The University of Warsaw is not only the largest university in Poland, but also a leading research centre in the country. Besides its 25 faculties and 4 doctoral schools, the university also comprises 30 research units, where almost 4,000 scholars work and 2,100 doctoral candidates receive their education. Since 2016, the University of Warsaw has the right to use the title ‘HR Excellence in Research’ awarded by the European Commission. This award confirms that the university fulfils the requirements of the European Charter for Researchers. In 2022, the University of Warsaw submitted to the European Commission HR Strategy for Researchers including the Gap Analyses, Internal Review for Renewal Assessment along with Action Plan for 2022–2027 and OTM Recruitment Questionnaire, in order to renew the award.

According to international rankings such as THE, QS and ARWU, the UW is in the top 3% of universities in the world. Ten scientific disciplines run by UW were ranked in the Shanghai’s Global Ranking of Academic Subjects 2022, with Physics in the lead (51-75). This was the best result for this discipline among all Polish universities.

Subsidies from the Ministry of Education and Science as well as domestic and European grants are the main sources of academic research funding. Employees from the University of Warsaw have received over 3,000 grants since the foundation of the National Science Centre. The University of Warsaw is ranked first among the Horizon 2020 beneficiaries in Poland in terms of the number of participants (121) and coordination (26). The most prestigious European research competitions are organised by the European Research Council. UW employees have won 24 of the 57 grants given to Polish institutions from ERC. Winners of ERC grants are engaged in a wide range of areas that relate to, e.g. computer science, astronomy and archaeology – fields in which UW research groups maintain a well-established position in the academic world. Prof. Piotr Sankowski from the UW Faculty of Mathematics, Informatics and Mechanics is one of those winners. He won 3 ERC grants, which is quite an achievement in Europe.

In 2019, following the competition of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (currently Ministry of Science and Higher Education) entitled “Initiative of Excellence – Research University”, the University of Warsaw was granted research university status for 2020-2026. The University of Warsaw receives extra subsidy as part of the IDUB programme. This boosts the development of five priority research areas and the execution of 70 measures specified in the application.

The strategic objective of the university ensure a good position among top European research universities and international recognition. It involves continuous development and collaboration with leading world centres. The university works with 1,000 international and domestic partners, and belongs to 100 global research networks and various consortiums set up to conduct particular research projects.

The UW is a member of the 4EU+ European University Alliance selected by the European Commission for funding in the ‘European Universities’ call for proposals, launched as part of the 2019 Erasmus+ programme. The 4EU+ universities want to enhance cooperation in research, teaching and initiatives related to the social responsibilities of science. On 27th July 2022 a project of the 4EU+ Alliance One Comprehensive Research European University (1CORE) received a funding in the next “European Universities” call of the European Commission. The project aims, e.g., to develop a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary educational offer, innovative research-based education, intensified physical and virtual mobility and a new common digital infrastructure. The members of the 4EU+ European University Alliance are: Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic), the University of Copenhagen (Denmark), Heidelberg University (Germany), the University of Milan (Italy), the University of Warsaw (Poland) and the University of Geneva (Switzerland, joined the alliance on 1st August 2022).
UW scientists are engaged in conducting research projects within the European Knowledge and Innovation Communities: EIT Food (projects related to the food sector), EIT Climate (projects whose objective is to mitigate and adapt to the consequences of climate change) and EIT Raw Materials (projects related to raw materials). On 26th October 2021, a letter of intent between EIT Health / EIT Health InnoStars and the UW authorities was signed, enabling the university to become a partner institution of the network.

The University of Warsaw is also a member of Central European Universities – CE7 (together with the universities in Belgrade, Budapest – Eötvös Loránd University –, Ljubljana, Prague, Tartu and Zagreb). In September 2022, the rectors of the CE7 universities signed an agreement with the League of European Research Universities, renewing and fostering their collaboration. The agreement addresses the commitment to enhance the conditions for research and education at the European level, to stimulate cooperation between researchers and academics, and to demonstrate the common values and characteristics of European research universities. A list of short-term priorities for the European Union institutions was also added to the document.

In partnership with the University of Oxford, the Centre for Quantum Optical Technologies was founded at the UW. The unit explores quantum phenomena, such as superpositions and entanglement, in optical and optically controlled system, with the long-term prospects of their practical utilisation.

Over the last decade, thanks to EU funding, representatives of the exact and natural sciences have been equipped with laboratories facilitating research at the highest level. 2016 saw the beginning of the realisation of the UW multiannual development plan (2016-2027). It aims to foster research in humanities and social sciences, tighten up collaboration between faculties and simplify cooperation within the social and economic environment, as well as promote international academic exchange.

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