

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY

FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT

July 2012

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of Yeditepe University. EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated Yeditepe University in 2007 with the report submitted to the University in July 2007. In June 2011 the Rector of Yeditepe University subsequently requested that IEP carry out a follow-up evaluation.

1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme and follow-up evaluation process

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (EUA) that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

In line with the EUA's Institutional Evaluation Programme as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure, and it is for the institution itself to set the agenda in the light of its experiences since the original evaluation. The institution is expected to submit its own self-evaluation report, which will describe the progress made, possibly indicating barriers to change.

The rationale is that the follow-up evaluation can assist the institution in evaluating the changes that have been made since the original evaluation: What was the impact of the original evaluation? What use has the institution made of the original evaluation report? How far has it been able to address the issues raised in the report? The follow-up evaluation is also an opportunity for the institution to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities.

As for the original evaluation, the follow-up process is also guided by four key questions, which are based on a 'fitness for (and of) purpose' approach:

- What is the institution trying to do?
- How is the institution trying to do it?
- How does it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

1.2 Yeditepe University and the national context

Established in 1996 as a public corporate body by the ISTEK (Istanbul Education and Culture) Foundation, in terms of student numbers Yeditepe is the second largest Foundation (non-profit) University in Turkey. While the planning, governance, and coordination of Turkish higher education come under the authority of the Council of Higher Education (CHE), and though the University is required to seek official approval for new programmes of study, as a 'Foundation University' Yeditepe has a significant degree of autonomy in terms of governance, finance and administrative matters. As in other Turkish universities, the Board of Trustees is the highest decision-making body, exercising strong central control of the financial activities of the University. As a foundation university,

Yeditepe is not subject to any significant external financial controls or constraints, receives no income from the state, and is financially independent of the Turkish Government Treasury Department.

As with all Turkish universities, the legal context of Yeditepe is defined by the provisions of the Turkish Constitution (Articles 130 and 131) and the Higher Education Law (Law No. 2547), under which the CHE was established. More recently, to accommodate the Bologna Process, the IEP Team noted that Articles 44 and 46 have been added to the legal landscape of Turkish higher education. The IEP Team observed that the period covered by this follow-up IEP evaluation has been characterised by on-going policy developments at national level, most notably those relating to the CHE requirement that all Turkish higher education institutions secure alignment with the Bologna Process, and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in Turkey (NQF-HETR) which was developed in 2010. These matters, together with other changes relevant to the IEP follow-up evaluation such as internal changes in governance, are discussed more fully in section 2 of this report and in subsequent sections.

1.3 The Self Evaluation Process

In accordance with the IEP methodology and guidelines, in advance of the IEP Team's visit the University sent the Team an 18-page Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The SER analysed the University's development since the 2007 IEP evaluation, and also provided helpful accounts of how the recommendations made by the 2007 team had been received and responded to. The SER presented information on the University's management and strategic planning arrangements at the time of the IEP Team's visit, along with higher education policy developments at national level. It also discussed the changes introduced since the 2007 evaluation and since the appointment of the new Rector in 2010, together with developments in the University's capacity for change. The SER was accompanied by ten annexes, including Yeditepe's *Bologna Process Strategic Plan (2010)*, based on the University's Vision and Mission. The other annexes provided information on organisational structures and functions; SWOT analyses at faculty level; national regulatory frameworks; student numbers; staff; funding and finance; quality assurance data; and infrastructure.

The self-evaluation process was directed by a Self-Evaluation Steering Committee appointed by the Rector, and coordinated by the Yeditepe Vice Rector (International and Research), Prof. Dr. Nedret Kuran Burcoglu. The team included the Advisers to the Rector, the Director of the Research Projects Coordination Office, and two student representatives. The IEP Team greatly appreciated the work done in the SER and the accompanying documentation, and found them of great assistance in their deliberations.

1.4 The evaluation team (later Team)

The visit of the follow-up evaluation team to Yeditepe University took place from 16 to 18 May 2012.

The Evaluation Team consisted of:

- Julio Pedrosa, former Rector, University of Aveiro, Portugal (Chair)

- Carmen Fenoll, former Vice-Rector, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain;
- Alina Gavra, ESU Student Experts Pool, Romania
- Jethro Newton, Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, University of Chester, UK (Team Coordinator)

The IEP Team would like to express its sincere thanks to the Rector of Yeditepe University, Prof. Dr. Nurcan Bac, for the welcome and hospitality provided during the IEP Team's visit. The Team would also like to particularly thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aykut Arıkan for his excellent work that ensured the smooth running of all aspects of the process, and Vice Rector, Prof. Dr. Nedret Kuran Burcoglu, Chairperson of the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee.

2. General Context

a. Main changes since 2007

The IEP Team notes with great interest the changes introduced at Yeditepe University since the 2007 IEP Evaluation. Principal amongst these were the appointment in 2010 of a new Chairman of the ISTEK Foundation, and a new Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. This was followed in 2010-2011 by the appointment of a new Rector and Rectorate Team, including two Vice Rectors, one of whom was re-appointed for a further term. Externally, at national level, the IEP Team noted that a new President has recently been appointed to the Council of Higher Education.

Of particular interest to the IEP Team was the inclusion in the documentation provided to the Team of Yeditepe's strategic plan, adopted in 2010, and designated as the *Bologna Process Strategic Plan*. The SER described this document as being based on the Strategic Planning Framework, or Balanced Scorecard approach, which informed the strategic planning documentation made available to the IEP Team in 2007. As its name indicates, the *Bologna Process Strategic Plan* gives high prominence to the Bologna Process at Yeditepe University, including the activities of the Bologna Process Coordination Commission, established in 2009. The *Plan* also includes information on aspects of the policy background to the adoption of the Bologna Process in Turkey, and on the Turkish Higher Education Qualifications Framework. The *Plan* is based on the Vision and Mission of Yeditepe University. The latter is expressed in terms of Yeditepe becoming 'a contemporary and innovative world class university, responsive to the needs of all stakeholders, following Atatürk's principles, aimed at scientific excellence and providing valuable services for our country (...) through virtue of education and research'. This Vision is supported by the Yeditepe Mission which is 'to enhance the number of individuals having contemporary knowledge and skills at all levels from graduate to doctorate degrees (...) who will contribute to the development of our country's competitiveness in all areas and become a leading institution of higher education and research...'. Matters relating to strategic planning, and to Yeditepe's Vision and Mission, are described and discussed more fully in section 3.

The attention of the IEP Team was drawn particularly to the new governance and organisational arrangements marked by recent changes to the legal context, as referred to in section 1, and the changes at the top of the institution as described at the beginning of this section, not least the appointment of Prof. Dr. Bac as the new Rector. The Rectorate team now includes the Provost and Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, and a Vice Rector for International Affairs and Research. Also supporting the Rector are Advisers with responsibilities, respectively, for Bologna matters and quality assurance, and for Science and Technology Park developments, IT-related matters, and Rectorate links with directorates and departments. The IEP Team noted that a new Audit Board has been established, reporting directly to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees. The IEP Team was also interested to learn that the former Rector, who was in office at the time of the 2007 IEP evaluation, continues to serve the University as an adviser to the Board of Trustees.

The IEP Team learned that, though continuing with its system of faculty and department boards, since 2007 the University has introduced two new committees into its governance and deliberative committee structures in order to assist Yeditepe's efforts in addressing and meeting the requirements of the Bologna Process. The Bologna Coordination Commission (BCC) was introduced following a 2009 CHE directive to all Turkish HEIs, with the objective of steering change from the top level on Bologna-related matters. The BCC also undertakes a wider institutional role in the areas of quality assurance and strategic planning. Furthermore, Advisory Councils have been established in all academic departments to support the implementation of Yeditepe's Bologna Roadmap.

The Team noted other changes and highlights during the past five years which merit comment at this point. These include the growth in student numbers, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and increasing numbers of international students and students from parts of Turkey other than Istanbul. Furthermore, a new faculty has been added and new or re-designated study programmes have been included in the University's portfolio. Such developments have, in the view of the IEP Team, contributed to a process of institutionalisation which has strengthened the institutional identity of Yeditepe University.

