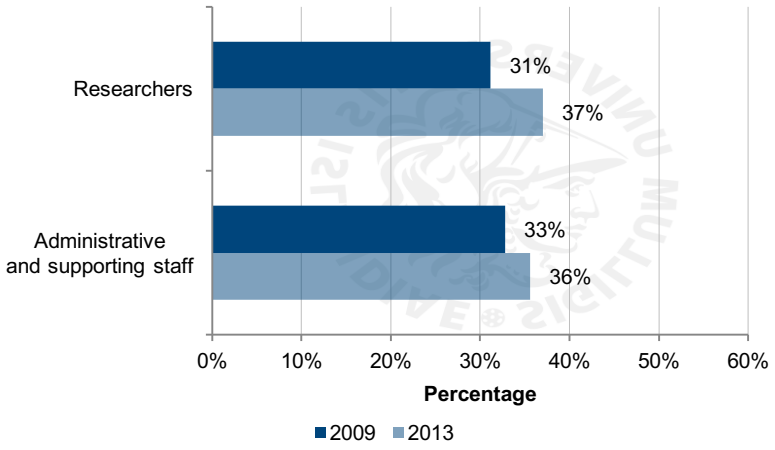


Fig. 1.8 UI male administrative and supporting staff and researchers 2009 and 2013

1.5.1.3 Total permanent staff

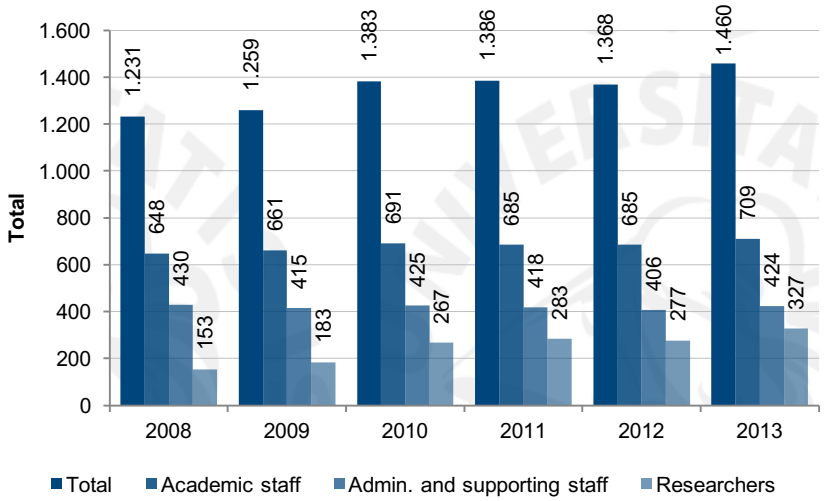


Fig. 1.9 Total permanent staff 2009-2013

1.5.1.4 Sessional teachers

As discussed in Section 1.7, teaching by sessional teachers, incl. PhD students, makes up around a third of all teaching at UI. Despite the considerable number of sessional teachers it is worth pointing out that the number of FTEs among sessional teachers has been relatively stable in recent years. In 2013 generally 11 sessional teachers equalled a FTE position, but the comparable figure for 2009 was 9. The high number of sessional teachers can be partly explained by the size and scope of UI in a country with a small population. Indeed, it also benefits UI to have a robust relationship with industry and thereby obtain a large number of specialists to teach at the University.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Sessional teachers	2.053	2.137	2.165	2.435	2.543
FTE	220	207	283	219	224
Sess. teachers/FTE	9	10	8	11	11

Table 1.10 Sessional teachers and their FTE 2009-2013

1.5.1.5 Postdoctoral researchers

The advancement of UI as a research university in recent years has led to the targeted recruitment of postdoctoral researchers. They were not previously defined as a specific group within UI and in some cases were recorded as project managers, researchers or research specialists. Efforts have been made to record postdoctoral researchers correctly. In 2010 they were 54, and 67 in 2012.

1.6 International collaboration

1.6.1 Introduction

UI has in recent years attracted international students, both exchange students for one or two semesters, and, to an even greater degree, international students pursuing a degree at UI. Nearly all faculties at UI offer courses taught in English at all levels of study. In 2014-2015 the total number of courses taught in English at undergraduate level is 377 or about 18% of all undergraduate courses. Full programmes taught in English are mainly available at the postgraduate level.

Figure 1.10 shows the number of international students at UI from 2009 to 2014 (February registrations). The total number of students increased at UI following the economic downturn, and the same holds true for international students, which count for around 8% of the student population during this period.

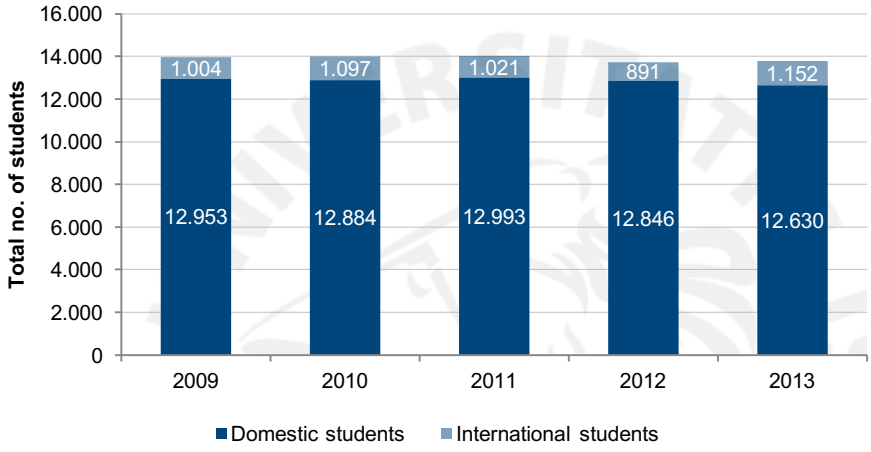


Fig. 1.10 International students at UI 2009-2014

1.6.2 Composition of the international student body by nationalities

The international students at UI come from over 80 different countries. German students are the most numerous at UI, and have remained so during the period under observation (2009-2014). The number of US students has more than doubled during that period from 42 students in 2009 to 77 students in 2013 and they are now the second largest nationality group at UI. Most students come from northern Europe, but it is notable that both the USA and Canada are among the top 10 nations at UI.

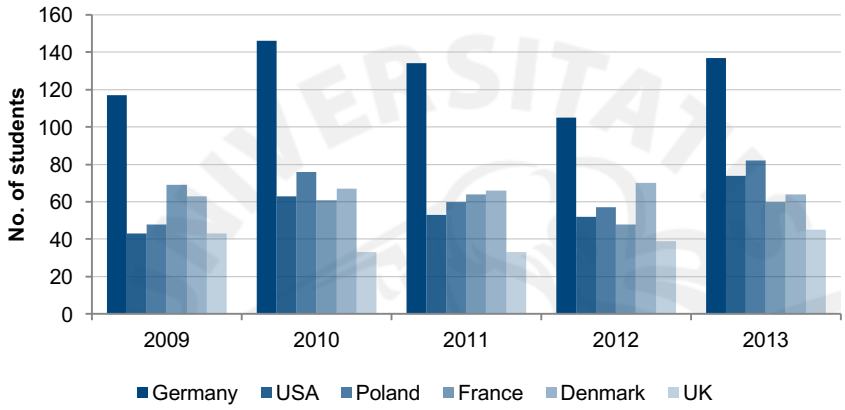


Fig. 1.11 International students at UI 2009-2013 (top five nationalities)

1.6.3 Number of exchange students to and from UI

UI participates in student mobility programmes such as the Erasmus+ programme and the Nordplus Higher Education programme, in addition to bilateral agreements with a large number of universities in Europe, the USA, Canada, Latin America, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. UI has over 500 agreements with international universities.

The number of students that come to UI on student agreements is considerably larger than the number of UI students going abroad, or more than double in 2013, with 267 UI students leaving on exchange programmes compared to 467 international students coming to UI. More emphasis will be put on encouraging UI students to take the opportunity to take part of their studies at our partner universities, and also on attaining balance in this area.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
To UI	374	384	408	426	467
From UI	188	188	260	272	267

Table 1.11 Exchange students to and from UI 2009-2013

1.6.4 International Office

In 2012-2013 the UI International Office (IO) was reorganised. This came into full effect by mid-2013. The responsibilities of the new office were expanded to not only focus on exchange students, but on all international students and staff. A new director was appointed in July 2013, and the IO has been

expanding its operations and responsibilities, and opening services to all international students. The IO has been working on streamlining services for international staff in cooperation with the DHR and individual schools and faculties, but that work is still underway.

1.6.5 International agreements

As stated earlier UI participates in the Erasmus+ programme for student and staff mobility and the Nordplus Higher Education programme, and has numerous bilateral agreements with universities all over the world. With UI establishing itself among the top 300 universities worldwide, an increased number of courses and programmes in English and also interest in Iceland as a destination, UI is now a sought-after university for collaborative agreements. Emphasis is on preferred partner universities, better ranked universities, and nurturing and promoting those agreements, not only for student exchange, but for research opportunities for academic staff and especially doctoral students.

Formal student and staff exchange agreements are with 36 of the top 100 universities listed by the Times Higher Education University Rankings in 2014. These include Caltech, UC Santa Barbara, University of Washington, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Cornell University and Purdue University (US), and McGill University and University of British Columbia (Canada). The first open student exchange agreement with an Ivy League College, Cornell University in NY, was signed in 2014. An agreement with UCSB is also active. Currently 30 UI students in science and engineering are allowed to study at UCSB each year without tuition fees. This agreement is being expanded to cover humanities and social sciences.

UI has also recently made agreements with prominent universities concerning summer programmes, the Stanford Summer International Honors Programme at Stanford University, as well as SURF programmes and research programmes at Caltech and at Purdue University in Indiana, giving UI students excellent opportunities to study and undertake research projects at outstanding universities.

Furthermore, UI participates with many Nordic universities offering joint Master's programmes within a framework established by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

1.6.6 Service provided to international students and staff

IO aims to be a one-stop shop for all international students and staff, both those that are browsing for information and those that have already decided to come to UI, to assist and provide all the relevant information.

IO organises, in collaboration with the SC, a mentor programme for incoming international students. This was run for the first time in its current form during the academic year 2013-2014, to great success. Each mentor is assigned 3-4 international students, and has to fulfil certain requirements in assisting them, both in regards to studying at UI and socially. Upon completion of the mentor period, the mentor files a report and, if approved, acknowledgement of the student's participation in the programme is cited in the diploma supplement upon graduation. There is interest in establishing a similar programme for incoming academic staff, as has already been done at SOE.

With increased internationalisation and a rapidly changing global landscape, there is call for an international strategy at UI. In most of Iceland's neighbouring countries national authorities have set a general policy and often very strict guidelines as to the internationalisation of the HEI system.

It is considered important that UI adopts a proactive approach to internationalisation with a strategy that deals with education and research, as well as student and researcher mobility to best serve the interests of UI.

A proposition was approved by the UC in autumn of 2014 to appoint a working committee to prepare a draft for UI's international collaboration strategy.

Measures

- ✓ *Prepare a policy on UI's international collaboration strategy which will address issues like a mentor programme for incoming academic staff similar to the existing mentor programme for overseas students.*
- ✓ *Increase the proportion of UI students participating in international student exchange programmes and other international programmes.*
- ✓ *Evaluate and prioritise existing cooperation agreements between UI and its international partners.*

1.7 Finances

1.7.1 Introduction

UI receives an annual allocation from the national budget in order to fulfil its duties. On the basis of an agreement with MESC, UI receives funding for teaching in accordance with a University financing model based on MESC regulations. In accordance with these regulations, each student shall be registered in a single programme, each programme falls into a certain payment grade and UI is funded for a certain

number of FTE students in each payment grade. UI also receives a certain amount for research and other projects based on agreements. The most recent agreement concerns the UI Centennial Fund (see Section 5.2). Additionally, UI receives funding from student registration fees for services for students, and from the UI Lottery for University buildings and maintainance.[8]

1.7.2 UI internal funding distribution model

The UC Finance Committee has developed a special internal funding distribution model in order to divide funding between the units of the University. This model allocates around 63% of the UI budget to the five schools and 37% to joint projects, central funds and central administration. Funding is allocated to schools depending on performance in teaching and research. The level of funding which is available through the model each time is dependent on the national budget and an agreement with MESC. Government funding does not increase automatically with improved performance or efficiency of the University. Funding allocated to schools is intended to cover the costs of teaching and research; salaries for teaching staff are the main expense.

An example of the distribution of funding to individual schools is shown in Table 1.12. The ratios generally do not change significantly from year to year.

	All schools	SOSS	SOHS	SOH	SOE	SENS
Percentage of funding through the teaching funding distribution model	55%	62%	61%	50%	44%	53%
Percentage of funding through the research funding distribution model	25%	26%	24%	27%	13%	36%
Percentage of other factors	20%	12%	15%	23%	43%	12%

Table 1.12 Funding for UI and individual schools 2013

1.7.3 Development of funding and non-governmental income 2009-2013

Since the merger of UI and IUE in 2008, the University's funding and non-governmental income has developed as indicated in Fig. 1.12. This is based on price levels from 2013. In this period, governmental funding has decreased by 12.0% in real terms and non-governmental income has decreased by 5.3%, an overall decrease of 9.9%. If the number of students (FTEs) is taken into account, governmental funding per student FTE has decreased by 25.2%, non-governmental funding per Student FTE by 19.5%, an overall decrease of 23.4%.

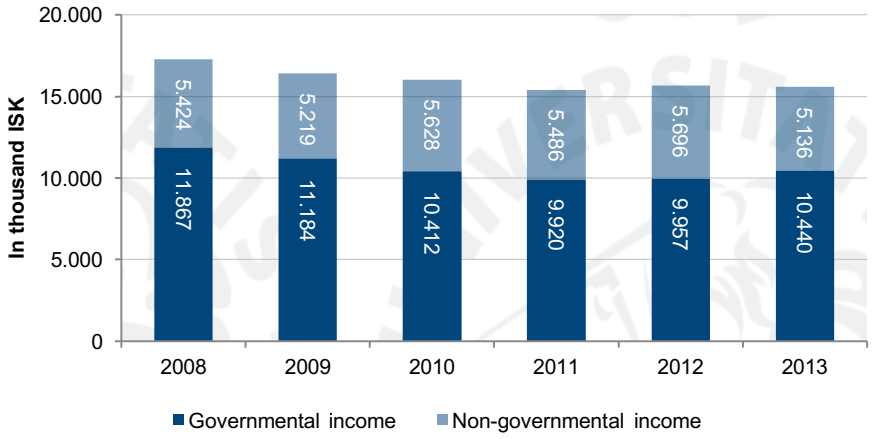


Fig. 1.12 Funding and non-governmental income for UI 2008-2013

Non-governmental income includes research grants and contract income as well as registration fees, contributions from the UI Lottery and other such sources. The percentage of non-governmental income of the total UI income from 2009 to 2013 is shown in Table 1.13.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Non-governmental income	32%	35%	36%	33%	36%

Table 1.13 Percentage of non-governmental income in the entire budget 2009-2013

Despite considerable cuts in funding in recent years, the operating results for UI have been well balanced (only a small deficit in 2013).

[8] See Regulation on the tariff of UI for various services to students etc., and the collection and disposition of the registration fee, no. 244/2014.

1.7.4 Funding in international comparison

Compared to the other Nordic countries and OECD-average, allocations to HEIs in Iceland are substantially lower, as Fig. 1.13 shows. For example, total expenditure on each FTE-student is more than 30% lower than the OECD average and about 50% lower than the average for the other Nordic countries during the period 2008-2012. The gap between Iceland and the OECD-average has increased since 2009, as can be seen in Fig 1.13 (cf. *Education at a Glance* 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014).

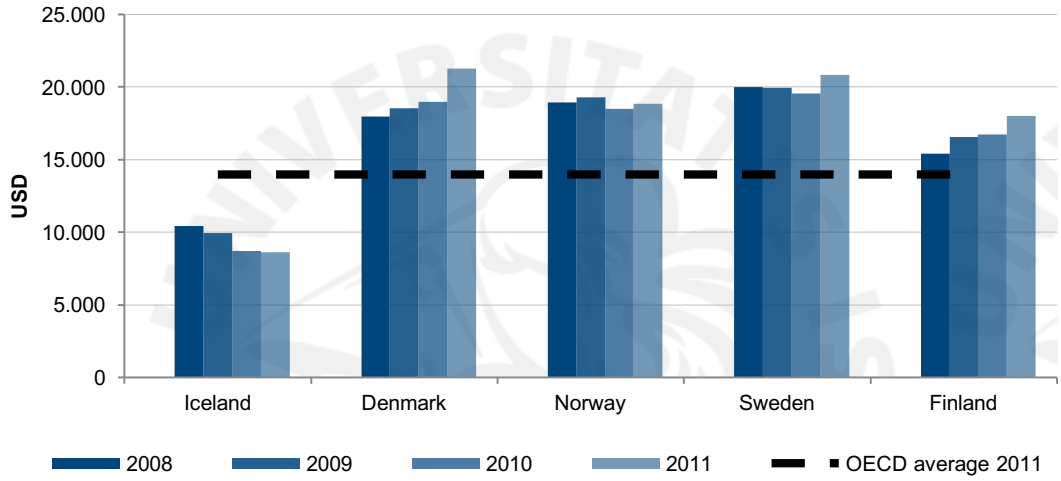


Fig. 1.13 Total expenditure in Iceland on each FTE student at tertiary level for the years 2008-2011 in comparison with OECD mean and selected countries

OECD's reports reveal that all comparisons between UI expenditure per student – be they with Icelandic primary and secondary school students, or with OECD or Nordic universities – confirm the difficult financial position of UI, and indeed the whole higher education sector in Iceland. The clearest testimony to this is that the student-teacher ratio is far higher at UI than at all comparable universities in the Nordic countries.

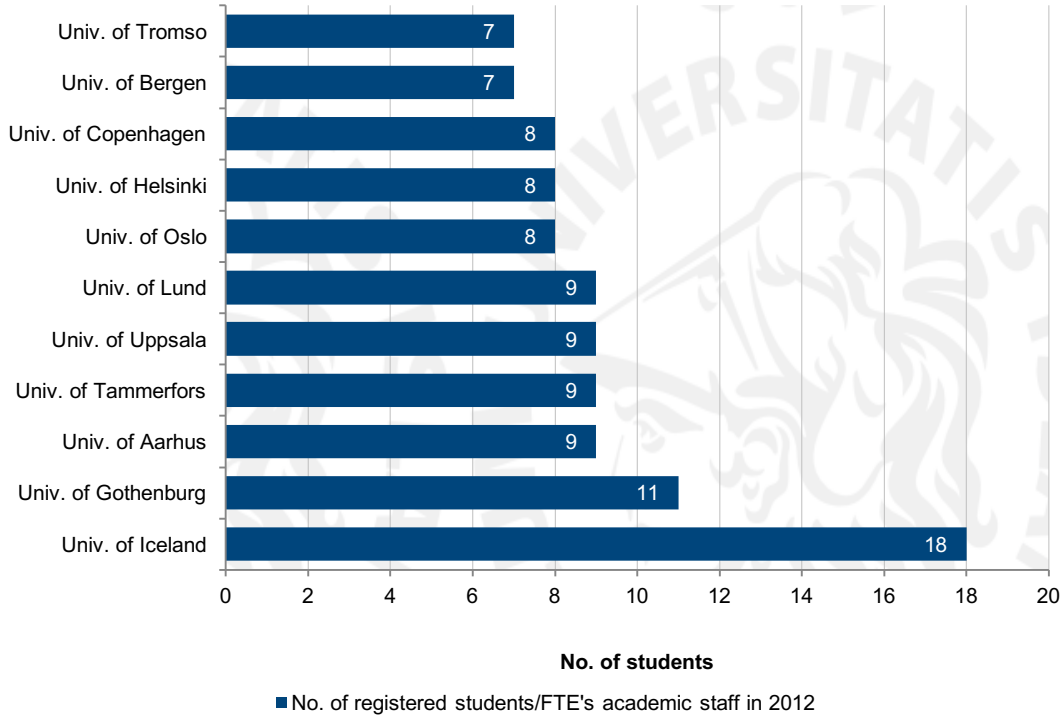


Fig. 1.14 Ratio between FTE students and all academic staff 2012. (This comparison is based on Nordic data where another method calculating the ratio is used than in Table 1.8 above).

1.7.5 Effect of the economic downturn on UI operations

After the economic downturn in 2008, the allocation of public funding to UI has decreased by over 19%. The government appealed to UI to open its doors for the unemployed and the University responded promptly and generously. As a result the number of FTE students increased by almost 20% right after the economic collapse. This of course affected University operations.

Cuts in funding for UI in recent years have rendered it necessary to reduce the number of electives, the average number of students in each course has risen, tutorial groups have grown in size, clinical training has been reduced, teaching staff have been assigned fewer hours for teaching courses, replacement of equipment for teaching and research has been slow and the salaries of administrative and support service staff have been cut despite increased workloads.

It has not been possible to respond to increased student enrolment with a corresponding increase in staff. The workload on staff has therefore substantially increased, which is not acceptable in the long term and will ultimately have lasting consequences for the University. Pressure is growing from UI staff, not least from sessional teachers and younger staff, for better working conditions and improved salaries (see Section 3.8.5).

Sessional teachers currently perform 30% of all teaching at the University, amounting to over 200.000 hours. This is roughly the equivalent to the teaching duties of 250 assistant professors. This percentage is high in any comparison, and no funds have been available to change this by increasing the number of permanent teaching staff. Furthermore the student-teacher ratio at UI is unfavourable and the same applies to the number of staff in administrative or support service positions, which is much lower at UI than at all comparable universities in the Nordic countries.

The objectives of the UI Centennial Fund and its importance for the future development of UI is dicussed in detail in Section 5.2.

1.8 UI Campus

The main University campus (campus A in map, see Fig. 15) is located in central Reykjavík and is around 60 hectares in size. Additionally, the University operates on four other sites, three in Reykjavík, two within walking distance of the main campus. The main campus is the site of operations connected to institutes and services to students and teaching staff of various kinds. In addition to the University buildings, the campus is home to, e.g, the National and University Library, the National Museum of Iceland, the Nordic House, the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies, student housing and preschools for students' children run under the auspices of Icelandic Student Services, banks, a cinema, a hotel and a nature reserve intended to reclaim wetlands for the city.

Fig. 1.15 Map of UI Campus

UI operations are conducted on premises owned by the University. The way in which UI buildings have been funded is undoubtedly unique, since they have all been built on the proceeds of a lottery run by the UI established in 1934 with special legislation. At the outset, the purpose of the lottery was to finance new buildings for UI and the refurbishment of older UI buildings, but in addition the lottery has partly funded research equipment and research work within the University. In 1934 the first building was constructed using proceeds from the lottery, and then the UI Main Building in 1940. More than twenty buildings have been built using proceeds of the UI Lottery.

With the merger of UI and IUE in 2008, and with the purchase of other premises, the total number of buildings is now a little over 30, totalling around 90.000 m^2 gross.

In the first decades of UI operations, detached buildings were built on the University campus to house individual subjects or faculties. This geographical separation was accompanied by unavoidable symbolic walls between the academic units. In recent years, the unity of UI and increasing interdisciplinary cooperation has been emphasised. This has increased the sharing and connecting of teaching premises to a greater degree.

UI's future vision is that sooner than later most of its operations will be united on the University main campus (campus A in Fig. 1.15) and the National University Hospital site (D in Fig. 1.15). The primary new buildings planned for the next years are a building for the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages (on campus A), to be used for language subjects within SOH, a building for the Árni Magnússon Institute for Icelandic Studies (on campus A), to be used for Icelandic studies within the Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies of SOH, a building for SOE (A) and a building for SOHS (D) which will be part of a new National University Hospital. Work on the UI Science Park has already commenced on the main campus, where University operations will be conducted in connection with enterprises in the field of research and development, in particular in life and health sciences, engineering and technology subjects. The UI Science Park will be crucial for the future development of research-based postgraduate study at the University (see Section 5.12).

The design of University buildings will in the future take new and changing teaching methods into account. Smaller teaching spaces may to a greater degree replace large lecture halls, since increased emphasis will most likely be placed on teaching in small groups, interactive teaching methods and flip teaching. Group work and students' independent study also requires increased and more diverse working and research facilities – and allowances must also be made for more workplaces for doctoral students.

Environmental and sustainability issues occupy an ever more significant position within UI, consistent with international developments, the changing needs of society and the interests of students and staff. Since 2005, UI has run an interdisciplinary postgraduate programme in Environment and Natural Resources, to which all University schools contribute. An ambitious sustainability and environmental policy for UI was approved by the UF and at the UC in 2012, and organised work has commenced in accordance with this. There is a growing interest in using the University main campus to a greater degree as a living research centre, e.g., with research in the nature reserve and experiments on storm water management. New buildings in the future will also take into account requirements and standards concerning sustainability and nature protection, and the future Icelandic Studies Building was designed with the requirements of Breeam (British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) in mind.

It should be noted that better use could be made of the University main campus as a site for experiments and practical training. UI also owns property outside of Reykjavík which might be suitable for building facilities for students in subjects such as engineering, biology and geology.

2. PREVIOUS QUALITY REVIEWS AND FOLLOW-UP

2.1 General position of UI towards quality reviews

Over the last 10-15 years, UI has participated in or been responsible for many internal and external reviews of the academic work and other operations of the University. This has, therefore, been a substantial component of the QA and enhancement work of UI. Indeed, the University does not consider external reviews and internal QA work to be separate; rather, they support each other and form an integral whole. UI's general experience of reviews is that they can provide valuable guidance for developing the work and progress of the University.

2.2 Overview of previous reviews

Previous reviews of UI may be divided into several categories[9]:

A. Subject-level reviews, which were conducted on the initiative of MESC between 2004 and 2010 on the basis of MESC's three-year plan for external assessment of quality of teaching and research in universities:
   - Faculty of Law (self-review & external review, 2004)
   - Faculty of Nursing (self-review & external review, 2004)
   - Faculty of Humanities (self-review & external review, 2006)

B. Institutional reviews, which were conducted between 2004 and 2005. The first two reviews were carried out on the initiative of MESC, but the third was carried out on the initiative of UI and implemented by EUA as a component in its Institutional Evaluation Programme:
   - Performance Audit of UI (Icelandic National Audit Office, 2005)
   - An Evaluation of Scholarly Work at UI (External expert team, 2005)
   - UI. EUA Evaluation Report (self-review & external review, 2005)

C. Reviews which were conducted on behalf of MESC in 2007 in connection with UI's application for accreditation:
   - Faculty of Science (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Humanities (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Theology (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Engineering (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Social Sciences (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Medicine (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Nursing (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Odontology (self-review & external review, 2007)
   - Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences (self-review & external review, 2007)

D. Reviews which were conducted on behalf of MESC from 2008 to 2009 in connection with UI's application for accreditation for offering doctoral studies:
   - Doctoral Studies in Humanities, Natural Science and Engineering (self-review & external review, 2008)
   - Doctoral Studies in Health and Social Sciences, incl. Education (self-review & external review, 2009)

E. Thematic reviews which were conducted variously on behalf of the National Audit Office or MESC between 2007 and 2011:
   - National Audit Office review of the expenses, efficiency and quality of university teaching in business administration, law, and computer science in four Icelandic universities (UI, the University of Akureyri, Reykjavik University and Bifröst University), e.g., in comparison with four foreign universities (Erasmus University, Netherlands, University of New Hampshire, USA, Høgskolen I Sør-Trøndelag, Norway and Umeå Universitet, Sweden) (Icelandic National Audit Office, 2007)
   - Comparison between tourism studies in two Icelandic universities (UI and Hólar University College, 2010)
   - Comparison between law programmes in four Icelandic universities (UI, University of Akureyri, Reykjavík University and Bifröst University, 2011)

F. Follow-up reviews, which were conducted on behalf of MESC between 2010 and 2011:

[9] Some of these reports are accessible on the MESC website: http://www.menntamalaraduneyti.is/mat-og-uttektir/haskolar/

- Faculty of Science (2010)
- Faculty of Humanities (2010)
- Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies (2010)
- Faculty of Business Administration (2011)

G. Subject-level reviews and institutional reviews, for which UI itself has been responsible:
   - Nordic Volcanological Centre at the UI Institute of Earth Sciences (self-review & external review, 2008)
   - Archaeology within the Faculty of History and Philosophy (self-review & external review, 2010)
   - Review of the merger of UI and IUE and the State of Teacher Education (self-review & external review, still in progress)[10]

H. Reviews in connection with international certification of academic units:
   - Certification of the Faculty of Social Work, carried out under the auspices of ENQASP-European Network for QA in Study Programmes in Social Professions (self-review & external review, 2006)
   - Certification of the MBA programme at the School of Business, carried out under the auspices of the Association of MBAs (self-review & external review, 2014)

I. Finally, many institution-led subject-level reviews have been conducted on the basis of the QEF between 2011 and 2014. These will be discussed in greater detail in Section 2.4.

Measure

✓ *Analyse the external final report on the merger of UI and IUE and the state of teacher education, and prepare actions based on recommendations in the report.*

2.3 Lessons

In the experience of UI, lessons learnt from quality reviews are primarily of two kinds: on the one hand, lessons involving the review *process* itself, in particular the work on self-review, and on the other hand lessons involving the *conclusions* of the reviews. There is not room here for a detailed discussion of those many lessons learnt. Therefore, three illustrative examples are made to suffice:

1. In 2004, the Minister for Education, Science and Culture tasked the National Audit Office with carrying out a detailed review of finances, performance, quality, operational structure and governance of UI, e.g., with international comparisons. Alongside this, the Minister tasked an international team of experts with specifically reviewing the academic work of UI, particularly in an international context. When these reviews were imminent, the rector of UI decided to request a third review by participating in the Institutional Evaluation Programme of EUA (see item B above). In the middle of 2005, three external review reports were then available. Although the results of the reviews had in all main issues been exceptionally positive for UI, they also contained numerous suggestions for improvement. At the same time, a new rector took office and one of the first actions was to appoint a workgroup tasked with carefully scrutinising the reports, listing all suggestions for improvements and making proposals for reform. When the group completed its work it submitted a report with around one hundred proposed measures. Concomitant with a strategic overall vision, the proposals formed the basis of a comprehensive policy for UI, which led to the approval of the Policy of UI 2006-2011 by the UF and UC in the beginning of 2011.
2. Between 2004 and 2011 (see items A, C and E above) three reviews were conducted of the Faculty of Law at UI. These reviews (and indeed also other reviews, e.g., the Performance Audit from the National Audit Office, cf. item B) frequently suggested that the University revise its policy on the admission of new students to undergraduate studies. It was contended that the general open access policy resulted in such a high number of new students in their first year in popular subjects, that the quality of the studies was compromised. At that time the strategy was to use examinations at the end of the first year of study, which meant time and money not well spent for a large group of students. The Policy of UI 2011-2016 reacted to these suggestions with a provision stating that UI would revise its policy on the admission of new students. Following this, development began on a general learning aptitude test, in cooperation with the Icelandic Institute of Educational Assessment, taking similar examinations in Sweden and the USA into consideration. This examination was implemented on a trial basis in the Faculty of Economics in 2012, then in the Faculty of Medicine in 2013 and finally in full in the Faculty of Law in the spring of 2014. The Faculty of Nursing will also use the examination from the spring of 2015. Furthermore, other faculties are considering the examination for later implementation (see Section 3.6.1.3). This, however, is not entirely straightforward, since MESC's university financing model is based in large part on universities receiving funding based on the number of students taking exams each year. This leads to a rather peculiar situation, whereby a

[10] See 'External review of the merger of UI and IUE 2014' in Folder 2.

certain tension exists between the governmental funding model and the University's efforts to improve the quality of studies.

3. In recent years various external review reports suggested that doctoral studies at UI, which were at that time just taking off as organised programmes, needed to be strengthened. This was addressed in the Policy of UI 2006-2011, and the decision was made to establish the UI GS which commenced operations in 2009. This is also the subject matter of the case study in Section 7 of this report.

2.4 Institution-led reviews at the subject level within the QEF

The largest single step in the development of QA in Icelandic universities since the entry into force of the Act on HEIs, no. 63/2006 was undoubtedly the establishment of the Quality Board for Icelandic Higher Education (QB) in 2010 and the approval of the QEF, a year later, published in the Quality Enhancement Handbook for Icelandic Higher Education. UI has made a sincere effort to answer this call, and sought to make utmost use of this to further quality enhancement work within the University. Emphasis has been laid on implementing good organisation and consistent procedures for the self-review work and securing active follow-up measurements. Throughout the cycle, the importance of openness and scrupulousness has been stressed in order to obtain maximum benefits.

2.5 Organisation

Following the approval of the QEF, UI sent QB a formal proposal concerning the organisation of the institution-led reviews at the subject level within the University. This proposal anticipated that the self-review would cover all 25 faculties of the University, since the faculties are the basic academic units of UI. In addition, UI suggested that the subject-level reviews would cover two interdisciplinary postgraduate programmes, which are collaborative projects between faculties. QB approved the proposal and UI, therefore, implemented 27 institution-led reviews in total in the first cycle of the QEF, which is taking place between 2011 and 2015 (see Table 2.1).[11]

	Faculty	School	Status
2011/2012	Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies	SOH	Completed
	Faculty of Earth Sciences	SENS	Completed
	Public Health (Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Programme)	Int.	Completed
	Faculty of Political Science	SOSS	Completed
	Environment and Natural Resources (Interdisciplinary Postgraduate Programme)	Int.	Completed
2012/ 2013	Faculty of Foreign Languages, Literature and Linguistics	SOH	Completed
	Faculty of Social and Human Sciences	SOSS	Completed
	Faculty of Social Work	SOSS	Completed
	Faculty of Economics	SOSS	Completed
	Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science	SENS	Completed
	Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition	SOHS	Completed
	Faculty of Psychology	SOHS	Completed
	Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering	SENS	Completed
	Faculty of Education Studies	SOE	Completed
	Faculty of Business Administration	SOSS	Completed
2013/ 2014	Faculty of Sport, Leisure Studies and Social Education	SOE	Completed
	Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences	SOHS	In final stages
	Faculty of Physical Sciences	SENS	Completed
	Faculty of History and Philosophy	SOH	Completed
2014/ 2015	Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies	SOH	In progress
	Faculty of Nursing	SOHS	In progress
	Faculty of Teacher Education	SOE	In progress
	Faculty of Law	SOSS	In progress
	Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences	SENS	In progress
	Faculty of Medicine	SOHS	In progress
	Faculty of Odontology	SOHS	In progress
	Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering	SENS	In progress

Table 2.1 Schedule of institution-led reviews at the subject level within UI

2.6 Consistent procedures

The faculties of UI are highly diverse in terms of their size (from 59 to 1.375 students, and from 6 to 110 permanent members of teaching staff), role (undergraduate/postgraduate, research activity, etc.), history and culture. In order to regulate them, the UC Quality Committee composed detailed guidelines for the self-review, based on the five cornerstones of the QEF. The guidelines were approved by the UC in early 2012 and have been revised twice since then in light of experience[12]. The role of the guidelines is to ensure consistency in the implementation of the review, whilst at the same time giving the faculties

[11] See 'Reports from the Institution-led reviews at the subject level' in Folder 2.1.

[12] See 'UI guidelines for subject level reviews' in Folder 2.

scope to present their own unique positions and diversity. The University's faculties have generally worked in accordance with the guidelines and other public HEIs have used them as a blueprint.

2.7 UI's Quality Review Committee

In connection with the organisation of the self-review within UI, the UC appointed a special Quality Review Committee with 10 members, to manage the review process on behalf of the UC and the rector. Committee members are the pro-rector of science and academic affairs, who is the chair, three representatives from the UC's standing committees, three representatives from the central administration, the director of the CTL and the head of the SC.

The role of the Quality Review Committee is (1.) at the beginning of work on each review, to hold an initial meeting with the self-review team. The dean of the relevant school participates in the meeting, at which the head of the self-review team submits a work schedule and the implementation of the review is discussed. (2.) When a draft of the self-review report is made available, the committee makes suggestions for improvements and provides a detailed statement.[13] (3.) One year after the final self-review report is submitted, the committee requests a report from the relevant head of faculty and dean of school on the follow-up of the review and implementation of the plan of action. (4.) The committee informs the UC regularly of the implementation of the QEF within the University and participates in the annual meeting between UI and representatives of QB. (5.) The committee oversees the QB-led review at the institutional level on behalf of UI.

