

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF THE
FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAGREB IN
THE PERIOD 2018-2022

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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1. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb (Faculty) is a public university that organizes and conducts university studies and conducts scientific and professional work in the field of biomedicine and health, veterinary medicine, and other related fields, as well as lifelong education programs of doctors of veterinary medicine. It is one of the oldest faculties in the Republic of Croatia (founded almost 100 years ago), with its long tradition and established criteria of excellence, inseparable from the development of the veterinary profession in Croatia. During the 100 years of its existence, the Faculty performs its basic educational and scientific function in the field of veterinary medicine. In addition to education and scientific research, the Faculty also conducts professional activities in numerous areas such as: veterinary public health and environmental protection, clinical and field diagnostics, treatment and control of animal diseases and zoonoses, supervision and professional expertise in veterinary medicine and animal husbandry, research and production of medicines intended for the protection of animal health, design and organization of livestock production, hygiene and technology in the production of food of animal origin.

2. MISSION OF THE FACULTY

The mission of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb, as the only scientific and educational institution in the Republic of Croatia in the field of veterinary medicine, is excellence in veterinary education, scientific research, professional work, lifelong learning and inter-institutional and international cooperation.

3. VISION OF THE FACULTY

The vision of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb is to become an example of a comprehensive teaching and research center of high standards of the 21st century. The work at the Faculty will be based on the constant improvement of scientific, teaching and professional work, respecting the highest ethical standards, and on a cooperation-ready and innovative environment.

GOALS

In the field of **education**, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb should become a clearly recognizable and competitive higher education institution adapted to market requirements, with a clear strategic concept of teaching development (integrated and postgraduate studies).

In the field of **scientific research**, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb should remain a dynamic research center marked by interdisciplinary scientific projects and collaborative centers of excellence.

In the field of **professional work**, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb should become the main carrier of lifelong education and training of experts at the highest standards in all segments of the veterinary profession and institutions with the highest level of veterinary services in Croatia.

In **financial operations**, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb should implement all actions to ensure positive financial operations and responsible fiscal policy.

In creating **personnel policy**, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb should become a place of employment for the best young professionals, scientists and teachers, who will receive strong support at the beginning and later in their careers, enabling continuous advancement and training in cooperation with leading world institutions.

In the field of **international cooperation and mobility**, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Zagreb should become an internationally recognized scientific-educational and professional institution that promotes partnership and cooperation between the constituent parts of the University and other higher education institutions in the region and the world.

4. BASIC STRATEGY SETTINGS

The main activity and purpose of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb is the training of doctors of veterinary medicine.

The goal of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is to continue development by improving the quality of teaching, scientific and professional activities, to continue harmonization with other European veterinary universities while retaining its own specifics arising from the veterinary needs of the Republic of Croatia.

The entire activity of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is in accordance with the mission, vision and goals of the institution, and the development opportunities are appropriate to the set strategic goals and are in line with applicable legislation. Achieving the set goal, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine would position itself among higher education institutions in Europe with recognized excellence in the field of veterinary medicine training.

The basic areas of strategic planning are based on the definition and development of five basic areas:

1. EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY
2. SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY
3. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY
4. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS
5. ADMINISTRATIVE-PROFESSIONAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

A separate area of strategic planning is the quality system. Although quality runs through all the basic areas, several strategic goals have been additionally singled out and separately make up the QUALITY SYSTEM.

The guarantee of the implementation of planned activities in these areas will be reflected in the positive decisions of all departments of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine on strategic guidelines within the basic areas of planning. For each guideline, the implementation period, the method of implementation (action plan) and the responsible staff are defined.

5. SWOT-ANALYSIS - ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION

The credibility of the settings set out in this document, as well as the likelihood of meeting the strategic objectives, cannot be assessed without insight into the current situation at the national, regional and wider international levels. The SWOT analysis (analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) lists the most important strengths and weaknesses of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine in the environment of the academic community of the University of Zagreb at the moment.

ADVANTAGES (POWER)

- Reputation of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine as an institution with almost a century of tradition in higher education and scientific research
- Proactive management that encourages raising the level of quality in all areas of activity
- Competent teaching staff that occupies a leading position in their scientific and professional fields in the Republic of Croatia and has national, regional and international recognition
- Student-centered teaching, in line with the principles and standards of international veterinary education
- Favorable ratio of the number of teachers and students of the Faculty, which enables teaching in small groups
- Good representation of all forms of practical teaching
- Institutionalized cooperation with external collaborating institutions
- Developed support models for students (mentoring system and Student Office)
- Successful research activity of several research groups with excellent results in the national and international environment
- High level of doctoral study quality
- Quality cooperation with scientists and teachers of related institutions in the country and the world
- Satisfactory overall laboratory equipment, with accreditation of various testing methods
- Availability of services at the clinics of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine during 24 hours
- Favorable geographical position with regard to regional positioning