The IEP Team wishes to acknowledge the attention paid by the University to the recommendations of 2007, and the actions taken to implement a number of those recommendations. It also notes that the necessary action is being taken for progress on other issues.

b) Addressing future challenges: strategic priority areas

In looking towards the future, the IEP Team recognises the progress made since 2007 in a number of specific areas, such as corporate communication, learning and teaching, research, human resources, and quality assurance, as well as the scope to continue to make progress in other areas under new leadership. In facing continued transition and change, and in addressing forthcoming challenges, the University's future development will

need to be balanced with consolidation of existing progress. With this in mind, the IEP Team identifies eight strategic priority areas for the University:

- Governance, strategic planning and management
- Corporate communication
- Developments in learning and teaching
- Research, and Third Mission
- Human resources and staff development
- Quality assurance and quality improvement
- Student issues

3. Governance, strategic planning and management

Two inter-related and very significant aspects of the follow-up visit to Yeditepe University that were of great interest to the IEP Team were the areas of 'governance and management' and 'strategic planning'. Each had been prominent in the 2007 IEP report and recommendations and, as has been highlighted in section 2, they continue to be of central importance in the on-going work of the University. Some changes in these areas were noted earlier. Integrally linked to these matters are considerations relating to finance and resources, which were also an essential aspect of the 2007 deliberations. In the view of the IEP Team, this remains fundamentally important for the next stage of the development of Yeditepe in identifying and meeting its strategic aspirations. In this section of the IEP Team's report, the focus is on what the Team learned of the progress being made by the University in all of these matters, and the conclusions that have been drawn.

Governance and management

The University has been through much change since the Yeditepe Vision and Mission were formulated in the 1990s under the vision and direction of the University's founder, Mr Bedrettin Dalan. In the view of the IEP Team, the University has reached a juncture in its evolution that requires reflection on the future, through a joint venture between the ISTEK Foundation and Board of Trustees and the University's Rector.

The Team believes that recent changes at Board and University levels enable this to happen. In discussion with senior managers, the Team noted that Yeditepe has now met and even gone beyond the original plans and aspirations laid down in 1996, not least in terms of the size of the student population and the overall profile and quality of the University. Together with resource-related challenges in areas such as the further growth of research and knowledge transfer capability, and related staffing requirements, Yeditepe faces important questions leading to important issues such as the desired optimum size of the University in terms of estate, space, and student numbers, as well as the extent of Yeditepe's global and international aspirations. There are linked questions on how this can be made manageable in terms of both strategy and resources. From the perspective of the IEP Team, the vision for the future development of the Yeditepe Foundation has to be built in the new and emerging context in which the University finds itself.

The emphasis on the need for continued work on Vision, Mission, and strategy carries with it the challenge of ensuring that the planned and intended outcomes are institutionalised across the Yeditepe academic community. The IEP Team is in favour of a governance model that secures the involvement of all, and the alignment of the broader University community with the Vision, Mission and Strategic Plan through a continuous process. The present Yeditepe *Strategic Plan* provides a good starting point, but from the discussions held by the IEP Team it is apparent that there is a need for all across the University to understand the Vision and Mission and to be part of realising them through stronger involvement in and ownership of the strategic planning process. In the view of the IEP Team, this can be achieved through concerted action between the Board and the Rector, as Chief Executive Officer. Therefore, in reflecting on these matters, and in view of the significant changes that have taken place at the University in recent years, including governance and leadership at the level of the Board of Trustees and the Rectorate, the Team recommends that this might be an appropriate juncture for the University's Vision and Mission to be revisited.

Strategic planning

In meetings with staff at all levels of the University, and in reading the documentation made available for their visit, the IEP Team paid close attention to matters relating to strategic planning. The Team noted that, in broad terms, as in 2007, the University's strategic planning continues to be heavily influenced by government higher education policy requirements, with annual activity reports based on the Yeditepe *Strategic Plan* being submitted to the Council of Higher Education (CHE) for screening purposes. As noted in section 2, government policy has placed the Bologna Process at the forefront of higher education planning considerations and, in February 2011, this was enshrined in the law governing Turkish higher education. This in turn has been reflected prominently in the Yeditepe strategic and academic planning agendas. Accordingly, the Team observed that in recent years strategic management and strategic planning processes at the University had become almost synonymous with Bologna Process planning; the Yeditepe Strategic Plan is officially named the *Bologna Process Strategic Plan*. The *Plan* was developed through the Bologna Commission Office and overseen by the Bologna Coordination Commission, each of which have dual strategic planning and quality management functions. The IEP Team learned that the method and philosophy of the *Plan* were based essentially on the same Balanced Scorecard approach and strategic planning framework as that which was being adopted for strategic planning processes in 2007. The *Bologna Process Strategic Plan* was adopted by the Yeditepe Senate in 2010.

In summary, the Team noted that the *Bologna Process Strategic Plan* incorporates a strategy map, strategic objectives, key performance indicators and milestones, together with a road map for the institutionalisation of the Bologna Process at Yeditepe. In addition to the 'Bologna matters', and the broader context of learning and teaching, the *Plan* also gave prominence to other areas of strategic importance such as finance, human resources, research, technology transfer, employability and stakeholder requirements. The IEP Team paid very close attention to the overall matter of how and by what processes the *Strategic Plan* had been developed, and how it might be implemented and made operational. The

Team also reflected on how well organised the University is for making all aspects of the *Plan* a reality from the point of view of being widely recognised and owned across the University. It appeared to the IEP Team that, while there has been extensive activity to secure involvement in the Bologna Process dimension of the *Plan*, this did not seem to be the case with several other aspects, such as research, or knowledge transfer, for example, and that parallel exercises had not been put in place for broad involvement in planning and implementation as in these other areas. Indeed, though they were making use of the *Strategic Plan* as formally approved by the University, senior staff from faculties and departments who met with the IEP Team indicated that they had not been extensively involved in the process of developing the *Plan* or in the prioritisation that this had involved. In the view of the IEP Team, this lack of involvement was a missed opportunity, not least since it could have provided a context in which the University's senior leadership could involve a broader section of the University in collectively making the resource-related choices that have to be made in such planning processes.

From this, the IEP Team believed that two matters arise for consideration by the University. First, while the Bologna agenda and the broad territory of learning and teaching strategy are of key importance to the University in its forward planning, other dimensions need to be better put to the fore in the planning and development stages. The profile of Yeditepe leads the IEP Team to the view that the central pillars of the University's strategic agenda are Teaching, Research, and Third Mission (including Knowledge Transfer). Secondly, in order to secure 'buy-in' and accountability at all levels of the University, along with ownership of the results and planning choices, the process for developing each aspect of the Plan should be extended across the University to incorporate both 'top down' and 'bottom up' contributions. In the view of the Team, this would carry with it the additional advantage of a more transparent approach to resourcing the Yeditepe *Strategic Plan*. From the IEP Team's perspective, the current planning document, informed as it is by high quality, professional thinking, provides a good basis for undertaking such a review of the Yeditepe *Strategic Plan*. The IEP Team was drawn to the view that, to facilitate this, there is merit in giving consideration to the formation of a strategy group that can secure stronger connections between the Plan and the organisation as a whole.

In summary, from their deliberations, the Team formed the view that the *Strategic Plan* developed in connection with the Bologna Process could be taken further forward by securing greater involvement and understanding across the University community. The IEP Team therefore recommends that a representative Organisational Development Group is identified, to be chaired and led by the Rector, and that a process is put in place to ensure that the monitoring and implementation of the University's Strategic Plan secures involvement of all levels and constituencies of the University.

Finance and resourcing

The Team also took the opportunity to explore with managers at various levels the current arrangements for financial planning and resource allocation at the University, and to reconsider issues raised in relation to these matters in the 2007 report.

As in 2007, the Yeditepe Board maintains responsibility for management of the University's financial strategy. The financial model and degree of centralisation in place at the University reflects Yeditepe's response to national regulatory requirements for foundation universities in budgetary-related and resource allocation matters, and represents the arrangements that have steered Yeditepe's development until the present day. Since the 2007 IEP evaluation, the principal change in this area, reflecting Article 11 of Yeditepe Regulations, has been the creation of the post of Fiscal Director, who is responsible for acting on behalf of the Yeditepe Board in the financial management of the University. For the purposes of budget building, the IEP Team noted that institutional arrangements remained largely as they had been in 2007, with annual budgeting forms submitted centrally by faculties and administrative departments for initial consideration at Rectorate level, and subsequently by the Board of Trustees, where final decisions are made on the annual budget. The Team noted that there were considerable differences in income between faculties and programmes and that the University's approach to resource allocation needed to take full account of this.

