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## Institutional Evaluation Programme

*Ready for innovating, ready for better serving the local needs - Quality and  
Diversity of the Romanian Universities*

### NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS BUCHAREST

#### *EVALUATION REPORT*

*January 2014*

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Quality and Diversity  
of the Romanian Universities





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## 1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the *National University of Physical Education and Sports in Bucharest (UNEFIS)*. The evaluation took place in 2013 in the framework of the project “Ready for innovating, ready for better serving the local needs - Quality and Diversity of the 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. National University of Physical Education and Sports’ profile

The National University of Physical Education and Sports (UNEFS) is a public higher education institution, recognised by the Ministry of National Education (MNE) in Romania. According to the Academic Charter, UNEFS defines itself as advanced research and education institution, with a specific profile which combines information about education, sport, health, culture and society.

Under the provisions of the 2011 national education law, higher education institutions (HEIs) in Romania have been classified into three groups: advanced research universities; teaching and research universities; and teaching universities. In 2011, UNEFS was classified in the category of the teaching universities and received a “high confidence” rating for taught programmes from ARACIS.

UNEFS is the only institution in Romania offering taught programmes in physical education and sport at Bachelor and Master’s degree level and Doctoral research in those areas. It has a 90-year old tradition and it was for many years the only one that offered a four-year study programme in the field of physical education and sports. Since its opening in 1923, the university has had 88 generations of graduates, 18 generations of Master’s students and 401 doctors of science. UNEFS adopted the Bologna reforms in 2005 and is offering Bachelor’s, Master’s and doctoral programmes, aligned with the European Qualifications Framework, for its full-time and part-time students.

UNEFS offers highly specialised programmes in physical education and sport as well as kinetotherapy<sup>1</sup>. It currently has two faculties: the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports and the Faculty of Kinetotherapy with a total of 1 451 students and 78 members of teaching staff and an annual budget of 11 million RON. The two faculties offer five undergraduate and eight Master’s degree programmes in four departments: Department of Physical and Sports Education, Department of Sports and Motor Performance, Department of Special Motor and

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<sup>1</sup> The word “kinetotherapy” is used in the UNEFS report. It corresponds to “physiotherapy” in the UK, “physical therapy” in the US and “kinésithérapie” in French-speaking countries.



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Medical Rehabilitation, and the Department of Psycho-Pedagogic Disciplines and Specialty Didactics.

As separate units, UNEFS established the “Alexandru Partheniu” Interdisciplinary Research Center (CCI) in 1968 called: “Team for scientific research in the field of physical education and sport” and also set up the doctoral school in 2012.

UNEFS is located in Bucharest with its headquarters in the city centre, but it also has other off-campus training facilities dispersed in different locations like the Faculty of Kinetotherapy, the football stadium called Rocar UNEFS Stadium training centre, the centre for winter sports called Professor Virgil Teodorescu training centre in the Parang mountains, the centre for swimming, water sports at the Black Sea Coast, at Eforie Nord Training Centre and Techirghiol.

UNEFS maintains very close relationships with sport federations and other partners in the area of sport, physical education and kinetotherapy. There are several famous athletes alumni of the university.

### 1.3. The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by the self-evaluation group that was approved by the Senate and involved different activities in the period between November 2012 and September 2013. The self-evaluation group was chaired by Vice-Rector Professor V. Grigore, PhD and the secretarial work was the responsibility of Professor Aura Bota, PhD. Members were selected among administrative staff and students of each faculty. The group communicated regularly with the deans, department directors, heads of disciplines, and chief clerks. To a certain extent the self-evaluation followed the IEP guidelines and included information about the institutional context, norms and values, governance and activities, quality assessment practices, strategic management and capacity for change with conclusions. Additionally, the SWOT analysis and the strategic plan for the period 2012-2016 along with an operational plan were prepared. The self-evaluation report was accompanied by 11 annexes, which were all translated into English and uploaded on the electronic platform. The SER was also approved by the rector and the Senate and presented to the administrative board, but students did not discuss it. The self-evaluation group does not intend to continue with its work after the IEP project is completed. The SER is more of a descriptive report than a critical evaluation.

The self-evaluation report of the UNEFS, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team in April 2013. The two visits of the evaluation team to UNEFS took place in



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May and September 2013, respectively. In between the visits UNEFS provided the evaluation team with some additional documentation and figures.

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

- Jean-Louis Vanherweghem, Emeritus Professor, Honorary Rector, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium, team chair
- Frank McMahon, Emeritus Director of Academic Affairs, Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland
- Blazhe Todorovski, student, University "Ss. Cyril and Methodius" Skopje, Macedonia
- Hermina Pika Radmilovič, Head of QA, University of Maribor, Slovenia, team coordinator.

The team would like to express its sincere thanks to UNEFS Rector, Prof. Viorel Cojocaru, PhD for the hospitality provided during the two visits. The team would like to thank Vice-Rector Prof. Vasilica Grigore, PhD and Prof. Pelin Florin, PhD, President of the Senate, for their active engagement in the evaluation process. Both Deans, Moanță Alina and Cordun Mariana, are thanked for their support and willingness to discuss and clarify issues regarding faculty organisation and development. The team is grateful to the Administrative Director Dimitru Porumb for providing excellent conditions to work in.

