UI's INSTITUTION-WIDE REVIEW
Follow-up Report 2017
May 2017

UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND

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Abbreviations

CTL	Centre for Teaching and Learning
ESG	Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area
GS	Graduate School of the University of Iceland
HÍ21	Strategy of the University of Iceland 2016-2021
IUE	Icelandic University of Education
IWR	Institutional-wide Review Report
LAT	Learning Aptitude Test for Higher Education
LÍS	National Union for Icelandic Students
QB	Quality Board of Icelandic Higher Education
QC	Quality Committee
QEF	Quality Enhancement Framework for Icelandic Higher Education
RA	Reflective Analysis of UI
SC	Student Council
SCCC	University Student Counselling and Career Centre
SENS	School of Engineering and Natural Sciences
SLR	Institution-led Review at the subject level
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

Preface

In Section 72 of the 1st Edition of the Quality Enhancement Handbook for Iceland it is stated that each university which, in the Quality Board-led Institutional Review, obtains the grade "full confidence or confidence in the management of quality and standards" should deliver "a written year-on report on the first anniversary of receipt by the institution of the final version of the report. This year-on report will be discussed at the next annual meeting with the Quality Board representatives, and will normally be published on the Board's website alongside the original review report. The purpose of the year-on report is to indicate how the institution has followed up on the main points raised in the report and to provide an update in relation to any major changes in the institution that would have a bearing on the matters raised in the report. It is important to note that the year-on activities are not conducted in the context of a compliance culture. It is for the institution to reflect on its report and decide on appropriate follow-up actions and activities."

Here follows UI's year-on report. The report is divided into three sections. The **first** section is a general review of the lessons learned from the QEF at UI and the primary changes in the University's operations since the institutional review took place. The **second** section addresses UI's response to the results of the IWR as published on the Rannís website in May 2015, focusing on suggestions regarding points the review team asked the University to consider. The **third** section briefly covers the 75 measures detailed in the RA, which was submitted in November 2014; these form an important background for the IWR. There was also a lot of common ground between the results of the RA and the IWR, which is consistent with the assertion from the report's authors that "throughout its interactions with the University, the Team was presented with an institution which was going to significant lengths to understand itself" (IWR, p. 71).

1. General comments and reflections

Since the first cycle of the QEF began in 2010, a great deal of work has been dedicated to its execution within UI. From 2011 to 2015, all 25 faculties at the University and two interdisciplinary postgraduate programmes underwent extensive institution-led reviews at the subject level (SLR), in which a large of number of administrators, other staff, students, representatives of industry and society, and international experts were actively involved. This work concluded with the composition of detailed self-review reports and accompanying plans of action. The last faculty submitted their self-review report at the end of 2015. The faculties have since been working on following up their plans of action.

Around the middle of 2014, work began on the institution-wide review and the UI Reflective Analysis (RA). The aforementioned SLRs formed a crucial basis for this work. Drafts of the RA were presented and discussed extensively within the University community that autumn. For example, an entire University Forum attended by around 100 representatives of all units at UI was dedicated to the subject in October 2014. The RA concluded with a 75-point plan of action. The University also learned a lot from the self-review process itself.

Around the middle of 2015, there was a change of rector when Professor Kristín Ingólfsdóttir left her post after 10 years, succeeded by Professor Jón Atli Benediktsson. One of the first works of the new Rector was to start preparation for the new comprehensive strategy for UI. The strategic planning work was completed over the winter 2016 and concluded with the approval of the Strategy of the University of Iceland 2016-2021 by the University Forum on 3 March and the University Council on 17 March 2016. In the strategic planning, great emphasis was placed on democratic working processes and all staff, students and external interested parties were given the opportunity to present their views. Planning was also based on extensive data, statistical information, reports and so forth. In this regard, particular acknowledgement should be given to the aforementioned reviews; they played an important part in the new Strategy, as will be described in more detail later in this report. This is in accordance with the primary thinking behind the QEF, that SLRs, RAs and IWRs should form a continuum in the spirit of constant reform, which is evident in the University's Strategy – at the same time as the Strategy ensures continuing development and enhancement of quality assurance work at the University.

2. Reactions to issues raised in UI's Institutional-wide Review Report

1. Strengthening the University's approach, at the institutional level, to managing standards and enhancing quality.

- Well-structured quality assurance processes ensure (a) standardised working practices within UI and (b) conformity with recognised international working practices. Working practices within UI are, however, to a large extent determined by individual members of staff and international criteria and benchmarking are little used (37[1]). This aspect of the University's operations must be improved.
- Management of the UI quality assurance system is a significant responsibility currently shouldered by a small number of individuals. The field must be strengthened (26, 72-73, 83).