The IEP Team learned that the main source of the University's income continues to be from student tuition fees, with the annual student intake being determined by the Council of Higher Education on the basis of a quota system that requires the University to meet clear recruitment targets. The Team was particularly interested to explore matters relating to the additional income that has been generated historically through the University's revolving funds, a source of income made possible through charges made for recreation facilities, and the sale of University products and services. At the time of the 2007 evaluation, it had been projected that the arrangement whereby such funds would be used predominantly to support ambitious initiatives in the Health Sciences area would soon come to an end. Given the successful progress of that overall project, the IEP Team formed the view that the University and the Yeditepe Board now had the opportunity to divert such funds elsewhere, and to put such income to a different strategic use in other priority areas of academic and organisational development, such as research or knowledge transfer, and human resource development.

In 2007, a key element of the IEP report and recommendations centred on the Team's proposal that the University might wish to review its centralised financial model. The 2012 IEP Team took the opportunity, through discussions with the University's senior leaders and other senior staff, to return to this issue.

The Team saw this as a useful means to take an even wider view of other matters relating to governance and institutional planning, as discussed earlier in this section. In meetings with members of the Rectorate, with Deans, Heads of Department, and members of the University Senate, the IEP Team formed the clear impression that a degree of decentralisation in finance and resourcing matters should be given serious consideration at the highest levels in the Yeditepe governance structures. During their meetings, the Team heard that such an approach, if supported by appropriate rules for resource allocation, would meet with broad approval across the University community and would introduce greater transparency, accountability, and ownership into financial matters. Moreover, from the IEP Team's perspective, this would also sit well alongside the Team's other

recommendations regarding governance and strategic planning, and the opportunities presented there for securing greater ownership, involvement and accountability in terms of future investment and forward planning. In the view of the IEP Team, if Yeditepe is to become a modern University in which its senior leadership, senior academics, and wider academic community are fully involved and accountable, then this needs to be made possible through key processes, including through the development of an appropriate financial model that incorporates a degree of decentralisation to faculties and departments along with reciprocal responsibility.

The 2007 recommendation on financial matters had suggested that the centralised financial model might be replaced by a five-year rolling investment and financial contract, between the Board and the University, for supporting the future development of the University. At the time, the Team was advised by the University of constraints placed upon the University and the Board of Trustees through national higher education regulations governing finance that might serve to prohibit this. From the SER, it became apparent to the 2012 IEP Team, that this was a matter that remained under active consideration by the University and one which has yet to be resolved. However, the Team was interested to note from the SER that even though the Board of Trustees is the responsible body for management of the University's financial strategy, according to Article 14 of the relevant regulations governing higher education: 'The Board of Trustees, as far as it deems appropriate, may delegate its powers to the President, Rector, or to other bodies of the institution of higher education'. Furthermore, the Team were encouraged to note that the SER also states that 'the University's administration is considering the introduction of a total-value oriented (...) five-year rolling contract, on an investment-against-value basis'. The Team noted also that this statement has as its reference point the key areas of teaching, research, and third mission activities. In view of the transformation challenges in such areas, and reflecting the Team's earlier observations on the scope of the *Yeditepe Strategic Plan*, the IEP Team would fully endorse this prioritisation. To reinforce this, the IEP Team believes that the Board of Trustees should take steps to introduce such changes and can have confidence in the Rector in taking these matters forward. Should such an investment plan be approved by the Board, the implementation and delivery of that plan can then be entrusted to the Rector, as the accountable Chief Executive Officer, under monitoring arrangements overseen at Board level.

Reflecting the findings described above, the Team proposes that the University gives further consideration to the 2007 recommendation regarding the centralised financial model, with a view to introducing an element of decentralisation in finance, resourcing, and budgetary matters, and to use this as an opportunity to achieve ownership, accountability, and involvement at faculty and department levels in resourcing and finance matters.

Academic organisation and committee arrangements

During their meetings with various groups, and through considering the documentation made available to them, the IEP Team took the opportunity to gain an updated view of matters relating, respectively, to the current academic organisation of the University, and

its committee structure. Since 2007, with the addition of a new Health Sciences Faculty, the number of faculties had grown from 11 to 12. Student numbers had grown from a total of 15 229 in 2007 (including 2 601 graduate students), to 18 216 in 2011-2012 (including 2 822 Masters students and 868 doctoral students), and new programmes have been added to the provision of the faculties of Education, Arts and Science, Engineering and Architecture, and Commerce. The Team noted that the number of research centres had grown from four to seven over the same period.

The Team also learned that the University had revised its organisational chart with respect to governance and management, thereby reflecting the advice of the 2007 IEP Team and describing organisational changes introduced since 2007. From the University's perspective, this had made possible a less complex, more explicit and more flexible set of management arrangements which, in the view of the IEP Team, appeared to be working satisfactorily. The University had used this as an opportunity to put in place a younger management structure, including advisory support for the Rectorate. As is the norm in foundation universities, the Board of Trustees remains the highest decision making body in the governance structure, while the Senate continues to function as the highest academic body in the University. Links between the Board and the Senate are maintained through the offices of the Rector and Vice Rectors. The IEP Team noted that, in taking forward the overall work of the University, the Rector is supported by a tier of other committees, in areas such as quality assurance, strategic planning, institutional data and management information, international affairs, and regulations. In the view of the Team, these arrangements appear to be working well. The Team noted that in the area of administrative matters the University continues to function through the operation of the Executive Board. This Board, which meets frequently, has oversight of operational matters in areas such as human resources, including promotions, as well as student complaints. The Team also confirmed that the University continues to operate a relatively devolved system of faculty boards, which are mandatory and which deal with academic (teaching and research) and staffing matters within the faculty, and also departmental boards, which play an important role in managing academic staffing matters and in planning curriculum delivery. In reflecting over these arrangements, the IEP Team formed the view that they remain fit for purpose.

4. Corporate communication

During meetings with staff, students and external stakeholders, and through considering documentation made available by the University, the IEP Team took the opportunity to consider progress with various matters relating to corporate communication. The Team was able to confirm that substantial efforts had been made by the University since 2007 to make this a priority area and improvements had been achieved in both internal and external communication. The Team also noted the University's acknowledgement of the need to continue to make progress in some areas.

The Team was interested to learn that two new departments had been established: the Communication Development and Events Management Department has a broadly internal remit, while the Corporate Communications Department is more outward-looking. They

consist of a number of units, covering areas such as events management, alumni relations, and units intended to enhance the effectiveness of internal communication processes. The IEP Team was particularly interested in the part played by the Student Clubs Office, and its role in supporting and encouraging clubs and societies. The Team felt that the department as a whole makes an important contribution to improving the quality of campus life for students, staff, faculties and alumni and in generally making available communication opportunities across the University. The Team learned that societies and clubs bid competitively for funding for their activities, though some are more active and successful than others. Projects are approved by the University Rectorate, with budgets being allocated by the Board of Trustees. The Team noted that there is an academic focus to some activities, with faculties able to work with clubs and societies to organise events. Guidance manuals are being prepared to help improve societies' and clubs' organisation.

The IEP Team formed the view that the Corporate Communications Department was making an important contribution to the social and public relations agenda of the University, and is supporting the Rectorate in these matters by strengthening Yeditepe's corporate image and the wider perception of the University. The Team noted the importance of this department in meeting wider national needs, through helping the University to reach and to recruit from a wider pool of potential Yeditepe applicants and future students in more distant geographical parts of Turkey. The Team learned that such communication efforts are essential in enabling the University to meet its allocated quota for the annual recruitment of a high quality student intake.

A further aspect of institutional communication of interest to the IEP Team was IT-related developments. Here, the Team noted that, relative to more general progress on corporate communication, current challenges were similar to the infrastructure and software issues experienced by the University in 2007. The SER listed IT matters as being prominent amongst the 'setbacks' currently facing Yeditepe. For example, the Team learned that institutional VLE (Virtual Learning Environment) and network development were constrained by bandwidth and server storage capacity difficulties. More broadly, in common with many other higher education institutions, the SER pointed to the increasing interdependency in universities, as complex organisations, between data requirements and IT capability. The Team was informed that amongst the institutional projects affected by this situation was management of the various Bologna Process initiatives. The IEP Team noted that the University was working towards the development of an IT-based and web-based Bologna Process information management system, and that it intended to integrate this with existing in-house systems (such as ED, or E-University, and OBS, or E-University for Students) for the purpose of supporting Bologna curriculum change, the move towards adoption of ECTS, and the work of the Advisory Councils.