Special thanks are extended to the staff members for their kind support to the team in logistics and administrative matters. Thanks are also extended to the students, to the UNEFS staff members and the external partners whom the team met and for their willingness to discuss selected matters in an open and constructive way.



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## 2. Governance and institutional decision-making

### Norms and values

UNEFS norms and values are presented mostly in its university Charter and strategic plan for 2012-2016. The mission was adopted by the Senate in September 2012.

According to the present mission (which is incorporated in its Charter), UNEFS is aiming to train and improve specialists at European Qualifications Framework standards in physical education, sport, kinetotherapy and other related professions. Another aim is to support the development and affirmation of Romanian sports performance through scientific assistance, counselling and participation in the educational policy for higher education profile and their promotion of the Olympic spirit and fair play. The mission of UNEFS is clearly stated and widely shared by academics as well as by students but it is not evidently incorporated in other strategic documents. The team felt that the UNEFS identity and future development were not entirely clear for the university community involved in the discussions and encourages UNEFS to develop a clear vision statement.

The study programmes of UNEFS prove to be of high quality since it provides a successful professional education, which results in a good record of graduate employability and very successful alumni including famous athletes. UNEFS strives to become an advanced scientific research and education university in order to increase the level of the scientific content of the students' training through the quality of teaching and all activities related to the above directions.

It is evident that UNEFS also promotes the principles of the Code of Professional Ethics as set out in its Charter; this encourages the development of an institutional culture based on values, principles and moral norms that the whole academic community has the obligation to uphold in teaching and scientific research activities.

### **Recommendations:**

- The mission of UNEFS is clearly stated and widely shared by academics as well as by students. The team recommends that the mission is integrated in the strategic development plan and driving clearly defined future goals.
- The team recommends that UNEFS should initiate a discussion within the academic community on the institution's identity and further develop this in the vision statement. To facilitate the process of developing an inspirational vision statement, the university leaders need to understand where they see the institution five years from now, to know what they have to achieve within that period and what the goals of the institution are.



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## **Strategic planning**

The team explored the university planning and organisational agenda, which were set out in the SER and in the strategic plan for 2012–2016. During the discussion with different staff members and through the description in the documentation, it appeared that the process of developing the strategic documents was mostly based on the rector's programme used during the rectoral elections.

According to the provisions of the National Education Law no. 1/2011, the internal managerial structures have changed and also some changes were made in the strategic plan 2012-2016 to be in line with the National Development Strategy of Romania's mid- and long-term 2020 agenda. Additionally, annual action plans were prepared and approved by the Senate. Further, UNEFS stresses as priorities in its future plans to develop the volume and quality of research, to adapt the curricula to the demands of the market, to promote excellence in teaching and research, to form the profile of professionals and researchers specific to physical education, kinetherapy and contemporary sports, and more active involvement in international cooperation. UNEFS is a small university but when the team raised the possibility of it merging with another university it was very clearly expressed during the discussions that the university wishes to remain independent and desires to promote the UNEFS brand.

In the strategic plan there is also a list of activities that have been carried out according to the objectives for the period 2008-2012 in all areas of university functioning. The report states that UNEFS benefited a lot from these very changes and felt more integrated and in harmonisation with the higher education system in Europe. However, the role, contribution and cooperation of the students' involvement in this process are not mentioned.

UNEFS's strategic plan is large and ambitious; however the resources are limited, and therefore the plan requires collaboration with other institutions, nationally and internationally.

### **Recommendation:**

1. The team considers that the usefulness of the strategic documents would be maximised if they included milestones, clear goals and priorities for the institution as a whole, in addition to describing objectives.
2. The team recommends that UNEFS actively involves its students in the process of developing strategic documents together with teachers, administrative staff representatives and external partners.





3. The team recommends that the UNEFS' commitment and leadership, but most importantly, the development of its strategic documents should be in line with the mission and vision of the institution and the available and anticipated resources.

### **Institutional autonomy**

In the present Charter the academic autonomy at UNEFS is understood as a concrete modality of self-governance within the legal framework conferred by the Romanian Constitution, the national education legislation and by the internal regulations concerning the exertion and assumption of responsibilities and competences, according to the development of education specific to the domain and to the main individual and public responsibilities for the developed teaching and scientific research activities, without any ideological, political or religious interference. Although academic autonomy is described as decisional autonomy at the organisational, functional, teaching, scientific, financial and administrative levels, the team noted that the academics feel that the strong dependence on the MERYS makes it difficult for UNEFS to achieve the level of institutional autonomy known by other similar EU institutions. This is particularly the case in the area of finance, which must submit to a set of controls that are analysed on pp. 10-11.

### **Governance and decision-making**

The governance structures are the university Senate, the Administrative Board, the Faculty Councils and the Departmental Councils. The Senate is the highest collective decisional and deliberative authority and it is chaired by an elected president. It has 15 members consisting of 11 academic staff members who also chair the Senate commissions and four students. The executive body is the university administrative board made up of the rector, the vice-rectors, the deans, the administrative director and one student representative; this body assures, under the rector's leadership, the university governance and implements the university Senate's decisions. The university administrative structure is governed by the administrative director and is organised according to the internal guidelines and services.

