Eesti Hariduse Kvaliteediagentuuri kõrghariduse hindamisnõukogu istungi protokoll

29.08.2025

Istungist võtsid osa hindamisnõukogu liikmed Ivar Annus, Peeter Burk, Katrin Jõgar, Maaja-Katrin Kerem, Mihhail Kirejev, Laivi Laidroo, Anneli Porri, Enlil Sonn, Eneken Titov, Krista Tuulik. Puudusid nõukogu liikmed Martin Argus, Priit Reiska ja Hanna-Britt Soots.

Istungit juhatas Peeter Burk. Protokollis hindamisnõukogu sekretär Hillar Bauman.

Istung toimus 29.08.2025. aastal Teamsis. Istung algas kell 12.00 ja lõppes kell 13.15.

Päevakord

1. Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman institutsionaalne akrediteerimine

2. The National University of Ostroh Academy institutsionaalne akrediteerimine

3. Lutsk National Technical University institutsionaalne akrediteerimine

1. Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman institutsionaalne akrediteerimine

Pursuant to section 44.1 of the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation in Ukraine established on the basis of the authorisation contained in subsection 3 of § 38 of the Higher Education Act and in subsection 5 of § 24 of the Statutes of the Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (hereinafter the Council) states the following:

1. The Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman (hereinafter KNEU) and the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA) agreed on the period for institutional accreditation on 20.11.2024.
2. By the decision of 12.02.2025, the Director of HAKA approved the composition of the Assessment Committee for Institutional Accreditation (hereinafter the Committee) as follows:

Enn Listra (chair)	Professor emeritus; Tallinn University of Technology; Estonia
Maiki Udam (secretary)	Head of the Department of Study Quality; Estonian Education and Youth Board; Estonia
Heidi Maiberg	Student member of the Panel; Royal Holloway University of London; Estonia

Maksym Karpash	Vice-rector for International Affairs and Strategic Development; King Danylo University; Ukraine
Nataliia Shalimova	Dean of the Faculty of Economics; Central Ukrainian National Technical University; Ukraine
Olena Smyntyna	Head of Center of Higher Education Quality Assurance; Odessa National I. I. Mechnikov University; Ukraine

3. KNEU submitted the self-evaluation report to HAKA on 15.03.2025, and the assessment coordinator of HAKA sent the self-evaluation report to the Committee on 21.03.2025.
4. The hybrid assessment visit to KNEU took place from 3rd to 5th June 2025.
5. The Committee sent the draft assessment report to HAKA on 07.07.2025, HAKA forwarded the draft assessment report to the higher education institution for comment on 07.07.2025, and KNEU submitted its comments on 20.07.2025.
6. The Committee submitted the final assessment report to HAKA on 05.08.2025. The assessment report is an integral part of the decision. The report is available on the HAKA website.
7. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the final assessment report and the self-evaluation report to the members of the Council on 22.08.2025.
8. The Assessment Committee's assessments were as follows:

Assessment area	Assessment
Organisational management and performance	Conforms to requirements
Teaching and learning	Conforms to requirements
Research, development and/or other creative activities (RDC)	Conforms to requirements
Service to society	Conforms to requirements

⭐ Worthy of Recognition

★ The University benefits from a highly qualified and competent faculty, which is a key determinant of the quality of both education and research at KNEU.

★ Despite the extreme psychological strain caused by wartime conditions, KNEU provides continuous and easily accessible psychological support through multiple channels, playing a crucial role in helping members of the academic community cope with stress and maintain mental resilience.

★ The University has strong relationship with society through its supportive group of diversified stakeholders committed to contributing to KNEU's growth and development and by diverse positions held by academic staff in NGOs and professional associations, supervisory boards at enterprises, advisory and methodological councils at public organisations, and expert groups that contribute to public policy and regulation.

9. At its meeting of 29 August 2025, with the participation of 10 members, the Council discussed the received documents and decided to highlight from the assessment report the following

strengths[1], areas of concern and recommendations[2] and opportunities for further improvement[3] regarding KNEU.

9.1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Strengths

1. The University has established Advisory and Supervisory Boards that can provide strategic guidance.
2. A significant proportion of KNEU academic staff hold doctoral and PhD degrees.
3. Purpose-built IT tools support academic staff performance monitoring and evaluation.
4. KNEU maintains its physical infrastructure in good condition and ensures access for external users, supporting wider societal engagement.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. The current formulation of the mission and vision is broad and lacks specific reference to KNEU's core disciplinary areas, which are central to its identity and strategic direction. The vision and mission statements should be revised to reflect more clearly KNEU's disciplinary focus, such as economics, finance, and management.
2. While implementation of the Development Strategy is primarily the responsibility of middle-level managers, their involvement in shaping strategic goals and priorities remains limited. Mid-level management should be more actively involved in the strategic planning process.
3. Although the hierarchical management structure is well established, communication between decision-making levels is often fragmented, and staff at lower levels are not always fully informed or engaged. Internal communication mechanisms should be enhanced to ensure alignment across units and promote student and staff engagement.
4. Some functional overlaps exist within administrative units, and the number of strategic documents and responsibilities may cause confusion in terms of roles and accountability. The current organisational structure should be reviewed using a fit-for-purpose approach to reduce redundancy and clarify roles.
5. Discrepancies exist between the human resource strategic goals outlined in KNEU's Development Strategy 2025–2029 and the actual regulations and practices related to staff recruitment, evaluation, and monitoring. Strategic targets - such as increasing the proportion of academic staff with scientific degrees or achieving a 1:1 ratio of academic to other staff - are not yet fully supported by internal procedures or implementation mechanisms. KNEU should ensure alignment between its strategic objectives, existing legal constraints, and operational practices by updating its regulatory framework and key performance indicators accordingly.

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[1] Achievements that exceed the level of the standard (not compliance with the standard) are presented as strengths.
[2] Areas of concern and recommendations point to shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the institutional accreditation standard and affect the formation of the final decision of the Council.
[3] Opportunities for further improvement are proposals for improvement that do not contain a reference to noncompliance with the standard and the inclusion or exclusion of which is at the discretion of the institution of higher education. Proposals for further developments will not affect the final decision of the Council.

6. Although several entities, such as the Human Resources Department, dean's offices, and faculty councils, are formally tasked with recruitment and staff evaluation, these processes are largely carried out by department heads with limited substantive involvement from other units. To promote shared responsibility and coherence, KNEU should revise its internal regulations on staff recruitment and performance evaluation to clearly distribute responsibilities across the relevant structural units.

7. Staff satisfaction surveys have been suspended due to the ongoing martial law, and internal communication has not been evaluated as part of these efforts. Moreover, little evidence suggests that past survey results have informed decision-making. KNEU should reinstate regular staff satisfaction surveys, include internal communication as a dedicated area of assessment, and develop formal procedures for incorporating feedback into institutional management practices.

8. Nearly 80% of total expenditures are allocated to staff salaries, yet satisfaction levels among staff remain low. The remuneration policy should be reviewed using a fitness-for-purpose approach to enhance effectiveness and fairness.

9. The share of expenditures dedicated to research and development remains low. This should be addressed by increasing revenues through targeted international fundraising and grant acquisition. Increased revenues shall be long-term planned for the following allocations: staff professional development, institutional support to existing and new R&D divisions, and support for breakthrough innovations.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. Internal communication could be aligned with the current management agenda in terms of tools, channels, and content, as some staff members appear to lack full awareness of the activities carried out by their colleagues.

2. To support the professional development of early-career academic staff, KNEU could consider introducing career consulting services, for example, in the form of a structured onboarding programme. Such an initiative could facilitate more effective internal communication, accelerate staff integration and performance, and enhance the University's attractiveness to young researchers, including its own alumni.

3. To ensure continuity in academic capacity and long-term institutional sustainability, KNEU could also increase the proportion of younger staff members - such as assistants and lecturers - within its academic community.