In their deliberations the Team also paid attention to developments on alumni matters, an area which had been identified in the 2007 evaluation. At that time the University had signalled its intention to make early progress in this area. The IEP Team was encouraged to note that in 2009, an Alumni Association (YUMED) had been established, and took the opportunity to assess progress to date. The Team learned that infrastructure, including office space and staffing, were now well embedded and that progress was being made in

developing an Alumni Network. This work was being assisted through the creation of a supporting database to facilitate contact between the Alumni Association and the University, and a related programme of activities. The Team noted that a catalogue, profiling all faculties, was being prepared for circulation to Yeditepe graduates, and meetings of the YUMED Business Network had commenced with a view to establishing and maintaining medium and long term business relationships. The IEP Team is able to confirm that, even though it is in its early stages, good progress is being made with the alumni initiative, and the Alumni Network is already showing positive results. In the view of the IEP Team, the target of the Alumni Association – of being amongst the top five of such associations – is well worth pursuing. The Team came to the view that as the University develops through time and the body of the alumni itself grows, the task of achieving recognition of the quality of the Yeditepe product will become easier. The Team learned that Yeditepe alumni are already taking up prestigious positions in business, commerce, and public life.

In considering matters related to corporate communication as they relate to the external profile of Yeditepe, the views, perspectives, and experiences of external partners and stakeholders were of particular interest to the IEP Team. The Team noted that the current Yeditepe *Strategic Plan* saw 'creating value' for all stakeholders as being a fundamental objective for the University. To assist them in their deliberations, the Team held a productive and positive meeting with a group of prominent external personalities who spoke encouragingly about Yeditepe and the future potential of the University. External stakeholders indicated to the Team that as they had become more familiar with the University, they had been pleasantly surprised by what they saw and experienced. The Team heard that Yeditepe could be viewed as amongst the best in Turkey from an external stakeholder's perspective since, unlike many competitors, particularly in the state sector, the University was adaptable, flexible, and open to joint projects, and was a leading Foundation University. However, the Team was also informed that Yeditepe's profile was not as prominent as it could or should be, and that there was still scope to learn from the publicity activities of other Turkish universities who were successful in projecting a corporate image. More progress can be made in interpreting and responding to employer needs and in projecting Yeditepe's wider, global aspirations to external stakeholders. The IEP Team concurs with the views they heard that there is progress to be made in conveying the 'message' of what the Yeditepe University 'brand' is and of projecting what it has to offer, which is a matter for senior management direction, and for further consideration in the context of the University's communication strategy.

In drawing together all matters relating to corporate communication considered by the IEP Team, the Team members welcome the various steps taken to strengthen corporate communications and community life within the University, including the range of activities, events, societies, and services from which students can benefit. In addition, the Team commends the progress made in establishing an Alumni Network (YUMED), and in improving arrangements for internal and external communication. However, from views expressed by external stakeholders, the Team recommends that there is further work to do in promoting the Yeditepe 'brand' in the wider society and to gain wider recognition of the University's profile.

5. Developments in learning and teaching

The SER and other documentation drew attention to progress being made in taking forward developments and changes in the area of learning and teaching, and to the continuing challenges and pressures, both externally and from within, being addressed by Yeditepe. The IEP Team was pleased to record that, as had been the case during the 2007 visit, students spoke favourably of the quality of their learning experience, and of the accessibility and openness of faculty. Team members noted the contribution to student well-being made by the Careers and Personal Development Office in enhancing student employability and career opportunities, as well as by the Consultation and Coordination Office for Students with Disabilities (CCOSD). The latter, established in 2010, has made good progress in preparing the academic environment for students with special needs and to facilitate integration into both educational and social aspects of student life at Yeditepe. However, with respect to the former, students indicated that they would like to have more internship opportunities and support in obtaining placements. The IEP Team also took note of the important contribution made by the Academic Writing Centre. The Centre assists learners and teachers to improve academic writing skills in English through provision of individualised tutoring sessions and workshops covering all levels of study. In view of the University's wider international aspirations and desire to strengthen its academic profile, the Team formed the view that this service has become an essential one for the Yeditepe academic community.

The IEP Team also explored the University's international aspirations, and noted that the Yeditepe *Strategic Plan* contained various references to matters such as the encouragement of student and staff mobility, and the development of joint/dual degree arrangements with international partners. The Team was impressed by the evident progress made in some areas of international activity from what had been a relatively low base in 2007. The SER pointed to emerging strengths in the areas of Erasmus and student exchanges, while growth in international recruitment had been such that at the time of the Team's visit, there was a total of 227 international students registered at the University, of whom 73 and 28 were Masters and Doctoral students, respectively. The Team noted with interest the University's plans to increase these numbers significantly in the medium term. The Team also observed that Yeditepe had some 400 or so Erasmus agreements, and around 120 exchange agreements, making the University amongst the most successful in Turkey in this respect. The Team learned that a key aim at present was to enable as many Yeditepe students as is feasible to spend one term of study in another country. In reflecting on these matters, the Team noted that the University has in place appropriate infrastructure to facilitate support for existing arrangements and to enable further expansion to take place. From the Team's perspective, the importance attached at Yeditepe to instruction through the medium of the English language was a distinctive feature, with the work of the Language Centre being of considerable importance. However, it was apparent to the Team that, in the not too distant future, the University may wish to consider whether it might rationalise and reduce the number of external partnerships (e.g. in the Erasmus area) to enable a stronger, more robust portfolio of student exchange

arrangements to be developed. All international activities are under the supervision of a Vice Rector and, in the view of the IEP Team, this arrangement is working well. The Team concluded that the growing internationalisation of Yeditepe is being reflected in positive developments and the members of the Team would wish to encourage the University to continue to make progress in this direction.

From all of the IEP Team's enquiries, by far the most significant aspect of Yeditepe's learning and teaching agenda, and the central feature of much of the University's education strategy, was represented in the considerable activity devoted to Bologna matters. Earlier sections of this report have presented detail on the legal changes at national level that have led Yeditepe and all other Turkish higher education institutions to place the Bologna Process at the centre of their strategic considerations. As has been noted, alignment with the requirements of the Bologna Process has ensured that the University's strategic planning, its institutionalisation priorities, and a considerable proportion of current and recent development work, has been focused on this agenda. During discussions with senior leaders it was evident that, since 2007, the quest for alignment with Bologna Process requirements has pervaded much of the activity and debate amongst the University and its academic community. As has been described in various ways in sections 1 to 3, governance arrangements, structures, policy changes, and development work all illustrate the continuing centrality of Bologna matters. As noted, strategically and operationally, the driving forces are the Bologna Coordination Commission (BCC), and the Bologna Coordination Office, each of which plays a key role in enabling the University to meet its reporting obligations on Bologna progress to the Council of Higher Education, in respect of issues such as ECTS, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and curriculum reform.

Though the IEP Team noted the profound influence that the requirements of working towards alignment with the Bologna Process has had on Yeditepe, including the marked effect on the current *Strategic Plan*, and on initiatives in support of the institutionalisation of quality (discussed in section 9), it is the firm view of the members of the Team that Bologna Process matters are, essentially, learning and teaching matters. From discussions held during various meetings, and through considering documentation made available to the IEP Team, it was possible to examine various aspects of learning and teaching development work in taking forward Yeditepe's Bologna work. The Team learned that this work was being guided by the EU *Bologna Handbook*.

The Team noted that at the level of the *Strategic Plan*, teaching and learning objectives were closely associated with the need to take account of stakeholder requirements. The Team was able to record various examples of the involvement of external and internal stakeholders in curriculum development deliberations. The Team noted that emphasis was being placed on ensuring that student-centredness informed the changes being introduced into learning and teaching processes. However, it was also apparent to the Team that some tension existed between student-centredness and teacher-centredness in some areas of the University and that the management of curriculum change should take full account of this. Further, the IEP Team noted that curriculum design and review efforts were being guided by the need to ensure that all undergraduate and postgraduate programmes were

aligned to the NQF, were learning-outcomes based, and took account of the credit-rating requirements of the ECTS. The Team formed the view that implementation progress across the University was varied, but noted that the transition according to the agreed 'Bologna roadmap' was being overseen by Deans and Heads, through faculty and department advisory boards, with revised curricula being approved on an annual basis by the University's Senate. The expectation at national level is for all higher education programmes across Turkish higher education to move to an outcomes-based curriculum, aligned to appropriate levels on the Turkish NQF, in the very near future.

