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*Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and
Innovation in Romanian Universities Project*

UMF Victor Babes Timisoara

EVALUATION REPORT

April 2013

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Performance
in Higher Education





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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of UMF Victor Babes Timisoara. The evaluation took place in 2012-2013 in the framework of the project “Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities”, which aims at strengthening core elements of Romanian universities, such as their autonomy and administrative competences, by improving their quality assurance and management proficiency.

The evaluations are taking place within the context of major reforms in the Romanian higher education system, and specifically in accordance with the provisions of the 2011 Law on Education and the various related normative acts.

While the institutional evaluations are taking place in the context of an overall reform, each university is assessed by an independent IEP team, using the IEP methodology described below.

1.1 The Institutional Evaluation Programme

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).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms



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The evaluation is 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. UMF Victor Babes Timisoara profile

The “Victor Babes” University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Timisoara (UMFVBT) was established in 1945. UMFVBT is a public institution of higher education, located in Western Romania at the border with Hungary and Serbia. The current structure of UMFVBT has three faculties, Medicine, Dental Medicine and Pharmacy. The University has 5694 students and 724 academic staff at the end of the academic year 2011-2012.

The university mission, according to the Self Evaluation Report (SER):

“Based on the academic team competence, on the quality of research and on the values of the medical profession, is:

- to train skilled and accountable students, from around the world, using the best methods for medical training, based on the Hippocratic Oath;
- to motivate students to continuously improve their knowledge and skills throughout life;
- to adapt the professional profile in education and research to the labour market demand;
- to continuously contribute to improve the quality of health and life in Romania and worldwide.”

The mission is supported by a series of value statements, which include quality, correctness, transparency, collaboration, creativity and excellence. The SER does not mention the vision of the university as such but does indicate intentions to transform the university and outlines a strategy to achieve this. Three priorities are identified in the SER, these are:

1. Development of research
2. Curricular reform
3. Internationalisation



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1.3 The evaluation process

The self-evaluation report of the UMF Victor Babes Timisoara together with the appendices was sent to the evaluation team in October 2012. The visits of the evaluation team to UMF Victor Babes Timisoara took place from 27 to 29 November 2012 and from 5 to 8 February 2013, respectively. In between the visits, UMF Victor Babes Timisoara provided the evaluation team with some additional documentation.

The team also referred to the report of a previous IEP evaluation that the university undertook in 2002.

Meetings were arranged with: the leadership of UMF Victor Babes Timisoara (rector, vice-rectors, deans, administrative director etc.), members of the academic and non-academic staff, students, the president and members of the Senate, and external partners (companies, local authorities, health services).

The evaluation team (hereinafter named the team) consisted of:

- Ferdinand Devinsky, Former Rector, Comenius University of Bratislava, Slovakia, Team chair (First Visit)
- Maria Helena Nazaré, Former Rector, University of Aveiro, Portugal, Team chair (Second Visit)
- Anastasios Manthos, Medical School Professor, former Rector, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
- Hannele Niemi, Professor of Education, former Vice-Rector, University of Helsinki, Finland
- Jan Vogt, Student, Freiburg University, Germany
- Andy Gibbs, Centre for Wellbeing and Health, Edinburgh Napier University, UK, Team coordinator

Professor Devinsky, the Chair during the first visit was unable to participate in the second visit due to illness. Professor Nazaré took the Chair for the second visit and the production of the final report.

The team thanks the Rector Professor Marius Raica for inviting the team to the university and Vice-Rector Professor Simona Dragan for organising the visits so effectively.



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2. Governance and institutional decision-making

A new Rectorate group is in place, following elections in 2012. This group has outlined an ambitious activity plan that will be implemented in the coming years. Considerable positive activity and initiatives have commenced in the past year and groups of committed staff have been identified. Plans to address many of the issues identified in this report are identified in the SER and the team notes these plans. The SER shows good insight into many issues which are mentioned in this report and proposes solutions to address these. Many of these solutions and processes to support them are described in this report have been initiated within the past twelve months.

