

WROCLAW UNIVERSITY OF ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

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Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Governance and institutional decision-making.....	6
3. Quality culture.....	8
4. Teaching and learning.....	9
5. Research.....	11
6. Service to society.....	13
7. Internationalisation.....	15
8. Conclusion.....	16

1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the Wroclaw University of Economics and Business in Wroclaw, Poland. The evaluation took place between 7 and 11 May 2023, on site.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

The distinctive features of IEP are:

- a strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase;
- a European and international perspective;
- a peer-review approach; and
- support for improvement.

The focus of IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses on:

- decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management; and
- relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management, as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

All aspects of the evaluation are guided by four key questions, which are based on a “fitness for (and of) purpose” approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 WUEB’s profile

Wroclaw University of Economics and Business (WUEB) was originally founded in 1947 as the Higher School of Trade following an initiative of the Wroclaw Association for the Advance of Economic and Trade Sciences. It was originally only a single faculty trade school that became the national Higher School of Economics in 1950, and the university gradually grew over time. In October 2019, the official English name of the University changed to Wroclaw University of Economics and Business.

WUEB is considered one of the top higher education institutions in Business and Economics in Poland. As a public university it is expected to function as an important centre for education, science, and research. In its activities, the university aims at maintaining and strengthening its position on various levels — regional, national, European, and international. According to its website, the university has more than 11.000 students enrolled on the bachelor's, master's and PhD level, resulting in more than 73.000 graduates since the university was founded. About 300 of these 11.000 students are international students.

The university consists of four faculties: the Faculty of Economic Sciences; the Faculty of Management, Computer Science and Finance; the Faculty of Engineering and Economics; and the Branch of Economics, Management and Tourism, which is located on a second campus in Jelenia Góra.

WUEB has updated its vision and mission statements as part of the work leading to its new 2030 strategic plan. Overall, the university sees its mission as creating experts and business leaders by establishing an environment for the development of knowledge, skills, and competences of the future. Sustainability, digitalisation and internationalisation all play an important role in this regard. WUEB is still in the middle of managing the transition from an institution that was mostly catering to the needs of the local community to one that is firmly embedded into a university with an international outreach. As part of this process, WUEB has obtained a number of international accreditations on the programme and institutional levels (e.g., EPAS/EQUIS on the programme level, IQA CEEMAN, ACCA, and AACSB in progress).

The latest changes in Polish higher education law have also been a major influence on the restructuring of the university and the updates of its strategy and statutes. The rather strict legal and political requirements pose quite a challenge for some of the university's internally driven ambitions, some of which will be named in this report.

1.3 The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a specifically assigned self-evaluation team, representing the institution's main stakeholders, and consisting of members from the institutional leadership, team ambassadors of strategic priorities and the International Cooperation Center team.

In alphabetical order, the team members were:

- Dr Magdalena Broszkiewicz, Professor, WUEB, Rector's Representative for Teaching Quality Assurance
- Mgr Karolina Brożyna, Specialist in the Accreditation and International Relations Section
- Prof. dr hab. Bogusława Drelich-Skulska, Vice-Rector for Accreditation and International Cooperation at Wrocław University of Economics and Business
- Dr Dariusz Garczyński, Specialist in the Accreditation and International Relations Section
- Dr Anna H. Jankowiak, Professor, WUEB, Director of International Cooperation Center
- Dr Maria Knecht-Tarczewska, Head of the Accreditation and International Relations Section
- Dr hab. Anna Marciszewska, Professor, WUEB, Department of Economics and Organization of Enterprise

- Julia Majewska, student at Wroclaw University of Economics and Business
- Dr hab. Bogusław Pótorak, Professor, WUEB, Vice-Dean for Academic Programs
- Mgr Klaudia Stawska, Specialist in the Accreditation and International Relations Section

The self-evaluation report (SER) was well-structured and well-designed, including the annexes. The team was able to see that the university was following the previous recommendations very closely, but also where the institution was trying to connect them to other ongoing processes or taking them in a different direction than originally advised. The team also observed considerable progress achieved since the initial evaluation and a very dedicated approach to meaningfully dealing with feedback from the IEP evaluation as well as from other external assessments. There is no doubt that WUEB was tackling the follow-up phase with great engagement and effectiveness. The visit itself was very well prepared and organised, and everyone the team interviewed was positive and willing to engage in a reflective dialogue.