4. Greater financial autonomy for faculties, particularly those actively involved in external fundraising, could be explored as a means of enhancing resource efficiency and incentivising innovation.

9.2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Strengths

1. An effective system for forming the student body at the bachelor's level, combining preparatory training and diversified outreach activities, enables the recruitment of highly motivated candidates with strong academic potential.

2. Extensive, multi-level cooperation with employers contributes to the high national and international competitiveness of KNEU graduates, as evidenced by the University's leading positions in recognised rankings.

3. Study programme development procedures are clearly defined in internal regulatory documents, widely communicated, and well understood by academic staff. Targeted professional development activities, such as "Accreditation Coaching" and training programmes, support programme teams and managers in implementing these procedures effectively.

4. All study programmes are aligned with national higher education and professional standards while also reflecting KNEU's unique academic strengths and stakeholder needs.

5. Comprehensive and transparent information about study programmes, their evaluation by students, employers, and external quality assurance bodies (such as NAQA), is publicly accessible via the University website through tools such as the Map of Educational Programmes and the e-Portfolio.

6. Stakeholder engagement in programme development is systematic and diverse. Employers are involved through consultations, participation in project teams, department-level engagement, and the Professional Advisory Committee. Students contribute through formal representation, open consultations, and anonymous surveys administered by the Institute of Sociological Research.

7. KNEU demonstrates a strong commitment to student support under extremely challenging conditions. Notably, the University has established an accessible and flexible psychological support system, including anonymous 24/7 counselling services, which represents an exemplary response to student well-being during wartime.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. Enrolment at the master's level remains significantly below licensed capacity. KNEU should expand its offer by introducing interdisciplinary study programmes and promoting second-degree opportunities to graduates of other Ukrainian and international universities.

2. Support for students with visual, hearing, and other disabilities remains limited. KNEU should enhance physical accessibility (e.g. tactile markers, auditory signage), improve digital accessibility on its websites, and provide clearer visual aids for students with hearing impairments.

3. While current students are regularly surveyed, there is no systematic use of anonymous surveys targeting other key stakeholder groups such as graduates and employers. KNEU should expand its feedback mechanisms to include targeted anonymous surveys for graduates and employers and integrate these results into the programme development process.

4. The procedures for recognising prior learning and work experience are insufficiently transparent and rarely applied in practice. Students have limited awareness of the process, and the recognition is based primarily on content comparison rather than learning outcomes. KNEU should review and update its recognition procedures in line with European best

practices, ensure they include informal and non-formal learning, and improve communication to students about available opportunities and application procedures.

<u>Opportunities for further improvement</u>

1. Several KNEU study programmes have been accredited by the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance with excellence. Although these cases are used as references in staff training, their wider dissemination remains limited. KNEU could enhance the institutional learning process by systematically sharing and applying best practices from these exemplary programmes across all study areas and academic units.
2. The University could enhance consistency and efficiency in digital learning by adopting a unified platform, such as Microsoft Teams, for communication, material sharing, and virtual teaching across all study programmes.

9.3. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (RDC)

<u>Strengths</u>

1. KNEU articulates RDC objectives aligned with international research standards (e.g. Scopus, WoS).
2. The University has achieved substantial growth in research output and citation impact. The University demonstrates a high absolute volume of internationally recognised research output.
3. A strong interdisciplinary profile is evident in the thematic distribution of publications.
4. The University has a highly qualified academic staff capable of conducting advanced research and providing effective supervision to doctoral students.
5. A significant proportion of eligible students are actively engaged in research activities.

<u>Areas of concern and recommendations</u>

1. While institutional KPIs are defined in the Development Strategy, the SER and interviews reveal that their translation into operational targets at lower levels is not systematically regulated. The alignment of KPIs at faculty and department levels with institutional RDC targets should be strengthened through clearer internal procedures.
2. Although total publication output is strong, the SER indicates, and interviews confirm that productivity per academic staff member remains modest and uneven across units and faculty members. The University should increase the research productivity of its academic staff, including publication output per faculty member.
3. The University currently relies on indirect or ad hoc sources for identifying societal needs, without a structured or consistent approach to gathering and analysing such data for research planning. A formal mechanism should be introduced to systematically monitor the needs of society and the labour market for integration into RDC planning.
4. Without systematic collection and analysis of student feedback on research supervision, the University lacks reliable evidence to identify areas for improvement, address emerging issues proactively, and ensure consistent quality across supervisory practices. Therefore, student

feedback on the quality of research supervision should be collected and analysed more systematically to inform continuous improvement.

<u>Opportunities for further improvement</u>

1. Reconsidering the distribution of research across subject areas would help concentrate efforts and resources on KNEU's strategic disciplinary strengths—such as economics, finance, and management—thereby enhancing research visibility, impact, and alignment with institutional priorities.
2. The University could consider acquiring additional specialised software tools, e.g., Stata, to further support data-driven research activities.
3. Given the breadth and complexity of the RDC support infrastructure, the University could introduce dedicated staff satisfaction surveys specifically focused on RDC support services to enhance service development.
4. The University should prioritise the expansion of international research cooperation as soon as conditions permit.

9.4. SERVICE TO SOCIETY

<u>Strengths</u>

1. Active participation of academic staff in national and international professional associations, NGOs, advisory councils, and strategic policy initiatives, demonstrating a strong institutional commitment to societal engagement.
2. Consistent dissemination of research and academic achievements through diverse communication channels, including regular media coverage of collaborative projects, joint publications with international organisations, targeted outreach to school communities, and representation in prominent international rankings and initiatives.
3. The University demonstrates a clear and strategic commitment to lifelong learning, with relevant objectives embedded across multiple strategic and operational goals in the Development Strategy. This includes a focus on inclusive access and responsiveness to societal needs.
4. KNEU has established a broad and diverse infrastructure for continuing education, including specialised centres such as the Institute of Business Education, the Educational Centre for Intensive Learning of Foreign and Ukrainian Languages "Intensive", the Center for Veteran Development, and the Startup School. These facilities are accessible to both internal and external audiences. The establishment of the Center for Veteran Development in 2025 serves as a timely and targeted initiative aligned with national priorities and exemplifies good practice in collaboration with government stakeholders.
5. Long-standing and well-integrated public-oriented initiatives such as the "Firm's Strategy" tournament, Startup School, IDEAFEST, and "School of Young Professionals," reflecting institutional commitment and continuity.
6. Active societal engagement through accessible cultural, sporting, and veteran-focused programmes supported by dedicated infrastructure and partnerships.

<u>Areas of concern and recommendations</u>

1. The absence of consistent and structured feedback mechanisms limits the University's ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its lifelong learning programmes and respond to emerging needs. KNEU should develop and implement a comprehensive quality assurance framework for continuing education, including regular, systematic participant satisfaction surveys, structured societal needs assessments, and defined procedures for incorporating feedback into programme design and improvement.

<u>Opportunities for further improvement</u>

1. To strengthen the coherence and effectiveness of its outreach activities, KNEU could introduce more targeted key performance indicators (KPIs) for science communication and public engagement. These may include metrics such as the number of publicly accessible research outputs, expert contributions to media, or outreach events held.
2. The University could also benefit from further systematising its internal monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistent performance tracking and structured reporting. This would support a more robust assessment of the scope, relevance, and impact of its public engagement initiatives.
3. KNEU could consider introducing micro-credential certificates in high-demand areas to attract working professionals, enhance the flexibility of its offerings, and diversify revenue streams. Further leveraging international cooperation mechanisms - such as Erasmus+ and Creative Spark - could provide opportunities to benchmark practices against international standards and support the development of high-quality, modular continuing education provision.
4. Strengthening strategic planning, monitoring, and impact assessment mechanisms would enhance the sustainability, visibility, and effectiveness of public-oriented initiatives, and support their alignment with institutional development goals and international benchmarks.