The team notes, however, none are yet fully embedded in the university structures and strategy. The team believes that it is the key task of university leadership to develop a compelling vision, ensure that all staff are aware of the new structures and strategy and are clear about the role they must play in realising this. The strategy and priorities need to be discussed, agreed and shared within university communities and integrated with heads of units/services that are responsible for implementation. The new leadership face a considerable challenge in building shared vision values and priorities. During meetings with the team, management and staff at all levels expressed conflicting priorities and goals and many had difficulties in identifying any. The team could not discern any clearly articulated or shared view of how the university should develop and what its key priorities are or should be. Overall there is currently a lack of common goals, interfaculty cooperation and an absence of systems to support these. There is no formal policy on cooperation, and much activity is based on personal relations and goodwill, rather than embedded in the structures of the university.

In interviews with all groups of staff, at all levels of the organisation, external forces and influences were typically identified as both the source and solution of problems (law, outside partners, national culture and EU legislation). This, in the opinion of the team, contributes to a sense of powerlessness, an inability to exercise autonomy, critically self-reflect and take action at individual and collective levels. The team also noted that frequently staff and management appeared to action only those issues that were required by law. The team believes that there is much more scope for the management and staff to work beyond the minimal requirements of the law by adopting an approach that anything not forbidden by the law is allowed.

The team noted that the three priority issues identified in the SER were also priorities in the Strategic Plan 2003-2007 and were considered by the previous IEP team in 2002. The university has therefore been strategically focused on these three priority areas for over ten years. Many of the recommendations made in the 2002 IEP report are repeated in this report



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and many of the circumstances described in that report appear to have remained the same. It was the overwhelming impression of the team that the university is emerging from a period of institutional inertia.

Pivotal to implementing change is the relationship between the Rector and the Senate. This relationship appears positive and both the Rector and Senate representatives express that there is good cooperation. The team is concerned that the Senate is too big for effective decision-making and that the structure of the Senate, based on proportional representation, as directed by legal instruments is unbalanced. The Faculty of Medicine has the potential to exert considerable power as they have an inbuilt majority, and this is felt by students and staff in other faculties. The representative composition of Senate provides no safeguards for minority groups and this may lead to their disengagement.

Additionally the team detected some evidence of module content being discussed in Senate meetings and noted the potential for micromanagement. The team recommend a review of the size and representation of the Senate to streamline decision-making and manage the inbuilt majority in a way that protects the minority groupings. Some disciplines, such as nursing, have no visibility within the university and are not mentioned in the SER nor represented in any meetings held with the team. All disciplines should be appropriately and transparently represented in university structures and the university should review the possibilities to address this.

Transparency and fairness are difficult to achieve in the absence of a centralised data management system, coupled with this is the difficulty in monitoring progress and adapting priorities. A recommendation from the 2002 IEP review was that "Management data systems are paper-based and the review team believes that the university needs organised information management in the future: an Intranet is necessary so that the university community can see decisions, monitor accounting and budget follow-up, check on good practices in administration, have access to statistical data etc." The (2013) team also takes this view and noted that the distribution of income to faculties is not transparent, does not follow priorities and is not based on effort and input. Resource allocation should follow priorities. At faculty level there is no awareness of cost and income and there needs to be proper guidelines for funding which ensure transparency and fairness.

Senate representatives commented that student representatives do not participate actively in Senate discussion and debate. Groups of students, in particular non Romanian students commented that they do not feel represented by the elected student body. The team recommends that student representation is reviewed to ensure fairness and representativeness and that student involvement and selection of (including international) students should be supported to ensure effective participation.



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The team observed that there is a low level of cooperation and interuniversity cooperation at institutional, national and international level. This arrangement is typically known as “silo working” and if collaboration and interdisciplinary is to be achieved, there is a need for horizontal cooperation. The “third mission” of the university is not considered important. Clearly defining and identifying advantages and points of cooperation with competitors and colleagues, both public and private, would highlight more clearly strengths and opportunities. The distinctiveness, niche or unique selling points that characterise the university, ground its contribution to society and give it a competitive advantage, should be identified and publicised.