The self-evaluation report of WUEB, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team in April 2023. The visit of the evaluation team to WUEB took place from 7 to 11 May 2023.

The evaluation team (hereinafter named the team) consisted of:

- Prof. Dr. Tatjana Volkova, former Rector, BA School of Business and Finance, Latvia, Chair
- Ana Gvritshvili, PhD student, Tbilisi State University, Georgia
- Dr. Oliver Vettori, Dean/Director Programme Management & Teaching and Learning, WU Vienna (Vienna University of Economics and Business) Austria, Team coordinator

Prof. Dr. Tomáš Zima, former Rector of Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic, was also a part of the team originally, but due to unforeseeable circumstances he had to withdraw shortly before the visit. The team is grateful for his contributions to the preparatory work.

In particular, the team thanks the well-prepared, open, and hospitable academic and administrative staff at WUEB, most notably the Rector, Prof. Dr. Andrzej Kaleta, the Vice-Rector for Accreditation and International Cooperation, Prof. Dr. Bogusława Drelich-Skulska, and the team from the Centre for International Cooperation, led by Prof. Dr. Anna Jankowiak and Dr. Maria Knecht-Tarczewska.

2. Governance and institutional decision-making

As in the previous visit, the team found WUEB to be going through a lot of changes, some externally and some internally induced, and despite the pandemic, the university has been navigating the changes and related challenges very effectively. One of the key changes of the last four years concerns a major organisational and governance reform at WUEB, driven by changes in university legislation, but also internal considerations and peer feedback, in the wake of the previous IEP evaluation. A matrix-like structure has been introduced, and the functions of the current faculties and their leadership (e.g., Deans and Vice-Deans) has changed. The faculties' core mission now is to conduct research and to establish conditions and structures that help to focus academic staff on this part of their activities, while further developing research output and quality. Academic programmes are now led by programme directors, who also hold responsibility for allocating teaching resources and negotiating teaching workloads with academic staff. In addition, various competence centres have been established, which support the staff through various services.

In the original evaluation, the university was advised to clarify roles and responsibilities in the wake of the upcoming organisation changes, and WUEB has done so in an impressive manner, especially given the short timeframe. The team finds that the university has adapted well to the recent structural changes, and even though their full effects remain to be seen, the institution has responded in a positive and constructive spirit. The university has also established clear structures and processes to manage and supervise its vast portfolio of strategic projects and initiatives and is also considering longer-term follow-up costs. Regular risk assessment, not least in financial terms, is a part of this. WUEB is making effective use of its internal expertise, really managing to bring people on board to participate in institutional development.

Development is largely driven by the WUEB Strategy 2030, adopted in May 2021. The strategy has been developed in a very collegial manner, involving lots of actors and stakeholder input from inside and outside the university ("Rector Strategic Forum 3.0"). Six strategic fields are considered particularly important:

- 1) committed employees;
- 2) modern organisation;
- 3) cooperation with business;
- 4) recognised practice-inspired research;
- 5) outstanding education of experts and business leaders;
- 6) continuous development of the competences of the future.

Introduction of the strategy was accompanied by clear implementation plans and monitoring processes. The team found, however, that it might be beneficial for WUEB **to invest even more work into a meaningful operationalisation of its strategic ambitions into KPIs, but also process indicators on a more operational level as well as impact measures**. The team was aware that the soon to be finalised set of KPIs have been developed over quite a long time. At the same time, it saw gaps in the underlying causal chains as well as some cases where the availability of data was driving the definition of indicators, instead of the other way round. In other words, not everything that can be counted should be used as a proxy just because it is easy to use.

