Institutional Accreditation Report

The National University of Ostroh Academy

July 2025

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1. Introduction

Institutional accreditation is an external evaluation during which the Estonian Quality Agency for Education (hereinafter **HAKA**) shall assess the compliance of the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment of universities and institutions of professional higher education (hereinafter higher education institutions), with the legislation as well as with the purposes and development plans of institutions of higher education. **The purpose of institutional accreditation** is to support the development of strategic management and culture of quality in higher education institutions, inform stakeholders of the outcomes of the main activities thereof, and enhance the reliability and competitiveness of higher education in Ukraine.

HAKA shall assess the compliance of the management, administration, academic and research activity, and academic and research environment of higher education institutions with the requirements by four assessment areas. **The assessment areas are:** Organisational management and performance (including the following sub-areas: General management; Personnel management; Management of financial resources and infrastructure); Teaching and learning (including the following sub-areas: Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body; Study programme development; Student academic progress and student assessment; Support processes for learning); Research, development and/or other creative activity (hereinafter RDC) (including the following sub-areas: RDC effectiveness; RDC resources and support processes; Student research supervision and doctoral studies); Service to society (including the following sub-areas: Popularisation of core activities of a higher education institution and the involvement of an institution of higher education in social development; Continuing education and other educational activities for the general public; Other public-oriented activities).

Institutional accreditation was conducted based on the regulation ***Conditions and Procedure for Institutional Accreditation in Ukraine*** approved by HAKA Quality Assessment Council for Higher Education on 2.07.2024.

The institutional accreditation of the National University of Ostroh Academy (hereinafter **NaUOA** or the university) took place in May 2025. **HAKA** together with National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance (hereinafter **NAQA)** composed an international expert panel, which was approved by the higher education institution. The composition of the panel was thereafter approved by the order of HAKA director.

Composition of the expert panel

Eve Eisenschmidt	Chair; Professor of Educational Leadership, School of Educational Sciences; Tallinn University; Estonia
Kaija Kumpas-Lenk	Secretary; Office of academic affairs, Head of Development and Quality Division; Tallinn University of Technology; Estonia
Birute Klaas-Lang	Professor of Estonian as Foreign Language; University of Tartu; Estonia
Oleksandr Bondarenko	Director of Language Translation Agency "TRANSLATEL LTD"; Ukraine

| Tamara Fedyk | Student member of the Panel; PhD student (Philology) at Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University; Ukraine |
| Serhii Stepenko | Leading researcher; Chernihiv Polytechnic National University; Ukraine |

Assessment process

The assessment process was coordinated by HAKA and NAQA staff – Ms Tiia Bach and Ms Iryna Simshah.

The work of the assessment panel in Ukraine started on March 4, 2025, with an introduction to the Higher Education System in Ukraine as well as the assessment procedures by HAKA.

During its online meetings before the site visit, the Panel agreed on the division of responsibilities, the overall questions and areas to discuss with each group during the site visit and a detailed schedule for the visit.

From Tuesday, May 27 to Thursday, May 29, 2025, the Panel held meetings with representatives of NaUOA (management, teaching staff, students, support staff) as well as external stakeholders (alumni, employers and cooperation partners). Additionally, the panel was given a tour of the premises and campuses of the university. The site visit took place in a hybrid format: Ukrainian experts together with the Coordinator from NAQA attended all the meetings onsite, and the Estonian experts over Zoom. The site visit was very well organised by the university and went smoothly with the help of two interpreters.

The findings of the panel were discussed after the site visit in panel meetings and were compiled in the current assessment report.

The Panel commends the university for making their self-evaluation report and appendices available to the public at https://www.oa.edu.ua/en/education/institutional_accreditation; this is considered a good international practice in similar procedures.

The National University of Ostroh Academy did not have any clarifications or comments on the report. The panel submitted the final report to HAKA on 22.07.2025.

Information about the National University of Ostroh Academy

The National University of Ostroh Academy (**NaUOA**) is a national university in Ukraine, Ostroh, Rivne Oblastm and is subordinated to the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

In October 2000, NaUOA was granted the status of a National University. According to the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated July 29, 2009, NaUOA was granted the status of a self-governing (autonomous) research national higher education institution.

NaUOA is led by **Professor Eduard Balashov**, a Doctor of Sciences (Psychology), who was appointed Rector on November 4, 2024, by the order of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The **mission of NaUOA** is presented by its unique slogan: **"A tradition that creates the future".**

According to NaUOA Development Strategy, the **vision** of NaUOA 2026 is based on the analysis of the current state of the university, the prospects of its activities over the next decade, the principle of sustainable development, and the leading educational trends of our time. Academic leadership, entrepreneurship (innovation), internationalisation (intercultural interaction, educational mobility, international popularisation of research results), and social service are the benchmarks for the university's development.

According to the self-evaluation report (hereinafter **SER**), the following principles shape **the moral and institutional identity of NaUOA**:

- fairness and non-discrimination;
- trust of members of the academic community in each other;
- academic autonomy, respect for reasoned opinions;
- democratic governance and transparency in conducting competitions for positions;
- responsibility for the use of resources;
- solidarity and decency in relations with partners;
- solidarity with the people of Ukraine and a sense of patriotism to foster the Ukrainian state-building elite.

University management and structure

NaUOA is managed by the Rector. The structure consists of the following bodies: Academic Council, Supervisory Board, Rector's Council, Student Brotherhood, Student Institute Councils.

The academic segment consists of an **Educational and Scientific Centre of Extramural and Distance Learning** and five **Educational and Scientific Institutes**:

- Institute of Social and Humanitarian Management
- Institute of Law by I. Malynovskyi
- Institute of Linguistics
- Institute of International Relations and National Security
- Institute of Information Technologies and Business

Table 1. Aggregated data about study programmes and students by central units and levels of study (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctoral) in the academic years 2019/2020–2023/2024. Source: USEDE

		2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Number of Bachelor's study programmes		23	25	25	27	32
Number of Master's study programmes		15	15	24	24	25
Number of Doctoral study programmes		10	10	10	10	11
Students of Bachelor's study	Number of students	2178	2260	2062	2199	2307

programmes	Number of students enrolled	585	546	539	620	785
	Number of dropouts	128	139	120	113	143
	Number of graduates	573	514	527	455	441
	Number of international students	12	16	11	3	3
Students of Master's study programmes	Number of students	532	468	473	603	769
	Number of students enrolled	225	254	232	405	388
	Number of dropouts	35	30	18	42	82
	Number of graduates	334	267	240	222	326
Students of doctoral study programmes	Number of students	83	78	70	80	95
	Number of students enrolled	23	24	15	29	38
	Number of dropouts	10	15	7	8	8
	Number of graduates	18	14	16	11	15

According to NaUOA 2017-2026 Development Strategy, the strategic goals (SG) of the University are (SER, p. 11):

- SG 1. Diversifying the offer of educational services.
- SG 2. To implement flexible educational pathways and new learning technologies.
- SG 3. Creating an innovative scientific space.

- SG 4. To provide a high level of internationalisation of scientific research at NaUOA.
- SG 5. Broad participation in grant research projects.
- SG 6. Popularisation of scientific achievements of NaUOA.
- SG 7. Innovative transformation of the space and services of the Scientific Library.
- SG 8. Formation of the National Elite.
- SG. 9. Preservation and enhancement of University Cultural Traditions.
- SG 10. Professional development of the employees of NaUOA.
- SG 11. Material support for the University.
- SG 12. Development of University infrastructure.
- SG 13. Financial safety of the University.
- SG 14. Implementation of effective mechanisms for project and case management at the University.

Main impressions of the self-evaluation report and the visit

The self-evaluation report was well compiled and comprehensive. The university analysed its core processes and highlighted its development needs. The analysis was realistic and communicated among the staff. The site visit was professionally conducted, and technical help was provided when necessary. The atmosphere was welcoming and constructive. The participants were informed about the accreditation process and purpose.

Summary of the institutional accreditation findings

General Findings

Organisational management conforms fully to requirements, because NaUOA demonstrates strong alignment with national priorities through its clear mission, structured strategic planning, and active promotion of academic ethics and quality assurance. The university shows financial resilience and invests in infrastructure while fostering staff and student engagement, though high workload of academic staff members remains a concern. Transparent personnel policies and regular feedback mechanisms support continuous improvement in teaching and organisational development.

Teaching and learning at NaUOA conforms fully to requirements, with clearly defined goals, systematic monitoring, and strong alignment with national and international needs. Study programme development is inclusive, involving lecturers, students, and external stakeholders, while student learning processes are well supported. However, improvements are needed in decentralising quality monitoring and recognising prior work experience during studies.

RDC conforms fully to requirements, by showing strong strategic alignment, growing scientific output, and active student involvement. The university effectively secures diverse funding, promotes academic integrity, and engages in international collaborations. While challenges such as limited international visibility and high teaching load that hinder effective research persist, NaUOA is proactively addressing these issues and demonstrates strong potential for strengthening its research capacity and visibility.

NaUOA's service to society conforms fully to requirements, by demonstrating a strategic and structured approach to public engagement. The university actively involves staff in professional and civic roles, offers continuing education tailored to societal needs, and regularly evaluates participant satisfaction to inform improvements. Its public-oriented activities are purposeful, well-integrated, and contribute meaningfully to community well-being through accessible resources and events.

Commendations

Organisational management
- The university demonstrates strong alignment between national priorities and institutional strategy, with a clear commitment to societal needs and democratic, inclusive leadership.
- A comprehensive internal quality assurance system is in place, supported by regular feedback cycles and effective annual monitoring, including annual evaluation of individual teaching and research plans. Advanced digital infrastructure and integrated information systems support both academic and administrative functions, alongside growing strategic communication capacity.

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- Financial management is efficient and transparent, with diversified income sources, no arrears, and public budget reporting that enhances accountability.

