Conditions for Success in a Contemporary Education Market

1. Introduction

The state’s monopoly on higher education was overturned in 1990; it resulted in the rapid growth of privately owned higher-education institutions as well as the development of a different outlook on knowledge *per se*. This different definition of knowledge has a broader context, however, as P. Drucker writes: “For Socrates the purpose of studying was self-knowledge and self-improvement. There were intrinsic benefits of possessing knowledge. His opponent Pythagoras claimed that the skillful choice and presentation of arguments were objectives of possessing knowledge. […] Mediaeval trivium, the system of education consisting of: grammar, logic and rhetoric, makes for what is now called general education. Those three major studies give the tools necessary for making decisions about what to say and how to say it. […] Contemporary knowledge is, by contrast, proven in the field. Nowadays knowledge means the effective utilisation of possessed information in an action performed, with a focus on the results. The results are extrinsic to an individual, existing in the society and economy as well as in the pure development of knowledge” [1, p. 43].

It can be said that the state of education today is the result of an attempt to answer social, economic and civic needs. The didactic system offered by Polish universities is additionally constrained by new European Union requirements with which Poland is confronted. It is mostly the privately owned
schools, not constrained by rigid organisation systems and state funds, that try to meet these requirements.

2. The concept of a modern University

The University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów (UITM) was founded on the basis of the decree dated 8th March 1996 of the Minister of Education and was listed on the Register for Non-state Owned Universities under item 81. The University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów is run according to the Higher Education Act of 12th September 1990 (Act Register No. 65, position item 835 with amendments). The Association of Entrepreneurship Promotion (AEP)1 in Rzeszów is the founder of The University of Information Technology and Management.

As the University was being created it was obvious that it would not concentrate solely on providing education to Bachelor level. Hence, having been granted the permission to lead Bachelor’s studies, the University has been actively seeking the authorisation to grant Master’s degrees.

Currently there are 6 faculties offering Bachelor’s degree, one faculty offering a degree in engineering, and two faculties offering Master’s degree. It is

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1 The Association for Entrepreneurship Promotion has operated in the Podkarpacki Region since 1992. It deals with the promotion of economic enterprises, offers educational services, carries out research and offers comprehensive counselling for companies and other institutions. Its training, counselling and informational roles are supported by numerous organisations and international programs such as: PHARE, PHARE PARTNERSHIP, STRUDETER, FIRSTA, and LEONARDO DA VINCI. The following institutions function within the Association for Entrepreneurship Promotion: Rzeszów Business Support Centre Network (8000 individual and corporate clients), Euro Info Correspondence Centre (15 000 information services involving small and medium sized company solutions and the rules of functioning in the EU labour Market), Rzeszów School for Managers (14 500 graduates), and Investor Service Centre (operated in cooperation with Rzeszów Regional Development Agency within PHARE PARTNERSHIP Program). The Association for Entrepreneurship Promotion has managed to create a unique education system which provides a comprehensive education. It has opened: The Association for Entrepreneurship Promotion Secondary School in 1992, The University of Information Technology and Management in 1996, The College of Management and Public Administration in Zamość in 1997 (opened in cooperation with The University of Information Technology and Management), and the Association for Entrepreneurship Promotion Junior High School in 1996 (on the basis of the State Ministry of Education decree of 1st September 2001 the Association for Entrepreneurship Promotion Secondary School and junior High School became a part of the University of Information Technology and Management structure). AEP was awarded 1st prize for its activities in support of the environment and region in the PRO PUBLICO BONO competition.
worth noting that UITM is one of the very few privately owned universities that offer a Master’s degree in more than one faculty. Because of the great interest shown by students from the area of Lublin and Zamość, in 1997 AEP decided to create a UITM subsidiary, the College of Management and Public Administration in Zamość. In this way 4000 students who began their studies at UITM in Rzeszów were able to continue them in Zamość.