UI's reaction:

- In implementing QEF1 and the SLRs, UI has placed a great deal of emphasis on the idea that the RA and the IWR would form a coherent whole to be used directly in the University's strategic planning. The faculty and UI plans of action and the recommendations made in the IWR are therefore the main foundation of the new Strategy for UI for the period 2016-2021 (HÍ21) – the Strategy will also ensure the continuing development and enhancement of quality assurance work at the University. One of five focus areas in HÍ21 is entitled *'Quality culture and efficient information technology'*, described as follows: "*The University ensures that research and degrees meet international criteria and quality requirements, which is the basis for the trust the University has earned in Iceland and internationally. The success of the University is based on common values, clear strategy, systematic planning, performance reviews based on reliable information and continuous reform.*" This is then expanded upon in the individual goals and measures that make up the Strategy. Work is currently underway on a more detailed plan for implementing the Strategy.
- A part-time (50%) head of quality management has been hired, who will work closely with the previous head of quality administration, the University Council Quality Committee and all parties responsible for implementing the new Strategy for the University. This will ensure that any changes made will enhance the quality of University operations. The formal UI quality assurance system will also be more clearly defined, e.g. in consideration of the framework of the Bologna Process, Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

2. Clarifying the roles and functions of Masters degrees.

- Development of Master's studies at UI has been characterised by considerable and rapid growth, but Master's studies have nevertheless been somewhat neglected compared to undergraduate and doctoral studies. Master's studies must be better differentiated from the other two levels of study and better defined on their own terms. This applies in particular to academic Master's studies, and programmes for professional recognition to a lesser extent (40, 47-48, 56, 65, 76).
- Throughout the University, the selection of specialised Master's courses on offer is often poor (40, 47, 61).

UI's reaction:

- One of the goals in HÍ21, under Teaching and Learning, is *to strengthen Master's programmes as an independent level of study and enhance the framework, infrastructure and international connections for the programmes* (TL4).
  - The Graduate School (GS) has started mapping studies at the Master's

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[1] Numbers in brackets refer to page numbers in the IWR Report.

level at UI in order to collect the necessary information on enrolment, drop-out rates, time taken to graduate etc.

- o The Graduate School has also started collecting information about international joint Master's programmes in line with the Strategy for UI.

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3. Considering the implications of the mixed use of open enrolment and entrance examinations across the University.

- Admission to UI is determined variously using open enrolment (on the basis of the Icelandic matriculation examination), competitive examinations (numerus clausus) or the Learning Aptitude Test (LAT). In some subjects, attempts are also made to tackle poor levels of student preparation using special preparatory courses for which students do not earn credits and the University does not receive funding. The Learning Aptitude Test has proven to reduce drop-out rates. In light of this, UI ought to establish a comprehensive strategy regarding the admission of new students (31, 38).

UI's reaction:

The University of Iceland is a public university and is particularly aware of the conflict involved in being by far the largest university in Iceland and the only one that offers many subjects, whilst at the same time it is evidently easier to control quality by limiting access and selecting students. Another important point is that funding for public universities is based in large part on the number of students. The matter is, however, under consideration both internally at the University and in consultation with the government.

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4. Considering the value of distinguishing between the following categories of students: full and part-time; graduating and non-graduating; and campus-based and distance learning.

- The usefulness of statistical data on students and studies (e.g. retention rates, length of study, graduation rates and student satisfaction) is reduced by the fact that such data is frequently general and seldom broken down according to different groups of students. In order to gather more precise information and be able to systematically apply measures to individual groups, a clear distinction must be drawn between full and part-time students, students who intend to graduate and those who do not, and campus-based and distance students. Regarding evaluation of the extent of drop-out rates, a distinction must be drawn between those who switch to another programme within UI and those who discontinue studies at the University altogether (52-53, 56).
- The average age of the student population at UI is high, the gender ratio imbalanced and students generally take a long time to complete their studies (14-15, 39). UI has not established a strategy regarding the ideal age composition of the student population (31).

UI's reaction:

- One of the goals in HÍ21, under Human Resources, is *to place emphasis on enhancing administration, quality processes, and the use of information technology* (HR5). This goal includes the following measures:
  - o *Key information on students and study programmes, research, human resources, and finances defined and uploaded to an information forum for use in day-to-day management.*
  - o *Work processes clarified and more efficient use of information technology, e.g. through the comprehensive design of software systems.*
- Preparation is underway to establish a special Division of Information Technology within the central administration. Its responsibilities will include improving various statistical data, standardising information systems and ensuring that these are better used as an administrative tool.
- Another goal in HÍ21, under Human Resources, is *to promote quality and diversity*

within the University community. This goal includes the following measure:

- o *The composition of the student body analysed, interventions and promotions developed if systematic barriers are in place or if underrepresented groups need increased support.*

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5. Creating an action plan based on the 75 Measures in the Reflective Analysis and linking them to performance indicators in the University Policy.

- There is a lot of overlap between the plan of action in the RA and the suggestions from the IWR. UI should formulate an implementation plan regarding these measures and suggestions (55).
- Faculties vary with regard to whether and how they follow up the results / plans of action of the RA.

UI's reaction:

- The 75 Measures in the Reflective Analysis were used as a basis on which to form the new Strategy for the University 2016-2021 (HÍ21). An Action Plan is already in place which is being followed (see answers to Point 1 above). The University has taken a number of actions already to achieve these measures (see Part 3 in this report).

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6. With regard to the maintenance of quality and standards, clarifying and communicating the roles of the University Council and its sub-committees, together with their inter-relationships.

- The rector and the University Council are ultimately responsible for quality assurance at UI, but the Council seems not to receive regular information on teaching and learning (24).
- The roles and division of responsibilities between the Academic Affairs Committee and the University Council Quality Committee (as well as the Quality Review Committee) on the one hand and these committees and the University Council on the other hand. There is a danger of responsibilities overlapping or being neglected (24, 73). For instance, there is no particular party responsible for systematic communication of best practices (50) and it is not clear which committee/party should have this role.