According to the academic staff whom the team met during both visits, communication between the president of the Senate and the rector is positive, frequent and open. The rector has invited the president of the Senate to be present at all the meetings of the board, and the Senate permanently invites the rector and the vice-rector and the deans to their meetings. This proves that the duality in terms of government is managed well, overcoming the risk of conflict. Regarding the 2011 Law, the rector has a contract with the Senate and every year on the basis of the strategic plan, the operational plan with clear objectives is adopted.



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The Senate has 11 committees including with specific remits: monitoring the rector's activities and the administrative board, ethics and deontology (professional ethics), strategy and development of the institution, quality of education, rules and regulations and university charter, university and post-university study programmes, scientific research, social matters of students, cultural and sports activities, admission, and hygiene and health. Although there are already several committees, the team recommends the creation of a student committee for discussions of student affairs, student partnerships, student projects and quality assessment and development involvement. This would give students more recognition and a sense of partnership.

Student representation in the governance structures is reflected by the students' open and secret voting at each structure level. Although the students are represented through their elected members in the university Senate, the Faculty Council, the doctoral school Council and the Administrative Board, as well as in the quality assurance structures, the team learnt during the various interviews that not all the information important to them is also shared with them; in some cases they are not allowed to vote on certain issues and they are sometimes not invited to the meetings (i.e. vacancies' contests for the teaching staff). Surprisingly, there is no student representative in the quality assurance committees at the faculty level.

The team perceived the rector and his management team to be very committed to their duties and dedicated to improving the position of UNEFS in every aspect, as well as showing the ability to adapt in the light of changing legal requirements. However, some members of the academic community expressed their concern about the lack of information flow and communication about the decisions of the governance bodies.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The team recommends UENFS to include student representatives in all committees where feasible.
2. The team recommends UNEFS to improve the ways of communication to the university community about decisions of the Senate, Administrative board, Faculty Council and committees.



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## **Finances and financial management**

UNEFS functions as a public institution financed with a budget provided by MERYS, and by tuition fees and revenue collected from other academic and scientific activities, from interest, donations and sponsorships received according to law. This revenue is integrally managed by the university, in conformity with the legal provisions. Funding from the budget is based on a contract with the supervising ministry (MNE). UNEFS may receive extra funding from the budget, allocated by MNE for institutional development, on the basis of competitive criteria and in conformity with international standards. Funding for academic scientific research occurs in compliance with the legislation specific to the area of research-development. Any remaining funds at the end of the year after the execution of the budget stipulated in the institutional and complementary contracts, the funds from academic scientific research and the extra-budgetary revenues remain available to UNEFS and are included in the university revenue and expense budget, without affecting the budgeted allowances for the following year. However, the team was told during various interviews that the institution doesn't have much leeway in terms of expenditure, not having sufficient autonomy to change the allocation of funding between budget headings throughout the fiscal year.

MNE finances the university according to a set of criteria, including the number of students enrolled and, according to the UNEFS staff, the current funding is sufficient to cover salaries. However, the resources to support scientific research and infrastructure investments are very limited. Additionally, the team was informed that the maximum number of fee-paying students, who would provide the university with additional resources, is limited by MNE based on ARACIS criteria of minimum space per student. Faculty members believe that more students could be accepted to UNEFS because in previous years there have always been more candidates than the positions available (for example, in 2012 the ratio was 6:1 in one faculty and 3:1 in the other faculty). The tuition fees are fixed by the Senate and are the same for both faculties. They can differ depending on the programme attended. For example, the fee for a Bachelor's programme is €800 per year, €1 000 for Master's programme and €1 800 for doctoral studies.

It is the team's view that UNEFS receives little funding, sufficient only for maintaining its current position with no possibility to invest in development. Financial management is effective but the cautious approach to using funds resulted in a surplus at the end of the year 2012. UNEFS has several off-campus training facilities and other buildings that are in poor condition. Although the investments in infrastructure are within the objectives of the strategic plan, the academic members involved felt that it will not be possible to achieve them since UNEFS is unable to get a sufficient amount of funding. It is estimated that 10 million euro are needed for renovation of those facilities. The team recommends that the



university develops a building investment strategy, which includes the possibility of renting them out. Furthermore, UNEFS should consider diversifying the sources of income within the constraints (example of Gral Medical, cf. p. 18) and the team felt that there is a need for more outward-looking activities (such as the provision of courses and consulting services to sport, medical, military, tourism industry, etc.) which should also be actively marketed.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Development of the strategic plan for reconstruction of some buildings.
2. Development of new educational activities which will generate extra income for UNEFS.

#### **Human resources**

The academic staff members who perform all the teaching activities defined in the curricula consist of 78 members, mostly associate professors, assistant professors, assistant lecturers and tenured professors. They are all UNEFS graduates. The teaching workload is 40%-45%, which means 1 600 hours per year and 1 100 of contact hours with students. 460 hours are dedicated to research activities. Promotion of teaching staff is based primarily on research achievements, although until recently sport was not classified as a scientific field. According to the data provided to the team, only a certain percentage of the total number of posts is occupied and it was explained by the academics that the vacancies are blocked by MERYS, although the ministry approved an increase in student enrolment.