The range of specialties offered by UITM is concurrent with the present job market demand and presents the students with the opportunity to seek employment appropriate to their field of study. The specialties offered within the range of post Bachelor’s degree studies have been prepared in such a way as to enable all graduates with a Bachelor’s degree to continue their studies. Although there exist certain curriculum differences which must be covered by supplementary material, a graduates’ position in the job market is definitely improved by such study.

The University of Information Technology is a non-profit organisation providing high quality education for numerous students. Thus it requires a modern and vast infrastructure, which is the main priority in the development strategy. UITM consists of a number of buildings covering 70 ares of which 11,000 m² are used for didactic and office purposes. There is a hotel for lecturers, students’ club where you can find a modern and spacious library and reading room.

In February 2002 the Tourism Centre in Kielnarowa-Królka near Rzeszów was opened. It occupies 12 hectares. There are lecture halls, classes, language and computer laboratories. Altogether UITM has got the scientific and didactic base of 12,500 m². By April 2003 one of the biggest sports halls (4500 m²) in Poland will have been opened. In May, the works over new asphalt sports field (for football, mini ball, volleyball and basketball) will be finished. In September new tennis courts, cycling path, track, health spa, reading room and bar will be finished.

3. The system of managing the University

It became clear at the very beginning of the functioning of the University that effective management cannot be put into practice by means of the old fashioned, “paper” methods (used mainly at public universities). The system that was

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3 Non-profit organisation means that any financial surplus from statutory activities is used for investments.
introduced at this University, if applied in all public universities, would save PLN 1.5 billion annually. Thus an Integrated System of Managing the University was implemented because of the need to invest in new managing systems (a vast majority is based on information technologies) as well as the experience of Western universities. The system can be divided into five sub-systems: Educational Process Management System, Finance Management System, Human Resources Management System, System of Environment Communication and Inner Communication System.

The number of students indicates how interesting the educational offer of the University is. At present there are about 8000 students, including 500 in postgraduate studies. So far 8454 students have received Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees. All graduates during their studies have received nearly 10 000 international language and information technologies certificates.

Students pay their university fees in a system of ten monthly payments. Fees vary, from PLN 280 to PLN 415, according to the type and major of studies.

The system mentioned above relies on the relevant supporting applications involving the use of the computer network. The fundamental application reinforcing the UITM management system and the calculation of costs regarding the teaching process is an integrated system “UCZELNIA CL” based on the product made by the Partner in Progress Company which benefits from the ORACLE database. This system manages very effectively three modules: the dean’s office module (administration of students), recruitment module (the process of new students selection) and the module that assists in calculating teaching hours for the faculty. This application enables the automation of the work of the UITM organizational divisions such as dean’s office, bursar’s office and personnel department. The system of internal and external communication works with the help of the application designed by the INVAR Company employing the LOTUS NOTES Domino R5 program. It functions as an e-mail system, manages staff organization and facilitates the circulation of documents within the institution. It also controls the flow of documentation, administers the development of common

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4 Considers Students’ matters (documents about studies), timetables, examination session records, scholarships, didactic personnel planning, classes account, managing the didactic infrastructure etc.

5 Manages unds according to regulations in force.

6 Includes recruitment, work organisation, development of scientific research, motivation for teaching, scientific personnel and administrative staff with certain qualifications, putting personnel policy into practice.

7 Provides a flow of information between school and its environment, that is supervisory organisations (Ministry of National Education and Sport), local financial institutions, potential candidates for the University (promotion), other schools in Poland and abroad (co-operation) etc.

8 Provides a correct flow of information between particular sub-systems.
projects and estimates the optimum working time (time management) through the application of the network calendar. In addition to those specialized applications, there are network disks on which files used in collective work are stored as well as University websites in Polish, English, German and Ukrainian.