UI's reaction:

- In the focus area **Human Resources** of HÍ21 one of the measures is as follows: *A review of the University's structure and administration system used to ensure efficiency and clarify responsibility (HR-5-1).*
- A new rector was elected in 2015 and he initiated a thorough review of all organisational structures and administrative systems at the University. Two pro-rectors have been hired, Pro-Rector of Science and pro-Rector of cademic Affairs, who also chair the Science Committee and the Academic Affairs Committee, respectively. The chair of the Quality Committee was selected on the basis of performance in the SLRs. The role of the Quality Committee has been better defined and it will have the ultimate responsibility in managing implementation of QEF2. The review is not complete and its final stage in 2017 will address in particular the organisational structure of the University's governing bodies, including the University Council and its sub-committees.

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7. Continuing the University's review of the structure and management of its research institutes.

- Over 130 research centres and institutes operate within UI, with different organisational structures and roles. It is important to complete the ongoing review of the structure and management of UI research institutes (44, 66).

UI's reaction:

- In the focus area **Research** of HÍ21 one of the measures is as follows: *The review of*

the structure and roles of the University research centres implemented (R-1-4).

- A report has already been completed which analyses the structure and roles of the research centres but no decision has yet been taken on how this will be carried through.

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8. Developing a strategic policy for using IT-based teaching in the University together with implications for staff development and investment in infrastructure.

- Due to a lack of funding, the student-teacher ratio is unfavourable and teaching at UI frequently takes place in large student groups. One effect of this is that teaching methods are generally rather conventional, although individual members of teaching staff do experiment with exciting new teaching technology (44, 50).
- A strategy must be established regarding distance teaching and online support for students, including staff training and investment in infrastructure (44, 50).
- Library services must be improved, as well as access to online journals for postgraduate students (44).
- Teaching equipment is outdated and in some cases obsolete (45).

UI's reaction:

- This is a part of the measure TL-1-1 in HÍ21 where the planned strategy for teaching and learning will address, among other things, strategic recording of lectures and distance teaching. In 2016 a collaboration with edX was initiated and the University is now in the process of becoming a full member of the network. Through its participation the University will receive advice on technical matters related to the use of IT and strategic experiments with web-based courses will be initiated in the years to come.
- Since the publication of the IWR the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) has pursued its mission of enhancing teaching in a similar manner as before. Various measures have been taken, such as redesigning and upgrading the annual newsletter to The Journal of CTL, renewing the CTL website and launching an English version in August 2016. There is a need and strong will to further strengthen CTL but but this has been difficult to carry through because of limited resources.

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9. Further developing the University's policy in support of increasing internationalisation, including such matters as the language of instruction, the management of joint programmes, and opportunities for study abroad.

- UI is highly involved in international collaboration, but the resulting experience and knowledge is very spread out and little is compiled in an organised fashion (80).
- UI is encouraged to complete its strategic planning on international affairs (56).
- The exchange students coming to UI from other universities greatly outnumber those who leave UI on exchange programmes.
- Consideration must be given to the UI language policy in light of the fact that the University plans to become an international research university to an even greater extent. For example, roughly half of all postgraduate students at the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences are of foreign origin, but they are not offered appropriate language instruction. Also, almost all the course material in the Faculty of Nursing is in English, which could lead to communication problems with patients. Finally, around a fifth of all undergraduate courses are taught in English, which conflicts with the current language policy at UI (61).

UI's reaction:

- Work on the strategy regarding international collaboration is ongoing. In 2016 UI became a founding member of a new collaborative network of nine European universities (Aurora). This began a new chapter in the University's international affairs, providing opportunities for much more systematic collaboration with selected foreign universities than before.
- In 2016 a new language policy was approved by the UC and a special committee has been established to support the execution of the policy. The basic principle of the

language policy is that the written and spoken language of the University is Icelandic, whether in teaching, research or administration. It is also emphasised that information on the University and its operations, as extensive and detailed as possible, should be available in English on the public University website and on the University intranet (Ugla). The University also encourages students and teaching staff to use foreign languages other than English in their work where possible.

| 10. Addressing the perceived imbalance between incentives for teaching and for research. |

- Besides the annual award for teaching staff and grants from the Academic Affairs Fund, there are no systematic rewards for good teaching, whilst a great deal of emphasis is placed on the motivational system for research (35-36, 49, 55, 68). This is evident in the fact that, for example, teaching staff who are active in research receive a reduction in teaching duties, which could send the message that teaching is a duty of little value, as well as meaning that Master's and undergraduate students are less likely to meet the most active researchers. This is not consistent with UI's strategy regarding the integration of teaching and resarch at all levels of study (68, 70).

- CTL offers a wide variety of courses for teaching staff in pedagogy, university teaching, teaching methods and technology, but participation is optional (34).

- CTL does important work in teaching development and teacher training. The Centre is, however, understaffed and runs the risk of failing to fulfil its responsibilities to a sufficiently high standard (77).

- Teaching portfolios could be a useful resource but are little used (35, 49).

- Staff appraisal interviews should be conducted at least once every two years, but this is frequently not the case (35).

