

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
APPLIED SCIENCES VELIKA GORICA
2022-2026

Publisher

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CONTENTS

COMMITTEE FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE STRATEGY AND INFORMATION ON ITS ADOPTION	6
FOREWORD BY THE DEAN	8
1. INTRODUCTION	10
2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY	13
3. METHODOLOGY FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE STRATEGY AND COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	15
4. MISSION, VISION, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	17
5. QUALITY POLICY AND THE SWOT ANALYSIS	18
6. INTERNATIONALIZATION	22
7. GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES	24
8. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND SUB-OBJECTIVES, MEASURES, INDICATORS, IMPLEMENTERS, AND DEADLINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	27
9. CONCLUSION	48

COMMITTEE FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE STRATEGY AND INFORMATION ON ITS ADOPTION

Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026 was drafted by the Committee for the drafting of the proposal of the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026, consisting of 13 members. The Committee was appointed on the 15 July 2021 by the decision (CLASS: 602-04/21-01/036; REG. NO.: 238/31-132-056-21-23) of the Dean of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica, Ivan Toth, PhD, col. prof., associate professor.

Members of the Committee for the drafting of the proposal of the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026:

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Opinions of all other employees of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica were also considered in drafting the Strategy.

Gendered terms apply equally to all genders, regardless of the gender in which they are expressed.

For practical reasons, the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is often shortened to University in the text, while the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026 is shortened to Strategy.

Abbreviations are explained at their first appearance in the text.

The content of the document is the sole responsibility of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica, which is also the only holder of this document.

The Governing Council of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica adopted this Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026 on its 2nd session, held on 20 December 2021.



FOREWORD BY THE DEAN

Determining the development strategy and formulating objectives until 2026 for the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica and all its employees means clearly determining the path we want to follow in the coming years and find the ways to fulfil our set objectives. Our institution has a structure through which we realize all our business tasks and only our joint efforts can ensure the implementation of our formulated plans.

This strategy was developed through the identification of all our strengths and weaknesses during the past five years, as well as the vision of development we aim to achieve. The University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica established a clear direction of continuous development at its very inception in 2003, thus defining its mission which it has been following throughout the years. The mission entails our core business – higher education, along with the continuous development of study programmes and lifelong learning, all based on the monitoring of the market needs. Furthermore, it directs us towards the recognition of a higher education institution which has built its place in the national, but also international environment, as well as the socially responsible work that creates a positive impact in our community.

The Strategy is a framework by which we will work and create, taking into account given conditions determined by our environment, demographics and current economic trends and opportunities, as the consequence of the overall state of society and natural influences that accompany us. Therefore, the development of the University will in the following years be likewise based on the strengthening of the system of quality and sustainable development through the constant upgrading of the study programmes which cover a wide range of interests of young people who want to study, as well as the needs of our community. We will continue to develop the scientific and professional staff, encourage lifelong learning, enhance communication, and realize projects of common interest with the business sector, which will further strengthen the role of the University at the local, national, and European level. Our guiding thought has always been and has remained: high-quality and efficient system management, constant work on the improvement and development of study programmes, development of teaching processes, strengthening human resources and infrastructure, encouragement of scientific and research work and the creation of a recognizable role in the society through cooperation at all levels.

Today, after 18 years, we can say that we have attained an enviable level of quality and recognition,

and we want to be one of the best domestic and international higher education institutions. Clear objectives, which we as an institution want to continue realizing, are the achievement of high-quality and recognizable higher education in the European higher education area, assurance of efficient and sustainable management of the University and its quality system, as well as recognizable work by the University from the local to the international level.

The times ahead provide us with great responsibility to build an even better institution and even more quality conditions for the young people and all those eager for personal development to acquire competences necessary for their further development. Aware of our significant role in society as a higher education institution, the University must continue to be a place of intellectual development, a place which will attract young people and be a desirable environment for the work and development of our employees. The development of this Strategy is the presentation of a vision built on the basis of real perspective, which can be achieved only through joint effort, commitment and mutual respect of all of us at the University, since our strength is measured by our weakest link.

Objectives are easier to achieve if they are set realistically, to an attainable level. However, moderately ambitious goals allow for something more to be achieved. We were guided by this belief in the development of this strategy, which shall be upgraded and supplemented as necessary, according to the time and opportunities given to us and the needs of the community in which we live. Taking into consideration all our strengths and weaknesses, recognizing all our opportunities and limitations identified over our 18-year work, and looking for a safe path between our desires and opportunities, we want to create a stimulating place which offers high-quality and modern education, stimulating for our students, teachers and employees who will give their best in such an environment, and build an institution valued and recognizable in the society to which we belong.

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is a private higher education institution, which started operating in 2003 when it obtained work permit from the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. It was established in accordance with the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education, while its founders were the City of Velika Gorica, the College of Occupational Safety and Health from Zagreb, Technology Transfer Centre of the Zagreb University's Faculty of Mechanical Engineering and Naval Architecture. In the meantime, the City of Velika Gorica became the sole founder of the University, while Ivan Toth, PhD, col. prof. is the person authorized to represent the University.

The University is located at the address Zagrebačka ulica 5, 10410 Velika Gorica (OIB: 09032023114, ID No.: 01745069).

The University has a total of 90 employees (teaching and non-teaching staff), while a large number of external associates (87) from various institutions and business entities likewise participate in the teaching activities.