During the interviews, it was frequently emphasised how strengthening internationalisation – international visibility and recognition, strategic cooperations, increasing mobility – is one of the

strategic priorities of the university. The Strategic Plan, however, does not correspondingly emphasise this priority. Instead, there is a separate international development plan (publicly available) which is only loosely coupled with the Strategic Plan. In the team's view, a coherent approach would be **to embed the institutional internationalisation plan and WUEB's national and regional impact ambitions more strongly within the overall strategy document, as they appear to be the two main driving forces (together with digitalisation) from a longer-term perspective.**

One main function of KPIs is to provide orientation for the university, much in the way of a coordinate system – but there are other possibilities to provide this orientation. In this respect, the team advises WUEB **to explore options for a more systematic and strategy-led system of benchmarking. Specifically, the benchmarks should identify and analyse: which are the institutions that the university aspires to follow or which inspire it; which are its main competitors and why; and which are the universities WUEB can compare itself to and what can the university learn from them.** Limiting the benchmarks to these specific questions and systematically monitoring them could play an important role in moving the institution forward, beyond an assessment of its goal attainment.

Making the strategic process more agile and flexible is considered a key achievement by everyone involved. The annual updating of strategic priorities and adaptation of plans ensure WUEB's viability and is very much in line with suggestions from the previous evaluation. There is still a risk that the university overstretches itself. Changing work attitudes, the fierce national and international competition for top talents and the current economic challenges all make it important to anticipate difficulties in recruiting or retaining staff. The university's continuing work on HR support structure and genuine efforts to focus on staff well-being help to mitigate this risk. Laudable recent innovations include the Academy of Leaders, which helps to prepare staff on different levels for their roles, or the Skills Development Office.

3. Quality culture

The university has clearly invested in further developing its quality assurance (QA) system for education, including establishing regular peer observation of teaching, and exploring digital feedback options. The former has also been praised by the interviewed teaching staff, as they appreciate the systematic collegial feedback. The introduction of the so-called didactic teams further helps in this regard. Very much in line with the ESG, the university has also established annual study programme reviews, making effective use of the new management structure for education mentioned in the section on governance and decision-making. Even though there is still room for improvement, WUEB has been visibly updating its methodological portfolio, as had been suggested in the previous review. Integrating the various data-management systems (which is part of a larger digital transformation process planned until 2030) has also been a key success factor in making the existing QA system not only stronger, but also more efficient.

There is a strong quality culture in place, but it is also to a considerable degree accreditation-driven and compliance-oriented. Even though the accreditation unit and quality assurance unit are separate, the various international accreditations play a decisive role in both, and the recommendations from the various external assessments on the institutional and programme levels (e.g., EFMD programme accreditation, CEEMAN IQA, AMBA, CIMA, ACCA and also IEP) create a quite comprehensive list of “homework assignments”, which drive institutional development to a considerable degree. It is in many ways positive that the university takes these external assessments seriously and treats them as valuable developmental inputs, but the team nevertheless **encourages WUEB to carefully streamline its different external assessments and accreditations to avoid being largely driven and/or overloaded by them.**

As WUEB states in the SER, the quality system in place is mainly primed to improve the quality of education. The team was able to confirm this during the interviews; however, in comparison, systematic quality assurance mechanisms for research are much underdeveloped. Commissions for research quality, situated within each faculty, have been established to carry out regular evaluations of research, but the underlying processes and methods are far less elaborate than in the education part of the organisation, and it remained unclear how quality loops in research are closed. Quality assurance instruments or procedures covering third mission activities are basically non-existent. An integrated overarching quality assurance system, covering all areas of operation in a comparable way, is still not closer than four years ago. A more systematic research management and quality assurance system is also wished for by the Deans and Vice-Deans. The team therefore **advises the university to further develop quality assurance instruments and mechanisms for research and third mission/impact activities, which could include, for example, 360° evaluations of faculties/departments, research area evaluations and impact analyses.**

Students feel that, in general, quality assurance of teaching and learning works rather well, and emphasise that they usually find open doors and ears if they note an issue for improvement. The university even incentivises students to take part in the official feedback processes. Yet both students as well as external stakeholders mentioned that they often lack the knowledge and insight about what happens afterwards and how their feedback has an impact. **The team thereby encourages the university to increase its efforts toward closing the quality loops also communicatively, strengthening policies and practices regarding feedback on feedback.** Ultimately, seeing that the university takes all input seriously (even if not all input can or should lead to an action), feedback will be more effective than any other kind of incentive.