Another element of the system is the Virtual University – a system that was created by the University itself and, in general terms, is the means of external communication of the University with its eight thousand students. This system includes such communication tools as Student Processing Cards, which the UITM installed; the first school in Poland to do so. The ELS system controls, for example, the amount of hours the student spends in a computer laboratory or the number of books he has already borrowed. The ELS system benefits the student who can check his record (the results from the last examination session or the state of his sub-account in the financial–accounting system) in a student database any time he wants, using one of the terminals equipped with card readers.

Moreover, the system of the Virtual University covers Interactive Voice Response Gateway (IVR), E-mail Gateway, SMS Gateway, “on-line hour division” sub-system, “electronic notice board” sub-system, “electronic questionnaire” sub-system and “computer laboratory exploitation” monitoring sub-system.

The effectiveness of this modern university management system is reflected in the number of 96 administrative workers who are able to serve 8000 students.

4. The system of teaching and learning methods at the UITM

The concept of the modern university discussed in the first section entails creating a system of teaching methods that correspond to the highest teaching standards. The curriculum of the UITM is designed to be in line with the study programs offered by other Polish and overseas universities. The supervision and results of the examinations carried out at the UITM are monitored and comments and conclusions are given to the examiners immediately. They fully respect the policy of the University and willingly cooperate in mastering their teaching

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9 The Internet service available in four languages results from the UITM international co-operation policy.
10 Student Processing Cards are called Student Electronic Identity Cards (ELS).
11 Terminals are freely available at the University; the ELS cards entitle students to use computer network (over 800 PCs) at all times.
12 High quality should be confirmed by the accreditation the University has received.
methods. Every term, reports and analyses are prepared to improve teaching efficiency\textsuperscript{13}.

**Educational process discipline**

At the beginning of a term each faculty is obliged to provide all students with a detailed syllabus of the course, the bibliography required together with the precise conditions for receiving credit and the bibliography required. The syllabus presents the person and the academic achievements of the lecturer. It is the faculty’s duty to submit samples of students’ tests and final examination papers (best, medium, worst) to the authorities of the University. The process of education at the University of Information Technology and Management is organized in accordance with ISO 9001:2000.

**Faculty**

Obtaining the Ministry of National Education and Sport licence and high position the University has occupied in various university rankings has been attributable to the faculty of the University.

UITM employs 89 professors, associate professors, 97 PhDs. Altogether the University employs 422 faculty, 247 of whom work full time.

**Faculty Assessment System**

From the beginning of the existence of the University, its authorities have run a faculty assessment system comprising their educational, scholar and organizational merit. A crucial element of this evaluation is a faculty evaluation form which is completed by students, anonymously, in each semester.

**The System of student’s aid**

To enable students to thoroughly understand the material and eliminate any existing uncertainties, the University provides a system of virtual consultancies on-line with faculty members. The system of additional classes for students has also helped UITM students in their learning process. This system comprises a system of free obligatory classes and a system of paid optional classes.

The system of free obligatory classes is directed to the first year students. It is based on the list of the classes which cause most difficulties (the list is formed

\textsuperscript{13} For students who graduated in BA Studies in the academic year 2001/2002 the teaching efficiency was between 61–68%.
on the basis of previous years’ experience). At the beginning of the term there are tests, whose results constitute the basis for allocating students to the additional free obligatory classes of the course.

The system of paid optional classes is directed to students of all years. It enables the organising of additional classes within the courses which are parts of the curriculum, and which cause students the most problems. Other additional classes are launched at students’ incentive.

**Scholarship system**

The element of a modern educational system at a university is a students’ motivating scholarship system. UITM is one of few universities in Poland which grants scholarships not only to its day students but also to the extramural ones. The scholarships are a form of a reward for students’ scholastic achievements as well as their engagement in the academic life of the University. The scholarship can only be granted to a student who has obtained all the credits required and passed all the exams at the first sitting. Students with the average grade of 4.8–5.0 will receive the scholarship which amounts to 50% of their fee. Students whose average grade is not lower than 4.0 may receive a scholarship of 50% or 30% of their fee provided they are engaged in the academic life of the University, in particular if they participate in the system of a Particularly Capable Student, science and special interest groups, open lectures, scientific conferences, seminars and symposia and activities aimed to improve the quality of the educational process at the University as well as other forms of academic activities. Such a scholarship system encourages students to actively take advantage of all the opportunities the University offers to participate in its academic life.