UI's reaction:

- This is a primary focus for **Teaching and Learning** in the new Strategy HÍ21, while research was a primary focus in the previous strategy. Various measures have been set up specifically to strengthen incentives for quality teaching, such as:

  o *Pedagogical support for academic staff increased, e.g. through strengthening the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and hiring teaching experts in every school* (TL-1-2). Two of the University's Schools, the School of Health Sciences (SOHS) and the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences (SENS) have recently created and staffed posts for academic developers. These individuals work closely with the staff of CTL to enhance educational development within their respective schools. This arrangement has both strengthened the role of the Centre and provided more leeway for disciplinary based development. The Centre has also worked closely with the School of Social Science (SOSS) and the School of Humanities (SOH) in establishing workshops for teachers. One of the Centre's members of staff is based in the School of Education (SOE).

  The Postgraduate Diploma Programme in Teaching Studies for Higher Education is slowly gaining acknowledgement within the University. In spring 2016 eight students graduated with a formal diploma and in autumn 2016 26 participants were accepted into the first module. The programme is currently being evaluated based on the findings of a survey and focus-group interviews from June 2016 and an academic committee was formally established for the program in August 2016 to review results and further develop the programme.

  o *Systematic support for faculty plans that are created based on faculty reviews, e.g. through enlarging the Academic Affairs Fund* (TL-1-3). The fund has already been enlarged by ISK 15 m per year for the next three years from 2017. The aim is to support the realisation of action plans set up in connection with SLRs.

  o *Faculties reward teaching staff at undergraduate and graduate level for significant contributions to teaching on the basis of clearer criteria for teaching quality (TL-3-2).* This is in the preparation phase under the auspices of the Academic Affairs Committee. Consideration will be given to best practices in

> Australia, for example. Each year an Exemplary Teacher is awarded the Teacher's Prize and there has been a conscious effort by CTL to disseminate his/her best practice through lectures and workshops.

- In the focus area **Research** of HÍ21 one of the measures is as follows: *The system for evaluation of research revised following a review of the Evaluation System for Public Higher Education Institutions (R-2-1).* A review of the system was initiated in autumn 2015. An internal review, containing an impartial description of the system, an analysis of its application within the universities, and a separate self-review from the users of the system, was completed in December 2016. An external review was carried out by a panel of four international experts in the first half of 2017 where one of the objectives was to explore whether the system can be improved and/or expanded to better cover teaching and learning and the societal impact of research. The aim is to have a revised system in place, following the review, taking effect from 2018.

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11. Increasing the utility of course evaluations through effective follow-up and feedback to students.

- Formal rules exist on the implementation and follow-up of teaching evaluation surveys, but there is no standardised working procedure for analysing and processing results. Student participation in teaching evaluation surveys is generally low and the information and feedback provided to students is unsatisfactory. The University should learn from examples of good practice, e.g. at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering (30, 41, 55, 75).

- The implementation of teaching evaluation surveys should be amended such that students do not have to evaluate all the teaching staff involved in teaching a particular course when they have not personally been taught by all of them (42).

- The mid-semester survey has proven effective and should become a regular feature of operations (42).

UI's reaction:

- In the focus area **Teaching and Learning** of HÍ21 one of the measures is as follows: *Faculties make systematic use of student evaluations of teaching and hold regular meetings with students in order to enhance teaching quality and encourage students to be committed to their studies* (TL-3-1). There has been a conscious effort to follow up on student evaluations of teaching, in many cases involving students directly. Surveys are discussed at faculty councils or faculty meetings and staff are encouraged to use the results to make improvements where needed. Faculty heads also ensure that survey results are used, often in the case of projects for improvement following a self-review report. In some cases is the head of faculty who processes results and discusses them with supervisory teachers on the courses that perform the worst.

- Especially for the mid-semester survey, working procedures for following up the results vary between schools and faculties and are usually still being developed. The method most frequently used is to make teaching staff responsible for checking their own courses and discussing anonymous results with students in an informal way, e.g. in the smaller faculties or departments. In some cases a formal meeting is held with representatives of student organisations; results are then discussed and the students given the opportunity to get their views across. CTL is also involved with interpreting results where their assistance is sought, and advice is available for those who want it.

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12. Further systematising the University's processes for the approval, monitoring and evaluation of courses and programmes.

- When introducing new study programmes, external perspectives should be sought and internationally recognised criteria used (29, 37).

- There is no systematic, central monitoring of the quality of courses and programmes; this responsibilty primarily falls to individual members of teaching staff (26).

- The Graduate School was established to guarantee the quality of doctoral programmes, but there is no equivalent management of undergraduate studies (27).

- The systematic use of international benchmarking must be increased in field of quality assurance for teaching and learning (28).

- There is a lack of clear guidelines and standards regarding the evaluation of student performance and credits (ECTS). These things are primarily the responsibility of individual members of teaching staff and are not standardised. According to students, in some cases workloads are either increased or reduced with no impact on the number of credits received for a course. The number of credits for a course therefore appears to be arbitrarily determined, to a certain extent (28, 51).

- Course assessment and feedback at UI are primarily the responsibility of individual members of teaching staff. There is a lack of consistent standards for course assessment and the evaluation of assignments – and where standardised criteria do exist, it is unclear whether they are known or systematically followed. External examiners and double marking are also rarely used, meaning there is a risk of inconsistency or abitrariness. This compromises the quality of degrees from the University (32-33, 37-38, 51).

- External examiners are used for postgraduate studies and if students challenge the results of an examination. This, however, is only an option if the student has failed, which is unsatisfactory (33).