The University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica currently performs five undergraduate professional study programmes and three specialist graduate professional study programmes that enable attendees to acquire knowledge and skills necessary to perform occupations for which there is a real demand in Croatia and beyond its borders.

Higher education institutions represent one of the main factors in continuous economic development, and the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is oriented towards people eager to gain knowledge, who will one day be active factors in the development of the whole society.

Study programmes currently performed by the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica are the following:

● ***Undergraduate professional study programmes:***

1. Computer Systems Maintenance
2. Crisis Management
3. Aircraft Maintenance

4. Optometry
5. Motor Vehicles

● ***Specialist graduate professional study programmes:***

1. Crisis Management
2. Information Systems
3. Logistics Management

The Statute of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica and the Act prescribe and determine the status of the institution, its legal status, activities, and internal structure of the University.

Activities of the University include:

- organization and implementation of adult education, training, and specialization programmes,
- organization and implementation of various lifelong learning programmes in its primary fields of activity,
- training for the purposes of crisis management, civil protection, firefighting and other organized protection and rescue forces,
- publishing, library, and IT activities related to its primary field of activity,
- preparation of risk and threat assessment studies, crisis plans and protection and rescue plans,
- performing other unmentioned services and commercial activities of trade in goods and services in its primary field of activity,
- organization and performance of professional, collaborative, and joint study programmes,
- performance of professional and scientific activities and the organization of professional and scientific conferences in accordance with the requirements established by special regulations.

Governing bodies of the University are:

- **Governing Council** – governs the University, takes care about the performance of the University's activities and protects the University in accordance with the founding act and the Statute of the University.
- **Dean** – represents and manages the University and in his work has the rights and obligations of the director of the institution. The dean is the head of the University who manages the University within the framework specified by the Statute and the legislation.
- **Expert Council** – University body which discusses and decides on academic, professional, teaching, and scientific issues related to the University's activities, within its powers determined by the legislation, the Statute, and other general acts of the University.
- **Business director** – manages the business subsystem of the University, represents the University in the business community within the powers determined by the Statute, the Book of Regulations on the Internal Organisation, and those entrusted to him by the Dean.
- **Other governing, advisory, and professional bodies** whose foundation, composition and competence are regulated by the Statute or other general acts of the University.

As an advisory body, the University also has the Quality Unit, which includes two committees: the Committee for Quality Assurance at the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica and the Internal Audit Committee.

The fundamental factors of the University's environment at the level of the City of Velika Gorica, the Zagreb County, the Republic of Croatia and the European Union are undoubtedly the demographic trends of the population (depopulation, aging, emigration), the economic situation (slower economic growth caused by the pandemic and natural disasters), labour market trends (lack of specific workforce) and the situation in the educational sector (need for specific personnel and the condition of the extant infrastructure). Therefore, the aforementioned factors are crucial in the drafting of this Development Strategy, or the defining of the mission, vision, and strategic objectives of the University.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University is constituted and organized as a single unit with two interconnected and aligned subsystems: the academic subsystem which is structured through the teaching, professional, and scientific organizational units of the University (studies, departments, and centres) and the business subsystem which is structured through the business, legal, and administrative organizational units (deanery, departments, offices, sections, and student offices).

- **Studies** - perform teaching and scientific-professional activities from one or more scientific areas. The University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica performs five undergraduate professional study programmes and three specialist graduate study programmes.
- **Departments** - coordinate the teaching activities of the professional and specialist graduate professional study programmes in the fields for which they were established.
- **Centres** - perform specific scientific and professional activities important for the University's operations.

Several centres have been established at the University: Centre for Scientific and Professional Activity, the Centre for Professional Development and the Centre for Career and Psychological Support.

The Deanery is an organisational unit of the University which performs professional, administrative, statistical, accounting, bookkeeping, technical and other tasks that enable the successful operation of the University.

The Deanery is managed by the Dean, and it consists of the following organizational units:

- **Dean's Office (consisting of the dean, vice-deans including the Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities, business director, dean's assistants, secretary of the University and the Communications Department)**
- **Human Resources, Personnel and Legal Affairs Department**
- **International Cooperation and Projects' Department**

- **Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department (consisting of the Department for the Planning, Organization, and Implementation of Classes, Student Office, Office for Administrative and Management Affairs, and the Library)**
- **Finances, Accounting and Procurement Department**
- **IT Support Department**
- **Maintenance and Security Department.**

Organization and structure of the University, jobs and positions at the University, as well as the requirements for individual jobs, the list and description of tasks for each job position are regulated in detail by the Book of Regulations on the Internal Organisation and the List of Job Positions of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica.



3. METHODOLOGY FOR THE DRAFTING OF THE STRATEGY AND COMPLIANCE WITH STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The drafting process for this Development Strategy is defined in phases as follows:

- 1. Establishment of the Committee for the Drafting of the Development Strategy for the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026, consisting of the representatives of the University's organizational units, representatives of the University's students, representatives of the City of Velika Gorica, and the representatives of cooperating institutions.*
- 2. Analysis of the situation and trends for identifying and defining the development needs and potentials (analysis of the internal/institutional and external environment).*
- 3. Defining the development vision and mission, as well as the provisions of social responsibility.*
- 4. Preparation and sending of an online form for data collection regarding the objectives and measures from the managers and other relevant stakeholders at the University.*
- 5. Defining strategic objectives, special objectives, measures, indicators, implementers, and implementation deadlines.*
- 6. Inclusion of institutional data in the Strategy (basic information on the institution, organizational structure, quality policy, SWOT analysis, Internationalization Strategy).*
- 7. Consultation on the draft of the Strategy.*
- 8. Drafting of the final version of the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026 in both Croatian and English.*