10. If all component assessments are provided as 'conforms with requirements', the Quality Assessment Council shall conclude that the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment, meet the requirements; and decide to accredit the institution of higher education for seven years.
11. Considering the above, the Council

DECIDED TO:

Accredit the Kyiv National Economic University named after Vadym Hetman for seven years.

The decision was adopted with 10 votes in favour and 0 against.

12. Accreditation is valid until 29.08.2032.

13. A person who considers that his or her rights or freedoms have been infringed by the decision, can lodge a challenge with HAKA's Assessment Council within 30 days of the date on which the objector became aware or should have become aware of the contested act. The Council shall forward the challenge to HAKA's Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the appeal within 10 days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If further examination of the challenge is necessary, the Assessment Council may extend the deadline for examining the challenge by up to 30 days. Judicial contestation of a decision is possible within 30 days from the date of service of the judgment by filing an appeal with the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Court Procedure Act.

2. The National University of Ostroh Academy institutsionaalne akrediteerimine

Pursuant to section 44.1 of the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation in Ukraine established on the basis of the authorisation contained in subsection 3 of § 38 of the Higher Education Act and in subsection 5 of § 24 of the Statutes of the Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (hereinafter the Council) states the following:

1. The National University of Ostroh Academy (hereinafter NUOA) and the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA) agreed on the period for institutional accreditation on 20.11.2024.
2. By the decision of 12.02.2025, the Director of HAKA approved the composition of the Assessment Committee for Institutional Accreditation (hereinafter the Committee) as follows:

Eve Eisenschmidt (chair)	Professor, School of Educational Sciences; Tallinn University; Estonia
Kaija Kumpas-Lenk (secretary)	Office of academic affairs, Head of Development and Quality Division; Tallinn University of Technology; Estonia
Tamara Fedyk	Student member of the Panel; PhD student (Philology) at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University; Ukraine
Birute Klaas-Lang	Professor of Estonian as Foreign Language; University of Tartu; Estonia
Oleksandr Bondarenko	Director of Language Translation Agency "TRANSLATEL LTD"; Ukraine
Serhii Stepenko	Leading researcher; Chernihiv Polytechnic National University; Ukraine

3. NUOA submitted the self-evaluation report to HAKA on 14.03.2025, and the assessment coordinator of HAKA sent the self-evaluation report to the Committee on 28.03.2025.
4. The hybrid assessment visit to NUOA took place from 27th to 29th May 2025.
5. The Committee sent the draft assessment report to HAKA on 04.07.2025, HAKA forwarded the draft assessment report to the higher education institution for comment on 07.07.2025. The NUOA did not have any clarifications or comments on the report.

6. The Committee submitted the final assessment report to HAKA on 22.07.2025. The assessment report is an integral part of the decision. The report is available on the HAKA website.
7. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the final assessment report and the self-evaluation report to the members of the Council on 22.08.2025.
8. The Assessment Committee's assessments were as follows:

Assessment area	Assessment
Organisational management and performance	Conforms to requirements
Teaching and learning	Conforms to requirements
Research, development and/or other creative activities (RDC)	Conforms to requirements
Service to society	Conforms to requirements

⭐ **Worthy of Recognition**

1. Sub-area of general management. NUOA has demonstrated excellence in general management – a clear mission and vision aligned with national priorities, strategic alignment and a strong commitment to societal needs, supported by robust internal quality assurance and inclusive leadership.
2. Sub-area of other public-oriented activities. Consistent implementation of impactful and creative public-oriented initiatives. Fostering community building through the holistic integration of social, educational and cultural activities by involving students and the entire university.

9. At its meeting of 29 August 2025, with the participation of 10 members, the Council discussed the received documents and decided to highlight from the assessment report the following strengths[4], areas of concern and recommendations[5] and opportunities for further improvement[6] regarding NUOA.

9.1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Strengths

1. Clear alignment between national and university strategy and strong commitment to societal needs is part of academic activities.
2. The annual quality assurance monitoring system is thoroughly planned and comprehensive, effective internal quality assurance procedures with regular feedback cycles are in place.
3. Strong commitment to democratic leadership and inclusive decision-making is part of the organisational culture.

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[4] Achievements that exceed the level of the standard (not compliance with the standard) are presented as strengths.
[5] Areas of concern and recommendations point to shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the institutional accreditation standard and affect the formation of the final decision of the Council.
[6] Opportunities for further improvement are proposals for improvement that do not contain a reference to noncompliance with the standard and the inclusion or exclusion of which is at the discretion of the institution of higher education. Proposals for further developments will not affect the final decision of the Council.

4. Growing digital and strategic communication capacity.
5. The university aligns its personnel management system with both national and international best practices by implementing individual teaching and research plans for academic staff, that are evaluated annually.
6. Effective financial management with diversified income and no arrears on salaries or utilities.
7. Transparent budgeting with public reporting increases accountability.
8. Advanced, integrated information systems support academic and administrative functions.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. Several sub-strategies (Digitalisation strategy, Internationalisation strategy) could create fragmentations. More coherence between different plans is recommended with clear connection with key performance indicators.
2. A high teaching-related workload among academic staff, along with a relatively large proportion of part-time, contract-based staff, may lead to burnout and limit the time available for research. To maintain motivation and ensure a better balance between teaching and research, encourage more full-time contracts and deepen staff engagement in research and development.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. Strengthen the visibility and impact of internationalization and digitalization by expanding communication tools to reach global audiences and support collaboration through webinars, podcasts, and virtual events.
2. Develop a comprehensive external communication strategy for disseminating information about core academic, research, and civic activities across digital platforms (website, social media, YouTube and other channels, including the combination of student radio, cultural projects, and collaborations with schools could inspire a national framework for youth engagement in civic education).
3. It is recommended that the university initiate national level debates to reduce teaching hours for professors and other academics while upholding academic standards, such as offering incentives for publishing in international journals and implementing clear regulations for scientific work.
4. Further efforts should be made to expand access to international research grants, foster private partnerships, and collaborate with enterprises in high-tech fields like artificial intelligence and robotics to diversify funding and enhance research output.
5. Introduce more systematic incentives to encourage young professionals to take academic career (e.g. improve visibility and access to career pathways in academia for students through mentorship and research integration).
6. Enhance student training and support for better utilization of academic databases and digital resources to increase meaningful use of databases.
7. Expand international and non-governmental funding efforts to reduce reliance on state budgets.
8. Continue upgrading digital infrastructure to keep the pace with evolving educational technologies.

9.2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Strengths

1. Clear and transparent admission conditions for all levels and all specialities.
2. English-language training for all level of education.
3. Quality control system for educational services and learning environment.
4. Developed university policies for designing and improving study programmes.
5. Stakeholders are involved in study programme development and monitoring which helps to assure that study programmes meet the expectations of employers and society.
6. Each study programme has a component of internship (industrial, research, training, etc.).
7. Student assessment methods are diverse.
8. NUOA has established a support system for students, e.g. a tutoring system.
9. Modern technical and educational technological resources are used.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. There is no system for taking previous work experience into account. Since there are students from various ages and experiences at the university there is a growing need to develop a system for considering previous work experience.
2. Excessive centralisation of the management of learning processes could be resolved by adding responsibility to all levels in the management of learning processes.
3. Student mobility could be increased by expanding the range of international partners in academic mobility.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. To attract international students by offering flexible educational pathways and using new learning technologies.
2. Improve the admission process with motivational interviews with students to prevent drop-out.
3. To introduce stakeholder councils for all study programmes. The activities of the employers' council will facilitate their active involvement in the educational process and the process of improving study programmes. This will allow for immediate response to changes in the labour market and, as a result, the training of highly qualified graduates.
4. Together with students, set up a system to motivate students to give feedback on learning activities.
5. Find ways to increase contact teaching and meetings with students to reduce drop-out.

9.3. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (RDC)

Strengths

1. NUOA has clearly defined strategic goals and operational objectives for research, aligned with its mission and regional development priorities.