4. Teaching and learning

The last years at WUEB have been characterised by a major educational reform: the responsibility for managing teaching and learning has been carefully shifted from the faculties to newly established programme managers, and the programme portfolio – as had also been suggested in the previous review – has been revised, with some new programmes and majors either already launched or in an advanced stage of preparation. The rector and the senate remain responsible for the overall teaching policy, but new boards coordinating fields of study or programmes have been established and didactic teams focusing on specific subjects facilitate good practice exchange and advise the teaching staff. Together, the programme managers and didactic teams play a big role in ensuring consistency and shared quality standards, enabling an effective institutional dialogue on teaching and learning methods. All in all, the new matrix structure seems to be working well in practice, and everyone the team met was positive about the new roles and committees (including, but not limited to the people who hold these new roles). The team feels that at least in these early stages of implementation, the university has successfully managed to make the new programme scheme work.

On the other hand, programmes appear to be coordinated rather than actually managed: student workload, constructive alignment, assessment quality, overlap-free scheduling and alignment of courses are all issues to be further developed. The communication architecture and culture to support such endeavours are clearly here – but the people involved might need the necessary top-down led impulses to systematically tackle such issues. In this respect, **the team suggests that WUEB find ways of monitoring students' learning experiences and learning conditions beyond the well-proven student feedback systems. In particular, monitoring actual student workload, learning effectiveness and assessment quality will be important for the future.**

This is not to say that the university is not moving forward on pedagogical development. On the contrary, teaching innovations are encouraged on various levels, many of them with a technological component (for example, the new virtual campus). Students are also benefitting from InQUBE, the mentoring programme, and other initiatives. A new “virtual campus” is currently being developed, which will not only support synchronous and asynchronous online teaching and learning, but also digital student services. Overall, the SER and the visit showcased an abundance of new initiatives, though many are still in their pilot phase and not yet benefitting the majority of students. Also, from the team's perspective, there is still too strong a focus on teaching, rather than student-centred learning, despite the academic staff being very dedicated and willing to develop. Student-centred learning and an updated teaching and learning policy had already been advocated in the previous visit, but here progress is not as visible as in other areas. Assessment of learning outcomes, in particular, seems not yet to be recognised as a pivotal area for didactic innovation.

This is also mirrored in the way learning outcomes are handled at the university. At first glance, learning outcome orientation is strong, and some of the syllabi the team reviewed feature an admirable level of detail on the skills and competences students are supposed to develop, including how the individual courses relate to the overall programme level goals and how skills are to be weighted. In the current set up, though, the current academic programmes and individual classes have too many learning outcomes to be meaningfully covered, tracked, and evaluated. Wherever possible, **the team therefore encourages the university to slim down the range of learning outcomes, and to prioritise existing curriculum maps to clearly define which classes are mainly responsible for which hard and soft skills and how courses complement each other in achieving overall goals.**

Lastly, student numbers are going down, even though the university can still be selective when admitting students to the various programmes. Dropout rates, particularly in the first year, are relatively high, mirroring the fact that students – also in their own words - often feel lost in their first year and need support to ease their start into academic life. The team thereby advises WUEB **to rethink the first year of studies, also in terms of support, and invest time and effort into easing the transition from high school to university to avoid losing potential top talents too early.**

5. Research

The university is on a clear upward trajectory regarding research and has the clear objective to also raise the quality of publications, not just the quantity. Goals include an increase of domestic and international research awards for WUEB-affiliated publications as well as a certain quota of publications tackling research problems of current social and economic importance.