The Committee for the drafting of the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica defined the strategic objectives for the period 2022-2026 in accordance with the

conducted analysis of the state and trends of development needs and potentials in higher education. The realized objectives of the Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2016-2020 were analysed, as well as the realized objectives of the Internationalization Strategy 2016-2020 and the Quality Assurance Strategy 2018-2022. The SWOT analysis and Quality Policy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica drafted in March 2021 were likewise taken into account. In addition to relevant institution acts, the Committee paid special attention to the Standards for the evaluation of quality of polytechnics and colleges in the procedure of re-accreditation of higher education institutions and the Opinion of the Accreditation Council in the re-accreditation procedure of the University. Having conducted the internal analysis of the state of the University, the Committee identified strategic objectives which would contribute to the process of realizing the University's mission and vision in the following five-year period. Likewise, the final strategic objectives were harmonized with the relevant national and European acts that contribute to the high-quality development of higher education, for example the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG), the Croatian Qualifications Framework, and the Strategy of Education, Science and Technology. Therefore, the strategic objectives of the Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026 are in alignment with the development needs and capacities of the institution, as well as the national and European strategic and legislative framework.



4. MISSION, VISION, AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The mission of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is to implement the activities of higher education and lifelong learning through the continuous development and improvement of high-quality and specific study programmes and lifelong learning programmes based on the principles of social responsibility, academic excellence, and market competitiveness. The University contributes to the responsible and sustainable development of the social community through the education and training of experts prepared to respond to contemporary challenges and needs of the labour market.

The vision of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is to become a distinguished modern institution of higher education, which will be competitive at the national and international level due to the specificities and internationalization of its study programmes and lifelong learning programmes. By networking with partner institutions and real sector stakeholders and encouraging mobility and development of scientific-research work, our aim is to educate competent experts and future stakeholders in social development through the acquisition of practical knowledge and skills during their studies and lifelong learning aligned with the highest Croatian and European standards, as well as the contemporary needs of the labour market.

Social responsibility of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is manifested in the fact that the University encourages systematic and sustainable development through its activities and business operations, as well as exerting a positive impact on the society and the environment. The University's infrastructure is likewise adapted for all students, employees, and associates, thus allowing undisturbed work, enrolment, and attendance of the study programmes. Promotion of equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and equality are the fundamental principles in all fields of higher education activity at the University.

5. QUALITY POLICY AND THE SWOT ANALYSIS

Quality policy

The quality policy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is aimed at quality assurance through the constant improvement of both the teaching and business processes and relationships' quality in realistic conditions, which enable the high-quality selection and high standards of the University's students.

The management of the University ensures quality appropriate for the University's strategic objectives. The policy provides the framework for the continuous improvement of the quality assurance system's efficiency.

The quality policy is known and understandable to all University stakeholders.

The quality policy is periodically audited through the evaluation of the University Management of the quality management system based on the ISO 9001:2015 standard, internal audit report in accordance with the ESG standards and the external independent periodic audit.

The quality policy is implemented through:

- clearly defined objectives and standards of the development of the quality system in strategic and planning documents
- constant engagement in the implementation, evaluation, and revision of the quality system in the organization of the Quality Unit, all other organizational units of the University, as well as the students and external stakeholders
- continuous improvement of the teaching process, by updating the course curricula with the latest professional developments, technologies, and scientific-research work
- continuous improvement of the teaching and professional staff, by encouraging and monitoring their work and development
- meeting the requirements for the improvement and enhancement of the teaching process set by the teachers, students, and all other stakeholders for the realisation of quality objectives
- motivating the staff, associates, students, and all stakeholders to adopt a responsible and creative approach to work obligations in order to realize strategic objectives and develop human resources

- motivating and including students in the work and development of the University
- establishment of partnerships with external institutions and business entities upon which the efficiency of the teaching process depends, as well as the development and maintenance of good relations with state institutions
- promotion of quality culture at all levels of the University
- development of the University as a socially responsible higher education institution which contributes to the development of the local community, region, and society
- supporting the development of its position as an important higher education institution which maintains and seeks high quality
- quality improvement in accordance with the ESG standards, the international ISO 9001:2015 standard, legal regulations, and stakeholder requirements
- rational use of University's resources.

SWOT analysis

STRENGTHS

- specific and multidisciplinary study programmes, as well as continuous work on their improvement
- cooperation with the business sector and the local community in the development and implementation of study programmes based on the principle of learning through work
- location of the University, where the largest airline companies are located and the possibility for the development of the aircraft maintenance study programme
- comparability of undergraduate professional and specialist graduate professional study programmes with similar study programmes abroad
- professional and high-quality course implementation, and the training of teachers for specific teaching methods and techniques, such as the development of critical thinking and collaborative learning
- distance learning through the Gaudeamus system (Moodle platform), supported by MS Teams
- high percentage of employment after graduation
- ERASMUS+ charter and a long tradition of international cooperation
- integrated quality assurance system in accordance with ESG standards and ISO 9001 in the developed phase
- organization of international scientific-professional conferences and our own publication of the ADRS scientific journal