The team were advised that after a period in which both academic and administrative vacancies could not be filled, authorisation had been given to fill over seventy vacant posts. This provides an opportunity to address many of the recommendations highlighted in this report and provide impetus to many proposals outlined by the Rectorate group. The team recommend that vacancies should be filled according to these strategic priorities and not merely replacing posts which became vacant during the period when appointments were not possible.



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3. Teaching and learning

Curriculum reform has been on the agenda of the university since at least 2000 and was recommended by the IEP in 2002. Curriculum reform has now begun, with further staff development events run by an external partner planned for 2013. It is envisaged that by 2015 a modular system will be in place. The team consider that the pace of change is too slow, because there will be two further intakes of students into a curriculum that is described by 27% of teachers as mediocre and by 90% as in need of reform (according to the SER). Furthermore, the team's understanding is that these reforms refer only to medical education and believes that an overarching student-centred philosophy/strategy and approach to teaching and learning must be developed, engaging the involvement of teachers and students and external stakeholders in a collective effort. This should be a university wide process, with details of how to activate and implement this. Additionally, curriculum development and reform should reflect the needs of society and stakeholders, be applied across the whole university and embrace contemporary methods in education. Consideration should be given to cross faculty teaching engaging all disciplines as a way to use resources efficiently and promoting interdisciplinary working.

The team heard from representatives of the Senate and other groups that students were not at the centre of the education process. Throughout the team's discussions with various groups, no evidence could be found of student-centred learning. On the contrary, all of the systems were teacher-centred and based on the needs of the university, primarily arising from the funding of teachers based on contact hours.

Students are generally positive and report good relationships with teachers. Staff complain that "we have too many students". Over time, an increase in student numbers has developed to boost income to the university. Interviews with students suggested that this was unrelated to the needs of the labour market and many students expressed concern that they would be unable to find employment. This amplifies issues such as lack of resources, space and clinical facilities in which students can learn in clinical areas and hospitals. In some faculties, students do not have facilitated access to patients, have to buy their own materials, cannot find teachers after the teaching is over and the teachers have little availability. Conversely, in another faculty, students reported good availability and helpfulness of lecturers, but observed that they seemed disorganised. It was clear that all students would appreciate a systematic approach towards teacher availability to support them outside class time.

Students reported a didactic style of teaching and an examination system which encouraged learning by rote and tested recall rather than understanding. Whilst this approach was described favourably by a large number of students, the team were concerned that this approach would not develop the deeper skills and learning associated with knowledge



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management and the knowledge society that students in the majority of European universities achieve and in the longer term would handicap UVB graduates in the labour market. Teaching, learning and assessment methods should focus on deep learning and understanding.

Courses flow in parallel with the same subjects in different faculties when there are clearly good reasons to introduce multidisciplinary learning. Teaching methods should be more student-centred, connect research, and develop student enquiry skills. There are also issues about practical skills, students say there could be more practical teaching in medicine and they would prefer earlier clinical access to patients. Students welcomed plans to build a skills lab.

Related to this, the team observed the increasing use of Moodle and the developing application of digital interactive technologies. To prevent the haphazard development of these technologies the university should create a plan and identify resources for effective use of these. This would ensure that technology is developed as a complement rather than a supplement to study as some students already have an excessive workload.

ECTS is not based on learning outcomes/workload. The review team learned in different discussions across the university both from staff and students that the number of teaching hours and corresponding student workload tends to be extremely high, while also differing greatly from subject to subject. ECTS must be reviewed to ensure student workload is transparent, equitable and in line with the guidelines in the ECTS Users Guide.

