



# Creative environment assessment form

**Applicant:**

department of sociology, Trnava University

**Unit of assessment:**

Sociology and Social Anthropology

**Context, mission and scientific profiling:**

Within the Department of Sociology, research and education focuses on the following main areas:

**Sociological Theory and Methodology**

Provides training in theoretical approaches to sociological study, including the history of sociology, and focuses on quantitative and qualitative research methods.

**Applied sociological research**

Connects scientific research with practice. Students are prepared to undertake research projects oriented to current issues such as social policy, the development of markets, gender issues and social inequalities.

**Study of European social trends**

Education and research reflect current knowledge of European cultural and political systems. Topics include family politics, consumer behaviour and the social consequences of economic crises.

**Social data analysis**

The Department provides access to advanced IT data processing software, enabling skills in statistical analysis, qualitative analysis and data visualisation.

**Mission and research areas**

The main mission is to prepare professionals capable of independently identifying, analysing, and solving complex social problems. Key research areas include:

**Analysis of social inequalities and their consequences**

Research focuses on inequalities in access to education, employment and the labour market, with a particular emphasis on young people not in education and employment (NEETs).

**Family policy and demographic trends**

Examines changes in family structures and their impact on society, including the needs of single-parent households.

**Cultural and Media Studies**

Analyses the impact of digital media and popular culture in shaping public opinion.

**Research on the needs of primary school children**

Focuses on the study of children's educational needs, social connections and relationships.

The department emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach and collaborates with experts in political science, economics, and history. This provides students with a comprehensive view of social phenomena, making them highly employable in the public sector, non-profit organizations, research centers, and the business world.

## **Strategy:**

### **Strategy of the Department of Sociology for the period 2025 - 2029**

In the period under review, the Department of Sociology has set as a strategic priority the development of research activities with an emphasis on social impact, sustainable collaboration and interdisciplinary partnerships. In the coming five-year period (2025 - 2029), it plans to build on and expand on the successful collaborations to date and to strengthen its position as a major player in applied research and the promotion of social change.

#### **Strategic objectives for research and cooperation**

- Expanding international cooperation

The Department plans to continue its cooperation with the University of Ostrava on the development of e-learning modules focused on transferable work competences, and to extend this project to other V4 countries. It also plans to participate in international research schemes to analyse the impact of digitalisation and Industry 4.0 on the labour market in Central Europe.

- Involvement in new projects of national and international importance

Research on Slovaks abroad: In cooperation with the Faculty of Law of TU and the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad, the Department plans to implement a project aimed at mapping the situation, needs and integration of Slovaks abroad. The results of this research will contribute to the formulation of policies supporting relations between Slovakia and Slovak communities abroad. Developing Slovak-Icelandic relations: the project, in cooperation with the Permanent Conference of Actors in Education, n.o., will focus on cultural exchange between Slovakia and Iceland. This will be based on the innovative Culture 3.0 model, which promotes the active involvement of young people in cultural activities and connects them with the values of sustainable development.

- Strengthening regional research

The Department plans to expand its cooperation with the Trnava Self-Governing Region, the City of Trnava and other local actors to continue research that contributes to improving the quality of life at regional level. Research will focus on: youth unemployment in the NEET situation and the design of effective measures for their integration into society, the needs of families and children, especially incomplete households.

Leisure activities of young people and their meaningful use of time.

- Long-term cooperation with professional organisations and research agencies

The Department plans to strengthen the existing cooperation with the survey agency IPSOS. This cooperation allows us to link theoretical knowledge with practice, to involve students in research activities and to organise regular lectures by practitioners. The Department also plans to collaborate with other non-profit organisations, such as ZIPCeM, to carry out research with a high societal impact.

#### **Increasing the societal impact of research**

The Department of Sociology focuses on projects that directly impact policy and practice in the areas of social inclusion, education, family policy and youth work. Long-term strategic goals include:

- Supporting vulnerable groups: by conducting research on the needs of children, families and young people, the Department helps to shape effective policies at regional and national levels.
- Digitalisation and employment: through projects such as the development of learning modules, the department contributes to improving young people's digital skills and readiness for the labour market of the future.
- Developing community cooperation: Research focusing on urban communities (e.g. cooperation with the City of Trnava) and youth (ZIPCeM) supports initiatives to improve the quality of life in the regions.

#### **Promoting student involvement in research activities**

Involving students in research is one of the key strategies of the department. Students participate in projects as part of their sociological practice, but also have the opportunity to collaborate on research activities beyond their studies. This approach ensures: Training students for the job market, Practical experiences that enhance their employability, Development of professional contacts and opportunities for future collaboration.