Teaching and learning
- The university ensures clear and transparent admission procedures across all levels and integrates English-language training, also internships into all study programmes, enhancing national and international competitiveness.
- NaUOA has developed robust policies for study programme design and improvement, with active involvement of stakeholders to align programmes with labour market and societal needs.
- The university maintains a strong quality control system for educational services and provides modern technical resources and structured student support, including tutoring.

RDC
- NaUOA has clearly defined research goals aligned with its mission and regional priorities, supported by a transparent and comprehensive RDC system. External evaluations confirm NaUOA's strong research performance, ranking it 24th out of 104 Ukrainian institutions in Social Sciences.
- The university actively secures diverse research funding through national and international grants, maintains modern infrastructure, and fosters international collaboration through consortia and academic partnerships.

Service to society
- The university effectively integrates civic engagement with academic life through public forums, high-profile lectures, Science Days and offers continuing education courses that are well-developed and for diverse populations.
- NaUOA plays a vital role in the socio-cultural life of the region, using its infrastructure creatively and resiliently to support community cohesion and public benefit.

Worthy of Recognition

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

Areas of concern and recommendations

Organisational management
- **Fragmented strategic planning:** Sub-strategies (e.g. digitalisation, internationalisation) lack integration. It is recommended to align them more coherently with the overall development strategy and link them clearly to key performance indicators.
- **High teaching workload and part-time staffing:** Excessive teaching load and reliance on part-time contracts pose a risk for staff burnout and limit research engagement. The university should promote more full-time positions and strengthen support for academic staff involvement in research and development.

Teaching and learning
- **Lack of recognition for prior work experience**: Develop a system to formally acknowledge students' previous professional experience, especially given the diverse student body.
- **Over-centralised learning management**: Delegate responsibilities more evenly across institutional levels to improve responsiveness and efficiency.
- **Limited student mobility**: Expand international academic partnerships to increase opportunities for student exchange and global exposure.

RDC
- **Limited international visibility of research**: Increase support for academic writing and publishing in the English-language, peer-reviewed journals to enhance global reach and funding opportunities.
- **Fragmented and narrowly focused research groups**: Consolidate smaller units into interdisciplinary teams to broaden research scope, foster collaboration, and increase student participation.
- **Low engagement in national funding programmes**: Strengthen strategic efforts to participate in state budget and National Research Fund competitions to diversify research funding.
- **Underutilisation of research infrastructure and databases**: Provide training and improve access to scientific databases and tools to support high-quality research.
- **Limited internationalisation of doctoral studies**: Create incentives and streamline procedures to attract more domestic and international PhD candidates and involve foreign supervisors more formally.

Service to society
- **Unsystematic tracking of faculty outreach**: Develop a centralised database to monitor and recognise academic staff involvement in external advisory roles and integrate this engagement into workload planning and performance evaluations.
- **Limited collaboration with local industries**: Strengthen strategic partnerships with employers and regional stakeholders to co-develop short-term, labour market–oriented continuing education programmes.
- **Sustainability of public initiatives**: Ensure long-term viability of volunteer and cultural programmes by securing diversified funding and embedding them into

institutional structures. Formalise cooperation with NGOs and civil society organisations to expand outreach and impact.

ASSESSMENTS BY ASSESSMENT AREAS:

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Organisational management and performance	☒	☐	☐	☐
Teaching and learning	☒	☐	☐	☐
Research, development and/or other creative activities (RDC)	☒	☐	☐	☐
Service to society	☒	☐	☐	☐

2. Assessment across assessment areas and sub-areas

2.1. ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

2.1.1. General management

Requirements:

- A higher education institution has defined its role in the Ukrainian society.
- The development plan and the related action plans of a higher education institution arise from the concrete purposes that are built on its mission, vision and core values, and that consider the country's priorities and society's expectations.
- Key results of a higher education institution have been defined.
- The leadership of a higher education institution conducts the preparation and implementation of development and action plans and involves the members and different stakeholders.
- Liability at all management levels has been defined and described, and it supports the achievement of institutional purposes and the coherent performance of core processes.
- Internal and external communications of a higher education institution (including marketing and image building) are purposeful and managed.
- The higher education institution has defined the quality of its core and support processes, and the principles of quality assurance. In the higher education institution, internal evaluation supports strategic management and is conducted regularly at different levels (institution, units, study programmes).
- The higher education institution has defined its principles for academic ethics, has a system for disseminating them among its members, and has a code of conduct including guidelines for any cases of non- compliance with these principles. The higher education institution has a functioning system for handling complaints.

Evidence and Analysis

NaUOA has clearly defined its role in the Ukrainian society through its mission, vision, and values, which emphasize the development of an innovative scientific and educational space that addresses social, economic, political, and cultural challenges. The mission and university values are well understood across the university community, with a strong commitment among staff and students to contributing to national development. During the visit, the evaluation panel observed how the value of excellence is addressed by leadership at all levels and drives progress in teaching, research, and administration. The leadership team demonstrated a clear sense of responsibility, actively promotes democratic values, and fosters inclusive decision-making processes. Students emphasized

that their voice is heard and that they have opportunities to make suggestions to improve their learning process.

The university's strategic framework is grounded in its mission and responsive to national priorities and societal expectations (alignment of NaUOA strategy with national strategies is presented in SER p.19, table 12). Key documents such as the Development Strategy 2017–2026, alongside supporting strategies, e.g. Digitalization (2022–2026), Internationalization (2023–2028), and Communication (2024–2027) outline focused goals and implementation measures. The rector ensures the realization of these strategies by assigning resources, responsibilities, and timelines, and monitoring progress through regular reporting to the Ministry of Education. Action plans are developed collaboratively, and each department aligns its yearly goals with an institutional strategy.

Although key results and key performance indicators (KPI) are defined (SER, p. 11), they are not fully integrated into the Development Strategy and their relation with strategic aims is not clear. For example, how 11 strategic goals are related to KPIs is not presented in the Development Strategy.

Annual reporting mechanisms, such as the Rector's Report, Financial Report, and KPI analysis, ensure accountability and transparency. The university's leadership plays a central role in strategic implementation, supported by the rector's council, with periodic analysis of the organizational structure to respond to emerging needs, such as strengthening the scientific departments.

Internal and external communication is purposeful and managed through the recently adopted Communication Strategy. The university actively engages with its community via digital platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and a renewed website, complemented by tools like synchronized academic calendars. Public events, expert publications, and career guidance initiatives further reinforce this engagement. The overarching goal of communication efforts is to build strong internal cohesion and promote meaningful involvement with the broader community.

Quality assurance processes at NaUOA are well established and operate across all levels at the university. The Regulation on Ensuring the Quality of Educational Activities defines responsibilities, while annual planning and self-evaluation by faculty members ensure individual accountability. All semester surveys provide feedback from students and stakeholders, with results reviewed in departmental meetings and published online. Weekly leadership meetings include these findings in continuous improvement cycles. Risk management practices, including a maintained risk register and a quality management system aligned with ISO 9001:2015, support strategic planning and operational resilience.

The principles of academic ethics are defined and promoted within the university. Academic Integrity Weeks are held every year, where students engage in discussions about ethical practices, reinforcing a culture of honesty and accountability in education and research. During the meetings students demonstrated the awareness of complaints channels, emphasizing a transparent and fair academic environment.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of organisational management and performance. NaUOA has a clearly defined mission and vision that aligns with national priorities and societal needs, fostering a strong identity building and commitment among staff and students. Strategic planning is well-structured, monitored through regular reporting and evaluation. Internal and external communication is purposeful and increasingly effective, especially with the adoption of a new communication strategy and digital tools. Quality assurance is systematic, involving all levels of the institution. Academic ethics supported by awareness activities and a functioning complaints system.

Strengths

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

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Several sub-strategies (Digitalisation strategy, Internationalisation strategy) could create fragmentations. More coherence between different plans is recommended with clear connection with key performance indicators.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Strengthen the visibility and impact of internationalization and digitalization by expanding communication tools to reach global audiences and support collaboration through webinars, podcasts, and virtual events.
- Develop a comprehensive external communication strategy for disseminating information about core academic, research, and civic activities across digital platforms (website, social media, YouTube and other channels, including the combination of student radio, cultural projects, and collaborations with schools could inspire a national framework for youth engagement in civic education).

2.1.2. Personnel management

Requirements:

- The principles and procedures for employee recruitment and development arise from the objectives of the development plan of a higher education institution and ensure academic sustainability.
- When selecting, appointing and evaluating members of the academic staff, their past activities (teaching, RDC, student feedback, etc.) are taken into account in a balanced way and are in compliance with Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine dated 30.12.2015 №1187 On Approval of the Licensing Conditions of the Implementation of the Educational Activity.
- The principles of remuneration and motivation of employees are clearly defined, available to all employees, and implemented.
- Employee satisfaction with the management, working conditions, flow of information, etc., is regularly surveyed and the results used in improvement activities.
- Employees participate in international mobility programmes, cooperation projects, networks, etc.

Evidence and Analysis

NaUOA's personnel policies are aligned with national legislation, including the Laws of Ukraine on Higher Education. The recruitment procedures for academic staff are transparent. Open positions are publicly announced at least two months in advance on the university's official website, and candidates are evaluated based on clear eligibility and professional criteria, following a secret ballot process. This structured approach complies with the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine "On the Approval of Licensing Conditions for the Conduct of Educational Activities by Educational Institutions" (30.12.2015).

Even though the age distribution of academic staff is optimal, e.g. 20% under the age 35, 34% are in age group 35-45 and average age of doctors of science is 57 years (SER, p. 14, Table 2), the report and the meetings with institute heads expresses concern about the lack of attractiveness of academic careers, including teaching careers, in the younger age group. One of the main reasons for the lack of interest in academic careers is low salaries as mentioned by institute heads. The system of division of teachers into researchers and scholars causes hesitation. Research and teaching should be abbreviated at the university. That is, the lecturers should also be researchers. The university is encouraged to further promote science and involve students in research to help foster future academic talent.