There is however a tension between the university's own ambitions and the recently introduced national framework, which are sometimes pulling in different directions. At times, these differences have a practical impact, such as in deciding which journals are relevant. The team is aware that navigating this difficult environment and aligning trends in the international scientific communities with national interests will be a key necessity in the future.

The SWOT analysis cited in the appendix of the SER sees WUEB well equipped to do so. The most recent restructuring of the university, redefining the faculties as the primary research hubs, will play a major role in bringing the research goals to life. The team understands that the university is still in transition regarding its structure and that the number and name of departments may change over time.

Currently, however, there is still a dominant "microstructure" with many fragmented/overlapping departments, which impacts the way research is organised. This point was conceded by several interview partners. In line with these observations and in light of the recommendations from the previous review, the team **encourages WUEB to further connect research areas across departments and faculties; there is still potential for more research collaborations across faculties, universities and regions, as well as internationally.**

This will also help WUEB gain a clearer research profile. Currently, it is difficult to distil such a profile from the research set up, which is bottom-up and very interest- and opportunity-driven. During the last review, the team recommended developing a system of research analytics, and the foundation for such a system has been laid. There is still considerable potential for a deeper analysis of the current research output, identifying those research areas in which WUEB is already strong and where it wants to become stronger, to distinguish itself from the national and international competition. Recognising that such an analysis or similar evaluative endeavour will be crucial, the team **suggests that WUEB invest in creating a communicable research profile focusing on the university's areas of research excellence, also in relation to its strategic profile, and with an eye on what the competitors are doing.** Finding an answer to the question what WUEB wants to be known for will play an important role for the university's international positioning.

Relatedly, the team proposes **that WUEB systematically explore emerging areas of high priority research, including cyber security, artificial intelligence, digital and green economy, and embed them visibly in its research agenda.** This also includes aligning areas of research between the different departments with respect to the overlaps mentioned above.

Another area that the previous evaluation had touched upon and where the university has clearly invested a lot of time and effort is its doctoral education: in 2019 a new doctoral school was established, and the development and support of the university's PhD students is clearly an institutional priority. PhD students have access to a great variety of internal funds and support offers, including career development and internationalisation. Opportunities to engage in research for bachelor's and master's students are still not yet that systematically embedded across the portfolio,

though. There are basic classes on conducting research, and various opportunities for students to hone their problem-solving skills, but learning through research/research-led teaching (as a didactic principle, not limited to taught content) is still something to consider more strongly. Even though the team does not formulate a formal recommendation in this regard, it still advises the university to explore the growing movement for undergraduate research and to build such elements into all programmes and learning opportunities.

6. Service to society

Societal impact and relevance on the regional and national level is one of WUEB's key priorities. The university regards developing connections with the world of practice (for monetary and impact reasons) as one of the biggest challenges for the next years. As mentioned in the SER, cooperation with the world of practice takes the form of both permanent partnership and periodic activities, which are flexibly carried out as needed. Corporate representatives are involved in, among other entities, the University Council or the newly established Field of Study Board. Various units and centres are contributing to this goal including: the Knowledge and Innovation Transfer and Commercialization Centre, InQUBE (a comprehensive Entrepreneurship Centre, offering learning opportunities for students but also support for start-ups), the Center for Designing Innovative Solutions DT-Hub (which also delivers staff development services to WUEB) the Collaboration with Business Centre (which aims at establishing and maintaining relations with external partners and supports joint activities with them), as well as several new initiatives. WUEB also runs a "University of the Third Age" (UTW) as an organisational unit. The main aims of the UTW are to carry out educational activities to activate and stimulate the intellectual and mental development of citizens, not least as a means to prevent social exclusion.