- Regular positive evaluation of external vocational (EAEVE) and national higher education organizations (ASHE)
- Strong internationalization - Integrated study of veterinary medicine in English

DISADVANTAGES (WEAKNESSES)

- Outdated IT infrastructure
- Multiplication and underutilization of existing scientific equipment, high maintenance costs
- Insufficient connection of basic and preclinical departments with clinics and clinical departments
- Fragmentation and insufficient connection of research groups and projects
- Insufficient development and application of the career guidance system for new young teachers
- Uneven development of departments, clinics and laboratories
- Lack of collaborative interdisciplinary research and projects and insufficient number of research and professional projects with other state institutions and the economy
- Insufficient use of the system of rewarding and motivating scientists and teachers, ie insufficiently developed mechanisms for encouraging top research and breakthroughs in teaching

OPPORTUNITIES

- Encouraging external evaluations for better positioning in Europe (EAEVE, VETCEE)
- Raising the quality of incoming students by testing additional skills before enrollment (psycho-motorical skills)
- Better connection of different scientific fields and launching interdisciplinary projects with other universities and scientific institutions
- Increasing the number of applications for projects funded by the European Union and the possibility of using such funds
- Strengthening cooperation and teamwork between clinics and departments in research and professional work with the aim of creating a unique institutional framework
- Development and accreditation of those laboratories that have a market justification for additional income of the Faculty
- Taking advantage of the regional position related to teaching in English
- Connecting with local, national and international economic entities and strengthening partnerships with the public and private sectors
- Better use of the AMAC-VEF association to connect with scientists who came from the Faculty and have achieved international recognition abroad
- Education of employees through various workshops, seminars and courses to raise the level of quality in all areas and processes

THREATS

- High competitiveness in the field of biomedical research for obtaining research projects, in Croatia and the EU
- Restricting the new employment of scientists and inadequately stimulating young people for scientific work
- Unstable way of financing with potentially reduced inflow of funds for science from the state budget
- Lack of funds for the purchase of scientific equipment, especially capital
- Going abroad of young veterinary doctors immediately after graduation or after acquiring additional levels of education

6. STRATEGIC GOALS AND IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES

The working group for the development of the strategy defined five basic areas of strategic planning, on the basis of which guidelines for action were adopted. The strategy is planned with the participation of all organizational units, for the reason that the achievement of growth and development can be achieved only through the coordinated action of all organizational units of the Faculty.

6.1. IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, as an institution where future veterinarians are educated, must harmonize its curriculum in such a way as to meet the general conditions of the so-called regulated professions and recognition of qualifications at the international level.

The following studies are currently being conducted at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the graduate level:

- a) Integrated undergraduate and graduate university study of veterinary medicine lasting 6 years - a basic study of the Faculty that prepares students for the title of doctor of veterinary medicine, and enrolls 150 students per year.
- b) Integrated undergraduate and graduate university study of veterinary medicine in English for 6 years. Up to 25 students are enrolled in this study per year (one seminar group), and the study is a very important element in strengthening the international reputation and recognition of the Faculty and its involvement in the international exchange of work and knowledge.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. Improving the quality of teaching at the integrated undergraduate and graduate university study of veterinary medicine, which is conducted in Croatian and English. Harmonization of curricula according to EU standards, national and international evaluation of the study program, with a more active role of students in everyday activities.

Activities:

1. Improving the curriculum in accordance with the EU list of subjects and recommended competencies (Day one Competence) and generic skills that must be possessed by today's doctor of veterinary medicine.
2. Improving the appropriate representation of lectures, seminars and exercises in accordance with learning outcomes.
3. Encouraging horizontal and vertical integration within the given curriculum and continuing to define practical forms of application of acquired knowledge in the light of defined learning outcomes.
4. Arranging and equipping cabinets for acquiring skills within the Faculty and its clinical teaching bases, as well as renovating the equipment in the existing cabinets.
5. Take safety and health measures, as set out in the EAEVE SOP.
6. Improving teaching by increasing the number of field work sites and preparing and publishing appropriate textbooks, manuals and teaching texts intended for these studies.
7. Revision of examinations in elective courses (introduce other knowledge tests, eg without assessment or with descriptive assessment) and for the most part convert elective subjects into e-learning courses.
8. Establishment of a system of career counseling for students in order to identify their affinities as early as possible, and then to direct their profiling during their studies. Monitoring the employability of graduate students and student satisfaction with study programs at the national level. Encouraging lifelong professional guidance and career development.
9. Encouraging students to make a more active contribution and greater involvement in the work of various faculty bodies in decision-making processes; encouraging the strengthening of their position within university bodies; providing support to the Student Union; encouraging the work and development of other student associations and student projects.
10. Promoting excellence, with a special focus on rewarding and finding opportunities to reward the best students.
11. Consideration of the introduction of an additional enrollment requirement with the aim of further raising the level of quality of incoming students. Development of a procedure for the introduction of a classification procedure for the enrollment of candidates in the study program conducted in English.
12. Ensuring periodic evaluations of study programs by national and external evaluators.
13. Encouraging the application of information and communication technologies in learning, education and record keeping.
14. Ensuring and raising the quality of teaching competencies through the training of young teachers in pedagogical, didactic, methodological and other contents.
15. Improving the use of European and other funds for student and teacher mobility projects.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2. Improving the quality of postgraduate studies and lifelong learning