2. The University demonstrates steady growth in scientific output, with publications number increasing from 263 to 379 annually between 2020 and 2024, research visibility is supported by substantial presence and citations in Google Scholar and Scopus database.

3. The University actively participates in national and international grant competitions, reflecting a commitment to broad research funding and collaboration.

4. External evaluations confirm NUOA's strong research performance, ranking it 24th out of 104 institutions in Social Sciences within Ukraine.

5. NUOA maintains a comprehensive and transparent RDC support system, integrating research obligations into faculty contracts and providing internal funding through the Ostroh Academy Grant.

6. The University operates 14 research centres and 11 laboratories across diverse disciplines, actively engaging students and fostering international collaboration.

7. NUOA secures diverse financial resources for research, combining internal funding with successful participation in competitive international grant programs such as Erasmus+ and the Visegrad Fund.

8. The University demonstrates strong international cooperation, evidenced by membership in multiple consortia and numerous research and academic agreements worldwide.

9. Modernized infrastructure and well-equipped laboratories, including the Robotics Laboratory, support interdisciplinary research and practical learning, with efficient utilization confirmed by the expert panel.

10. NUOA actively engages students across bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels in diverse research and creative activities, supported by structured supervision and project participation.

11. Supervisory workloads are carefully managed with limits on the number of doctoral candidates per supervisor, ensuring focused and quality mentorship.

12. The University maintains a strong academic integrity culture through clear policies and advanced plagiarism detection tools integrated into the learning platform.

13. Formal frameworks are in place to admit international doctoral students and support their mobility, aligned with international cooperation initiatives.

14. NUOA involves recognized foreign scientists in doctoral programs via international collaborations and partnerships, enhancing global academic exposure for students.

<u>Areas of concern and recommendations</u>

1. The limited international visibility of research outputs can be addressed by developing targeted support programs to increase publications in high-impact, internationally recognized journals through academic writing and dissemination training.

2. The limited number of English-language research publications constrains the University's international visibility and funding opportunities, so it is recommended to increase the share of publications in English-language, peer-reviewed journals to support internationalisation and broader RDC engagement.

3. Moderate doctoral student enrolment and limited internationalization can be improved by creating incentives and streamlined procedures to attract more domestic and international doctoral candidates.

4. Participation in national research funding programs remains limited; the University should increase its strategic engagement with state budget competitions and the National Research Fund of Ukraine to diversify and strengthen its financial support for RDC activities.

5. Students' underutilization of scientific databases limits the depth and quality of their research. This issue should be addressed by enhancing student engagement through mandatory training sessions integrated into research methodology courses, regular library-led workshops on platforms like Scopus and Google Scholar, and the inclusion of compulsory literature reviews based on academic databases in thesis and project requirements.

6. The predominance of single-author student publications may reduce collaborative learning opportunities, so encouraging joint publications with supervisors is recommended.

7. The relatively narrow scope of research groups could be expanded by merging smaller groups to foster broader student participation and interdisciplinary research. Also to help with the supervision workload and manage resources effectively.

8. Limited formal involvement of international supervisors constrains global academic exposure and can be improved by formalizing and increasing foreign expert participation in supervision and co-supervision.

9. High academic teaching loads on staff reduce time available for supervision and research, suggesting systemic and personalized approach to workload reduction by NUOA management.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. Expand interdisciplinary and collaborative research projects to address broader societal challenges and increase stakeholder engagement.

2. Intensify the applications to the state budget funding (young researchers, interdisciplinary research).

3. Strengthen mechanisms to better align research priorities with emerging regional and national development needs through regular stakeholder consultations.

4. Consolidate and strengthen research centres and laboratories to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and optimize the use of resources and to reduce fragmentation of research centres and laboratories.

5. Expand and diversify internal and external funding sources by increasing participation in national research competitions and international grant programs.

6. Further modernize and maintain research infrastructure to meet evolving scientific and technological demands.

7. Enhance support services for researchers, including grant writing assistance, intellectual property management, and research data services.

8. Consider the use of the approved professional standard for higher education teachers under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine Order No. 1466 (dated October 16, 2024) for reduction and personalization of academic staff teaching load to enable more focused and effective PhD student supervision.

9.4. SERVICE TO SOCIETY

<u>Strengths</u>

1. Effective use of public forums (e.g. Diplomatic Forum) and media to popularise scientific and academic discourse.
2. Integration of civic engagement with academic programming through high-profile guest lectures and Science Days.
3. The use of a centralized institutional calendar to coordinate and promote university events demonstrates effective internal communication and outreach. This practice enhances visibility, fosters engagement across departments, and serves as a replicable model for other institutions.
4. Comprehensive teacher training programmes aligned with European standards and digital transformation goals.
5. Continuing education is strongly aligned with national priorities, particularly in the areas of post-conflict recovery and education reform, as evidenced by timely and relevant initiatives like the "One Nation" programme focused on social reintegration.
6. Use of digital and blended formats in Open University increases access to lifelong learning, including for rural and vulnerable populations.
7. Strong integration of the university into the socio-cultural life of Ostroh and the broader region.
8. Effective use of university infrastructure (museums, forums, shelters) for public benefit.
9. Resilient cultural programming during wartime that creatively repurposes institutional resources to benefit the public and strengthen community cohesion, e.g. cultural programming in shelters.

<u>Areas of concern and recommendations</u>

1. While the platform and activities towards society are robust, there is room for development in systemising of faculty's external advisory roles and collaborations to better reflect institutional outreach. The panel recommends that the university develop a systematic database and tracking system for faculty involvement in social or external advisory roles and collaborations to enhance strategic outreach, visibility, and reporting. At the same time actively encourage academic staff to take on such roles and formally recognise this type of engagement by integrating it into staff workload planning and performance assessment frameworks.
2. There appears to be limited strategic engagement with local industries or employers to tailor short-term programmes for labour market needs. Strengthen partnerships with regional business associations and employment services to align continuing education offerings with workforce demands. Establish mechanisms for employers and other stakeholder involvement in shaping continuing education programmes in a more agile and responsive manner.
3. The sustainability of volunteer and cultural programmes is not clearly supported by long-term funding strategies or institutional integration. Secure diversified funding (e.g., municipal co-financing, international grants) and embed public-oriented projects within academic or operational structures to ensure sustainability. Also, formal partnerships with NGOs or CSOs for shared delivery of public services might help. For that it might be useful to develop a

memorandum of cooperation with relevant civil society organisations to co-create and expand outreach initiatives.

<u>Opportunities for further improvement</u>

1. It is not evident how public lectures, and civic events translate into longer-term results and collaborations or policy influence. It might be useful to develop a follow-up system to track policy or academic collaborations arising from public engagements and establish thematic continuity across events.
2. To understand the impact of the carried-out events, post-event surveys or community feedback mechanisms might also help to evaluate the impact and refine future engagement.
3. Continue offering continuing education programmes online and hybrid formats to reach underserved communities, particularly in eastern and southern Ukraine.
4. Continue increasing awareness and visibility of continuing education programmes, public lectures etc through strategic communications and stakeholder engagement. Enhance the visibility of these programmes by actively promoting them through digital platforms and other communication channels at the national level to have broader audiences and outreach. The School of Educational Innovations can be more introduced on national level as good practice, with its sector-specific, targeted upskilling (particularly for teachers), can be a model for scaling sectoral courses for professional development (CPD) across the country.
5. According to SER and the interview with the university senior management the university's digital platform for lifelong learning, though promising, is not widely referenced in terms of actual usage metrics or learner engagement outcomes. Regularly collect and publish data on platform usage, course completion rates, and learner satisfaction to optimize digital delivery and identify improvement areas.
6. Develop a unified feedback and impact-tracking system to evaluate the medium- and long-term effectiveness of continuing education. This would enable the university to assess the real-world outcomes of its lifelong learning initiatives, such as career advancement or skill application by learners. Such insights can inform curriculum improvement, demonstrate societal impact, and support strategic positioning in a competitive educational landscape.
7. Broaden access to Open University content by offering multilingual options, expanding international collaboration in continuing education, and adopting hybrid or fully online formats to enhance accessibility. This would not only increase the university's global reach and visibility but could also attract a more diverse learner base, opening new avenues for external funding, international partnerships, and revenue generation through fee-based programs. Expanding accessibility aligns with broader institutional goals of inclusion, impact, and sustainability.
8. To have a more transparent and unified system for continuing education that is easily understandable for all interested parties, it would be useful in the future to bring The School of Innovations and Open University under one umbrella, instead of having two separate systems, have one centralised monitoring system, create a centralised digital portal for continuing education programmes, clearly specifying course offerings, schedules, target groups, and registration procedures.