### **Collaboration and contribution to the research field, economy and society:**

The Department of Sociology of FFTU has long been collaborating on research projects that have a significant impact on the research field, economy and society. This cooperation is characterised by an interdisciplinary approach, linking academia with practice and involving students in research activities. The main areas of cooperation and its benefits are listed below.

#### **Development of an e-learning module for transferable work competences (2020 - 2023)**

The project, funded by the INTERREG V-A SK-CZ/2020/12 programme, focused on the development and testing of an international e-learning training module for first and second cycle university students. The aim was to strengthen the so-called transferable work competences, which are key to improving the employability of graduates on the labour market. The module reflected the latest trends of Industry 4.0 and provided students with the skills needed for successful adaptation in a dynamic work environment. The project also resulted in the promotion of sustainable international cooperation between universities and increased job mobility of university graduates.

#### **Regional analysis of young people in NEET situation (2023)**

Within the framework of the Youth Needs in Trnava County project (Slovakia Programme), the Department carried out an analysis focused on young people at risk of NEET situation (those who are not in employment, education or training). The research focused on the Trnava Region and provided valuable data that enabled more effective design of policies and measures to support this vulnerable group. The results contributed to the formulation of concrete recommendations for the regional government and other stakeholders.

#### **Cooperation with the city of Trnava**

Since 2022, the Department has been cooperating with the City of Trnava to carry out various surveys. On the basis of the signed memorandum, research projects have been created, which included: Public Attitudes towards Safe Mobility in the City, Senior Citizens' Suggestions for the Revitalization of the City District, Analysis of the Viewership of Trnava City Television, Research on the Needs of Single Family Households. The collaboration has produced concrete recommendations for the city administration and improved the link between research and the needs of the local community.

#### **Cooperation with youth organisations in Trnava region**

Since 2024, the Department has been collaborating with youth organisations in the Trnava Region on research on young people's leisure activities. This has resulted in a deeper understanding of their needs and an initiative to sign a memorandum on long-term cooperation with the ZIPCeM organisation. The aim is to promote meaningful leisure time and create conditions for youth development in the region.

#### **Research cooperation with the Office of the Commissioner for Children**

In 2023, the Department started a collaboration with the Office of the Children's Commissioner, focusing on representative research on the needs of children in Slovakia. In 2024, the research was expanded to include an analysis of children's relationships and needs. This project contributes to shaping policies aimed at protecting and promoting children's rights and creates a platform for further interdisciplinary collaboration.

#### **Involvement of students in research activities**

All of the above projects involve the active involvement of students from the Department of Sociology. Students gain first-hand experience of research activities through sociological practice and have the opportunity to participate beyond their compulsory studies. This practice allows them to develop professional skills, gain practical experience and better prepare for future work in a variety of fields.

### **Employees:**

The Department of Sociology has long emphasized quality staffing and training of researchers and doctoral students in order to develop cutting-edge research and to link academic education with practice. This strategy is implemented through the purposeful development of the curriculum, the expansion of collaboration with practitioners, and the active involvement of students and postgraduates in the Department's research activities.

**Programme profiling and student support** - In recent years, the programme has systematically profiled itself in the area of sociological research methods and techniques, while continuing to maintain a strong grounding in sociological theory. The aim is to prepare graduates for the practical challenges of the labour market while guiding them to develop analytical skills useful in research. This profiling is supported by two main strands:

**Expanding electives with an emphasis on practice** - The Department is continuously expanding the structure of electives, while involving practitioners in teaching. This provides students with direct experience of current challenges in sociological research and analysis. Examples of electives include: **a course implemented with the University of Ostrava:** focusing on transferable work competences in an international context. **Urban Sociology:** Lectures by practitioners focusing on sociological aspects of urban planning. **Methods and techniques of sociological research in cooperation with the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic and the IPSOS agency.**

The department also plans to establish permanent cooperation with practitioners, especially focusing on the latest technologies such as artificial intelligence and digital innovations. This initiative aims to provide students with up-to-date knowledge and access to the latest trends in sociological research.

### **Direct participation of students in research projects**

The Department systematically involves students in its research activities. These projects allow them to gain practical experience, which they subsequently use when writing their bachelor's and master's theses. **Research for the City of Trnava:** Involvement of students in public opinion polls on safe mobility, revitalisation of city districts or the viewership of the city's television.

**Collaboration with the Trnava Region:** surveys focused on young people in NEET situation and their needs. **Research for the Office of the Commissioner for Children:** Students participated in a representative research on the needs of children in Slovakia. This provides students with practical experience during their studies, helping them to prepare for professional challenges while developing the critical thinking skills needed to process research data.