The team noted that the university had introduced an evaluation of the quality of the teaching staff, which it had undertaken once and intended to become a regular event. Whilst the team welcomed the notion of regular evaluation, it does have some concerns regarding this process. Apart from the immense effort connected with this paper-based exercise, the team believes that the evaluation should focus on evaluating the teaching itself rather than the teaching staff; secondly it would be better to focus on student learning, in line with modern European practice. In any case, the team suggests that this evaluation needs to be regular and the outcome of the evaluation should be improved learning and not punishment of teachers. We heard from the University that rewards for good practice were awarded in December 2012 and that this is intended to become an ongoing practice. The team agree that good teaching practice should be supported by rewards and that staff development and other actions to improve learning should be in place.



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4. Research

According to the SER, the development of research is one of the top three priorities for the university. The SER also includes a SWOT analysis for research within UVB and provides a plan of how this area will be developed.

The SER identifies that short-term planning of research is based on the priority topics at national and European level, before going on to list six topic areas, which are identified in the 2009-2012 strategic plan. The SER also identifies nine potential centres of excellence in research that have passed stage one of national accreditation as well as indicating that the department for research and grant management has the mission to “to develop high-performance human resources in priority health areas in Europe.” The team explored the issue of research priorities in meetings with the rector, deans of faculty and research leaders and received inconsistent responses, none of which reflected the priority areas mentioned in the SER. The team concluded that there was a lack of clarity regarding a research focus. The university needs to identify key foci of research activity, develop research groups, provide staff development and identify potential.

The team also noted that there is a lack of leadership or leadership position and this has resulted in a strategic approach which, whilst needing to build critical mass, focus and research pillars lacks clarity and tangible prioritisation of activity. Currently each faculty develops its own research strategy. The team believe that the development of this priority area needs leadership within the Rectorate group. This would support, lead and consolidate the work, which has commenced within the past year and has gathered together staff within the university who have successful track records in obtaining external grants. This identification of personnel who have been active in research funding opportunities has already started to take some straightforward actions, which will facilitate cross university sharing and activity. Amongst these actions is the creation of an inventory of research equipment which will not only enhance more effective use of resources but also make cross faculty working more likely, as currently the potential for cross/inter disciplinary work is not exploited by either faculties or research centres, both of which have the potential to share resources and activity. In many ways the formation of this group represents a “new beginning” in research and building on existing foundations is being attempted.

The team considered that the strategy should consider all types of research and pay some attention to research in basic sciences. This will cascade into clinical and other research such as technology transfer and which it is crucial to develop and sustain in priority areas in the future.



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The team observed that many of the recommendations regarding research made in the 2002 IEP report have not been addressed. It is suggested that the university revisit these recommendations.

The research strategy is based on publication. The team were told that many staff are afraid of rejection. A number of staff told the team that they believed editors deliberately chose not to publish articles by Romanian authors. The team recommend that there should be support for writing and publishing articles that specifically addresses these fears. Overall the goal of research has to look beyond publication towards other outputs such as impact applicability and influence on local health care and society.

Students want to have more research at undergraduate and Master's levels. They have limited materials for practical teaching and few chemicals so they can only carry out experiments at their own expense. Consequently, this impacts on the research culture and capability of the university. The doctoral school within the Faculty of Medicine has a scholarship scheme for young researchers and the processes for supporting these appear to be developing in a positive manner. The team noted increased funding for research in the Faculty of Pharmacy but staff identified that it would be beneficial to establish a doctoral school. The team agreed that this is essential both for the development and sustainability of research in this area.

The team recommend the establishment of an institutional research office supported by wide IT data management system to support research activities, promote opportunities, lobby at national and EU level to increase influence, and provide support in proposal writing. For example, opportunities are discovered by individual endeavour rather than centrally coordinated. Additionally the research office could help establish closer relationships with local universities and national institutions seeking synergies in resources and opportunities.



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5. Service to society

The team met a small group of external stakeholders, most of whom were university employees who also held roles in civil society. It is indicated in the SER that “There is no experience or initiative for development of entrepreneurial activities within university framework.”

