



### **Invitation of Vice-Rector for Education**

"Excellent study and research conditions, individual approach, great employment prospects"

Apart from highly appealing and interdisciplinary study programmes, the University of Nova Gorica and the Goriška region, situated in western Slovenia, in the culturally rich area bordering Italy, offer to students an ideal location for studies. Despite the fact that Nova Gorica is an hour and a half's drive away from the capital city of Slovenia, Ljubljana, it offers to students enough possibilities for active and fun spending one's free time, and, on the other hand, a peaceful environment for studies and relaxation.

Nova Gorica and the adjacent town of Gorizia in Italy and their suburbs are attractive locations yet on their own. Moreover, in less than an hour you can reach famous tourist destinations such as the Lipica stud farm, the enchanting Postojna cave and the Miramar castle near Trieste in Italy. Travelling only an hour or two by train brings you to other world-famous locations such as Venice, Aquileia or Lake Bled. Only a stonethrow away from Nova Gorica you can enjoy the fresh air of the Trnovski gozd forest and the colourful landscape of Karst, not even to mention the fact that you only need to mount your bike to get to the seaside.

The adjacent Soča River Valley with its undisputed natural beauties of world acclaim is also home to famous Slovene poet Simon Gregorčič and thus inspires those who are interested in Slovene studies, linguistics and cultural history. Besides studying the opuses of Gregorčič and other authors and linguists from this region, such as France Bevk or Stanislav Škrabec, the University of Nova Gorica has recently also been focusing on studying the local female poet and writers such as Ljubka Šorli and Pavlina Pajk, née Doljak, whose names would perhaps have been long forgotten if the University had not started to pass on the knowledge of them to its students.

The area where the Alpine and the Mediterranean worlds meet, represents a unique natural laboratory for the students of the study programme Environment, enabling them to explore the laws of nature, the biodiversity and the human impact on it. The School of Environmental Sciences and the School for Viticulture and Enology are located in the very heart of the Vipava Valley, in the beautifully renovated Lanthieri Mansion in Vipava offering the students modern chemical and biological laboratories for practical classes. Studying viticulture and enology in the renowned winegrowing Vipava Valley, bordering another two vineyard-rich areas – Karst in the south and the hilly Brda in the west – is a tremendous advantage for the students, helping them learn about the local viticultural traditions and preserve the local native sorts such as Zelen, Pinela, Klarnica and others.

The University's premises in the neighbouring town of Ajdovščina house state-of-the-art laboratories for research in the field of materials, where our students of physics and astrophysics can engage in research. Our modern laboratory equipment such as the latest electronic microscopes and a free-electron laser can in all respects be compared to the equipment owned by the largest and most renowned research institutes in Slovenia, such as the Jožef Stefan Institute or the Institute of Chemistry of Slovenia. Another exciting option is to visit the only lidar atmospheric observatory in Slovenia, which our University has set up at Otlica near Ajdovščina and where the transport of aerosols in higher layers of the troposphere is studied.

The strong economy of the Goriška region is another factor adding to various opportunities for practical placements for students of Engineering and Management, as well as for students of other programmes. The students can perform their practical placements either in large companies such as Iskra Avtoelektrika, Salonit Anhovo and Hidria or in high-tech companies such as the world's leading light aircraft producer Pipistrel from Ajdovščina. One should not forget the School of Arts, the youngest of our schools. The school, which is located in the attractive Alvarez Palace in Gorizia, Italy, focuses on digital arts and practices and we are sure that our students, who study this new branch of art, will soon be heard of in terms of their success in the field of applied and digital arts.

However, University does not only mean excellent conditions for studies such as the availability of lecture rooms and laboratories, University is also its staff and, above all, its students. In this respect, the University of Nova Gorica proudly states that it is not only a successful research-oriented university but also a student-friendly university. This, however, does not mean that the students can obtain a degree with little effort, but rather that we offer the students, besides quality lectures and practical classes, the highest level of support possible, helping them obtain the required knowledge and complete the studies. To do that, we have all the necessary conditions, among which the extremely favourable teacher-student number ratio should definitely be pointed out, being 1:5. Our students are thus never perceived merely as "numbers" in our lecture rooms, but rather enjoy our individual approach towards them from their enrollment to the University to their entering in the labour market. Our mission is actually not accomplished upon awarding the student with the diploma certificate, as we continue to strive for the successful development and career path of each graduate. These activities are mainly carried out by our Career Centre, which maintains contacts with our graduates, offers help in job-search and gathers the data on the employment rates of our graduates. Despite the current gloomy situation in the labour market the employment rate of our graduates is very high, currently amounting to 91 % within one year of graduation.

To ensure the students a smooth transition to the university, we offer to prospective students free introductory courses, at which they can brush up their knowledge of various study fields, above all mathematics, physics and chemistry. Our tutorship system is another affective form of support available to our students. At our university only professors and lecturers can be appointed tutors, which reflects the great importance of the role of tutors as understood by us. We are one on hand aware of the fact that the students are adult persons and that they require their own personal space, but, on the other hand we are sure that young people do need somebody whom they can trust and who they can refer to for advice. This is especially important in these hard economic times leading to the crisis of values, including the inappropriate appraisal of knowledge, which often causes the young to create a dark vision of their futures. In circumstances of this kind, the decision which path to take seems to be even harder and yet a small tip suggesting the right way might be of utmost importance.

Our e-learning system plays an important role in providing our students with the recordings of lectures, live e-lectures and virtual classrooms. Such distance learning activities make studies easier and more enjoyable. Moreover, they are especially welcome form our students-athletes, who might often be absent from lectures. We have actually been devoting special care to students-athletes and have become the first university in Slovenia to adopt specific measures in terms of obtaining the status of a student-athlete to enable the athletes to manage their studies and sports careers in the best possible way.

We are fully aware of the fact that the international perspective can significantly contribute to the personal development of a student, and thus we continuously create the possibilities for our students to take part in various international projects and activities and encourage the students to participate in international student mobilities. Various international evaluation schemes and the U-Multirank university ranking system have recognised the excellence of the Univeristy of Nova Gorica not only in the area of internationalisation but also in other fields.

The final decision on the choice of studies of course rests within the hands of the prospective student. Nevertheless, if your expectations about your future studies rise

beyond the average, and if you hope for an individual approach of teaching staff, excellent conditions for becoming involved in research activities, and great employment prospects, we are completely sure that opting for the University of Nova Gorica is the best choice for you.

*Vice-Rector for Education, Prof. Dr. Mladen Franko*

January 2016

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