The Team also considered the progress being made in converting the University's current credit system to that required by ECTS, and noted that faculties were carrying out work in this area on a programme by programme basis. To date, student transcripts were prepared to reflect both ECTS and Yeditepe's regular credit system, designed as it is to accommodate the credit requirements of US and Australian students for whom ECTS is not used. Consequently, it was evident to the IEP Team that the issue of accommodating both credit systems had not yet been resolved and it was not yet possible to make Diploma Supplements available to students. The Team members noted that the University had advised them of some resistance in this general area from amongst senior faculty members, who had expressed concerns regarding adoption of ECTS and the implications for the academic calendar and number of study years. The Team noted that, for the most part, these concerns had been allayed through information sessions and other forms of communication, including web-based ones. However, the Team also noted that with respect to joint/dual degree programmes, it was important for the University to give due consideration in curriculum transformation to student workload and to the need to meet the ECTS/Bologna requirement of 30 credits per semester.

In summarising the foregoing discussion, the IEP Team was pleased to learn of the changes being made in the area of the Bologna agenda, and the work towards a student and learner-centred educational paradigm. In addition, the IEP Team acknowledges the University's efforts in seeking to ensure an appropriate workload for students when adapting the curriculum to Bologna guidelines, but recommends that particular care is taken in this matter, particularly in dual degree programmes.

Finally, the IEP Team turned some of their attention to general matters relating to the University's arrangements for promoting the enhancement of learning and teaching. The Team were interested to note the upward trends indicated in the longitudinal data on various learning and teaching items as set out in the *Self-evaluation Comparison Table (2008/2011)*. The Team also took note of the role played by the Bologna Coordination Office in providing 'in-service' seminars and briefing and training sessions on Bologna and quality assurance matters. However, the Team formed the view that there remains scope for the University to reflect further on how arrangements and strategies for enhancing learning and teaching practice might be strengthened and taken further forward. Therefore, with reference to the 2007 recommendation regarding learning and teaching strategy and arrangements to facilitate the enhancement of academic practice, the IEP Team recommends that the University pays further attention to putting in place effective

mechanisms and arrangements for the identification and sharing of best practice in student centred learning.

6. Research

The IEP Team took a close interest in exploring with the University the current situation, as well as future directions, regarding research. Though the Team did not meet active research staff from the more prominent and relatively better resourced research areas, such as Biotechnology or Medicine, Team members drew sufficient information from meetings and from documentation to form the view that while difficulties and challenges remain, particularly in research infrastructure, progress had been made since 2007.

The Team observed that research development remained a prominent strategic objective, and this was reflected in statements contained in the SER and in the 'Research Process Scorecard' set out in the Yeditepe *Strategic Plan*. The latter identified growth in the volume of research and publications, and reduction of barriers to research, as prominent targets. Of particular interest to the IEP Team was the emphasis placed on a vision of 'Transforming Yeditepe University's Value Creation functions to a research-based culture'. In the view of the IEP Team, this signified an ambitious perspective on the part of Yeditepe's leadership. The designation of a Vice Rector whose portfolio includes research; the growth in recent years in the number of doctoral students (particularly in Health, Science and Engineering, and Social Science); the increase in the number of research centres to seven; and the continued development of research through the University's Institutes, each operating as a Graduate School, all appeared to the IEP Team to lend weight to the University's research aspirations. The Team heard that plans in place at the time of the 2007 evaluation, for the development of a Science and Technology Park, had been held back by a series of constraints. The Team learned that this potential development remained under review. Meanwhile, in the absence of this development, the University had taken steps to increase the level of provision of laboratory facilities on the main Yeditepe campus. From the Team's perspective, this was a reasonable way forward at this juncture, given the need to look for opportunities to continue to enhance research facilities. Nevertheless, as the University fully recognised, this in itself may exacerbate the growing problem of pressure on space and was likely to represent only a temporary solution as the institution continued to grow.

In reading documentation made available, and through discussions with staff and students, the IEP Team noted that progress has been made in a number of ways to support capacity building in research at the University. The Team formed the view that the recommendations of 2007 had been taken seriously, but that the question of research funding remained prominent. The Team noted that several changes for the better had been made in recent years. In general terms the Team observed that the University's self-evaluation data for 2008-2011, on Research and Development Processes, collected for the Council of Higher Education, showed upward trends in all categories. More specifically, the Team learned that three schemes had been put in place to reward staff for research activity: incentivising publication in peer reviewed international journals; decreasing workloads for principal investigators and authors of research papers; and ensuring that

project teams are allocated the relevant overhead costs for externally generated project income. Each of these represented positive steps in the view of the IEP Team. Furthermore, though not all costs for participation in international conferences are yet met by the University, and even though departments do not yet have their own budgets for such purposes, the level and extent of such support has improved considerably and rules are clearer. Staff who met the IEP Team confirmed that all these arrangements were, for the most part, working well. Moreover, it was also evident to the Team that research teams with funded projects were able to access resources, such as laboratory space, when income had been generated, and were also permitted to hire additional staffing resources. Undergraduate and postgraduate students who met the IEP Team drew a generally positive picture of how staff research informed their teaching and how they, as students, were able to benefit from this in their learning. A group of recently appointed young international researchers who met with the Team indicated explicitly that they had chosen Yeditepe due to the extent to which their research would be encouraged and supported by the University and by their respective faculties.

However, from meetings with staff and students, the Team learned of a number of continuing difficulties faced in several areas. These included matters such as: the variable rate of development of and support for research in different areas of the University; the availability of technical staff; equipment maintenance; lack of research assistants; high drop-out rates of doctoral students; and also emerging issues such as growing pressure on space. The Team also noted that the University had no policy for sabbatical leave to stimulate research, except for unpaid leave. From meetings with the University's senior leadership it was evident to the Team that most, if not all, of these matters were under active consideration by the University's senior leadership. In general terms, the IEP Team concluded that improved support for research remained an important consideration for the University, but that resources and budgetary matters were an underlying factor.

Reflecting on the above discussion, and on the basis of the Team's deliberations across the entire area of research at Yeditepe, recommendations are put forward in three areas.

First, the IEP Team considered the University's efforts to increase the number of doctoral students, to provide contractual scholarship support, and to give opportunities for postgraduate research (PGR) students to help with research and with teaching, for example as research assistants. The Team noted, however, a number of difficulties stemming from the absence of clear regulations to define the status of PGR students, and from the competing demands placed upon students who, in addition to completing a doctoral thesis, may also be in employment and completing other academic studies. The Team therefore advises that a review is undertaken of the status and responsibilities of doctoral students in relation to research, teaching, and other commitments. In the view of the IEP Team, this might go some way to addressing the high drop-out rate of its largely part-time doctoral cohort, to making progress in and completing studies achievable, and also to enabling doctoral students to play a fuller part in supporting research and teaching within their departments. It would also provide an opportunity for the University to take full advantage of the richness of a young body of researchers who will be well placed to contribute to building the Yeditepe research brand.

Secondly, in exploring the structures, governance arrangements, and resources currently in place to support and steer research at this stage of Yeditepe's development, the IEP Team reflected on whether the necessary coordinating framework is in place to promote the development of research across the University. The Team noted the important role played in these matters, in various ways, by the University's research centres, Institutes, and faculties, as well as the Research Projects Office. However, the Team formed the view that in order to develop a more integrated and cohesive approach across the University's research agenda, consideration should be given to the establishment of a post of Director of Research and Doctoral Studies.

Thirdly, as noted, the IEP Team paid specific attention in their research-related enquiries to the resourcing of research. Of particular concern, from the Team's perspective, was the issue of the sustainable and realisable nature of Yeditepe's research aspirations, and the need for appropriate budgetary arrangements for research purposes. The Team members noted from data and other information made available to them the active support for a growing number of research projects, including those funded on an in-house basis. The Team also observed the effective role played by the Research Projects Coordinator in exercising oversight of the management of projects and in providing general support. However, in the view of the IEP Team, though welcome, these arrangements were not sufficient for the sustainability of the University's research aspirations. In addition, while revolving funds had been used in recent years to stimulate research in some areas, it was not clear to the Team whether this would be transferable to other areas in the future. Without these or similar funds it was not apparent to the Team how progress across other areas could be secured. The Team noted that, currently, applications for research support can only be made directly via the Rectorate to the Board of Trustees.

In the view of the IEP Team, these matters can only be resolved at the highest level, through discussion and action between the Yeditepe Board and the University's leadership. From the Team's perspective, the most desired outcome for the University would be the identification of a budget for the promotion of research, with open and transparent criteria for allocation on a competitive basis, to include seed money for emerging research areas, and also to incorporate support for research infrastructure. The Team learned that similar arrangements are to be found in state universities in Turkey. From this, the Team recommends that the progress made in the allocation of resources towards research activities and publications should in the future be integrated into a budget for research, and that this should be allocated and overseen by the Rectorate, through a twice-yearly or annual 'call for proposals'.