In modern society, higher education is the basis of economic growth, based on highly educated staff, scientific research and innovation. Postgraduate education at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine aims to expand the competencies of DVM and encourage the full development of their potential through high quality studies and courses. The next period is one of the most challenging given the likelihood of an increase in the supply of EU funds and therefore an increase in opportunities to improve university activities.

At the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine implemented are:

- a) Postgraduate university doctoral study of Veterinary Science lasting from 3 to a maximum of 8 years, which enrolls about 10 students per year.
- b) There are currently 16 postgraduate specialist studies, of which 15 last four and 1 two semesters. According to the number of enrolled students, the study of Surgery, Orthopedics and Ophthalmology is currently in the lead.
- c) Lifelong learning courses conducted in cooperation with the Croatian Veterinary Chamber.

Activities:

1. Preparation and implementation of regular evaluation procedures, after the introduction of specialist studies in English, their accreditation within VETCEE
2. Internationalization of postgraduate education
3. Encouraging excellence in curriculum design and implementation
4. Continuation of development and modernization of study programs, ensuring the same quality of teaching performance at different studies
5. Introduction of the possibility of attending a certain part of classes with appropriate certification - postgraduate certificate, specialist diploma
6. Encouraging the creation of joint study programs with other institutions
7. Development of accompanying scientific-teaching-professional infrastructure for effective training of students - improvement of laboratories, contracts with veterinary organizations and other institutions, provision of journal database, library premises for journal club
8. Introduction of forms of distance learning (online, distance learning), with emphasis on online lifelong learning courses
9. Establishment of the Commission for Lifelong Learning
10. Creating new courses and webinars through stronger cooperation with the economy
11. Monitoring the number of participants in studies and conducting an analysis of the situation with proposing improvement measures
12. Improving the quality system
13. Encouraging the introduction of the Internship program

14. Developing a positive environment for the establishment of residency programs at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

6.2. IMPROVEMENT OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY

Strategic goals for the development of scientific research are extensively stated in the Strategic Program of Scientific Research of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb for the period 2016 - 2022. Efforts include encouraging the creation of new scientific research profile and active and fruitful atmosphere for increasing research activities and providing financial and organizational support for increasing research productivity at the Faculty. They also include encouraging the development of scientific research activities in all departments and clinics and creating an atmosphere that will encourage individuals and groups of scientists to research and collaborate with various entities, applying new knowledge about sustainable development of society as a whole.

The strategic goal of improving scientific activity includes the following activities:

1. Improving the quality of scientific research activities
2. Human resources development and knowledge transfer
3. Increasing interdisciplinary scientific research activities
4. Improving cooperation with the economy
5. Strengthening national and international recognition

6.3. IMPROVEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is a recognizable institution in all areas of veterinary activity, and the staff of the Faculty is involved in various forms of clinical work, specialist programs and projects of cooperation with the economy. In addition to efforts to improve the reputation of veterinarians in society, the Faculty is committed to establishing the best possible relations with the Croatian Veterinary Chamber, Ministry of Agriculture and the Croatian Veterinary Institute.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. Improving the coordination of professional and clinical work of organizational units that conduct clinical practice on a daily basis

Activity:

1. Organization of the Veterinary University Hospital for the purpose of coordination and improvement of professional-clinical work

STRATEGIC GOAL 2. Formation of professional teams for cooperation with the economy by species of animals and areas of professional interest and improvement of the professional activity of the Faculty

Activities:

1. Appointment of coordinators and members of expert teams by animal species and areas of professional interest in order to provide services to the economy
2. Intensifying cooperation and dialogue with economic entities on their needs for professional cooperation
3. Ensuring targeted short professional training of members of professional teams in areas of interest of economic entities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3. Encouraging professional development, primarily of young teachers, in order to be able to respond to the demands of the economy

Activity:

1. Encouraging the use of opportunities, primarily of young teachers, for longer-term professional development in order to improve professional work and achieve the qualifications necessary for cooperation with the economy.