2.8 Presentation and ownership

Following the approval of the QEF, presentation of the system was undertaken within the University in order to promote 'ownership' amongst students and staff. In recent semesters, the system has, for example, been presented in all faculties, at regular informative meetings for management personnel, in UC meetings, at meetings between the rector and school deans, at meetings with the SC and at meetings of the UC Quality Committee and the UC Academic Affairs Committee. The annual UI conference on teaching and learning, which is a forum for discussion of innovation in the field of teaching and learning within UI, has also been specifically dedicated to the QEF and lessons learnt from it. Furthermore, UI has undertaken presentation and discussion of the QEF outside of the University, e.g., at consultative meetings with senior staff of MESC, at meetings of the Icelandic Rectors' Conference, at meetings with the Icelandic Association of Quality Management and at a well-attended conference under the auspices of the QC held in the spring of 2014 to address lessons learnt both from institution-led reviews at the subject level and QB-led reviews at the institutional level.

2.9 Active student involvement

Significant emphasis is placed on the active participation of students in the faculty self-reviews. There are at least two student representatives in each self-review team, the head of the SC has sat on the UI Quality Review Committee, and student focus groups have been established in connection with faculty self-reviews.

In the spring semester of 2014, the SC and the CTL organised a special meeting with a group of students who had participated in the faculty self-review teams to discuss their experiences of the review. In general, students feel they have been active participants in the self-review teams and that their opinions came across clearly in the self-review reports, and suggestions for improvements were also presented at organised regular student focus groups.[14]

It is clear that students usually study at the University for no more than a few years and their representatives in standing committees and formal QA work change at similar intervals. For this reason, it is important to have an organised forum for training students to participate in quality reviews. As head of the QC, the Director of Quality Management at UI has already begun talks with the board of the Icelandic National Student Union and UI will work within the QC to ensure that this takes priority during the beginning of the second cycle of the QEF in 2015/2016.

Measure

- ✓ *UI will initiate, in collaboration with the National Student Union and the QC, a training programme for students participating in quality reviews before the launch of the second cycle of QEF in 2016.*

2.10 Support from the Centre for Teaching and Learning

The CTL, which operates within DAA, has from the outset been an active participant in the implementation of the QEF within UI. The Centre, for example, offers to carry out an analysis of teaching methods and teaching quality for faculties undertaking a review, and several faculties have availed themselves of this service (see Section 3.2.10). Furthermore, many faculties have asked the CTL and

[13] See 'Example of a Statement from the UI Quality Review Committee on a draft report' in Folder 2.

[14] See 'Minutes from a meeting with student representatives in self-review teams' in Folder 2.

the UI Social Sciences Research Institute to organise focus groups, World Café meetings or other discussion meetings with students, in which, e.g., the results of surveys have been discussed and interpreted, and improvements planned where appropriate.

2.11 Evidence base

It is emphasised that the self-review is well thought out and evidence based. This is in conformity with the rationale of the QEF. To ensure that faculties base their reviews on comparable evidence, the central administration provides each faculty with key information at the beginning of work on the reviews. This refers to:

1. Statistical data on students and student progression, i.e., number of students / number of FTE students, number of tenured teaching staff, student-teacher ratio, intake rate, retention rate, time taken to graduate and graduation rate.
2. Statistical information on research performance, i.e., number of research points in accordance with the research evaluation system of public HEIs in Iceland, and number of research points in specific categories within the evaluation system.
3. Results from surveys on the experiences and opinions of students in relation to multiple components of studies. This refers to five surveys conducted by the UI Social Science Research Institute since 2011 (see Section 3.7). The results of the surveys are presented in reports which enable each faculty to compare themselves with other faculties, the respective school, other schools and with UI as a whole, and discuss developments from one year to another within faculties.
4. Information on teaching staff who have participated in CTL courses.
5. Various other data and information which is gathered regularly, e.g., the results of the course evaluation surveys.

Individual faculties have also gathered further information. For example, the faculties within SOE have submitted a list of questions to teaching staff, the faculties within SENS have carried out special analyses of teaching methods and the faculties within SOSS have gathered additional information on graduate outcomes.

2.12 Input from external reviewers

Although there is rather little guidance to be found in the Quality Enhancement Handbook on the role of the foreign members on the self-review teams, work on the self-reviews has shown that they can be extremely useful. In the updated versions of the UI guidelines for the self-review, the involvement of the external reviewers has, therefore, been better defined and they now submit an independent report with suggestions and proposals, which the self-review team responds to in the final report. In this way, the foreign experts have in fact acted as external advisors and, thereby, promoted integration of internal and external perspective in the self-review.

2.13 Best practice

As the self-review process has progressed, the faculties of UI have, to an ever increasing degree, learned from each others' experiences, both in relation to the review process and the adoption of best practice. All self-review reports, results from surveys, statements from the UI Quality Review Committee and other relevant information is, therefore, saved in Ugla, the UI IT system (see Section 4.8.1) and made accessible to all self-review teams, University management personnel and other relevant parties. Results from student surveys are also presented regularly at the UF, both for the sake of relaying information and to create healthy competition between schools and faculties. Heads of faculty who have performed particularly well in the self-review of their faculty have also been asked to present their work and provide practical advice in an annual seminar for those faculties next in line for review, at informative meetings for management personnel and at the annual UI conference on teaching and learning and a special meeting focusing on this agenda held outside Reykjavik in spring 2014. Finally, it is worth mentioning that in the search for the next chair of the UC Quality Committee, who will chair the committee from the beginning of 2015, performance in the institution-led reviews was given particular consideration.

Measures

- ✓ *The UC Quality Committee will analyse the self-review reports of faculties and interdisciplinary programmes in order to identify examples of best practice.*
- ✓ *CTL will make information on best practice accessible and disseminate this to students and faculties through Ugla and other media.*

2.14 Annual meetings with Quality Board representatives

In conformity with the QEF, annual meetings are held between UI representatives and the institutional contact, and, where applicable, other representatives of the QB. These meetings have now been held three times. At the meetings, the representatives of UI have reported on progress regarding the

implementation of the QEF within UI and the development of the University QA system. The representatives of the QB have posed questions and made suggestions. The meetings have proved very useful.

2.15 Conclusions and follow-up

Regarding the conclusions of the institution-led reviews at subject level, UI distinguishes between conclusions relating first and foremost to the relevant faculty/school and conclusions relating to UI as a whole.

Concerning those conclusions focused on schools and faculties, the primary role of the University authorities, taking the academic freedom and independence of the faculties into account, is to ensure that policy-making, setting of targets and plans of action within faculties are followed up in an organised manner.

Concerning those results focused on UI as a whole, the reports have been reviewed for the purpose of identifying recurring themes and systematic factors requiring further analysis or action. This work has, in particular, been conducted by the UC Quality Committee, the UC Academic Affairs Committee and the CTL. Several examples of such general lessons and conclusions will be enumerated here, but it must be noted that since this is very extensive data, and also around a third of faculties have yet to complete their review, the analysis is not complete and will be continued in 2015, e.g., in connection with the preparation for the next stage of the Policy of UI. It is also worth noting that there are many planned measures mentioned in this reflective analysis which may be traced, directly or indirectly, to the self-review work although this is not always specifically stated.

2.15.1 In general

As previously stated, the QEF has proved very useful to UI and has had a stimulating and positive effect on discussions and awareness amongst staff and students of the quality of teaching and learning. The self-reviews of faculties and UI have also already prompted many development projects and enhancement measures, which will undoubtedly strengthen the University's QA work and quality culture in the future. [15]

The data from the self-reviews shows that the quality of teaching and studies at UI is generally high, conferred degrees command respect inside and outside of Iceland, the majority of students are satisfied or very satisfied with their studies, graduates are admitted to postgraduate studies at outstanding universities abroad, unemployment rates amongst graduates are very low and students generally find employment relevant to their education.

The self-review has also highlighted various matters which might be improved, of which a number of examples will be given in this reflective analysis.

2.15.2 Self-review and writing of the self-review reports

Members of individual self-review teams have indicated in interviews that they consider the review process to have been time-consuming and demanding, and for this reason in some instances the teams did not manage to comply with the schedule. In spite of this, these interviews also confirm unanimously that the work on the review has proved to be very useful. However, in light of this experience, it might be suggested whether in the second cycle of the QEF, the scope of the work should be streamlined by emphasising follow-up in particular.

2.15.3 Formal and informal quality management

The self-review reports show that although the academic performance of UI is generally good, quality management in some faculties, in particular the smaller ones, is too informal and depends too much on individuals. This is indicated by the fact that although clear rules, working procedures and so forth are available and accessible, familiarity with them appears in places to be insufficient, or they do not seem to be followed as they should. There is no single reason for this, but undoubtedly part of the explanation lies in inadequate funding, an unfavourable student-teacher ratio and high workloads for staff. Cultural factors may also be mentioned, e.g., the small size of Icelandic society, working culture, greater social proximity between people, informal manners of communication and short communication channels. This, however, does not explain everything and there are also examples in the faculty reports in which formal quality management is exemplary. On the whole, the reports indicate that in recent years significant progress has been made in these matters, and this is in line with the increased emphasis placed on quality at the national and international levels. An important background in this development was the adoption of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the subsequent HEI Act, no. 63/2006, and the introduction of the QEF in Iceland, which have altogether increased the awareness and the importance of QA in the work of the University.

Although informal quality management has certain advantages, its disadvantage, by its very nature, is that it cannot serve as a tool for performance management, risk assessment and the management of

[15] See 'Responses from heads of faculty to questions on their experience with subject-level reviews' in Folder 2.

enhancement. UI will, therefore, continue to strengthen its QA system and promote quality culture within the University. This may include strengthening and better defining the roles of school governing boards, school assemblies, faculty meetings and departmental board meetings in the field of quality management, so as to ensure that QA matters in teaching and studies, such as the results of course evaluation surveys, surveys on student satisfaction, appraisal interviews, drop-out rates, learning outcomes, workload, feedback, etc., are addressed regularly – as they should – in these forums.

Measures

- ✓ *Continue to strengthen UI's QA system and the promotion of quality culture within the University, including the roles of school governing boards, school assemblies, faculty meetings and departmental board meetings in the field of quality management, so as to ensure that QA matters in teaching and studie are addressed regularly in these forums.*
- ✓ *Regular informative meetings between the UI director of quality management and the SC on QA at UI.*

2.15.4 Role and responsibility of faculty heads regarding quality assurance

The prepartions for the reflective analysis have confirmed what was expected, that the work of faculty heads must be supported and the position made more desirable. This involves, e.g., extending the term of employment of a faculty head, promoting regular leadership training, focusing the roles and division of responsibilities between school deans, faculty heads and heads of department, and better defining the responsibilities of faculty heads in the field of QA. Action has already been taken in response to this, to a certain extent, with meetings on the matter held by the rector with school deans and faculty heads. The DHR have also made preparations for offering regular administrative training for new deans from the autumn semester of 2014 (see Section 3.8).

Measure

- ✓ *Strengthen the QA role of faculty heads and their support.*

2.15.5 Organisation of quality assurance

The implementation of the QEF within UI has shown that the organisation, division of duties and responsibility for matters of quality assurance within the University are formally regulated. However, it has also emerged that follow-up procedures might be better defined and supported, both centrally and at the school and faculty levels. Among these are supervision concerning follow-up of subject-level reviews, processing of statistical data and survey results, communication of such information to students and staff, the implementation of appraisal interviews and application of their results, the regular review of learning outcomes, course assessment, and credit allocation to courses, to name a few examples.

In response to this, the establishment of formal QA committees within schools should also be considered. Finally, along this line, the University might consider reviewing the responsibilities and division of duties between the UC Quality Committee and the UC Academic Affairs Committee.

Measures

- ✓ *Establish formal QA committees for each school.*
- ✓ *Revise responsibilities and division of duties between the UC Quality Committee and the UC Academic Affairs Committee.*

2.15.6 Gathering, analysis, application and dissemination of statistical data on students and studies

Within UI, a large amount of quantitative and qualitative data is gathered on University operations, i.e., on students and studies at all levels (responsibility of the Student Registration at the DAA), on the views of current and former students (responsibility of the Social Science Research Institute), on international students (responsibility of the International Office), on doctoral studies (responsibility of the GS), on human resources and staff development (responsibility of the DHR), on research activities, research grants, innovation and intellectual property, patents and so forth (responsibility of the DSI), on finances, study facilities, University buildings (responsibility of the DOR), to name some examples.

Although at the beginning of the self-review work, faculties received a selected collection of statistical information covering a period of several years, the self-review reports and interviews with faculty heads indicate that there is a need to present and use this data in a more organised manner in connection with day-to-day quality management, setting of targets and follow-up.

Following these suggestions, a working group has been established concerning future organisation of information material at UI, e.g. considering the development of a comprehensive information system connecting existing information in all different areas of the University, and how the management of gathering, storage, analysis and dissemination of data can be organised. Summarised data on general patterns of student enrolment provide insufficient resolution for the detection of e.g. reasons for dropping

out of individual programmes. Having data on individual students would create an opportunity for schools, faculties and departments to examine also the differences and similarities between sub-groups of students in order to determine which factors impact student enrolment behaviour and design intervention strategies.

Measure

- ✓ *Develop a comprehensive information system connecting existing information from the various areas of the University, and organise the management of the gathering, storage, analysis and dissemination of data.*

2.15.7 Follow-up and support

One of the most significant changes brought by the QEF is that HEIs are now entirely responsible for regular subject-level reviews, without this being followed by a special external review and subsequent report from external experts. Although this arrangement certainly serves the purpose of promoting institutional responsibility and quality management within faculties, a desire to receive a formal response to the review and support with follow-up work has been indicated in the self-review reports and in meetings with faculty heads and other members of the self-review teams.

To meet the faculties half-way on this, several measures have been implemented. Firstly, the UI guidelines for the self-review prescribe at least two external members of each self-review team, one being a domestic representative of alumni or of industry, and the other being the foreign expert. As mentioned before, particular emphasis is placed on the contribution of the foreign expert in the self-review team. Secondly, the UI Quality Review Committee submits an independent statement and suggestions for each self-review draft report before it is submitted, as well as providing faculties with guidance on follow-up work. Thirdly, the CTL has had an ever-increasing supporting and guiding role in connection with the self-review and its follow-up, as described in Section 2.2.10.2. The possibility of further formalising the academic involvement of the CTL by making this a required rather than optional component, funded centrally, will be considered. Fourthly and finally, the UI authorities are considering establishing a special fund, or increasing the current Teaching Development Fund (see Section 2.2.11), in order to systematically support the plans of action and reform projects selected by faculties.

Measures

- ✓ *Formalise the academic involvement of the CTL by making its supportive role in connection with subject-level reviews a requirement.*
- ✓ *Stenghten the Teaching Development Fund in order to support plans of action and reform projects chosen by faculties.*

3. SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS

3.1 Institutional approach to managing standards

3.1.1 Internal quality assurance system

A formal QA policy for UI was first approved at the UF in 2002,[16] and a formal QA system was then adopted within the University, covering in a systematic manner all primary components of operations, teaching and studies, research and innovation, and governance and administration.

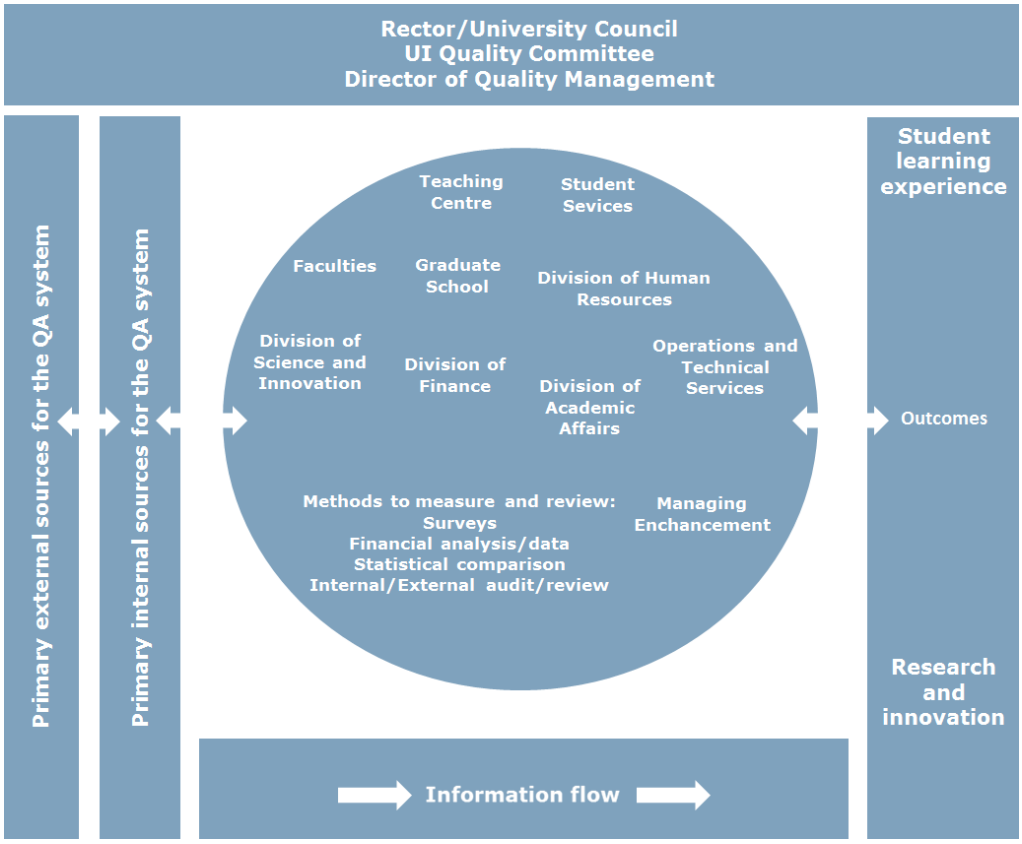


Fig. 3.1 University of Iceland's Quality Assurance system

3.1.2 Basis for the quality assurance system

The QA system is based on various external and internal sources. The primary external sources are:

- Act on HEIs, no. 63/2006
- Act on Public HEIs, no. 85/2008
- Regulation on QA for Teaching and Research, no. 321/2009
- Regulation on Accreditation of HEIs, no. 1067/2006
- Regulation on Doctoral Studies in HEIs, no. 37/2007
- National Qualification Framework, no. 530/2011
- Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education
- Agreement between MESC and UI on teaching and research 2012-2016, with appendices
- Agreement on the UI Centenary Fund
- The Bologna Process and its policy in the field of QA, in particular Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area

The primary internal sources for the QA system are:

- The comprehensive policy for UI (currently: Policy of UI 2011-2016)
- UI policy on various issues
- Regulation for UI, no. 569/2009
- UI regulations and codes on various issues

[16] See 'QA policy for UI' in Folder 3.

- UI course catalogue

3.1.3 Objective of the quality assurance system

The objective of the QA system is, broadly speaking, divided into three parts: firstly, to *ensure* that the quality of operations is in conformity with aforementioned external and internal sources and meets the reasonable expectations of students, staff, industry and Icelandic society, as well as the demands of the international scientific community. Secondly, to *enhance* in an organised manner the quality of operations. Thirdly, to increase the knowledge and interest of students and staff in matters of quality, and thereby promote a robust *quality culture* within UI.

3.1.4 Concept of quality

The above points demonstrate that the term 'quality' in fact has several different meanings within the framework of the UI QA system, depending on the matter concerned. In this way, the QA system simultaneously serves the demands of the authorities, the public and students concerning *accountability* and *value for money*, as well as promoting the University's long term goals concerning *excellence*, ensuring that operations are always *fit for purpose* and also promoting continuous *enhancement*.

3.1.5 Scope of the quality assurance system

The UI QA system simultaneously covers *resources/input* (by ensuring that the University attracts good students, effective teaching and research staff and by procuring sufficient funds to offer them adequate premises, facilities and salaries), *processes* (with organised induction of new students and staff, supervision ensuring that new study programmes satisfy established quality requirements, the organised utilisation of learning outcomes (LOs), regular review of the quality of teaching and studies, diverse methods in course assessment, organised discourse between staff and so forth) and *achievement/outcome* (by promoting success in the fields of research and innovation, high graduation rates and so forth).

3.1.6 Quality documents

The Regulation for UI no. 569/2009, regulations specific to schools and faculties, defined criteria and requirements, rules of procedure, guidelines, handbooks, statistical data, forms and other documents are accessible for all staff in the Ugla IT system, in Icelandic. Most of these quality documents are also available in English and translation work will be continued.

In addition to this, in 2015 UI will undertake the writing of a easy-to-use quality manual for management personnel, teaching staff and students. This manual is intended to provide an overview of quality management within UI and to be a practical guide in day-to-day work and study.

Measures

- ✓ *Continue to develop QA procedures and guidelines in Ugla, including identification of key quality documents of UI.*
- ✓ *Produce a short easy-to-use manual on the UI QA system.*

3.1.7 Quality circle, information and evidence

The main principle in QA work at UI is to endeavour to ensure that the primary processes form a 'quality circle', such that planning, action, checking and follow-up form a continuous process of reform.

UI endeavours to ensure that the QA system is based upon reliable information and evidence, and the gathering, analysis, dissemination and organised use of such is an important component of the system.

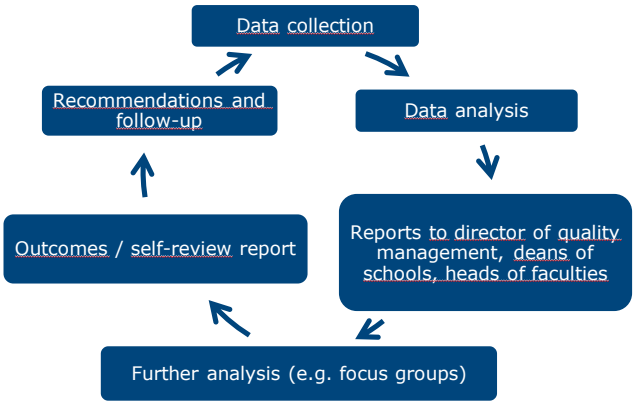


Fig. 3.2 Quality circle: Use of student satisfaction surveys

3.1.8 Methods of incentives/organised motivation

An important part of the UI QA system involves organised motivation. The primary incentive systems of the University are the performance-based incentive system for research for academic staff (see Section 4), the job evaluation system SKREF for staff in administrative and technical positions, sabbaticals for academic staff and study leave for staff in administrative and technical positions, the annual staff awards for outstanding professional achievement, organised administrative training, the extensive training programme of the DHR, training of teaching staff in the CTL and various support funds for students and staff, e.g., the UI Student Achievement and Incentive Fund for new students at UI, doctoral grants, the Teaching Development Fund and so forth.

3.1.9 Responsibility for quality assurance

The rector and the UC are the highest authorities at UI and are ultimately responsible for the quality of operations. School deans work under the authority of the rector and are answerable to the rector for the quality of operations within schools and those faculties under their auspices. Faculty heads and directors of institutes work under the authority of the school deans and are answerable to them for the quality of the academic work of faculties and institutes.

The UI central administration operates under the authority of the rector and works to help that the rector, the UC, school deans and faculty heads can perform their duties in the field of quality management.

The pro-rector of science and academic affairs and the UI director of quality management oversee day-to-day implementation of the UI QA system, under the authority of the rector and the UC. The pro-rector has upheld this role by, e.g., acting as chair of the UC Quality Committee, the board of the GS and the UI Quality Review Committee. The role of the director of quality management is further addressed in Section 3.1.11.

Last but not least, each member of staff, and indeed also each student, is responsible for the quality and standard of their work. The role of the governance of UI is to ensure that staff and students receive the necessary information and support for this.

3.1.10 University Council Quality Committee

The UC Quality Committee was initially appointed in 2006. The committee is composed of representatives from all schools and a student representative. The role of the committee is to ensure the quality of teaching, research and governance at UI. This involves, e.g., supporting the formal University QA system and strengthening the quality culture within the University.

The responsibilities of the UC Quality Committee are:

- to develop, maintain and supervise the formal UI QA system,
- to follow up those components in UI policy pertaining to the University QA system and the quality of operations,
- to monitor and take into account international developments and strategies in the field of quality regarding the work of universities, e.g., within EUA, ENQA and in connection with the Bologna Process,
- to evaluate applications from faculties to invite selected individuals to fill the position of visiting scholar,
- to oversee the online UI quality documents,
- to ensure discussion, knowledge and awareness of quality and thereby promote quality culture within UI,
- to advise the rector, the UC, the UF, schools, faculties, other working committees, directors and heads of divisions on anything pertaining to QA at the University,
- to perform any other tasks which the rector or the UC may assign to the committee.

The committee works closely with other parties involved in central QA within UI, e.g., the UC Academic Affairs Committee, the UC Science Committee, central administration, school administration and those service units under its auspices. The committee regularly informs the rector and the UC of its work.

3.1.11 Director of quality management

The director of quality management, who is also director of the Office of the Rector, oversees the UI QA system on a day-to-day basis under the authority of the rector. The director of quality management works closely with the rector, pro-rector and other central administration personnel, especially the directors of DAA and DSI, school administrative personnel and student representatives on the development and progression of the QA system. The director participates in the work of the UC Quality Committee and the UI Quality Review Committee and oversees the gathering of evidence in connection with internal and external reviews. The director of quality management is the institutional contact of the QB and oversees the organisation and implementation of the QEF within the University, as well as overseeing internal and external reviews under the auspices of the University. The director is the chair of

the QC and works with heads of QA at other Icelandic HEIs and student representatives towards the furthering and coordination of quality administration in Iceland, as well as participating in international cooperation in the field of quality. The director of quality management is also the secretary of the UC and the UF and participates in forming and following up the comprehensive policy of UI.

3.1.12 Development

The UI QA system never reaches a final form and is in constant development in line with ever changing premises, demands and the development of UI's operations.

3.2 Design, approval, monitoring and review of courses and programmes

3.2.1 Programmes

Studies at UI are organised into degree programmes and shorter diploma qualifications, in accordance with The National Qualification Framework for Higher Education, issued by MESC. The term *programme* is defined in the University's Rules of procedure on the preparation and organisation of new programmes, forming a part of the University's QA system. The rules specify which steps must be taken when establishing a new study programme, detailing the information required and the various conditions that must be met. Procedures for the review and evaluation of existing study programmes are also outlined. The descriptive elements and details that constitute a study programme are further specified in UI's Rules of procedure on the course catalogue.

3.2.2 Responsibilities and approval processes

Faculties are the principal academic units of UI, responsible for organising the curriculum in individual subject areas. The curriculum on offer at each time is determined by the respective faculty meeting, the faculty council, department or board of studies, as applicable in each case. The school board takes decisions on faculty proposals for new study programmes and presents a reasoned motion to the UC on the programme and appropriate amendments to regulations. In the case of a postgraduate programme (cycle 2 or 3), a reference and confirmation from the GS and the DAA must first be obtained. The course catalogue editor and other DAA personnel also inspect and verify information on new programmes before official publication.

The approach outlined above has been in effect for the last few years and has proved to be useful in furthering methodical and coordinated practices in curriculum planning, ensuring that study programmes are not introduced unless certain precisely outlined standards are met. There is certainly still room for improvement in these matters, for instance when it comes to conforming to the set time limits regarding proposals or providing sufficiently thorough information and rationales. In general, however, the formal procedures applied have led to better and more uniform working methods, thus improving quality.

The evaluation and revision of individual programmes is carried out within the relevant faculties and departments. Where interdisciplinary postgraduate studies − or programmes subject to special agreements between faculties − are concerned, this responsibility rests with the board of studies appointed in each case.

The responsibilities of the parties involved are outlined in the relevant articles of the central UI regulation, as well as in the rules of procedure on the course catalogue and on the preparation and organisation of new programmes. The annual production of the course catalogue involves a certain evaluation and review of current study programmes, alongside more systematic reassessments, carried out as necessary at the faculty or department level. The resulting amendments and improvements are evidenced in the course catalogue published for the relevant academic year.

The academic affairs committees of schools and the study committees of individual faculties play an important role in curriculum review. Students are represented in both types of committees and thus can have their fair say.

Programmes may be discontinued for various reasons, economic and/or academic. Such decisions are initiated at department and faculty level and taken by the relevant faculty meeting, given the approval of the board of school. Concerns regarding discontinuation of programmes on account of financial constraints or poor performance can be raised by UC or other governing bodies.

Recent examples of discontinued programmes include a 90 ECTS MA in Applied Ethnology and a BA in Library and Information Science. The former was discontinued as a separate programme (in 2013) and instead established as a specialisation within the 120 ECTS MA in Folkloristics/Ethnology. This was seen as a consolidating measure, benefitting both the subject itself and the students graduating with an MA in Folkloristics/Ethnology. The BA in Library and Information Science was discontinued (in 2013) as a result of extensive revision of the subject, intended to reinforce studies at the Master's level.

Dwindling enrolment in the BA programme, coupled with a substantially increased number of applications for the postgraduate programmes, were named as contributing reasons for concentrating the development of studies in information science on the postgraduate level. Also mentioned was the fact that the subject of information science is taught only at postgraduate level in many neighbouring countries.

In both these cases, well-reasoned proposals were submitted to the UC by SOSS. Also, as in all such instances, measures were taken to ensure that students already enrolled in the discontinued programmes were able to complete their studies in accordance with the original programme structure.

Recent surveys on students' views on their studies at UI indicate that students are generally quite content with the quality of their programmes (see Section 4.3). As stated above, in a survey conducted in 2013 among second-year undergraduates, 87% of the respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that they were satisfied, overall, with their study programme. Around 84% found their programme intellectually stimulating and 92% found it demanding. When it came to statements about organisation and management the results were less flattering. Around 69% found that any changes to the programme and teaching had been effectively communicated, while 72% reported their programme being well organised and their studies running smoothly. Table 3.1 shows these results as compared to the responses of Master's students to the same statements in a survey conducted during the same period. The opinions of both groups of students are similar on all the statements posed, although undergraduates appear to be slightly more positive towards the ways in which changes to study programmes are communicated. Nonetheless, the figures reveal an evident need for improvement, on the part of schools and faculties, in the organisation and management of study programmes.

Survey on students' satisfaction 2013, attitudes towards the study programme (a few of the statements posed)	2nd year undergraduates	Master's students
Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of my study programme	87%	86%
The study programme is intellectually stimulating	84%	84%
The study programme is demanding	92%	88%
Any changes to the study programme have been communicated effectively	69%	61%
The study programme is well organised and runs smoothly	72%	71%

Table 3.1 Survey on students' satisfaction 2013, response to question on study programme

The Policy of UI 2011-2016 states that faculties, in collaboration with student representatives, should regularly re-evaluate course offerings, and whether courses and study programmes fulfil the defined LOs. Similarly, one of the stipulated tasks of the UC Academic Affairs Committee is to ensure that UI's schools and faculties define and regularly update the LOs of all programmes and courses, in accordance with The National Qualification Framework for Higher Education.

According to the Report on the activities of the UC Academic Affairs Committee 2009-2014,[17] the committee exerted considerable effort on the matter of LOs during 2009-2012. The incorporation and use of LOs within faculties and departments was thus examined systematically, under the supervision of the chairs of school teaching committees. As for the regular review of LOs, the report indicates the possible establishment of specific 'curriculum review committees', contemplating whether such an undertaking should be on the initiative of the committee itself or the school teaching committees.

Measures

- ✓ *Strengthen systematic and coordinated curriculum review procedures and channels, at the level of schools, faculties and departments. This will encourage uniform practices and facilitate the objective of continuously enhancing the quality of current programmes and courses.*
- ✓ *Introduce clear quality assurance guidelines for the design and development of courses.*
- ✓ *Publish curriculum review procedures on faculty websites.*

3.2.3 Number of programmes on offer

The following table shows how the number of study programmes, displayed in the UI course catalogue, has developed from 2009 to 2013. The summary reveals that there has been a steady increase in the number of programmes at the Master's and doctoral level. This is in accordance with the University's growing emphasis on research-based studies. Schools and faculties have gradually been offering more study possibilities at the postgraduate level, responding to increased demand.

Year	Undergraduate* (Cy. 1.1 & 1.2)	Qual. at Master's Level (Cy. 2.1)	Master's (Cy. 2.2)	PhD (Cy. 3)	Total
2009	108	39	123	53	323
2010	103	34	133	56	326
2011	104	35	136	63	338
2012	105	36	140	63	344
2013	106	36	146	65	353

* Excluding minors, around 50 each year

Table 3.2 Number of programmes displayed in the UI course catalogue

[17] See 'Summary of the UC Academic Affairs Committee's work 2009-2014' in Folder 3.

3.2.4 Courses

Teaching at UI is carried out in courses, to which a number of ECTS credits are allocated in each case. Full-time studies equal 60 ECTS credits per academic year, 30 ECTS per semester, reflecting the total amount of work performed by the student, including class attendance and examinations. This credit system was adopted as of the 2008-2009 academic year, in accordance with the Act on HEIs, no. 63/2006 and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. Former UI credits, based on the same principles as ECTS, were thus equalled to ECTS credits, conforming fully to the credit system used within the European Higher Education Area, created through the Bologna Process.

The term *course* here refers to a formally structured educational component, whether it is a course taught through lectures/classes, a reading course, seminar, assignment, clinical placement or final thesis. The parties responsible for the planning, construction and organisation of courses are, in general, the same as those responsible for study programmes. Faculties, departments and study boards determine the division of teaching between individual members of teaching staff, while the study committees of faculties have the role of resolving curriculum proposals for each subject, as well as evaluating and proposing the organisation of learning and teaching in the subject. Depending on the agreed course offerings and organisation of teaching and classes at each time, courses are then arranged as *steps* or components within study programmes, with the same course often constituting a step on more than one programme. The programme overview in the online course catalogue presents the arrangement of courses/steps by year of study and semester, as well as indicating whether any given course is mandatory, a restricted elective or free elective within the programme.

Designated employees (contacts) at faculties and departments are responsible for setting up programmes and courses for display in the online course catalogue, in collaboration with study committees and the supervisory teaching staff in each case. During the revision period for the course catalogue each year, teaching staff is given the editing access necessary to update certain core information for their respective courses, such as the general course description. Teaching staff can update other details, such as the LOs, textbooks and assessment information, whenever appropriate or necessary. The Ugla IT system allows faculty contacts to monitor any such updates. Employees should verify and confirm the changes made, using a function provided in Ugla. Changes are logged and traceable.

The annual revision and publication of the online course catalogue also entails regular review of programmes and courses. Every autumn, all teaching staff, as well as faculty and department contacts, are sent detailed instructions on how to review and update course and programme details, including LOs[18].The monitoring functions integrated into the Ugla course recording and programme recording systems indeed reveal substantial levels of activity in the form of editing, updating and verification. In some cases, this is related to systematic evaluation and review of complete programmes or course offerings, while in other cases it is related to minor adjustments or necessary amendments to individual courses.

The Rules of procedure on the course catalogue describe in detail the roles, responsibilities and cooperation of faculty contacts, teaching staff and other employees involved in compiling the online course catalogue. A special procedure applies when a faculty contact creates a new course from scratch. When the provided course info is saved, a notification is automatically sent to staff members of the Student Registration. They will then check the information and approve the course for display, given that all the required data is adequately provided. If not, the missing details are requested before the course is approved.

Individual courses may be discontinued, temporarily or permanently, for instance because of financial reasons, continual and evident lack of student interest, difficulties in finding qualified teaching staff with the required expertise, etc. Such decisions are made at the level of faculties and departments, typically discussed and determined by the study committee responsible in each case. In many cases, however, individual (elective) courses are taught every other year or at other regular intervals. This is quite common in the faculties of SOH, for example. Such courses are generally listed in the course catalogue but marked as 'Not taught' when applicable. This indicates to students that the course exists, even though it is not available during the particular semester displayed.

In other cases, faculties may require that a specified, minimum number of students are registered for a course in order for it to be taught through lectures or other types of regular classes. Should that condition not be met on a fixed date early in the semester, the form of teaching will be altered, the course being turned into a reading course with little or no class attendance and limited teacher interaction. In other words: the course will still be offered, albeit in a different format which is less costly for the faculty concerned.

[18] See example: Instructions for teachers on updating course info.

3.2.5 Number of courses on offer

Table 3.3 indicates the number of courses displayed in the course catalogue during a five-year period, 2010-2014. The figures show that the number of postgraduate courses meeting these conditions has increased considerably over those five years, which indeed was called for in the Policy of UI 2011-2016.