7. Third Mission

During the 16 years since its establishment, Yeditepe University has developed strong ties with society and, as is reflected in the SER, this is manifested through the range of social responsibility programmes, regarded by the University as a strength and distinctive feature. The IEP Team noted that this aspect of the University's profile was viewed as a key element of how Yeditepe interpreted its 'Third Mission'. The University's social responsibility agenda features prominently in the *Strategic Plan* Third Mission Scorecard,

alongside key strategic objectives for lifelong learning, enhancement of industrial and business collaboration, and the establishment of the Technopark. Within the broad range of social responsibility programmes, the Team noted the importance attached to continuing education; strong links with schools, local authorities, and regional bodies; provision of free community awareness services in health and medicine; and also the international dimension. The Team notes that the University is proud of its efforts to contribute environmental benefits. All such activities are presented positively in the self-evaluation data made available to the IEP Team in respect of Third Mission Services. From their enquiries, and in reflecting on the 2007 IEP report, the Team was well aware that one of the key aims of Yeditepe is to create socially responsible students, and notes that in this respect the University is very successful.

The IEP Team formed the view that although research and development activities, Science and Technology Park aspirations, and industrial and commercial collaboration, are incorporated into Yeditepe's Third Mission contributions, the central thrust of the University's perspective on 'Third Mission' is based primarily on community cooperation through its commitment to social responsibility principles. From the Team's perspective, knowledge transfer should be given more prominence in the Yeditepe Third Mission agenda, and 'research' and 'third mission' agendas should blend better. This perception was also shared by external stakeholders whom the IEP Team met. External partners put forward the view, shared by the Team, that Yeditepe can be even more proactive and responsive in this area by identifying industrial and business needs and developing the necessary platforms to strengthen knowledge transfer capabilities.

The SER correctly identifies that, amongst the opportunities available to the University, is the close presence of industrial organisations, industrial zones, and potential partners. The IEP Team wishes to endorse the emphasis placed on this, and urge the University to reinforce the capacity to link with businesses and companies and to build mutual trust to support knowledge transfer activity. It was apparent to the Team that opportunities for the University to show the economic value of research are extensive, and include working with companies to address practical problems through proposing projects and by incentivising this at the University. For example, the Team noted that such projects can be used as a basis for designing postgraduate programmes and doctoral work, with industrial companies and businesses contributing funding and playing a role in leading projects with Yeditepe. The expertise in the University's research centres, Institutes and faculties is well placed to take the initiative in this aspect of Yeditepe's Third Mission agenda, and is also capable of growing 'spin-off' companies. The IEP Team observed that there is obvious potential for income to be generated through making the University's intellectual property available to the outside world. In reflecting on these matters, it occurred to the Team that just as the University has been successful in approaching and engaging potential students through strong and aggressive links with schools, the same effort should be made in approaching industry, business, and employers for knowledge transfer purposes.

In summary, while the IEP Team acknowledges the positive emphasis placed on social responsibility projects and wider societal links in the University's Third Mission agenda, the Team formed the view that this perspective on Third Mission should be broadened. The

Team sees this as a way of implementing the strategic goal, included in the 2010 Strategic Plan, of 'Transforming Yeditepe University's Value Creation Functions to a research-based structure'. The Team therefore advises that the University incorporates within its focus on 'Third Mission' activities a strong and clear emphasis on Knowledge Transfer work, involving both applied and fundamental research, ensuring that appropriate emphasis is also placed on industry links, the economic value of such work, and the opportunities for income generation.

8. Human resources and staff development

In their enquiries, the IEP Team paid attention to matters relating to human resources and staff development, and returned to several issues raised in the 2007 report. The Team noted that prioritisation of research remained an important consideration in staffing policy, as did the need to continue to make progress in strengthening the level of technical and administrative support staff across the University, along with initiatives to encourage research assistants and to support young staff in achieving promotion to the professoriate. Though no reference was made in the SER to developments relating to technical and administrative support staff, the other matters referred to were, for the most part, helpfully addressed by the University. For example, both in the SER and in additional documentation made available to the IEP Team, the data presented for consideration by the Team depicted upward trajectories over the period 2007 – 2012 in the numbers of appointments made to positions of assistant and associate professor, and research assistants, and in the level of research active faculty. (Matters relating to research were discussed more fully in section 6).

In meetings with senior staff from faculties and departments the IEP Team learned that while clear progress had been made in recent years on matters such as reduction of contact hours, and support for conference attendance (all of which were perceived to be positive steps from the point of view of staff research), further progress was deemed to be necessary in the area of support staff. While some staff who met with the IEP Team reported that they had benefited from additional administrative or secretarial support, or from additional faculty appointments, continued problems in this area were a persistent theme emerging from the SWOT analyses undertaken by faculties for consideration by the IEP Team. As noted in section 6, the Team also formed the view that further development of research assistants, to facilitate an increased level of support for professors, is also a continuing concern in some academic areas of the University.

In summary, the IEP Team welcomed the progress made in several areas, including reduced contact hours, administrative support, and improvements in support for conference attendance. However, in view of concerns expressed to them, the Team wishes to reinforce the matter raised in the 2007 report of 'a general concern regarding the need for additional technical and administrative support in the areas of teaching, learning, and research' and to recommend that action is taken to address these concerns. The SER indicated that this recommendation remained under consideration, though an appropriate strategy for the staff-related matters discussed here has yet to be developed.

An additional human resources matter arose during the IEP Team's discussions regarding the Yeditepe's internationalisation agenda. Through meeting international students and international researchers, the Team recognised that the international culture and openness of Yeditepe is attractive to both international students and staff. The University has created an experienced and supportive environment, both academically and socially. However, it was also clear to the Team that this could be strengthened further. The Team understood that key processes, such as admissions and induction into departments, could improve if all administrative and secretarial staff had at least a basic competence in foreign languages. The Team therefore recommends that if Yeditepe wishes to continue to improve its international profile, a programme of staff development should be put in place to strengthen the foreign language speaking abilities of administrative staff who deal with international students and staff.

9. Quality assurance and quality culture

In reviewing developments and progress since 2007, the IEP Team observed that there continued to be strong external drivers in the area of quality assurance, and a heavy degree of accountability, as represented in the requirements of the Council of Higher Education (CHE) and the Yodek Commission. Of continued interest to the Team was the nature and extent of progress being made in the general area of the institutionalisation of quality, and the degree to which the wider academic community was becoming part of a growing culture of quality.

From the documentation made available to the IEP Team, and through meetings at all levels of the University, it became evident to Team members that the principal thrust of recent and current efforts to institutionalise quality at Yeditepe was focused on Bologna matters. It was apparent to the Team that this reflected strong national priorities emanating from the CHE and associated bodies. The Team noted that while ADEK (the Academic Evaluation and Quality Improvement Committee), chaired by the Rector, continued to play a role in this area as it had done in 2007, in view of the emergence and scope of responsibilities of the Bologna Coordination Commission (BCC) and the Bologna Coordination Office its prominence had diminished noticeably. Though in formal terms ADEK's responsibilities as described in Article 11 of the national higher education regulations include internal and external assessment activities and preparations, the IEP Team were advised that, while ADEK continues to make reports to the CHE, its relative significance has diminished. This was evident to the Team in that the CHE now collects much of its required information in the area of the Bologna Process, and the University facilitates this through the BCC and the Bologna Office. From this, the Team concluded that, in all but name, the BCC and Bologna Office were in structural terms functioning, respectively, as a Quality Committee and a Quality Office. Additionally, the IEP Team formed the view that though the Academic Quality Monitoring and Improvement Office (which had been present in 2007) continued to exist at the time of the Team's visit, given that it shares data with and prepares similar reports as the Bologna Office, in all but name it has in effect been dissolved into the latter. The Team learned that, in addition to making

provision for the training and development activities to support learning and teaching referred to in section 5, the Bologna Coordination Office also organises and delivers training for quality matters.