- efficient and good cooperation of students and teachers with the Student Office, the library, and the Centre for Career and Psychological Support during distance learning and remote working and in the usual circumstances
- learning space adapted to student needs, individual learning support through tutoring and individual consultations
- encouragement of our own publishing activity and a large number of our own published textbooks, availability of course materials on the university intranet and the use of e-learning through the Gaudeamus system
- good equipment of lecture halls and laboratories, as well as good preconditions for the implementation of professional practice based on the principle of learning through work
- membership and influence of the University in international organizations and bodies
- the possibility for teachers to work on EU projects
- stability of our financial operations
- continuous increase in the number of employees and the mentoring of assistants and professional associates by established teachers, bidirectional intergenerational exchange of teaching knowledge, skills, and experience
- constant education of teachers and individual scientific work of doctoral students
- caring for physical and mental health through the support of and initiation of physical activity, recreation, and sports competitions
- students and teachers publicize their activities in the Gaudeamus magazine, which is also a source of information

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient number of published professional and scientific papers by some teachers and assistants
- insufficient emphasis on the professional and practical content of final theses
- lack of subsidised accommodation and meals for students in Velika Gorica
- a small number of lifelong learning programmes
- uneven development of generic skills and knowledge on study programmes
- insufficient activity of the Alumni Club
- insufficient activity of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica's Student Assembly

OPPORTUNITIES

- international cooperation and a large labour market in the EU
- development of cooperation on international projects funded by the EU in the Republic of Croatia and abroad
- continuous development of teaching staff from the pool of our own students after graduation
- training of stakeholders in the integrated quality system tasks
- development of joint and collaborative study programmes
- enhancement of lifelong learning programmes
- further training of teaching staff for specific teaching methods and techniques, such as critical thinking development and collaborative learning
- modernisation of the University through the strengthening of the role of human resources management
- development of further connections between students and potential employers
- increased need for personnel in the field of technical sciences on the labour market
- specificities of the micro-region in which the University is located, and which unites almost all airline companies that offer the possibility of completing professional practice and gaining employment, particularly for the students of Aircraft Maintenance and Logistics
- further infrastructural development of the University

THREATS

- demographic and economic changes in the Republic of Croatia
- inability to use budget funds
- unequal position of university and polytechnic students and the inability to continue their studies at the doctoral level in the Republic of Croatia
- unequal position of teachers and students of polytechnics when compared to university teachers and students regarding advancement requirements and work obligations
- length of the approval procedure for curricular revisions and introduction of new curricula required by labour market trends
- accelerated development and growth of higher education institutions which offer the same or similar study programmes (primarily in the fields of computer science and crisis management)
- new circumstances (influenced by force majeure) and the move to distance learning have resulted in the increase in the number of competitive study programmes in the country and abroad

6. INTERNATIONALIZATION

Since the very establishment of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica, **internationalization** has been identified as an important process, necessary for the development, quality, and sustainability of the entire institution. The University is the first and still the only higher education institution in Velika Gorica and is aware of its role in the development of the local community. This is the reason why it actively participates in cooperation with public institutions, civil society organizations at all levels, but also business entities. Encouraged by the positive results at the local level, the University has expanded its activities to cooperation beyond the borders of the Republic of Croatia.

Cooperation with regional partners has been continuously strengthened, and with the entry of the University into the *Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP)*, it has also joined the Erasmus+ programme and expanded participation in student, teaching and staff mobility. This process has been systematically and dynamically expanded and accelerated since 2011. After the University was granted a charter that allows participation in the Erasmus+ programme, it emphasised incoming and outgoing student mobility, but it also enabled the teaching and non-teaching staff to participate in staff exchange. It is important to point out that the purpose of internationalization at the University is not only manifested in the strengthening of international mobility and cooperation with foreign institutions of higher education, but also in the cooperation through the exchange of experiences with the business sector. Namely, the students do not participate in the mobility only for educational purposes, but they also have the opportunity to gain practical experiences by participating in student internships at foreign partner institutions. International cooperation with the real sector is likewise manifested in the inviting of guest lecturers who possess practical business experience. In the forthcoming period, it is necessary to continue the current good practice in cooperation achieved with foreign partners, but also improve cooperation in currently underdeveloped areas. In accordance with this notion, the objectives, measures and indicators of this Strategy have been identified, and the main prerequisite for the majority of cooperation has already been achieved by the renewal of the Erasmus Charter for the period between 2021-2027, which the University obtained in 2021.

Since the internationalization process is an extensive and demanding task, during the 2016-2020 period the University was guided by the *Internationalization Strategy* document. Administrative

capacity was strengthened by the establishment and expansion of the International Cooperation and Projects' Department. Through the successful application and realisation of several international projects, the University has not only significantly improved its own human resource and institutional capacities, but the emphasis was placed on the improvement of the study programmes. One of the important objectives in the forthcoming period is the organisation of courses in English within each study programme through the development of an international 30-ECTS module in each study programme.

An important aspect of internationalization are the public policies with an emphasis on education since internationalization can be realized only by aligning study programmes with the latest European and global educational trends. The harmonization with the European Qualifications Framework is a necessary precondition, as well as the strengthening of the international character. In this way, the University will make it easier for its students to obtain recognition and international acceptance of their qualifications in the European Economic Area, promote better transparency of qualifications and create new values. Learning outcomes will be adapted to the needs of the Croatian and European labour markets, and the clarity of qualifications and competences will enable students to easily assess and recognize competences gained, as well as ensuring competitiveness in the labour market.

A clear framework for the development of internationalization in the period between 2022 and 2026, is manifested in four directions: further development of mobility, development of international cooperation with foreign strategic partners, involvement in EU-funded projects and the implementation of mechanisms for quality assurance and information availability.