The Strategy of NaUOA for 2017-2026 envisages the need to implement a personnel policy focused on the development of human capital, high level of professional qualities of the university employees, and comprehensive promotion of their qualifications and skills. The measures planned in this strategic development plan are aimed at strengthening the human resources potential of NaUOA and using the mechanisms of increasing the motivation of the university employees. Particular attention has been paid to supporting young researchers and lecturers to ensure the continuity of human resources and the

formation of traditions of scientific schools (Development Strategy for 2017-2026, p. 21). The Regulation on the Procedure for Conducting a Competition for Vacant Positions of Academic Staff is in line with the Development Strategy, e.g. according to clause 1.7, academic staff positions are filled outside the competition by graduates of postgraduate (doctoral) studies in the year of graduation from postgraduate (doctoral) studies (Regulation, clause 1.7, p. 2).

The recruitment process at NaUOA aligns with the Development Strategy 2017–2026, particularly goals related to enhancing education quality, research capacity, and internationalisation. Candidates are assessed by institute committees based on academic qualifications, research output, trial teaching performance, and alignment with the position. Evaluation also considers innovation, scientific activity, and professional conduct, supporting the University's strategic aim to strengthen its academic potential. This ensures the selection of qualified staff who can advance the institution's educational and research priorities (Regulation, chapter 4 on professional assessment, p. 5). NaUOA maintains a balanced age distribution among academic staff (SER, p. 15). Yet, the part-time contracts have some limitations for engagement into research and development work. However, the university offers support for newly appointed staff. New faculty members have orientation seminars in September and ongoing training provided by the School of Educational Innovations. Weekly pedagogical seminars, one-on-one coaching, teaching observations, and methodological workshops are regularly organized to ensure teaching excellence. Similarly, equal support is offered for developing research skills through thematic groups and mentoring.

Academic staff development is closely tied to performance monitoring. The university conducts anonymous student surveys every semester to assess the quality of teaching. Feedback from these surveys plays a key role in workload distribution and contract renewal. Faculty members with low evaluation scores receive constructive feedback and personalized support plans. If a faculty member's teaching quality rating averages 3.0 or lower for a given academic year, workload adjustments are made, particularly for the specific courses rated poorly (SER, p. 27). These results remain confidential to promote improvement over punishment. During the meeting with alumni and students it was mentioned that students are not active in giving feedback. The university is encouraged to take actions in motivating students to give feedback that would support to make even stronger evidence-based decisions and monitoring performance more realistically.

NaUOA also performs annual performance evaluation. Each May, academic staff submit documentation confirming their ongoing work and progress. This helps to maintain teaching and research standards and set personal goals.

The university has clearly defined principles of remuneration and motivation. These are publicly available. The system combines financial incentives, such as bonuses, allowances, and material support, with non-financial recognition like honorary certificates and public awards. These incentives are directly linked to academic achievements, particularly in teaching and research and help create a culture of excellence.

Employee satisfaction is regularly surveyed, covering topics such as management, workload, communication, and work environment. The results are analysed and used to

plan improvements. During the panel's visit, staff members expressed pride in their roles and strong dedication to the university's mission.

During the meetings NaUOA academic staff members have raised concerns about excessive teaching workload. Lecturers expressed that balancing teaching and research requires significant efforts. Research, teaching and learning support units' representatives stated that they involve practitioners for teaching related activities and the department heads emphasized that NaUOA uses individual workload agreements, covering both teaching and research duties, which are established through internal negotiations. Also, NaUOA allocates 50-100 hours for research paper preparation.

According to national guidelines, academic workloads can be differentiated. Recent legislation (Law No. 3791-IX) allows the differentiation in teaching workload between research-active staff (460-480 contact hours) and those engaged only in teaching without research responsibilities (900 contact hours) which provides more opportunities for personalization of workload.

Based on the expert panel expertise, the number of teaching hours per year remains rather high (average in EU countries is between 100-300 for academics with PhD). EU-level analyses of policy documents indicate that those pursuing academic careers must demonstrate their research capabilities, teaching performance slightly less emphasized compared to research (https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-05/Chapter_5_Learning_and_teaching.pdf).

Moreover, the approved professional standard for higher education teachers under the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine Order No. 1466 (October 16, 2024) defines the roles, responsibilities, and qualification levels of academic staff and establishing clear career stages. The expert panel recommends NaUOA to use this standard for improvement of the balance between teaching and research workloads.

International engagement is a growing strength. Between 2020 and 2024, the number of signed agreements with international educational and scientific institutions increased significantly (SER, p. 28), and despite that foreign internships were disrupted in 2022, participation has generally remained stable. The university engages with over 80 international partners and draws inspiration from global best practices.

NaUOA's approach to academic staff reflects a commitment to quality, transparency, and development, ensuring that its academic community is well-supported.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of personnel management. NaUOA's personnel policies are clearly aligned with national legislation and institutional strategic goals, ensuring transparency in recruitment, development, and evaluation processes. Teaching quality is monitored through regular student feedback, which directly influences workload and contract decisions, fostering accountability and continuous development. Staff satisfaction is regularly surveyed and used for improvement, and while international cooperation has expanded, maintaining mobility opportunities remains important. Although, academic staff teaching workload is high and requires attention.

Strengths

- The university aligns its personnel management system with both national and international best practices by implementing individual teaching and research plans for academic staff, that are evaluated annually.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- A high teaching-related workload among academic staff, along with a relatively large proportion of part-time, contract-based staff, may lead to burnout and limit the time available for research. To maintain motivation and ensure a better balance between teaching and research, encourage more full-time contracts and deepen staff engagement in research and development.

Opportunities for further improvement

- It is recommended that the university initiate national level debates to reduce teaching hours for professors and other academics while upholding academic standards, such as offering incentives for publishing in international journals and implementing clear regulations for scientific work.
- Further efforts should be made to expand access to international research grants, foster private partnerships, and collaborate with enterprises in high-tech fields like artificial intelligence and robotics to diversify funding and enhance research output.
- Introduce more systematic incentives to encourage young professionals to take academic career (e.g. improve visibility and access to career pathways in academia for students through mentorship and research integration).

2.1.3. Management of financial resources and infrastructure

Requirements:

- The allocation of financial resources of a higher education institution, and the administration and development of infrastructure, are economically feasible; and are based on the objectives of the development plan of an institution of higher education and national priorities (except private institutions).
- A higher education institution uses information systems that support its management and the coherent performance of core processes.
- The working conditions of the staff and the learning and RDC conditions of students (library, studios, workshops, laboratories, etc.) meet the needs arising from the specifics of an institution of higher education and the expectations of members.
- The educational environment is safe for the life and health of all participants in the educational process.

Evidence and Analysis

During recent crises, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian war, NaUOA has demonstrated financial resilience and adaptability. The university revised its financial strategy by diversifying income sources and implementing cost-efficiency

measures while avoiding reducing salaries, scholarships, and utility payments. In response to wartime challenges, it received targeted funding for supporting individuals and enhancing its infrastructure. Financial transparency is ensured through the public dissemination of budget reports on the University's official website.

NaUOA operates under six national budget programmes and maintains a diversified funding base. The consolidated budget for 2024 totals UAH 144.9 million, of which 65.1% comes from the special fund. This fund plays a crucial role in sustaining core functions such as wages, utilities, and facility maintenance, and supports research through ten active grant projects. The University is increasingly focused on attracting international and non-governmental funding to further enhance global research connectivity and sustainability.

From 2020 to 2024, income from educational services increased significantly, from UAH 69.5 million to UAH 111 million, indicating growth. Income from research has varied, peaking in 2023 but decreasing in 2024. Despite fluctuations, investments in infrastructure peaked in 2023 and staff salaries have steadily increased, reflecting NaUOA's ongoing commitment to supporting its personnel and facilities.

The university has developed and upgraded its information systems to ensure coherent performance of educational and administrative processes. It uses integrated platforms for financial reporting, academic management, electronic documentation, and library services. These systems are supported by Google Workspace for Education, enabling digital collaboration and learning continuity. Continuous digital infrastructure improvements further enhance operational efficiency.

Infrastructure development is guided by both strategic objectives and responsiveness to emerging needs. Plans include the construction of two new dormitories and use of solar panel capacity. The material and technical base of NaUOA is regularly reviewed through needs analyses and complies with national standards. New building has good conditions for work and study, these facilities are inclusive and accessible for people with limited mobility.

NaUOA offers digital resources in the library, students have access to academic databases, although their effective use remains an area for further support and training.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of management of financial resources and infrastructure. NaUOA demonstrates financial resilience during crises by diversifying funding sources and maintaining transparency through public budget reporting. Infrastructure development aligns with strategic goals, emphasizing inclusivity, safety, and sustainability. Although students have access to digital academic tools, further support is needed to improve their effective use.

Strengths

- Effective financial management with diversified income and no arrears on salaries or utilities.
- Transparent budgeting with public reporting increases accountability.
- Advanced, integrated information systems support academic and administrative functions.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Enhance student training and support for better utilization of academic databases and digital resources to increase of meaning and importance of databases.
- Expand international and non-governmental funding efforts to reduce reliance on state budgets.
- Continue upgrading digital infrastructure to keep the pace with evolving educational technologies.

SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT AREA: ORGANISATIONAL MANAGEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
General management	☒	☐	☐	☒
Personnel management	☒	☐	☐	☐
Management of financial resources and infrastructure	☒	☐	☐	☐

Conclusion

Conforms to requirements in all sub-areas. NaUOA has demonstrated excellence in general management – a clear mission and vision aligned with national priorities, strategic alignment and a strong commitment to societal needs, supported by robust internal quality assurance and inclusive leadership. Therefore, the general management sub-area is emphasised as worthy of recognition.