9. Enhance visibility of public events, documentation and activities through media partnerships and open-access documentation. Also consider, multilingual visibility and documentation of public-oriented activities to promote replicability and strengthen international reputation. It might be useful to increase outreach to different target groups through targeted access strategies (e.g., people with disabilities, elderly, internally displaced persons).

10. While there is a notable variety of public initiatives, the evaluation of these activities' long-term societal impact remains limited. To address this, an impact monitoring system to assess community outcomes and ensure alignment with university development goals and public needs could be developed. Regular reporting on community impact — such as participant numbers, demographics, and follow-up activities — could also be implemented.

11. Expand thematic diversity in cultural programming to include global and regional sustainability challenges. Consider developing community advisory boards or focus groups to co-design future public programmes. These bodies can serve as structured platforms for dialogue with local stakeholders, ensuring that programming reflects community interests and priorities, enhances relevance and inclusivity, and fosters stronger university-community partnerships.

12. The geographic remoteness of the university may limit broader regional engagement. Increase digital outreach and forge stronger partnerships with other regional educational and cultural institutions to broaden impact.

10. If all component assessments are provided as 'conforms with requirements', the Quality Assessment Council shall conclude that the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment, meet the requirements; and decide to accredit the institution of higher education for seven years.

11. Considering the above, the Council

DECIDED TO:

Accredit the National University of Ostroh Academy for seven years.

The decision was adopted with 10 votes in favour and 0 against.

The Council considers it necessary to emphasize that the areas of concern identified under the RDC and Service to society assessment areas require serious attention to ensure the sustainable development of the university.

12. Accreditation is valid until 29.08.2032.

13. A person who considers that his or her rights or freedoms have been infringed by the decision, can lodge a challenge with HAKA's Assessment Council within 30 days of the date on which the objector became aware or should have become aware of the contested act. The Council shall forward the challenge to HAKA's Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased

opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the appeal within 10 days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If further examination of the challenge is necessary, the Assessment Council may extend the deadline for examining the challenge by up to 30 days. Judicial contestation of a decision is possible within 30 days from the date of service of the judgment by filing an appeal with the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Court Procedure Act.

3. Lutsk National Technical University institutsionaalne akrediteerimine

Pursuant to section 44.2 of the Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation in Ukraine established on the basis of the authorisation contained in subsection 3 of § 38 of the Higher Education Act and in subsection 5 of § 24 of the Statutes of the Education and Youth Board, the Higher Education Assessment Council of the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (hereinafter the Council) states the following:

1. The Lutsk National Technical University (hereinafter LNTU) and the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (HAKA) agreed on the period for institutional accreditation on 20.11.2024.
2. By the decision of 12.02.2025, the Director of HAKA approved the composition of the Assessment Committee for Institutional Accreditation (hereinafter the Committee) as follows:

Kristiina Tõnnisson (chair)	Head of the Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies, University of Tartu (Estonia)
Birgit Vilgats (secretary)	Director of Baltic Film, Media and Arts School, Tallinn University (Estonia)
Polina Hombalevska	Student member of the Panel; President of national students' union of Ukraine – Ukrainian Association of Students - UAS (Ukraine)
Georgii Lopatenko	Associate professor, Dean of the Faculty of Health Physical Education and Sport, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University (Ukraine)
Lauri Tabur	Public governance and education sector reform expert, former Rector of Estonian Academy of Security Sciences (Estonia)
Mykola Trehub	Vice-Rector for Educational Innovations, Kyiv School of Economics, professor of the Department of Geodesy, Dnipro University of Technology (Ukraine)

3. LNTU submitted the self-evaluation report to HAKA on 14.03.2025, and the assessment coordinator of HAKA sent the self-evaluation report to the Committee on 26.03.2025.
4. The hybrid assessment visit to LNTU took place from 3rd to 5th June 2025.
5. The Committee sent the draft assessment report to HAKA on 04.07.2025, HAKA forwarded the draft assessment report to the higher education institution for comment on 07.07.2025, and LNTU submitted its comments on 18.07.2025.
6. The Committee submitted the final assessment report to HAKA on 31.07.2025. The assessment report is an integral part of the decision. The report is available on the HAKA website.

7. The Secretary of the Council forwarded the final assessment report and the self-evaluation report to the members of the Council on 22.08.2025.
8. The Assessment Committee's assessments were as follows:

Assessment area	Assessment
Organisational management and performance	Conforms to requirements
Teaching and learning	Conforms to requirements
Research, development and/or other creative activities (RDC)	Partially conforms to requirements
Service to society	Conforms to requirements

⭐ Worthy of Recognition

⭐ Institutional resilience and civic mission during wartime. LNTU has shown exceptional commitment to continuity, community support, and societal responsibility despite operating under extreme national circumstances. The university's social initiatives, including psychological services, legal counselling, and support for displaced and vulnerable groups, reflect values-based leadership and serve as an example for other institutions.

⭐ Staff international mobility performance. The university has significantly exceeded its targets for academic staff international mobility, demonstrating a proactive and well-supported approach to internationalisation, even in a constrained operating environment.

⭐ Internal digital infrastructure development. LNTU's in-house creation of digital platforms—such as the Academic Management System, e-testing platform, and student/teacher portals—demonstrates initiative, technical capacity, and institutional self-reliance in advancing digital transformation.

⭐ Interdisciplinary student engagement in research. Through the promotion of student-led research, grant schemes, and scientific competitions, LNTU has created a vibrant research culture among early-career scholars, integrating them meaningfully into institutional R&D.

9. At its meeting of 29 August 2025, with the participation of 10 members, the Council discussed the received documents and decided to highlight from the assessment report the following strengths[7], areas of concern and recommendations[8] and opportunities for further improvement[9] regarding LNTU.

9.1 ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Strengths

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[7] Achievements that exceed the level of the standard (not compliance with the standard) are presented as strengths.

[8] Areas of concern and recommendations point to shortcomings in meeting the requirements of the institutional accreditation standard and affect the formation of the final decision of the Council.

[9] Opportunities for further improvement are proposals for improvement that do not contain a reference to noncompliance with the standard and the inclusion or exclusion of which is at the discretion of the institution of higher education. Proposals for further developments will not affect the final decision of the Council.

