UITM – A Hub for Teaching Excellence

A modern university not only shares knowledge but also creates the conditions for continually improving how that knowledge is taught. At the University of Information Technology and Management in Rzeszów (UITM), enhancing the quality of education is a process that involves the entire academic community—from developing new methods and tools and sharing good practices to engaging academic staff in international projects devoted to the future of education.

Teaching excellence does not mean following a single perfect teaching method. It emerges when lecturers' knowledge and experience are supported by a strong institutional framework, access to modern tools, and room to develop and test their own solutions. UITM is consistently building such an environment by supporting staff initiatives and helping translate good ideas into everyday teaching practice.

Centre for Teaching and Learning Development – supporting modern education

The **UITM Centre for Teaching and Learning Development** plays an important role in this process. Its work focuses on improving teaching processes and enhancing the quality of education, while its initiatives are addressed to everyone involved in education: academic staff, students, doctoral candidates, and postgraduate students.

The Centre develops and tests new teaching methods, formats, and tools and supports lecturers in implementing them. It also collects and disseminates examples of good practice, assists university units in developing and revising curricula, and participates in both pilot schemes and full-scale implementations of new solutions within specific degree programmes and courses.

UNIVERSITY of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY and MANAGEMENT in Rzeszow, POLAND

The Centre's work extends well beyond individual training sessions. It systematically develops resources that staff can use when designing classes and preparing materials for students. Its repository includes Moodle video tutorials, the "UITM E-Lecturer's Toolbox," practical teaching toolkits, case studies, resources on business models and career planning, and a repository of board games that can be incorporated into the learning process.

One recent example of this practical support is the **Teaching Alerts** series: concise ideas for lecturers that can be applied directly in the classroom. The first Alert, entitled **"Spot the Mistake,"** introduces an exercise in which students look for an error deliberately included by the lecturer. The activity increases students' attention and engagement without requiring changes to the course syllabus or a complete redesign of the lesson plan.

Responsible teaching in the age of artificial intelligence

Resources on artificial intelligence occupy a particularly important place in the Centre's work. They are organised into several areas of application: **AI at UITM, AI in teaching, and AI in administration**. This enables staff to access resources suited to their responsibilities and particular professional situations.

The materials address not only the opportunities offered by generative AI but also the responsibilities and risks associated with its use. They include guidelines on students' use of generative artificial intelligence, issues relating to employee privacy, and guidance for lecturers on responding to the misuse of AI.

This approach demonstrates that the digital transformation of education at UITM is being addressed comprehensively. The introduction of new tools is accompanied by attention to teaching quality, reliable assessment, information security, and user responsibility. The role of a modern university is not simply to

provide access to new technologies, but also to prepare its academic community to use them critically and ethically.

Generative AI can support the preparation of exercises and teaching materials, the provision of feedback, and the personalisation of learning. At the same time, it raises new questions for lecturers concerning authorship, independent student work, transparency in the use of digital tools, data protection, and the biases and oversimplifications embedded in AI systems. The Centre's resources help translate these questions into responsible teaching practice.

From international projects to practical tools for lecturers

International cooperation is another important area of activity for the Centre for Teaching and Learning Development. UITM has implemented educational projects with partners from Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Lithuania, Iceland, Greece, and Slovakia, acting both as a project partner and as the leader of international consortia.

The **BEAST, OMNI-BEAST, and Teach-BEASTs** projects focused on developing methods that help students better recognise their competencies, prepare to enter the labour market, and combine academic knowledge with solving real-world problems. Teach-BEASTs placed particular emphasis on project-based learning and design thinking, including their application in STEM education.

The **ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE!** project explored gamification in online higher education, while **SEED – Sustainable Entrepreneurship in Education** developed approaches to incorporating sustainable entrepreneurship into education. The **DYLMIC** project, in turn, focused on individual career planning and aligning educational pathways with students' interests, aptitudes, and professional goals.

These initiatives have produced not only valuable experience for participants, but also lesson plans, manuals, exercise sets, and tools that can be used in the classroom. In this way, international cooperation becomes a source of practical solutions that enrich teaching at UITM.