NaUOA strategic planning is well-structured and regularly monitored, with effective internal and external communication supported by digital tools. Quality assurance is systematic, and academic ethics are actively promoted. University staff is committed and contribute to the organisational development. Although, academic staff teaching workload is high and requires attention also on national level. Personnel policies ensure transparent recruitment and evaluation, with teaching quality monitored through student feedback to support continuous improvement. Financially resilient, NaUOA diversifies funding and invests in infrastructure, while working to enhance students' use of digital academic resources.

2.2. TEACHING AND LEARNING

> ### 2.2.1. Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body
>
> **Requirements:**
>
> - A higher education institution has defined its educational objectives and measures their implementation.
> - A higher education institution creates the prerequisites to ensure its graduates national and international competitiveness.
> - The number of student places is planned in accordance with the social need and the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.
> - The admission rules are consistent with the mission and purposes of an institution of higher education and support the formation of the motivated student body.
> - Students are provided with opportunities to study at a higher education institution regardless of any special needs.

Evidence and Analysis

The university has set goals for its teaching activities: to diversify the offer of educational services and implement the widespread introduction of flexible educational pathways and new learning technologies (SER p. 33). The university systematically monitors the implementation of these goals. There are students of all three levels of higher education (SER, p. 13, Table 1):

1) Bachelor's level 2307;
2) Master's level 769;
3) PhD's level 95.

Based on the report (SER, p. 35-36), it can be observed that the university has a clear and transparent admission conditions for all levels and all specialities. Also, to form a motivated student body, a motivation letter is considered for admission to the competitive selection process and establishing the order of priority with the same competitive score. The university systematically monitors the current labour market and the needs of potential applicants. Then, based on these results and the recommendations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine the licence volume for which the enrolment will be carried out is determined. However, there are special study programmes for which the licensing volume is determined exclusively by the Ministry of Education and Science and cannot be adjusted separately by the university (SER, p. 35).

In its study activities, the university considers national needs as well as prepares its graduates for an international career. In recent years, the vector of international relations and national security has been added to NaUOA's competitive offers besides the classic humanitarian and social sciences specialities. The university is working hard to develop interdisciplinary programmes. In the meeting with institute heads it was explained that the

Global Communication Management study programme has been developed based on two fields of study – "Social Sciences, Journalism and Information" and "Business, Administration and Law". Such kind of work contributes to increasing the level of competitiveness of graduates at the national and international levels.

NaUOA is guided by international requirements for a set of relevant professional and general competencies and introduced from 2017 the Concept of Teaching English. According to the report, English is included in the list of compulsory components of all university study programmes at the first, second, and third levels of higher education (SER, p. 34). As mentioned in the meeting with management this helps to ensure its graduates national and international competitiveness.

In recent years, the university has been strategically engaged by further transformation of the learning process, by reducing classroom hours, increasing the share of independent work of students, and focusing on acquiring practical skills during the courses. Despite the fact that the university provides comprehensive support to students - informational, organisational, social - they speak out about increasing their studies at the university. During the communication with students and alumni experts found out that students want more classroom hours, namely, an offline format of education. The university administration is aware of the need to increase offline learning and is working hard to overcome this challenge, as the decline in classroom learning is due to the lack of sufficient dormitory space

The university has created a barrier-free learning environment (SER, chapter 3.1.3.), by offering an unrestricted access to information, providing free access for teachers and students to use library collections and the Internet, ensuring safety of the educational environment; creating sufficient conditions for persons with special educational needs, by mechanisms of educational, organisational, informational, advisory and social support for higher education students.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body. NaUOA has set clear goals for its teaching activities and systematically monitors the implementation of these goals, considers national needs as well as prepares its graduates for an international career. The University has created a barrier-free learning environment, ensuring safety of the educational environment; has created sufficient conditions for persons with special educational needs, by mechanisms of educational, organisational, informational, advisory and social support for higher education students.

Strengths

- Clear and transparent admission conditions for all levels and all specialities.
- English-language training for all level of education.
- Quality control system for educational services and learning environment.

Opportunities for further improvement

- To attract international students by offering flexible educational pathways and using new learning technologies.
- Improve the admission process with motivational interviews with students to prevent drop-out, discussed below in section 2.2.4.

2.2.2. Study programme development

Requirements:

- A higher education institution bases its new study programmes on its purposes and the needs of the labour market and takes into account the strategies of the country, expectations of the society and the higher education and professional standards.
- Development activities related to study programmes are systematic and regular, and different stakeholders are involved in the development of study programmes.
- Graduate satisfaction with the quality of instruction and employer satisfaction with the quality of graduates are surveyed and analysed; the results are considered in the development of study programmes.

Evidence and Analysis

The university systematically develops study programmes, addresses the societal and national challenges, and actively involves stakeholders in the design and monitoring of these programmes.

As of September 1, 2024, all study programmes of NaUOA comply with the Standards of Higher Education of Ukraine in the relevant speciality. To obtain a higher education degree at any level, a student must successfully complete the corresponding study programme. This forms the basis for awarding the appropriate qualification: Bachelor's (240 ECTS credits), Master's (90–120 ECTS credits), and Doctoral degrees (43–45 ECTS credits) (SER, p. 37).

Despite the war, the university remains committed to promote internationalisation by setting ambitious goals for recruiting foreign lecturers and creating an attractive place to study for international students. The university's efforts to promote online learning and develop English-taught courses for international audiences are both timely and well-justified.

Each study programme has an internship component (industrial, research, training, etc.) in its structure which is highly valued by the students (students and alumni meeting). Practitioners are involved in teaching disciplines or conducting master classes. Opportunities for students to practice their skills is well thought out. The possibilities include Art Cluster and the Museum of History of NaUOA, the Training Laboratory "Center for Creative Industries", the Information Technology Center, which includes an IT Hub, a Robotics Laboratory, a Pro Bono Legal Clinic, the Psychological Service, the Laboratory of

Journalistic Skills J. Lab and Student Radio "OstrRadio". The university has made efforts to take an individual approach to learners and from 2024 expanded the opportunities for self-creation of a student's educational trajectory.

The university has developed a special document which includes regulations designing and improving study programmes – Regulations on Educational and Methodological Support at NaUOA (SER, p. 37). NaUOA has established a systematic approach to monitoring satisfaction with teaching activities among students, staff, alumni, and stakeholders. In addition to surveys, focus group interviews and sociological validation are also conducted. A Survey of Students on the Quality of Teaching at NaUOA has been implemented since 2019, Monitoring the Quality of the Educational Environment since 2018 and Monitoring the Quality of the Implementation of the study programmes since 2020 (for graduate students), which is considered when revising the study programmes (SER, chapter 3.1.1.).

Various groups of stakeholders are involved in the systematic monitoring of the content of educational programmes and disciplines and the quality of their teaching. Students are regularly surveyed – the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously. In addition, there is constant communication between students and university representatives, during which the former makes recommendations for improvement. There is also a trust box in the university buildings, where everyone can leave any comments anonymously. Secondly, the university's academic community works closely with stakeholders, who participate in meetings to discuss changes to study programmes. In some study programmes the cooperation with stakeholders is established through stakeholders' Councils, whose activities include improving the practical component of study programmes.

The last monitoring of the educational environment of NaUOA took place in March-May 2024. Table 13 (SER, p. 39) shows the graduate satisfaction with the quality of education and employer satisfaction with the quality of graduates. The sociological survey within the monitoring framework is conducted to study the academic environment of NaUOA from the stakeholders' perspective. Graduate satisfaction with the quality of education and employer satisfaction with the quality of graduates is quite high. Over 80% of the respondence agreed or completely agreed that the university adequately prepares for a modern career (SER, p. 39, Table 13). Monitoring results, along with action plans, responsibilities, and deadlines, were reviewed by the Rector's Council and the Education Quality Commission, then assigned for analysis and implementation (implementation period 2024–2026).

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of Study programme development. NaUOA carries out systematic work in the development of study programmes, considering the challenges facing the society and the state, for involving stakeholders in developing and monitoring of study programmes.

Strengths

- Developed university policies for designing and improving study programmes.
- Quality control system for educational services and learning environment.

- Stakeholders are involved in study programme development and monitoring which helps to assure that study programmes meet the expectations of employers and society.
- Each study programme has a component of internship (industrial, research, training, etc.).

Opportunities for further improvement

- To introduce stakeholder councils for all study programmes. The activities of the employers' council will facilitate their active involvement in the educational process and the process of improving study programmes. This will allow for immediate response to changes in the labour market and, as a result, the training of highly qualified graduates.

2.2.3. Student academic progress and student assessment

Requirements:

- Student academic progress is monitored and supported.
- Student assessment supports learning and is in line with learning outcomes.
- A higher education institution has an effective system for taking account of prior learning and work experience.

Evidence and Analysis

The university has developed and implements a system for monitoring the academic progress of students, the results of which are public and are reviewed at the end of each semester by the university's top-level management (SER, p. 40, Table 14). It remains incomprehensible why the university has implemented the rector's Control system in addition to the usual course assessment. The rector's Control is carried out by writing a test or conducting written or computer-based testing (SER, p. 40).

The university has developed an algorithm for forming a particular student's curriculum, which indicates the list and sequence of studying by the applicant of academic disciplines, the semester-by-semester volume of educational workload (all types of educational activities), forms of knowledge quality control, types of practical training and final certification. Measures to avoid excessive technicality have also been developed, i.e. the student discusses their individual educational trajectory with the tutor and only then is the individual educational trajectory approved.

Assessment methods cover the full range of written, oral and practical tests/exams, projects and portfolios, essays, and research used to assess student progress and determine whether the learning outcomes of an educational component or module have been achieved.

The University also has policies for recognising learning outcomes obtained in other study programmes (in Ukraine and abroad) and non-formal education (SER, chapter 3.2.4.). However, there is no evidence in the report of a system for taking prior professional experience into account which was confirmed in the meeting with study support staff.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of student academic progress and student assessment. The university has developed and implements a system for monitoring the academic progress of students, assessment methods are diverse. However, students should be encouraged to give active feedback, and a system should be developed to take prior work experience into account as part of their studies.