1. LNTU operates under a clearly defined and well-structured governance model, with responsibilities allocated across academic, administrative, and support units, ensuring coordinated institutional functioning.
2. LNTU demonstrates strong performance in achieving or exceeding several key indicators in the areas of teaching and learning, internationalisation, and digital transformation, including notable growth in academic mobility and research outputs.
3. The university has established an internal quality assurance system, including dedicated structures (e.g., Quality Council, Department of Educational Quality Assurance), which reflect a formal institutional commitment to continuous improvement.
4. Academic integrity and ethics are actively promoted through established codes, awareness activities, and external affiliations (e.g., ENAI), supported by functioning mechanisms for reporting and resolution.
5. The university's digital management systems—such as student and staff portals, automated testing, and internal performance ranking tools—are evidence of a clear commitment to institutional modernisation.
6. LNTU's personnel management is strongly aligned with its strategic development goals, focusing on fostering, preserving, and continuously developing both academic and support staff to ensure long-term academic sustainability.
7. The university cultivates a supportive and inclusive environment, valuing staff contributions and promoting professional growth through equal opportunities and diverse pathways.
8. A clear and transparent academic career management system, including public competitive selection for positions and merit-based promotion processes, ensures the recruitment and advancement of highly competent professionals.
9. The university actively promotes the internationalization of its staff, evidenced by extensive participation in academic mobility programs, research internships, and international projects, enhancing global competencies.
10. LNTU demonstrates excellent economic feasibility with significantly improved financial performance between 2020 and 2024, notably a near 55% increase in general fund revenues and over four-fold growth in special fund revenues, largely driven by doubled student enrolment. This indicates a robust and sustainable financial model, capable of supporting its growth objectives.
11. The university has invested substantially (UAH 165.6 million) in its infrastructure between 2020-2024, undergoing its largest reconstruction in history. This includes major projects like the "SMART Volyn Hub" and "Science Museum," ensuring continuous modernization, renewal of laboratory equipment, and the creation of modern, functional study and RDC spaces.
12. Beyond functionality, LNTU places high priority on ensuring a safe, comfortable, and accessible environment. This is evident through the establishment and maintenance of shelters and emergency preparedness, continuous modernization of facilities (including energy-saving initiatives), and a strong emphasis on barrier-free accessibility in all renovations, reflecting a holistic approach to infrastructure management.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. Key performance indicators (KPIs) are in place and appear to support the university's improvement efforts. However, the current numerical targets are set too low and should be revised. The expert committee recommends a comprehensive review and recalibration of KPIs within the framework of the new development strategy. These revised KPIs should be more ambitious and challenging, better aligned with the university's evolving capabilities and strategic goals—particularly in light of the current wartime context.

2. Progress on long-term digital transformation projects — specifically the Electronic Document Management System (currently 27% complete, with a target year of 2026) and the E-University platform (MyLNTU) (10% complete, target year 2028)—is advancing more slowly than anticipated. The expert committee recommends allocating additional dedicated resources and accelerating implementation timelines to ensure the timely completion of these critical digital infrastructure initiatives.

3. In several areas (graduates, external partners, e-courses) the quality loop is not completely closed and feedback collection is not systematic. Expert panel recommends establishing clear feedback mechanisms to provide structured input on the quality, using this feedback for continuous improvement.

4. Despite recent growth, LNTU has experienced a decline in academic staff numbers, primarily due to the full-scale invasion and the COVID-19 pandemic. Ongoing challenges posed by martial law and a national workforce shortage continue to threaten academic sustainability. The expert panel recommends developing robust contingency plans for staff retention and recruitment during times of crisis. These plans should prioritize enhanced support services, flexible work arrangements, and targeted talent acquisition strategies to mitigate the impact of external disruptions.

5. Although academic staff are expected to engage in demanding international activities, pursue continuous professional development, and contribute actively to both research and teaching, there is currently no evidence of detailed mechanisms to ensure a balanced workload. This lack of oversight poses risks of burnout and reduced effectiveness. The expert panel advises implementing regular, transparent workload assessments and establishing clear, institution-wide guidelines for balancing teaching, research, administrative responsibilities, and international engagement. Adequate resources and support structures should accompany these measures to prevent staff overextension.

6. The substantial increase in special fund revenues is primarily driven by a doubling of student enrolment, with tuition fees as the main source. This heavy reliance on student numbers makes the university financially vulnerable to demographic changes and shifts in enrolment trends. The expert committee recommends diversifying the university's own income streams by actively pursuing the commercialization of research outputs, expanding paid professional development courses for external learners, and increasing fundraising efforts targeting alumni and private donors. These measures would strengthen the university's financial resilience beyond tuition revenue.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. While LNTU manages conflicts of interest and academic integrity, the self-evaluation report and panels highlight the continuous challenge of upholding these principles in a dynamic

environment, requiring constant vigilance and adaptation. Beyond current measures, implement regular, interactive training workshops on academic integrity and conflict of interest for all staff and students, focusing on practical case studies and fostering a proactive culture of ethical behaviour rather than just reactive enforcement.

2. Detailed statistics from staff competition results and professional development participation can be used to conduct deeper analytics (e.g. using dashboards for data processing) for identifying specific skill gaps across departments, forecasting future academic needs, and tailoring professional development programs more precisely to maximize impact and ROI.

3. While the self-evaluation report and conducted interviews emphasizes support and professional growth, the experts' panel didn't find evidence directly detailing the "principles of the reward and motivation". This presents an opportunity to clearly define, document, and widely disseminate these principles to all employees, ensuring transparency and fostering a stronger sense of fairness and recognition, which could further boost morale and retention.

4. Given the emphasis on academic career management and transparent promotion, LNTU has an opportunity to develop more formalized succession planning and leadership development programs.

5. Although investment levels declined in 2024 — mainly due to the completion of major projects and cost optimization — this trend could become problematic if sustained investment is not planned beyond the current initiatives. In light of the long-term demands associated with maintaining and modernizing extensive physical infrastructure, the expert committee recommends developing a comprehensive, multi-year strategic infrastructure investment plan. This plan should clearly identify future needs for maintenance, upgrades, and new developments, and ensure stable funding beyond the lifecycle of current projects to avoid future infrastructure deficits.

6. LNTU demonstrates a commitment to sustainability through the use of renewable energy, eco-friendly materials, and energy-saving initiatives, guided by a developing Sustainable Development Strategy. However, the documentation lacks detail on specific funding allocations or a long-term feasibility plan to achieve climate neutrality. The expert committee advises finalizing and fully operationalizing the Sustainable Development Strategy by establishing clear, measurable targets for renewable energy use and green initiatives. This should be supported by dedicated long-term funding mechanisms and external partnerships to ensure the sustainability and credibility of progress toward climate neutrality.

7. While the university has achieved cost optimization following major project completions, there's an opportunity to implement and embed continuous, university-wide operational efficiency programs across all departments and functions. This would move beyond project-specific savings to foster an ongoing culture of resource optimization and waste reduction in daily operations.

8. With robust ICT resources and six dedicated scientific laboratories, LNTU has an opportunity to explore monetizing underutilized capacity by offering access to specialized equipment or digital services (e.g., data analysis, lab time, software access) to external businesses, research institutions, or community groups, generating additional revenue streams.

9.2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Strengths

1. LNTU has clearly articulated educational mission and strategic objectives, which are aligned with its broader institutional vision and societal role.
2. University has established good relationships with professional organisations and institutions in order to ensure its graduates national and international competitiveness.
3. Very good physical learning infrastructure that also caters for students with special needs.
4. University has close contacts with society and the labour market and bases new study programmes on society- and labour market needs.
5. LNTU has developed a comprehensive procedure for the design and updating of study programmes.
6. Academic staff have the autonomy to determine assessment formats, which promotes flexibility and supports academic freedom.
7. LNTU actively supports student international mobility through a well-articulated institutional strategy and structured procedures. The expert panel commends the university's efforts to promote mobility despite external challenges such as war-related restrictions.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. The expert panel notes a limitation in stakeholder engagement, particularly during the early stages of study programme development. Analysis of the additional documentation provided by LNTU confirms that only employers are actively involved, and primarily during the final stages, after draft of the study programmes have already been formulated. There is no evidence of student participation in the early-stages of the study programme development process, and the university itself acknowledges in the SER that early-stage stakeholder engagement remains an area for improvement. The panel recommends that LNTU strengthen its procedures to ensure earlier and more systematic involvement of a wider range of stakeholders, including students, throughout all phases of programme development.
2. The guidelines for writing Bachelor's and Master's theses do not include assessment criteria for qualification theses. Some of the guidelines published on the LNTU web pages are outdated. The panel recommends that LNTU ensure that all departments regularly update and publish current guidelines for qualification theses, including clearly defined assessment criteria. This will enhance consistency in the evaluation of final student work and support institutional quality assurance efforts.
3. Based on the information gathered during the interviews, experts' panel learned that teachers regularly allow students to improve their grades, which is why there have been no grade disputes since 2022. This approach significantly increases the workload of academic staff members and requires university management to set clear rules on when grade improvements are allowed (for example, only for the lowest grade). Panel recommends developing formal procedures to ensure consistent and equitable handling of grade disputes and improvement requests, particularly in cases involving temporary teaching staff. Such measures would strengthen the university's commitment to student-centred learning and further enhance the transparency and fairness of its assessment system.