The teaching activity is also supported by the auxiliary teaching staff and technical-administrative staff made up of 75 persons. The auxiliary teaching staff members work in various areas such as the library, human resources, laboratories, gyms, and as warehouse managers. These positions are defined by the MERYS and are meant to support and assist teachers. The difficulty of employing new staff and problems arising thereof are acknowledged as external constraints.

Some academics feel that students are generally not attracted to an academic career due to the gap between the high performance level required and the low salary level.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The team recommends that UNEFS reconsiders its policy of recruiting mainly its own graduates.



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### 3. Teaching and Learning

The Bologna Process started in 1999 in Romania, and in 2005/2006 the European Credit and Transfer System (ECTS) was introduced at UNEFS and is today fully implemented. However, there is some evidence that students have no opportunity to choose any elective subjects and that student-centred learning approaches have not been adopted by all teaching staff.

UNEFS offers educational programmes for students to become physical education teachers for all education cycles, coaches for all training levels, physical therapists who can practice in medical units, schools for children with special needs, health-care institutions, sports managers, personal trainers for health centres, and fitness instructors for leisure activities. The competition to enter UNEFS among students is high; they have to pass a physical test, language and biology exam, and there have always been more candidates than places available. In the academic year 2013/2014 the ratio for applicants to kinetotherapy studies was 6:1 and 3:1 for physical education. The institution is known for its high quality programmes as evidenced by the success in finding employment by its graduates and the different positions graduates hold in a variety of sectors such as teaching in a variety of sectors: e.g. teaching in different types of schools and higher education institutions; being school and high school principals; sport coaches; secretaries and presidents of the Romanian sports federations and of other sports and youth governing bodies; scientific researchers and authors in the domain; members of the Romanian Olympic Committee, international sports federations and of other specialty bodies from abroad. From this data it can be concluded that the teaching and learning process is effective as manifested by the high employability of graduates, which reaches 90% in the first year.

In 2010, the physical education and sports study programme was accredited in the French language due to the intense exchange of international students from French-speaking institutions.

#### **Bachelor programme**

The duration of the undergraduate study programmes at UNEFS is three years with 180 ECTS credits. During the meetings, academics and also some alumni representatives, especially of kinetotherapy, have expressed some concerns with the three-year study programme and suggest that it would be better if it were extended to four years.

In the academic year 2012/2013, the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport had 581 full-time students in three study programmes: physical education and sport education; physical education and sport education in the French language; and sport and motor performance. At the end of this cycle, after the Bachelor's exam, the graduates can get a job as school teacher in primary and high schools, but with a Masters they can teach at a higher level and become coaches. More than 60% of graduates from UNEFS continue with a Master's programme but



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some graduates come from other universities. The Faculty of Kinetotherapy enrolls 309 full-time students in its single undergraduate programme (Kinetotherapy and Special Motricity). This study programme has changed over the past years and requires the additional approval of the Ministry of Health, which agreed on the recognition of graduates as specialists trained to work in the medical field. They can work in hospitals or private practice, in the same position and for the same salary as the physical therapists trained in medical schools. It was reported to the team that, as a consequence to the current state of the art, there is some tension between UNEFS and a number of medical schools that train physical therapists, especially given that UNEFS graduates can work independently very quickly, whereas medical schools require additional years of training. According to staff and students, the labour market situation is very good, especially for graduates from the Faculty of Kinetotherapy. There is a shortage of physical therapists with high demand especially outside the big cities. The team also learnt during the interviews that the Faculty of Kinetotherapy therefore asked MERYS and ARACIS to allow more students to enrol and an increase from 60 to 150 places was approved through the Government Decision 707/2012 but the documents presented to the team show an intake of 113 students in the academic year 2012 – 2013. The team was told that this is because of space restrictions as ARACIS prescribed standards regarding the required number of m<sup>2</sup> per student.

The ratio between the number of students and the number of teachers is 15:1, which appears reasonable. The student dropout rate is 5% and the students and staff have explained that this is because tuition fees are €800 a year, which is high for most of them. In addition, since attendance is compulsory, it is difficult for those who also work to meet this requirement for all courses, which therefore results in some students having to drop out.

The students of both faculties explained that they are very pleased with their programme and teachers, but they wish they could be more involved in the teaching and learning process. Moreover, they have expressed a wish to have more practical work early on in the study programme and some said that they would be willing to do an extra year in order to gain more practical experience. They stated that the programmes do not include any choice of elective courses. Many students also mentioned the need for better access to up-to-date literature, better IT facilities and e-learning possibilities. Students seem to be highly motivated and proud to identify themselves with the institution. English language proficiency of students whom the team met during both visits was impressive and no interpretation was needed.

### **Master's programme**

The Master's study programme lasts two years with 120 ECTS credits. At the Faculty of Physical Education and Sport the students can choose from six accredited study programmes: science and technologies of human motor skills education; management and marketing in



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sport structures; activities and events; performance in sport; adapted physical activities; physical education and leisure time motor activities; and leisure time motor activities. In the academic year 2012/2013 there were 144 students enrolled in three study programmes: marketing in sport structures; activities and events; performance in sport and in physical education and leisure time motor activities. The interest in the programmes was high, with a ratio of 4:1 between applications and places available.

