

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Assessment report in the first competition under the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme

1st criterion - substantive quality of an application:

- a) the quality of a SWOT analysis with respect to the objectives referred to in paragraph 4 of Communication from the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 March 2019 on the first competition under the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme, including the quality of the analysis used to identify priority research areas;
- b) conciseness and concreteness of the SWOT analysis and the plan;
- c) relevance of the identification of the specific objectives referred to in paragraph 6(2)(a) and paragraph 8 of Communication from the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 March 2019 on the first competition under the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme in relation to the SWOT analysis results;
- d) appropriateness of the indicators chosen to describe the university’s potential and to measure the extent of the objectives’ attainment;

Substantiation

a) UAM has prepared an ambitious development plan with a clear strategy to perform better in research and become well-networked internationally. The SWOT analysis is exemplary in its scope and honesty, including a fair presentation of UAM's present limitations. The priority research areas selected are to enhance connectivity, productivity and quality of research. The one in Social Sciences and Humanities is less focused. Here the IAS is expected to become an internationally connected platform for better performance.

b) The SWOT analysis and the related plan are concise as well as concrete. The analysis seems fair and weaknesses are presented relentlessly.

c) Specific objectives listed are certainly relevant given the requirements and in relation to the SWOT analysis. They aim for more productive and internationally visible research, enhanced research-based teaching, strongly incentivized staff development and a complete overhaul of present organization and management.

d) The chosen indicators are appropriate, though in some cases (like in research productivity and international collaboration) slightly overoptimistic given the limited timeframe.

2nd criterion - relevance of assumed objectives to enhancing the international significance of the university's activity:

- a) the extent to which specific objectives contribute to attaining the objectives referred to in paragraph 4 of Communication from the Minister of Science and Higher Education of 26 March 2019 on the first competition under the “Excellence Initiative – Research University” programme;
- b) sustainability of specific objectives after the plan implementation period, taking into account, in particular, actions to be carried out in 2026.

Substantiation

a) The listed specific objectives are certainly in line with the objectives of paragraph 4. The interview produced a strong sense of readiness on the part of the academic community to make them a success. UAM seems well aware of the hurdles inherent in the present situation and has begun to pave the way towards implementation of change in a process that is both well governed by a development team and done in a participatory mode.

b) A series of 23 actions are foreseen to continue the planned changes in 2026 and later, in combination with relevant evaluations. Also this package is well balanced in terms of the many goals that UAM wants to attain.

3rd criterion - adequacy of described actions to the assumed objectives:

- a) appropriateness of the actions selected, including actions of ground-breaking and innovative nature, in the context of the specific objectives' implementation;
- b) feasibility of the activities given the university's potential and budget;

Substantiation

a) The 45 actions selected are well linked to the objectives. They are to a large extent incentivizing and supporting the chosen priority areas. Others are generic and/or meant to transfer from the priority areas to the whole of UAM, while another large part of the actions are tailor-made to develop specific activities. This distribution makes sense.

b) In general the planned activities are doable and the goals attainable, although maybe not in all cases at the level indicated, given the timeframe and the point of departure. UAM has to and is planning to go a long way. In terms of human resources and international collaborations developments may take more time. The engagement and commitment of present leadership looks strong enough. Continuity of such leadership and broad support over the years to come will be crucial.

4th criterion - potential of the university in terms of:

- a) the impact of the university's research activity on the development of world science, especially in priority research areas;
- b) research collaboration with research institutions of high international reputation, especially in priority research areas;
- c) the quality of education provision for students and doctoral training, especially in fields of study and disciplines of science related to priority research areas;
- d) the solutions deployed for the professional development of the university's staff, especially young scientists;
- e) the quality of university governance and management;
- f) other specific objectives to raise the international significance of the university's activities if these objectives have been determined in the plan.

Substantiation

- a) UAM will certainly be performing better and more visibly in the international arena of science. All progress is relative, however. So some ambitions will take more time to bear fruit.
- b) This is especially true for establishing deep collaboration with international partners. UAM certainly has great potential and strong will to perform well. Realistically it should, however, be prepared for a longer implementation period.
- c) The establishment of the - strongly internationalized - doctoral school and the planned retooling of second-cycle programs toward research-based learning are valuable instrument to enhance the quality of education.
- d) A set of measures towards talent management, support and stimulation is foreseen. This will certainly help to improve UAM's future performance.
- e) Resetting its governance and management structure and culture is a key aspect of the present plan. It is promising that these decisions have already been made, with sufficient support. Continuation and further development will be a key success factor, also in terms of available leadership and support staff.
- f) UAM rightly works hard to improve the university's presence and visibility in the international arena. International reviews and partnerships will certainly help towards these goals. Promoting multilingualism is a welcome strategy. Yet again, such developments take time and are to a considerable extent generational.

Summary of assessment

UAM has certainly filed a professional and ambitious development plan. All of its objectives are worthwhile, and in line with the present policy instrument. So the university deserves full support and strong encouragement. At the same time over stretching the capabilities and capacities of the

institution might be a risk in some instances of the proposed plan and change process. The SWOT analysis demonstrates that UAM is keenly aware of risks and threats. UAM certainly has the potential to become a full-fledged research university. The interview confirmed that the plan and its objectives are the result of good analysis and great ambition. The university is not satisfied with its present levels of success in terms of scholarly output, international collaborations and citations. Its response to this is by no means superficial and easy. UAM has chosen to go all the way, building on a strong commitment and will to succeed. Therefore, the university must carefully decide on each step ahead, whether the available resources in terms of leadership, human and physical capital suffice the ambition, it may be worthwhile to evaluate the sequence of steps to ensure adequacy and high levels of feasibility. In order to implement its ambitious plan the university depends on the implementation of an efficient governance system within the provisions of the new law, and the support of a strong and focussed leadership. The panel specifically recommends to:

- Ensure delivery against the ambitious goals for their plans, including the improvement in performance.
- Manage the identified risks to ensure that the changes and development plans are successfully delivered.

Total score

34.0 / 40

Recommendation

Positive

Position on the ranking list of positively assessed applications

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