Year	Undergrad.	Undergrad. & grad.*	Postgrad.	Total
2010	1.259	178	543	1.980
2011	1.309	183	570	2.062
2012	1.339	198	588	2.125
2013	1.333	185	598	2.116
2014	1.303	206	626	2.135

* Courses open to students at both levels

Table 3.3 Courses displayed in the UI course catalogue

In the 2013-2014 course catalogue, a total of 388 courses were marked as 'not taught'. In most cases, this was due to the courses in question being taught at regular or irregular intervals but displayed anyway in the catalogue for that particular year, in order to show that they exist. In other cases, courses marked as not taught may have been discontinued temporarily, for any number of valid reasons.

The 2013 survey results reveal that only 39% of Master's students found the variety of courses offered satisfactory, as compared to 56% of the undergraduate students. These figures indicate that there is general discontent among students about the number and variety of courses available, especially so among Master's students, which in each case must be related to the structure of the study programme in question. However, when scrutinised according to individual schools and faculties (see Table 3.4 below), the figures vary considerably. Thus, only 9% of the Master's students of SENS appear to be positive about the variety of courses offered, compared to 56% of the undergraduates at SENS.

Among the Master's students, SOSS scores highest on this point, 47% being highly or relatively content. Among the undergraduates, on the other hand, students within SOH seem least satisfied with the availability of courses, scoring only 45%, while students of SOHS are markedly most satisfied, a total of 67% responding positively. Most courses in undergraduate programmes in health sciences are mandatory, meaning that students have very little or no choice at all in selecting courses counting towards their degree. This seems to indicate that undergraduates do not dislike strictly structured programmes with a limited choice of elective courses, at least not in the health sciences.

Survey on students' satisfaction 2013; statement: the number of available courses is satisfactory ('A variety of courses are available')	2nd year undergraduates	Master's students
UI as a whole	56%	39%
SOE	50%	35%
SENS	56%	9%
SOHS	67%	39%
SOH	45%	28%
SOSS	58%	47%

Table 3.4 Student satisfaction with the number of available courses

Measure

- ✓ *Availability of courses at the Master's level needs to be improved, e.g., by developing additional courses, increased cooperation, both within the University and with foreign universities through formal agreements on planned Master's programmes, and student exchange schemes like Erasmus.*

3.2.6 Course catalogue

The course catalogue for each academic year is published online annually in March by the DAA and archived, year by year, on the University website. The catalogue is one of the key quality documents of UI. The editor of the course catalogue oversees publication and annual revision. School and faculty staff members are in charge of editing and updating the material for their relevant sections of the catalogue. Work on the catalogue content and updating is a coordinated effort between the editor, editorial board and the editing contacts of faculties and departments. Teaching staff are also directly involved in editing and updating the catalogue.

The course catalogue editorial board is comprised of representatives from each school. Furthermore, two representatives of the DAA, in addition to the editor, and two software development experts from UI Computer Services sit on the board. Each faculty – and each department, when applicable – appoints an editing contact who takes care of work on the catalogue on behalf of the faculty/department. Around 50 people are directly involved in the development of the catalogue each year, in addition to numerous members of teaching staff. School teaching committees, faculty study committees, heads of department

and individual members of teaching staff are consulted regarding information on study programmes and courses.

The UI course catalogue is arranged such that it portrays the organisation of studies and teaching in each school, each faculty and in interdisciplinary programmes, in accordance with the applicable rules and procedures determined by the UC. The catalogue contains all programmes and all courses taught at the University, outlining the key elements and general structure of the studies in each case. Each programme and, when applicable, each specialisation, is described, including an overview of courses and their structure by year and semester. Individual course descriptions may be displayed, both in Icelandic and English, in addition to further course details. The catalogue furthermore contains various practical information on, for instance, the academic calendar; admission requirements and applications; student registration and fees; course credit and grading; organisation of examinations, as well as services to students and students' rights and obligations.

The catalogue is entirely assembled, edited and published online via Ugla. Although Ugla functions as the University's intranet, the course catalogue is accessible to all web users. On the UI website there are hundreds of links to relevant pages and overviews in the catalogue. In essence, the catalogue, as it appears to users, is a compilation of data saved and maintained in various sub-systems of Ugla. Any changes made to catalogue-related data in these sub-systems are immediately reflected in the relevant pages or overviews in the catalogue. The current course catalogue is thus a highly dynamic web of information which is updated as soon as required, as opposed to the previous printed version of the UI course catalogue. The catalogue is, therefore, an essential tool for QA at UI.

The online course catalogue receives millions of visits or hits every year, indicating that it is widely used by students, staff and other interested web users. Interestingly, when looking at a one-month period at the start of the academic year, September 2013 in this case, web analytics show that the catalogue is almost as 'popular' as the Icelandic UI website itself.

As pointed out in Section 3.2.2, survey results show that students are rather dissatisfied with the effectiveness of communicating changes to programmes and teaching. Thus, in the 2013 survey on students' satisfaction, only 61% of Master's students found that changes to the study programme had been effectively communicated, while among the undergraduates the percentage was a little higher, or 69%. Based on the survey data, there is no way of telling to what extent the apparent rate of discontent is due to misleading or lacking information in the course catalogue or to flawed practices and procedures on the part of faculties or teaching staff. The reasons for students' relatively high rate of dissatisfaction in this respect must, therefore, be examined further, as the need for improvement is evident.

In the 2012 survey on students' opinions of support services, one of the questions directly referred to the course catalogue. Students were asked whether they had successfully managed to find information on courses in the catalogue. A total of 77% of respondents strongly or somewhat agreed to having done so. This result and the respondents' comments on the course catalogue were presented and discussed at an editorial board meeting, as well as at a meeting held with the catalogue contacts of the various faculties and departments. Improvements were subsequently made to the course search function. Other enhancements intended to increase the usability of the course catalogue included improving the format of course details displayed and automatically securing the continued functionality of external links to catalogue pages with each new revision published.

3.2.7 Teaching and course evaluation survey

Each semester during the last two weeks of teaching, students are asked to respond to a teaching and course evaluation survey for each course they are taking. The survey is a part of UI's QA system, as further detailed in the Rules of procedure on the teaching and course evaluation survey and its usage. The Act on the Protection of Privacy as regards the Processing of Personal Data, no. 77/2000, applies to the electronic processing of information gathered using the survey; this processing is permissible in accordance with the Act.

Undergraduate teaching and course evaluation surveys have been used at UI since 1989, with the objective of improving learning and teaching. The survey is online and is conducted at the end of each semester. It is open for two weeks but closes before the first day of examinations.

3.2.7.1 Content of the survey

The course evaluation consists of six sections. Two of them reflect students' assessment of the distinctive character of the relevant member of teaching staff's performance (teaching, academic stimulation). In the section on teaching students evaluate factors relating to presentation of course materials in class and the teacher's enthusiasm. The academic stimulation section details the teacher's effort to encourage students to adopt critical, independent and scientific thinking. The third section (course planning) is the students' evaluation of how clear and accessible the objectives and requirements of the course were. This section is intended to demonstrate how well the course description conforms to what happens in the classroom. The fourth section (workload) is the students' assessment of how demanding the course is and how heavy the workload is compared to other courses the students have completed at the University. The fifth section (course outcome) is the students'

evaluation of what they have gained from taking the course. The evaluation measures increase in interest in, knowledge and understanding of the course material. The sixth and last section (student's contribution) is the students' evaluation of their own preparation and how well it served them in dealing with the course material and how much effort they have expended on the course. This section is, therefore, not a direct evaluation of a teacher or a course, but rather of the study requirements made by the teacher and the student's adaptation and performance in meeting those.

3.2.7.2 Access to results

All teaching staff can access their own evaluation results. Deans of schools, faculty heads and deputy heads, as well as heads of department, have full access to the results of the course evaluations for all teaching staff under their authority. Supervisory teaching staff have access to the evaluations of sessional teachers in courses they supervise. In instances of contract teaching (classes taught by teaching staff at another faculty), the head of the receiving faculty also has access to the course evaluations relating to those courses. This option has not yet been much used, but is now being programmed in Ugla.

3.2.7.3 Follow-up formal response to teaching and course evaluations

Teaching staff, school teaching committees and their chairs, faculty heads, managing directors and school deans are responsible for following up the results of the course evaluations. The CTL provides counsel on interpretation of the results and potential responses.

At least once per semester comparison of non-personalised (anonymous) results should be discussed at an open faculty meeting or department meeting, attended by student representatives. There the results are, e.g., considered in relation to the faculty teaching policy and LOs for each study programme. School teaching committees are tasked with assessing whether faculties must set specific objectives, revise previous policy or take other actions in response to results. Faculties are encouraged to engage students and teaching staff in discussing the anonymous results of the course evaluations.

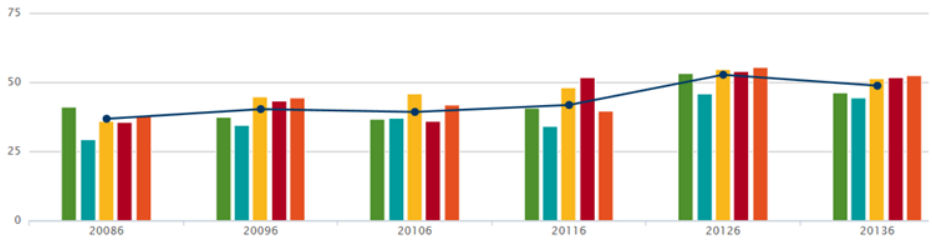
During annual appraisal interviews, school deans/faculty heads and teaching staff are obligated to discuss results of course evaluations and the teacher's notes on his or her own performance and courses.

Measure

- ✓ *Formalise procedures that ensure that student representatives have access to course evaluation results in accordance with laws and regulations.*

3.2.7.4 Examples of use and functionality

Total student participation in the evaluation has increased as the following figure shows.



Green: SOSS; Blue: SOHS; Yellow: SOH; Red: SOE; Orange: SENS; Line: Total participation

* Screenshot from UGLA.

Fig. 3.3 Total student participation rate in the course evaluation

The figure shows total student participation from the autumn of 2008 to autumn 2013; spring semester is excluded. For the University as a whole the participation rate was 37% in 2008 but increased to 49% in 2013. Ugla makes it possible for administrators to explore results in greater detail.

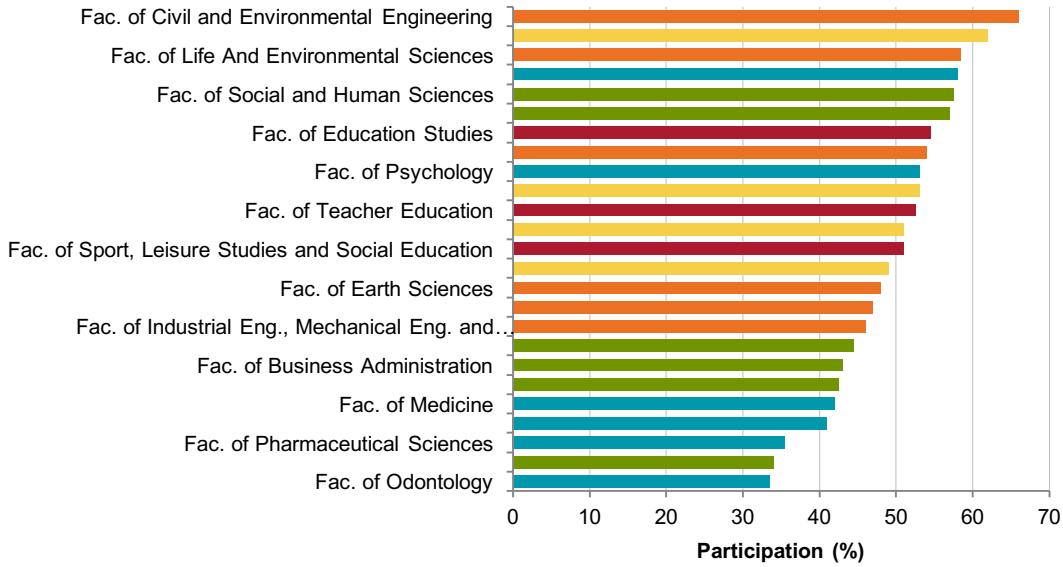


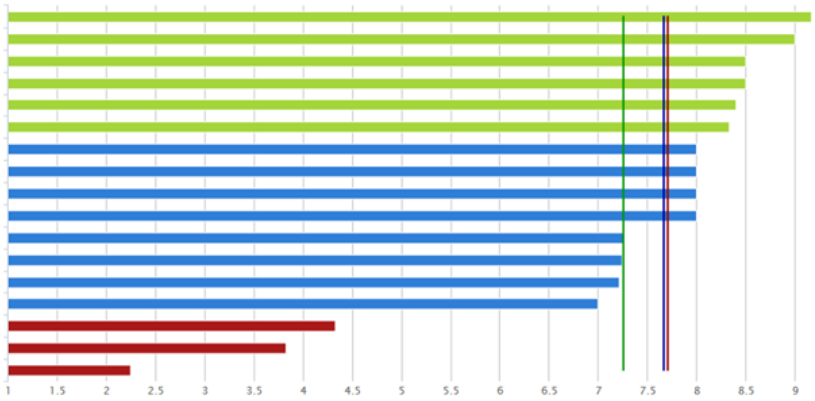
Fig. 3.4 Student participation rate in the course evaluation for each faculty

Figure 3.4 shows the turnout for each faculty in spring 2014. The variation of student participation between faculties is considerable. The highest participation is in the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering in SENS (over 65%) and the lowest participation is in the Faculty of Odontology in SOHS (lower than 35%). It has been stated that there is a high correlation between student participation in course evaluation surveys and student confidence that their input leads to action and improvements. High turnout in the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering can be explained by the quality culture within the faculty. A good description of the methods used in utilising the survey results to the benefit of teaching and learning in the Faculty can be seen in an article by the former Faculty head in the latest issue of the Newsletter of the CTL.[19] This example of good practice has been disseminated in the University through meetings and conferences.

3.2.7.5 Results

The results are presented in six sections showing both a mark received by each teacher from participating students and each teacher's percentile ranking with regard to other teachers, a) in the school, b) in the faculty, and c) in classes of similar size. Marks for individual questions are not reported as part of the main results, but those wishing to see the score on questions in each section can do so.

In general students seem to be satisfied with teaching and courses, since the grade range is from 7.51 to 7.94 (on the scale from 1 to 10) for all schools. However, there can be variation between courses within individual faculties. This can be seen on Fig. 3.5 which is a real example from a small faculty in the autumn of 2014. The grade for individual courses ranges from 2.25 to 9.17.



* Screenshot from UGLA.

*Fig. 3.5 Course evaluation comparison in an anonymous faculty (autumn semester of 2013)**

[19] See article from the head of the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering in the Newsletter of CTL (Autumn 2014), 'Application of teaching evaluation surveys' in Folder 3.

The green vertical line shows the average score for this faculty and the blue line represents the University in total, while the red one stands for the school. The green bars are one standard deviation above the average and the red bars are more than one standard deviation below.

From Fig. 3.5, it can be seen that the grades from the student evaluation of the performance of teachers in this particular faculty vary from 7.82 to 8.3.

It is considered highly important that individual faculties scrutinise and discuss the survey results with students and staff and follow the appropriate procedures, for example in line with the best practice example mentioned above.

Measures

- ✓ *Examine further reasons for students' relatively high rate of dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of communicating changes to programmes and teaching.*
- ✓ *Strengthen follow-up measures for course evaluations in accordance with best practice within UI.*

3.2.8 Mid-semester course evaluations

According to the Policy of UI 2011-2016 the development of a mid-semester course evaluation survey is underway. The first experimental round of the evaluation was launched during the autumn of 2013 and continued in 2014.[20] The survey contains two open ended questions on what has been successful and what could be improved. Students are also asked to rate each course on a scale of 1 to 10. The purpose of the evaluation is to give teaching staff a chance to immediately react to students' comments.

The results on the grade of the course can be viewed in a similar way as that described in Section 2.2.7 above. Currently the answers to the two open ended questions can only be viewed by the teacher concerned. Key figures for the evaluation for the autumn semester of 2013 are shown in Table 3.5.

School	Average grade	No. of max. answers	No. of answers	Participation	No. of courses
SOSS	7.9	14.318	2.898	20%	232
SOHS	7.9	6.421	1.177	18%	134
SOH	8.4	5.856	1.147	20%	242
SOE	8.0	4.164	660	16%	104
SENS	7.9	9.989	1.939	22%	165

Table 3.5 Key results from mid-semester course evaluation in the autumn semester 2013

When compared to spring semester 2014 the evaluation seems to be on the right track since there is a 10% increase in overall participation.

School	Average grade	No. of max. answers	No. of answers	Participation	No. of courses
SOSS	7.6	12.114	3.387	28%	212
SOHS	8.2	5.457	1.740	32%	205
SOH	8.3	5.887	1.793	30%	239
SOE	8.0	3.974	1.014	26%	148
SENS	7.9	7.661	2.761	36%	171

Table 3.6 Key results from mid-semester course evaluation in the spring semester 2014

Measure

- ✓ *Continue the development and promotion of the mid-semester evaluation.*

3.2.9 Course evaluations at the graduate level

In accordance with the UI Policy for 2011-2016 the UC Academic Affairs Committee is in the process of preparing a survey to evaluate courses at the postgraduate level. This process has not been finalised and the committee has even considered suggesting that faculties conduct evaluation meetings with their students or student representatives. Such meetings have been held within SOE. There is a great variety within postgraduate studies with regards to the structure of teaching and research in many programmes the courses on offer are relatively few. In such cases, at least, a formal dialogue between students, teaching staff and other staff seems a more promising method of evaluating the quality of programmes than an online survey.

[20] See article from the chair of the SENS teaching committee in the Newsletter of CTL (Autumn 2014), 'The mid-semester teaching and course evaluation survey at UI' in Folder 3.

Measure

- ✓ *Develop formal procedures for evaluating the quality of courses at postgraduate level.*

3.2.10 Other methods of validation of courses and programmes

3.2.10.1 Role of the Centre for Teaching and Learning

The CTL was founded in 2001 within the DAA and currently has a staff of 7. The Centre is affiliated to SOE but located centrally.

The main objective and role of the CTL is to enhance the development and quality of teaching practices at UI by providing professional services to teaching staff, faculties, schools and University administration. This is achieved in a variety of ways, including consulting and seminars.

Increased demand for diversification in teaching practices is reflected in the Policy of UI 2011-2016 where a leading role and further growth is planned for the CTL.

The main tasks of the CTL include consultation on teaching practices and technologically enhanced teaching for teaching staff and UI administration; seminars and workshops on various teaching issues; innovative teaching methods, online teaching, development of information technology in teaching; introduction of new media and assistance on technologically enhanced teaching and distance learning; maintenance of a website containing useful information and advice on teaching and learning; teaching-related services for teaching and administrative staff, such as course evaluation and consultation on development projects regarding teaching.

CTL has in recent years put emphasis on its role in supporting educational development within the different schools, cooperation with the school teaching committees and educational managers. The Centre increasingly provides faculty-based seminars and workshops tailored to the needs of different disciplines and faculties.

In cooperation with SOE, the Centre is in charge of the organisation and management of a 30 ECTS Postgraduate Diploma Programme in Teaching Studies for Higher Education. Since the programme's establishment in 2010, 63 members of UI teaching staff have finished the introductory course (10 ECTS), 35 have finished a 10 ECTS course on course design while 23 have finished a course on educational research (10 ECTS). Currently, 22 members of teaching staff hold a 30 ECTS diploma in higher education teaching. Participation in the introductory course is not mandatory, but completion of the course (or equivalent education) is required for those applying for a permanent academic post at UI. Participation in the course is supported centrally (a grant covering registration fees from the Teaching Development Fund) as well as at faculty level, with teaching staff being offered a 40 hrs reduction in teaching duties upon completion.

In addition, the CTL launches the end-of-semester teaching and course evaluation surveys and offers academic staff professional consultation on how to utilise the evaluation results in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. Finally, another important function of the CTL is to monitor innovations and developments in higher education teaching methods and disseminate that information to the academic and administrative staff of the University.

3.2.10.2 Centre for Teaching and Learning services regarding evaluation of the quality of teaching

The CTL contributes towards evaluation of the quality of teaching at three different levels:

1. *Evaluation services to individual teachers/departments/faculties.* The CTL provides various modes of course evaluation for teaching staff. The most common methods are video recording of classroom teaching (reviewed in collaboration with CTL staff if required); online evaluation forms and surveys tailored to the requirements of teaching staff, departments or faculties; student group evaluations (discussions with students at the end of class on issues suggested by the teacher beforehand) and student focus groups on the strengths and weaknesses of courses or programmes.
2. *End-of-semester course evaluation survey.* The CTL launches and supervises the end-of-semester teaching and course evaluation surveys and provides teaching staff and/or department/faculty heads with professional consultation and advice on how to follow up the evaluation results in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.
3. *Participation in institution-led reviews at the subject level.* For the last three years the CTL has actively participated in the quality review process by offering assistance to faculties in their self-reviews. The CTL offers services in gathering data from students on the quality of teaching and learning within study programmes, using different means of data collection such as focus groups, online survey forms, etc. The following figure demonstrates the methodology used in the process.

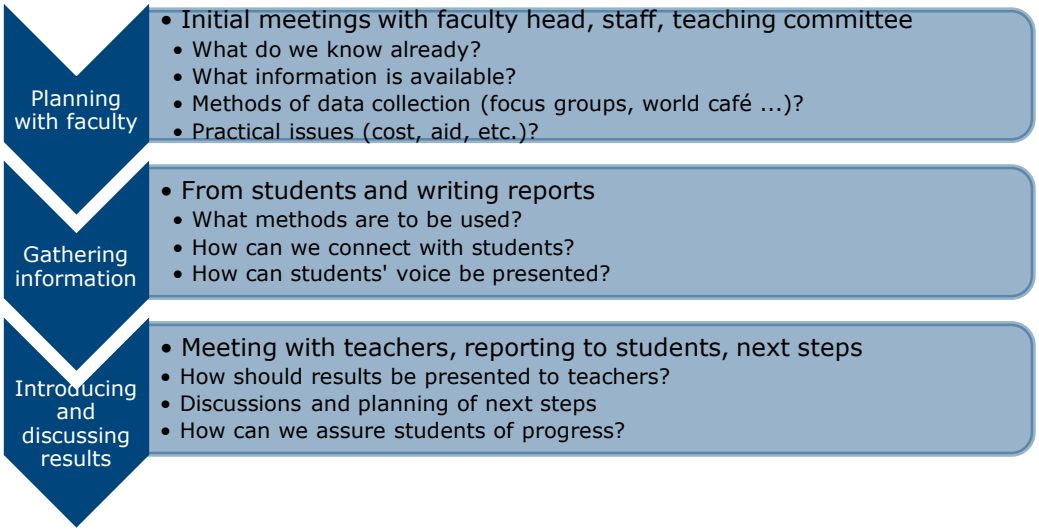


Fig. 3.6 CTL support services to faculties

In the follow-up of such analyses the CTL has also provided faculties with workshops or seminars, communicated 'best practices' and assisted in developing projects devoted to quality enhancement in teaching and conforming to the grant allocation rules of the Teaching Development Fund. Finally, the CTL has, in cooperation with the director of quality management, organised annual workshops for self-review teams at the subject level.

3.2.11 Teaching Development Fund

UI's Teaching Development Fund is used to fund innovation and enhancement projects in teaching and learning. The UC Academic Affairs Committee allocates grants from the fund which is open for applications every spring. In 2012, 36 applications were submitted to the fund, of which 19 were accepted. The projects which have received grants have primarily been connected to the Policy of UI 2011-2016 and to follow up faculty plans of action in connection with subject-level quality reviews.[21]

3.2.12 Teaching portfolios

Teaching portfolios were introduced in 2009. The purpose of the portfolio is to enhance the quality of teaching by providing teaching staff with opportunities to reflect on their teaching experience and interaction with students and fellow teaching staff. In the portfolio, teaching staff present all available information on their teaching in one place. The portfolio also gives teaching staff the opportunity to describe their teaching philosophies (teaching goals, teaching methods, etc.) and evaluate how successful their teaching has been in individual courses (comments about the course including number of drop-outs from the course, participation in the teaching survey, feedback and potential changes to the course, comments on the class, etc.).

Furthermore, teaching staff can register students' final projects under their supervision. They may also register teaching materials, teaching innovations, membership in committees addressing teaching matters, teaching recognitions, pedagogical training and teaching at universities abroad.[22]

The use of the teaching portfolio has been considerable; Table 3.7 details the number of comments on courses entered by teaching staff as well as number of teachers commenting.

Year	Comments	Teachers
2010	1.210	272
2011	2.662	531
2012	3.263	692
2013	4.127	710
2014	4.313	707

Table 3.7 Number of comments on courses by years in teaching portfolio and number of teachers

Another indicator is the number of comments on supervision of final theses in undergraduate and postgraduate studies (Table 3.8).

[21] See 'List of grants awarded from UI Teaching Development Fund in 2014' in Folder 3.
[22] See 'Teaching portfolios at UI' in Folder 3.

Year	Comments	Teachers
2011	1.788	423
2012	1.155	289
2013	1.313	351
2014	1.282	363

Table 3.8 Comments on supervision of students' final theses in teaching portfolio

Although teaching staff are already using the teaching portfolio, there is room for improvement in terms of utilisation and further development of this tool. The UC Academic Affairs Committee will, during 2015, reconsider the set goals and evaluate the current and potential use of the teaching portfolio.

Measures

- ✓ *Reconsider the set goals and evaluate the current and potential use of the teaching portfolio, e.g., regarding academic promotion.*
- ✓ *Introduce tools for evaluating quality and rewarding teaching staff for teaching performance.*
- ✓ *Increase the allocations for the Teaching Development Fund in order to support faculty action plans resulting from subject-level reviews.*

3.3 Use of learning outcomes

Learning outcomes (LOs) for study programmes at UI were first defined following the passing of the Act on HEIs, no. 63/2006. A special effort was initiated between 2007 and 2009 regarding LOs in conjunction with the applications submitted to MESC for accreditation of the Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD programmes in the relevant fields of study.

A National Qualification Framework for Iceland was first issued in 2007 and included six categories of LOs: knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, practical skills, communication skills and information literacy, and learning skills. When LOs for programmes at UI took effect they were generally based on this categorisation, the Framework in essence being used as a model. From 2008 the LOs for programmes have been included in graduating students' diploma supplements.

A revised National Qualification Framework for Higher Education, no 530/2011, was issued in 2011. Under this Framework, the LOs are based on three categories of outcomes: knowledge, skills, and competences, and the overall structure of LOs was simplified. Along with the Framework MESC issued a model, in both Icelandic and English, presenting the five cycles of higher education and demonstrating how the LOs evolve within each of the three categories. Introduction of this revised structure for LOs within UI started in the academic year 2011-2012 and it is currently used when revising previously issued LOs, as well as when LOs for new programmes and new courses are defined.

The CTL has for the past few years offered regular seminars and workshops for teaching staff and other staff on how to formulate LOs and on their use in teaching and assessment. Representatives of the CTL have also conducted seminars and workshops on LOs for the teaching staff of individual schools, faculties, departments or subjects, upon request. The CTL website contains information and instructions on writing LOs, both in Icelandic and English.

Specific text fields for LOs in both Icelandic and English were added to the course definition at the end of 2008. A concerted effort was made in 2009 to define LOs for individual courses to coincide with preparation of the course catalogue for 2009-2010.

Gradually the number of courses with clearly defined LOs has grown. In many instances the teaching staff of a faculty, department or subject have worked as a team to systematically define the LOs for courses, based on the programme LOs.

In the 2014-2015 course catalogue, LOs have been defined for about 82% of the courses listed. Some faculties have attained up to 100% percent, while the rate is just above 60% of listed courses in other faculties. Regular review of LOs takes place in conjunction with the annual updating and publication of the course catalogue.

Even though the statistics imply that LOs have been defined for all programmes and the majority of courses on offer at UI, that in itself is no proof that teaching staff are actually taking the LOs into account when organising and communicating the content of their courses. Of course there are several examples of the systematic use of LOs when planning and structuring individual programmes and relevant courses, but there are indications observed by the CTL that in some cases students have limited knowledge of LOs, which in turn seems to suggest that the concept is not widely discussed in classes or presented by teaching staff as an integral factor of the syllabus.

Measure

- ✓ *Reinforce teaching staff's and students' knowledge and awareness of the importance and use of LOs, not least in relation to course assessment. Organise specific student-orientated seminars at school and faculty level, under supervision of the CTL.*

3.4 Effectiveness of assessment practices and processes

3.4.1 Course assessment, examinations and return of grades

The relevant member of teaching staff and an external examiner, if applicable, should jointly decide upon the examination questions in each subject and mark the papers. They separately grade each paper in each examination subject and give an independent grade, both of which apply equally in the final grading. One external examiner is by rule present at oral examinations. Grades are published two weeks after each examination at the latest, but three weeks after each examination in the December examination period. The same deadline applies for courses which end without a written examination and for examinations and assignments outside the regular examination periods.

Grades are awarded in whole numbers, or in whole and half numbers, from 0 to 10. The grade point average shall be the weighted mean of all grades included in the programme.[23] A student receiving a grade lower than 5.0, or the equivalent letter grade, has failed the examination. Exceptions may be made for individual examinations, assessments and examination categories, which may require a higher or lower minimum grade.

Teaching staff are responsible for marking written and practical examinations, including presentations on projects, unless the faculty determines otherwise. In competitive examinations, where the number of students who will be entitled to continue their studies has been determined in advance by the UC, there is an external examiner for each examination subject, appointed in advance. Examples for this can be found in studies in medicine, nursing and law. Students have the right to receive an explanation of the evaluation of their written examination papers, if requested, within 15 days of grades being published.

The UC has determined Rules of procedure on the return of grades. In accordance with these rules, the DAA have a specific page or 'grade return list' set up in Ugla, on which students can see whether examination papers have been collected and grades posted in any single course, group of courses or course by school and faculty. The UC has also determined Rules of procedure on good working practice in teaching and examination at UI.

3.5 Examinations Office

General examinations for each semester are organised centrally, scheduled and administered by the director of examinations, on behalf of, and in consultation with, schools and faculties. The director of examinations works within the DAA and is supported by the Examinations Office. The Examinations Office handles reservation of examination rooms, hires and manages invigilators, distributes examination materials to the various exam locations/rooms, etc.

3.5.1 Overview and statistics for centrally organised examinations[24]

During the regular examination periods in 2012, i.e., during the spring and autumn examinations, written examinations were held in 1.040 courses, resulting in a total of around 43.200 examination papers (passed and failed). Makeup examinations were held in January, May and June in 777 courses, resulting in around 4.400 examination papers. The total number of examination papers rose by around 5.5% from the previous year. The following overview gives a more detailed breakdown according to situation and performance (withdrawal, illness, absence, pass, failure), and examination period. Note that the same student can have differing performances in each course and that generally each examination period is considered individually, rather than the final result in each individual course. A student failing one examination may pass an examination in the same course at a different time. The number of examinations refers to the number of courses which concluded with a written examination. This overview shows that withdrawal rates are, on average, 28%, but are much more pronounced during the regular examination periods in the autumn and spring.

Period	No. exams	Withdrawals		Illness		Absences		Passed		Failed		Total	
January	176	11	1%	33	4%	71	8%	622	67%	198	21%	935	100%
Spring exam.	489	12.519	35%	1.587	4%	3.299	9%	16.540	46%	2.336	6%	36.281	100%
May	319	135	5%	124	5%	321	13%	1.334	54%	560	23%	2.474	100%
June	282	91	4%	134	6%	194	9%	1.225	59%	439	21%	2.083	100%
Autumn exam.	551	10.060	26%	1.667	4%	2.319	6%	20.749	54%	3.597	9%	38.392	100%
Total	**1.817**	**22.816**	**28%**	**3.545**	**4%**	**6.204**	**8%**	**40.470**	**50%**	**7.130**	**9%**	**80.165**	**100%**

Table 3.9 Examination statistics for different periods in 2012

[23] The grade point average is calculated to two decimal places: 9.00-10.00 is first class with distinction, 7.25-8.99 is first class, 6.00-7.24 is second class and 5.00-5.99 is third class.

[24] 2012 figures.

If only the pass and fail rates are considered, the overview is more focused, as can be seen in table 3.10.

Period	No. of exams	Passed		Failed		Total	
January	176	622	76%	198	24%	820	100%
Spring examinations	489	16.540	88%	2.336	12%	18.876	100%
May	319	1.334	70%	560	30%	1.894	100%
June	282	1.225	74%	439	26%	1.664	100%
Autumn examinations	551	20.749	85%	3.597	15%	24.346	100%
Total	**1.817**	**40.470**	**85%**	**7.130**	**15%**	**47.600**	**100%**

Table 3.10 Examination statistics for different periods in 2013

Proportionally more students pass examinations in the spring than in the autumn. The primary explanation for this is probably that a portion of the students have discontinued their studies at the end of the autumn semester. It may also be seen, as before, that performance in makeup examinations (January, May and June) is considerably poorer than in the conventional autumn and spring examinations.

It must be kept in mind that many courses conclude with assignments, essays or examinations wholly under the auspices of teaching staff. Figures on the number of examinations and examination papers, therefore, do not provide a comprehensive image of course assessment at the University. In the following tables, the number of examinations indicates courses, essays and assignments in which final grades were awarded or which students passed without receiving a grade.

Period	No of exams	Withdrawal		Illness		Passed		Failed		Total	
January	35	7	5%	2	1%	78	57%	51	37%	138	100%
Spring	1.041	8.314	37%	147	1%	13.458	60%	641	3%	22.560	100%
May	33	4	5%	1	1%	64	75%	16	19%	85	100%
June	28	1	1%	0	0%	82	86%	12	13%	95	100%
Summer	231	673	41%	5	0%	933	57%	18	1%	1.629	100%
Autumn	932	6.610	33%	101	1%	12.517	63%	721	4%	19.949	100%
Total	**2.300**	**15.609**	**38%**	**256**	**1%**	**27.132**	**61%**	**1.459**	**3%**	**44.456**	**100%**

Table 3.11 Statistics for examinations taken outside of the examination timetable in 2012

DAA personnel assisted with the implementation of 123 examinations held during class time in 2012, resulting in around 9.250 examination papers. The occasional distance examinations managed by the University for institutions outside of Iceland have not been counted, but among the regular customers due to Icelanders in distance studies are the University of South Africa and the University of London, though the DAA oversees examinations from more institutions every year. Distance examinations sent from the University to supervisory parties within and outside of Iceland are also uncounted. When these are added up, it is clear that DAA personnel were involved with the examination of around 57.000 examinees in 2012.

3.5.2 Seminars and workshops on student assessment

The CTL regularly arranges seminars and workshops on various approaches to student assessment. For example workshops on designing examination papers and writing examination questions with regard to LOs; workshops on designing rubrics for assessment and on constructive feedback to students; seminars on student self-assessment and peer assessment and the connection of these forms of assessment with LOs; as well as workshops on writing and reviewing LOs.

3.5.3 Other forms of student feedback

Teaching staff at UI make use of various feedback methods other than conventional examinations. Most commonly, teaching staff in the humanities or social sciences provide written feedback as well as grades for assignments, whilst students in the physical sciences attend tutorials in which they go over and discuss exercises completed at home. There are also various other feedback methods used, e.g., student peer review.

Student satisfaction surveys indicate that feedback is the component of which students are most critical. This opinion is also widespread in other Icelandic and foreign universities, not least in the case of courses at the beginning of studies with large class sizes. It is difficult to say what the reason for this is, whether it indicates increased demands placed on teaching staff from students, or whether feedback is inadequate. In interviews with the CTL, students complain of various things pertaining to feedback, e.g., too much emphasis on final examinations (this applies in particular to courses at the beginning of studies with large class sizes), requirements made of students are not presented with sufficient clarity (e.g., in descriptions of assignments and in course syllabuses), that feedback comes too late to be useful in guiding students and that feedback is inconsistent.

The next UI Conference on Teaching and Learning in 2015 will be devoted to diverse methods of student feedback and assessment of course work.