At the Faculty of Kinetotherapy, the Master students can choose one of the two accredited programmes, motor and somatic-functional recovery rehabilitation or nutrition and corporal remodelling. In the academic year 2012/2013, there were 101 students enrolled in both study programmes. Those students enrolled in Master's programmes explained that with this degree they are more qualified and can get permanent employment. With a Bachelor's degree the graduates have to renew the licence to practice every six months, which is issued by the Ministry of Health and free of charge, but with a Master's degree the licence does not have to be renewed.

At the end of this cycle, after passing the dissertation exam, the students obtain a Master's degree from three types of programmes: professional Masters, research Masters and didactic Masters.

During the discussion with the Master students they shared positive experiences and stressed that UNEFS compared favourably with other institutions in Romania offering programmes in Physical Education and Sport (at present there are 18 offering programmes in this domain), especially with private institutions. The team found there is a widespread belief among students that the employers in the field perceive the UNEFS diploma as a seal of quality. In addition, they pointed out that some study programmes should have more practical work and reduce the theoretical exams or complement them with a practicum.

### **Doctoral programme**

The UNEFS doctoral school is an independent academic structure that organises and manages doctoral and postdoctoral activities in the physical education and sports domain. Doctoral education has existed since 1963, even though it closed down during the communist regime, but started up again in 1990. Therefore, during most of the communist regime there were no doctoral studies in the fields of sport, today, however the doctoral school has 108 PhD students, more than 60% of whom are fee-paying students. They come from different fields and are registered at the doctoral school and not at the faculty. The team was told that, following the implementation of Bologna, also the selection procedure for students is now regulated, with the result that only 50% of Master students are allowed to continue on to the third cycle. The students have to pass a preliminary selection and exam with two tests — a foreign language test and oral exam about knowledge and with a minimum grade of 8 out of 10. The entrance exam commission has five staff members. The doctoral study programme



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lasts three years with 180 ECTS credits. There are 13 coordinators for PhD students, seven of whom teach at UNEFS, six are associate professors (three of whom are former professors who have already retired) and the remaining three come from other universities. The ratio of PhD students to supervisor is 10:1.

Graduates of doctoral studies are awarded, after the public submission of their doctoral thesis and their validation by the habilitated structures, the scientific degree of Doctor of Physical Education and Sports/Doctor of Human Motor Sciences.

### **Training and Professional Development Centre**

The Training and Professional Development Centre was established in 2012 to continue with the training programmes UNEFS had introduced as part of an EU project. In the last two years, six different programmes were offered to 889 teachers. The centre offers initial and continuous training of specialists for various occupations in physical education, sport and kinethotherapy. The programme was authorised by the MERYS after UNEFS had provided a needs analysis. The Centre offers training programmes for the teaching staff in primary schools, adult education programmes, and professional improvement programmes for the UNEFS teaching staff and researchers. These programmes are designed to increase the level of professional competences and develop new knowledge in keeping with trends in the modernisation of education.

Each programme is composed of 60 hours plus private study and is worth 15 ECTS credits. Presently there are 210 students attending the continuing training programme at UNEFS. For the year 2013/2014 the goal of UNEFS is to have 50-60 participants in each one-year programme. The offer of the training programme depends on the demand. Presently, the centre offers accredited training courses and exams to obtain teaching degrees for elementary and high schools. Further, it organises continuing education programmes for teaching staff on topics such as physical education in primary school, extracurricular sports activities, sport training for children and juniors, methods and means for the recovery of effort capacity, applying ICT in teaching physical education and sport and mentoring in physical education and sport. Most training programmes have 50 hours teaching plus private study and are worth 15 credits. Physical education teachers need to collect 90 credits of additional training every five years to maintain their registration as teachers. All participants receive a certificate at the end. The centre is run by the teachers themselves and they have expressed a need for an additional administrative support person on a permanent basis. It was reported to the team that the teaching staff members at the centre get paid extra for their teaching but not for the coordination and organisation of the courses. In the future, the centre plans to offer foreign language courses for the UNEFS employees, scientific methodology, statistics and other programmes that will emerge from the needs analysis.





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## **Infrastructure**

The team took the opportunity to visit the library, indoor sport halls, fitness centre, outdoor sports playground, testing labs, lecture halls and the more modern building housing the Kinetotherapy Faculty and newly opened centre for research and medical analysis, which is run in partnership with the private company, Gral Medical. Despite the fact that some buildings are protected structures, there is room for improvement in building infrastructure. The fitness centre on campus is a private gym and students have to pay a fee to use it outside of class. The library is very important for any education institution, especially for research work, and it is necessary to have online access to journals as well as comfortable, well-equipped study rooms with modern technology. During the meetings the students as well as academic staff expressed a need for better IT equipment, Wi-Fi access on both campuses and more space for indoor sports programmes and swimming. The students also mentioned the need for better equipment in the locker rooms and would like to have some more space for waiting rooms, especially in winter as they have nowhere warm to wait for the classes.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The choice available to students of selecting subjects should be extended.
2. Teacher-student communication to be enhanced by introducing e-learning technology.
3. Increase number of hours in practical training.
4. Involve students in student-centred learning.
5. IT network requires development.
6. Regular consulting with beneficiaries on syllabus, course content and diploma projects.
7. Consider offering teaching to students of military universities.
8. Continue with the doctoral school, in view of its history, its uniqueness as the only school offering doctoral studies in Physical Education and Sport and potential to support research ambitions.
9. Developing documentation, library and information services.
10. Despite the attractive location in the centre of the capital there is much room for improvement in building infrastructure, particularly sports facilities, space for students' free time, heated rooms in winter, toilets, locker rooms, as well as the library.