- Due to a lack of funding and unfavourable student-teacher ratios, there is a lack of personalised feedback (50).

UI's reaction:

- This is a central theme in HÍ21 under the focus area **Teaching and Learning**. Most of the points listed above will be addressed specifically in the SLRs in the next round of QEF2, under the supervision of the Quality Committee (QC), and in line with ESG Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance, in particular 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes), 1.3 (Student-centred learning, teaching and assessment) and 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes).

- A new University website will be launched before the end of the 2017 spring semester. It is much more student centered than the current website and is organised around study programmes rather than schools and faculties.

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13. Increasing the use of externality in the University's processes for assuring standards and managing quality.

- UI generally does not make sufficient use of externality and international benchmarks in quality management. Extensive international collaboration should, however, provide the University with sufficient opportunity to improve in this area (37).

- There is no assumption that external perspectives will be sought when introducing new study programmes (29).

UI's reaction:

- The aim is to make more systematic use of the external experts in QEF2 than was the case in QEF1, for example by forming a small team of experts what would serve 2-4 faculties during their SLRs.

- The Quality Committee is currently considering how to review the rules on the introduction and regular review of study programmes in the spirit of ESG2015, with an emphasis on externality, relevance and employability.

- We are hoping that the member universities of the Aurora network will work closer together in the future, both in benchmarking and disseminating best practices.

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14. Monitoring and supporting the contribution made by sessional teachers.

- Sessional teachers perform around a third of all teaching at UI. The professional support provided to sessional teachers is, however, patchy and their involvement in teacher training is minimal. Students report inconsistency in course assessment and

the evaluation of workloads (36, 57).

- In courses taught by more than one sessional teacher, there is considerable variation in course assessment, evaluation of workloads and so forth (36, 38, 46, 51).

UI's reaction:

- In the focus area **Teaching and Learning** of HÍ21 one of the measures is as follows: *Support for sessional teachers increased and framework for sessional teaching strengthened* (TL-2-2).
- In 2016, the UC appointed a committee to review matters regarding sessional teachers which led to the clarification of all processes, e.g. supervision, monitoring etc. Salaries were increased and professional demands better defined.

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15. Considering the possible merit of a more focused approach to the provision of doctoral education.

- The position of the Graduate School has still not been sufficiently established. Information on its role must be better disseminated and it must be made more visible.
- There is a lack of systematic training for supervisors of doctoral students (34-35). There is also a sense that supervisors are unaware of current criteria and requirements regarding the supervision of postgraduate students (62).
- There is no requirement for courses for doctoral students. Although a doctoral programme can be personalised, it is important to offer all doctoral students, either centrally or under the auspices of the relevant school, courses in research methodology, including qualitative and quantitative analysis and scientific ethics, in order to ensure that they are fully prepared to conduct independent research (60, 62).
- Doctoral students should be provided with systematic student counselling to encourage them to complete their studies on schedule (60).
- Only around half of all doctoral students at UI receive full maintenance grants, which has a direct impact on length of study (63-64).
- The community of doctoral students at UI must be strengthened in order to bolster their identity, create opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and promote the common interests of doctoral students and supervisors (69).
- Doctoral students have insufficient access to scholarly books, articles and online journals (64).
- UI should consider whether there is cause for doctoral students to pick a specialisation, in light of units with few students which lack breadth and 'critical mass'. Situations in which there is only one possible supervisor threaten the security of students, e.g. if this member of staff is unable to take on the role for whatever reason.
- The Graduate School must better organise the admissions procedure for doctoral students, gather data on retention rates and length of study, and increase support and monitoring of supervisors (69).
- Increased emphasis on doctoral studies and a higher number of doctoral students means there is a risk of 'inbreeding', such that that the University hires staff from among its own students (69).

UI's reaction:

- One of the goals in HÍ21, under **Teaching and Learning**, is *to strengthen the framework for doctoral studies and increase support for students and supervisors* (TL-5).
- Since the publication of the IWR the Graduate School (GS) has conducted interviews with Ph.D. students that have been enrolled in the Ph.D. programmes for more than seven years. The interviews have provided insight into different issues affecting the progress of Ph.D. students at UI. Not surprisingly, funding is a major issue but there are other explanations for slow progress which will be summarised in a special report after the conclusion of these interview sessions.
- The GS has initiated work to improve the registration of Ph.D. students and a new

application form is being designed as well as a system for Ph.D. students and supervisors for planning and monitoring of individual Ph.D. projects, which will become a part of Ugla. This will promote standardised processes for registration and progress monitoring throughout UI as a whole, not only benefiting individual students but also providing UI with more reliable statistics on the status of its Ph.D. programmes and building a platform for future reviews of the Ph.D. programmes at individual faculties.

- The GS arranged its first course for Ph.D. supervisors to be offered to supervisors at SOHS in May 2016 and participated in the promotion of a course given at the Faculty of History and Philosophy at SOH in research ethics for Ph.D. students.

- GS has also arranged a workshop on career development with SOHS and Vitae, UK. Based on the outcome of the meeting, career development services available at UI will be mapped and improved.

- An introductory course on library services will be offered in collaboration with the National and University Library in autumn 2017.

- Outreach efforts clarifying the role and function of the GS have been made in several ways such as workshops on the quality of Ph.D. studies, improvements made to the GS homepage, informal meetings with supervisors and regular meetings with faculty personnel.