Objectives, sub-objectives, and measures belonging to the topic of internationalization are elaborated in detail in the document titled **Internationalization Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026**.

7. GENERAL INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

Development plans and the definition of the University's strategic objectives in this five-year period are based on previously set institutional objectives that are in line with the mission, vision, and social responsibility of the University.

The primary institutional objective of the University refers to **the provision of high-quality and recognisable higher education in the European Education Area**. Even though the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica is already a higher education institution which places the utmost emphasis on its students, it is necessary to improve the existing and develop new study programmes and lifelong learning programmes, with a focus on internationalization, mobility programmes and international cooperation. A high-quality and recognizable higher education implies the improvement of the teaching process in accordance with the adaptation to the modern ways of studying. Therefore, it is necessary to improve the professional practice and enable distance learning through e-learning tools. It is particularly important to strengthen the support for students, which the University provides through the services of the Centre for Career and Psychological Support. It is also important to develop the scientific-research activities and encourage participation in EU-funded projects. The aforementioned ways of contributing to the institutional objective are therefore also defined through the strategic objectives in this Development Strategy.

The second institutional objective is **to ensure efficient and sustainable management of the University and its quality assurance system**. Ensuring efficient and sustainable business operations of the institution is closely related to the first institutional objective since it provides the organizational and financial preconditions for the quality and smooth operation of the University in the field of higher education. The quality assurance system is an important part of this objective since it allows continuous monitoring and improvement of the performance of higher education activities. An important factor in the realisation of high-quality, efficient, and sustainable business operations is the provision of adequate institutional and human resource capacities. The University is aware that an institution consists not only of infrastructure and students, but also of employees and external associates, whether as teaching or non-teaching staff.

Any incentive for the development of human resources simultaneously means the improvement of the institution as a whole. Only the synergy between all parts of the University can ensure quality institutional action. Therefore, in the following five-year period a special emphasis shall be placed on the strengthening of the institutional and human resource capacities, which is also defined as a separate strategic objective.

The third institutional objective refers to **the activities of the University at the local, regional, and national level**. As the only higher education institution in Velika Gorica, the University is cognizant of the importance of its social role, which is why it actively encourages cooperation with public institutions and civil society organizations at all levels. The University is continuously working on raising awareness about healthy lifestyles, as well as environmental protection. By organising various informative and humanitarian activities, the University actively supports the spread of tolerance, empathy, integration culture for all social stakeholders, as well as the improvement of the quality of life. The University is likewise cognizant of its contribution to the development of the labour market because it recognizes the individuals' needs for higher education in accordance with modern needs, as evident in the offer of specific study programmes. However, the ultimate quality of competences achieved during the studies is accomplished by completing professional practice in legal entities, that is, the employers. The University actively cooperates with employers from the range of our study programmes, in order to provide students with the practical application of theoretical knowledge and adequately prepare them for the labour market. A successful cooperation with the employers is also manifested in the Economic Council consisting of numerous experts from the real sector, who also propose improvements for the curricula and teaching methodology at the University. In the following five-year period, it is necessary to continue cooperation based on the examples of good practice, as well as encourage and realize new forms of cooperation to the benefit of all those involved, based on which a specific strategic objective has been formulated.

The main principles in the realisation of the aforementioned objectives are the following:

● Flexibility

Flexibility refers to the constant adaptation to labour market requirements, as well as the overall social situation. Study programmes, as well as mobility programmes and professional practice programmes, shall be continuously improved so that the acquired knowledge and competences

ensure labour market employability and competitiveness for our students. Flexibility also refers to the increase in the number of courses available through e-learning. In 2020 and 2021 the pandemic of the COVID-19 disease changed the functioning of modern society, and distance learning became one of the priorities in educational development. Namely, only flexible higher education institutions will be able to compete with their study programmes.

● **Innovativeness**

Development of e-learning is closely related to innovativeness, which is encouraged in the design of other teaching methods and student-centred forms of teaching. Innovativeness is also linked to the development of scientific-research activities at the University, by publishing the ADRS scientific journal and course materials published by the University, and by organising conferences.

● **Interdisciplinarity**

Considering the specificity of the University's study programmes, interdisciplinarity has been one of the fundamental institutional principles since its inception. In the following period, the emphasis shall be placed on cooperation at all levels, particularly through various EU-funded projects. Project activities, but also cooperation beyond the scope of projects, depend on the quality interaction of different staff manifested in interdisciplinarity.

● **Excellence**

The University's higher education activities constantly strive for excellence. Previously mentioned development of e-learning is closely related to innovativeness, which is also encouraged in the design of other teaching methods and student-centred forms of teaching. At the same time, it is important to emphasise teaching and research excellence, which are actively encouraged at the University, while respecting academic freedom and the highest ethical standards. We also nurture academic integrity through the availability of antiplagiarism software. Only by following the principles of excellence can we ensure the highest student standards.

8. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES AND SUB-OBJECTIVES, MEASURES, INDICATORS, IMPLEMENTERS, AND DEADLINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Strategic objective 1: Effectively manage the business process and quality assurance system of the University

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 1.1. CONTINUOUSLY IMPLEMENT AND IMPROVE QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM'S MECHANISMS	
Measure	1.1.1. Conduct an internal audit of the quality assurance system
Implementer/s	Internal Audit Committee
Indicator/s	Internal audit report Action plan after an internal audit
Implementation deadline	Continuously
<hr/>	
Measure	1.1.2. Conduct an external audit of the quality assurance system
Implementer/s	Dean Reaccreditation Committee appointed by ASHE
Indicator/s	Obtained work permit
Implementation deadline	In accordance with the ASHE's Higher Education Institutions Reaccreditation Plan
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Measure	1.1.3. Regularly analyse and improve quality system documents based on University's stakeholder surveys
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance Committee for the Assurance and Implementation of the Quality System
Indicator/s	Revised and improved quality system documents
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	1.1.4. Conduct control audits in accordance with the ISO standard
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance Appointed internal auditors
Indicator/s	Renewed quality certificate in accordance with the ISO standard
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 1.2. ENSURE FUNCTIONAL ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY

Measure	1.2.1. Adjust the development of the University's organisational units in accordance with the needs of the teaching and business process
Implementer/s	Governing Council Dean's Office
Indicator/s	General Act on the Organisation of the University
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	1.2.2. Continuously plan and monitor the operation of the University's organisational units
Implementer/s	Dean's Office
Indicator/s	Annual operational plan of the University Annual report on the University's operations
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 1.3. ENSURE FINANCIAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY

Measure	1.3.1. Plan financial operations and public procurement of the University
Implementer/s	Finances, Accounting, and Procurement Department
Indicator/s	Financial plan and Procurement plan
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	1.3.2. Control and analyse financial operations and public procurement of the University
Implementer/s	Finances, Accounting, and Procurement Department External independent auditor
Indicator/s	Financial reports Audit reports on financial statements Annual statistical public procurement report
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Strategic objective 2: Continuously improve and develop study programmes and lifelong learning programmes

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 2.1. IMPROVE EXTANT STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Measure	2.1.1. Systematically assess and revise extant study programmes
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities ECTS coordinator Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of extant study programmes revised
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	
2.1.2. Increase the proportion of e-learning in study programmes	
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of courses available through the e-learning system
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	2.1.3. Organise courses in English in each study programme
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities ECTS coordinator Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Developed a 30-ECTS international study module in each study programme
Implementation deadline	2026

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 2.2. DEVELOP NEW STUDY PROGRAMMES	
Measure	2.2.1. Develop a curriculum for new study programmes
Implementer/s	Expert Council Dean Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Study Programme Council Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of curricula developed for new study programmes
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	2.2.2. Launch of new study programmes
Implementer/s	Expert Council Dean Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Study Programme Council Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of new study programmes launched
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	2.2.3. Increase the number of elective courses
Implementer/s	Expert Council Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Number of new elective courses
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 2.3. DEVELOP LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMMES	
Measure	2.3.1. Develop a curriculum and launch lifelong learning programmes
Implementer/s	Expert Council Dean Head of the Centre for Professional Development and Education
Indicator/s	Number of lifelong learning programme curricula developed Number of lifelong learning programmes launched
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	2.3.2. Implementation of lifelong learning programmes
Implementer/s	Expert Council Dean Head of the Centre for Professional Development and Education
Indicator/s	Number of lifelong learning programmes and the frequency of their implementation
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Strategic objective 3: Develop the teaching process and enhance student support

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 3.1. IMPROVE AND MAKE STUDYING EASIER FOR UNDERREPRESENTED AND VULNERABLE GROUPS, AS WELL AS FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME STUDENTS	
Measure	3.1.1. Inform the students about the teaching process at the University
Implementer/s	Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Number of informative presentations held
Implementation deadline	Continuously
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Measure	3.1.2. Ensure additional classes to compensate for the insufficiently acquired competences
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of additional classes held
Implementation deadline	Continuously
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Measure	3.1.3. Enable a greater share of distance learning
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Course implementation plan
Implementation deadline	Continuously
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Measure	3.1.4. Inform the students about the activities of the Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Implementer/s	Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Indicator/s	Number of informative workshops held
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	3.1.5. Provide information for people with disabilities and health difficulties during their enrolment
Implementer/s	Centre for Career and Psychological Support Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Extension of the requirement for additional documents proving that enrolment candidates have a disability or health difficulties Number of individual consultations held regarding the possibilities of following and completing the study programme
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	3.1.6. Enable visits to the University for persons with disabilities and health difficulties, who are interested in enrolment
Implementer/s	Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Indicator/s	Number of visits organised Publication of visit requests on the University's website
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 3.2. SYSTEMATICALLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHING PROCESS

Measure	3.2.1. Encourage the development and use of various student-centred forms of teaching
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Number of workshops held for improving teacher competences
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	3.2.2. Improve the process of evaluating the correlation between knowledge and learning outcomes
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Report on the analysis of the final exam results, self-assessment, and external assessment
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 3.3. ESTABLISH AN EFFICIENT SYSTEM FOR THE RECOGNITION OF ACQUIRED INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING COMPETENCES

Measure	3.3.1. Elaborate the procedure for recognizing acquired non-formal and informal learning competencies
Implementer/s	Expert Council Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department Secretary
Indicator/s	Drafted and adopted normative act on the recognition of acquired non-formal and informal learning competences
Implementation deadline	2023

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 3.4. IMPROVE THE PROCEDURE OF REGISTERING, WRITING AND QUALITY CONTROL FOR FINAL THESES

Measure	3.4.1. Develop software for the procedure of registering, grading, and defending final theses
Implementer/s	IT Support Department Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Software for the procedure of registering, grading, and defending final theses developed
Implementation deadline	2022