### **Focus on doctoral studies**

The Department places a similar emphasis on linking research with practice at doctoral level. Doctoral students are directly involved in the implementation of the department's research projects, with the opportunity to actively work on specific research tasks as part of their studies. This model allows them to publish research results during their doctoral studies and gain valuable experience in both academic and applied research. An example of the successful implementation of this strategy is a PhD graduate who obtained an internal position in the department after completing her PhD. This case illustrates an effective way of supporting young researchers and staff continuity.

### **Cooperation with professional organisations and research institutions**

The Department of Sociology cooperates with a number of prestigious institutions and practitioners to ensure high quality training:

**IPSOS agency:** Lectures by experts and involvement of students in real research projects, thus learning practical methods of data collection and analysis.

**Statistical Office of Slovak Republic:** Supporting students in working with official statistics and producing analytical outputs.

**ZIPCeM:** Collaboration on research on young people's leisure activities and suggestions to improve their meaningful leisure time.

### **Plans for the next period (2025-2029)**

In the next period, the Department plans to:

**Intensification of student involvement in research:** students will be systematically motivated to participate in national and international research projects.

**Development of doctoral studies:** Increasing the number of PhD students and involving them in interdisciplinary projects that combine knowledge from sociology with other disciplines such as computer science or economics.

**Enhancing the professional competences of staff:** Creating space for the involvement of experts with experience in the latest technologies (e.g. AI) so that students and PhD students can acquire relevant and up-to-date knowledge for the modern labour market.

**Encouraging student publishing activities:** the Department will motivate students to publish their outputs in peer-reviewed journals, thus preparing them for a career in research.

The system of support for researchers and PhD students in the Department of Sociology thus creates conditions for their professional and professional growth, deepens the link between theory and practice, and at the same time strengthens the sustainability of the Department's research capacities.

#### **Doctoral studies:**

Changes in reproductive behaviour in Slovakia and the effect of female education on fertility.

Author: Ryšavá, Daša

Supervisor: Miháliková, Silvia

<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=F5F5797E7D011AB16091E438F23A>

Gender stereotypes in early childhood - The findings of empirical research.

Author: Štrofová, Karin

Supervisor: Miháliková, Silvia

<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=F5F5797E7D011AB16297E238F23A>

Slovak Students Abroad: Who leaves and who returns?

Author: Bystrianska, Mária

Supervisor: Bahna, Miloslav

<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=F91C020D285978796DC1C87F74E7>

### Income, infrastructure and facilities:

1. The sociology study programme is implemented in the building of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Trnava at Hornopotočná 23 in Trnava. The Department has two departmental rooms for teachers, two lecture rooms with larger capacity and two seminar rooms for smaller groups. All classrooms have adequate technical and other equipment necessary to ensure the teaching process. All of these rooms have both traditional and modern material and technological equipment, including whiteboards, projectors, laptops or desktops with Internet access and intranet services (online catalogues, library systems, etc.), as well as technology for showing presentations, videos or recordings related to teaching. In the context of research, staff have access to electronic information resources that were in the portfolio of the National Information System for Supporting Research and Development in Slovakia (NISPEZ). Resources to fund the Department's research activities are obtained primarily through grant support, which are the essential backdrop for its research. The Department strives to obtain new grants and projects at the national and international level, to build interdisciplinary partnerships with other departments and institutions, to improve the communication of research results through professional publications, conferences and public discussions, and to improve the technical background for research, including the digitalization of research processes and the use of advanced analytical tools. Research: Contributions to the understanding of social inequalities, youth needs, family policy and children's rights are valuable for the development of social sciences and interdisciplinary approaches. Economics: Research findings on youth employability and labour market needs support the development of innovative policies that can increase the competitiveness of the workforce. Society: The projects directly affect local communities, regional policies and social groups such as children, youth and the elderly. The Department plays an important role in linking academic research with practical solutions. Overall, the research activities of the Department of Sociology foster sustainable collaborations with the public, private and non-profit sectors, thereby contributing to the improvement of the quality of life at the regional and national level.

2. The amount of funds received for science and research provided under the state budget subsidy in the assessed period 1.1.2020-31.12.2024. (EUR)  
348 860€

3. The amount of funding for science and research obtained competitively (grants) in the assessment period 1.1.2020-31.12.2024 from the State budget or from European Union sources. (EUR)  
64 042€

4. The amount of funding received in the assessment period 1.1.2020-31.12.2024 from non-state and public sources.  
130 833€