In fact, there are so many institutional and individual initiatives that — as the interviews revealed — no one has oversight or a clear quantitative/qualitative grasp of WUEB's Service to Society activities in total, or at least of the most impactful ones. The university is employing various channels to communicate with the outside world, but the stories are very much oriented toward the logic and internal needs of the university, rather than the demands of the outside world. In simpler words: communication is more about sending out information than creating an image or positioning the institution. The university needs to assess its impact more effectively and to fuel its narrative of relevance. **The team therefore advises WUEB to invest in the development of a comprehensive third mission repository (i.e., collecting the third mission activities of all staff members in a database) and link them to societal impact KPIs.** For this it would be helpful to define more clearly, what the objectives of third mission activities are: earning money? demonstrating impact? providing learning opportunities for students? building stable partnerships? In each case, the targets and activities will need to look slightly different.

Entrepreneurial thinking, in particular, is something the university wants to instil in all graduates. There is even a high-level Council of (Wroclaw-based) Entrepreneurs advising the university's senior management team in this regard. InQube as mentioned above, plays an important role for delivering on this ambition. At present, however, WUEB's entrepreneurship-related activities and initiatives are reaching only a minority of students, as they are mostly organised as extracurricular activities. In light of WUEB's self-stated prioritisation of instilling an entrepreneurial mindset in all its graduates, **the team suggests embedding this issue more strongly in all its programmes. Student-teacher-stakeholder conferences on the level of the entire university could be an interesting showcase opportunity.**

Regarding a more systematic alumni relationship management, as had been suggested in the previous review, WUEB lists in the SER a number of recent events or initiatives, most of them bound to a single programme, though, and not alluding to an overall scheme. A "Graduates' Professional Careers Monitoring" study, conducted by the Business Cooperation Center, provides input to improve the quality of education by adapting curricula to the needs of the labour market. Long-term career tracking and systematic impact monitoring beyond individual stories of success, however, continues

to be an area for development. **The team therefore suggests developing a methodology for long-term tracking of the university's top alumni.**

7. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is a key priority for the university, with many important steps taken in the last years. International visibility and recognition appear to be one of the core goals, according to interviews across the stakeholder groups. In this regard, WUEB is particularly proud of its various international accreditations and aims for even more prestigious ones. The current International Development Plan of WUEB was adopted under Regulation of the Rector No. 13/2022 and appears to be closely linked to the values and priorities of the Strategy 2030. However, the team found it surprising that such a pivotal strategic area is included in a separate strategic document, rather than as part of the overall strategic plan. The university is actively pursuing and hosting events with the international higher education (specifically Business School) events.

The International Cooperation Center plays a big role here and also implements and monitors strategic initiatives. The Accreditation and International Relations Section within the Center cooperates with foreign institutions and international organisations, co-organising conferences and seminars. The team perceived a slight mismatch between the university's ambitions to become more visible on the global stage and the actual activities employed. It therefore encourages WUEB **to find more effective ways to achieve a higher level of visibility on the international stage. Accreditations and joining an alliance network are important building steps, but so would be rankings, internationalising the academic/administrative staff and corporate connections, joint programs and strategic community work.** The team also believes that the university has yet to fully tap the potential for strategic partnerships and networks, as had been suggested in the previous review. For example, targeting partner institutions or communities that would help the institution to raise its profile could be one possible approach.

According to the SER, WUEB strives to internationalise its activities in all areas. This is not further specified, though. International mobility programmes play a major role in this respect and have been opened for academic and administrative staff, with an impressive number of stays abroad. However, with 7%, the share of students with mobility experience is far less impressive. The increased ERASMUS+ funds and newly created mobility windows on the level of individual programmes are increasing mobility opportunities but might ultimately not be enough to achieve a significant share of graduates with an international mindset. Relatedly, the team perceives a need to rethink the present approach for instilling an international mindset in as many graduates as possible. It **advises the university to explore ideas such as mandatory international experience in some programmes as well as increasing networking opportunities for students with international faculty and students at home or abroad.**

8. Conclusion

Summing up, the team found that WUEB has achieved a lot since the last visit.