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## 4. Research

In the SER, the strategic plan and in the discussions with the UNEFS academics it was clearly stated that research activities are a priority area and it is UNEFS's main objective to become an advanced research institution. However, in the past, scientific research has attracted insufficient funds and only a very low number of articles can be found in ISI publications. The team was told that this is partially due to the fact that sport was not included in the area of scientific research subjects. In the documents made available to the team it is also stressed that there was only a small number of applications for research projects and that there is insufficient collaboration with doctoral and postdoctoral studies. The number of ISI publications is low, but the team found that UNEFS management and academics are aware of this weakness and efforts to encourage an increase in the number of publications in international journals are being made at the level of the institution.

Several strategic activities to be developed are listed in UNEFS' plan up to 2016. The university would like to increase participation in national and international research calls, target the research activities in accordance with the requirements of the beneficiaries and develop research contracts with economic and social partners. It also plans to involve teaching staff and students in research activities to establish interdisciplinary teams, attract specialists from sports performance and sports medicine to work in joint teams to develop various research topics. The participation of the teaching staff and students in national and international scientific meetings organised at home and abroad will be stimulated with financial support from the university and, similarly, so will be their contribution to ISI quoted journals, etc.

The year 2013 already shows a significant development in ISI publications, and the proceedings of a recent and important scientific meeting held in UNEFS will be issued very soon. Moreover, nine research projects are in the pipeline to be assessed by the ministry. The team has also learned that the Romanian Government has now included physical education and sports in the domain of science under the label "Sport and physical education science". This decision now really opens the door to research contract applications for UNEFS.

In June 2013 UNEFS organised the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress of Physical Education, Sport and Kinetotherapy where more than 170 scientific papers and posters were presented from 16 different countries and 51 institutions in Europe. 130 papers will be processed for publication by ELSEVIER in *Procedia – Social and behaviour sciences*. The team encourages UNEFS to continue with this kind of activity.

In October 2013 UNEFS opened a centre of research and medical analysis in partnership with a private company (Gral Medical) to perform analysis for children and youth playing sport. The centre will also perform different analysis and tests for athletes and the elderly. Some



athletes will pay for these services; but for young athletes who will have to undertake compulsory medical tests, the federation will cover the costs. Together with the centre for interdisciplinary research UNEFS believes that it will be able to carry out more research, which will contribute to the development of science and research at the institution.

### **“Alexandru Partheniu” Interdisciplinary Research Center (CCI)**

UNEFS established in 1968 an interdisciplinary centre that is a research, development and innovation unit accredited by MERYS. It has helped create the tradition of scientific research in the field of physical education and sport. The centre is named after Dr Aleksandru Partheniu who was a former researcher of the university in the field of sport medicine 40 years ago. CCI is a part of the university organisational structure and has presently only one researcher and two support staff employed by UNEFS. The CCI no longer benefits from national funding for research projects and thus is vulnerable with regard to its future.

CCI is well-equipped and supports the teaching process. It provides scientific and technical counselling for the preparation of scientific dissertations, reports and doctoral theses or postdoctoral projects, promotes interdisciplinary studies and research, provides consulting and technical assistance for the preparation and development of grant projects, and supports the UNEFS young researchers’ training programmes. It made a major contribution by providing scientific assistance to athletic coaching and information feedback and guidance, in the process of coaching high-performance athletes and experts for the big competitions.

The team is confident that the objective to develop the university’s research activities would be served by:

- Encouraging more UNEFS academic staff to become involved in the doctoral school and to take on the supervision of PhD students.
- Forming research partnerships with medical, pharmaceutical and sports industries.
- Establishing research partnerships with national and international universities.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Launch an institutional help service for promoting applications to research grants and international contracts.
2. Involve students in research activities, especially through organising students’ scientific circles.
3. Continue the good practice of encouraging participation at scientific events.
4. Fully explore international research funding possibilities such as FP7.



## 5. Service to society

UNEFS is very proud of its graduates, especially those who have achieved international success in the area of sports. There is a special alumni room on campus where information with photos and other documentation is presented. UNEFS does not have a formal network of alumni but informal links and communication are very successful. Intense cooperation and regular communication is kept with sport federations, clubs, associations and also the national Olympic committee.

UNEFS is involved in different community activities mostly as volunteers in different sports events. Among others there is a special programme that involves students as volunteers who help disabled children to prepare for sports games and also help adults with disabilities. UNEFS works very closely with the Special Olympics. It contributes to its research, and developed new theoretical content focused on aspects such as intellectual disabled therapy, wheelchair sports, volunteering activities and coaching.