**The system of free places**

In order to achieve the highest educational level in the academic year 2002/2003 the University Authorities have decided to introduce a new form of scholarship called “The system of free places” into the scholarship regulations. It is a motivational system addressed to high school graduates who can apply for a high-flier status with a scholarship covering all fee costs of their studies. There are certain criteria to be met, in order to be awarded 100% scholarship\(^\text{14}\). The students who receive the scholarship and want to retain it during their studies have to prove to be hardworking and to make progress. The high-fliers are to be active within the system of talented students as well as in Scientific Clubs and Interests Clubs.

\(^{14}\) One of the criteria to be satisfied is a positive mark at the interview.
The system of talented students (STS)

The aim of the system is to make it possible for students to gain extra knowledge and practical skills, which will make them more competitive in the employment market. It is a long-term program of students’ activity development – the first step towards a professional career.

Only students who finished the first year and got a 4.0 average mark are allowed to apply for membership in the system of talented students. 100 students are accepted every October. Priority is given to those who can supply documentary evidence of their interests, achievements and abilities. Moreover the system of talented students accepts all candidates who are in the system of free places automatically.

Every STS student has a tutor who supervises his/her didactic, scientific and organizational activities. Mentors supervise talented students and encourage them to develop their interests individually. STS students are members of Scientific Clubs and may attend extra free classes chosen in accordance with their interests. Additionally they take part in training sessions and workshops as well as didactic, scientific and organizational activities for the University. They work as volunteers and receive training in Poland and abroad. STS students have a chance to participate in competitions, conferences and symposia. They can apply for additional scientific scholarships and can be granted financial help for conferences. They have the right to use an instalment system when paying for University courses and examinations. Finally STS students are promoted among employers and the University helps them to the best of its ability to secure their first job.

Scientific Clubs

The University of Information Technology and Management includes the following scientific-educational units: Marketing Forum, Financial Investment Club, Managers Club, Communication and Negotiations Club, Students Programming Club, Multimedia Techniques Club, Computer Graphics and Animation Club, Computer Systems and Nets Club, Geographical Club, Podkarpacie Cultural Heritage Club, Photography Club, Economics Club, Modelling Studio. There are 300 students in the clubs in total.

Innovations in the teaching process

In the academic year 2002/2003 further innovative elements have been introduced into the teaching process. One of them is the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). ECTS, which is already widely known in Western Europe, and
is a set of procedures developed by the European Commission. The system guarantees academic recognition of studies completed at home or foreign institutions. The studies can be included in the students’ regular curriculum. In this way the European Commission promotes co-operation between institutions of higher education within the scope of student exchange. The system has been successfully implemented in many European schools of higher education which decided to adopt its principles.

ECTS was implemented in the UITM on 1st October 2002. Because of this system the students of UITM can travel abroad during their course of studies to a chosen university, provided that it has also implemented the ECTS. At a chosen institution of higher education, for example German, French or Italian university our students will be able to attend courses, complete a semester and come back with a set of credits without any loss of time or necessity to make up for any differences in the study programs.

Full recognition of credits resulting from ECTS means that a period of study at a foreign institution (including exams and other forms of assessment) is recognized as a comparable period of study at the home institution, regardless of any differences in the study programs of the courses agreed on as parallel. This results from the fact that ECTS\(^{15}\) is based on the trust the institutions of higher education have in each other.