Measure

- ✓ *The CTL will prepare standardised procedures and guidelines on feedback. Special consideration will be given to the fact that feedback in courses attracting large numbers of students constitutes the main challenge here and is therefore of special importance.*

3.5.4 Plagiarism prevention

All HEIs in Iceland have joined forces in using the Turnitin online service for safeguarding against plagiarism. Turnitin allows the user to upload a text document, for instance a student's paper or thesis, to be compared to a large database of sources, the extent and nature of which can be further defined in each case. The comparison report promptly makes it clear whether sources are acceptably cited or if the text distinctly matches content already in the database.

UI has adopted the Turnitin service, in order to allow teaching staff to check the originality and proper citation of sources in papers submitted by students. Turnitin enables teaching staff to organise assignment submission so that students can upload their papers directly to the Turnitin database and thus make their own originality checks and ensure that sources are properly cited. The CTL regularly arranges workshops for teaching staff on the utilisation of Turnitin.

The Rights and obligations chapter in the UI course catalogue addresses issues such as best international academic practice regarding studies and examinations, plagiarism prevention and the disciplinary sanctions imposed in cases of cheating or acts of plagiarism. Different types of plagiarism are specified, as well as the punitive measures applied in case of any kind of cheating or misconduct by students regarding examinations or submitted assignments. These include expulsion from the given examination or course, suspension from completing examinations in other courses of the given semester or formal admonition or expulsion from the University, temporary or permanent.

3.6 Management of student admissions

3.6.1 Admission requirements

The entrance requirement for commencing undergraduate studies at UI is an Icelandic matriculation examination or an equivalent qualification from a foreign school. Besides this general requirement, admission requirements differ between UI's faculties. Detailed information may be found in the Regulation on admission requirements for undergraduate study at UI and in the faculty and school chapters of the University course catalogue. Admission requirements are also specified in information on each individual study programme. Specific faculty regulations apply concerning admission requirements for Master's and doctoral studies. These regulations appear in the course catalogue and on school and faculty websites.[25]

The Student Registration Office od DAA oversees enrolment and registration of students for courses in all faculties of the University. Applications for undergraduate studies are for the most part dealt with and processed by Student Registration staff.

The Recognition Office (under the DAA) handles the coordination of affairs related to student applications and evaluation of these, particularly international applications and documents for undergraduate and postgraduate studies, in addition to applications for exemptions from the formal admission requirements for undergraduate studies.

3.6.1.1 Admission guidelines

Admission guidelines are minimum references for students commencing studies at the undergraduate level (higher education cycle 1) in individual University faculties. UI faculties define admission guidelines in consideration of the 2011 Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools. A new curriculum guide is currently being introduced in Icelandic upper secondary schools, a process which ought to be complete by the autumn of 2015.

The admission guidelines for individual University faculties (or, as appropriate, for study programmes within faculties), provide important guidance for upper secondary school students, and also academic counsellors. Admission guidelines could also have great significance for upper secondary schools, providing direction for the development of programmes for the Icelandic matriculation examination.

Admission guidelines for University faculties are defined in conformity with those qualification levels outlined in the Icelandic National Curriculum Guide for Upper Secondary Schools. Completion of different upper secondary school programmes falls into one of four qualification levels. Completion of a programme for an Icelandic matriculation examination is in all instances defined as qualification level three.

All UI faculties have defined their admission guidelines, which are outlined in the University course catalogue.

[25] See also Regulation on restrictions on the admission of students to certain subjects at UI, no 153/2010.

Measure

- ✓ *Evaluate the UI admission requirements rules with regard to set admission guidelines.*

3.6.1.2 Surveys on preparation of new students

The UC Academic Affairs Committee has conducted several surveys, in connection, for example, with the strategy objective concerning review of the preparation and admission of new students. Examples include a survey amongst heads of faculty and deputy heads of faculty on how well new students are prepared for higher education, presented at a meeting with upper secondary school head teachers in the spring of 2009, and a survey amongst UI students on how well their upper secondary school prepared them for higher education, presented at a meeting with upper secondary school head teachers in the spring of 2010. The UC Academic Affairs Committee has also, in collaboration with the DAA, had several databases compiled, such as the Database on Student Progression, presented at a meeting with upper secondary school head teachers in the spring of 2011, and the Database on Student Performance, presented at a meeting with upper secondary school head teachers in the spring of 2012.

3.6.1.3 Entrance and admission examinations

The UI Faculty of Medicine has, since 2003, used an entrance examination (competitive examination) in selecting students for studies in medicine and in physical therapy. There has been widespread satisfaction with this method, and the Faculty considers it to have many advantages over the method which was previously employed (competitive examinations at the end of the first semester). The examination is held over two days in June and comprises a total of six two-hour stages taken from the upper secondary school's course material. Applicants must specify in advance whether they intend to study medicine or physical therapy. On average, around 250 applicants have applied to study medicine each year, and the 48 who perform best are admitted. Around 50 applicants apply to study physical therapy, of whom 35 are admitted.

In January 2012, UI launched a developmental project aiming to design a general examination which might be used in the selection of students for undergraduate study at Icelandic HEIs. The name of the examination is the Learning Aptitude Test for Higher Education, abbreviated to LAT (see Section 2.6.1.3).

The LAT is a general, standardised access examination in Icelandic, intended to assist in the admission of students to HEIs. The examination is based on foreign models such as the ACT and SAT in the USA and the Swe-SAT in Sweden. The LAT has certain features in common with these examinations in that it is not intended to examine individual areas of knowledge from upper secondary school course material. Rather, it is intended to examine the acquired skills of students following upper secondary school, and thereby predict their aptitude for succeeding in higher education.

The LAT is developed under the supervision of the UC Academic Affairs Committee. All Icelandic HEIs have access to the examination and may make use of it. According to an agreement, the Institute of Educational Assessment (www.namsmat.is) oversees the development and processing of the examination. The objective is that Icelandic HEIs should in the future have access to general standardised information for making decisions on the admission of students, in those cases where it is necessary or preferable to restrict access to studies to a greater extent than is already generally done on the basis of the Icelandic matriculation examination.

The Faculty of Economics has had applicants sit part of the LAT, as well as an examination in mathematics, in order to select students for admission. Everyone who has sat these examinations and passed them has been admitted. The implementation of the examination has resulted in a significant reduction in new students enrolling in the Faculty. Furthermore, they have performed better and drop-out rates have been reduced.

The Faculty of Law has made the LAT a requirement for admission (weighting 80%), along with an Icelandic matriculation examination (weighting 20%); the LAT was first held in June 2014. There were 207 new students at the Faculty in the autumn of 2013, and the plan was to admit the 150 most successful applicants. However, only 97 applicants sat the examination, of whom 78 commenced studies at the Faculty in the autumn of 2014. It had been expected to take 2-3 years to reduce the group of new students down to this size; by adopting the LAT this was achieved in one step.

The Faculty of Nursing will use the LAT for the admission of students in 2015.

Measure

- ✓ *Evaluate the usage and outcome of the LAT with a special focus on the correlation between students' performance in the LAT and in their study at UI.*

3.7 Student satisfaction surveys

UI has, for a number of years, collected ad hoc information about specific groups of students, such as disabled students, students that drop out of their studies, current students' satisfaction with their studies

at the University, student progression in different faculties, and on graduate outcomes, to name but a few.

With the implementation of the QEF in 2011 this data collection was formalised. Since the autumn of 2011 regular surveys have been conducted by UI's Social Science Research Institute in order to gather student feedback from different groups within the student population, e.g., second-year undergraduate students, Master's students, doctoral students and alumni from the University. In addition a sample survey on support services is now conducted every three years (see Section 3.7.10).

Emphasis has been placed on international benchmarking. Thus, the questionnaire for undergraduates was based on the National Student Survey[26] that has been used in the UK since 2005 and the questionnaire for alumni was based on the survey Destination of Leavers from Higher Education[27] that has been used in the UK in its current form since 2002. Since the UK survey results are published online and results for individual HEIs and their departments made available, valuable comparisons for individual faculties at UI are possible.

The main focus of the student surveys among current students is on their overall attitudes towards the study programme in which they are enrolled, the opportunities they get to work and interact with other students and academics in Iceland and abroad and towards the facilities at the University.

Questions about the study programme are classified into six categories that are given an overall estimate, i.e., teaching and learning, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources and personal development.

Domestic comparison has not been possible until now, but in the autumn of 2013 UI initiated cooperation between the public HEIs in carrying out the surveys described above in all public universities simultaneously. A working committee with representatives from all the universities has been established to oversee the project. The working committee is responsible for overall administration and dissemination of results, but as previously the surveys are conducted by the Social Science Research Institute and now also in part by the University of Akureyri Research Centre, which has carried out the data collection in public HEIs other than UI. This not only makes domestic comparison possible but also strengthens the public HEIs' cooperation and work on quality enhancement.

Student feedback gathered through these surveys is valuable for many different purposes and provides:

- information for the institution-led subject-level reviews and day-to-day quality management in individual faculties;
- identification of areas for improvement and guidelines for setting targets for institutional developments;
- a tool for assessing the outcomes of reforms and strategic action plans;
- comparison with other domestic public HEIs to make more informed strategic decisions and to strengthen collaboration between the universities;
- international (British) benchmarking to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning from an international perspective.

See section 4.3 for a more detailed discussion of the student satisfaction surveys.

3.8 Human resources

3.8.1 Human resources policy

The UI human resources policy applies to all staff at the University and at those institutes under the auspices of the UC, schools or faculties.

The objective of the human resources policy is to ensure that UI fulfils its lawful role and meets reasonable expectations made of the University and its staff. In order to achieve this objective, UI must engage qualified and enthusiastic staff who devote their talents to the University and to the research, teaching, education and service work conducted there, and respond to the ever changing needs of students and society.

The human resources policy is intended to be informative and motivational for all University staff. It outlines the University's desire to be a good place of employment, in which good work is done by motivated, coordinated and responsible people in an egalitarian environment. The policy is intended to ensure the best possible working conditions for staff and opportunities to develop and thrive in their work.

3.8.2 Human resources management

The DHR oversees all matters related to employment and human resources at UI. The primary role of the division is to facilitate good practices in human resources at UI and to ensure that legislation and regulation is enforced in accordance with the UI human resources policy. The division ensures equality

[26] See http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lt/publicinfo/nss/
[27] See http://www.hefce.ac.uk/whatwedo/lt/publicinfo/dlhe/

and consistency in human resource procedures and initiates development in human resources matters at UI. This is done in collaboration with human resources managers at different schools and University management personnel, e.g., by enhancing training and support for staff. The DHR oversees ranking in salary grids, based on negotiated union contracts. Close collaboration is with the DSI concerning the hiring of academic staff.

There are human resources managers in four out of five schools working in a team with the central DHR unit. This arrangement is intended to bring service closer to staff and ensure prompt responses when difficult matters arise.

3.8.3 Appointment and induction of new staff

All vacant positions at UI are advertised. Academic staff are hired on a temporary basis for five years. After this initial tenure track period, staff are evaluated for their academic performance and must meet certain requirements for a permanent appointment.

The DHR and the DSI collaborate closely throughout the entire process of hiring academic staff, from advertisement to recruitment. There are five standing evaluation committees made up of experts for each field of study. Their role is to evaluate the academic performance of applicants, as well as which applicants meet the minimum requirements for holding the advertised position. The evaluation committee's verdict is then reviewed by a selection committee, chaired by the head of the relevant faculty. The selection committee interviews the applicants and they are also, in many cases, asked to give a lecture. The selection committee submits a recommendation to the relevant school dean about the applicant they consider best suited for the advertised position. The school dean makes the final decision on the appointment. The rector takes the final decision on permanent appointments and academic promotion.

3.8.4 Job development and training

3.8.4.1 Sabbaticals

Academic staff can apply for a one semester sabbatical every sixth semester (or a one year sabbatical every sixth year). Sabbaticals are very important for UI since they promote a dynamic international network and academic collaboration (see Section 5.7.5).

3.8.4.2 Job development

The CTL manages education and support services for teaching staff. Appraisal interviews are used to gather information on needs for training and job development for UI staff. The DHR offers a training programme for all University staff made up of various courses, such as computer and systems courses, personal skills, finances, languages, induction of new recruits and so forth. The IO has recently been assigned the role of managing special training for international staff.

Schools manage specialised education for their staff, in collaboration with the DHR. A training day for administrative staff is held once a year. This covers the most pressing issues each time and the aim is also to support networking. Regular consultative meetings are held between the University's key administrative personnel.

The DHR manages a comprehensive staff handbook which is an essential part of UI's QA system. The staff handbook is stored in Ugla and contains various information concerning staff and the workplace. The staff handbook is reviewed once a year and new information is added regularly as needed.

Regular appraisal interviews are obligatory with all UI employees - annually with those who work in administrative, technical or service positions and every other year with academic staff.[28] Appraisal interviews have been successfully introduced for administrative staff, but this has been more difficult for academic staff. Some faculties conduct appraisals regularly but others infrequently. Now that human resources managers have been hired for all schools, it has become easier to supervise interviews with academic staff and assist the human resources managers with preparation and follow-up.

3.8.5 Job satisfaction survey and follow-up

In accordance with the current Policy of UI a comprehensive job satisfaction survey is conducted every other year. This survey is a component of the University QA system. The latest survey was conducted in October 2012 and the next is due in the autumn of 2014.

The survey in 2012 was submitted to all staff in at least 40% employment, a total of 1.218 people and 69% of staff responded.

The results of the survey were examined in terms of each individual working unit and, as was to be expected, these units performed variously. School deans are responsible for follow-up of the survey's results within schools, and heads of divisions in central administration are responsible for those departments under their auspices.

[28] See 'Guidelines for annual appraisal interviews' in Folder 3.

When the primary results for the University as a whole are examined, 76% of UI staff are satisfied in their work at UI, a decline since 2006, when 88% of staff was satisfied. The results of the survey were divided into eight components: management, salaries; workload and stress; autonomy and influence in work; flexibility and balance of family and work; working atmosphere and satisfaction with working unit; dissemination of information and UI in wider society; facilities and security in the workplace. The two components which received the best results were autonomy and flexibility, and the two components which received the worst results were salaries, and stress and workload.[29]

Reform projects for the University as a whole following the survey concern issues like induction for newly recruited academic staff, workload and stress, and management.

A great deal has already been done regarding the induction of new recruits at school and faculty level, as well as centrally. A mentoring system has also been implemented in collaboration with the CTL. These matters require a great deal of follow-up, and the school human resources managers are responsible for following up the induction of academic staff in collaboration with the DHR.

Where workload and stress are concerned, various measures have been taken to improve the situation. The student-teacher ratio has been slightly improved, especially in faculties where this ratio was particularly unfavourable. Concerning stress reduction, the DHR offers courses in mindfulness that are very popular. A great deal has been added to the programme for the UI gymnasium, since exercise is an important factor in relieving stress.

Systematic training programmes have been offered for academic management personnel in their leadership roles, for example through meetings on academic leadership.

3.9 Language policy

The University of Iceland language policy, established in 2004, states that teaching and examinations at the undergraduate level shall be conducted in Icelandic unless there is a particular reason to do otherwise (international teaching staff, courses primarily intended for international students, etc.). Icelandic should also be the main language of instruction at the postgraduate level. However, a greater level of flexibility is assumed here and in some faculties postgraduate programmes are conducted to a significant extent in English. At SOH, most doctoral theses are written in Icelandic, but in other schools most are written in English.

With increasing numbers of international students and teaching staff, and increased participation in student exchange programmes and all kinds of international relations and research collaboration, it is to be expected that the use of English will become more widespread in University operations. At the same time, it is important that the University fulfils its role of communicating academic knowledge to society in Icelandic. Tension can arise between the international academic role of the University, which calls for increased English usage, and its responsibilities towards Icelandic society.

This is related to the status of the Icelandic language, but is also important in terms of quality. It must be considered whether the use of Icelandic, e.g. in postgraduate study programmes and doctoral theses, could prevent the involvement of the most qualified experts, e.g. as opponents. At the same time, it must be considered whether requiring the use of English could reduce the quality of studies, due to the fact that teaching staff and students are not sufficiently proficient in English to discuss complex subject matter in that language.

Measure

- ✓ *The University will review its language policy in consideration of the University's international academic role on the one hand, and its role in communicating academic knowledge to society on the other.*

[29] See 'Results from UI job satisfaction survey 2012' in Folder 3.

4. THE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Current UI Policy states the following: 'A dynamic undergraduate curriculum in diverse academic areas has been the hallmark of UI for decades. A demanding University curriculum emphasizes students' independent and meticulous work procedures, close cooperation between students and teachers, good study facilities and students' diverse opportunities to do independent research projects in collaboration with parties from the business community and society. In addition to basic knowledge and technical skills in a particular area, the entire curriculum at UI ought to promote proficiency in academic procedures, critical thinking and sound ethical judgment that will serve students in advanced studies and their work as responsible citizens.'

'The University of Iceland ensures all students equal opportunities for a good education, meeting recognised international quality standards. At the University of Iceland there is rich emphasis on students taking responsibility for their own curricula and respecting the resources that Icelandic society provides them in the form of a university education. It is important that the entire arrangement of curricula at the University shall promote students' diligence. The University emphasises that students shall be informed of their rights and involved in the decisions regarding their interests.'

4.1 Student recruitment and induction

4.1.1 Student recruitment

The importance of marketing and public relations has increased significantly over the last decade, and Icelandic universities now devote considerable effort to this area.

The single most important marketing device at UI is the University website, where prospective students can find comprehensive information on studies, study facilities and support services. Applications to study at UI also primarily take place on the website. UI conducts regular surveys in order to monitor influences on students' choice of study programme and the ways in which they obtain information about programmes. According to surveys around 95% of prospective students acquire information on study programmes and make their choice using the UI website.

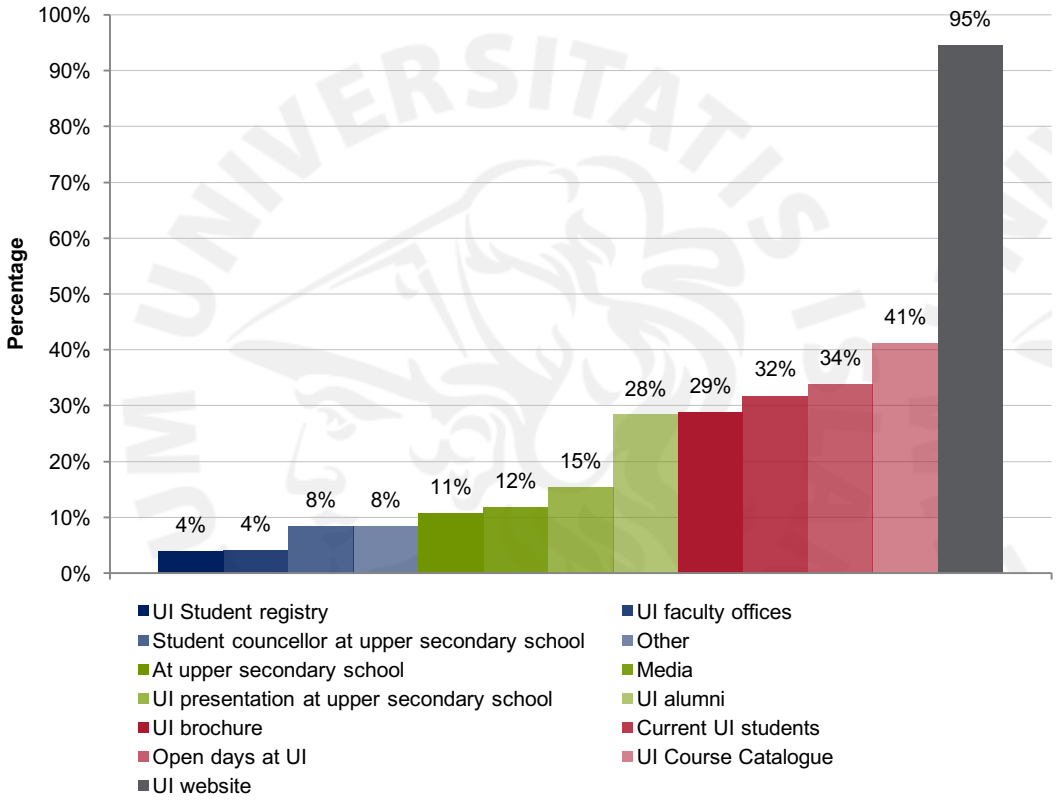


Fig. 4.1 How students acquire information on study programmes in 2011 (more than one answer possible)

Despite the importance of the website, printed promotional material is still important and UI regularly publishes promotional booklets for domestic and international students containing key information on studies, study facilities, support services and social activities. Furthermore, the University produces the UI Magazine every year, a substantial publication including articles on the research of students and teaching staff, as well as information for prospective students. The Magazine is distributed, for example, to the homes of all students in their last year of upper secondary school.

To an ever increasing extent, UI makes use of both social media and television to inform the public about studies at the University.

Measure

- ✓ *The UI website needs to be under constant development, e.g. the site needs to be simplified and more accessible for smartphones, tablets and other new electronical devices and access to information should be ensured via effective search mechanisim.*

4.1.2 Long-term recruitment

UI employs various methods to raise the interest of young people in primary and secondary schools in academia at the higher education level. This serves the dual purpose of recruiting future students, and upholding the University's duties towards Icelandic society. The University has developed several programmes aimed at this age group.

UI Youth Programme

Since 2004 UI has run a one-week Youth Programme in the spring for twelve to sixteen-year-olds and which is taught by UI staff and postgraduate students. Emphasis is placed on the personal development of students, who determine their own timetables. The group includes outstanding students who get the opportunity to tackle challenging projects and meet their peers. Participation in the UI Youth Programme, therefore, encourages the development of both social and study skills. The programme is extremely popular and altogether, almost three thousand students have taken part.

The UI Web of Science

Since 2000, UI has operated the UI Web of Science, which is primarily intended to educate and inform young people and the general public about scientific and academic subjects. The Web is among the most popular websites in Iceland, visited over half a million times per year with around 500-700 answers published every year in all academic fields, produced by UI academic staff. The UI Web of Science is used as a teaching aid in many Icelandic schools and has proved one of the most important forums for disseminating science to young people in Iceland.

The Mobile University

Since 2011, every year a group of students and teaching staff from UI has visited rural areas in Iceland with a programme devoted to science and academia. The programme involves a vibrant dissemination of science to young people and their families and is made up of a diverse collection of courses from the UI Youth Programme, demonstration experiments, and equipment and tools from the UI Science Workshop. A total of over 2.000 children and teenagers have participated in the programme.

University Science Workshop

The UI Science Workshop has operated two years and is open to groups from Icelandic primary schools, but groups also come from secondary schools and preschools. The objective of the UI Science Workshop is to increase interest amongst young people in science and technology, support teaching in this field, strengthen teachers in science subjects and promote continuing education for primary and secondary school teachers. The Science Workshop is staffed by UI students and teaching staff, most from SENS. In the 2013-2014 academic year, almost 3.000 school children visited the workshop with their teachers.

Biophilia Education Programme

In 2011, UI took part in creating music workshops for children in collaboration with the artist Björk Guðmundsdóttir and the City of Reykjavík. The workshops were connected to a series of concerts by Björk on the release of her album Biophilia, which was the first 'app album' in history. Biophilia attracted attention all over the world as an comprehensive display of the connection between man and nature, technology and music. The project has now been expanded still further and is Iceland's contribution to educational matters in its year of Presidency for the Nordic Council in 2014.

The UI Student Achievement and Incentive Fund

The UI Student Achievement and Incentive Fund has been operating since 2008 with the aim of supporting exceptional students through their studies at UI and every year, around 20-25 new students are awarded a grant. Selection of grant recipients is based on outstanding performance in the Icelandic matriculation examination, participation in social activities and success in other areas, for example in sports or the arts.

4.1.3 University Day

An important component of the publicity work of UI is the annual University Day, when UI opens its doors to the public. The main emphasis is on reaching prospective students and their families. University Day has grown more extensive with each year, with almost 6.000 visitors in 2014. All schools and faculties present studies on offer and there are also numerous events, presentations and displays which show academia in a colourful and vibrant light. Following University Day, representatives of UI visit upper

secondary schools and present the studies on offer at the University. This peer-based approach has proven popular.

4.1.4 International Day

International Day is held annually in order to present opportunities for study abroad, strengthen international relations and support cooperation with representatives of foreign embassies and institutes in Iceland. Representatives from over twenty countries and institutes are invited to present study possibilities abroad, both exchange programmes and other studies.

4.1.5 New student orientation

At the beginning of each academic year, an orientation for new students is held in UI. The objective is to welcome new students, introduce them to services offered by the University and to provide them with support in their first days of study. Academic counselling, walking tours and presentations on the UI campus and short lectures on exchange programmes are all on offer, and insight is provided into student social life. An information desk for new students is open.

4.2 Student retention and progression

4.2.1 Retention rate

Table 4.1 shows the retention rate for UI undergraduate students. The average retention for autumn semesters 2010-2012 is around 75%.

	2010	2011	2012
New entrants in autumn	3.229	3.970	3.820
Return autumn	2.575	2.820	2.730
Retention rate	79.8%	71.0%	71.5%

Table 4.1 Undergraduate retention rate 2010-2012 (return to UI)

Although these figures show a retention rate above 70% it must be mentioned that the rate differs between individual schools within UI. However, a drop-out in one faculty does not necessarily mean a drop-out from UI due to the fact that some students convert between disciplines. One of the actions UI has taken is to clarify retention calculation/definition within the University in order to get more reliable information on student drop-out/retention issues.

A special ad hoc committee scrutinised data on drop-out rates and made several proposals to improve retention which are included as measures in the current UI policy, including improved orientation for new students, development of an aptitude test for access and more effective implementation of rules on maximum duration of study in individual programmes. [30] In addition, individual faculties have implemented special programmes and measures to increase retention.[31]

However, it is clear that further measures must be taken to increase retention in general. For instance a clear plan must be implemented to track student progression from the beginning of their studies.

4.2.2 Graduation

Table 4.2 shows the number of graduations from UI 2009-2013. The numbers represent each calendar year. There was a 30% increase in graduations from undergraduate programmes from 2009 to 2013. The increase in Master's degrees was 23% during the same period. There was also a rise in PhD graduations, a 63% increase from 2009 to 2013.

	Undergraduate	Master's	PhD	Other	Total
2009	1.347	580	32	233	2.192
2010	1.586	740	36	322	2.684
2011	1.645	779	50	238	2.712
2012	1.733	814	38	227	2.812
2013	1.757	712	52	196	2.717

Table 4.2 Graduations from UI 2009-2013

In 2009 the proportion of female graduates from undergraduate programmes was 72% but has since decreased to 67% in 2013, which is in line with the gender balance of enrolled students. In 2013 71.2% of graduates from Master's programmes were female students. There was a rise in female graduates from 2009, when 65.1% of graduated students were female. Of the graduates from PhD programmes in 2013, 51.9% were male students. This is a significant change from 2009 when male students were 37.5% of the total number of graduates. These matters are discussed in the case study in Section 6.

In Tables 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 the time taken to graduate (for graduations 2011-2013) is shown. Note that although the norm is 3 years (for undergraduate and PhD) and 2 years (for Master's) there are a few

[30] See 'Summary of the report from ad hoc drop-out-prevention committee' in Folder 4.
[31] See 'Enhancement project at the Faculty of Political Science' in Folder 4.

programmes that are organised to be completed over a longer period of time (e.g., 4 years for a BS in Nursing and 6 years for Cand. Odondt.). Also note that when a student completes a degree in one or two years it is likely that he or she had some ECTS recognised from previous programmes.

School/Years from start*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
UI	0.5%	2.8%	46.8%	75.3%	85.2%	91.3%	100%
SOSS	0.0%	1.6%	44.9%	76.2%	87.2%	91.5%	100%
SOHS	0.8%	1.3%	33.7%	68.1%	81.2%	94.0%	100%
SOH	0.1%	3.1%	36.8%	62.1%	72.5%	80.2%	100%
SOE	1.5%	7.7%	72.1%	88.0%	93.7%	95.6%	100%
SENS	0.2%	0.9%	45.3%	79.6%	88.5%	93.4%	100%

* Starting year is determined by the date that a student enrols for the first time in a course that counts towards a degree.

Table 4.3 Undergraduate degree graduation rate 2011-2013 in terms of years of study (accumulative)

School/Years from start*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
UI	6.3%	46.1%	69.6%	82.0%	89.0%	92.6%	100%
SOSS	6.4%	51.6%	74.8%	85.2%	90.3%	94.1%	100%
SOHS	2.7%	52.7%	74.4%	85.1%	93.1%	95.0%	100%
SOH	17.3%	56.3%	74.7%	82.7%	87.7%	90.0%	100%
SOE	0.4%	18.1%	40.9%	66.1%	80.7%	85.0%	100%
SENS	3.3%	36.0%	68.2%	80.8%	89.7%	94.9%	100%
INT.	1.5%	23.9%	58.2%	79.1%	88.1%	91.0%	100%

* Starting year is determined by the date that a student enrols for the first time in a course that counts towards a degree.

Table 4.4 Master's degree graduation rate 2011-2013 in terms of years of study (accumulative)

School/Years from start*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7+
UI	2.3%	6.8%	20.3%	45.1%	62.4%	72.2%	100%
SOSS	0%	0%	16.7%	25.0%	41.7%	41.7%	100%
SOHS	4.9%	14.6%	22.0%	43.9%	61.0%	78.0%	100%
SOH	0%	0%	0%	23.1%	30.8%	38.5%	100%
SOE	0%	14.3%	14.3%	28.6%	42.9%	42.9%	100%
SENS	1.9%	3.8%	28.3%	56.6%	75.5%	83.0%	100%
INT.	0%	0%	0%	57.1%	85.7%	100%	100%

* Starting year is determined by the date that a student enrols for the first time in a course that counts towards a degree.

Table 4.5 PhD graduation rate 2011-2013 in terms of years of study (accumulative)

The 5-year graduation rate for undergraduates is 61%-64%, (see Table 4.6) and has been mostly steady from 2010. The 3-year graduation rate for Master's students is 52%-53% with the exception of 2012 when it dropped to 44%. The 5-year graduation rate for PhD students has varied over the years, being highest in 2011 (42%) and lowest in 2013 (29%).

	2010	2011	2012	2013
5-year graduation rate for undergraduates (BA/BS)	63.5%	60.9%	63.0%	60.8%
3-year graduation rate for Master's students	51.8%	53.4%	44.4%	53.2%
5-year graduation rate for PhD students	33.3%	41.7%	38.2%	29.4%

* Graduations from programmes started 3/5 years prior. excl. students enrolled in longer programmes (e.g., 4-year BA); exchange students; students that complete 10 or fewer ECTS.

*Table 4.6 Graduation rate 2010-2013**

Measure

- ✓ *Improve tracking of students' progression from the beginning of their studies.*

4.2.3 FTE students

The full-time equivalent (FTE) number of students versus the number of enrolled students at UI is shown in Fig. 4.2. In 2009 the number of FTE students was 8.985, 64% of the total number of enrolled students. In 2013 the number had risen to 9.347 or 68% of the enrolled students.

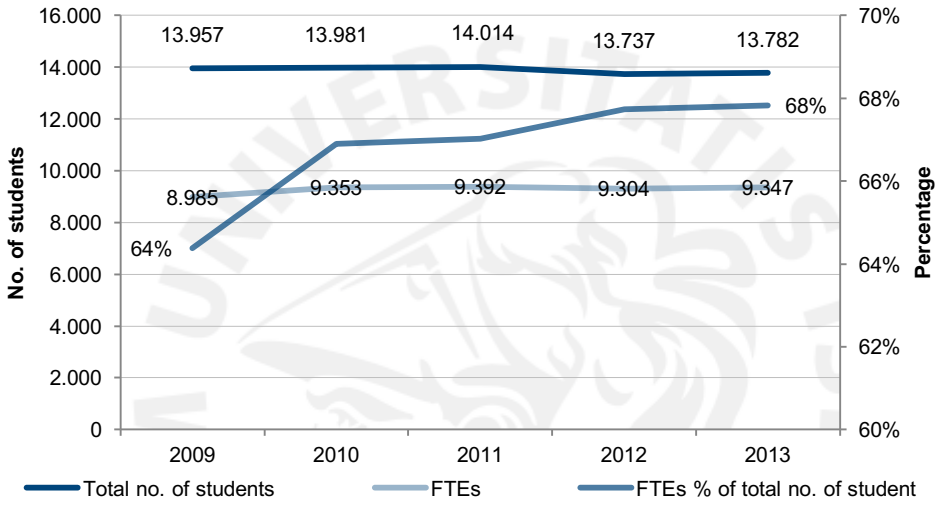


Fig. 4.2 FTE students vs. enrolled students at UI 2009-2013

FTE percentage of enrolled students varies between different schools. From 2009-2013 SOHS had the highest percentage, 75.4% in 2013, compared to 67.8% for UI. SENS was the second highest in 2013 with 70.5%. The percentage for SOE was slightly higher (68.5%) than the UI average. The two remaining schools and interdisciplinary studies were all below UI average, the lowest percentage being in interdisciplinary studies, 50%.

4.3 Overall Student Satisfaction

Results show that there is a substantial variation in students' evaluations across faculties and across levels.[32] Students' overall satisfaction with the quality of their study programme has been fairly high and stable over the three years of measurement (see Fig. 4.3).

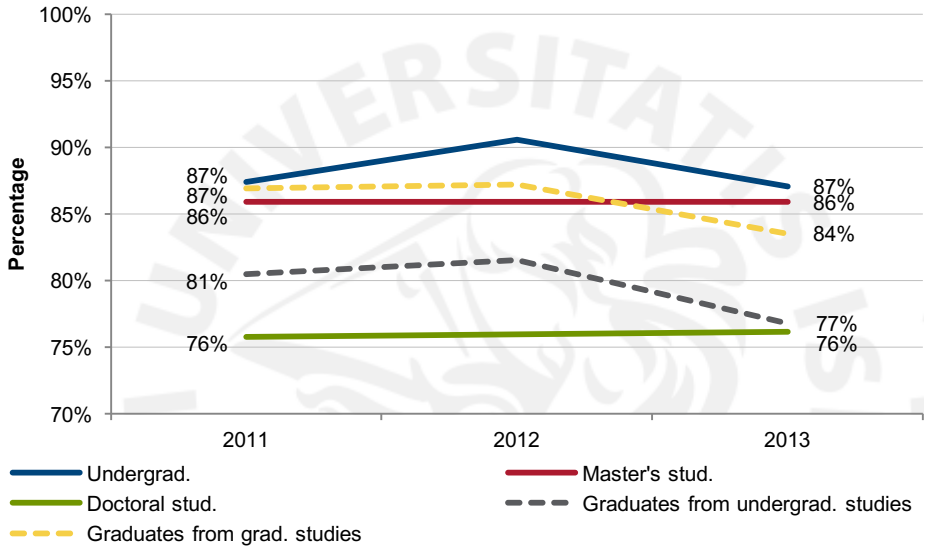


Fig. 4.3 Overall satisfaction with quality of studies by level of studies 2011-2013

Close to nine out of ten undergraduate students are satisfied with the quality of their studies, ranging from 50% in the faculty with the least satisfaction to 100% where satisfaction was highest in 2013. Satisfaction among Master's students in 2013 was only a little lower; 86% were satisfied with the quality of their studies overall, ranging from 73% to 95% depending on faculties. Somewhat more mixed results are found among the doctoral students at UI. A little over three out of four doctoral students claim to be satisfied with the quality of their studies, ranging from a worrying 43% to 100%. Although variation in student satisfaction across UI's schools is not as great as it is across faculties, it is substantial, especially at the doctoral level (see Fig. 4.4).

[32] See 'Results from student satisfaction surveys' in Folder 4.1.