The team met a number of representatives from sport federations, clubs, the ministry, the Olympic committee, sports media, the school inspectorate, school sports clubs and the private sector kineotherapists. Most of them were also UNEFS graduates and are still engaged in regular cooperation with UNEFS. During the discussion the beneficiaries explained that the quality of UNEFS graduates is very high and that they are very successful when they enter the labour market. Some stakeholders involve UNEFS students for their practical work experience and volunteer work and are very pleased with their performance. A school inspector who coordinates 300 physical education teachers explained that he receives feedback on graduates who are physical education teachers; more than 50% of them are graduates from UNEFS and among those 85% passed the national teacher exam and got very high grades and ended up with some of the best positions in teaching.

Some beneficiaries have also expressed an interest in being more closely involved in curriculum development and that in some areas more practical work should be offered to students during their study.

Service to society includes, among others, lifelong learning. UNEFS offers some courses at the centre for professional training and development but these courses are offered mostly to those seeking to obtain teaching degrees in physical education. Consideration should be given to broadening this activity also to other areas and in this way increase UNEFS outward visibility and generate additional income.

UNEFS has many informal ways of keeping contact with alumni and the team met with some representatives who expressed a desire to be involved with UNEFS more formally and were willing to help develop activities targeted at keeping close contacts with each other. Alumni



associations often organise social events, publish newsletters or magazines and raise funds for organisations as well as helping current students. UNEFS alumni can help create an international image and network, involve influential people to strengthen the relationship with them as much as possible and generate additional resources through different actions.

Currently UNEFS uses an outside supplier to provide services for public relations and has no clear strategy for branding and marketing to make its image more recognised. A permanent position within the institution would enable day-to-day communication and information flow that could contribute to more active outward promotion.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Beneficiaries should be involved formally in the development and provision of study programmes at UNEFS.
2. Expand activities of lifelong learning also to other areas like consulting to sport, medicine, kinetotherapy, etc...
3. Consider the establishment of an alumni association.
4. Exploit its unique position with regards to close collaboration with sport clubs, federations, Olympic committee, alumni and medical institutions to promote its image.



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## 6. Quality culture

Quality assessment practices and management of quality is most extensively described in UNEFS documentation and is also a priority in the strategic plan for 2012-2016. In 2009 the Senate approved the setting-up of the Department for Quality Management as a structure coordinating the education quality assurance and assessment activities at institutional level. The Department for Quality Management is subordinated to the Senate. The Senate has a committee for quality assurance; there are also two quality assurance committees (one in each faculty) and two others, one for the doctoral school and one for the administrative department. The Department for Quality Management's activity is coordinated by an executive board made up of the chair who is the vice-rector, the heads of the two faculty quality committees, one students' representative and one employers' representative. All the activities performed by the Department for Quality Management are defined in the calendar that is accepted by all university bodies. There is no full-time administrative support in the QA department. Although the detailed and institutionalised procedures are known by the academic community and well-established, the team felt that the overlapping structures for quality assessment generates duplicative, time-consuming and unnecessary activities.

UNEFS evaluation and quality assurance system is made up of regulations, procedures and tools that cover all issues related to academic life and evaluate the quality of both the programmes and the teaching staff members' activity, as well as that of the other staff categories in the university.

The fundamental criterion to evaluate the teaching staff's professional performances is based on both teaching and scientific research activity certified by published works, communications and acknowledged intellectual outputs. Performances are periodically evaluated, according to the adopted regulations. This includes peer evaluation, students' evaluation, and professional performance self-evaluation, evaluation for the competition to hold vacant teaching posts, evaluation by the department director and evaluation by the university leaders. The results are then presented at departmental, faculty and university level, and are discussed with each evaluated member of the teaching staff. The conclusions drawn after the periodical evaluations are analysed by the respective faculty council and by the university Senate.

During the meetings, students confirmed that they are involved in the evaluation of teachers, but that they do not see the results and do not have the opportunity to discuss them because it was explained to them that the results are confidential. Only the student representatives who sit in the university governing bodies or committees are informed about the evaluation procedures and reports, but are not allowed to vote or contribute.



According to the documentation provided to the team, the study courses and learning resources are analysed by academic staff annually. Students are not involved in formal assessment procedures regarding the study programmes.

The UNEFS study programmes are periodically evaluated by ARACIS, except for the part-time study programme, which is only authorised, a prerequisite for obtaining accreditation; all the other programmes are accredited.

Auxiliary teaching and administrative staff members are evaluated in conformity with the legislation in force.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. Procedures for the evaluation of the research programmes should be implemented.
2. Consider appointing a full-time staff member to be responsible for the QA department.
3. Involve students in QA at programme/department/faculty level.
4. Curricular development should include students, other stakeholders and be based on learning outcomes.



## 7. Internationalisation

Promoting and broadening international cooperation is one of the UNEFS's strategic objectives. UNEFS internationalisation is presently pursued through bilateral partnership with foreign universities, participation in the European mobility programmes (Erasmus) providing preparatory Romanian language courses for incoming students, joint supervision of doctoral theses and organising or participating in international events and conferences.

Most international activities take place within bilateral partnerships. UNEFS has inter-university agreements with 17 institutions mostly from France, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Turkey, Greece, Albania, Ukraine and Moldavia. Within these partnerships, some teaching staff exchanges and joint research take place. In 2010, UNEFS accredited a study programme in the French language.

