

C. SWOT ANALYSIS

Summary of the SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis of NCU was prepared based on the outcomes of the project “Strategy for Excellence - Research University” in the following tasks.

1. Increasing the impact of the university’s research.
2. Enhancing collaboration with international institutions.
3. Improving the quality of education for students.
4. Devising solutions for the development of the university staff.
5. Improving the quality of university governance and management.

Strengths Gravity & potential: NCU is ranked 5th in Poland for academic staff, 10th for the number of students, and 9th for its budget. It is the largest academic institution in northern Poland with a potential to become a thriving research university.

1. As a preparation for the application process, a NCU-wide competition for interdisciplinary research teams was organized. The teams were assessed based on their academic performance resulting in 8 teams being short-listed, while 8 others received an honorable mention. Most of the pre-selected winning teams form five priority research areas.

2. NCU has an increasing number of published articles, international grants, foreign students, and visiting professors. This trend signifies potential that may be further strengthened with NCU becoming a research university.

3. In accordance with the ministerial financial algorithm, NCU fulfils the required student/staff ratio for research universities. The NCU staff is not overloaded with teaching duties so that it can closely connect research and teaching. This is signified by the first, Polish-wide interdisciplinary doctoral school - Academia Copernicana - established using EU POWER funds.

4. In 2015, NCU received the **HR Excellence in Research** status as the first university in Poland. This achievement illustrates NCU’s far-reaching approach towards creating a friendly environment for scholarly work and its compliance with EU Commission directives.

5. In April 2019, NCU implemented its new charter, changing the structure and management system by (i) unification of management, (ii) division of the scientific and managerial branches of the administration, and (iii) reduction of the organizational duties of the academic staff. This new established governance within the university is more efficient and hence provides the mandatory climate to intensify research.

Weaknesses Suboptimal allocation of resources: the inefficiency of the NCU administration and management as well as the deficiency of staff motivation systems may disproportionate the investment in the intensification of research and results.

1. Deficiencies in organisational reflexivity as well as institutional obstacles to the transmission of knowledge and know-how constitute the main weakness for an efficient allocation of resources.

2. Based on an annual employee satisfaction survey, the work motivation and satisfaction of the academic staff are in decline. The lack of academic mobility and English proficiency may hinder international collaborations.

3. External audits identified weaknesses of the management of education processes: deep differences in local procedures concerning studies, overcomplicated administration structures, fragmented and unsynchronised curricula.

4. A disadvantageous age structure endangers the generational succession in some research areas. The pay structure is geared towards sustaining the existing academic hierarchy rather than promoting young researchers.
5. NCU lacks a comprehensive human resources office, a transparent administration, and procedures that facilitate a wide-ranging support of international research efforts.

Opportunities "University matters": NCU, the largest employer in the region, with its students constituting 12% of Toruń's population, defines the character of the city. NCU enjoys firm support of regional authorities and local visibility, and provides a friendly academic environment for newcomers. NCU is ready to follow in the footsteps of some of the world-leading universities that, though emerging from small towns, have been recognized worldwide.

1. The new ministerial algorithm creates an advantageous environment. As a result of its academic potential, the expected staff/student ratio, and the number of research fields, the subsidy rises annually (a growth of 25% since 2014).
2. Low living costs and an efficient transportation network (international airports and highways) form a helpful environment for international collaborations.
3. The Copernican tradition and the attractiveness of Toruń (the Old Town is a World Heritage Site of UNESCO) augment NCU's international appeal.
- 4 and 5. The weak labor market with the abundance of a well-educated workforce provide an excellent opportunity to improve both academic and administrative staff.

Threats Relegation to teaching university status: competition with economically much stronger (Poznań, Łódź), geographically detached (Olsztyn), and densely populated (Bydgoszcz) regions. Failure to reach the status of research university would lead to the dispersion of NCU's potential due to an increasing elusion of the academic staff.

- 1 and 2. The evaluation system introduced by the new law limits cross-disciplinary collaborations. It further forces scholars to be evaluated individually, which prevents efficient teambuilding and discourages high risk-high gain projects.
- 3 and 4. Being located in one of the poorest regions of Poland with low wages (ranked 12th in Poland) and high unemployment (ranked 2nd in Poland) translates to a weak economic environment and lower regional attractiveness.
5. The extraordinary pace and complexity of recent legislative and institutional changes within higher education seriously impede the establishment of stable, efficient, and transparent administrative procedures.

Attachment no1, File: SWOT_caly_en_v3.pdf

No.	PRIORITY RESEARCH AREAS (POB – PRIORYTETOWY OBSZAR BADAWCZY) IDENTIFIED WITHIN THE SWOT ANALYSIS
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