Thanks to this system a new, more convenient organization of the academic year has been introduced. The primary examination session begins as early as in the middle of a semester and the semester has been made two weeks longer. Various courses begin and finish at different times during a semester. Exams and final tests are administered after a course has been finished, therefore also during a semester. The benefit of this is that students have more time to study, achieve better marks and as a result, a better chance to obtain a higher average grade and to be awarded a scholarship.

Another innovative element in the teaching process introduced in the academic year 2002/2003 is, apart from the traditional methods of teaching, the

\(^{15}\) In the ECTS each subject is assigned a certain number of points. The system is the same in all the universities that have the ECTS. Students at the university who take part in the system are granted the full number of points, which correspond to the number of subjects that they completed while studying, that is 60 points during a year (30 points per semester). The student who successfully completes his studies, the programme of which was previously agreed between their mother university and the foreign university, comes back to his mother university. The points (credits) that he acquires while studying abroad will be transferred to his account when he wants to continue his studies at his mother university. Consequently, he can continue his studies without the waste of time and without losing his credits. Another important change resulting from our access to the ECTS is the fact that since the beginning of the academic year 2002/2003 students have been given just one mark for one subject. This mark is the mean of all the marks they get for all the forms of classes realized on the curriculum, e.g. lectures, classes, lab classes, projects, etc.
possibility of improving the qualifications with the use of distance learning techniques and the Internet (Distance Learning).

Teaching materials prepared in this up-to-date form have been collected and they are distributed on CD among students, without any extra charge. It enables the students of the UITEM to have access to a high level of education, available at any place, and at any time. It gives a chance to the disabled, the unemployed people who work and want to obtain better qualifications and to all those who look for knowledge “available always and everywhere”.

The modules that have been prepared consist of economic, information technology and quantity subjects. However, it needs to be stressed at this point that distance learning courses are an additional form of studying and they are not equivalent to regular classes, lectures, lab classes or project work. Implementation of the Distance Learning (DL) project is possible thanks to the platform Lotus Learning Space 5.0, by IBM. This platform enables integration of the material coming from other systems, the Internet and intranet resources together with the material prepared by ourselves. Learning Space enables us to organize group learning and create virtual classes. It also gives us the answer to the most crucial questions: Has a student begun studying? Which subjects has he started? If yes – has he passed the exam? How many times has he taken the exams? How many marks has he gained?

Incorporation of DL courses in the University curriculum means acquisition of more knowledge on the part of student. The DL didactic materials allow students to check their knowledge and acquire some skills using modern tools delivered with the help of the Internet, at a time most convenient to themselves.

The next element of the didactic system at UITEM is the student-exchange system, which consists of two parts. The first consists in preparing students for their stay abroad. The second phase begins when students choose the country they would like to visit and it lasts until they complete all the formalities. The preparation process is an essential element in the education system. The countries where students mainly go are the European Union countries and the United States of America. The duration of their stay abroad varies from 3 months to 2 years, which is the decision of each student.

The training in foreign companies gives students the chance to practice their language skills and have a closer look at various departments within a company. They can also take part in many professional training courses and receive certificates. Acquiring experience of the functioning of foreign companies increases the chances of UITEM graduates to secure an attractive job. Such a wide spectrum of student exchange programs is possible thanks to the well-established cooperation between this University and fellow universities abroad as well as some international organizations.
Moreover, to further enable our graduates to get employment in Poland and in other European countries our University joined the national project “Supplement to the diploma” at the beginning of the academic year 2000/2001. The project is coordinated by Biuro Uznawalności Wykształcenia i Wymiany Międzynarodowej, the Ministry of National Education and Sport. The supplement to the diploma prepared by experts from the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations is to help in recognition and fair evaluation of students’ qualifications in Poland and abroad. It also enables students to further qualify themselves. The supplement confirms the qualifications and includes a description of the profile of the studies that the person mentioned in the original diploma completed which is attached to the supplement. Finally, the supplement makes it possible to trace the history of the studies that the graduate has completed – including names of subjects, form of classes, number of hours and marks obtained.