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16. Determining how best to provide guidance and monitor assessment when students take courses across disciplinary boundaries.

UI's reaction:

- A report on how interdisciplinary collaboration could be strengthened at UI was submitted to the UC in April 2016. Following this report, the submitted proposals were prioritised and a plan was formulated regarding their implementation. This is a long-term project that will be followed up.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS

Faculty self-review reports

- The faculties have done an excellent job with the SLRs and writing of the self-review reports. It is, however, clear that the work has fallen to a large extent to the faculty heads. They urgently require more support in their roles, not least in light of their short terms of employment.
- It is important to systematically process the reports, learn from them, follow up the plans of action and disseminate examples of good working practice (79).

UI's reaction:

- This will be given special consideration in implementing QEF2 at UI. Work is currently underway on the establishment of an informal consultation group for key quality assurance staff at UI schools. This group is intended to help with dissemination of information on quality assurance matters to the schools from the central administration, including the UC standing committees, and create a forum for the parties in question to share their experiences and learn from each other.

Student complaints/appeals

- The time allowed to respond to student complaints/appeals is two months, which is too long (43).

UI's reaction:

- The Complaints Committee for student issues operates in accordance with paragraph 3, Article 7 of the Regulation for the University of Iceland no. 569/2009. The committee's role is to address student complaints and appeals in accordance with Article 50 of the Regulation. Paragraph 2, Article 50 states regarding the role of the head of faculty (who

is the first person to receive the matter) in handling alleged student offences that "the head of faculty shall address the issue as quickly as possible, generally ruling on it within two months of receiving notification at the latest. If the matter is extensive and expected to take longer to resolve, parties involved shall be notified and informed of when to expect a ruling." This is in accordance with Article 9 of the Administrative Procedures Act, which states that a decision should be made as quickly as possible.

Use of Ugla

- Teaching staff use Ugla to varying degrees. This situation must be improved and teaching staff must be guaranteed training in the use of Ugla.

UI's reaction:

- Systematic guidelines for the use of Ugla are available on the UI website and demand among teaching staff for courses on the use of Ugla has dwindled so much that CTL discontinued them. One possible explanation is that so much knowledge on the use of Ugla in teaching has been accrued among teaching staff and faculties that the system for passing that knowledge on is now self-sufficient. Another possible explanation is that Moodle is now increasingly used as a Learning Management System - LMS - (whereas Ugla is more of a Student Information System - SIS) and CTL now emphasises Moodle for managing courses.

Information in the course catalogue

- Changes to course information in the course catalogue do not always reach students in a timely fashion and the catalogue is not always updated (54).
- The course catalogue does not include information on the number of courses not taught. Students do not find out whether a course is taught or not until they try and register for it (54).

UI's reaction:

- The regulations and rules of procedure on the course catalogue state that all changes to the course catalogue shall be reported in writing not later than the beginning of the semester. This also applies to any changes that may be made to the information on individual courses. Teaching staff and other staff involved in compiling the course catalogue are regularly reminded of the deadlines for updating individual components of the course catalogue and encouraged to ensure that information is always accurate. Regarding the registration of course information, the registration system in Ugla has been reformed in order to ensure that the latest version of a course is always updated and consistent, as appropriate, if any changes are made to an older version.
- At UI faculties and departments, there are a considerable number of courses that are taught every other year or less frequently, for various reasons. Faculties and departments have the right, however, to publish such courses in the course catalogue, marked in an appropriate manner, in order to show that they are part of the regular selection of courses. Courses that are not taught in a particular academic year or semester are marked in the course catalogue with a special symbol and/or text that clearly states they are not taught. With few exceptions, this information is all in order. Efforts have been made to make the symbols more visible for users of the course catalogue.

3. List of measures in the RA and their present status

Here we link measures listed in the RA to measures defined in the Strategy of the University of Iceland 2016-2021, HÍ21, and indicate otherwise the status of the RA measures with colours; green=completed, yellow=in progress, red=not started.

A follow-up meeting was organised on 17 May 2017 to map the progress of the measures defined in HÍ21.

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.*
	See HÍ21, HR-5-1.
1.4.1.3	*Enforce rules on the maximum length of study.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-4.
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.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-1.
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.*
	A new international policy is under preparation. In 2016 a new language policy was approved by the UC.
1.6.6	*Increase the proportion of UI students participating in international student exchange programmes and other international programmes.*
	See HÍ21, TL-6-1,2.
1.6.6	*Evaluate and prioritise existing cooperation agreements between UI and its international partners.*
	See HÍ21, R-4-1.
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.*
	See HÍ21, HR-5-1. Based on the analysis of the report the UC has agreed on fundamental changes in the organisation of SOE. Number of faculties will change from three to four and and teaching within the school will be reorganised accordingly. These changes will take an effect during the school year 2018-19.
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.*
	This has already been initiated. The Bologna Promoter Group, located at Rannís, has received a European grant to prepare a training programme for students participating in quality reviews in collaboration with the QC and the National Union for Icelandic Students (LÍS).
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.*
	One of the guiding principles for the second cycle of QEF is to make use of the experiences obtained in the first cycle of the SLRs for the next round as much as possible. A number of actions have already been taken, such as a survey carried out among faculty heads on their views on the execution of QEF1 in their respective faculties.
2.13	*CTL will make information on best practice accessible and disseminate this to students and faculties through Ugla and other media.*