Lecturers creating resources for lecturers

Sharing experience is one of the foundations of a culture of teaching excellence. UITM lecturers not only use the resources available to them but also create materials that can support other university teachers.



One example is the 2025 publication *Wykładowcy doskonali. Podręcznik nauczycieli akademickich* (*Excellent Lecturers: A Handbook for University Teachers*), edited by Andrzej Rozmus, PhD, Associate Professor at UITM. The book addresses contemporary challenges in higher education and demonstrates that the quality of teaching depends not only on the content delivered, but also on how knowledge is communicated, the relationships established with students, and the ability to create an environment conducive to learning.

Publications of this kind show how the teaching experience of UITM staff becomes a resource that extends beyond individual lecturers. It can be shared across the university community, used by other educators, and incorporated into the wider discussion on the quality of higher education.

UITM co-creates European solutions

Academic mobility, Blended Intensive Programmes, and UITM's membership of the SUNRISE Alliance of European Universities open up further opportunities for teaching development. They enable academic staff to

exchange experiences with colleagues from international institutions, explore different educational models, and, above all, participate in developing shared solutions.

One example is Dr Paula Wieczorek's participation in the **"AI Didactics in Language Learning"** Blended Intensive Programme, organised by European University Cyprus. The programme brought together lecturers, directors of language centres, and experts in teaching and digital transformation from SUNRISE member universities and other European institutions.



The international team worked on adapting teaching methods to a reality in which generative AI tools have become widely available. The participants examined the design of assignments and courses that take account of AI, methods of reliably assessing students' competencies, ways of reducing misuse, and the legal and ethical principles governing the use of new technologies. The collaboration also involved preparing recommendations, training proposals, and resources for foreign-language teachers.

"Teaching excellence today requires not only familiarity with new tools, but also a conscious and responsible approach to their use. Participation in international programmes such as the 'AI Didactics in Language Learning' BIP allows us to exchange experiences with lecturers from other countries and to actively co-create solutions addressing the real challenges facing education. These include designing classes and assignments in the age of generative AI, ensuring reliable assessment, and using technology ethically. We can then apply the experience we gain and the materials we develop in our work with students and share them with other university teachers," emphasises Dr Paula Wieczorek, Vice-Dean of the College of Media and Social Communication at UITM.

The participation of UITM representatives in such initiatives therefore extends beyond learning about solutions developed by other institutions. The University's academic staff actively contribute to their creation, bringing their own research expertise, teaching experience, and perspectives gained from working in an international and multicultural academic environment.

Teaching excellence benefits students

Developing the teaching competencies of academic staff and providing them with effective support directly enhance the student experience. Active learning methods help increase students' engagement, foster independence and critical thinking, and connect academic knowledge more effectively with practical problem-solving.

International exchange also makes it possible to introduce new perspectives into education and prepare students to function in multicultural, digital, and rapidly changing environments. The ability to use technology responsibly is becoming particularly important—not only the practical use of new tools, but also the capacity to assess their reliability, limitations, and social consequences.

Through the work of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Development, new solutions can be collected, tested, and shared, while the experience of individual staff members becomes part of the University's wider educational resources. Teaching excellence then ceases to be an abstract concept. It becomes visible in course design, the quality of teaching materials, the diversity of methods used, and the readiness to respond responsibly to emerging challenges.

A university that creates opportunities for development

From an extensive repository and practical Teaching Alerts to resources created by lecturers and participation in international projects, all these activities are united by the belief that high-quality education requires room for initiative, cooperation, and the exploration of new solutions.

UITM creates these conditions by providing staff with institutional support, access to tools, and opportunities to participate in national and international initiatives. The University not only encourages the development of modern teaching practices, but also enables employees to transform their ideas into materials, projects, and solutions that benefit the entire academic community.

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

These activities are also aligned with the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers implemented by UITM. The University's **HR Excellence in Research** Award entails a commitment to continuously improving the working environment and supporting the professional development of academic staff. Teaching, mentoring, international exchange, and knowledge-sharing are important dimensions of that development.

The new academic year will bring further challenges as well as new opportunities. Thanks to the experience and initiative of its lecturers and the work of the Centre for Teaching and Learning Development, UITM remains a place where good ideas can be transformed into even better teaching.