Language Certificates and Information Technology Certificates

To assist our graduates with the requirements of the modern “job market” our University offers students a wide range of possibilities of learning modern languages as well as using information technology tools.

All UITM students are obliged to obtain English and German language certificates. The University provides students with the opportunity of taking free placement tests and improving their language skills by using modern computer methods and the latest language learning programs. The Center for Modern Languages (CJO) holds full membership in the European Language Certificates (TELC), and is also an accredited Examination Center of the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Examinations Board (LCCIEB).

The University cooperates with the world largest information technology companies, whose training programs are part of the curricula. It is worth mentioning the following:

Cisco Networking Academy Program – CNAP. Our University is a Regional Cisco Academy. Cisco Networking Academy Program (CNAP), which comprises regional and local academies, is a modern worldwide teaching program. The program prepares theoretically and practically tomorrow’s computer networks specialists. Besides traditional lectures and classes there is also practical training in computer laboratories during which students have opportunities to deal with real problems. The course materials for self-study are also available in electronic format via the Internet. The curricula are accomplished by e-learning system (electronic teaching). CCNA course is a part of the curricula for the students of Information Technology and Econometrics in the specializations of Computer Systems and Networks (Bachelor’s degree), and the students of Eco-
omics in the specialization of Management of Computer Systems and Networks (Post Bachelor’s degree). On 1st January 2001 the Regional Cisco Academy at the UITM in Rzeszów received “The Best Local Academy” award as the best in Europe, Far East and Africa (EMEA region). The Regional Cisco Academy is the best in its category among 1850 academies. In September 2002 our University was officially registered as the Regional Cisco Academy – CCNP (Cisco Certified Network Professional) – the only one in Poland fulfilling the Cisco Systems requirements. CCNP is the next level in training in the Cisco Systems company. One more Cisco laboratory has been set up.

Novell INC. Novell certificates are a part of an operating systems course for students of Information Technology and Econometrics in the specialization of Computer Systems and Networks at the UITM. A student is prepared to manage local and global networks supervised by Novell Netware 4.11 and 5.00 operating system. The University provides students with the possibility of earning a certificate of Certified Novell Administrator (5.60) and Certified Novell Advanced Administrator (5.70).

Microsoft. Students have the opportunity of earning the Microsoft MCP certificate as a part of some courses. These certificates include the following products: FrontPage, Windows 2000, SQL Server, Visual Studio, Internet Security and Acceleration Server, XML or any programming language (e.g. C++, VC++) as well as other certificates depending on their interests.

IBM. The University obtained access to one of the newest tools – DB2 Universal Database which is the industry’s first multimedia, Web-ready relational database management system delivering leading capabilities in reliability, performance, and scalability as well as the implementation of a departmental data mart to analyze sales and financial performance, and architecture of an enterprise data warehouse which scales to peta bytes of data storage. It is thanks to this co-operation, the DB2 Warehouse Manager allows students of the University of Information Technology and Management to architecture scalable database warehouse and to manage access to the enterprise information; it being a basis for a decision maker. Students are taught DB2 Universal Database in such classes as “Database” and “Database Application”.

Hewlett Packard. The University began cooperation with the Hewlett Packard Company, which equipped the computer laboratory with the latest equipment. Thanks to this, students have the opportunity to learn about classification, hardware, rules of operation, parameters of the external and multimedia devices, and PC usable configurations.

Authorized Academic Education Center. In January of 2002, The University of Information Technology and Management signed an agreement with Sun Microsystems and obtained the authority to become an Authorized Academic Education Center, the first university in Poland to do so. The University obtained
rights to carry out training in the SO Solaris, Java Technologies and Star Office. Our students have the opportunity to gain knowledge of the cutting edge technologies developed by Sun Microsystems. The University of Information Technology and Management applied for the grant and received 15 workplaces of SUN BLADE 100. The Sun Certified Programmer for the Java and A Solaris System Administration courses are conducted in this computer laboratory.