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 3.5. IMPROVE THE PROCEDURE FOR THE REGISTRATION, CONTROL AND PERFORMANCE OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE	
Measure	3.5.1. Develop software for the procedure of registering, control, and performance of professional practice
Implementer/s	IT Support Department Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Software for the procedure of registering, control, and performance of professional practice developed
Implementation deadline	2022
Measure	
	3.5.2. Enhance the activity of connecting students with legal entities for the purposes of professional practice
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes IT Support Department Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	A database of employers established for the completion of professional practice Number of students attending professional practice at employers from the database
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 3.6. INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY OF LITERATURE FOR THE STUDENTS AND THE TEACHERS	
Measure	3.6.1. Increase the library fund with the obligatory and additional professional and scientific literature
Implementer/s	Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department Library
Indicator/s	Number of new publications in the library
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	3.6.2. Conduct training sessions for students on the ways to gather information (information literacy)
Implementer/s	Centre for Career and Psychological Support Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department Library
Indicator/s	Number of training sessions held
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Strategic objective 4: Strengthen the human resource, institutional, and infrastructural capacities

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 4.1. IMPROVE THE INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY	
Measure	4.1.1. Develop a plan for the reconstruction and development of the information and communication infrastructure
Implementer/s	IT Support Department
Indicator/s	A plan for the reconstruction and development of the information and communication infrastructure developed
Implementation deadline	2023
Measure	4.1.2. Implement the new information system of the University
Implementer/s	IT Support Department
Indicator/s	The new information system of the University implemented
Implementation deadline	2023

Measure	4.1.3. Improve and maintain the data protection and security system at the University
Implementer/s	IT Support Department
Indicator/s	Annual report on the work of the IT Support Department
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	
	4.1.4. Regulate the information security of the University
Implementer/s	IT Support Department Secretary
Indicator/s	Normative act on information security
Implementation deadline	2022

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 4.2. IMPROVE TEACHING INFRASTRUCTURE

Measure	4.2.1. Development of new infrastructural laboratory and classroom capacities
Implementer/s	Governing Council Dean
Indicator/s	Number of new laboratory and classroom capacities
Implementation deadline	2026
Measure	
	4.2.2. Increase the number of teaching sites and specialised laboratories
Implementer/s	Dean Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of new teaching sites and specialised laboratories
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	4.2.3. Modernise the lecture halls' equipment
Implementer/s	IT Support Department
Indicator/s	Annual report on the work of the IT Support Department
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 4.3. EFFICIENTLY MANAGE HUMAN RESOURCES	
Measure	4.3.1. Analyse the work of organisational units for the purpose of employment planning
Implementer/s	Human Resources, Personnel, and Legal Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Annual employment plan
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	4.3.2. Evaluate the employees' work
Implementer/s	Human Resources, Personnel, and Legal Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Normative act on employee evaluation Annual report on the employees' work
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	4.3.3. Encourage education and training of the employees
Implementer/s	Human Resources, Personnel, and Legal Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Annual report on employee education and training
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	4.3.4. Provide the necessary teacher structure
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Human Resources, Personnel, and Legal Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Annual report on the teaching staff structure
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	4.3.5. Implement an IT system for human resources management
Implementer/s	Human Resources, Personnel, and Legal Affairs Department IT Support Department
Indicator/s	IT system for human resources management implemented
Implementation deadline	2026

Strategic objective 5: Encourage internationalization and activities related to mobility and cooperation at the national and international level

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 5.1. IMPROVE ADMINISTRATIVE MONITORING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF MOBILITY	
Measure	5.1.1. Develop an application for monitoring mobility
Implementer/s	International Cooperation and Projects' Department IT Support Department
Indicator/s	Mobility monitoring application developed
Implementation deadline	2023

Measure	5.1.2. Simplify the process of evaluating and recognizing ECTS credits achieved through mobility
Implementer/s	Dean ECTS coordinator International Cooperation and Projects' Department
Indicator/s	Normative act on the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica's international mobility drafted and adopted Committee for the implementation of mobility programmes established
Implementation deadline	2023

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 5.2. ENCOURAGE STUDENT, TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING STAFF MOBILITY	
Measure	5.2.1. Attract incoming students by providing easily available information
Implementer/s	International Cooperation and Projects' Department Committee for the implementation of mobility programmes
Indicator/s	University website in English developed Promotional materials made Number of info days organized Number of incoming students
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	5.2.2. Include lectures by foreign teachers in course curricula
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of classes held by foreign lecturers
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	5.2.3. Inform the students, teaching and non-teaching staff of the University on the opportunities for outgoing mobility
Implementer/s	Committee for the implementation of mobility programmes
Indicator/s	Number of outgoing students, teaching and non-teaching staff
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 5.3. ENSURE COOPERATION WITH FOREIGN STRATEGIC PARTNERS

Measure	5.3.1. Conclude new and implement existing bilateral agreements with foreign institutions within the framework of the mobility programme
Implementer/s	Dean Committee for the implementation of mobility programmes International Cooperation and Projects' Department
Indicator/s	Number of new bilateral agreements within the mobility programme Number of incoming and outgoing mobilities within existing bilateral agreements
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	5.3.2. Conclude cooperation agreements with foreign institutions from the educational and real sectors
Implementer/s	Dean Secretary
Indicator/s	Number of concluded cooperation agreements
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	5.3.3. Involve the University in the work of international associations from the fields of the University's study programmes
Implementer/s	Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of memberships in associations
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	5.3.4. Exchange teaching and professional publications, e-publications, academic material, sources, and other resources
Implementer/s	Teaching Activities and Student Affairs Department
Indicator/s	Number of sent and received teaching and professional publications
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Strategic objective 6: Improve the scientific and research activities, as well as the preparation and implementation of EU-funded projects

