

At WUT, the three-cycle-system is applied at all levels. The same can be said for the use of ECTS. Unfortunately, the team could not obtain samples of curricula to get a picture on how the concept of learning outcomes is applied, thus it will not elaborate on them. Still, it should be noted that during interviews the concept of 'learning outcomes' appeared at some faculties as not well known among faculty and student members. Thus, the team recommends WUT to take care of these issues as well as the relationship of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) 'learning outcomes and ECTS/student workload and how these are aligned with teaching and assessment methods. The team was told that student workload and contact hours have been reduced during the last years, but the team feels that further reduction to less than 20 hours per week is needed.

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Improving teaching and learning through research, didactical training and the use of ICT

The student organisation said that teaching and learning is moving very slowly towards more student-centred learning. In one interview, a student called the teaching methods 'archaic'. Several students said they wanted more methods that were based on learning by doing (instead of just reading texts and memorising facts).

As stated in the SER, WUT focuses on improving its results in research, which is expected to have a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning. According to the strategic objective to improve research it is stated in the institutional strategic plan: 'the creation of a competitive research environment that would transform the WUT as a pole of excellence focusing on knowledge, scientific research and artistic creation, directly impacting on teaching and on the rendered services to society' (SER 2012 p. 4).

The team understands that there is a direct link between research outputs and the evaluation of study programmes, with a direct impact on the funding of study programmes. Still, it remains unclear how research is supposed to guarantee high quality in teaching and learning. This should be elaborated further. However, as it has been discussed as the priority area for WUT at the moment, the team would like to stress that WUT should not improve research at the expense of teaching and learning.

Effective teaching has three major elements 'the curricula, the teaching methodology and the assessment technique. The last two are undervalued in most universities. The team recommends that WUT looks into reducing one-way lecturing in favour of active/interactive methodologies which put the students at the centre of teaching activity and into criterion-referenced assessment techniques.

The SER reports that WUT management is focusing on the development and improvement of teaching skills by setting up a staff development centre. Also, academic staff will be encouraged to improve the teaching skills by following specific courses (SER 2012, p. 10-11). However, there was not much said about this during the site visits, seemingly these activities are still at the planning stage, but the team strongly supports WUT in doing so. Also, it would be highly reasonable to make much more use of internal expertise, such as that of the Department for Educational Sciences the enthusiasm of which the team witnessed.

Continuing university education

WUT considers continuing university and postgraduate education as a potential source for more income from study fees. Looking at WUT tables on full-time/part-time student numbers for the last years, it becomes obvious that there is a considerable potential for the growth of part-time studies as well as distance learning with the support of ICT in order to accommodate the students and their learning environment in such programmes. For this purpose, WUT just recently opened up the Department for University Continuing Education and Distance Learning, a central support unit for all faculties of WUT, to help them in the development of blended learning and distance learning. The team supports WUT in doing so, also in the light of the reduction of full-time students. During the site visits, the team wondered why not include existing expertise at WUT in HE didactics in order to assist faculties in the development of part-time studies or distance learning, both technically and didactically.

Programme development and link to the labour market

As mentioned already, WUT has established close links to employers and wishes to expand these partnerships for several purposes. As to teaching and learning, external stakeholders could play an important role when it comes to study programme development, providing insights from the labour market as well as internships or practical lectures to students. As to programme development, there are some examples at WUT on how to put this into practice, be it in the framework of a consultative council consisting of external stakeholders only, or as a board for programme development, which also includes two to three external stakeholders. The team considers these approaches excellent and encourages WUT to think of making this general practice in order to ensure that courses are relevant to practice.

Student drop-out

The average number of students per study programme is relatively low (BA level: 128 students for three years, MA level: 35 students for two years), the same can be observed for the student/teacher ratios (23 for all students at WUT and 15.7 at undergraduate level). Despite this, the dropout rates appear to be very high (mathematics 29%, 19%, 23%; even in physical education it is 11%, 19%, 39%). The SER states tutorship as one approach to decrease student dropout, which needs further improvement. Also, there is not yet a proven strategy to support students with lower grades to prevent their dropout, disabled students do not benefit from counselling or programme adaptations for their needs. The team suggests that WUT management carefully analyse the reasons for dropout. Dropout rates and time-to-degree should be monitored.

Career counselling and monitoring employability of graduates

The team noted that WUT is participating in the Trendence barometer, a yearly monitoring of the employability of its graduates, which can be used as a great resource to review study programmes in relation to the intended learning outcomes and qualification for the labour market. During interviews, some students questioned the match between student skills and the market needs. Also, students of several faculties mentioned the necessity of having more practical-oriented teaching.

As for career counselling, the team gained the impression that there are two units working at WUT (Department for career development, cultural, artistic, sport activities and talent acquisition, as stated in the organisational structure of WUT, a subordinated unit of the vice-rector for academic strategy; and the Centre for Psychological Counselling and career guidance). This should be further developed as well as it is important that students know about the existence of such services. The team recommends WUT to consider ways of providing more effective Career Advisory services.

More flexibility in programme content, language learning & students? involvement in research

Starting from winter semester 2013/2014, students are encouraged to choose subjects from a faculty other than their own, with a share of 5-10 ECTS (out of 60) per academic year). Thus, WUT wishes to put the objective to foster interdisciplinary studies into practice. The team welcomes and strongly supports this approach towards more flexible, elective-rich programme content. In addition to this, the team suggests to foster possibilities for language learning within WUT, in order to obtain greater benefits from the internet and related resources, including massive open online courses (MOOCs).