Much of the above is reflected in Yeditepe's *Bologna Process Strategy* document, where quality assurance matters are presented in terms of the 'Scorecard' methodology. The strategic objectives, actions, and key performance indicators identified in the *Plan* relate, respectively, to: Yodek reporting; measurement of Bologna Process progress; accreditation; and matters relating to the IEP Team's follow-up visit and evaluation. Complementing this strategic documentation, the University's SER highlighted several key issues and levers for further change, drawing the IEP Team's attention particularly to the institution's aspirations to 'extend quality management to all levels of faculty staff', and also to bring about 'consolidation of data used for quality, self-evaluation, and business intelligence purposes'. Matters relating to the generation and use of data for quality management and quality improvement purposes are discussed more fully later in this section.

To support the University's quality assurance work, the IEP Team noted that the overarching quality frameworks used by the University in its quality assurance work are, firstly, the Yodek Manual, provided by the CHE, and, secondly, Yeditepe's *own Bologna Process Strategy*. From the point of view of formal responsibilities for quality assurance, quality management, and quality improvement, the Rector holds responsibility for exercising oversight of the adoption and implementation of agreed quality initiatives, including Bologna requirements, supported by the Vice Rector and Bologna bodies. At the level of faculty, department, and programme, Deans, Heads, and programme chairs carry these responsibilities.

The IEP Team took the opportunity to explore specific aspects of internal quality developments and procedures. Here, the Team noted the importance attached by Yeditepe and its faculties and departments to national and international accreditation, of both academic provision and of services, as appropriate. Here, the progress in quality assurance and quality improvement matters made in the faculties of Engineering and Architecture, Dentistry, Medicine, Education, and Arts and Science, was illustrated to the IEP Team through the success in achieving programme accreditation by professional and discipline-related external agencies, such as MUDEK and FEDEK. The Team heard from faculty staff that institutional quality assurance and review procedures had been helpful in supporting the achievement of successful outcomes. The IEP Team learned of similar successes in other areas of the University. For example, international accreditation has been achieved by the University Hospital through meeting JCI (Joint Commission International) standards, and the hospital, along with the Dental Hospital, has also achieved ISO 9001/9002 accreditation for various aspects of the services they provide.

In their deliberations on internally-driven quality procedures and priorities, the Team also learned that, at academic programme level, monitoring is undertaken through completion of annual self-reviews and monitoring reports which contribute to external monitoring through the CHE Annual Assessment Report. The IEP Team was also interested to learn

that, since 2007, the University had introduced a web-based staff appraisal scheme into its quality procedures. The Team noted that this Academic Evaluation System (ADS) was a performance-based mechanism for evaluating and ranking academic staff on an annual basis, with data being assembled in several categories, including teaching, research, and administration. The Team learned that this provided data for internal purposes, and enabled the Rectorate and Deans to evaluate the progress of departments and individuals for quality purposes and to inform management action. Academic staff receive feedback, while Heads of Department obtain information relating to department staff, enabling them to monitor progress in areas such as staff research. The IEP Team was particularly interested to note that this system and the data it generated was in many respects similar to that produced for external purposes, through the YOKSIS system, which is a national database created for the purpose of gathering data on individual academics across the entire Turkish higher education system. As described below, in the view of the IEP Team, to all intents and purposes this duplication imposed a marked burden on the University, not least since the institution and its senior managers have limited access to the data that are generated under the YOKSIS system for the purposes of external accountability. These and related matters are commented upon further, in the discussion below.

The IEP Team explored the full range of types of data and information that the University is obliged to collect and generate for meeting the requirements of external bodies, such as YODEK and the Council of Higher Education. This was considered alongside data generated for internal purposes only, some of which has been referred to above. It was noticeable to the Team members that, as a whole, the data-related demands placed on the University and its faculties, departments, and staff, for quality monitoring and accountability purposes, are quite considerable. At the centre of the activity that is necessary for Yeditepe to meet such demands is the part played by the Bologna Coordination Office. The Team noted that the office oversees several levels of evaluation for the purpose of gathering information and data. An institutional self-evaluation survey with 120 evaluation criteria classified under 10 major categories is completed for YODEK, and this is further supplemented by information also provided to YODEK (under the aegis of ADEK), against 76 key performance indicators (KPIs). In a third area of evaluation activity, the results of a series of electronically administered satisfaction surveys (of students, staff, external stakeholders) are gathered together. The Team noted that the resulting information and data sets are reported to the University's senior leadership and made available to the Council of Higher Education in the context of the YODEK Annual Report. As noted earlier, this is in addition to data that are also collected to supply YOKSIS, and through the University's own academic evaluation survey (ADS).

It is evident from the foregoing that information and data are collected for various *external* bodies and in response to several *external* calls. This is in addition to *internal* requirements for information, some of which are due to the University's inability to use or access information or data made available to *external* bodies for accountability purposes. The IEP Team noted that this introduced a degree of repetition and duplication into the information gathering, with some information being collected twice, as well as imposing a burden on departments and academic staff. It appeared to the IEP Team that this situation

called for the University to be innovative and imaginative in its approach at the data collection stage. In the view of the Team, by seeking to integrate the processes through which data and information required for Bologna purposes, YODEK, YOKSIS, and through the ADS system, are collected and stored, this might produce some benefits in terms of streamlining and reducing the duplication of effort and the consequent burden on academics and departments. The Team felt that all this activity should ideally be undertaken through one fully integrated office. The Team fully recognises that this is a challenging area, and that it is for the University to determine the feasibility of the progress that might be made in these matters, including data integration. In addition, the IEP Team reflected on the use made by the University of all such information and data for quality management and planning purposes. Here, the Team came to the conclusion that if Yeditepe wants its quality policy to stimulate quality improvement, the University will need to decide what common set of performance indicators it wishes to measure its faculties and departments against. From the Team's perspective, this would mean going beyond following government trends and would involve using data and information for Yeditepe's own internal requirements and its own strategic decision-making and governance purposes.

In considering these issues relating to the collection and use of information and data, the IEP Team proposes two recommendations. First, in noting that various types of data are collected for meeting external and internal requirements, the Team recommends that consideration is given to extending the use made internally of available data, and taking full advantage of this for quality management and planning purposes and for assisting strategic thinking. Secondly, to reduce duplication and the burden on academics and departments, and to enable the streamlining of processes, the IEP Team recommends that a well-integrated central office is established with responsibility for collecting and managing all quality-related project and strategic information, for both external and internal purposes.

Finally, in reflecting on all of these matters, including the framework and reference points used by the University in its quality assurance planning, the IEP Team formed the view that, though addressing the Bologna agenda and securing accreditation achievements are of central importance to the University, it would be advantageous to broaden the focus of Yeditepe's approach to quality assurance matters by making more use of the guidance and principles contained in the *European Standards and Guidelines (ESG)*. This was acknowledged by senior staff of the University, though the Team noted that at other levels of the University awareness of the *Guidelines* was for the most part absent. The Team would also wish to take this opportunity to record its view that more use could be made of the ESG at national level in Turkish higher education than appears to be the case at present.

10. Student issues

The IEP Team was able to meet students at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and were pleased to again record the same degree of pride shown by students in Yeditepe University as in 2007. This positive aspect was also confirmed in meetings with external

stakeholders who indicated the attractiveness to employers of Yeditepe graduates and the extent to which their self-confidence, and employability and achievement orientation qualities were valued by the wider society. Through discussion with students, the Team explored the arrangements made to obtain feedback on student views and experiences, and the degree of student involvement in the community life of the University, and also in its governance arrangements and committee structures. It should be noted, however, that the students who met the IEP Team were drawn from a limited number of academic areas and that the views and experiences expressed to the Team may not have been fully representative of the wider student body of Yeditepe.

The Team noted that in addition to student representation on the Self-Evaluation Steering Committee, as in 2007 there is provision for student representation on Senate, and on Faculty Boards. Students are also represented on the Bologna Coordination Committee, and the recently established Advisory Councils for undergraduate and graduate programmes at the level of academic departments. The IEP Team learned that elections are held for positions of department and faculty representatives, who, together, elect the President of the Students' Council.

However, while noting these arrangements, and in reflecting on the 2007 IEP report and relevant recommendation, it appeared to the IEP Team that the current system is broadly similar to that described by the 2007 IEP Team and that the concerns expressed at that time remain. For example, while, as noted in section 4, enhanced arrangements have been put in place to make more opportunities available for students to participate in clubs and societies and to use this as a means of encouraging the 'student voice', these student-related developments fall short of what was intended in the 2007 IEP report. Thus, while, as the University indicates, student representatives are able to present issues on academic matters at Senate through the Students' Council President, and at Faculty and Department Boards through faculty and department representatives, this does not equate with full representation. The Team learned that students continue to have observer status only, and have not been granted full status with voting rights and the ability to contribute formally to decision making processes. Also, the students who met with the IEP Team appeared to be unaware of opportunities for involvement in or representation on the emerging Advisory Councils. In addition, the IEP Team noted with interest that, in contrast to the growing convention in Europe, the Students' Council as an association is not independent of the University.