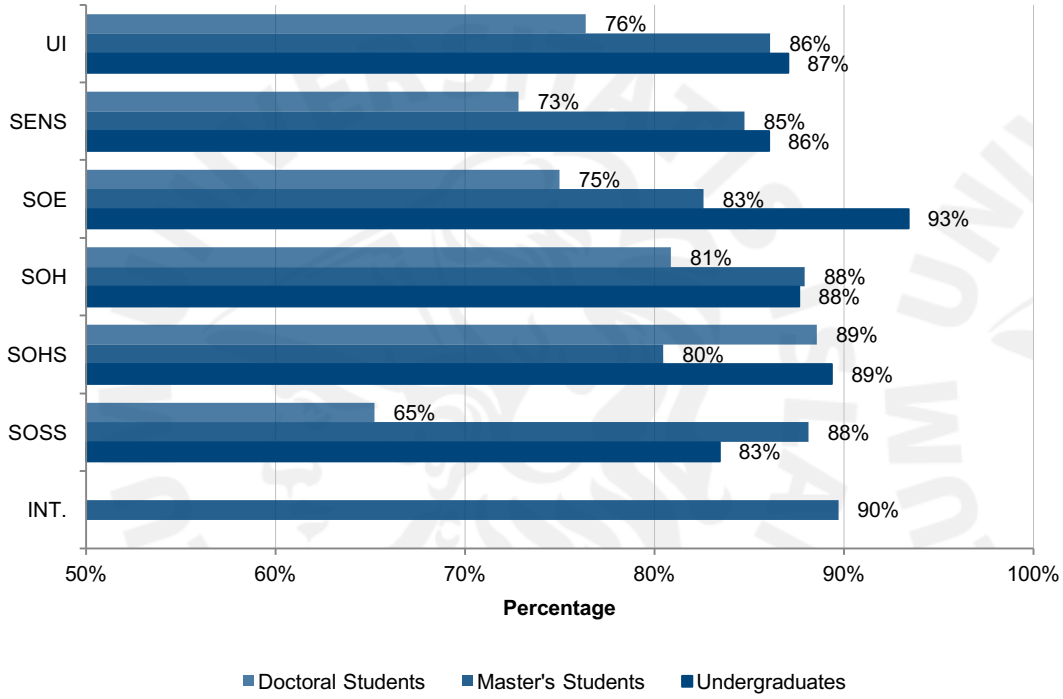


Fig. 4.4 Overall satisfaction with quality of studies by schools and level in 2013

4.3.1 Satisfaction of undergraduate students

In comparison to the British universities taken part in the National Student Survey in 2013 these results would place the undergraduate studies at UI among the top 36-43% universities with respect to overall satisfaction. The comparison with the other public HEIs in Iceland that took part in the student surveys for the first time in 2014 is still under way.

Undergraduate students at UI are fairly satisfied with teaching and learning and with learning resources but less so with assessment and feedback, which also seems to be the main complaint factor in the British universities (see Fig. 4.5) and in the other public HEIs in Iceland.

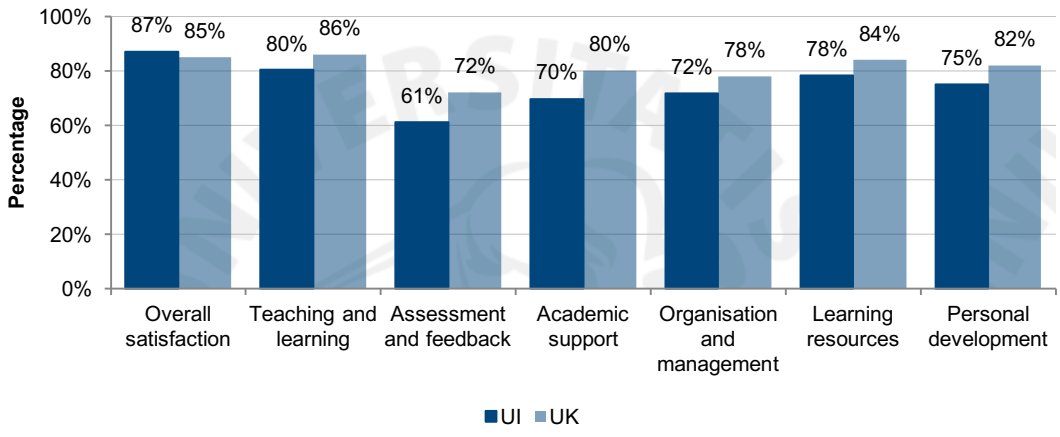


Fig. 4.5 Satisfaction with overall quality of studies and specific factors at UI and in the UK in 2013

The first steps in analysing the relationship between student satisfaction and various operational and administrational factors within faculties of the University, suggest that many factors may be related to student overall satisfaction and satisfaction with feedback and assessment, one of which is the student-teacher ratio.

4.3.2 Satisfaction of Master's students

There are some differences between the experiences of undergraduate and Master's students worth mentioning. Although assessment and feedback receives a relatively low score from Master's students as it does from undergraduate students, another factor receives similar or somewhat lower scores in

most of the University's schools. This is the factor measuring satisfaction with organisation and management of study programmes by the faculty (see Fig. 4.6). This factor is composed of three considerations: whether the timetable works efficiently; whether any changes to the study programme have been communicated effectively; whether the study programme is well organised and runs smoothly. It appears that students are especially dissatisfied with the way in which changes to the study programmes are communicated. There are various reasons for this some of which can be seen in the subject-level reviews, such as a limited selection of specialised courses for Master's level.

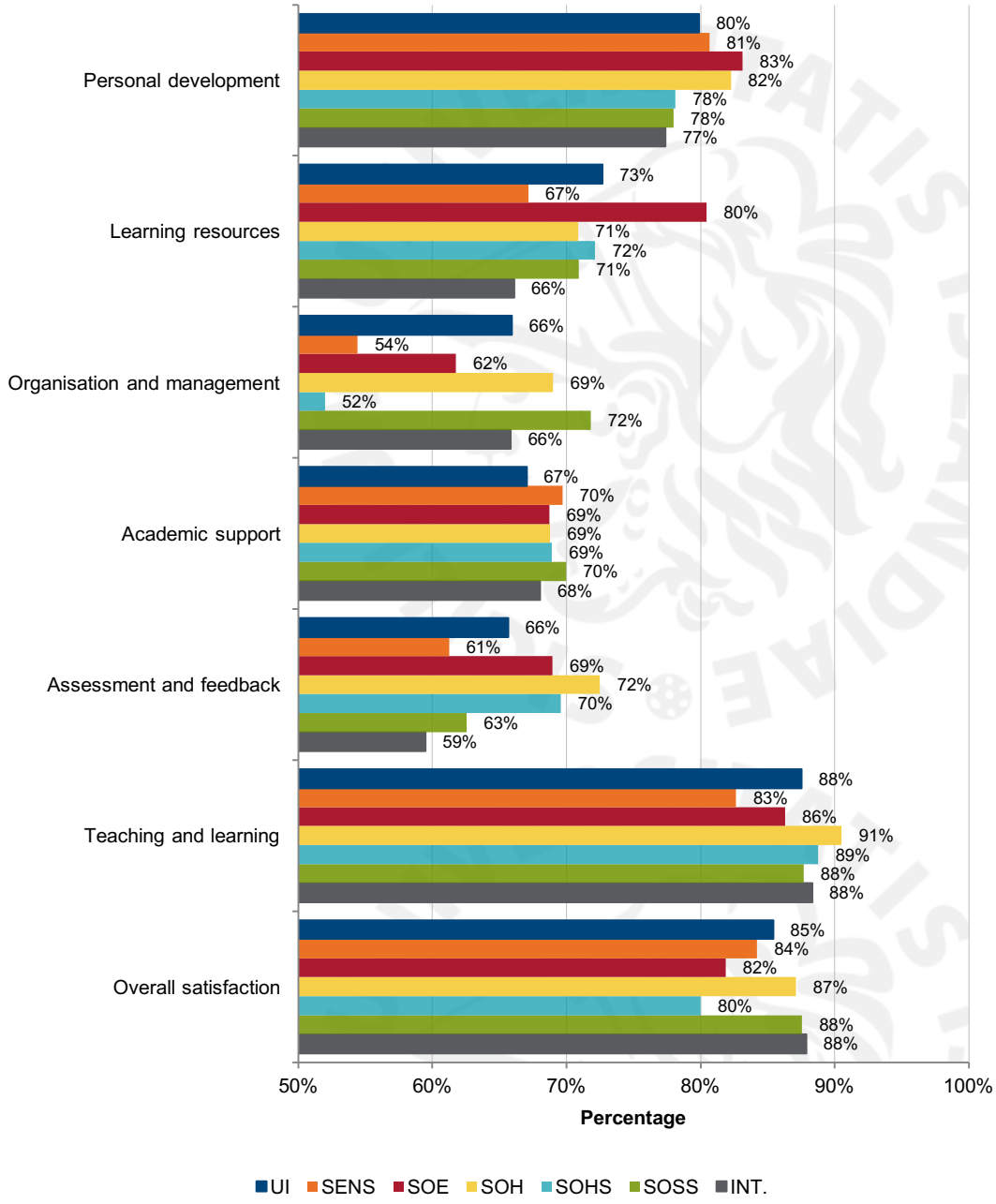


Fig. 4.6 Master's students satisfaction with overall quality of studies and specific factors in 2013

Despite some dissatisfaction with the organisation and, in particular, with the communication of important information, there is general satisfaction with the academic knowledge of teaching staff, access to teaching staff and number of contact hours (see Fig. 4.7).

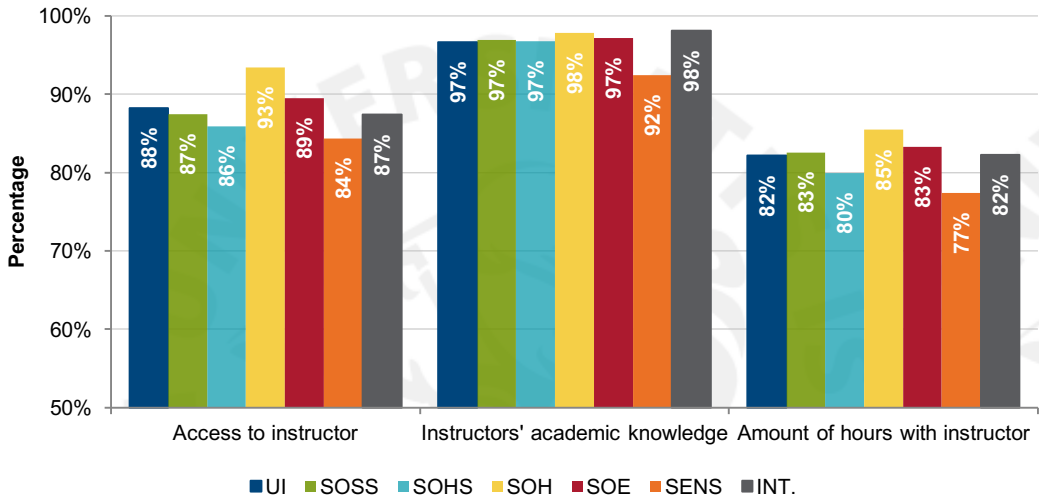


Fig. 4.7 Master's students satisfaction with teaching staff's knowledge and access to teaching staff in 2013

4.3.3 Satisfaction of doctoral students

As mentioned above, there is a much greater variation in student satisfaction at the doctoral level than at the undergraduate and Master's levels. The two variables that show the strongest correlation with doctoral students' overall satisfaction are whether they find their studies intellectually stimulating and whether they are satisfied with their study facilities. There are some differences between schools as can be seen in Fig. 4.8.

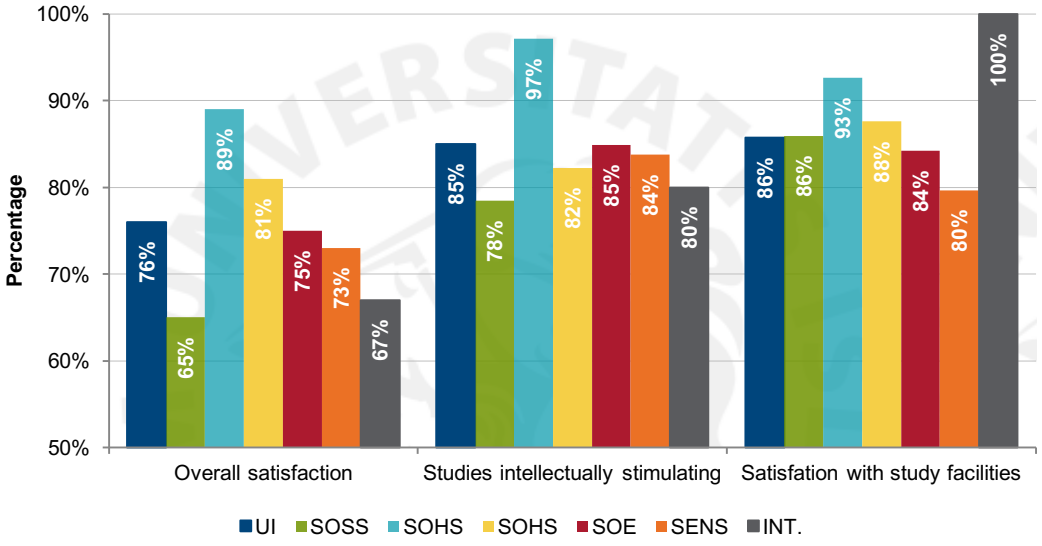


Fig. 4.8 Doctoral students that find their studies intellectually stimulating, satisfaction with study facilities and overall satisfaction in 2013

Doctoral students are, like Master's students, fairly satisfied with the teaching staff, in particular with the academic knowledge of teaching staff. They are however somewhat less satisfied with the amount of time they get to spend with them (see Fig. 4.9).

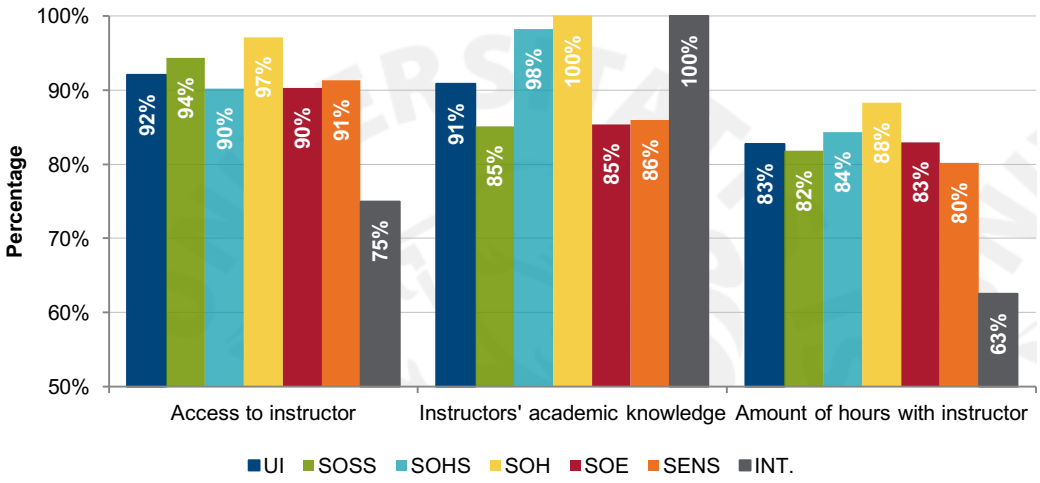


Fig. 4.9 Doctoral students' satisfaction with teaching staff's knowledge and access to teaching staff in 2013

4.3.4 Satisfaction of graduates from UI

Graduates, or more precisely leavers from UI (students who graduate and do not continue studying at UI), are asked about their study experience in the autumn of the year after their graduation or leaving UI (on average 1.5 years after graduation). Figure 4.10 depicts the overall satisfaction of both undergraduate and higher degree graduates. (See further discussion on graduates in Section 4.5).

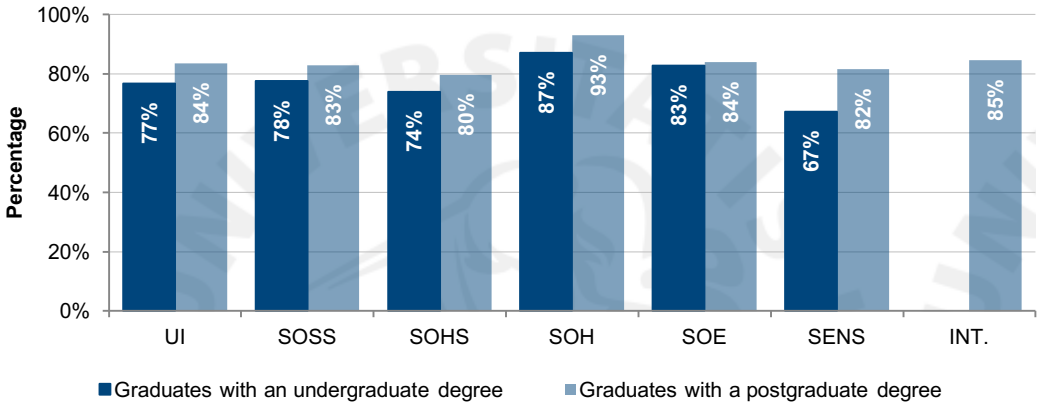


Fig. 4.10 Overall satisfaction of students that graduated in 2012

Measures

- ✓ *Further develop student satisfaction surveys and utilisation of data, e.g by linking information on subjective opinion with objective data (on students' length of study, drop-out rates, graduation rates, grades, academic records, etc.) and by using the data in connection with setting targets and measuring progress.*
- ✓ *Ensure that data from student satisfaction surveys will be addressed in a formal manner, in consultation with students, both centrally and at the school and faculty level so that it can be still better used in the interests of systematically guaranteeing and enhancing quality and strengthening quality culture. Implement a formal process for continuously introducing and discussing the results amongst students and staff and integrating this fully into the quality enhancement process.*
- ✓ *Students that leave without completing their studies or drop out early on in the academic process are an important group that could shed light on aspects of student support that need improving. It should be considered whether this group should be added to the annual survey.*
- ✓ *The main purpose of student satisfaction surveys at UI has been to improve the student learning experience. However, such data is often also used to help prospective students and their families to make study choices. It needs to be discussed whether the data should be made publicly available for such purposes.*

4.4 Integration of teaching and research

One of the leading principles of UI's teaching policy is that teaching and research should be integrally connected, and that the systematic integration of teaching and research increases the quality of studies and ensures that teaching and research always have equal priority. This manifests itself, for example, in the fact that students are already taught research methods at the undergraduate level, and emphasis is placed on them exploring different research methods within their subjects as well as learning to read findings from research. Generally, undergraduate students carry out some research projects in the course of their studies. Emphasis is placed on courses in the first year of undergraduate study being taught by permanent teaching staff that have been active in research. Obviously, the independent research component of study is then more significant at the Master's level and particularly at the doctoral level. Postgraduate students generally have opportunities to carry out research projects in collaboration with their supervisors and industry, to assist researchers at the University, and so forth.

The UC Academic Affairs Committee has worked towards the strategic objective concerning the integration of teaching and research at all levels of study using discussions, publicity and education within the University. In 2012, the UC Academic Affairs Committee and the CTL organised a well-attended seminar on the integration of teaching and research in university teaching led by an international expert in the field. In addition, CTL organised seminars on the integration of teaching and research, and a special session on the matter was held at the 2012 annual UI Conference on Teaching and Learning.

In the future the work carried out within faculties towards this goal must be analysed, and teaching policies and faculty self-review reports examined in consideration of this.

4.5 The development of graduate attributes and employability

All UI study programmes aim to prepare students for further academic studies, employment and to be responsible citizens in a democratic society. Evidence shows that UI graduates generally have good access to leading international research universities (see Section 1.6). Many programmes within all UI schools are, in addition to their academic orientation, orientated towards specific professions, such as medicine, nursing, law, social work, engineering and education. Professional training in the relevant field is integrated into these programmes. In most academic programmes, especially at the postgraduate level, students have the opportunity to carry out research projects in collaboration with industry and other partners. However, based on results from student satisfaction surveys, UI must enhance this further and find ways to increase such opportunities for collaboration with external partners.

As mentioned before in this analysis, around 1/3 of all teaching in UI as well as in other Icelandic HEIs is performed by sessional teachers. This fact is not only a challenge to quality but is also seen as an opportunity, since most of these sessional teachers are experts within their respective fields and strengthen the ties between UI and the relevant industry. Obviously, these kinds of connections create opportunities for graduates to transfer to the labour market.

UI not only prepares students for the current job market but also aspires to enable students to take on new challenges and create future opportunities. An important aspect of UI's activity is entrepreneurial education and training for students. The University operates a limited company with external partners which has the objective of promoting innovation ideology and helping students with start-up companies and business plans (see Section 5).

The latest initiative in this respect, launched in the autumn of 2014, is an interdisciplinary Master's programme in innovation and entrepreneurship, run in cooperation between SENS and SOSS. This programme is open for postgraduate students from all faculties.

Measure

- ✓ *Enhance ways for students to carry out research projects as part of their studies in collaboration with industry, domestic institutions and other partners.*

4.6 Transition of graduates from UI

Around two thirds of students who graduated (and did not continue studying at UI) already had a full-time job at the time of interviewing in 2013. 4.4% were unemployed and 10% were studying full time at another educational institution (see Fig. 4.11 and Fig. 4.12).

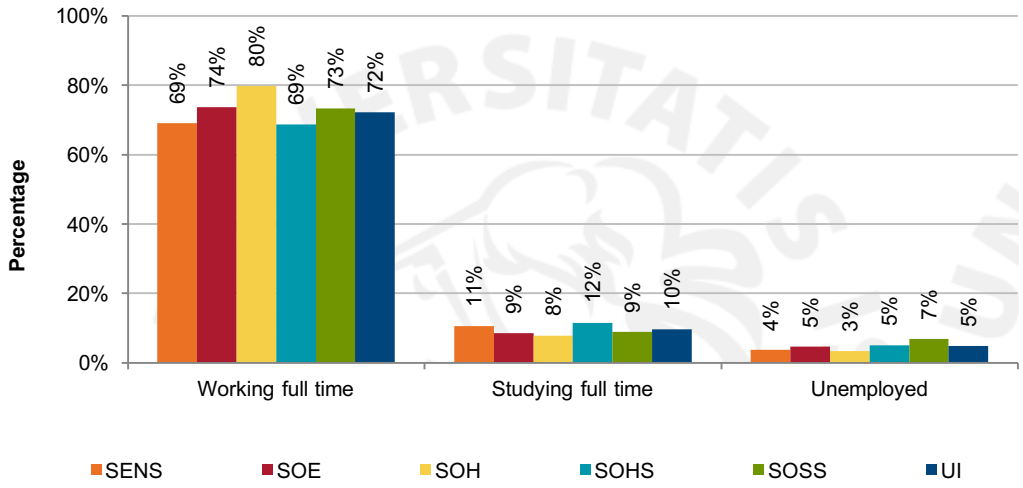


Fig. 4.11 Occupational status of students that graduated in 2012 from undergraduate programmes

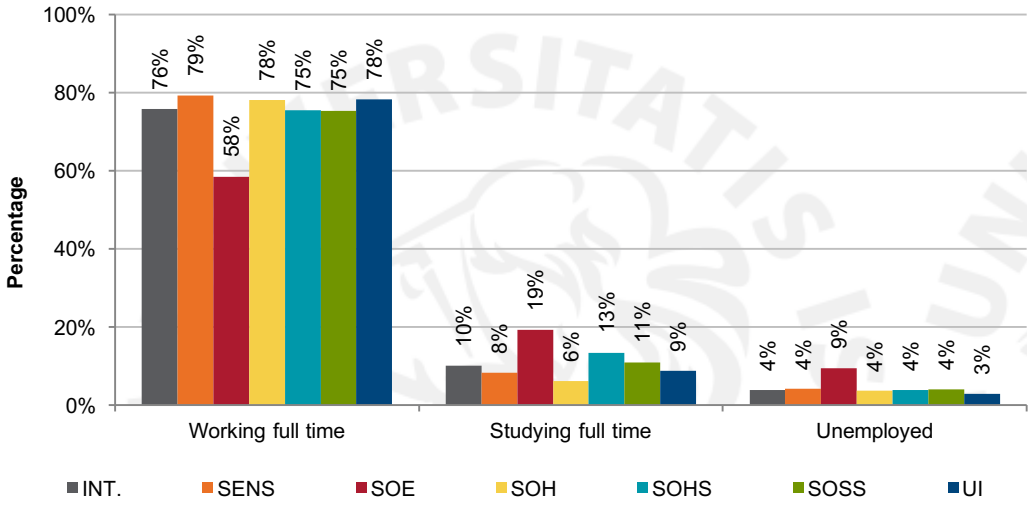


Fig. 4.12 Occupational status of students that graduated in 2012 from Master's programmes

Overall, graduates from UI believe that their education has prepared them well for their current tasks, such as work, further education and general tasks in life.

	Undergraduate programmes		Postgraduate programmes	
	Very well	Rather well	Very well	Rather well
SENS	20%	60%	17%	57%
SOE	27%	48%	19%	53%
SOH	33%	41%	22%	37%
SOHS	31%	42%	33%	44%
SOSS	25%	49%	27%	46%
INT.	N/A	N/A	26%	32%
UI	26%	50%	25%	46%

Table 4.7 UI education was a very or rather good preparation for current job – graduates from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

	Undergraduate programmes		Postgraduate programmes	
	Very well	Rather well	Very well	Rather well
SENS	35%	35%	30%	30%
SOE	0%	67%	40%	60%
SOH	25%	63%	60%	20%
SOHS	22%	50%	0%	75%
SOSS	20%	53%	32%	60%
INT.	N/A	N/A	50%	50%
UI	22%	51%	31%	53%

Table 4.8 UI education was a very or rather good preparation for current studies – graduates from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

	Undergraduate programmes		Postgraduate programmes	
	Very well	Rather well	Very well	Rather well
SENS	25%	59%	11%	66%
SOE	22%	56%	21%	56%
SOH	28%	48%	25%	29%
SOHS	21%	52%	33%	46%
SOSS	25%	53%	24%	54%
INT.	N/A	N/A	21%	38%
UI	24%	54%	24%	51%

Table 4.9 UI education was a very or rather good preparation for other tasks in life – graduates from undergraduate and postgraduate programmes

Just under 15% of students who graduated from UI in 2012 had applied for jobs abroad when they were interviewed at the end of the year 2013: 14% of graduates from undergraduate studies and 15% from Master's studies. No significant differences exist between schools. Just over 12% had received a job offer from abroad and just fewer than 10% had been working abroad after graduation.

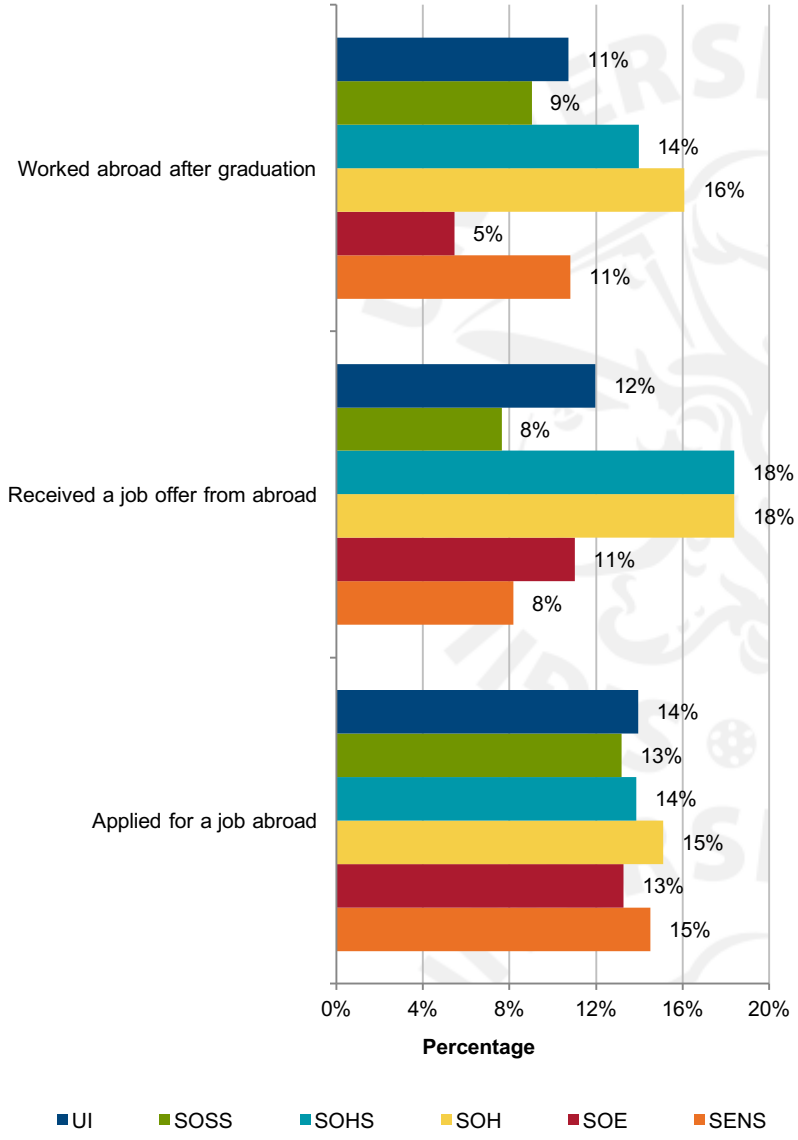


Fig. 4.13 Graduated students that had applied for jobs abroad, received job offers or worked abroad after graduation – undergraduate programmes

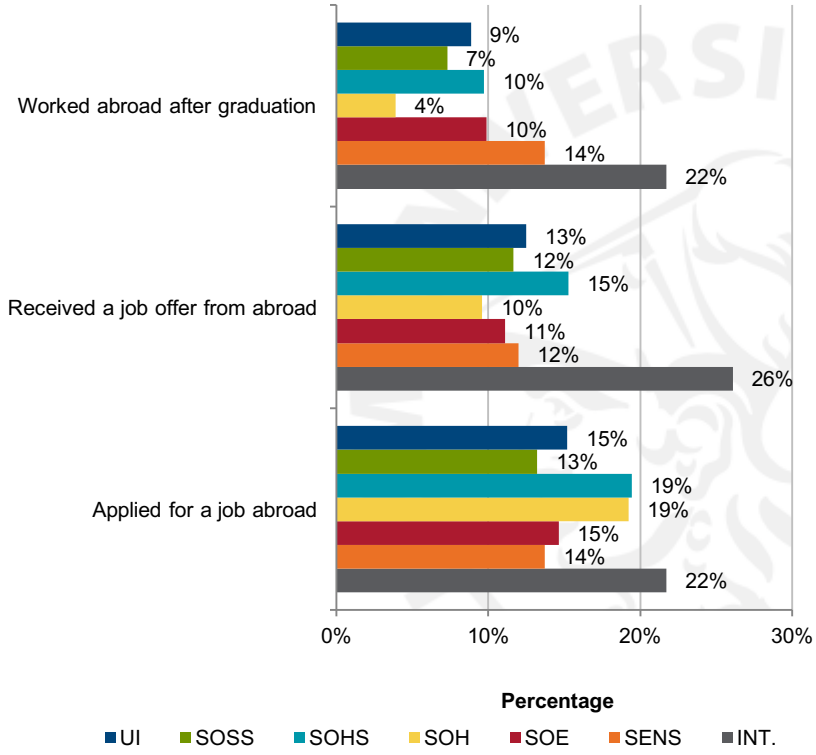


Fig. 4.14 Graduated students that had applied for jobs abroad, received job offers or worked abroad after graduation – Master's programmes

According to the views of graduates from UI the University's reputation had an impact on their chances of finding employment, although they believed that the factor most important to their employer was the subject and the degree they had completed at UI (see Fig. 4.15).

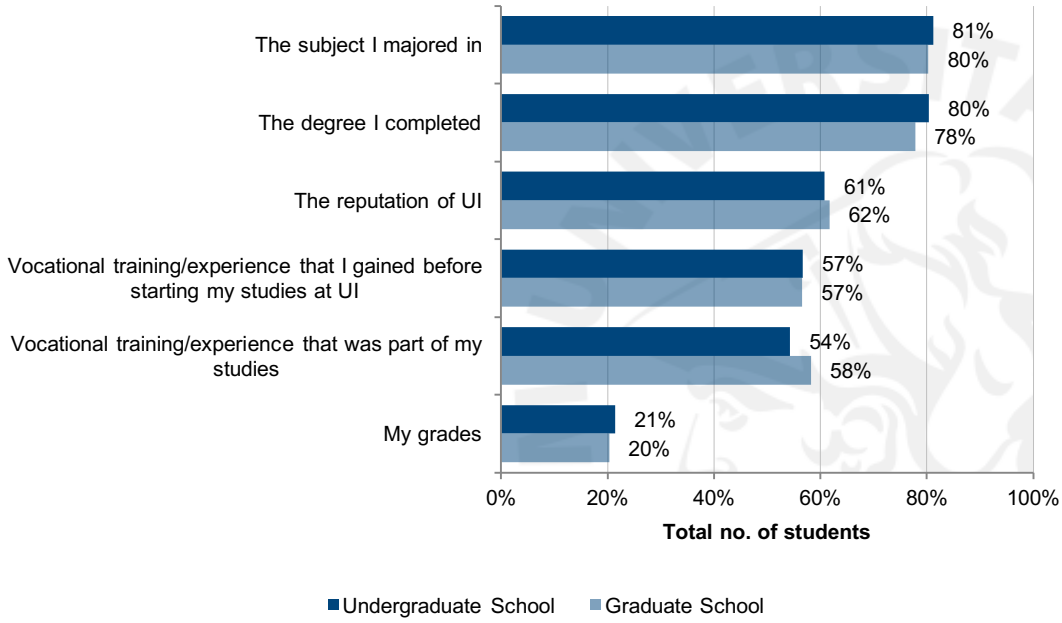


Fig. 4.15 As far as you know, which of your qualifications was most important to your employer?

Measure

✓ *Measure employer satisfaction with UI graduates for individual faculties.*

4.7 The learning environment

4.7.1 UI's facilities

UI's buildings house facilities for teaching and study of numerous kinds. The division of the primary teaching spaces is as follows:

Classrooms	Classrooms / lecture halls	Lecture halls	Comp. labs	Research laboratories and clinical training facilities
Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Capacity	Square metres
> 50 pers.	50-99 pers.	100-300 pers.	10-40 pers.	~ 20,000 m^2
Number of	Number of	Number of	Number of	Number of
101	21	13	15	N/A

Table 4.10 Teaching space

The usage of teaching spaces and clinical training facilities is at around 75%. Wireless internet connections are available to staff and students in all UI buildings, classrooms are equipped with projectors and whiteboards, and teleconferencing equipment is widely available in the University's buildings.

Reading and working facilities for students are available variously in silent reading rooms or in open and public spaces, which are very well used. Group work has increased and there is a shortage of especially designed group work rooms in University buildings, but students can book a general conference room for group work. Students have access to reading rooms in University buildings until 10 o'clock in the evening, and later during examination periods. There is only limited surveillance in UI buildings and access controls are little used.

In 2007 the newest UI building was opened, the University Centre. In this building all primary support services for students are united under one roof, i.e., the International Office, the SCCC, the Student Registration, a UI Computer Service Desk, the offices of Student Services, the student book shop, cafeteria services under the auspices of Student Services and the office of the SC. A special service desk operates within the University Centre, and individual support service offices operate under the auspices of each school, providing various services for students and teaching staff.

In 1994, the UI library and the National Library of Iceland were merged in a new building situated on the University campus. Numerous library services are available to students there, and the library also offers reading facilities for around 300 people. Specialised academic libraries are also situated in individual schools.

Student Services is a non-profit organisation which handles the buildings and management of student housing, preschools for students' children, and various cafeteria facilities on the UI campus and in the Student Club. Most student housing is situated on the University main campus or in its vicinity.

In all new buildings, access for students in wheelchairs is very good, but is more difficult in the older buildings which were constructed in accordance with older building codes. When booking courses into classrooms, students with disabilities are taken into account and appropriate facilities chosen in each case. Specially designed reading spaces in UI's newest building, the University Centre, are available for students in wheelchairs.

In the Policy of UI 2011-2016, emphasis is placed on diverse teaching methods, student responsibility and active participation of students in studies, and team work. This is in line with recent developments and trends within university teaching whereby emphasis is placed on enhancing both the subject-specific and general competence of students. New teaching methods are intended to enable students to enhance their competence under the supervision of teaching staff and in collaboration with other students, e.g., project based learning, problem based learning, case methods, etc. At the same time, communication and study is transferred to a greater extent to online media. Recent discourse on the development of university teaching also addresses a different approach towards course assessment, including a reduction in written final examinations, which have been replaced by diverse assessment of student competence distributed evenly over the period of study. Future facilities for teaching and learning environments should adapt to changing needs and future developments.