Strengths

- Student assessment methods are diverse.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- There is no system for taking previous work experience into account. Since there are students from various ages and experiences at the university there is a growing need to develop a system for considering previous work experience.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Together with students, set up a system to motivate students to give feedback on learning activities.

2.2.4. Support processes for learning

Requirements:

- The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period.
- A higher education institution provides counselling related to studies and career.
- A higher education institution supports student international mobility.
- Modern technical and educational technology resources are used to organise educational activities.
- Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes (the organisation of studies, assessment, counselling, etc.); the results of surveys are taken into account in improvement activities.

Evidence and Analysis

The displacement in study programmes is strictly regulated. In all study programmes and at all levels, both the number of credits and the number of academic hours per week for students are regulated. The estimated academic workload of a first (Bachelor's) and second (Master's) degree student during one academic year of higher education is 60 ECTS credits. Academic disciplines are usually planned in 3 or more ECTS-s. The number courses per year should be no more than 16, no more than 8 per semester. The maximum weekly classroom load for full-time Bachelor's degree programmes should not exceed 24 hours in the first year, 26 hours in the 2nd to 4th year of study. In Master's degree

programmes it is 16 hours in the first year and 18 hours in the second year of study (SER, p. 42-43).

The organisation of studies creates an opportunity for students to complete their studies within the standard period. However, the workload of postgraduate students should be noticed. In particular, the fact that the scientific component is not regulated by the appropriate number of credits, the process of completing the dissertation is the responsibility of the supervisors.

The university has established a comprehensive regulatory framework to support students throughout their academic journey. This includes provisions for organisational and psychological support, assistance with adaptation to the educational environment, and career counselling services (SER, p. 45). At the programme level, the development of students' self-management skills is actively encouraged through structured independent work (SER, p. 43). Furthermore, students benefit from robust library and information support systems, including institute-based resource centres. The delivery of educational activities is enhanced using modern technical infrastructure and educational technologies, ensuring a supportive and resource-rich learning environment (SER, p. 44).

According to the report, the Student Handbook was created, and students have regular meetings with Chief of study programmes, heads of departments, directors of institutes, heads of structural units, and the Rector, during which they directly discuss the peculiarities of the educational process at NaUOA. On the one hand, such centralisation also shows the participation of the University's top management in making learning processes more effective. On the other hand, such top-level (rector) leadership exacerbates the excessive concentration of responsibility at the top of the university.

The university also has The Student Brotherhood to participate in social and educational support for students. There is an Ostroh Academy Alumni Association. The Volunteer Corps helps to employ students at the University on a volunteer basis to gain experience and start building their portfolios.

It is noticeable that the university has some increase in dropout rates (SER, p. 13, Table 1) at the Bachelor's and Master's level. The interviews revealed the university's efforts to prevent dropouts (personal conversations, monitoring of individual plans and tutoring, counselling etc). The establishment of a career counselling system at the university would be helpful, especially at the admission stage.

One of the aims of the university is to increase international cooperation and mobility. In 2024, the NUOA implemented two joint study programmes with diplomas from both sides: The Institute of International Relations and National Security with the University of Warsaw (Political Science and Eastern Studies) and the University of Warmia and Mazury (Olsztyn, Poland) (International Relations and Euro-Atlantic Studies). Semester academic exchange programmes are active between NaUOA and several foreign universities (SER, p. 45-46). It is understandable that in a state of war, it is very difficult to increase the number of foreign students at the university and to encourage the mobility of local students. However, the university has pursued to working towards this goal and has made efforts to secure more international mobility agreements and attract foreign students.

Students are periodically asked for feedback on learning and support processes. However, based on this data and meetings with students it emerged that students are not active in giving feedback on courses. The system of monitoring the educational environment of NaUOA consists of monitoring the quality of teaching disciplines, the quality of the educational environment and the quality of the implementation of the study program. The survey results are considered in improvement activities (SER, chapter 3.1.1., 3.2.2.) and several examples were provided in the meetings with academic staff.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of support processes for learning, has created a support and tutoring system, monitors periodically the quality of teaching and the educational environment. More attention needs to be paid to continuously supporting student mobility and reducing drop-out rates.

Strengths

- NaUOA has established a support system for students, e.g. a tutoring system.
- Modern technical and educational technological resources are used.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- Excessive centralisation of the management of learning processes could be resolved by adding responsibility to all levels in the management of learning processes.
- Student mobility could be increased by expanding the range of international partners in academic mobility.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Find ways to increase contact teaching and meetings with students to reduce drop-out.
- Find ways to activate students in the feedback process.

SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT AREA: TEACHING AND LEARNING

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Effectiveness of teaching and learning, and formation of the student body	☒	☐	☐	☐
Study programme development	☒	☐	☐	☐
Student academic progress and student assessment	☒	☐	☐	☐
Support processes for learning	☒	☐	☐	☐

Conclusion

Conforms to requirements in all sub-areas of teaching and learning. NaUOA has clearly set goals for its teaching activities and systematically monitors the implementation of these goals, considers national needs as well as prepares its graduates for an international career. The development of study programmes involves university lecturers, students, as well as employers and stakeholders and considers both the needs of the state and the demand of the labour market. The students' learning processes are supported and monitored. The university is trying to develop internationalisation despite the war conditions. More attention needs to be paid to decentralising the monitoring of learning quality, to share responsibility between different levels. In addition to the inclusion of prior learning experience, the inclusion of prior work experience should be introduced.

2.3. RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)

2.3.1. RDC effectiveness

Requirements:

- A higher education institution has defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation.
- A higher education institution monitors the needs of society and the labour market and considers them in planning RDC activities.

Evidence and Analysis

According to SER (p. 47) and The Development Strategy for 2017-2026 (p. 13) NaUOA has defined its priorities in the field of scientific research as follows: Creation of an innovative scientific space; High level of internationalisation of scientific research conducted at NaUOA; Broad participation in grant research projects; Popularisation of the scientific achievements and innovative science lectures. It is remarkable that the broad participation in grant research projects has led to an increase in the number of contractual research and development activities. The university has set several operational objectives under each scientific objectives and measures their implementation. These objectives align with the mission of NaUOA, which is embodied in its slogan: "A tradition that creates the future". The implementation of NaUOA's research strategic and operational objectives is monitored through annual Rector's reports, which systematically track progress in key areas such as the number of research publications, participation in grants, development of research infrastructure, and international cooperation. These reports, combined with internal audits and the activities of the Academic Council, serve as tools to assess whether the defined objectives are being met.

The University has thought through and developed the Regulations on the Organization of Scientific Research and Technical Activities (SRTA) to ensure organizational, legal, and economic conditions for SRTA and to provide the integration of academic process at the University.

According to SER (p. 47-48) and meetings with researchers from NaUOA, the RDC objectives have been implemented. As indicated in NaUOA scientific work data (SER, p. 50, Table 16), the number of publications—including research articles and teaching handbooks etc—increased annually from 263 in 2020 to 379 in 2024. During the same period, the publication coefficient, representing the number of publications per academic staff member, rose from 1.55 to 2.18.

In addition, the expert panel has studied NaUOA publications more detailed. Based on the Google Scholar https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=uk&view_op=search_authors&mauthors=oa.edu.ua&btnG= 171 academic profiles have been presented with non-zero citations. The TOP 10 researchers have 383-1337 citations and h-indices of 10 to 15. The main part of the publications are written in Ukrainian. At the same time, the university values internationalisation and aims to apply additional research funding. To do so it is relevant to have more research papers published in English. The expert panel has also studied the Scopus profile of NaUOA https://www.scopus.com/pages/organization/60004414, where in total 303 documents published by 150 authors are existing. According to Scopus 2025 Ranking of Ukrainian Universities https://osvita.ua/vnz/rating/94650/, NaUOA occupies 157 position (+2 to 2024 results) out of 221 educational institutions in the list.

The external scientific evaluation results 2025 have been recently represented by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine. It should be noted, that NaUOA has successfully passed the attestation procedure and it belongs to the category "B" in Social Sciences, occupying the **24**[th] place out of **104** Ukrainian HEIs in the Social Sciences category. It should be mentioned that NaUOA has demonstrated strong results of the research evaluation without any preferences for near-border or damaged universities (https://atestat.nauka.gov.ua/uk/atestat-2025.)

According to SER (p. 48) and discussions with stakeholders, the research priorities at NaUOA are determined based on cooperation with stakeholders as well as studying and considering the priority research areas set by the state. NaUOA actively monitors societal and labour market needs through continuous engagement with key regional stakeholders, including local government bodies, businesses, and the IT sector. This dialogue is institutionalized via the Vice-Rector for Research and Teaching's participation in the Scientific Council of Rivne Oblast and cooperation with platforms like the Rivne Unity Platform. Additionally, the University aligns its research priorities with regional development strategies, such as the Rivne Region Development Strategy until 2027, ensuring that RDC activities address relevant economic and social challenges. Through these mechanisms, it integrates current labour market demands and societal priorities into its research planning, thereby fostering applied and impactful scientific work that supports regional growth and innovation.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of RDC effectiveness. The University has clearly defined its RDC objectives and measures their implementation. NaUOA is communicating its strategic goals, objectives and tasks in the field of research, development and/or other creative activities, monitors the needs of society and the labour market and considers them in planning RDC activities. The numeric results of the scientific activities and scientometric indicators from the search system Google Scholar and scientific database Scopus have demonstrated the positive dynamics of the scientific activities. The results of the external expert evaluation of the research activities provided by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine in 2025 has shown that NaUOA is accredited in category "B" occupying the 24th place out of 104 institutions in Social

Sciences. However, to further improve its research effectiveness, the University should address the limited international visibility of its scientific outputs and consider broadening the scope of research groups to support interdisciplinary collaboration and international engagement.