The university mission includes the objective “To adapt the professional profile in education and research to the labour market demand.” The 2007-2013 National Strategy for Research, Development and Innovation prepared by the National Authority for Scientific Research and undertaken by the government has amongst its objectives “the transfer of results to economy and society.” The SER asserts that “negative perception of research by society” is a threat to research development. The SER also points out that “Foreseeing the future society health needs and demands is an important part of Quality Assurance, because it is the means by which proactive responses can be successfully made.”

The team concluded that the so-called “third mission” of a university has been neglected or ignored and that this will seriously impede the development of the university according to its own mission statement. Without links to society, activities which are now considered routine in modern European universities will be unavailable to UVB. These include: effective development of health human resources, intellectual property, spin-offs, contracts with industry, contracts with public bodies, participation in policy making, involvement in social and cultural life and promoting public understanding of science.

The team recommends as a priority the organisation of a systematic connection between the university and stakeholders to identify links and opportunities. This should be at Rector level and include key personnel in civil society in the city and the region. For example, responding to health care needs may provide opportunities — maximise advantages, encourage brain circulation. External contracts could become income-generating/could be paid in resources rather than money (e.g. toxicology/food quality).

Also of concern is that those external stakeholders with whom the team met agreed that the standards of graduates were slipping. Whilst there is no objective evidence to demonstrate this, UVB should have mechanisms for knowing the satisfaction of employers of their graduates. The team recommends that there should be systematic involvement of external stakeholders in curriculum development which should include health care providers, health service users and carers.



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6. Quality culture

There has been a recent reorganisation of internal quality assurance arrangements and quality assurance has a growing impact on the university. Prior to 2012, the strategy, policy and procedures for assurance of quality and standards did not have a formal status. The reorganised team prepared the SER and is beginning to consider arrangements for internal quality assurance across the university. There is little inherited expertise within the university in this field from earlier times and the team currently involved are not experts but enthusiasts and volunteers and so some staff development in this area would increase their knowledge of methods of implementing quality processes. The introduction of a quality assurance department is a positive step that must be supported, and education, expertise and outside specialist support are requested. The team recommend a programme of staff development in the form of external education, expertise and specialist support in order to address the knowledge gap. The university could use European funds/Erasmus exchange to support the above.

The university is a partner in the "Quality standards and specific performance indicators for health education", coordinated by the UMF Cluj Napoca. The main objective of the project is the development of new quality standards and performance indicators for higher education in the field of health. The team support this link with external organisations in developing quality standards and performance indicators. The team also welcomes the recognition that links to employers and society need to be enhanced as does alumni.

There is a need to develop a systematic approach and way of gathering data regularly and there is no IT infrastructure or integrated database for quality management. Information is gathered by hand in a repetitive paper-based bureaucracy. The team recommend that an IT infrastructure and integrated management database for quality management is essential.

The quality department staff reported that they have no direct means to implement ideas and solutions nor systematic connection to university decision-making bodies. Quality assurance processes should be incorporated into the remit of all university decision-making bodies and ensure participation of quality assurance staff in these. The team recommend that the quality department devise a quality assurance cycle and timetable to promote a systematic transparent approach towards gathering data regularly and initiating action. The quality department must ensure that the outcomes of quality assurance interventions are communicated to staff so that the findings of quality assurance activity are communicated, the feedback loop is closed and usefulness is demonstrated.

The above activities will contribute to building sound quality assurance approaches that are transparent and designed to build trust and confidence in university processes and



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procedures. The team noted that QA arrangements to date had included student involvement. Beyond this there is a need to educate staff not currently directly involved in quality assurance of the importance of involvement in developing quality assurance and building a quality culture within the organisation. However quality assurance processes are only one component of a quality culture. Currently none of the characteristics of a quality culture are present in the university such as a common purpose, critical self-reflection, equity and fairness. Greater horizontal co-operation will enhance the potential for cross disciplinary working, sharing of ideas and effectiveness of the findings of quality assurance. There is a need to educate others of the importance of involvement in quality and communicate the expectation that it is everybody's role to ensure and enhance quality.