The university has demonstrated its capacity for change in an impressive manner: it has transformed itself in many ways in the last years. Be it structural changes, strategy adaptations or new policies and initiatives, the university has implemented an incredible array of innovations in a short time. This is particularly noteworthy given that three out of these four years have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which WUEB also seems to have handled in a laudably effective manner. The recommendations from the previous IEP evaluation have all been taken seriously, and for most suggestions, the university was able to demonstrate how they were systematically followed up on.

Overall, WUEB remains a positive, open, and reflective university, ambitious in its goals to play in the “premier league” of international business schools and working hard to get there. Remaining a university that is firmly grounded in the Polish community it is serving, while on the other hand becoming more visible and connected on the international stage, poses some challenges but is very much part of WUEB’s commendable research ambitions.

The team sees that the transformative journey the university is undertaking is far from over and that it has the clear ambition to move even further. It is also clear, though, that the leadership change in the next year, economic uncertainties, the unstable geopolitical situation and the rapidly accelerating technological development are also forces to consider. Relatedly, there is still a risk that the university may be overstretching itself, and with changing work attitudes, the fierce national and international competition for top talents and the current economic challenges, it is important to anticipate difficulties to recruit new/retain staff.

However, the team is highly confident that WUEB has the necessary structures, processes and, most of all, the spirit to navigate these challenges and hopes that the feedback from this follow-up evaluation will provide input for reflection regarding the immediate and mid-term next steps.

Summary of the recommendations

With regard to governance and decision making:

- **invest even more work into a meaningful operationalisation of the university’s strategic ambitions into KPIs, but also process indicators on a more operational level as well as impact measures;**
- **embed the institutional internationalisation plan and WUEB’s national and regional impact ambitions more strongly within the overall strategy document, as they appear to be the two main driving forces (together with digitalisation) from a longer-term perspective;**
- **explore options for a more systematic and strategy-led benchmarking system to identify and analyse: which are the institutions that the university aspires to become, or which inspire it; which are its main competitors and why; and which are the universities WUEB can compare itself to and what can it learn from them.**

With regard to quality culture:

- carefully streamline the different external assessments and accreditations in order to avoid being largely driven and/or overloaded by them;
- further develop quality assurance instruments and mechanisms for research and third mission/impact activities, which could include, for example, 360° evaluations of the university's faculties/departments, research area evaluations and impact analyses;
- increase efforts toward closing the quality loops also communicatively, strengthening policies and practices regarding feedback on feedback.

With regard to teaching and learning:

- find ways of monitoring students' learning experiences and learning conditions beyond the well-proven student feedback systems — in particular, monitoring actual student workload, learning effectiveness and assessment quality will be important for the future;
- slim down the range of learning outcomes, and prioritise existing curriculum maps to clearly define which classes are mainly responsible for which hard and soft skills and how courses complement each other in achieving overall goals;
- rethink the first year of studies, also in terms of support, and invest time and effort into easing the transition from high school to university to avoid losing potential top talents too early.

With regard to research:

- further connect the research areas across departments and faculties; there is still potential for more research collaborations across faculties, universities, and regions, as well as internationally;
- invest in creating a communicable research profile focusing on the university's areas of research excellence, also in relation to its strategic profile, and with an eye on what the competitors are doing;
- systematically explore emerging areas of high priority research, including cyber security, artificial intelligence, digital and green economy, and embed them visibly in the university's research agenda.

With regard to service to society:

- invest in the development of a comprehensive third mission repository (i.e., collecting the third mission activities of all staff members in a database) and link them to societal impact KPIs;
- embed entrepreneurial thinking and skills more strongly in all the university's programmes. Student-teacher-stakeholder conferences on the level of the entire university could be an interesting showcase opportunity;
- develop a methodology for long term tracking of the university's top alumni.

With regard to internationalisation:

- **find more effective ways to achieve a higher level of visibility on the international stage. Accreditations and joining an alliance network are important building steps, but so would be rankings, internationalising the academic/administrative staff and corporate connections, joint programs, and strategic community work;**
- **explore ideas such as mandatory international experience in some programmes as well as increasing networking opportunities for students with international faculty and students at home or abroad.**