6.4. FINANCIAL BUSINESS

The financial operations of the Faculty are presented cyclically in the final accounts, for a period of one budget year in accordance with the Budget Act. The largest item of revenue, over 75%, is made up of budget funds. In the mentioned financing system, an extremely important item will be revenues generated from own activities, therefore the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine must be prepared to generate as much revenue as possible on the market, especially in the field of intellectual and professional services, clinical work and organization of specialized courses and workshops.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. Systematic work on increasing own financial resources in the total funds of the faculty in the amount of more than 25%

Activities:

1. Continuously develop and improve the study in English and try to meet the quota of 25 enrolled students per year of study. If the need arises, consider increasing quotas according to capacity and capacity.
2. Develop all forms of postgraduate studies and lifelong learning in terms of internationalization in order to generate additional resources in the market.
3. Encourage all forms of professional cooperation with economic entities on a commercial basis.
4. Encourage applications for international projects from European funding sources, not only as collaborators but, if possible, as project leaders.

5. If necessary, use short-term financial products on the financial market in a situation of favorable interest rates.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. Continuous allocation of funds in accordance with the possibilities for renewal of infrastructure and equipment

6.5. ADMINISTRATIVE-PROFESSIONAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES

When hiring new employees, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is guided by the policy of recognizing excellence and selecting the best young employees in all segments of its activities. In the next period, it is necessary to continue and strengthen the transformation of the administrative (professional) and personnel operations of the Faculty. During this transformation, standards and guidelines and acts at the level of the European Union will be fully monitored and applied, as well as all relevant documents adopted at the national level in the field of higher education.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. To maintain the optimal number of employees in the scientific-teaching profession with the rejuvenation of staff with a long-term development-oriented personnel policy

Activities:

1. Development of a new job systematization and multi-year staff projection of jobs with a development component.
2. Introduction of a system of assigning mentors in the training of new employees in associate positions with a defined training plan, goals, criteria for monitoring and quality control of the system through which young teachers would systematically and focused acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that guarantee further successful development of their scientific and teaching careers and at the same time enabling the evaluation of mentors.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2. Reorganization and rationalization of administrative-professional and administrative business

Activities:

1. Make an audit of the jobs of employees in administrative and professional operations and, where the opportunity arises, gradually implement the rationalization and centralization of such jobs into a single service at the faculty level.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3. Informatics transformation of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Activities:

1. Improving the IT infrastructure and the level of support to employees.
2. Continuation of full implementation of business digitalization.
3. Digitization of archival material.

6.6. QUALITY SYSTEM

The guiding idea of the quality system of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is to enable excellence in all processes: from the highest quality teaching to the latest (state-of-the-art) research and organizational skills, which together provide rounded support to students and staff, but also improves relationships with veterinarians and broader community. All processes at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine must be at the highest level, with comprehensive transparency, efficiency and fairness, the aim of ensuring the trust of all service users - students, external associates, and employees themselves.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1. Application of defined standards (ISO 9001, 17025; ESG (in accordance with ASHE and EAEVE guidelines, Croatian legal acts) in all processes and adoption of appropriate procedures that enable the maintenance of these standards at the institution.

Activities:

1. Development of procedures necessary for the implementation of defined standards in the work processes at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (eg Study program, Day One Competencies, Elective courses, Student assessments, Persons with disabilities, Library, Monitoring students after graduation, Biosafety and Biosecurity, Use of animals in teaching, Recruitment of new employees, etc.)
2. Acceptance of the culture of quality by all employees of the Faculty, active involvement of all stakeholders and conducting of regular training on the quality system at the Faculty level.
3. Transition from the quality assurance system (currently existing, which is primarily based on the elimination of existing shortcomings) to a total quality system (TQS) that will allow continuous improvement and through risk analysis reduce or eliminate the possibility of non-compliances at the Faculty level.
4. Reorganization of the Quality Office and appointment of persons at departments / clinics who will be in charge of the quality system and involved in the work of the Quality Office (bottom-up communication).

7. RESPONSIBLE STAFF AND SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

The implementation of the Strategy will be supervised by the Dean's Collegium, and if necessary, the Dean may propose the establishment of a Commission to monitor the implementation of the Strategy. The Dean's Collegium and, if necessary, the Commission will periodically, at least once a year, report to the Faculty Council on the achieved results of the implementation of the Strategy. Taking into account the reports, achieved results, but also possible unfulfilled goals, the Faculty Council will appoint a team for drafting the Strategy of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine for the next period (2023-2028) no later than January 2023.

RESPONSIBLE STAFF

- Dean and Dean's Collegium
- Division heads
- Head of the Quality Office
- Heads of departments and clinics
- Faculty Committees
- Heads of other organizational units