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7. Internationalisation

Internationalisation is one of the top three priorities highlighted in the SER and has been a university priority since 2003. It was not highlighted as a priority in any meeting that the team had, apart from with the UVB International team. At that meeting the team was presented with a paper that outlined a clear internationalisation strategy, however, its recent production means that it is not embedded in university structures and relationships. Internationalisation should be a key component of all other university strategies. The team underlines the importance of placing the international dimension at the core of the university's activities. The internationalisation process should be transversal and omnipresent, and address all aspects of the university's activities.

The strategy does not have clear measures and milestones and would benefit from the inclusion of these. The team recommend the elaboration of the internationalisation strategy to include key measures, milestones and performance indicators.

The team noticed that the numbers of non-Romanian students enrolling onto programmes delivered in French or English has been increasing every year. Whilst on the one hand this may be seen as internationalising the university, the team concluded that just the opposite was happening — that there are curricula delivered according to language delivery with no crossover or sharing of experiences. The reasons for this appear to be related to income generation rather than pedagogical excellence. The team concluded that the segmentation of programmes into languages misses an opportunity to internationalise the student body and that UVB should balance income generation against the integration of international students with Romanian students. This is of particular importance given the numbers of Romanian graduates who seek employment in other countries.

Additionally students reported social and academic separation between the differing language groups. The SER outlines some initiatives in this area however more effort needs to be directed towards creating opportunities for greater social cohesion of the student body. In particular, French and English students report that there are limited library resources and that more language support would be welcomed. The team recommend language and other social support should be extended for incoming students. UVB should ensure adequate library resources for international students. Finally, international students do not have any formal representation in the Senate and other university structures. UVB should make sure that international students have a voice in university life and decision-making.

In more general terms the team heard from students and staff that the curricula were not internationalised either in their structure or content. As well as not fully preparing students



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for the global labour market, the lack of internationalised curricula manifests itself in the failure for students to have their studies recognised when returning from exchange study abroad. The team concluded that UVB need to consider the issue of recognition and curriculum compatibility which appears to be out of line with current EU practice regarding substantial differences. UVB should ensure that internationalisation is addressed as part of curricula reform and in the meantime steps must be taken to stop the blocking of recognition of studies abroad by becoming familiar with the notion of substantial differences outlined in the Lisbon Recognition Convention and the European Recognition Manual. The current arrangements are unfair to students and a disincentive to study abroad.

Development of preferred partners would also increase the potential take-up of Erasmus programmes, which currently have a range of diverse unfocused partnerships. The university should engage in partner identification, selecting those most likely to support university activity, thereby focusing on the quality of partnerships rather than the quantity. Equity across different disciplines to Erasmus funding is not obvious and in the interests of equity and fairness the university should ensure equal access for all disciplines to Erasmus and other mobility schemes.

Many students leave the Romanian medical education system to work outside of Romania, and this provides an opportunity to establish alumni which could contribute significantly to the internationalisation of the university, either by acting as ambassadors abroad, or returning for short periods and sharing their international experience with staff and students. The team suggests using alumni and the network of Romanian medical staff abroad as ambassadors both at home and abroad to assist in the internationalisation of the university.



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8. Conclusion

The evaluation team note that many recommendations from the earlier IEP evaluation were not implemented and are repeated here.

The team is encouraged by the programme of activity which has commenced in the last year and makes its recommendations in the spirit of support and the expectation of these positive initiatives developing further. It notes that many positive strategic developments exist only on paper at the moment and recognise that the university management will need to provide strong leadership as it develops a sense of unity, cohesion and common purpose amongst staff, students and other stakeholders.