Strengths

- NaUOA has clearly defined strategic goals and operational objectives for research, aligned with its mission and regional development priorities.
- The University demonstrates steady growth in scientific output, with publications number increasing from 263 to 379 annually between 2020 and 2024, research visibility is supported by substantial presence and citations in Google Scholar and Scopus database.
- The University actively participates in national and international grant competitions, reflecting a commitment to broad research funding and collaboration.
- External evaluations confirm NaUOA's strong research performance, ranking it 24th out of 104 institutions in Social Sciences within Ukraine.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The limited international visibility of research outputs can be addressed by developing targeted support programs to increase publications in high-impact, internationally recognized journals through academic writing and dissemination training.
- The limited number of English-language research publications constrains the University's international visibility and funding opportunities, so it is recommended to increase the share of publications in English-language, peer-reviewed journals to support internationalisation and broader RDC engagement.
- Moderate doctoral student enrolment and limited internationalization can be improved by creating incentives and streamlined procedures to attract more domestic and international doctoral candidates.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Expand interdisciplinary and collaborative research projects to address broader societal challenges and increase stakeholder engagement.
- Intensify the applications to the state budget funding (young researchers, interdisciplinary research).
- Strengthen mechanisms to better align research priorities with emerging regional and national development needs through regular stakeholder consultations.

> ### 2.3.2. RDC resources and support processes
>
> **Requirements:**
>
> - A higher education institution has an effective RDC support system.
> - A higher education institution has financial resources needed for RDC development and a strategy that supports their acquisition.
> - A higher education institution participates in different RDC networks.
> - RDC infrastructure is being updated and used effectively.

Evidence and Analysis

NaUOA demonstrates a structured and effective RDC support system that integrates research into the academic fabric of the institution through strategic internal funding, infrastructure, and administrative mechanisms. The annual Ostroh Academy Grant supports various research activities, including fieldwork, equipment, and publication, and research obligations are explicitly included in faculty contracts, ensuring institutional commitment. The university's system also encompasses administrative and technical support for researchers, including staff in the research department who assist with grant application procedures, monitor calls for proposals, and provide consultations on proposal writing and reporting. Researchers benefit from internal training opportunities related to project management, academic writing, and international collaboration, often implemented through involvement in externally funded projects like Erasmus+ or REACT. Support is also available for student researchers through coordinated supervision, structured research groups, and the integration of academic integrity tools into learning systems. While these mechanisms contribute to the university's success in securing national and international grants, and foster participation in scientific communities, there remains room for development—such as expanding full-time support roles for grant writing and editorial assistance, formalizing mentoring programs, and enhancing services like research data management or intellectual property advisory. Overall, the system is functional and positively impacts research outputs, but it could be further strengthened by diversifying and professionalizing the support services offered.

The University supports 14 research centres and 11 laboratories covering diverse disciplines, many of which actively engage students and collaborate internationally. They include Institute for Ukrainian Diaspora Studies, Research Laboratory of Cognitive Psychology, Centre for Political Research, POLIS School of Political Analysis, Center for European Studies, Laboratory of Christian Ethics, Psychology, and Pedagogy, Centre for the Study of the Heritage of the Princes of Ostroh, Laboratory for the Study of Hybrid Threats to National Security, Lexicographic Laboratory "Ostroh Neographer" , Scientific and Practical Laboratory "Modern Technologies of Formation of Foreign Language Communicative Competence". The expert panel had an opportunity to visit these laboratories, hence the institution has established a supportive, transparent, and impact-driven RDC environment aligned with national and European priorities.

NaUOA demonstrates a strategic approach to securing financial resources for RDC development. It has institutional internal funding through the Ostroh Academy Grant,

which supports a wide range of research activities, including publication, equipment, and fieldwork. The University actively participates in competitive international funding programs such as Erasmus+ Jean Monnet and the Visegrad Fund, successfully implementing multiple externally funded projects. Engagement in large-scale initiatives like the WARN project reflects both the capacity to attract substantial funding and alignment with strategic priorities. According to the report on the scientific and technical activities in 2024 (https://www.oa.edu.ua/ua/science/naukova_diyalnist_universutety), NaUOA not only secures financial resources for RDC but also follows a proactive strategy to expand and diversify them.

The university has developed several international cooperation ties. Since 2010, NaUOA has been an associate member of the European Association of Universities and is currently applying for full membership. It actively cooperates with the UK Twinning program alongside the University of St. Andrews and is a member of multiple consortia, including the Consortium of Ukrainian Universities, University of Warsaw, Eastern European Network of Universities, and the International Consortium of Universities spanning Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Kazakhstan, and Poland. In 2024, NaUOA joined the KreativEU alliance as an associate partner. The University pursues an active policy of expanding international cooperation, having signed 80 research and academic agreements by October 2024 with institutions across Europe, Asia, and the United States of America. These partnerships reinforce NaUOA's commitment to broad research and educational collaboration. In addition, NaUOA participates in 6 Erasmus+ Jean Monnet projects, 2 projects of cooperation with the Swedish Defense University, a Visegrad Fund grant project "Resilience approach in cross-cultural training of future teachers in Ukraine and V4 countries", the "Academic Response to Hybrid Threats – WARN" consortium, and numerous global partnerships confirms its commitment to the internationalization and demonstrate the research relevance.

The University has invested in modernizing research facilities and equipment to meet current scientific standards, such as The Robotics Laboratory. This updated infrastructure facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration and hands-on learning for students and researchers alike. While the University demonstrates a clear commitment to maintaining and utilizing its RDC infrastructure, some facilities would benefit from further expansion and systematic maintenance to fully align with rapidly evolving scientific and technological demands. Additionally, although the University secures financial resources through internal grants and selected international programs, participation in national-level competitive funding schemes, such as those organized by the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine and the National Research Fund of Ukraine, remains limited and represents an underused opportunity for strengthening the RDC resource base and research capabilities.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of RDC resources and support processes. NaUOA demonstrates a clear commitment to updating and effectively utilizing its RDC infrastructure. The modernized facilities and well-equipped laboratories actively support both research and educational activities, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration

and practical learning. While the infrastructure meets current scientific and technological standards, some areas could benefit from further expansion and enhanced maintenance to fully align with evolving research demands. Some additional benefits could be brought by successful participation in the state budget competition from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to get new funding for fundamental and applied research. Another area of development is devoted to the competitions of the National Research Fund of Ukraine.

Strengths

- NaUOA maintains a comprehensive and transparent RDC support system, integrating research obligations into faculty contracts and providing internal funding through the Ostroh Academy Grant.
- The University operates 14 research centres and 11 laboratories across diverse disciplines, actively engaging students and fostering international collaboration.
- NaUOA secures diverse financial resources for research, combining internal funding with successful participation in competitive international grant programs such as Erasmus+ and the Visegrad Fund.
- The University demonstrates strong international cooperation, evidenced by membership in multiple consortia and numerous research and academic agreements worldwide.
- Modernized infrastructure and well-equipped laboratories, including the Robotics Laboratory, support interdisciplinary research and practical learning, with efficient utilization confirmed by the expert panel.

Areas of concern and recommendations

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

Opportunities for further improvement

- Consolidate and strengthen research centres and laboratories to promote interdisciplinary collaboration and optimize the use of resources and to reduce fragmentation of research centres and laboratories.
- Expand and diversify internal and external funding sources by increasing participation in national research competitions and international grant programs.
- Further modernize and maintain research infrastructure to meet evolving scientific and technological demands.
- Enhance support services for researchers, including grant writing assistance, intellectual property management, and research data services.

2.3.3. Student research supervision and doctoral studies

Requirements:

- A higher education institution involves students of all academic cycles in research, creative or project activity; and systematically surveys student satisfaction with their supervision.
- Professionalism, effectiveness and the workload of supervisors are reasonably balanced, which ensures the quality of research papers and positive graduation rates.
- Students are guided to recognize plagiarism and to avoid it.
- Conditions have been created for admission of international doctoral students and for studies abroad for all doctoral students.
- A higher education institution involves recognized foreign scientists in the provision of doctoral studies and the supervision of doctoral theses.

Evidence and Analysis

NaUOA actively involves students of all academic cycles (bachelor's, master's, and PhD) in research, creative, and project-based activities through structured participation in research groups (SER, p. 54), scientific events, academic competitions, and institutional projects such as REACT. Students regularly contribute to conferences, publish independently or in co-authorship, and engage in interdisciplinary topics across law, economics, linguistics, pedagogy, and information technology (SER, p. 56, Table 18). Graduate and postgraduate students benefit from supervised, project-based learning environments aligned with their advisors' research fields, and supervisor-student ratios are carefully regulated to ensure quality mentorship. The University also implements internal mechanisms to collect feedback on the quality of supervision, including surveys conducted through the internal quality assurance system.

At the same time, the meeting with support staff revealed that students rarely use the sources of scientific databases available at the library, however it is rather important for high-impact research. As was evident from statistics most of student papers are written as single-author publications. Based on the discussion with the PhD supervisors and PhD students, such an approach should be combined and/or followed by the publication with the scientific supervisor. It became evident that many research groups have narrow-topic, some departments (even some faculties) have several research groups under supervision. The number of research groups was shown as 45. It is worth considering the enlargement and combination of several research groups into large ones to attract more participants to wider topics, support collaboration (also interdisciplinarity) and manage resources.

Based on the (SER, p. 56; meeting with PhD supervisors), professionalism, effectiveness, and the workload of supervisors at NaUOA appear to be reasonably balanced, contributing to the quality of research outcomes and positive graduation rates. The institution enforces clear limitations on supervisory load. A maximum of five PhD students could be supervised by Doctor of Science and three by PhD degree holders. This helps

maintain individual attention and research quality. Supervisors are carefully matched with candidates according to their research specialization, ensuring academic relevance and effective guidance. The institution also supports professional development of supervisors through participation in international projects like REACT, which emphasize mentoring and methodological training (SER p. 56-57). At the same time, the total academic workload for the academic staff is rather high, 600 hours per year. It was discussed at the meeting with academic staff, that the university should proactively emphasise the need for changes regarding workload. Therefore, appropriate measures should be systematically taken by NaUOA to decrease and personalize the educational workload for academic staff, especially according to the newly approved Law No. 3791-IX.