4. The expert panel notes that the development and structure of e-courses at LNTU are largely determined by individual teaching staff. While this approach allows for academic freedom and flexibility, it also leads to variability in the quality and format of e-learning materials across different courses. Panel recommends that the university's management consider creating e-learning support system for academic staff.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. The experts' panel encourages the university to further strengthen its quality assurance system by integrating quantifiable indicators directly linked to its strategic objectives. For example, goal "providing labour market with highly qualified graduates" might have quantifiable indicator about employability rate of graduates. This would enhance institutional capacity to monitor goal achievement, support data-informed decision-making, and ensure continuous improvement.

2. Experts' panel strongly supports university's initiative to develop interactive approaches to meet the inclusive needs of students to ensure equal opportunities for achieving learning outcomes and conducting research.

3. The expert panel recommends that LNTU introduce regular surveys of PhD graduates and ensure that the results are made publicly available on the university's official website. This practice would enhance transparency, support quality assurance, and provide valuable insights for the continuous improvement of doctoral education.

4. The expert panel suggest that LNTU further develop its career counselling services by integrating diagnostic tools, personalised coaching, and structured employer engagement. Enhancing these services would support students in aligning their academic paths with long-term career objectives and reinforce the university's role in facilitating successful labour market transitions.

5. The panel advises LNTU to introduce targeted surveys to systematically evaluate the quality and effectiveness of its counselling services. Collecting structured feedback would help identify areas for improvement, ensure alignment with student needs, and contribute to the continuous development of the student support system.

9.3. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITIES (RDC)

Strengths

1. LNTU maintains an extensive network of international and national partnerships that directly support its research and innovation agenda. The university cooperates with 120 foreign universities across 26 countries and has signed agreements with 29 national public authorities and organisations — a number that continues to grow. These partnerships enable joint research projects and collaborative innovation.

2. LNTU actively integrates the evolving needs of society and the labour market into its RDC planning, evidenced by extensive cooperation with over 300 local business partners and the undertaking of "research to business order," ensuring the relevance and practical application of its scientific work.

3. The university consistently shows increasing research output and impact, with high publication numbers in scientometric databases, a continuously growing Hirsch index, and a significant increase in international co-authored publications (peaking at 32% in 2023), highlighting its successful internationalization and contribution to global knowledge.

4. The RDC support system at LNTU is founded on several key departments and units that provide specialised assistance across various aspects of research.

5. The university has demonstrated resilience in securing RDC funding, particularly during challenging periods.

6. LNTU is actively engaged in promoting science among young people and in fostering a culture of research and development.

7. LNTU effectively engages students across all academic cycles (undergraduate to doctoral) in diverse research, creative, and project activities, providing dedicated hubs (clubs, labs, bureaus) that foster professional and personal development.

8. The university actively cultivates entrepreneurial thinking through a well-developed ecosystem, including a Student Business Incubator, Startup School, and other support structures, empowering students to develop innovative ideas and achieve significant success in national and international startup competitions.

9. The university provides comprehensive opportunities for postgraduate and doctoral students to undertake research internships and participate in international academic programs both in Ukraine and abroad, significantly boosting their professional and scientific qualifications through global exposure.

<u>Areas of concern and recommendations</u>

1. LNTU did not achieve its goal for R&D funding obtained through competitive selection from the national budget, and this funding stream decreased to zero in 2024. This indicates a persistent challenge in securing national competitive research grants. Experts' panel suggest developing a targeted strategy to enhance project application writing skills among academic staff, specifically for national competitive grants, and establish a dedicated support unit to identify, prepare, and submit high-quality applications to relevant government funding programs.

2. While LNTU mentions commercialization and technology transfer (e.g., through BIC and patent activity), there were no evidence about detail specific metrics for evaluating the actual economic or societal impact of commercialized RDC results beyond just their establishment or registration. Experts recommend setting clear KPIs for tracking the commercialization success of RDC outcomes, such as spin-off creation, licensing agreements, generated revenue from transferred technologies, and documented societal benefits from applied research, to provide a more comprehensive picture of impact, during the development of new strategy of LNTU.

3. While there are over 300 business partners and "research to business order," there were no evidence on a systematic process for identifying and proactively aligning LNTU's RDC capabilities with specific, high-priority industrial or sectoral needs, beyond general employer involvement. Experts highly recommend conducting regular, in-depth analyses of key industry sectors in Ukraine and globally to identify emerging research needs and technological gaps,

then proactively align LNTU's scientific schools and laboratories to these specific demands, potentially leading to more targeted and higher-value commissioned research.

4. While "research on order for enterprises" is a significant funding source, there was no evidence on how these funds are strategically allocated internally to specific research initiatives, labs, or researchers, which could impact equitable distribution and strategic investment. University should develop and communicate clear, transparent internal policies for the allocation and management of funds secured from enterprise orders, ensuring these resources strategically support LNTU's RDC priorities, encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, and incentivize high-impact research.

5. LNTU has significantly increased international collaborations and projects. Without explicit mention of scaling up administrative and legal support for international agreements, intellectual property across borders, and complex international reporting requirements, existing units might become overburdened. Expert panel recommends conducting an assessment of the administrative capacity required to manage the growing volume of international RDC projects and collaborations, and strengthen relevant support units (e.g., legal, finance, project management) with additional personnel or specialized training in international research administration.

6. While supervisor professionalism and foreign scientist involvement are highlighted, the focus should be on how the workload of supervisors is managed to ensure it is "reasonably balanced," which is critical for sustaining high-quality supervision amidst diverse responsibilities (teaching, RDC, international work). University should implement a transparent workload management system for academic staff involved in supervision, considering the number of students, research intensity, and administrative duties, to ensure sustainable and high-quality mentorship without overburdening supervisors.

7. While LNTU nurtures young talent, there was no evidence for any strategy of attracting and retaining highly experienced, well-known researchers or research leaders, especially given the national workforce shortages and global competition for talent. University should develop a targeted talent acquisition and retention strategy for senior researchers, including competitive research packages, reduced teaching loads, opportunities for establishing new research groups, and active participation in international scientific diplomacy, to elevate LNTU's research profile.

8. The interviewees emphasize research quality, but there was not explicitly provided information or the timeliness discussed of doctoral thesis completion or overall graduation rates, which are key indicators of program effectiveness. Experts' panel advise to begin systematically tracking and reporting doctoral graduation rates and average time-to-degree and analyse this data to identify any systemic barriers or areas for improvement in the doctoral study process and supervision.

9. While postgraduate students' satisfaction with supervision is surveyed, there was no evidence on how feedback on research supervision is systematically gathered from undergraduate or Master's students involved in research, creative, or project activities. Panel recommends extending systematic student satisfaction surveys specifically regarding research supervision and project mentorship to undergraduate and Master's students, utilizing their feedback to continuously refine guidance and support for early-career researchers.

<u>Opportunities for further improvement</u>

1. LNTU lists four distinct scientific schools. While valuable, there were no evidence on mechanisms that actively encourage interdisciplinary collaboration between these schools, which could limit the scope for truly innovative, complex problem-solving. Expert panel suggest developing and incentivize interdisciplinary RDC programs, workshops, and joint funding opportunities that specifically encourage collaboration between LNTU's distinct scientific schools, fostering cross-pollination of ideas and approaches to tackle multifaceted challenges.

2. The panel advises LNTU to strengthen its research commercialisation pipeline by enhancing institutional support for intellectual property protection, conducting market analyses for university-generated technologies, and facilitating connections with venture capital and industrial stakeholders to maximise the socio-economic impact of research.