Summary of recommendations

Governance and institutional decision-making recommendations

- All staff should be aware of the university vision and clear about the role they must play in realising this.
- Strategy and priorities need to be discussed, agreed and shared within university communities.
- Strategy needs to be integrated with heads of units/services responsible for implementation.
- Resource allocation should follow priorities.
- Review size and representation of the Senate to streamline decision-making and avoid inbuilt majorities.
- Student involvement and selection of (including international) students should be supported to ensure effective participation.
- All disciplines (nursing, for example) should be appropriately represented in university structures.
- Review institutional approach to look beyond minimal compliance with the law adopting the principle that everything which is not forbidden is allowed.
- Distinctiveness, niche or unique selling points that characterise the university, ground its contribution to society and give it a competitive advantage should be identified.
- Vacancies should be filled according to strategic priorities and not historic posts.



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Teaching and learning

- Curriculum development/reform should reflect the needs of society and stakeholders, be applied across the whole university and embrace contemporary methods in education.
- A student-centred philosophy/strategy and approach to teaching and learning must be developed, engaging the involvement of teachers and students.
- Assessment methods should focus on deep learning and understanding.
- Early clinical contact with patients.
- Create a plan and identify resources for effective use of digital technologies.
- Staff development must support these recommendations.
- Maximise opportunities for interdisciplinary teaching and learning.
- The pace of curriculum reform must be quicker and not just in one discipline.
- ECTS must be reviewed to ensure student workload is transparent, equitable and in line with the guidelines in the ECTS User Guide.
- Consideration should be given to cross faculty teaching engaging all disciplines as a way to use resources efficiently and promoting interdisciplinary working.
- Evaluation of teaching needs to be regular and supported by rewards, staff development and actions to improve poorer performers.

Research

- Leadership of the university should embrace and support strategically the focus of priorities for research.
- Identify key foci of research activity, develop research groups, provide staff development and identify potential.
- Office to support research activities, promoting opportunities, lobbying and support in proposal writing.
- The goal of research has to look beyond publication towards other outputs such as impact applicability and influence on local health care and society.
- An institutional research office supported by wide IT data management system is needed.
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- Establish closer relationships with local universities seeking synergies in resources and opportunities.
- Pay some attention to research in basic sciences. This will cascade into clinical and other research.

Service to society

- Involve external stakeholders in curriculum development.
- Organise systematic connection between the university and stakeholders to identify links and opportunities.
- Responding to health care needs may provide opportunities – maximise advantages, encourage brain circulation.

Quality culture

- The introduction of a quality assurance department is a positive step that must be supported.
- An IT infrastructure and integrated management database for quality management is essential.
- Greater horizontal cooperation will enhance cross-disciplinary working, sharing of ideas and effectiveness of the findings of quality assurance.
- A programme of staff development in the form of external education, expertise and specialist support will address the knowledge gap.
- Use European funds/Erasmus exchange to support the above.
- Incorporate quality assurance into the remit of all university decision-making bodies and ensure participation of QA staff in these.
- Devise a quality assurance cycle and timetable to promote a systematic approach towards gathering data regularly and initiating action.
- Ensure that the outcomes of QA interventions are communicated to staff so that the feedback loop is closed and usefulness is demonstrated.
- Need to educate staff not directly involved in QA of the importance of involvement in quality and communicate the expectation that it is everybody's role to ensure and enhance quality.

Internationalisation

- Elaborate the internationalisation strategy to include key measures, milestones and performance indicators.



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- Internationalisation should be a key component of all other university strategies.
- Balance income generation against the integration of international students with Romanian students.
- Create opportunities for greater social cohesion of all students.
- Ensure that internationalisation is addressed as part of curricula reform.
- Stop the blocking of recognition of studies abroad by becoming familiar with the notion of substantial differences outlined in the Lisbon recognition Convention and the European Recognition Manual.
- Extend language and other social support for incoming students. Make sure that international students have a voice in university life and decision-making.
- Ensure adequate library resources for international students.
- Utilise alumni and the network of Romanian medical staff abroad as ambassadors both at home and abroad.
- Engage in partner identification selecting those most likely to support university activity. Focus on the quality of partnerships rather than the quantity.
- Ensure equal access for all disciplines to Erasmus and other mobility schemes.