Third Mission Indicators for New Ranking Methodologies

Marko Marhl*
Vice-Rector
University of Maribor

Attila Pausits
Head of the Centre for University Continuing Education and Educational Management
Danube University Krems

Abstract

It is traditionally recognised that the two main missions of universities are teaching and research. However, in recent years, another mission is being discussed in order to reflect all contributions of universities to society. It is generally known as ‘Third Mission’. While several ranking systems exist for the first and second mission, the Third Mission lacks any cohesive methodology. The commonly accepted ranking systems for the two “classical” missions of the university provide indicators to measure excellence at universities around the world. At the same time, indicators can improve quality assurance by allowing the institutions, governments and industry to understand their performance, develop best practices and provide effective and efficient value to society. However, there are no commonly agreed indicators or methodologies to assess quality in Third Mission activities. The paper discusses the third mission phenomenon as well as provides indicators for the third mission dimensions like continuing education, technology transfer and innovation as well as for social engagement by using the Delphi method.

Keyword: Third Mission; Technology Transfer; Ranking; Continuing Education; Social Engagement

Manuscript received: 2011.4.26; Revised: 2011.6.20; Accepted: 2011.7.3
email: marko.marhl@uni-mb.si