NaUOA fosters a strong culture of academic ethics, guiding students at all levels to recognize and avoid plagiarism through both policy and practice (meeting with programme directors). Academic integrity is governed by clearly defined documents, including the Code of Academic Integrity, the Regulations on the Prevention of Academic Plagiarism, and procedures for reviewing academic work. Educational efforts on ethical research conduct are complemented using plagiarism detection systems Unicheck (2017–2024) and StrikePlagiarism (from July 2024), integrated into the Moodle platform. Students are consistently informed about standards of citation, originality, and ethical publishing, forming a conscious understanding of academic responsibility. The meetings with students, supervisors, support staff, and management revealed that the procedure for considering cases of academic misconduct is operational and known among stakeholders. Students are regularly introduced to the Code of Academic Integrity, real-life cases are used in awareness-raising, and a clear escalation path exists: from peer-level reporting to the Academic Integrity Commission. Although the approach is often individualized and case-specific, the commission has mechanisms for investigation, resolution, and appropriate sanctions. Based on these discussions, the current measures for prevention and response appear functional and sufficiently robust; however, there remains room to enhance transparency, consistency, and systematic preventive education across all study programs.

NaUOA has established formal conditions to admit international doctoral students, including clear regulations on supervision and research alignment, ensuring equal access to doctoral education for both Ukrainian and foreign candidates. Although the current absence of international PhD students is due to external factors like martial law, the University has a history of enrolling foreign doctoral candidates and remains open to their admission. Additionally, NaUOA supports doctoral students' opportunities for international mobility and study abroad through active participation in international projects and partnerships, such as Erasmus+ and collaboration with the Swedish Defense University. These frameworks provide doctoral students with access to cross-border academic exchange and research development. Although NaUOA has created formal conditions and frameworks for international mobility and academic exchange accessible to all doctoral students, the actual level of participation remains limited. The opportunities are in place, but not broadly utilized, indicating a need for the university to strengthen support mechanisms, raise awareness, and motivate wider student engagement in international activities.

NaUOA actively engages recognized foreign scientists in its doctoral programs through international collaborations and joint research projects. The University's cooperation with institutions such as the Swedish Defense University, and participation in Erasmus+ initiatives, facilitates the involvement of foreign experts in teaching, mentoring, and research supervision. While direct co-supervision by international scholars is not extensively detailed, these partnerships provide doctoral candidates access to global academic expertise and methodological guidance. This international engagement enhances the quality and relevance of doctoral training and expands the scholarly network available to students.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of student research supervision and doctoral studies. The university demonstrates strong engagement of students across all academic levels in research and creative activities, supported by effective supervision with reasonable workload limits and alignment of research topics. However, to improve scientific outputs the university should consider broadening the scope of narrowly focused research groups. Academic integrity is well-promoted through clear policies and advanced plagiarism detection tools integrated into the educational system. Although the institution has established conditions for admitting international doctoral students and involving foreign scientists, actual international student enrolment and formalized foreign supervision remain limited due to external factors and could be further developed. Overall, strengths in student research support and academic integrity outweigh minor gaps in internationalization.

Strengths

- NaUOA actively engages students across bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels in diverse research and creative activities, supported by structured supervision and project participation.
- Supervisory workloads are carefully managed with limits on the number of doctoral candidates per supervisor, ensuring focused and quality mentorship.
- The University maintains a strong academic integrity culture through clear policies and advanced plagiarism detection tools integrated into the learning platform.
- Formal frameworks are in place to admit international doctoral students and support their mobility, aligned with international cooperation initiatives.
- NaUOA involves recognized foreign scientists in doctoral programs via international collaborations and partnerships, enhancing global academic exposure for students.

Areas of concern and recommendations

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

- The predominance of single-author student publications may reduce collaborative learning opportunities, so encouraging joint publications with supervisors is recommended.
- The relatively narrow scope of research groups could be expanded by merging smaller groups to foster broader student participation and interdisciplinary research. Also to help with the supervision workload and manage resources effectively.
- Limited formal involvement of international supervisors constrains global academic exposure and can be improved by formalizing and increasing foreign expert participation in supervision and co-supervision.
- High academic teaching loads on staff reduce time available for supervision and research, suggesting systemic and personalized approach to workload reduction by NaUOA management.

Opportunities for further improvement

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

SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT AREA: RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND/OR OTHER CREATIVE ACTIVITY (RDC)

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
RDC effectiveness	☒	☐	☐	☐
RDC resources and support processes	☒	☐	☐	☐
Student research supervision and doctoral studies	☒	☐	☐	☐

Conclusion

Conforms to requirements in all sub-areas of RDC. NaUOA is demonstrating clear strategic alignment, steady growth in scientific output, robust support systems, modernized infrastructure, and broad student engagement across all academic levels. The university effectively secures internal and external funding, fosters international collaborations, and promotes academic integrity in supervision and doctoral studies. While challenges remain – such as enhancing international research visibility, consolidating research groups, increasing formal involvement of foreign supervisors, and addressing high teaching loads imposed by national policy – these do not undermine the institution's overall compliance. NaUOA shows a proactive approach to overcoming these limitations,

ensuring that its research and doctoral education functions meet expected standards and possess strong potential for further development.

2.4. SERVICE TO SOCIETY

2.4.1. Popularisation of core activities of a higher education institution and its involvement in social development

Requirements:

- A higher education institution has a system for popularising its core activities.
- Employees of an institution of higher education participate in the activities of professional associations and, as experts, in social supervisory boards and decision-making bodies.

Evidence and Analysis

NaUOA has implemented a comprehensive system for popularising its core activities and engaging in the social development of Ukraine. Through multifaceted initiatives, the institution has actively positioned itself as a cultural, educational, and civic leader. The university's role during the war has vividly demonstrated its civic leadership and deep commitment to societal resilience.

NaUOA's core popularisation activities include public lectures, panel discussions, digital outreach, and community collaboration. The "Mission of the Modern University" discussion platform has become a cornerstone of civic engagement, featuring renowned speakers and scholars discussing topics such as the role of university rankings, classical heritage, and entrepreneurship in modern academia. These discussions have spawned related projects, such as "Town and Gown 2.0," and publications like *Quo Vadis, University?* The institution also invites high-profile speakers to stimulate civic discourse. In 2024, General Ben Hodges and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Oleksandra Matviichuk were featured in public lectures addressing war, human rights, and civil liberties. These events are embedded in broader programming such as Science Days, which also feature panel discussions like digital transformation or societal values and Diplomatic Forum.

All planned events are shared with university staff and students through the Institution's Google Calendar, which provides detailed information about upcoming activities. This ensures that all interested parties are informed well in advance. Using a shared institutional calendar to promote university events is a good practice that could be successfully adopted elsewhere as well.

The popularisation of core activities is closely supported by the university's broader communication strategy (read more in chapter 2.1.1.), which ensures visibility of institutional priorities and fosters public engagement. The university has established a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its outreach efforts — particularly those available online or promoted digitally. University representatives explained in the meetings that event reach and impact are routinely assessed through the metrics and feedback tools. Based on this monitoring, the university regularly sets goals

and identifies areas for improvement, aligning its communication and popularisation efforts with strategic objectives and civic impact.

The spirit of civic engagement at NaUOA extends beyond formal initiatives into deeply rooted volunteer work embraced by students, faculty, and staff alike. The university community regularly undertakes initiatives that address pressing social needs. For example, students have raised funds to support a local kindergarten, demonstrating solidarity and care for the youngest members of society during times of crisis. Additionally, journalism students contribute to national resilience by producing radio programs aimed at uplifting public morale and reinforcing national identity amid the war in Ukraine. These are just few examples of a widespread culture of giving back that reflects a university-wide commitment to societal well-being. NaUOA sets a national example by actively involving all members of its academic community in meaningful service to society.

Additionally, according to SER (p. 60) and interviews the faculty members actively contribute as experts in various national and international agencies, including the National Agency for Higher Education Quality Assurance, the Ukrainian Cultural Foundation, and the Horizon 2020 programme. They also share their experience in community development, are involved in developing of the Ukrainian Legislation and support the veteran community by developing a model of psychological support and creating a tool for assessing communities' readiness for veterans' reintegration. However, it emerged that the collection of such information is not systematically developed and there is room for improvement in strategical planning as well.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of popularisation of core activities. The university has established impactful system for popularising its core activities and contributing to societal development. University staff are actively involved in professional networks and support public decision-making as experts and advisors.

Strengths

- Effective use of public forums (e.g. Diplomatic Forum) and media to popularise scientific and academic discourse.
- Integration of civic engagement with academic programming through high-profile guest lectures and Science Days.
- The use of a centralized institutional calendar to coordinate and promote university events demonstrates effective internal communication and outreach. This practice enhances visibility, fosters engagement across departments, and serves as a replicable model for other institutions.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- While the platform and activities towards society are robust, there is room for development in systemising of faculty's external advisory roles and collaborations to better reflect institutional outreach. The panel recommends that the university

develop a systematic database and tracking system for faculty involvement in social or external advisory roles and collaborations to enhance strategic outreach, visibility, and reporting. At the same time actively encourage academic staff to take on such roles and formally recognise this type of engagement by integrating it into staff workload planning and performance assessment frameworks.

Opportunities for further improvement

- It is not evident how public lectures, and civic events translate into longer-term results and collaborations or policy influence. It might be useful to develop a follow-up system to track policy or academic collaborations arising from public engagements and establish thematic continuity across events.
- To understand the impact of the carried-out events, post-event surveys or community feedback mechanisms might also help to evaluate the impact and refine future engagement.

2.4.2. Continuing education and other educational activities for the general public

Requirements:

- A higher education institution has defined its objectives regarding continuing education and measures their implementation.
- Continuing education is planned in accordance with the needs of target groups as well as with the potentials and purposes of an institution of higher education.
- Participant satisfaction with the quality of continuing education is regularly surveyed and the results are used in planning improvement activities.