	The main forums for dissemination of best practice from CTL are: - Annual publication of the CTL journal where teachers, students and other staff share their practices (https://kennslumidstod.hi.is/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Timarit2016.pdf) - In their workshops and seminars - On their website (https://kennslumidstod.hi.is/en/) - The project "Friends of CTL" identifies teaching staff who are exemplary and are not only willing to share best practices but are also available for consultation.
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.*
	This is one of five primary focus areas in HÍ21 and is reflected throughout the strategy.
2.15.3	*Regular informative meetings between the UI director of quality management and the SC on QA at UI.*
	We are currently preparing the establishment of a coordination group consisting of 2-3 representatives from each of the five schools, under the leadership of the Director of Quality Management, in order to facilitate the exchange of information and sharing of experiences with the SLRs.
2.15.4	*Strengthen the QA role of faculty heads and their support.*
	See HÍ21, HR-5-2. This will be dealt with in the preparatory phase of QEF2 during 2017.
2.15.5	*Establish formal QA committees for each school.*
	A formal QA Committee has already been established at SENS but in the first instance this will be developed through the initiative described under 2.15.3.
2.15.5	*Revise responsibilities and division of duties between the UC Quality Committee and the UC Academic Affairs Committee.*
	See HÍ21, HR-5-1.
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.*
	See HÍ21, HR-5-3.
2.15.7	*Formalise the academic involvement of the CTL by making its supportive role in connection with subject-level reviews a requirement.*
	This is already being dealt with in the preparatory phase of QEF2 during 2017. The idea is to provide a centralised service to all academic units.
2.15.7	*Strengthen the Teaching Development Fund in order to support plans of action and reform projects chosen by faculties.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-3. Completed. The decision has already been taken to enlarge the fund by ISK 15 M per year from 2017.
3.1.6	*Continue to develop QA procedures and guidelines in Ugla, including identification of key quality documents of UI.*
	This is work in progress. Already a number of procedures and guidelines have been systematically published in Ugla and a number of documents have been translated to English.
3.1.6	*Produce a short easy-to-use manual on the UI QA system.*
	An ESG 2015 based electronic quality handbook is under preparation and a new version of a manual for the SLRs will be ready in spring 2017.
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.*

	See HÍ21, TL-1. It will be addressed specifically in the next round of QEF2, under the supervision of the Quality Committee, and in line with ESG Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance, in particular 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes) and 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes).
3.2.2	*Introduce clear quality assurance guidelines for the design and development of courses.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1. It will be addressed specifically in the next round of QEF2, under the supervision of the Quality Committee, and in line with ESG Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance, in particular 1.2 (Design and approval of programmes) and 1.9 (On-going monitoring and periodic review of programmes).
3.2.2	*Publish curriculum review procedures on faculty websites.*
	This is being initiated in connection with QEF2 where procedures around ongoing reviews of programmes will be strengthened.
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.*
	See HÍ21, TL-4.
3.2.7.3	*Formalise procedures that ensure that student representatives have access to course evaluation results in accordance with laws and regulations.*
	See HÍ21, TL-3-1.
3.2.7.5	*Examine further reasons for students' relatively high rate of dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of communicating changes to programmes and teaching.*
	See comments to 3.2.2 above.
3.2.7.5	*Strengthen follow-up measures for course evaluations in accordance with best practice within UI.*
	See HÍ21, TL-3-1.
3.2.8	*Continue the development and promotion of the mid-semester evaluation.*
	See HÍ21, TL-3-1.
3.2.9	*Develop formal procedures for evaluating the quality of courses at postgraduate level.*
	See HÍ21, TL-4-1 and TL-5-2.
3.2.12	*Reconsider the set goals and evaluate the current and potential use of the teaching portfolio, e.g., regarding academic promotion.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-1.
3.2.12	*Introduce tools for evaluating quality and rewarding teaching staff for teaching performance.*
	See HÍ21, TL-3-2.
3.2.12	*Increase the allocations for the Teaching Development Fund in order to support faculty action plans resulting from subject-level reviews.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-3. Completed.
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 CTL.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-1,2.
3.5.3	*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.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-1 and TL-3-1.
3.6.1.1	*Evaluate the UI admission requirements rules with regard to set admission guidelines.*
	See HÍ21, TL-2-2.

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.*
	See HÍ21, TL-2-2.
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.*
	See HÍ21, HR-4-4 and AP-2.
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 electronic devices and access to information should be ensured via an effective search mechanism.*
	See HÍ21, HR-5-4.
4.2.2	*Improve tracking of students' progression from the beginning of their studies.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-4.
4.3.4	*Further develop student satisfaction surveys and use 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.*
	See HÍ 21, TL-1-4, TL-3-1, HR-5-3. (?)
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 presenting and discussing the results amongst students and staff and integrating this fully into the quality enhancement process.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-4, TL-3-1, HR-5-3. (?)
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.*
	See HÍ21, TL-1-4, TL-3-1, HR-5-3. (?)
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.*
	The presentation of results is now far more accessible and plans to publish them for all students and teaching staff in Ugla are underway.
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.*
	See HÍ21, R-5-1 (?), AP-1-1, AP-2-2
4.6	*Measure employer satisfaction with UI graduates for individual faculties.*
	See HÍ21, AP-1-5 (?)
4.7.1	*Increase the availability of study rooms and research facilities for students.*
	See HÍ21, R-1-1 (?)
4.7.1	*Adapt existing classrooms to changing needs and future development in teaching and learning.*
	Those responsible for buildings and accommodation at the University are highly aware of the fact that design should always take teaching methods into account. A large number of University buildings are old and in these cases, efforts are made to update them as far as possible, but lack of funding at the University limits possibilities.