Measures

- ✓ *Increase the availability of study rooms and research facilities for students.*
- ✓ *Adapt existing classrooms to changing needs and future development in teaching and learning.*

4.7.2 Facilities for clinical training and labs

Clinical training for students in medicine and nursing in SOHS is conducted in authentic conditions in the National University Hospital and Primary Health Care of the Capital Area, and close links exist between the hospital and SOHS. Student numbers are restricted by the hospital's capacity for handling clinical training. There are also skills labs within the premises of the Faculty of Nursing, to which students in nursing and medicine have access.

Clinical training of students in physical therapy is conducted variously on UI premises or within hospitals, rehabilitation centres or physical therapy clinics. Students in pharmaceutical sciences have access to research laboratories for clinical training at the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences facilities, and part of their vocational training is conducted in pharmacies and hospital pharmacies. Facilities for clinical training in biomedical sciences and radiography are situated both within UI and in the research laboratories of the National University Hospital, and other institutes. Clinical training for student dentists for the first three years is conducted in a pre-clinic in which students practice under artificial conditions. For the last three years clinical training is conducted in a clinical training centre which is run as a fully-equipped dental clinic within the premises of the Faculty of Odontology. Clinical training in biology, molecular biology and geology is conducted in special premises on campus.

Practical training for students in physics and chemistry is conducted in specially designed premises on campus, which were refurbished a few years ago in consideration of requirements for air quality, health and safety and access for students with mobility disabilities.

4.7.3 Health and safety

UI has a standing Health and Safety Committee in accordance with general legislation. In recent years, the committee has concentrated on carrying out risk assessments for individual buildings, improving labelling in research laboratories, reviewing working processes, evaluating the responsibility of teaching staff, supervisors and other staff, preparing evacuation plans, checking fire protection, preparing emergency diagrams, reviewing conditions in research laboratories and preparing a health and safety handbook for UI.

Various projects, however, are still incomplete concerning health and safety in connection with University buildings, teaching and research. Health and safety committees need to be better developed in individual buildings and parties responsible for health and safety in research laboratories and classrooms better defined. Procedures might also be still further improved regarding the disposal of waste and hazardous material. It is necessary to introduce risk assessments for students' practical exercises, and to set up working processes. Research laboratories and facilities for clinical and practical training are generally good, but much of the equipment for practical subjects has become outdated. Due to funding shortages these prove difficult to replace.

Measures

- ✓ *Standardise education on working hazards and health and safety in research laboratories within UI.*
- ✓ *Define the responsibilities of those who conduct clinical training.*

4.8 Availability and effectiveness of student support services[33]

4.8.1 University's Ugla IT system

Ugla is a collection of information systems and components, containing various data on the operations of UI. These include, to name but a few, the student register and academic records, application systems (all applications for enrolment are electronic), the course catalogue, registration and maintenance of study programmes and courses, course homepages or 'teaching webs' (each course acquires its own homepage), an examination schedules component (for assigning examination dates and scheduling examinations by course and students registered), a final projects administration component, etc. All schools have a representative on the Ugla project management team, in addition to the UI Computer Services, DAA, the Student Registration, the CTL and the other public HEIs, which adopted Ugla in 2012.

Ugla is also the UI intranet and provides an information forum and communications medium for students and teaching staff alike. Certain parts of Ugla, e.g., the course catalogue, are open to all. Access to other parts of Ugla, student records for instance, is restricted. Information and access for each student is contingent upon his or her course registration. It is, therefore, highly important for students that their registration is accurate and that payment of registration fees and registration for courses is timely.

Homepages or teaching webs for each course are automatically created in Ugla, allowing teaching staff to post teaching materials, send announcements and notices to students, and to take care of other aspects relating to the course. The Ugla teaching webs also offer the possibility for electronic submission of assignments and interactive communication between teaching staff and students. In general, only those who are registered for a certain course have access to the course homepage, but the member of teaching staff can change and/or extend the access. Students are expected and encouraged to use Ugla and check their UI email regularly during the semester, as study related announcements throughout the semester are typically sent via Ugla. The Ugla interface is adapted for tablets, mobile telephones, and other smart devices. Users can download an app, the AppUgla, for free.

[33] See 'Results from survey on students' attitudes towards support services' in Folder 4.

In Ugla students can, e.g., find information on their academic records and progress. Students see the courses in which they are registered, have completed or dropped for whatever reason, but in such cases the students have limited access to course material. The semester of completion is posted, as well as the grade for each course completed. For the completed courses students can in each case see statistics relating to rank and grade distribution within the course, along with the ratio of students who passed, failed, or were absent in that examination.

During certain periods students can register or deregister for courses (examinations) via Ugla. During examination periods information on examination locations and seating arrangements is published in a personal exam schedule for each student. As mentioned elsewhere, students can also see their own timetable on the Ugla front page.

In user surveys performed regularly by UI Computer Services, Ugla has from the start been very positively received. The vast majority of students and employees seem, according to the surveys, satisfied with Ugla, using it regularly. Students' satisfaction with Ugla and other support services is discussed in Section 4.8.10.

Classrooms for lectures or other activities are booked via Ugla. A central booking system is a prerequisite for organising classes effectively for everyone concerned and ensures optimal use of UI teaching facilities.

4.8.2 National and University Library

The National and University Library is the largest library in Iceland with one million items in various collections. The library is the main legal deposit library in Iceland and its national collection contains almost all published written Icelandic works. The library houses the largest academic collection in Iceland with a broad collection of international scientific works and literature most of which can be borrowed for off-site use by holders of library cards. A special contract exists between the library and UI concerning various services and UI appoints two representatives to the library board. Students at UI get library cards for free, but anyone can acquire a card for a small fee.

According to a student satisfaction survey in 2013, 75% of undergraduate students agree that 'the library resources and services are satisfactory' (the corresponding proportion for Master's students is 75% and 50% for PhD students). Asked about access to online journals and databases, 75% of undergraduates, 75% of Master's students and 46% of PhD students are satisfied.

Measures

- ✓ *Find ways to extend opening hours of the National and University Library, especially during examination periods.*
- ✓ *Examine reasons behind low levels of satisfaction among PhD students with library resources and access to online journals and databases.*

4.8.3 UI Computer Services

The UI Computer Services supervise the University's computer system. In general their responsibilities consist of service, configuration and operation of the computer networks and servers, computer labs in University buildings, IT help desks, etc. Accordingly the Computer Services are divided into five departments, i.e., IT service, Telephone and Network Department, Software Development, System Department and Web Factory. Computer Services cooperate closely with the DAA concerning the development of Ugla.

According to a student satisfaction survey in 2013, 89% of undergraduate students, 83% of Master's students and 71% of PhD students agree with the statement 'I have been able to access general IT resources whenever I need to'. The UI Computer Services are very focused on the importance of the quality of IT services and regularly perform customer satisfaction surveys.

4.8.4 Student Registration

The UI Student Registration maintains a register of all students at the University. This register is the foundation upon which the organisation of studies is based, such as timetabling, arrangement of classrooms, organisation of examinations and book purchasing for the University Bookstore. The Student Registration manages the entry of new students, annual registration for courses and examinations, storage of grades and collection of registration fees. Students can also access a great deal of information on their courses and study records from the Student Registration. During certain periods students can use Ugla to register themselves. They can also use Ugla to register for courses/examinations, makeup and resit examinations and make changes to which courses they are registered for.

The recognition of foreign qualifications is handled by the Recognition Office (ENIC/NARIC) in the DAA, as is the processing of international applications, in collaboration with the Student Registration and faculty offices. The office serves all HEIs in Iceland by contract with MESC.

4.8.5 Service Desk

The Service Desk at the University Centre opened in 2008 with the main objective of serving as a first port of call for students that are in need of services of any kind. The Service Desk acts as a reception for the service units located within the University Centre.

The University Centre now houses all student services: the Service Desk, the Student Registration, the IO, the Student Council, the SCCC, the Recognition Office (ENIC/NARIC) and the Equal Rights Office as well as Student Services, the University Bookstore, the UI cafeteria, the Student Club, and an IT Help Desk.

The Service Desk offers diverse services. Students can acquire various certificates and confirmations, academic transcripts, buy printing credits, sign up and pay for seminars held by SCCC, get Student ID Cards, hand in medical certificates for examinations, and sign up and pay for excursions offered by the IO. All international students register at the Service Desk and food tickets for UI staff are sold there.

Measure

- ✓ *Develop and simplify customer service at the Student Service Desk with further automation.*

4.8.6 Student Counselling and Career Centre

The SCCC provides holistic counselling services for all UI students, from the time individuals consider enrolling for studies at UI, during their studies, and finally for the transition period entering the labour market. The services are divided into three main areas: academic counselling, career counselling and disability services, provided by seven career and guidance counsellors and one psychologist. SCCC offers individual interviews, group counselling and workshops. The total number of student visits to SCCC from 2009 to 2013 is between 6.500 and 7.000 annually.

In an international context, it is rather unique for SCCC to offer disability services in addition to academic and career counselling services. It has been one of the main roles of SCCC since its foundation and the number of students receiving assistance during their studies and/or examinations has increased steadily from year to year (see Fig. 4.16).

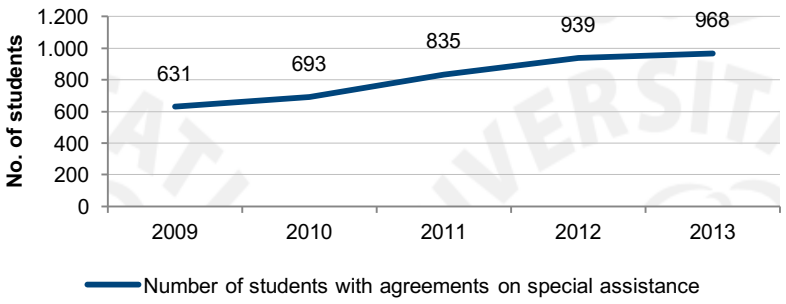


Fig. 4.16 Students with arrangements on special assistance 2009-2013

The aim of SCCC is to develop and improve the services for students in order to meet their needs. For that purpose, the staff regularly conduct small scale assessments on the quality of the workshops, group counselling and disability services, as well as responding to other forms of feedback from students. Student feedback on academic learning workshops has also been used to improve their content and structure.

SCCC has reacted to surveys on students' opinions towards support services, where students' responses indicated their lack of knowledge about the existence of SCCC and its services. Following this, efforts were made to make SCCC more visible to students and to inform them about available services.

4.8.7 Distance Learning and Teaching

UI has only in individual instances offered courses or organised regular programmes involving distance teaching. However, organised distance teaching has long been practiced at SOE and to a lesser extent in individual faculties within SOSS and SOH. Technology has developed fast, making distance teaching easier to implement with software applications like Moodle, eMission and more recently with the use of Adobe Connect which is an interactive piece of software now being experimented with, especially in SOE. In many disciplines students are able to study on-site or through distance learning without special organisation of studies - and currently many students prefer distance education although they live in Reykjavík, while others prefer on-site teaching.

One of the objectives of the Policy of UI 2011-2016 is to form a strategy on distance teaching to better facilitate cooperation with other universities and strengthen distance teaching in selected subjects. After discussions in the UI Academic Affairs Committee the decision was taken to form a working group to

prepare possible proposals for the enhancement of distance teaching in selected subjects. It was also decided that this should be defined as an organised method whereby a degree programme is offered partly or as a whole through distance teaching and learning. This work is now underway. At the same time work has begun on estimating the need for necessary tools, software and other instruments, the cost and need for support services, both technical and academic.

	On campus students only	Mixed students (on campus / distance learning)	Distance learning students only
SOSS	89.9%	4.1%	6.0%
SOHS	99.0%	0.5%	0.5%
SOH	95.2%	2.8%	2.0%
SOE	68.5%	11.6%	19.9%
SENS	99.3%	0.3%	0.4%
INT.	97.0%	1.5%	1.5%
Total	90.8%	3.7%	5.5

Table 4.11 On campus students and distance learning students in 2014

4.8.7.1 Web based courses

Web based courses, such as MOOCs, are a growing part of teaching in higher education, although it is not clear how this development will affect traditional universities. The UC appointed a working group in 2013 with the aim of forming a policy on the possible use and integration of such web based teaching into the UI curriculum. One of the outcomes was the launch of a pilot project using foreign web courses as a part of traditional on-site education. Initial results, introduced and discussed at the UF in 2014, have been positive but there are still many issues to resolve in general concerning MOOCs, such as quality assurance, assessment and credit recognition. These issues are of international concern and UI will monitor developments closely, such as results of ongoing research into comparative learning analytics.[34]

Measures

- ✓ *Monitor international development in web based education as it could be important for the variety of courses on offer at UI.*
- ✓ *Provide further incentives and support for teachers who experiment with teaching methods.*

4.8.8 UI Gymnasium

The UI Gymnasium offers sport facilities for student and staff. It is situated centrally on campus and is open all days except Sundays. Information and programmes are available on the UI website.

4.8.9 Icelandic Student Services

The ISS is a non-profit organisation with independent finances established in 1968. All UI students, the University and MESC are members. There are five board members appointed for a two-year period, three from the UC, one from UI and one from MESC. The board elects its chair.

The ISS is primarily a service organisation for students with the main objective of offering students good service for a fair price. As of 2014 ISS operates Student Housing, the University Bookstore, the Student Book Café, student cafés in various UI buildings, the UI cafeteria, fast food restaurants, preschools for children of UI students, the Student Club, and an online job and housing agency.

4.8.10 Survey on students' opinions towards support services

An extensive survey on student opinion towards support services was carried out by the UI Social Science Research Institute. Data collection was performed in early 2012 and the resulting survey report was published in May 2012. The units concerned were the following: the Student Registration, University Centre Service Desk and the SCCC.

The Student Registration

According to the survey only 39% of the respondents reported having used the services of Student Registration during the previous 12 months. That was considered surprising, not least when compared to the 76% of the survey population that said they had used the services of the Service Desk. A possible explanation might be the nature of the services of the Student Registration, partly provided via telephone but predominantly via email or online self-service in Ugla. In other words: many students may not be aware that they are (or have been) using the services of the Student Registration when in fact they are, directly or indirectly.

The survey also revealed that the majority (69%) of those who used the services of the Student Registration did so mainly in order to acquire information on their academic progress, the registration fee, examinations and graduation, as well as for getting help in changing their course registration (59%). This

[34] See a recent article by Kristín Ingólfsdóttir, Rector of UI, 'Impact of MOOCs and other forms of online education' in Folder 4.

was mostly as expected, although the percentage indicating course registration inquiries was thought rather high, considering the online self-service opportunities provided.

The results of questions/statements regarding views on the Student Registration staff and the quickness of the service proved quite favourable, with 90% strongly (57%) or somewhat agreeing to the staff attitude being good and a similarly positive rate for the service being quick. However, the Student Registration staff expressed concern that the percentage of those strongly agreeing to both statements posed was not considerably higher. This was seen as an indication of necessary improvements, although means to increase the efficiency and speed of services during peak strain periods have proved difficult to find. Measures in this respect emphasised increased, improved and more stable self-service possibilities for students via Ugla. Adding temporary staff members at peak periods was discussed but not considered a realistic option, since a great deal of practical training and expertise is required.

About 90% of the students having used the services of the Student Registration strongly (58%) or somewhat agreed to being satisfied, on the whole, with the services provided. This result was found adequate, but the staff report emphasises that a higher level of general customer satisfaction is aimed for. The report states that this will be attained by the staff striving to find ways to further enhance the quality of the services, not only for the benefit of students but also the administrative staff of schools and faculties.

The University Centre Service Desk

Although 76% of the respondents said they had used the services of the Service Desk in the past 12 months, only 22% seemed to be well informed about the services provided. The Service Desk report points out that the apparent inconsistency of these results is hard to explain, based on the survey data. However, results by individual schools and faculties reveal that students at the centrally situated schools were better informed about the services than those studying at locations further away from the main campus, the students of SOHS and SOE scoring lowest.

The Service Desk report explains that the unit's services are first and foremost promoted on the UI websites, both the Icelandic and English versions. The services offered are listed and explained on a specific page available on both websites, apart from an informative page devoted to FAQs. Both pages contain information on the unit's opening hours, telephone numbers and email address, and both are widely linked to from other UI web pages, for example those of individual schools and faculties. Indeed, the steady flow of students visiting the Service Desk and the variety of countable services they seek indicates that students generally do find their way to the desk and know about the services offered. However, the survey results spurred the Service Desk staff to improve the service information provided on the websites and to have short announcements, advertising individual service factors, displayed on the information screens located in various University buildings.

According to the survey, only 51% of the students reporting having used its services seemed to be fully content with Service Desk's hours of operation. This result was found rather puzzling, considering that the Service Desk is open 8:30-17:00 all working days except Fridays, when the hours are 8:30-16:00. These are normal 'school hours' for most students and in fact the current hours of service reflect the actual pattern of customer traffic.

The survey results for questions on staff attitude and quickness of the service were similar to those received for the Student Registration, i.e., about 90% of the respondents being highly or relatively positive with regard to those aspects. Also, the vast majority, or 93%, of the respondents reported being generally satisfied with the services. The Service Desk report however states a firm aim of increasing the level of customer satisfaction, and a resolve to see an even higher percentage of students 'strongly agreeing' to being satisfied with the services.

SCCC

The SCCC expressed general content with the results, although three aspects were seen as requiring further scrutiny for the sake of improvement:

Firstly, the results indicated that only 24% of the respondents had much or some knowledge of the services provided by the SCCC. In their report, the staff point out that there is a difference between asking students *how much knowledge they have* about SCCC services or *if they know about the existence* of SCCC. In other words: students may well know that the SCCC exists, without knowing much about what goes on there. This might not least be the case among those not needing the services of SCCC. The report explains the means used by the SCCC for promoting its services, which include a specific website, a Facebook page, email and Ugla announcements to students, as well as presentations held at open days and introductory events for new students. As a direct result of the survey results, however, the SCCC staff launched an effort to be more visible to students and to inform them about the SCCC.

Secondly, the results showed that very few students reported having used the career counselling services of the SCCC ('counselling on occupational options after graduation'). This finding confirmed a fact already known to the SCCC staff; they admit that the career counselling aspect had been lagging behind, due mainly to lack of resources and the continuous urgency of services within the areas of

academic counselling and disability services. The SCCC report states a strong interest among the staff in improving the career counselling services. In fact, this has led to the development of new services like workshops on job seeking, covering matters such as writing a CV, the use of introduction letters as a tool in job seeking and preparation for job interviews.

Thirdly, the survey indicated that students within certain schools and faculties had a more negative attitude than others towards some of the service factors of the SCCC (i.e., opening hours, quickness of service, staff attitude, etc.). This was found worrying, calling for special measures in order to better introduce the services of the SCCC to the students of the schools concerned. Student focus groups and meetings with school deans were suggested as possible first steps.

Survey results: Ugla IT system and Moodle

Generally speaking, the survey respondents seemed quite positive towards Ugla. The results were discussed by the Ugla project management team and briefly accounted for in the team's annual report for 2012. About 75% of the students said they used Ugla daily or almost daily. About 95% strongly or somewhat agreed that Ugla had benefitted them in their studies, while a slightly lower percentage was content with the user interface and usability of Ugla. The user interface of Ugla saw some improvements later in 2012. The interface and functioning of the '*My courses'* section was thoroughly revised and improved in 2013.

About 50% of the respondents said they had taken a course in which Moodle was employed. Of those, less than 70% were highly or relatively positive about Moodle having benefitted them in their studies and 63% strongly or somewhat agreed that Moodle was user friendly. These results contributed to a specific Moodle user support team being established, with representatives from the CTL, SOE and SOH. Also, efforts were made to improve and secure the 'up-time' of Moodle. Last but not least, Moodle access was linked to Ugla, allowing teaching staff to easily create a Moodle learning web.

4.9 Student Council and other student associations

The SC is a central organisation advocating the interests of students at UI. Both inside and outside the University, the SC acts as a representative for students. 27 elected members sit on the council, as well as two student representatives from the UC who attend in an observational capacity. In 2013 a new governance structure was adopted for the SC, aimed at standardising governance between the University and the SC. In accordance with the new structure, students elect representatives from their own school to the respective school council. There are five representatives for each school, with the exception of SOSS, which has seven representatives due to its size. Together, all school council members form the SC, which meets once per month. Furthermore, there are imminent plans to establish a representative body within each school, made up of members of the relevant school council, as well as representatives from every student organisation within the school in question.

Five people work in the SC office. The SC also runs the Student Rights Office, where students can seek assistance should they believe their rights have been infringed. SC operations are extremely diverse; as well as organising social events, the Council also appoints members to various committees and councils under the auspices of the University and the government.

PhD students have their own association, FeDoN.

4.10 Handling students complaints and appeals

The process regarding student complaints and appeals is specified in detail in the Regulation for UI. Basically, the process is the following:

- Students believing their rights have been infringed shall submit a claim in writing to the respective head of faculty.
- The head of faculty shall address the issue as quickly as possible, as a rule within two months from the time the matter was raised.
- The head of faculty shall respond to the student's claim with a formal reply.
- Should a student not accept the head of faculty's ruling, he or she can refer the matter to the UI Complaints Committee for student issues (in Icelandic), providing that the set requirements are met.
- Rulings of the Complaints Committee may be referred to the Board of Appeal to deal with HEIs students' complaints, providing that the set requirements are met.[35]

Measure

✓ *Shorten the response time of UI authorities to student complaints.*

[35] Also see stipulations on the role and appointment of external examiners and a students' right to explanation of a teacher's assessment and information on the role of the Board of Appeal to deal with HEI students' complaints.

5. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Research at UI is organised within University faculties and research institutes. Academic staff enjoy academic freedom, which is one of the core values at UI. Academic freedom means, e.g., that University teaching and research staff choose their own research projects within their research fields. At UI there is a consensus that academic freedom is the cornerstone of university research, since it promotes critical and creative thinking. This understanding means that University academic staff are themselves responsible for their own research.

Most academic staff carry out their research within a faculty or an interdisciplinary unit. Although there appear to be many research institutes at the University, it bears keeping in mind that only a few of these are actually research institutes in the sense that academic research is carried out within them. Most of these institutes are rather service units which perform various tasks or contract research for third parties. The most important exception to this is the UI Science Institute and its sub-institutes. Under their auspices, many academic researchers carry out primary research in the academic fields in question. At this time, a special evaluation of the University research institutes is underway under the auspices of the rector.

5.1 UI policy on research and innovation

UI has in recent years undertaken rapid changes, from placing the main emphasis on teaching in undergraduate and vocational studies to becoming an international research university with the main emphasis on the development of quality research and doctoral studies. UI places emphasis on continuing advances in the field of research. For this reason, the main objective is to develop a productive research environment. The University intends to do this by, e.g.:

- Increasing collaboration with the foremost universities and university faculties in the world.
- Increasing collaboration with Icelandic research institutes, universities and enterprises.
- Systematically submitting applications to domestic and international competitive funds.
- Supporting in particular researchers who achieve success at an international level, and attracting more such researchers to the University.
- Increasing the number of positions for postdoctoral researchers and supporting in particular the training of young researchers.
- Improving facilities, i.e., premises, instruments and equipment.
- Using an active incentive and QA system which places emphasis on rewarding publications in outlets which make rigorous academic demands. The incentive and QA system for research affects, e.g., the hiring and promotion system, productivity evaluation funds, decisions on the division of employment duties, sabbaticals and the division of research funding within the University.
- Increasing interdisciplinary collaboration within the University.
- Enhancing doctoral studies, which involves, e.g., increasing the number of doctoral students graduating to 60-70 per year.
- Improving funding for doctoral studies.
- Enhancing the GS.

UI places growing emphasis on innovation and entrepreneurship. The University encourages academic staff in various ways to find practical applications for the value inherent in the University's research work. The University does this by, e.g.:

- Systematically seeking practical research results and supporting entrepreneurs.
- Incorporating the value of innovations into undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
- Enhancing the support system for innovation.
- Increasing collaboration with parties within Icelandic society working towards similar goals.
- Making special efforts to present innovation and entrepreneurial work to students.

5.2 UI Centennial Fund

On the occasion of the centenary of UI in 2011, the Icelandic government and the *Althingi* parliament approved the establishment of a special UI Centennial Fund in order to support research and innovation, in keeping with the primary policy targets of the University, and to strengthen industry in the interests of Icelandic society. Contributions to the fund were to increase exponentially until 2014, at which time it was to be ISK 700 million. Up until 2020, contributions to the fund should continue to rise, in keeping with the progression of UI policy and the state of public finances. The aim is to increase contributions to the fund such that the total contribution for each student at UI reaches the OECD average by 2016 and the average for the Nordic countries by 2020.

The Centennial Fund has made it possible to work towards the aforementioned objectives of UI much more surely than otherwise. During a difficult period of austerity following the economic downturn, it has

been possible to safeguard important components of University operations. It has been possible to hire new academic staff in a strategic manner within all schools.

The Centennial Fund has also initiated the hiring of 15 postdoctoral researchers and 8 assistant professors. The hiring process was managed centrally under the auspices of the rector. These positions were advertised internationally without being defined, and emphasis was placed on hiring those applicants considered to excel in research in an international context. This novel experiment went well and a large number of outstanding academics applied for the positions. Those academics who were hired will strengthen the position of UI in the fierce international competition which lies ahead.

5.3 Interdisciplinary cooperation

Emphasis is increasingly being placed on interdisciplinarity between different fields within UI and UI regional research centres, both with regard to teaching and research. The University has for some time offered two formal study programmes based on interdisciplinary collaboration between all five schools. These are in the public health sciences and environment and natural resources, both of which have been evaluated through subject-level review. Speech pathology is a more recent study programme offered in collaboration between SOHS, SOH and SOE. In the autumn of 2014 a new Master's programme was launched in innovation and entrepreneurship, organized jointly by SOSS and SENS. In addition, several informal interdisciplinary collaborative platforms have been initiated in the areas of renewable energy, fisheries and marine sciences, arctic issues, remote sensing, medieval literature, biosciences, equality Issues and technology-humanities-arts.

5.4 Division of Science and Innovation

The Division of Science and Innovation (DSI) manages central matters pertaining to research or innovation. The primary tasks of the Division are:

1. Overseeing *research-based competitive funds* within the University, as well as services for the UC Science Committee. The role of the UC Science Committee is to promote the enhancement of research activity at UI and to initiate discourse on research. The committee also allocates grants from the University Research Fund.
2. *Evaluation of research* and various projects connected to the University QA and incentive system: evaluation is carried out by standing evaluation committees for each school and in consultation with the UC Science Committee for Public HEIs and the Evaluation System Committee. The Science Committee for Public HEIs, which is composed of representatives from all Icelandic public HEIs, oversees development of the evaluation system, along with the Evaluation System Committee, composed of representatives from public HEIs and the government.
3. *Hiring and promotion* of academic staff. This refers to tasks performed by standing evaluation committees, selection committees and the University Promotion Committee in connection with recruitment, promotion, hiring to permanent positions, hiring to guest positions and the awarding of academic titles.
4. Promoting *proposals from University staff to competitive funds outside of Iceland* through publicity work within the University, technical assistance with applications, and financial records for and management of projects which have been awarded grants. An important component in this work is the coordination of collaboration between research directors within the University schools.
5. *Enhancing innovation and the practical application* of research results. The DSI relays information to University staff concerning support services provided to innovative enterprises and entrepreneurs in Iceland with regards to patents, technology development grants and venture capital. The DSI receives announcements of inventions and patentable research results and mediates for endorsement agreements concerning patents or other knowledge. The DSI also provides assistance with the establishment, initial financing and business plans of start-up companies, as well as finding them acceptable premises for the beginning of operations.

5.5 Research-based competitive funds

Several research-based competitive funds operate within UI, which award grants for research, doctoral studies and equipment purchasing. The most important granting funds are the UI Research Fund, the UI Eimskip Fund, the Assistantship Fund, the Equipment Purchasing Fund and the Equipment Matching Grant Fund. One of the main tasks of the UI Research Fund is to support new recruits, but this kind of support needs to be strengthened.[36]

5.6 Evaluation of research and other work

As previously stated, academic freedom is the cornerstone of UI's work, but all freedom is accompanied by responsibility. UI encourages academic staff in numerous ways to be active in research, but at the same time closely monitors the ways in which they uphold their research duties. In order to increase the quality of research work at the University, international publications of high academic standard are

[36] See 'UI research related funds' in Folder 5.

strongly encouraged. Every year, academic staff must submit a detailed report of their work and, following this, every individual's contribution is evaluated for points. This evaluation is a key component of the UI QA and incentive system.

The Evaluation System for Public HEIs forms the basis for evaluation of the work of academic staff, i.e., those who are hired in accordance with a formal qualifications assessment. Quality assessment applies first and foremost to research, but to a certain extent also to teaching, administration, service and other components in the work of University teaching and research staff. Annual performance evaluation for academic staff involves a performance report detailing work done over the last year for each member of academic staff. It also involves updating the teaching portfolio, an overview of collaboration with parties outside the University and an overview of secondary employment outside the University. This report is generally referred to as the *annual performance report*.

Five committees of experts also perform the evaluation. Points are awarded for research and other work performed over the previous academic year, but no points will be awarded unless a satisfactory performance report has been submitted.

This evaluation system is obviously not perfect and has been criticised within the University. One of the issues frequently mentioned is that such a standardised system is used to evaluate different disciplines. Due to ongoing debate the system has been revised regularly and has now reached the point for comprehensive (external) assessment. However, it must be kept in mind that University is heavily underfunded (see Section 1.7) and the system is therefore dividing a fractional amount of research funding compared to reference institutions.

5.6.1 Research

Evaluation of research is largely based on the publication venue. Research appearing in a publication outlet that makes rigorous scholarly demands of its content is considered to already have been evaluated with regards to the gathering of data, originality and contribution to advancement of knowledge. The publisher's peer-review process is of utmost significance. For peer review to be considered satisfactory, the material in question must be sent to at least two reviewers. Peer review must be anonymous, professional, substantive and carried out by recognised specialists in the field in question. Publication distribution, accessibility and impact are also evaluated.

5.6.2 Teaching

Teaching activity and quality are evaluated, including publication of teaching materials, innovation in teaching, and supervision of postgraduate students. At UI, points for teaching experience are not awarded unless the teaching portfolio has been updated (see Section 3.2.12).

5.6.3 Administration, service and other activities

Points are awarded for specific administrative positions, in particular under the auspices of the University as a whole, or its schools. Administrative work under the auspices of faculties is, as a rule, not evaluated for points in accordance with these rules. Services for the public performed by University staff in their capacity as specialists are also evaluated.

5.6.4 Collaborative projects, secondary employment and job engagement

Academic staff at UI also account in the aforementioned report for all collaboration in which they are involved, in Iceland and abroad, whether it be with other universities, research institutes, enterprises or other parties. The DSI manages this information in a special database.

UI has established regulations concerning conflicts of interest, secondary employment and job engagement. It is very important that staff members' secondary employment does not adversely affect their work for the University. Academic staff must account for any secondary employment in the aforementioned report.

5.7 Quality assurance and incentive system for research at UI

UI places a great deal of emphasis on improving still further the University's performance in research. This emphasis comes up again and again throughout the UI Policy for 2011-2016. In order that this might be achieved, the University must make use of limited funding and non-governmental income for research as best it possibly can. To this end, the University has developed a QA and incentive system in connection with research, which has significant influence on the working conditions and salaries of University employees from appointment to end of employment.

5.7.1 Hiring and promotion

Positions are generally advertised outside of Iceland, and emphasis is placed on attracting as many applicants as possible for each position. Usually academic staff are initially hired to the lowest professional title, i.e., to the position of assistant professor, since a very active system of promotion then takes effect with rigorous academic demands concerning performance in research and teaching.

In 2010, the requirements for promotion to another professional title were raised significantly. This change involved, e.g., making certain minimum requirements for the number of advanced research

points needed for promotion and recruitment. Advanced research points are only awarded for publications in peer-reviewed outlets which make rigorous demands concerning innovation, originality and scientific methods. This regulation furthermore introduced the arrangement that all academic staff are hired temporarily for a five-year period and, at the end of this period, they must have achieved a certain level of performance in their research and other work to have the option of appointment to a permanent position. The new rules from 2010 furthermore allowed for a fast-track promotion to a higher professional title when an academic staff member is appointed. This is important since almost all position are advertised for the lowest professional title, i.e., assistant professor.[37]

5.7.2 Initial salary bracket

Academic staff are arranged into salary brackets in accordance with an initial evaluation at the time of hiring. This initial evaluation involves research and other work carried out by staff before they were hired. Points from the annual performance evaluation, which are added on 1 September each year, raise the initial salary in conformity with research activity and the provisions of union contracts.

5.7.3 Annual performance based bonuses

Professors receive an annual bonus payment; other academic staff receive a comparable payment from a different source. These payments are based on the annual total of research points over a certain threshold.

5.7.4 Employment duties and secondary employment

The Regulation on the employment duties of teaching and research staff at UI no. 605/2006 states that if the individual average research output falls below a certain level over a three or five-year period, teaching duties are increased. Furthermore, the Regulation on performance based transfer of duties no. 971/2009 assumes that teaching duties shall be reduced for those who are most active in research. The Regulation on secondary employment of academic staff no. 1096/2008 and rules of procedure on payments for additional work within the University do not permit staff to be paid for such additional work if their total of research points falls below a certain level, i.e., if the staff member in question is not active in research.

5.7.5 Requirements for sabbaticals

To earn a sabbatical, on average every sixth semester, a member of staff must meet certain requirements with regards to academic output and fulfillment of teaching duties and submit an annual research report.

5.7.6 Internal funding distribution model for research

In addition to the aforementioned system, which has a direct effect on circumstances and salaries for staff, University research funding is divided between schools and faculties in accordance with the number of research points accumulated by each unit. Therefore low research activity is not the private matter of the staff member in question. Rather, low research activity also has a negative effect on the income of the faculty in question as a whole. The number of graduated Master's and doctoral students and the acquisition of non-governmental income, where grants from competitive funds outside of Iceland are most significant, also have a considerable impact on the division of funds for research.

The QA and incentive system for research has been effective and played a substantial part in the success which the University has achieved in research. The system has a significant impact on the earnings and working conditions for academic staff. Staff who for any reason do not reach an acceptable level of performance in research can therefore experience difficulties. Efforts are made to support these staff members in accordance with their individual personal circumstances. Regular appraisal interviews provide an opportunity to analyse the situation and to make plans for solutions.

5.8 Proposals to competitive funds outside of Iceland

Concerning increased income from competitive research funds the greatest opportunity for UI lies in the Horizon 2020 EU programme. DSI personnel as well as the research managers of UI's schools operate targeted support services for applicants to international competitive funds. UI success rate has been reasonable in European FP7, since UI academic staff has 52 accepted grants out of 251 applications, with a total amount of 12.450.243 Euros.

In order to increase the number of proposals from UI to international competitive funds, as stated as an aim in the UI Policy for 2011-2016, the Centennial Fund supports applicants with grants for preparation of applications. In addition to this, particular emphasis is placed on encouraging promising young academics to apply for ERC grants, and external counsellors have been brought in to train them in producing applications.

[37] See 'Regulation on the promotion and permanent appointment of academic staff at UI' in Folder 5.

5.9 Innovation at UI

Following UI policy growing emphasis is placed on innovation in all fields of science and academia within the University. Innovative work at UI is primarily performed by teaching and research staff, in collaboration with students and peers in enterprises, research institutes and international collaborating universities.

5.10 Intellectual Property Committee and legislation concerning staff inventions

The Intellectual Property Committee of UI and the National University Hospital oversees enforcement of procedures which institutes have established for themselves regarding the practical application of knowledge. All staff members at UI or NUH can contact the committee regarding practical application of results, and must do so, in accordance with the Act on respecting employees' inventions no. 72/2004, if research results are potentially patentable. The committee encourages staff and students to practically apply research results, for example by obtaining patents, founding enterprises or making licence agreements. The committee evaluates inventions and ideas with the assistance of an appropriate specialist, takes a position on the involvement of institutes in the practical application, and makes agreements with staff as necessary.

5.11 UI Applied Science Competition

UI holds an annual competition on the best ideas for the practical application of research work. Winning this competition confers the UI Applied Science Prize. The Applied Science Competition has, each year, attracted numerous ideas which show signs of growth and ambitious innovation within the University community. A host of start-up companies have been founded during those 15 years since the competition began.

5.12 UI Science Park

UI is currently building a science park in the Vatnsmýri area, in collaboration with the City of Reykjavík and international enterprises, e.g., in pharmaceutical sciences and genetics. The UI Science Park has recently acquired a high-tech building, home to DeCode Genetics, one of the leading international firms in genetic research and close partner to UI. Another building is under construction in the science park area, where the international pharmaceutical company Alvogen will house their research and development laboratories. The science park project will offer valuable opportunities for research at UI, especially for staff and postgraduate students in health and life sciences and engineering.