3. The panel encourages the establishment of interdisciplinary research clusters addressing major societal challenges—such as post-war reconstruction, sustainable development, and digital transformation—by integrating expertise across faculties and scientific schools to promote collaborative and high-impact RDC initiatives.

4. The panel recommends that LNTU complement its existing soft incentive measures with a more comprehensive, performance-based reward system for academic staff and students. This system should recognise achievements in high-impact publishing, successful grant acquisition, patenting, and commercialisation activities, thereby enhancing research excellence.

5. The expert panel suggests that LNTU expand the scope and diversity of international mobility opportunities specifically oriented towards research, development, and creativity. This includes enabling extended research visits, joint supervision arrangements with international experts, and participation in global research consortia to deepen integration into the international academic community.

6. The expert panel recommends developing and implementing a more ambitious and structured strategy for attracting international academic and research funding. This strategy should extend beyond individual scholarships and focus on participation in large-scale, multi-partner consortia, leveraging the university's international cooperation network.

7. The expert panel recommends that LNTU establish a competitive internal seed funding or grant programme aimed at supporting early-stage, interdisciplinary, or high-risk research, development, and creativity (RDC) initiatives. This would encourage innovative projects with the potential for significant long-term impact, particularly those not yet eligible for external funding.

8. The panel advises LNTU to adopt advanced data analytics tools, including AI-driven platforms, to monitor global research trends, identify emerging funding opportunities, and strategically position the university's RDC activities in areas of competitive advantage.

9. The panel suggests that LNTU create a structured accelerator programme within the existing Business Innovation Center or a newly established unit. This programme should provide mentorship, legal and business development support, and seed investment to researchers and students seeking to commercialise RDC results through start-ups or technology licensing.

10. The panel recommends the LNTU to implement a targeted strategy to enhance the global visibility and reputation of its research. In addition to improving traditional metrics, this could

include promoting open science practices, strengthening institutional repositories, increasing participation in prestigious international conferences, fostering collaborations with leading researchers worldwide, and engaging in strategic science communication through international media and digital platforms to highlight LNTU's research strengths and contributions.

11. The experts panel advise to establish a centralized online platform or a dedicated RDC infrastructure manager responsible for tracking high-value equipment, facilitating inter-laboratory sharing agreements, and promoting optimal utilization of specialized research infrastructure across the university.

12. The experts panel recommends LNTU has six dedicated scientific laboratories with renewed equipment. However, the SER doesn't explicitly describe a formal system for sharing high-cost equipment or specialized infrastructure between these laboratories or faculties, which could lead to redundancy or underutilization.

13. While various units like BIC and Scientific and Research Part provide support, there were no evidence about detailed mechanisms to ensure consistent quality, training, or standardization of administrative and logistical support services provided by each to researchers, which could lead to inefficiencies. It is recommended to implement a regular internal audit and quality assurance program for all RDC support units, including researcher feedback surveys, to identify bottlenecks, standardize best practices, and ensure equitable and high-quality administrative support across all scientific endeavours.

14. The expert panel recommends that LNTU establish a continuous professional development programme for all academic staff involved in student supervision. This should focus on best practices in mentorship, ethical research conduct, student well-being support, and the effective integration of interdisciplinary approaches in student-led projects.

15. The panel suggests that LNTU develop an intuitive online platform to match students at all levels with available research projects and supervisors based on shared interests and expertise. The platform should include features for collaborative project management, progress monitoring, and efficient communication.

16. The expert panel advises LNTU to establish a formal mentorship programme linking current doctoral students with successful alumni from academia, industry, and entrepreneurship. This initiative would provide career guidance, networking opportunities, and insights into diverse post-graduation pathways.

9.4. SERVICE TO SOCIETY

Strengths

1. LNTU identifies itself strongly through local community, being in many ways the community centre for the whole Volyn Region.

2. Essential strategic frameworks are in place to guide the overall direction the higher education institution aims to take while promoting its core activities and engaging in social development.

3. Smooth transitioning into online environment has positively impacted participation numbers of professional development programs.

4. The university demonstrates good practice in offering targeted competencies through initiatives such as the Veteran HUB and military specialisation programmes.
5. LNTU is visibly open to partners, offering training programmes not only to business partners and its own staff, but also to the wider community.
6. LNTU has significant number of public-oriented activities ongoing which contribute to the enhancement of community welfare.
7. The university maintains long-standing and stable partnerships with a broad spectrum of external stakeholders, including business and public sector organisations, reflecting sustained mutual cooperation.
8. The implementation of the Open Science Policy demonstrates LNTU's commitment to transparency and accessibility in research, fostering an open and inclusive relationship with the wider public.

Areas of concern and recommendations

1. LNTU objectives regarding continuing education are only vaguely defined and dispersed in various documents making it difficult to assess whether its implementation is effective in relation to these objectives. Therefore, further formal alignment of its continuous education with strategic objectives is needed.
2. The system for surveying participant satisfaction with the quality of continuing education is not yet fully established and needs to be more integrated with programme development.

Opportunities for further improvement

1. LNTU could find it feasible to continue translating the available key strategic frameworks into practical plans (who-when-what) to align more efficiently with societal expectations. There are impressive number of initiatives implemented, especially related to providing services to society, and linking them more with overall operational planning of the university could allow even more efficiency in its work.
2. LNTU might also consider integrating their active participation in various associations and decision-making bodies more into branding and promotion activities of the university to promote the business value of the LNTU to its (potential) partners.
3. Expert panel advise updating the 2021 communication strategy to reflect the current context would contribute to better aligning the university's overall communication initiatives with its community-oriented focus.

10. If one or two component assessments are provided as 'partially conforms with requirements' and all other component assessments are provided as 'conforms with requirements', the Quality Assessment Council shall analyse the strengths and areas for improvement of the higher education institution and conclude that the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment, meet the requirements; and decide to accredit the higher education institution for seven years; or shall conclude that there are deficiencies in the management, administration, academic and research activity, or

academic and research environment of the higher education institution; give instructions to remove them; and decide to accredit the higher education institution for three years.

11. The Council analysed the strengths and areas of concern of LNTU and found that:
    1) LNTU has shown exceptional commitment to continuity, community support, and societal responsibility despite operating under extreme national circumstances. The university's social initiatives, including psychological services, legal counselling, and support for displaced and vulnerable groups, reflect values-based leadership and serve as an example for other institutions.
    2) LNTU demonstrates strong performance in achieving or exceeding several key indicators in the areas of teaching and learning, internationalisation, and digital transformation, including notable growth in academic mobility and research outputs.
    3) LNTU identifies itself strongly through local community, being in many ways the community centre for the whole Volyn Region.

12. Having considered the strengths laid down in section 11, the Council

    DECIDED TO:

    Accredit the Lutsk National Technical University for seven years.

    The decision was adopted with 10 votes in favour and 0 against.

13. Accreditation is valid until 29.08.2032.

14. A person who considers that his or her rights or freedoms have been infringed by the decision, can lodge a challenge with HAKA's Assessment Council within 30 days of the date on which the objector became aware or should have become aware of the contested act. The Council shall forward the challenge to HAKA's Appeals Committee who shall provide an unbiased opinion in writing regarding the validity of the challenge to the Council, within five days after receipt of the challenge. The Council shall resolve the appeal within 10 days of its receipt, taking into account the reasoned opinion of the Appeals Committee. If further examination of the challenge is necessary, the Assessment Council may extend the deadline for examining the challenge by up to 30 days. Judicial contestation of a decision is possible within 30 days from the date of service of the judgment by filing an appeal with the Tallinn Administrative Court pursuant to the procedure provided for in the Administrative Court Procedure Act.

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Peeter Burk **Hillar Bauman**

Kõrghariduse hindamisnõukogu esimees Kõrghariduse hindamisnõukogu sekretär