4.7.3	*Standardise education on working hazards and health and safety in research laboratories within UI.*
	Standardised education has not been introduced in all faculties. Some faculties have finalised this education, but health and safety courses have yet to be introduced in many faculties.
4.7.3	*Define the responsibilities of those who conduct clinical training.*
	Not completed.
4.8.2	*Find ways to extend opening hours of the National and University Library, especially during examination periods.*
	Opening hours have remained unchanged for several years and extended during examination periods. It has not been considered necessary to make changes due to the expense it would incur, in particular since students have not made any complaints about the current opening hours.
4.8.2	*Examine reasons behind low levels of satisfaction among Ph.D. students with library resources and access to online journals and databases.*
	The Graduate School, together with the National and University Library of Iceland, is planning an introductory course on library services for postgraduate students. The focus will be on literature search, different databases, reference software, plagiarism check software and the services of the two writing centres available for postgraduate students. The course will be held annually for new postgraduate students.
4.8.5	*Develop and simplify customer service at the Student Service Desk with further automation.*
	The key task here is to find ways for students to receive automatic confirmation of their studies themselves through Ugla. A conclusion has not yet been reached, but work is currently underway on this urgent matter.
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.*
	See TL-1-1.
4.8.7.1	*Provide further incentives and support for teachers who experiment with teaching methods.*
	See TL-3-2.
4.10	*Shorten the response time of UI authorities to student complaints.*
	Handling of appeals is covered in University rules, which state that "the head of faculty shall address the issue as quickly as possible, generally ruling on it within two months of receiving notification at the latest. If the matter is extensive and expected to take longer to resolve, parties involved shall be notified and informed of when to expect a ruling." The spirit of the rules is that appeals and complaints shall be handled as quickly as possible.
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.*
	UI has continued the struggle in this area. The Science and Technology Policy Council adopted this goal and made it a general goal for Icelandic higher education. This is in the hands of the government and has not yet been achieved. We hope that the new government will clearly address this matter.
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.*
	See HÍ21, R-4-1, R-6-1.
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 a great impact on salaries and general research environment for academic staff.*

	See HÍ21, R-2-1. A review of the system was initiated in autumn 2015. An internal review, containing an impartial description of the system, an analysis of its application within the universities, and a separate self-review from the users of the system, was completed in December 2016. An external review will be carried out in the first half of 2017 where one of the aims is to explore whether the system can be improved and/or extended to better cover teaching and learning. The aim is to have a revised system in place, following the review, taking effect from 2018.
5	*Develop further formal study programmes based on interdisciplinary collaboration between different faculties and schools.*
	See HÍ21, R-5-1. A working group on interdisciplinary collaboration submitted a report to the University Council in the spring of 2016. Following this report, a plan of action was submitted, on which work is currently underway.
5	*Strengthen current interdisciplinary platforms and encourage development of new platforms.*
	The two existing interdisciplinary study programmes are successful, but various other possibilities are being considered with regard to interdisciplinary studies.
5	*Increase the number of grants for doctoral students and improve facilities for them within the University.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5.
5	*Ensure continuing new recruitment, in which emphasis is placed on hiring on the one hand dynamic young academics and on the other hand experienced researchers who have already proven themselves at the international level.*
	Systematic use has been made of the Centennial Fund in this area. The University's financial situation severely limits possibilities.
5	*Increase support for new recruits to establish and develop their research careers.*
	See HÍ21, R-3-1.
5	*Strengthen the infrastructure for research support, i.e. access to databases, lab facilities and supporting staff.*
	See HÍ21, R-1-1,2,3.
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.*
	See HÍ21, AP-1-2.
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.*
	See HÍ21, AP-1-2.
7	*Introduce written contracts between the GS and each student.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-3. This is already in place in some faculties and is intended to become a part of a new registration system for postgraduate students that is currently under development.
7	*Analyse the ways in which faculties and schools follow up student progression in doctoral studies.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-3.
7	*Analyse areas of particular strength and suggest establishment of thematic Ph.D. programmes.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-2. Not started.
7	*Analyse length of study for Ph.D. students and suggest methods for improvement.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-3. Annual reports will be handled through the new registration system.

7	*Further analyse the results and follow-up of Ph.D. student satisfaction surveys within each school.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5. Not started.
7	*Secure funding from the government and non-governmental partners. The GS should initiate guidelines on funding from private partners.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5. Not started.
7	*Improve facilities and increase the number of support staff for doctoral studies in faculties and schools*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-2. Some schools, such as SENS, have already taken action on this front.
7	*Increase the number of courses on offer that are made available for all Ph.D. students, and advertised by the GS.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-2. A course in Research Ethics will be offered to all Ph.D. students from the autumn semester of 2017.
7	*Introduce training programmes for supervisors of Ph.D. students.*
	See HÍ21, TL-5-2. SOH and SOHS, together with the GS, have already initiated such training.