5.13 Klak-Innovit Ltd.

Innovit (now Klak-Innovit), a centre for innovation and entrepreneurship, was founded by students at UI in 2007. Innovative students with promising business ideas may seek assistance there, e.g., in connection with the founding and operation of start-up companies. Klak-Innovit is a private limited company. The largest shareholders are the New Business Venture Fund (28%), the Federation of Icelandic Industries (13%), UI (15%) and Reykjavik University (15%). The company has part of its operations in the heart of the UI campus in the Centre for Technological Innovation.

The primary objective of the company is to increase student participation in entrepreneurial work and innovation in Iceland, and thereby promote an increase in enterprises and jobs which can be traced back to research and university operations. Klak-Innovit performs various activities directed towards encouraging the innovative power of students, and this work has clearly had a major effect on the awareness of the University's students concerning those opportunities involved in innovation and entrepreneurial work. Klak-Innovit runs, e.g., the business plan competition 'the Golden Egg', which has, just as the UI Applied Science Competition, led to the foundation of a host of prosperous start-up companies.

5.14 Performance in research

As previously mentioned in this analysis UI is ranked among the 300 best universities in the world according to the Times Higher Education World University Ranking. This success is based on exceptionally dynamic research work. Publications in ISI journals and their impact primarily determines the ranking of a university on the THE list. As may be seen in the following figures, the success has been considerable (Fig. 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3).

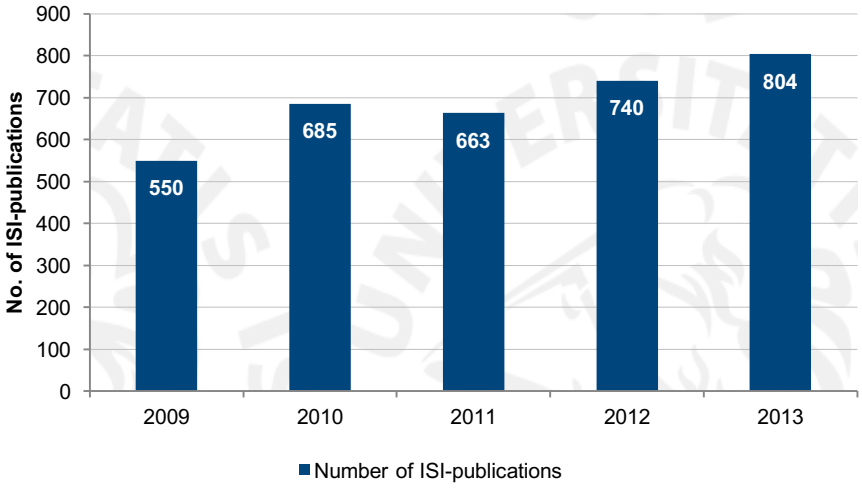


Fig. 5.1 Number of articles in ISI journals 2009-2013 according to Thomson-Reuters

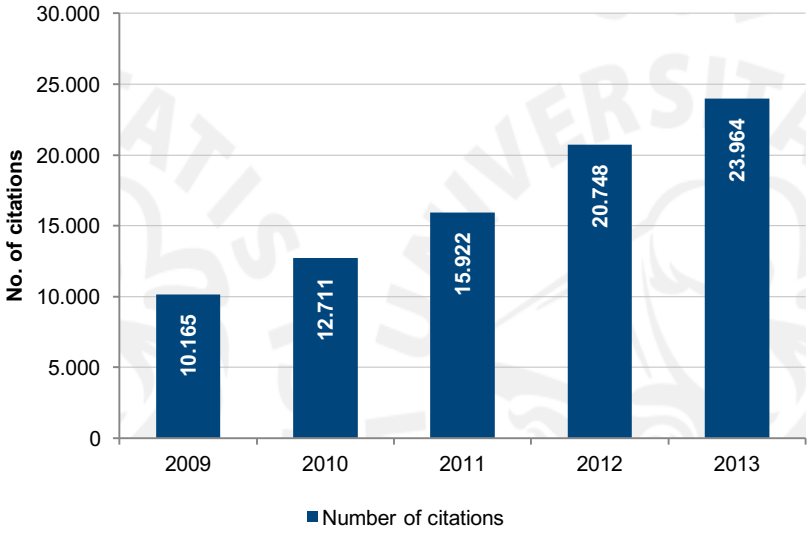


Fig. 5.2 Number of citations 2009-2013

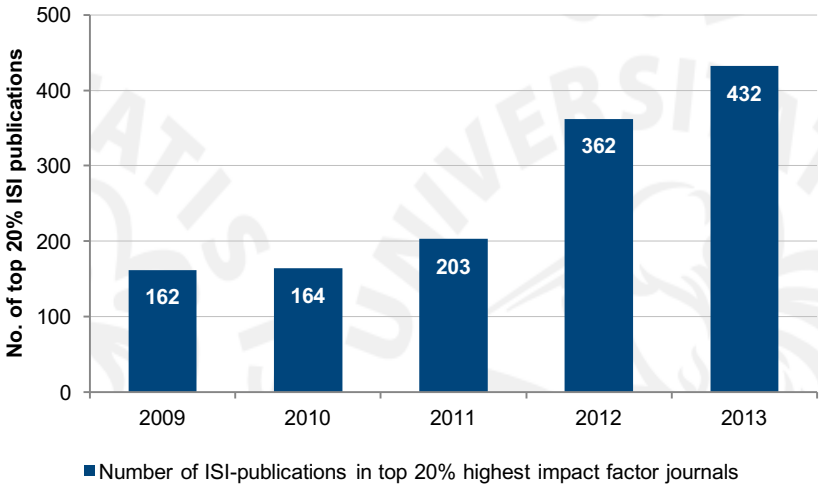


Fig. 5.3 Number of articles in top 20% highest impact factor journals 2009-2013

It is safe to say that since 2005, UI has undergone a considerable transformation and has changed into a dynamic research university which has, despite limited resources, achieved a striking level of success in research at an international level. This success has been confirmed with data from recognised international reviewers. Two recent reports highlight the development here over the last decade:

- Comparing Research at Nordic Universities using Bibliometric Indicators, second report, covering the year 2000-2012, NordForsk
- Biblometric Study in Support of Norway's Strategy for International Research Collaboration, Research Council of Norway

These reports clearly indicate that the growth of research at UI has been among the fastest in international terms. The NordForsk report shows that universities in the Nordic countries have a very high impact factor at an international level. It emerges that UI, with regards to impact factor, is amongst the foremost of these. UI has the highest impact factor in all the Nordic countries in life sciences and among the highest in engineering and material sciences. The NordForsk review also points out that, when the number of international publications are taken into account, earth sciences, social sciences and humanities are particularly strong at UI compared to other Nordic universities. Attention is also drawn to the fact that UI is responsible for 82% of all scientific articles that are published with affiliations to Icelandic universities. No university in the Nordic countries has a comparable national share; the University of Copenhagen has the next highest with 37% of scientific articles from Danish universities.

It is well known that strong scientific success is achieved through international cooperation. For precisely this reason, ambitious universities constantly seek to strengthen their relationships with other prominent universities and university faculties all over the world. It is also clear from the data in the aforementioned reports that there is a direct correlation between impact factor and how international a university's publications are. In other words, the impact factor rises in accordance with the number of international publications. Both reports confirm that Icelandic researchers are among the most international in the world, i.e., when it comes to international joint authorship of published articles. This may also be seen in the itemised grade for UI in the THE rankings.

The report from the Research Council of Norway compares 57 states and is very interesting in terms of Iceland’s research profile. It indicates that Iceland has the highest impact factor for scientific journals of the countries compared.

When research performance is evaluated in universities, it is useful to consider the success of the university in obtaining grants from international research funds. UI has significantly improved its performance in this area in recent years. Currently, income from outside of Iceland from such funds is around ISK 1.5 billion, making up around 10% of the total turnover for the University.

5.15 Performance in innovation and entrepreneurship

In recent years, the research work of UI staff and students has resulted in start-up companies with an annual turnover of ISK 2 billion, and which employ around 150 people. Some of these companies will undoubtedly take off and strengthen Icelandic society and industry over the next years and decades. In relation to this, it is worth mentioning that the company Marel in its time emerged from a research project at UI. Marel is now a large international high-tech food company with branches all over the world, employing around 4.000 people.

In recent years, UI has applied for a host of patents and had around 5 granted per year, most of them in the field of pharmaceutical sciences. Iceland also ranks highly on the Global Innovation Index. The University makes a significant contribution to this, since the number of high impact scientific journals in engineering and technical subjects has a considerable influence on this index.

In the UI Policy for 2011-2016, emphasis is placed on still further advances with practical application of research results and ideas, which create substantial value and employment. All research work has value. Although the term innovation is usually used in reference to technical subjects, innovation can denote progress in all areas of knowledge and sometimes it is based on the interconnection of two dissimilar subjects in interdisciplinary projects. The strength of UI lies not least in the academic diversity at its disposal.

5.16 Conclusion

Many of UI’s primary cooperating nations, which are at the same time competitors, have systematically reacted to the economic depression of recent years by strengthening their research universities, in particular to increase the competitiveness of industry at an international level. To keep up with the success of others, the University must continue on the same track, making the utmost use of those limited resources available. This refers in particular to funding, facilities, instruments and equipment.

UI's policy is clear: the University intends to improve itself still further with regards to science and innovation, and to withstand stiff international competition. The above has noted various things which are done well, but also several things which might be improved. For example, it is crucial to:

Measures

- ✓ *Increase contributions to the UI Centennial Fund such that the total contribution for each student at UI reaches the OECD average by 2016 and the average for the Nordic countries by 2020.*
- ✓ *Put increased effort into obtaining grants from research funds outside of Iceland, e.g., in cooperation with foreign consulting companies and the University's foremost collaborators in other Nordic universities.*
- ✓ *Review the Evaluation System for Public HEIs. The Evaluation System for Public HEIs has more or less been unchanged since 2009 and the system has a great impact on salaries and general research environment for academic staff.*
- ✓ *Develop further formal study programmes based on interdisciplinary collaboration between different faculties and schools.*
- ✓ *Strengthen current interdisciplinary platforms and encourage development of new platforms.*
- ✓ *Increase the number of grants for doctoral students and improve facilities for them within the University.*
- ✓ *Ensure continuing new recruitment, in which emphasis is placed on hiring on the one hand dynamic young academics and on the other experienced researchers who have already proven themselves at the international level.*
- ✓ *Increase support for new recruits to establish and develop their research careers.*
- ✓ *Strengthen the infrastructure for research support, i.e. access to databases, lab facilities and supporting staff.*
- ✓ *Increase efforts in the support of innovation in the interests of the Icelandic economy, e.g., through special support for entrepreneurs planning to establish a business in connection with the practical application of their research.*
- ✓ *Facilities for spin-off companies on the University campus must be considered; it is important that they are visible and that students at the University actively participate in their development process.*

6. MANAGING ENHANCEMENT

6.1 Strategic approach to managing enhancement

As this reflective analysis has previously indicated, the current Policy of UI is the starting point for quality enhancement at UI. The policy sets goals for all areas of operations and defines clear measures for reform. The University has been systematically working towards implementation of this policy and monitoring performance in order to ensure continuing improvements. The comprehensive policy also forms the basis for the University's formal QA system, the UC's annual work schedules, faculty and school policies, policies for individual issues, performance based agreements with MESC, and the UI Centennial Fund. This coordination of policy, implementation and QA is intended to ensure that the University's full potential is harnessed in the interests of continuous QA and reform work.

6.2 UI's approach to the collation and dissemination of good practice

Schools and faculties, which are the basic academic units of the University, are responsible for ensuring and enhancing quality in the fields of teaching, studies and degrees.

The advisory committees of UC, in particular the UC Academic Affairs Committee, the UC Quality Committee and the Science Committee, central administration and school administration have the role of supporting the academic work of schools and faculties, for the purpose of ensuring and enhancing its quality.

For a large institution such as UI, it is of paramount importance that channels be efficient and that information on good practice be communicated in an organised and efficient manner. A great deal of emphasis is placed on this within UI. To this end, schools and students have representatives in all central committees. Consultative teams also operate, made up of division heads within central administration and those responsible for the corresponding issues within schools.

The UF is held once a semester, and is attended by around 100 people representing all organisational units of the University and partner institutions. In addition to addressing specific policy issues at the Forum, new ideas and good practice in the fields of teaching, studies, research and innovation are presented.

The UC generally meets once a month. The minutes from its meetings and the UF are published on the University website.

The rector holds an open meeting for UI staff twice a semester, addressing the most pressing matters at the University and projects in progress. The rector also holds a weekly consultative meeting with school deans, pro-rector and the director of finance and operations. Furthermore, the rector meets at least biannually with each individual faculty. These visits are carefully prepared with comprehensive gathering of data on the performance and quality of work at the faculty. Finally, the rector and director of QA management hold a consultative meeting with the SC at least once a semester.

Regular informative meetings are held for academic and central management personnel, in which innovations in University operations are presented and plans for reform are made.

At the school level, board meetings are held 2-4 times a month, the minutes for which are published online. School assemblies are held once a semester, and regular faculty meetings are held in all faculties.

The University website is an important source of information on University operations, and frequently addresses good practice. The UI Magazine is published annually and schools regularly publish news letters on performance and innovations in their operations.

UI and the Association of Upper Secondary School Head Teachers meet once a year to discuss shared issues, such as access examinations, student progress and so forth.

Open forums on good practice are held regularly, such as the annual UI Conference on Teaching and Learning held in conjunction with the SU and informative meetings addressing UI's performance in the fields of research and innovation. At these forums, for example, faculty heads who have performed well in connection with the subject-level reviews have been asked to share their experiences.

The DHR manages a diverse educational timetable for staff in order to promote good practice and professional development.

The CTL manages a vibrant training timetable for teaching staff, a website and a Facebook page, publishes newsletters and organises a diverse range of open events addressing innovation and progression in the field of teaching, such as the use of LOs, workloads, teaching methods, assessment methods, standardised syllabuses, etc.

Every year three members of UI staff are presented with awards for outstanding professional achievement, one for teaching, one for research and one for other work in the interests of UI. All students and staff may submit nominations. Winners of the teaching award are asked to give a presentation on good teaching methods at the annual UI Conference on Teaching and Learning, and the CTL has arranged a series of presentations in which all award winners have discussed their teaching.

As previously stated, UI regularly gathers a great deal of information on teaching and studies, for example through regular course evaluation surveys and surveys amongst current and former students. The resulting data is used, e.g, to identify good practice and areas for improvement, which are then presented throughout the University.

Quality reviews are important for quality enhancement work. In recent years, many such reviews have taken place at UI, variously on the initiative of UI, MESC or the QB. The systematic analysis of good practice as well as areas for improvement, in connection with policy making and systematic reform work, is one of the cornerstones of UI's strategic approach to managing enhancement.

The QC is an important discussion forum for Icelandic HEIs concerning QA and enhancement. In the relatively short time for which the Council has operated since it was reappointed, trust and a cooperative environment have been successfully established, for example through mutual communication of information on good practice in connection with the subject-level reviews, institutional reviews and follow-up of these.

The cooperative network between public HEIs is another important forum for collaboration and dissemination of good practice between Icelandic HEIs in the field of QA, and much has been achieved here, for example through the shared use of Ugla, collaboration in the field of teaching development and shared student satisfaction surveys.

New projects and raised standards call for regular reflection on QA and enhancement. The subject-level reviews have highlighted a need to better regulate various QA processes and the systematic use of data, such that they are not only used in connection with the self-review but will become fixed components in the day-to-day QA and reform work of the University.

6.3 Use of external reference and benchmarks

6.3.1 International comparison

As this reflective analysis indicates, UI makes use of external reference and benchmarks in many different ways, in order to measure and evaluate the status and performance of University operations. Due to the University's size and unique position in the Icelandic context, comparisons are sought in particular at the international level. This analysis has previously addressed the ways in which UI's goals consider international comparison, the participation of foreign experts in internal and external reviews, UI's position in international rankings and surveys which provide the opportunity to carry out international comparisons of quality in teaching and studies, to name a few examples. Important comparison is also achieved through the University's participation in international cooperation, for example involvement in the Bologna Process, international associations of universities such as EUA and the Council of Graduate Schools, not to mention participation in staff and student exchange programmes. Further on in this analysis (see Section 5), international comparison in the field of science and innovation is addressed in particular.

It has become increasingly more common for the University to advertise academic posts internationally and there is a steadily growing number of strong applications from abroad.

Experience shows that graduates from the University have had good access to further studies in prominent universities overseas (see Section 1.6).

In the field of administration and governance, valuable comparisons are achieved through participation in international cooperation, for example involvement with the Association of Nordic University Rectors' Conferences (NUS) and the Nordic Association of University Administrators (NUAS). Additionally, management staff attend a large number of conferences and meetings with international colleagues each year, as well as belonging to expert groups It might also be mentioned that in recent years, an increasing number of representatives from universities outside of Iceland have come on study visits to UI.

6.3.2 Domestic comparison

At the domestic level, the University makes use of available data and information in order to monitor the success of its operations, for example data relating to grants awarded from public competitive funds. As previously mentioned, the University also took the initiative in introducing standardised student surveys in all Icelandic public HEIs.

6.3.3 Trust in Icelandic institutions

Since 2003, the company Gallup has measured the trust of the general public in the foremost institutions in Icelandic society. From the outset, UI has been amongst those institutions most trusted by the general public, and topped the list for a while with up to 90% trust. With the economic downturn in 2008, trust has fallen for all institutions, most notably for parliament. Since 2008 trust in UI has fallen by more than ten percent, and according to the latest measurement from March 2014, UI is trusted by 73% of those who responded and is in third place out of all the institutions measured. The institution most trusted by the nation is the Icelandic Coast Guard, followed by the Police.

The company MMR (Market and Media Research) have also measured trust in institutions in society. According to the data from MMR, UI is second only to the Police among the most trusted institutions.

However, in the long-term view it is clear that the close connection between UI and society, whereby scientists and experts from the University play a key role in the media, increases trust in the University. Systematic efforts go into increasing the role of UI academic staff in public discourse and in the media, and the University measures the success of these efforts from month to month. There has been a significant increase over the years. Emphasis is also placed on the dissemination to the public of information on research and innovation within the University, for example by notifying the media, publishing news on the University website, in social media, in the Magazine of UI and in special scientific television programmes which have been broadcast in Iceland, Sweden and Finland.

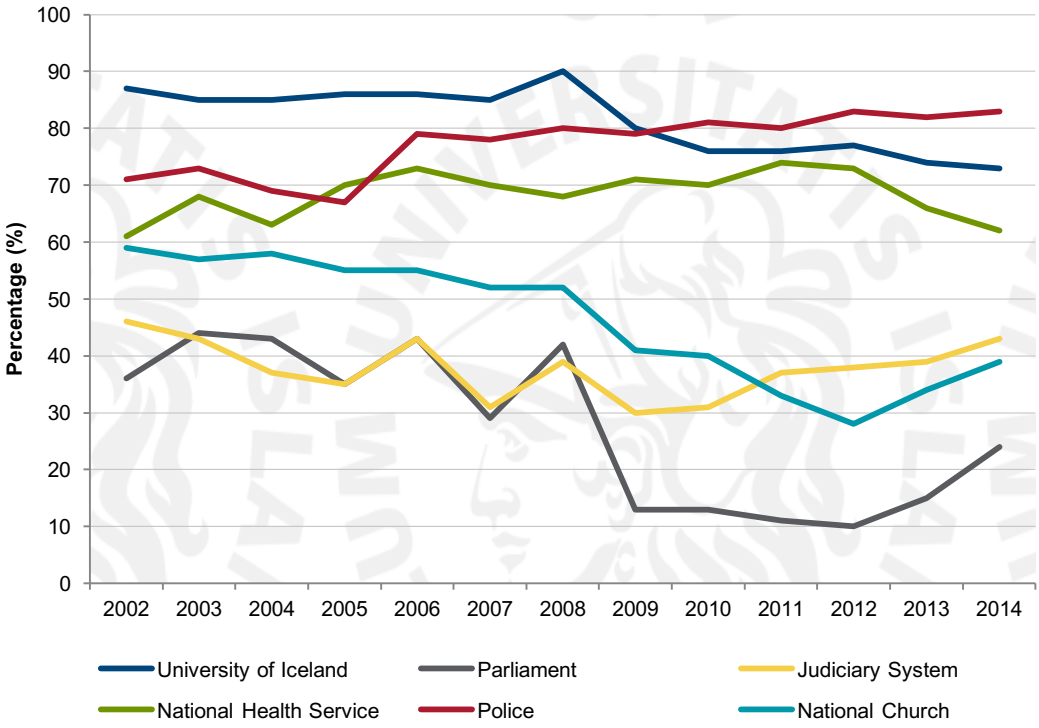


Fig. 6.1 Trust in selected Icelandic institutions

7. THE CASE STUDY: DOCTORAL EDUCATION AND THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

7.1 The task

UI has been graduating doctoral candidates from its early days. The first doctoral defence took place in 1919 and during the next seven and a half decades or so (1919-1996) 79 candidates successfully defended their theses at UI. However, all these doctoral degrees were awarded without a prior programme of organised study. The UC agreed early in the year 1990 to permit individual faculties to offer organised doctoral studies and seven years later (1997) the first candidate graduated from an organised programme (PhD in pharmacology). General regulations across UI on formal doctoral study programmes were adopted in the year 2000 to be replaced by a new regluation in the year 2009 which includes articles on graduate education (Ch. VI) and which formally established UI's GS (Art. 66).

The establishment of organised programmes has been seen by UI as a crucial step towards becoming an internationally recognised research university. Historically, Icelanders have sought their postgraduate degrees abroad and that has been one of the major strengths of the Icelandic higher education landscape, i.e., having academics educated abroad with international experience. However, this has been gradually changing. To be clear, UI does not intend to educate all Icelandic PhDs in the future. Indeed Icelanders continue to go abroad for their doctoral degrees.[38] The University strives to offer solid organised programmes with the aim of attracting good students, both domestically and internationally, and to offer academic staff the chance to enhance their research by taking on PhD students. This has been done by focusing on the structure of doctoral programmes (i.e., regulations and standards) and setting goals to enhance the student (and the supervisor) experience. Furthermore, UI places emphasis on international experience during doctoral studies (students are for instance required to take part of their studies abroad), and with the increasing number of international academic staff, joint degrees and international members on doctoral committees at UI, the exposure to international experience is gradually becoming an integral part of formal doctoral programmes at UI. The option facing prospective doctoral students at UI between an 'Icelandic' or a 'foreign' doctoral degree is, therefore, diminishing. Furthermore, the majority of doctoral defence opponents come from recognised international universities.

The purpose of this case study is to give a data supported description and an analysis of what UI was seeking to achieve with the establishment of the Graduate School and an evaluation of the extent to which goals have been achieved. The case study focuses primarily on doctoral education during the period 2004-2013, with comparison between two separate 5-year periods 2004-2008 and 2009-2013 (before and after the establishment of the Graduate School).[39]

7.2 Legislation, accreditation, standards and quality assurance – overview

A rapid growth in postgraduate education called for a formal structure. A new HEIs Act was adopted in 2006 (no. 63/2006) and accordingly, UI was accredited at the undergraduate and Master's levels in 2007-2008 and at the doctoral level in 2008-2009. Furthermore, UI adopted a new main regulation in the year 2009 (no. 569/2009) and standards and requirements for the quality of Master's (2013) and doctoral programmes (2004, rev. 2012). Finally, UI falls under the QEF, introduced in 2011 (see Fig. 7.1).

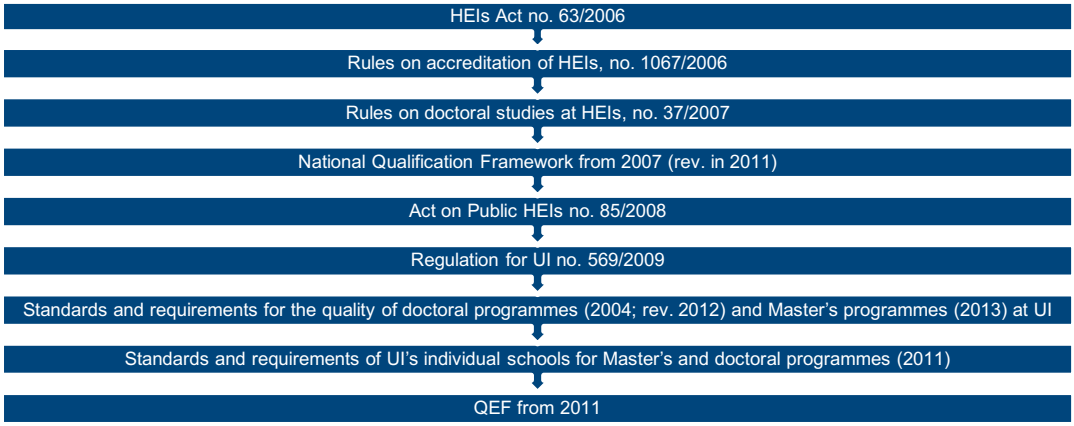


Fig. 7.1 Framework for postgraduate education at UI

[38] To give some figures: in 2008 a total of 80 Icelandic nationals graduated with a doctoral degree, thereof 23 from UI; in 2009 a total of 73 Icelandic nationals graduated with a doctoral degree, thereof 32 from UI; in 2010 a total of 88 Icelandic nationals graduated with a doctoral degree, thereof 36 from UI; in 2011 a total of 103 Icelandic nationals graduated with a doctoral degree, thereof 50 from UI; in 2012 a total of 93 Icelandic nationals graduated with a doctoral degree, thereof 38 from UI (figures from RANNIS, http://www.rannis.is/media/utgafur-og-skyrslur/Vasabok-Rannsoknir,-throun-og-nyskopun---Utgafa-2014.pdf).

[39] It should be noted that the case study rests on the organisation of UI implemented in 2008 (5 schools).

7.3 Organisation of doctoral programmes

Schools and faculties of UI organise and hold academic responsibility for doctoral programmes (content, structure and implementation). Under the HEI's Act no. 63/2006 and the Act on Public HEIs, no. 85/2008 the UC sets a general regulation for doctoral programmes and their completion with a viva voce examination. The Regulation for UI No. 569/2009 states that UI's schools and faculties may organise doctoral programmes in accordance with the framework set out there. More detailed provisions on postgraduate studies can be found in the special regulations of schools and faculties regarding such programmes, which are approved by the UC.

UI has formal contracts with a number of domestic partners, including important research institutions like the National University Hospital of Iceland, DeCode Genetics, the Icelandic Heart Association, Matís, the UI Institute of Experimental Pathology and the Marine Research Institute. These contracts include provisions for access to facilities for PhD students and supervisors.

7.4 Actions

UI places a significant emphasis on ensuring that doctoral programmes comply with internationally recognised standards and requirements. During the period in question (2004-2013), UI has taken the following main steps to ensure and enhance the quality of doctoral education:

2003/4 – A five-year service contract signed between UI and MESC. It states, amongst other things, that the quality of doctoral education at UI should measure up to international standards. The implementation of the contract was seriously affected by the financial crisis in 2008.

2004 – The UF and the UC approved formal standards and requirements for the quality of doctoral programmes (reviewed in 2012).[40] These standards and requirements are part of UI's formal QA system and draw on numerous models abroad, such as the policy of the EUA in Salzburg Principles (2005) and Salzburg II Recommendations (2010); the European Commission's policy; the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005); the policy formulation of the Organisation of PhD Education in Biomedicine and Health Sciences in the European System (ORPHEUS); the Association of Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE); and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), published in *Standards for PhD Education in Biomedicine and Health Sciences in Europe* (2012). Instructional writings of the Council of Graduate Schools in the US, to which UI's GS belongs, have also been taken into account.

2006 – Alongside the adoption of the new HEIs Act (no. 67/2006), the Policy of UI 2006-2011 was introduced. A cornerstone of the new policy was the ambitious long-term goal of becoming an international university. The Policy included a strong focus on the enhancement of doctoral studies during the period, including:

- Raising the number of enrolled doctoral students from 190 to 350 by 2009.
- Raising the number of international doctoral students to 30% of those enrolled.
- Raising the number of doctoral students aiming for joint degrees to 10%.
- Increasing the number of graduates from doctoral programmes by a factor of 5.
- Graduating at least 65 doctoral candidates in the year 2011.
- Establishing UI's GS.
- Increasing the monitoring of progression.
- The enhancement of UI's internal funding system for doctoral students.
- The enhancement of UI's CTL.

2009 – UI's GS is established. Its centralised function is to ensure and enhance the quality of postgraduate education (Master's and doctoral programmes) and to enforce the set standards and requirements across UI (cf. Section 6.6 below).

2011 – Standards and requirements of UI's individual schools for Master's and doctoral programmes adopted.

A new Policy of UI 2011-2016 is adopted. It includes an emphasis on strong doctoral programmes, including:

- Graduating annually 60-70 doctoral candidates (proportionally similar to the number of those in Iceland's neighbouring countries).
- Bringing the government into the overall financing of doctoral studies, with clear quality requirements as a guideline.

[40] See http://midstodframhaldsnams.hi.is/standards-and-requirements-quality-doctoral-programmes-university-iceland

- Aiming to have at least 10% of doctoral candidates graduating annually from UI with a joint degree with foreign research universities.
- Assuring the academic efficacy of doctoral students by fortifying the curricular framework, improving learning facilities and clarifying faculty advisors' responsibilities.
- Implementing the required use of a realistic plan for financing and progress at the beginning of a doctoral programme.
- Regular monitoring of doctoral students' progress with annual progress reports.
- Strengthening and consolidating the GS by providing it with a greater monitoring and coordinating role regarding implementation of the doctoral curriculum.

2012 – A new five-year service contract between UI and MESC is signed. Its appendix describes the current state of postgraduate education at UI and reiterates UI's current policy aims towards enhancing doctoral programmes at UI.

2013 – The UF and the UC approved formal standards and requirements for the quality of Master's programmes.

7.5 UI's Graduate School

One of the goals of the Policy of UI 2006-2011 was to establish UI's GS. This was achieved in 2009. Again, one of the goals of the Policy of UI 2011-2016 is to further strengthen and consolidate the GS. Active steps have been taken to do so.

By establishing the GS, UI wanted to establish a centralised unit responsible for promoting and raising awareness about standards and requirements for the quality of postgraduate education. Its mission would be to monitor developments and to safeguard standards and requirements by enhancing cooperation and coordination in postgraduate education within UI, based on the provisions of Art. 66 in the Regulation for UI no. 569/2009 and standards and requirements for the quality of Master's and doctoral programmes, and supported by both the Policies for 2006-2011 and 2011-2016.

The GS has a centralised role in upholding standards and individual schools and faculties organise and hold academic responsibility for postgraduate programmes. At the time the establishment of the GS met with some resistance within UI and was seen initially by some as a step towards more centralisation leading to eventual loss of academic authority. However, the purpose of the GS was never seen as such by those advocating its establishment but rather as a supporting unit working across UI to enhance quality in postgraduate education, using a mixture of support, advice and monitoring.

Certainly, the GS's operations were affected by the aftermath of the financial downturn in 2008 and lower funding levels to UI in general, but it has been firmly placed within the organisation of UI from the start (the pro-rector of science and academic affairs being its director) and since the adoption of the Policy of UI 2011-2016 the following steps have been taken to strengthen the GS:

2012 – Standards and requirements for the quality of doctoral programmes from 2004 were revised.

2013 – Formal standards and requirements for the quality of Master's programmes were approved by the UF and the UC.

A managing director appointed in 2014.

2014 – A Board of Directors appointed. It is chaired by the pro-rector of science and academic affairs and the director of the GS, with representatives from all schools within UI, the Agricultural University of Iceland (which is by agreement a formal member of the GS) and doctoral students.

A new bilingual website for the GS is introduced.

These are steps taken to firmly establish the GS as an integral part of UI. However, there are still further opportunities for providing the GS with a greater monitoring and coordinating role regarding implementation of the doctoral curriculum, including being active in monitoring admission to doctoral programmes. This could for instance be achieved with enhanced data collection and data monitoring (including the annual publication of key figures),[41] a mutual dialogue with both students and academic staff and by raising the profile of the GS within, and indeed outside of, the University.

7.6 Looking at statistics before and after the establishment of the Graduate School

Statistical analysis of data on doctoral education at UI from 2004 to 2013 reveals some significant changes during the period. Some are positive; others indicate that there are areas to improve.

7.6.1 Enrolment

The total increase in enrolment of doctoral students at UI has risen by 381% (107 to 515 students (February figures); see Fig. 7.2). However, comparing 2004-2008 and 2009-2013, enrolment has slowed

[41] See http://midstodframhaldsnams.hi.is/tolfraedi-doktorsnams (in Icelandic)

down considerably from a 149% increase in the former period (107 to 265 students) to a 49% increase in the latter (345 to 515 students).

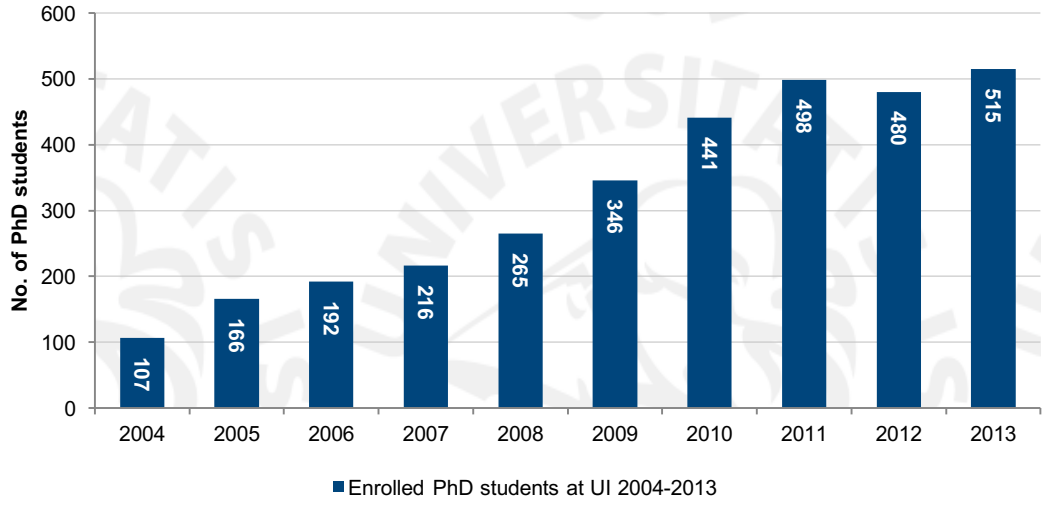


Fig. 7.2 Number of enrolled doctoral students at UI 2004-2013. (Please note that these are figures for February each year but figures in Table 1.2 are for October each year).

The gender balance of the doctoral student population has remained stable during the period 2004-2013: roughly 60% female and 40% male (see Fig. 7.3).

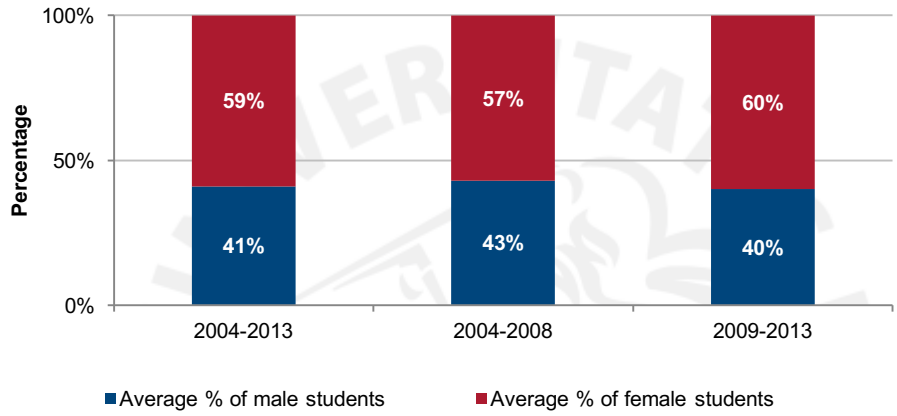


Fig. 7.3 Gender balance of doctoral students at UI 2004-2013

The average age of the student population is decreasing as can be seen in Fig. 7.4. This is seen by UI as a positive development as those who do indeed graduate within 7 years tend to be younger students (see Fig. 7.4).