**Oracle Academic Initiative.** In September of 2001, a preliminary agreement was signed with the Oracle Company. The University of Information Technology and Management is authorized to carry out training and is provided with the Oracle software on the platform NT. Participation in the Oracle Academic Initiative enables students and university lecturers to use Oracle training resources via Internet.

Additionally, The University of Information Technology and Management, takes part in the project SAP, which aims to enhance lecturers’ and students ability to apply an innovative and flexible deployment strategy of SAP R/3 system.

The University of Information Technology and Management was the first university in Poland to begin distribution of ECDL certificate which is the European and US wide qualification enabling people to demonstrate their competence in computer skills and office application. ECDL certificate is an obligatory exam for all students at the University of Information Technology and Management as well as part of the curricula of all faculties and specializations.

### 5. Summary

The above mentioned description of the educational system at the University of Information Technology and Management based in Rzeszów is only an abridged account of the initiatives which make the University of Information Technology and Management the best school in our region and one of the best nationwide according to the ranking of universities in a survey conducted by the independent media. Not all the information about extra curriculum lectures, the numerous seminars and conferences has been mentioned in this text. Some of these activities have been conducted in co-operation with the Warsaw Stock Exchange\(^\text{16}\). The Center for Post Graduate Studies offers courses in more than 50 disciplines. It is worth mentioning that the Financial and Banking Mind

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\(^{16}\) Each year a Stock Exchange School is organized – a series of lectures on the stock exchange, the functioning of the capital market, the influence of the economic environment on the stock exchange, the selection and evaluation of the financial situation of companies, the use of financial information as well as stocks and bonds management.
Club as well as the Investor Club allow students of the UITM to expand their interests.

The efforts undertaken to create a unique educational system are more and more often honored with numerous awards and accreditation rights.

Besides being accredited by the above mentioned computer companies and institutions certifying language competences, in addition to receiving the ISO certification, the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów was also accredited by Forum the Association for Manager Education as of February 1st 2003 in three fields of study (BS studies in economics, post graduate MS studies in economics, BS studies in informatics and econometrics). Such accreditation certifies the highest quality of education in these fields. Plans are underway to obtain the accreditation of the Polish Informatics Society.

The University’s information technology policy, including university syllabuses complete with computer tools, gained recognition in the national competition Leader in Informatics 2002 in the category – public institutions – organized by the magazine Computerworld.

The received accreditations, awards and recognitions, but most of all the trust placed with us by the 8 to 9 thousand students are confirmation of the good direction of our development. The chance given by the free market and the market economy in our case has been used properly. We also realize that only the good quality of our offer will allow further development of the University, thereby being very competitive with of the no-tuition state universities.

In view of Poland’s plans to join the European Union, the majority of Polish universities still have much to accomplish to compete fully with EU universities. The priorities include:

– Undertaking steps in signing international agreements leading to the recognition of professional and scientific degrees and titles. The corresponding agreements are to be drawn up with EU countries.

– Creating legislative grounds for the financing from public funds the scientific and didactic co-operation of Polish and European universities. Even EU programs in this respect (Socrates IV etc.) require a 50% contribution of the university’s own funds of the value of the project. These are often beyond the reach of Polish universities. It is then worthwhile to consider the possibility of creating a public fund which would financially support the contribution fund of Polish universities.

– Promoting and implementing information – communication technologies.

– Verifying and, possibly, signing international agreements which would make possible the equivalence of periods of study and scientific work abroad for social insurance and the treatment of such periods equivalent to corresponding periods in Poland.
– Creating a national data base of university international projects, an offer of data base of co-operation with EU universities and so on.
– Ensuring the flow of university education – by introducing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) into all schools of higher education as the proper means of supporting the most widespread type of student mobility as well as introducing a requirement (which is used in France and Germany) where each student studies at least one semester at a university in a different country.

References


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