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 6.1. ENSURE PREREQUISITES FOR SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY	
Measure	6.1.1. Inform the staff on databases of scientific articles
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance
Indicator/s	Number of informative workshops held
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	6.1.2. Hold scientific and professional conferences organised by the University
Implementer/s	Dean Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance Heads of study programmes
Indicator/s	Number of scientific and professional conferences organised by the University held
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 6.2. ENCOURAGE THE ACTIVITIES OF WRITING PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

Measure	6.2.1. Increase the number of articles published in the University's own ADRS scientific journal, as well as other scientific journals
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance
Indicator/s	Number of received, peer-reviewed, and published articles in the ADRS journal and other scientific journals
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	6.2.2. Encourage publication of the University's own editions
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance Committee for Publishing Activities
Indicator/s	Number of written, peer-reviewed, and published coursebooks and other course materials, published by the University
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	6.2.3. Increase the number of scientific papers in the CROSBİ database
Implementer/s	Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance
Indicator/s	Number of papers entered into the CROSBİ database
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	6.2.4.
	Support the teachers' work in the field of professional, scientific, and teaching activities
Implementer/s	Heads of study programmes, Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities, Vice-Dean for Science and Quality Assurance
Indicator/s	Normative act on advancement requirements and other teacher obligations
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 6.3. PARTICIPATE IN EU-FUNDED PROJECTS AS AN APPLICANT OR A PARTNER	
Measure	6.3.1. Apply for public tenders from EU funds
Implementer/s	International Cooperation and Projects' Department
Indicator/s	Number of EU-funded projects applied for
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	6.3.2. Enter into partnerships in the implementation of EU-funded projects
Implementer/s	International Cooperation and Projects' Department
Indicator/s	Number of partners in the implementation of EU-funded projects
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	6.3.3. Number of partners in the implementation of EU-funded projects
Implementer/s	International Cooperation and Projects' Department
Indicator/s	Annual report on the work of the International Cooperation and Projects' Department
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Strategic objective 7: Strengthen the social role of the University at the local, regional, and national level

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 7.1. ENCOURAGE THE COOPERATION OF THE UNIVERSITY WITH PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND BUSINESS ENTITIES AT THE LOCAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL LEVEL	
Measure	7.1.1. Develop and improve the cooperation of the University with the City of Velika Gorica, city institutions, and local civil society organisations
Implementer/s	Dean Communications Department
Indicator/s	Number of activities held to develop and improve cooperation
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	7.1.2. Develop cooperation with private sector employers with the purpose of sending students to complete professional practice
Implementer/s	Dean Vice-Dean for Teaching Activities Heads of study programmes Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Indicator/s	Number of cooperation agreements concluded
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	7.1.3. Improve the work of the Economic Council
Implementer/s	Dean Communications Department
Indicator/s	Number of Economic Council meetings held
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 7.2. ORGANISE INFORMATIVE PROGRAMMES WITH THE PURPOSE OF CONTRIBUTING TO THE LOCAL AND REGIONAL COMMUNITY

Measure	7.2.1. Organise activities with the aim of promoting a healthy and sustainable lifestyle
Implementer/s	Dean Communications Department
Indicator/s	Number of activities held with the aim of promoting a healthy and sustainable lifestyle
Implementation deadline	Continuously

SUB-OBJECTIVE: 7.3. INTENSIFY THE ACTIVITIES OF THE ALUMNI CLUB

Measure	7.3.1. Encourage networking among the former and current students through the Alumni Club
Implementer/s	Alumni Club Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Indicator/s	Number of Alumni Club meetings held
Implementation deadline	Continuously

Measure	7.3.2. Inform and encourage students to join the Alumni Club
Implementer/s	Alumni Club Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Indicator/s	Number of sent invitations to join the Alumni Club
Implementation deadline	Continuously
Measure	7.3.3. Develop a model for monitoring employability among the alumni
Implementer/s	Centre for Career and Psychological Support
Indicator/s	Model for monitoring employability among the alumni developed
Implementation deadline	2022



9. CONCLUSION

Development Strategy of the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica 2022-2026 consists of mutually coherent parts interconnected into an integrated whole. The guiding principle in the defining of institutional, strategic, and special objectives of this Strategy were primarily the mission and vision of the University, as well as social responsibility, documents from the quality system (Quality Policy and the SWOT analysis), in addition to the special acts of the University and competent institutions (Internationalization Strategy, Croatian Qualifications Framework). It is important to point out that the Strategy has been drafted in accordance with the ESG standards, with the intention to achieve significant institutional improvements in the following period, which will primarily benefit the students. Since its inception, the undergraduate and graduate professional study programmes at the University of Applied Sciences Velika Gorica have been known to be specific and unique in Croatia, and there is great potential for competitiveness at the international level. By increasing the level of recognisability and competitiveness in the national and European market, the students are provided with a greater possibility for employment, thus opening a smooth path to a future career. This is the reason why the University has in this Strategy defined a clear and measurable development trajectory for the following five-year period, based on the principles of flexibility, innovativeness, interdisciplinarity and excellence. Realisation of the set objectives represents a grand challenge, which the University shall be ready to face.