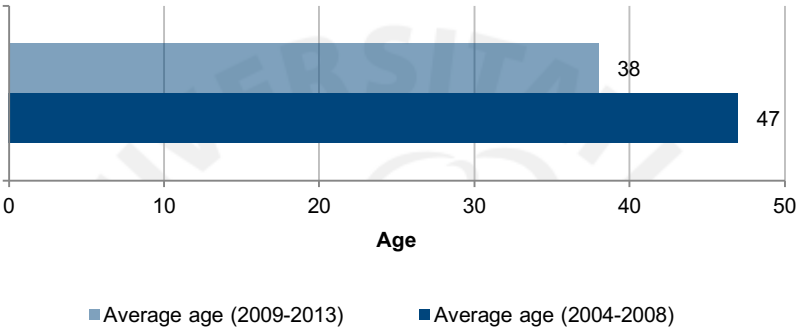


Fig. 7.4 Average age of doctoral students at UI 2004-2008 and 2009-2013

Finally, the percentage of international doctoral students has increased rapidly between the years 2004-2008 and 2009-2013 (see Fig. 7.5).

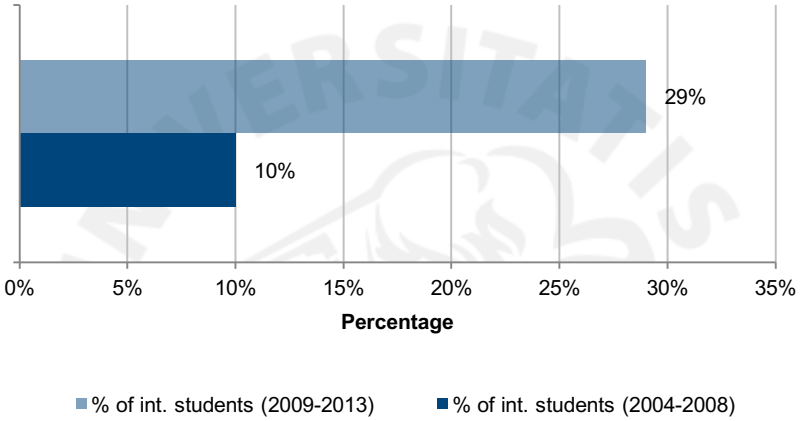


Fig. 7.5 Percentage of international doctoral students at UI 2004-2008 and 2009-2013

7.6.2 Graduation

The total increase in graduations of doctoral candidates from UI has risen by 420% (10 to 52 graduations, see. Fig. 7.6). During 2004-2008 UI graduated on average 14 doctoral candidates a year (a total of 72 graduations during the period) but an average of 42 a year during the period 2009-2013 (a total of 208 graduations during the period). UI has set the target for 60-70 graduations a year and that is expected to be met during 2014 (see Fig. 7.14).

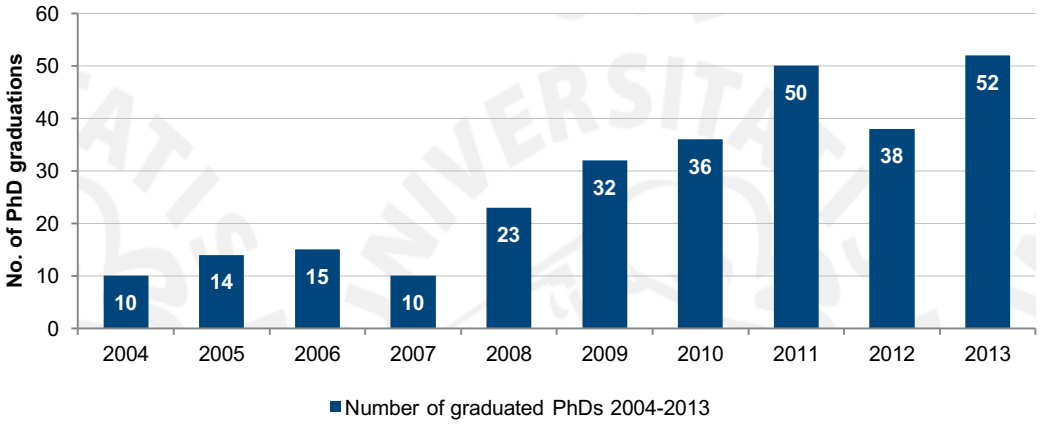


Fig. 7.6 Number of graduated doctoral candidates from UI 2004-2013

The gender balance of the doctoral graduates is almost even for the period 2004-2013 (see Fig. 7.7).

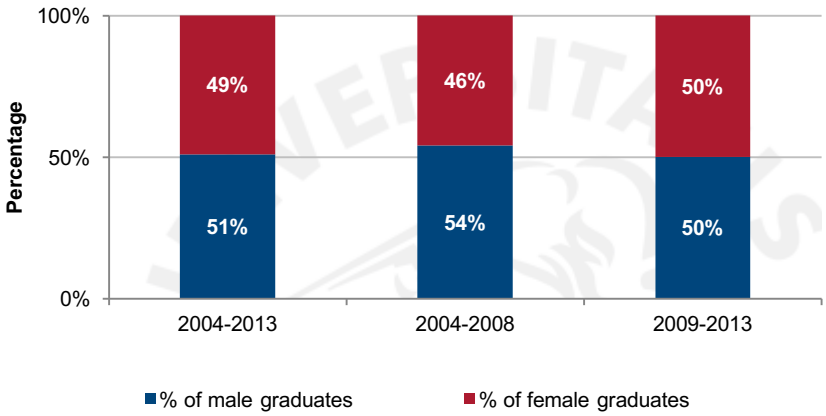


Fig. 7.7 Gender balance of doctoral graduates from UI 2004-2013

Around 60% of those who graduated from UI with a doctoral degree during the period 2004-2013 were 34 years old or younger. No significant change occurred between the years 2004-2008 and 2009-2013 concerning the age distribution of graduates (see Fig. 7.8).

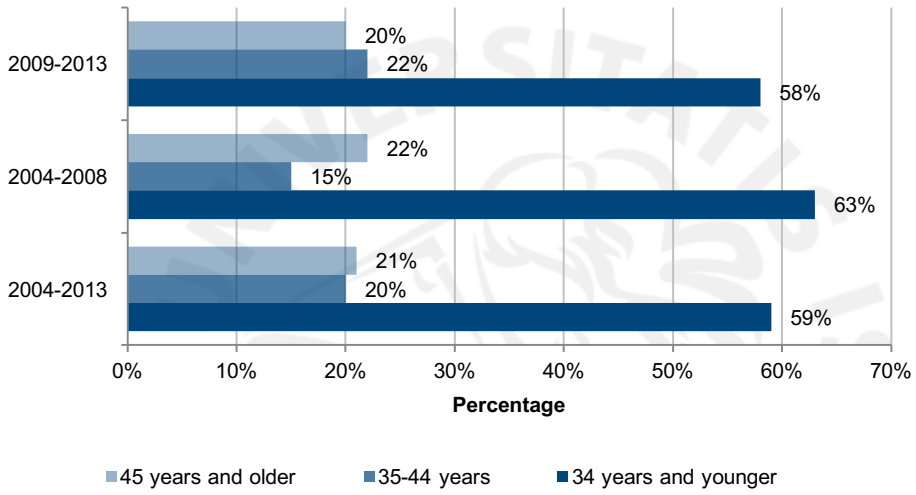


Fig. 7.8 Age distribution of doctoral graduates 2004-2013

About 50% of all graduates in 2004-2013 completed their degrees in less than 5 years and two-thirds of all who graduated during this period spent less than 7 years on their degrees (the maximum length of study for a doctoral degree at UI). No significant change occurred between the years 2004-2008 and 2009-2013 in terms of length of study, although a slight increase in 'shorter than 5-year degrees' can be noted (see Fig. 7.9). Although more data is needed, preliminary results show that most of those completing 'shorter than 5-year degrees' are (partly or) fully funded (salaries and maintainence costs). That goes to show that UI needs to place a focus on the funding side of doctoral studies, including requiring a realistic plan for the financing of the the doctoral programme as stated in the standards and requirements.[42]

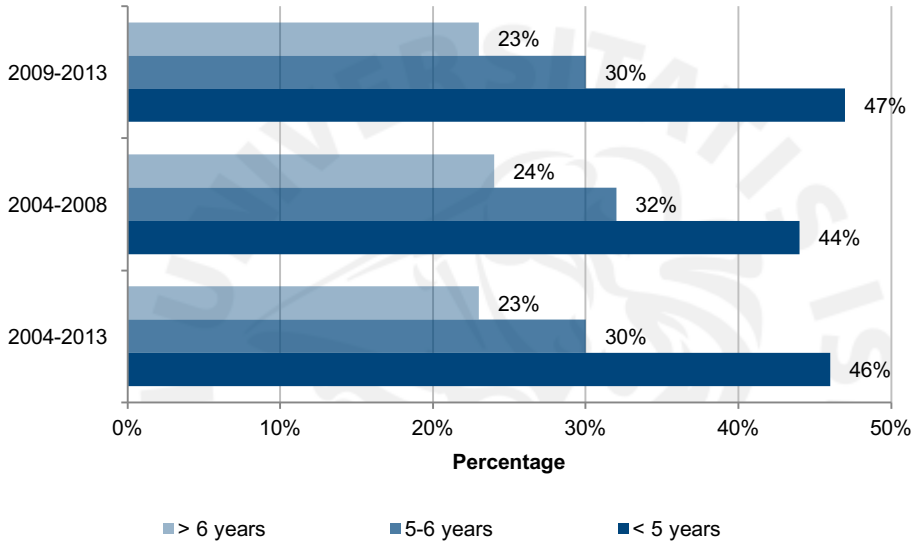


Fig. 7.9 Doctoral graduate's length of study 2004-2013

During 2009-2013 about 30% of doctoral graduates were non-Icelandic, double the corresponding figure for the years 2004-2008 (see Fig. 7.10). This is seen by UI as a positive development and in line with the targets set in both the 2006-2011 and 2011-2016 policies.

[42] See http://midstodframhaldsnams.hi.is/standards-and-requirements-quality-doctoral-programmes-university-iceland, Ch. 4.1.

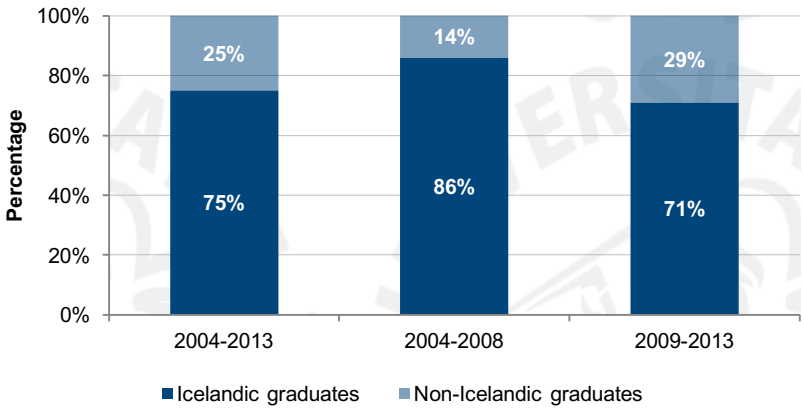


Fig. 7.10 Doctoral graduates by nationality 2004-2013

Of those 208 candidates who graduated with a doctoral degree from UI between the years 2009-2013, one in ten graduated with a joint degree with a foreign research university (see Fig. 7.11).[43]

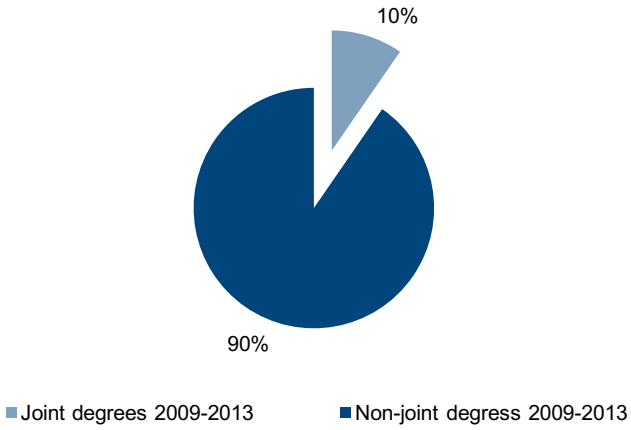


Fig. 7.11 Joint degrees and non-joint degrees 2009-2013

However, some caution should be advised in drawing too general assumptions from the statistical picture painted above as it describes UI as a whole. A closer look at individual schools would give somewhat different results, as Tables 7.1 and 7.12 indicate. One obvious example would be the distribution of graduations between individual schools when comparing the years 2009 and 2013 respectively. Combined, SOHS and SENS accounted for 55% of all doctoral students enrolled at UI in 2009 and account for 69% of doctoral graduations. Five years later, in 2013, these two schools accounted for 45% of all doctoral students enrolled at UI, but still 70% of all doctoral gradations. To put it differently, the combined number of doctoral students enrolled at SOHS and SENS rose by 23% between 2009 and 2013 (191 to 234 students) while graduations from those two schools during the same period rose by 64% (22 to 36 graduations). The combined increase in students enrolled at other schools (SOSS, SOH, SOE and those doing interdisciplinary studies) was 81% (155 to 281 students) while graduations from these schools increased by 60%. The relative increase in combined graduations far surpasses the relative increase in the number of combined students enrolled at SOHS and SENS. However, this is the other way around when it comes to combined graduations and student numbers from other schools within UI, i.e., the relative increase in student numbers surpasses the relative increase in graduations.

Schools	2009	Of total	2013	Of total	Change 2009/13
SOSS	71	21%	91	18%	28%
SOHS	76	22%	103	20%	36%
SOH	51	15%	96	19%	88%
SOE	26	8%	71	14%	173%
SENS	115	33%	131	25%	14%
Interdisciplinary studies	7	2%	23	4%	229%
Total number of students	**346**	**100%**	**515**	**100%**	**49%**

Table 7.1 Doctoral students by individual schools 2009-2013

[43] See 'Template for joint supervision and joint doctoral degrees' in Folder 7.

Schools	2009	Of total	2013	Of total	Change 2009/13
SOSS	5	16%	4	8%	-20%
SOHS	14	44%	18	35%	29%
SOH	4	13%	5	10%	25%
SOE	1	3%	4	8%	300%
SENS	8	25%	18	35%	125%
Interdisciplinary studies	0	0%	3	6%	N/A
Total no. of graduations	**32**	**100%**	**52**	**100%**	**63%**

Table 7.2 Doctoral graduations by individual schools 2009-2013

Furthermore, a relatively simple analysis of empirical data will not suffice. Subjective data from the ongoing UI student satisfaction survey is of equal importance when it comes to developing support for doctoral students, enhancing the student experience and strengthening the role of the GS in the near future. Although the period of data collection for the doctoral level using the student satisfaction survey is limited (doctoral students have been questioned twice, in 2011 and 2013) there are some clear indications of challenging areas. Overall satisfaction might have been 76% in the 2013 survey but only 32% of doctoral students found it very or rather easy to finance their doctoral studies (see Fig. 7.12) while 45% of all doctoral students at UI found it rather or very difficult to finance their studies (see Fig. 7.13).

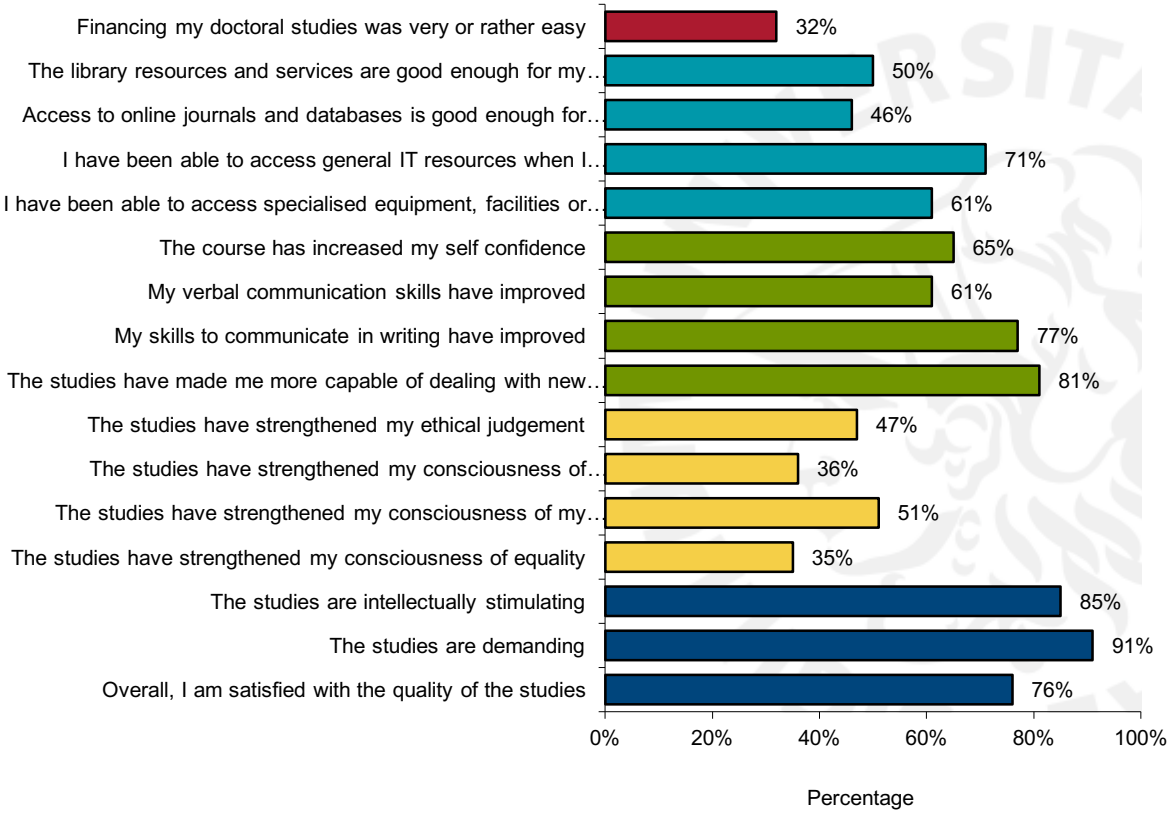


Fig. 7.12. Overview of the 2013 doctoral student satisfaction survey results. All answers except on financing include the percentage of students that replied with the answer 'Strongly/somewhat agree'

As with the empirical data above, the situation concerning the financing of doctoral studies varies within UI. Not surprisingly for the student satisfaction survey question 'How easy or difficult has it been to finance your doctoral studies?', a majority of students within SOSS, SOH and SOE responded that they found it either rather or very difficult while 45% of students from SOHS found it either rather or very difficult and only 28% of the students from SENS (see Fig. 7.13). As funding does indeed play an important role in doctoral studies, not only in terms of operating costs but also in terms of salaries for students to allow them to focus on their studies, this contrast between individual schools might – in part – explain the fact that SOHS and SENS still graduate 70% of doctoral candidates from UI although they account for less than 50% of enrolled doctoral students. More data is needed but there seems to be a correlation between funding and completion rates.

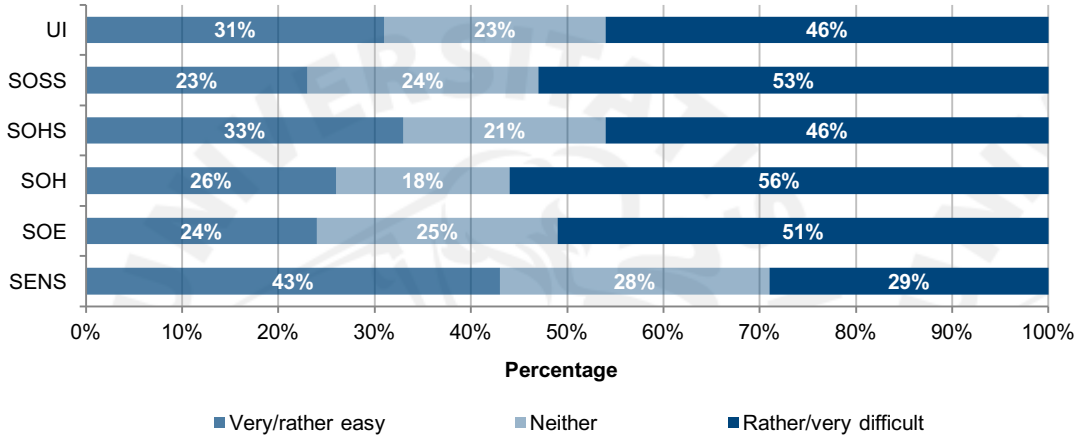


Fig. 7.13 The 2013 replies to the (doctoral) Student satisfaction survey question: 'How easy or difficult has it been to finance your doctoral studies?'

7.7 Lessons learned

The general framework for graduate education at UI is clear, from the HEIs Act down to standards and requirements for the quality of Master's and doctoral programmes, and individual parts of the framework are revised regularly. Measures taken to enhance the quality of postgraduate education at UI, such as goals included in the UI Policies for 2006-2011 and 2011-2016, have been helpful and assisted in bringing attention to the importance of postgraduate education and its quality within UI. Although the GS is firmly established within the organisation of UI, it needs more visibility in its role of promoting awareness about quality of postgraduate education within UI. This can be done by establishing the GS firmly amongst students and supervisors (human element).

By using statistical analysis UI can keep track of empirical developments in doctoral studies and map those developments against UI's strategic goals. Some of the numerical aims listed in the Policy of UI 2006-2011, such as raising the number of international doctoral students to 30% of those enrolled (see Fig. 7.5), raising the number of doctoral students aiming for joint degrees to 10% (see Fig. 7.11) and increasing the number of graduates from doctoral programmes by a factor of 5 (see Fig. 7.6), have been achieved while others have not, such as graduating 65 doctoral candidates in 2011 (see Fig. 7.6). This last goal is reiterated in the Policy of UI 2011-2016 and statistical data does indeed suggest that this should be achieved in 2014 and 2015 (see Fig. 7.14).

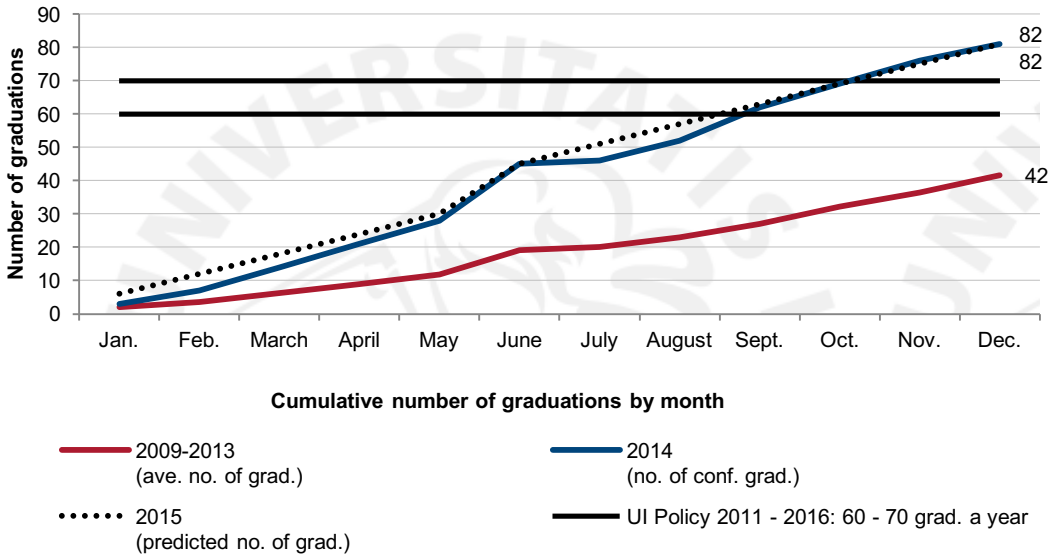


Fig. 7.14 Average number of doctoral graduations 2009-2013, confirmed graduations in 2014 and predicted graduations in 2015

Statistical analysis can also help to identify areas that need targeted support. This can be achieved for example by looking into what characterises the group of doctoral students that do indeed complete their studies in less than seven years and the group of doctoral students that either take more time or simply

drop out. Issues like funding, age and field of study will most likely play a part. According to the Policy of UI 2011-2016, the target number of annual doctoral graduations per year is 60-70 students and, according to the standards and requirements for the quality of doctoral programmes, length of study should not exceed 6 years. This gives UI an opportunity to also set numerical targets for admission and calculate what sort of students UI needs to sustain 60-70 graduations a year, assuming normal progression and an acceptable retention rate.

As with the statistical analysis, much of the same goes for the results from the ongoing student satisfaction survey. The subjective data it produces is important when it comes to developing support for doctoral students. Issues with very low satisfaction levels (such as (the lack of) funding, other resources and soft skills) need to be addressed, both formally (i.e., more robust funding system) and in general (i.e., training, including training and support for supervisors). Finally, the overall financing of the doctoral level, both within UI (internal funding system) and on the national level (overall financing of doctoral studies and public competitive funding), is an urgent issue to be addressed.

7.8 Follow-up

UI considers the offering of quality doctoral programmes and the continuing efforts of the GS in enhancing both the quality of postgraduate education at UI and the student experience throughout the period of study as important factors in strengthening its role as an international research university. This will be achieved by building on previous experience and by introducing changes. The primary goal is to create a sense of community (for students and supervisors alike) by monitoring and assuring quality and satisfaction and by organising conferences, lectures and training for students and supervisors.

There will be a focus on statistical analysis of empirical data and subjective data from the student satisfaction survey will be used to identify areas for improvement.

The regular publication of statistics on postgraduate education will be introduced using 5-year periods for comparison (2009-2013, 2010-2014, 2011-2015, etc.).[44] Data collection will also be enhanced with some basic elements, including reliable information on funding, progression and doctoral committees. To collect information and to establish the GS amongst both students and supervisors, the GS will introduce a written contract between the GS and each student (outlining rights and obligations) from the beginning of 2015. This will be followed by an annual interview with all students whose length of study exceeds 6 years and their supervisors. Collection of the required annual reports from students will also be an area the GS will look into. Although this is now handled by individual schools, it might be more effective to have the GS oversee its collection. Since the beginning of 2014 the GS has held monthly meetings with its Board of Directors, administrative staff responsible for postgraduate education within individual schools and last but not least doctoral students. This will be continued. The GS will also continue to aspire to increase collaboration with other administrative units within UI, units like the IO, the DSI, the Student Registration and the DAA.Collaboration with external partners like the EUA, CDE and the Council of Graduate Schools in the US will be enhanced.

Measures

- ✓ *Increase contributions to the UI Centennial Fund such that the total contribution for each student at UI reaches the OECD average by 2016 and the average for the Nordic countries by 2020.*
- ✓ *Introduce written contracts between the GS and each student.*
- ✓ *Analyse the ways in which faculties and schools follow up student progression in doctoral studies.*
- ✓ *Analyse areas of particular strength and suggest establishment of thematic PhD programmes.*
- ✓ *Analyse length of study for PhD students and suggest ways for improvement.*
- ✓ *Further analyse the results and follow-up of PhD student's satisfaction surveys within each school.*
- ✓ *Secure funding from the government and non-governmental partners. The GS should initiate guidelines on funding from private partners.*
- ✓ *Improve facilities and increase the number of support staff for doctoral studies in faculties and schools.*
- ✓ *Increase the number of courses offered by individuals that are made available for all PhD students, and advertised by the GS.*
- ✓ *Introduce training programmes for supervisors of PhD students.*

[44] See http://midstodframhaldsnams.hi.is/tolfraedi-doktorsnams (in Icelandic)

List of measures

Section	Measure
1.2.9.6	*Over the next 2 years the pros and cons of the new organisational structure of the University established in 2008 will be evaluated.*
1.4.1.3	*Enforce rules on the maximum length of study.*
1.4.1.3	*Introduce a systematic change in the structure of programmes, allowing for formal part-time study (not currently possible), i.e., making a clear distinction between full-time and part-time students.*
1.6.6	*Prepare a policy on UI's international collaboration strategy which will address issues like a mentor programme for incoming academic staff similar to the existing mentor programme for overseas students.*
1.6.6	*Increase the proportion of UI students participating in international student exchange programmes and other international programmes.*
1.6.6	*Evaluate and prioritise existing cooperation agreements between UI and its international partners.*
2.2	*Analyse the external final report on the merger of UI and IUE and the state of teacher education, and prepare actions based on recommendations in the report.*
2.9	*UI will initiate, in collaboration with the National Student Union and the QC, a training programme for students participating in quality reviews before the launch of the second cycle of QEF in 2016.*
2.13	*The UC Quality Committee will analyse the self-review reports of faculties and interdisciplinary programmes in order to identify examples of best practice.*
2.13	*CTL will make information on best practice accessible and disseminate this to students and faculties through Ugla and other media.*
2.15.3	*Continue to strengthen UI's QA system and the promotion of quality culture within the University, including the roles of school governing boards, school assemblies, faculty meetings and departmental board meetings in the field of quality management to ensure that QA matters in teaching and studies are addressed regularly in these forums.*
2.15.3	*Regular informative meetings between the UI director of quality management and the SC on QA at UI.*
2.15.4	*Strengthen the QA role of faculty heads and their support.*
2.15.5	*Establish formal QA committees for each school.*
2.15.5	*Revise responsibilities and division of duties between the UC Quality Committee and the UC Academic Affairs Committee.*
2.15.6	*Develop a comprehensive information system connecting existing information from the various areas of the University, and organise the management of the gathering, storage, analysis and dissemination of data.*
2.15.7	*Formalise the academic involvement of the CTL by making its supportive role in connection with subject-level reviews a requirement.*
2.15.7	*Strengthen the Teaching Development Fund in order to support plans of action and reform projects chosen by faculties.*
3.1.6	*Continue to develop QA procedures and guidelines in Ugla, including identification of key quality documents of UI.*
3.1.6	*Produce a short easy-to-use manual on the UI QA system.*
3.2.2	*Strengthen systematic and coordinated curriculum review procedures and channels, at the level of schools, faculties and departments. Such systematic review will encourage uniform practices and facilitate the objective of continuously enhancing the quality of current programmes and courses.*
3.2.2	*Introduce clear quality assurance guidelines for the design and development of courses.*
3.2.2	*Publish curriculum review procedures on faculty websites.*
3.2.5	*Availability of courses at the Master's level needs to be improved, e.g., by developing additional courses, increased cooperation, both within the University and with foreign universities through formal agreements on planned Master's programmes, and student exchange schemes like Erasmus.*
3.2.7.3	*Formalise procedures that ensure that student representatives have access to course evaluation results in accordance with laws and regulations.*

3.2.7.5	*Examine further reasons for students' relatively high rate of dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of communicating changes to programmes and teaching.*
3.2.7.5	*Strengthen follow-up measures for course evaluations in accordance with best practice within UI.*
3.2.8	*Continue the development and promotion of the mid-semester evaluation.*
3.2.9	*Develop formal procedures for evaluating the quality of courses at postgraduate level.*
3.2.12	*Reconsider the set goals and evaluate the current and potential use of the teaching portfolio, e.g., regarding academic promotion.*
3.2.12	*Introduce tools for evaluating quality and rewarding teaching staff for teaching performance.*
3.2.12	*Increase the allocations for the Teaching Development Fund in order to support faculty action plans resulting from subject-level reviews.*
3.3	*Reinforce teaching staff's and students' knowledge and awareness of the importance and use of LOs, not least in relation to course assessment. Organise specific student-orientated seminars at school and faculty level, under supervision of the CTL.*
3.5.3	*The CTL will prepare standardised procedures and guidelines on feedback. Special consideration will be given to the fact that feedback in courses attracting large numbers of students constitutes the main challenge here and is therefore of special importance.*
3.6.1.1	*Evaluate the UI admission requirements rules with regard to set admission guidelines.*
3.6.1.3	*Evaluate the usage and outcome of the LAT with a special focus on the correlation between students' performance in the LAT and in their study at UI.*
3.9	*The University will review its language policy in consideration of the University's international academic role on the one hand, and its role in communicating academic knowledge to society on the other.*
4.1.1	*The UI website needs to be under constant development, e.g. the site needs to be simplified and more accessible for smartphones, tablets and other new electronical devices and access to information should be ensured via effective search mechanisim.*
4.2.2	*Improve tracking of students' progression from the beginning of their studies.*
4.3.4	*Further develop student satisfaction surveys and utilisation of data, e.g by linking information on subjective opinion with objective data (on students' length of study, drop-out rates, graduation rates, grades, academic records, etc.) and by using the data in connection with setting targets and measuring progress.*
4.3.4	*Ensure that data from student satisfaction surveys will be addressed in a formal manner, in consultation with students, both centrally and at the school and faculty level so that it can be still better used in the interests of systematically guaranteeing and enhancing quality and strengthening quality culture. Implement a formal process for continuously introducing and discussing the results amongst students and staff and integrating this fully into the quality enhancement process.*
4.3.4	*Students that leave without completing their studies or drop out early on in the academic process are an important group that could shed light on aspects of student support that need improving. It should be considered whether this group should be added to the annual survey.*
4.3.4	*The main purpose of the student satisfaction surveys at UI has been to improve the student learning experience. However, such data is often also used to help prospective students and their families to make study choices. It needs to be discussed whether the data should be made publicly available for such purposes.*
4.5	*Enhance ways for students to carry out research projects as part of their studies in collaboration with industry, domestic institutions and other partners.*
4.6	*Measure employer satisfaction with UI graduates for individual faculties.*
4.7.1	*Increase the availability of study rooms and research facilities for students.*
4.7.1	*Adapt existing classrooms to changing needs and future development in teaching and learning.*
4.7.3	*Standardise education on working hazards and health and safety in research laboratories within UI.*
4.7.3	*Define the responsibilities of those who conduct clinical training.*
4.8.2	*Find ways to extend opening hours of the National and University Library, especially during examination periods.*
4.8.2	*Examine reasons behind low levels of satisfaction among PhD students with library resources and access to online journals and databases.*
4.8.5	*Develop and simplify customer service at the Student Service Desk with further automation.*

4.8.7.1	*Monitor international development in web based education as it could be important for the variety of courses on offer at UI.*
4.8.7.1	*Provide further incentives and support for teachers who experiment with teaching methods.*
4.10	*Shorten the response time of UI authorities to student complaints.*
5	*Increase contributions to the UI Centennial Fund such that the total contribution for each student at UI reaches the OECD average by 2016 and the average for the Nordic countries by 2020.*
5	*Put increased effort into obtaining grants from research funds outside of Iceland, e.g., in cooperation with foreign consulting companies and the University's foremost collaborators in other Nordic universities.*
5	*Review the Evaluation System for Public HEIs. The Evaluation System for Public HEIs has more or less been unchanged since 2009 and the system has, as mentioned above, a great impact on salaries and general research environment for academic staff.*
5	*Develop further formal study programmes based on interdisciplinary collaboration between different faculties and schools.*
5	*Strengthen current interdisciplinary platforms and encourage development of new platforms.*
5	*Increase the number of grants for doctoral students and improve facilities for them within the University.*
5	*Ensure continuing new recruitment, in which emphasis is placed on hiring on the one hand dynamic young academics and on the other experienced researchers who have already proven themselves at the international level.*
5	*Increase support for new recruits to establish and develop their research careers.*
5	*Strengthen the infrastructure for research support, i.e. access to databases, lab facilities and supporting staff.*
5	*Increase efforts in the support of innovation in the interests of the Icelandic economy, e.g., through special support for entrepreneurs planning to stablish a business in connection with the practical application of their research.*
5	*Facilities for spin-off companies on the University campus must be considered; it is important that they are visible and that students at the University actively participate in their development process.*
7	*Introduce written contracts between the GS and each student.*
7	*Analyse the ways in which faculties and schools follow up student progression in doctoral studies.*
7	*Analyse areas of particular strength and suggest establishment of thematic PhD programmes.*
7	*Analyse length of study for PhD students and suggest ways for improvement.*
7	*Further analyse the results and follow-up of PhD student's satisfaction surveys within each school.*
7	*Secure funding from the government and non-governmental partners. The GS should initiate guidelines on funding from private partners.*
7	*Improve facilities and increase the number of support staff for doctoral studies in faculties and schools*
7	*Increase the number of courses offered by individuals that are made available for all PhD students, and advertised by the GS.*
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