Evidence and Analysis

NaUOA demonstrates a robust and multifaceted approach to continuing education and lifelong learning, with clear strategic objectives and a consistent commitment to public education. The university offers advanced training programmes for teachers, civil servants, and other public groups, supporting national capacity-building and professional development.

A major highlight is the "School of Educational Innovations," an Educational and Methodological Center within NaUOA. This centre focuses on enhancing the pedagogical competencies of teachers through programmes open to educators across Ukraine. These programmes emphasize interdisciplinary training, digital literacy, and teaching excellence, aligned with EU competence frameworks to ensure compliance with international standards and support lifelong learning. According to the School of Educational Innovations materials on the university website the School has clear objectives, yearly calendar and thematic plans regarding continuing education and measures their implementation accordingly. The target groups are clearly defined, and their needs are surveyed. Surveys are conducted at the beginning and at the end of the studies. Reports

on the results of the work of School of Educational Innovations from the past five years, available on the university website, reveal the actions taken, improvements made based on the participant feedback and analysis conducted.

A notable example of public initiative in 2024 was the pilot programme "One Nation: Integration and Support of the Population from the De-occupied Territories." Implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine, it provided professional development to individuals working with people from de-occupied regions, focusing on mental health, collective trauma, and civic identity reinforcement. This effort integrated theoretical and practical elements and addressed urgent social needs stemming from the war.

Additionally, NaUOA runs the Open University project offering public lectures and certificate programmes, extending education beyond traditional student cohorts and creating flexible learning opportunities (digital, blended formats) for lifelong learners and professionals seeking upskilling.

It is evident that university offers various continuing education opportunities; however, this resource may be underutilised as a potential source of additional funding. In the next development plan this could be one of the areas to focus on. According to SER (p. 60, 63) and meeting with employers it emerged that there is limited strategic engagement with local industries to tailor short-term programmes for labour market needs. Introduction of microcredential programmes might be useful in here.

Both Open University and the School of Educational Innovations offer continuing education activities. However, they are presented and advertised separately that might confuse the potential participant – where to look at the courses etc. The actions and aims of the School of Educational Innovations are clear, however there is not much information about the strategic planning of the activities that are conducted in the open university in SER and on the university webpage. It would be useful in the future to bring them under one umbrella, instead of two separate systems.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of continuing education and other educational activities. The university demonstrates strong planning aligned with the needs of the target groups and uses participant feedback to improve offerings. Target audiences are identified, and course content is updated accordingly. Programmes are designed considering the institution's mission and capabilities and according to the target group needs.

Strengths

- Comprehensive teacher training programmes aligned with European standards and digital transformation goals.
- Continuing education is strongly aligned with national priorities, particularly in the areas of post-conflict recovery and education reform, as evidenced by timely and relevant initiatives like the "One Nation" programme focused on social reintegration.

- Use of digital and blended formats in Open University increases access to lifelong learning, including for rural and vulnerable populations.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- There appears to be limited strategic engagement with local industries or employers to tailor short-term programmes for labour market needs. Strengthen partnerships with regional business associations and employment services to align continuing education offerings with workforce demands. Establish mechanisms for employers and other stakeholder involvement in shaping continuing education programmes in a more agile and responsive manner.

Opportunities for further improvement

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

2.4.3. Other public-oriented activities

Requirements:

- Public-oriented activities are purposeful, the results of the activities are periodically evaluated, and improvements are introduced based on those evaluations.
- A higher education institution contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources (library, museums, sports facilities, etc.) and/or by organising concerts, exhibitions, performances, conferences, fairs and other events.

Evidence and Analysis

According to interviews with NaUOA's management, most of the university's public-oriented activities are purposeful and closely aligned with its civic mission. However, given the urgency of the current wartime context, many initiatives have been implemented as rapid responses rather than as part of a formally updated institutional strategy. As a result, some activities may not be fully reflected in the university's pre-war strategic documentation, hence this shows the university's adaptability to the rapid changes and reflects its mission to serve the society. Numerous initiatives such as student-led volunteer work, public radio programmes, cultural events, and educational outreach reflect a consistent effort to respond to current societal needs — particularly in the context of war and national recovery.

The university applies a monitoring approach to these initiatives. As confirmed during interviews, activities that are advertised or delivered online are tracked in terms of reach, engagement, and audience feedback. Regular feedback is also collected through post-event reflections and participant surveys. Based on these evaluations, improvements are introduced — such as adjusting formats, choosing more relevant topics, or increasing outreach efforts. This ongoing cycle of implementation, evaluation, and refinement indicates that the university not only acts purposefully in its public engagement but also takes steps to improve its impact based on evidence. This approach aligns well with national expectations and represents a maturing institutional practice.

NaUOA effectively contributes to the enhancement of community welfare by sharing its resources. A standout initiative is the transformation of the University into a "town-forming institution" through its Academic Town concept. This approach integrates NaUOA's academic and social missions, blending cultural heritage with urban innovation. Projects such as "Town and Gown 2.0" and the university's close cooperation with the Ostroh Town Council exemplify this community-university synergy.

NaUOA Museum plays a crucial role in preserving and promoting Ukrainian heritage, functioning as an adaptive cultural and social resilience hub. In 2024, it hosted around 7,000 visitors, facilitated exhibitions tackling complex societal issues, and offered cultural programming within its newly converted "Gallery-Shelter," a multifunctional space used even during air raids. The venue hosts exhibitions on national history, identity, and current events, and serve as a psychological adaptation space for war-affected populations.

Beyond cultural offerings, the university actively engages in humanitarian and volunteer support. Volunteer centres at NaUOA coordinate aid for internally displaced persons (IDPs), military personnel, and veterans. Activities include donation campaigns, psychological support sessions, and delivery of essential supplies to affected communities.

Educational initiatives extend to veteran reintegration programmes and psychological rehabilitation courses. These are backed by rigorous social research and expert-led assessments of community readiness for veteran support.

Moreover, the university hosts civic-focused platforms like the Ostroh Forum and thematic podcast series. These platforms amplify civil society discourse and academic outreach while fostering intergenerational and interdisciplinary dialogue.

NaUOA has demonstrated a wide array of public-oriented activities that effectively serve both educational and socio-cultural objectives. These activities are anchored in the university's strategic vision to act as a driver of regional development and cultural enrichment. On one hand, the university's contributions to society are commendable; on the other hand, from a management perspective, these activities would benefit from a more focused and strategic approach in advance. For example, what are the long-term funding strategies to support the sustainability of the cultural programmes and volunteering activities.

Conclusion

NaUOA conforms to requirements in the sub-area of other public-oriented activities. NaUOA consistently executes impactful public-oriented initiatives and demonstrates a holistic integration of social, educational, and cultural services. NaUOA monitors the effectiveness of these initiatives.

Strengths

- Strong integration of the university into the socio-cultural life of Ostroh and the broader region.
- Effective use of university infrastructure (museums, forums, shelters) for public benefit.
- Resilient cultural programming during wartime that creatively repurposes institutional resources to benefit the public and strengthen community cohesion, e.g. cultural programming in shelters.

Areas of concern and recommendations

- The sustainability of volunteer and cultural programmes is not clearly supported by long-term funding strategies or institutional integration. Secure diversified funding (e.g., municipal co-financing, international grants) and embed public-oriented projects within academic or operational structures to ensure sustainability. Also, formal partnerships with NGOs or CSOs for shared delivery of public services might help. For that it might be useful to develop a memorandum of cooperation with relevant civil society organisations to co-create and expand outreach initiatives.

Opportunities for further improvement

- Enhance visibility of public events, documentation and activities through media partnerships and open-access documentation. Also consider, multilingual visibility and documentation of public-oriented activities to promote replicability and strengthen international reputation. It might be useful to increase outreach to different target groups through targeted access strategies (e.g., people with disabilities, elderly, internally displaced persons).
- While there is a notable variety of public initiatives, the evaluation of these activities' long-term societal impact remains limited. To address this, an impact monitoring system to assess community outcomes and ensure alignment with university development goals and public needs could be developed. Regular reporting on community impact — such as participant numbers, demographics, and follow-up activities — could also be implemented.
- Expand thematic diversity in cultural programming to include global and regional sustainability challenges. Consider developing community advisory boards or focus groups to co-design future public programmes. These bodies can serve as structured platforms for dialogue with local stakeholders, ensuring that programming reflects community interests and priorities, enhances relevance and inclusivity, and fosters stronger university-community partnerships.
- The geographic remoteness of the university may limit broader regional engagement. Increase digital outreach and forge stronger partnerships with other regional educational and cultural institutions to broaden impact.

SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT AREA: SERVICE TO SOCIETY

	conforms to requirements	partially conforms to requirements	does not conform to requirements	worthy of recognition
Popularisation of core activities of a higher education institution and the involvement of an institution of higher education in social development	☒	☐	☐	☐
Continuing education and other educational activities for the general public	☒	☐	☐	☐
Other public-oriented activities	☒	☐	☐	☒

Conclusion

Conforms to requirements in all sub-areas of service to society. NaUOA actively promotes its core activities through a structured and strategic approach. Academic and administrative staff participate in professional associations and contribute their expertise to social advisory boards and decision-making bodies. These educational opportunities are tailored to meet the specific needs of target groups while aligning with the university's mission and capacity. However, a more systemised approach of faculty participation in external advisory boards could enhance university's strategic outreach and visibility. Participant satisfaction with continuing education programmes is collected and analysed, with the results informing ongoing improvements. At the same time, local industries and employers could be more effectively involved in the development of continuing education programmes. Public-oriented activities are purposeful and regularly evaluated. The institution also contributes to community well-being by making its resources accessible to the public and by organising community-focused events. The university's consistent implementation of impactful and creative public-oriented initiatives is worthy of recognition.