In their deliberations, the IEP Team observed that the 2007 IEP report had indicated that 'the University might wish to look for additional ways of securing student involvement in University matters, beyond clubs and societies, and particularly in representational and quality processes'. It had also been acknowledged that there were legal considerations of which the University needed to take account. The IEP Team formed the view that while legal considerations should be taken into account, this is an area that affords an opportunity for the University to be innovative and forward looking, and to place itself at the forefront of Turkish universities. The Team noted that students are willing to contribute more to governance processes and that, with the support of a suitably designed education and training programme on how to participate in processes of governance,

representation, and committee deliberations, Yeditepe would be well placed to increase student involvement by granting full status and voting rights. Further, the IEP Team takes this opportunity to emphasise that such measures would bring the University into line with broader trends across Europe for student representation and involvement, and with the precepts and principles of the *European Standards and Guidelines* which advocate the full involvement of students in governance.

In summary, while welcoming the presence and representation of students in the University's governance and committee structures, the IEP Team recommends that steps are taken to improve the status, representation, and involvement of students in decision making by granting them full voting rights on committees of which they are members. This should be supported by the provision of training on the topic of 'student involvement in University governance'.

The IEP Team also considered the opportunities made available to students to provide feedback on their experience. The Team learned that since the 2007 IEP Evaluation, the University has extended such opportunities. Students are invited to complete survey questionnaires at three levels: course evaluation surveys for each course, using the University's ED (E-University) system; faculty evaluation, through optically-marked forms; and an annual, web-based satisfaction survey covering various aspects of the general student experience. In meetings with students and staff, and through considering documentation made available by the University, the IEP Team were able to consider the operation and the use made of each of these types of student evaluation and feedback, and the general effectiveness in terms of outcomes. The Team learned that the process for course evaluation is managed at faculty and department level, through Deans and Heads of Department. It appeared to the Team that, while managers and lecturers are provided with direct feedback on issues raised, from what the IEP Team heard from students, little, if any, specific, formal feedback is provided to students on the issues raised in the questionnaires. While the Team was informed by department heads that plans were in place to get together with students to discuss such feedback, and also to share concerns across the faculty, this does not yet seem to have taken place, either for student ranking of professors or for student evaluation of courses.

The Team was thus encouraged to learn from the University that this is an area that is taken seriously by the University. Moreover, the Team noted that the University-wide Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) has been used to introduce improvements in course registration processes, and this is very much welcomed. The Team also learned that the Bologna Commission Office, in overseeing the SSS, presents departments and faculties with results relevant to them and that the Office monitors subsequent developments. However, in the view of the IEP Team, and from the evidence available to the Team members, further concerted action is needed by the University's senior leadership to ensure that full account is taken of student feedback and that actions are taken to respond at the appropriate levels. From the data made available to them the IEP Team were able to identify a range of concerns and unsatisfactory areas raised by students in the SSS. In turn, students who met with the IEP Team expressed disappointment that they did not see results from surveys. In the view of the IEP Team, to address this situation, one possible

way forward for the University is to publish headline information for students, from the University's senior leadership, on the basis of 'You said, we did...'. This is also a practice that is available for adoption at faculty and department level. In setting this in the wider context, and having noted the pride which Yeditepe students have in their University, the IEP Team formed the view that Yeditepe will wish to ensure that this level of student commitment and enthusiasm and high expectation, which is evident as students join the University, is sustained throughout a student's period of study and beyond. This can be achieved by being responsive at all times to issues that students may raise and ensuring that the student voice is effectively heard.

In view of the foregoing assessment, the IEP Team advises the University to reflect on the use made of course evaluation and student satisfaction surveys with a view to putting in place mechanisms for ensuring that students are informed of actions taken to 'close the loop', at all levels, in response to their concerns and the feedback they provide.

11. Recommendations

Governance, management, and strategic planning

- In view of the significant changes that have taken place at the University in recent years, including governance and leadership at the level of the Board of Trustees and the Rectorate, the Team recommends that this might be an appropriate juncture for the University's Vision and Mission to be revisited.
- In their deliberations the Team formed the view that the Strategic Plan developed in connection with the Bologna Process could be taken further forward by securing greater involvement and understanding across the University community. The IEP Team therefore recommends that a representative Organisational Development Group is identified, to be chaired and led by the Rector, and that a process is put in place to ensure that the monitoring and implementation of the University's Strategic Plan secures involvement of all levels and constituencies of the University.
- The Team proposes that the University gives further consideration to the 2007 recommendation regarding the centralised financial model, with a view to introducing an element of decentralisation in finance, resourcing, and budgetary matters and to use this as an opportunity to achieve ownership, accountability, and involvement at faculty and department levels in resourcing and finance matters.

Corporate communication

- The Team commends the progress made in establishing an Alumni network (YUMED), and in improving arrangements for internal and external communication. However, from views expressed by external stakeholders, the Team recommends that there is further work to do in promoting the Yeditepe 'brand' in the wider society and to gain wider recognition of the University's profile.

Developments in learning and teaching

- The Team acknowledges the University's efforts in seeking to ensure an appropriate workload for students when adapting the curriculum to Bologna guidelines, but recommends that particular care is taken on this matter, particularly in dual degree programmes.
- Further, with reference to the 2007 recommendation regarding learning and teaching strategy and arrangements to facilitate the enhancement of academic practice, the IEP Team recommends that the University pays further attention to putting in place effective mechanisms and arrangements for the identification and sharing of best practice in student centred learning.

Research

- The IEP Team formed the view that in order to enable the development of a more integrated and cohesive approach across the University's research agenda, consideration should be given to the establishment of a post of Director of Research and Doctoral Studies.
- The Team recommends that the progress made in the allocation of resources towards research activities and publications should in the future be integrated into a budget for research and that this should be allocated and overseen by the Rectorate, through a twice-yearly or annual 'call for proposals'.
- The Team further advises that a review is carried out of the status and responsibilities of doctoral students in relation to research, teaching, and other commitments.

Third Mission

- The Team advises that the University incorporates within its focus on 'Third Mission' activities a strong and clear emphasis on Knowledge Transfer work, involving both applied and fundamental research, ensuring that appropriate emphasis is also placed on industry links, the economic value of such work, and the opportunities for income generation.

Human resources and staff development

- In view of concerns expressed to the Team, we wish to reinforce the matter raised in the 2007 report of 'a general concern regarding the need for additional technical and administrative support in the areas of teaching, learning, and research' and to recommend that action is taken to address these concerns.
- The Team recognised that the international culture and openness of Yeditepe is attractive to international students and staff. This led the Team to recommend that a programme for staff development is put in place to strengthen the foreign language speaking abilities of administrative staff who deal with international students and staff.

Quality assurance and quality improvement

- To reduce duplication and the burden on academics and departments, and to enable the streamlining of processes, the IEP Team recommends that a well-integrated central office is established with responsibility for collecting and managing all quality-related project and strategic information, for both external and internal purposes.

- In noting that various types of data are collected for meeting external and internal requirements, the Team recommends that consideration is given to extending the use made internally of available data, and taking full advantage of this for quality management and planning purposes and for assisting strategic thinking.

Student issues

- While welcoming the presence and representation of students in the University's governance and committee structures, the IEP Team recommends that steps are taken to improve the status, representation, and involvement of students in decision making, by granting them full voting rights on committees of which they are members. This should be supported by the provision of training on the topic of 'student involvement in University governance'.
- The IEP Team advises the University to reflect on the use made of course evaluation and student satisfaction surveys with a view to ensuring that mechanisms are put in place for ensuring that students are informed of actions taken to 'close the loop', at all levels, in response to their concerns and the feedback they provide.

12. Envoi

It has been a pleasure for the IEP Team to discuss with staff, students, and external stakeholders the progress made in taking forward the agenda set out in the 2007 IEP report and recommendations. The University has in place new governance and senior management arrangements that enables it to face the future with determination and confidence. We hope the University finds our comments and suggestions helpful and supportive. Special thanks are extended to the Rector for inviting the IEP Team, and to the members of the Rectorate as well as Dr Aykut Arıkan and his team for ensuring the smooth running of all aspects of the evaluation process and follow-up visit.