The Erasmus mobility programme is regulated by MERYS that decided on the number of outgoing students, which is presently 16, and incoming students, which is presently six. The outgoing students have to pass a language test and have good grades. Students explained at the meetings that there are always more candidates than places to go abroad and that not all ECTS credits were recognised upon their return; therefore, some students had to do extra classes. Incoming Erasmus students are supported by teachers rather than students who meet them in classes.

International relations activities are coordinated by the Department for Communication and External Relations that is subordinated to the Senate and was established in 2008. Within the department there are three committees with different responsibilities: communication and international relations; communication and national relations; and communication, image and protocol. There is no full-time staff member for communication and international affairs but only academic staff members who are responsible for different international relations activities. The Department for Communication and External Relations is not responsible for EU and other research grant applications.

The experience of outgoing Erasmus students was very positive as was the experience of international students at UNEFS. International students explained that they had only a teacher mentor at the beginning and no students were involved to help them integrate but nevertheless they enjoyed the experience. The team recommends that UNEFS promotes activities that mix local and international students in academic and social life. The number of outgoing students is well below the European target of 20% of all students having to spend part of their programme abroad by the year 2020, a target agreed by Ministers of Education within the Bologna Process at their meeting in 2009 in Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve. Students also explained that the low number of Erasmus mobility is partially due to the insufficient





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knowledge of foreign languages, lack of information about this opportunity and the cost of studying abroad which is greater than the grant available.

UNEFS has no internationalisation strategy and should therefore consider specific aspects that need attention in this strategy. These are set out in the recommendations below.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Initiate the process for a clearly formulated internationalisation strategy. This should include:
  - Defining priorities for strategic partnerships;
  - Preparing intensive programmes/summer schools in selected subjects in foreign languages;
  - Developing and offering programmes in the English language;
  - Promoting activities that help to integrate international students with local students;
  - Attracting international guest teachers and researchers;
  - Expanding internationalisation beyond mobility: start internationalisation at home with organising international day, foreign guests, offer mentorship in diploma projects to foreign students, offer practical experience abroad and at home;
  - Joining international professional networks (EAIE, IUA, EUSA, FISU, ENAS);
  - Exploring several EU initiatives: Erasmus+, CEEPUS, TEMPUS, 7FP, DAAD, Marie Curie



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## 8. Conclusion

UNEFS is a small institution with a long tradition and a high degree of specialisation in the field of physical education, sport and kinetotherapy.

UNEFS's strategy is to become an advanced research university with excellence in teaching and research at an international level while remaining an independent institution. This is a large and ambitious strategy, which needs an operational plan with more specific actions and measurable indicators. Moreover, the resources are limited and therefore the development of collaborations with other institutions is advisable.

In terms of governance, UNEFS has found an astute way to manage the duality in governance imposed by the law, that is on the one hand the rector and his administrative board and on the other hand the president of the Senate (and his council). The full and open cooperation between the two bodies overcomes the risk of opposition and conflict.

UNEFS has shown its ability to adapt in the light of changes in legal requirements but has a limited financial autonomy with an insufficient flexibility in the management of the funds. There are also some concerns about the ability of the institution to face the needs for the rehabilitation and the development of the facilities and amenities on the campuses.

Many administrative tasks are performed by an overloaded academic staff.

The teaching and learning process is very effective: programmes are attractive, students are motivated and satisfied, and graduates are highly employable. Nevertheless, practical training, especially in kinetotherapy, could be increased and beneficiaries as well as students should be involved in course content and diploma projects. Documentation, libraries, e-learning and IT networks should be developed.

UNEFS benefits from a well-equipped interdisciplinary research centre with a long tradition of scientific research. However, the centre is vulnerable with regard to its future because of the lack of research project funding and by a reduced scientific staff. The number of international scientific publications is still low but there is a strong policy of encouraging research and publications. Recent trends are clearly positive.

UNEFS is deeply involved in service to the society, i.e. by providing continuing education for teachers in physical education and by volunteering in services for children and adults with disabilities. UNEFS enjoys very good relationships with sport federations, professional associations, famous athletes as alumni and private partners for applied research.

In terms of quality culture, UNEFS has a detailed and formal procedure. However, there are some overlapping and time-consuming procedures.



Figures for international mobility of students and teachers are relatively low. Nevertheless the experience of outgoing students from UNEFS and of international students in UNEFS is very positive. Moreover, UNEFS is developing its internationalisation strategy by offering a study programme in French, providing preparatory courses in the Romanian language and encouraging participation in international scientific events.

UNEFs is a well-established institution. It is fit for its purpose to educate physical education teachers, sport professionals and physical therapists and it shows a strong commitment of service to the community among students and staff. UNEFS should continue to develop its research activity as it is important that there is research in the fields of physical education and sport within Romania and UNEFS has a unique profile, which can enable it to have the leading role in the provision of physical education, sports and kinetotherapy.

The team is confident that the quality of leadership and the motivation of the UNEFS community provide excellent grounds for achieving the strategic objectives.

**The team’s main recommendations are:**

- The commitment from the university and its leadership, but most importantly, the development of the strategic documents should be in line with the mission and vision of the institution and the available and anticipated resources.
- The usefulness of the strategic documents would be maximised if they included milestones, clear goals and priorities for the institution as a whole, in addition to describing what are mostly objectives at present.
- Develop a building investment strategy.
- Consider diversifying the sources of income within the constraints (as in the case of the partnership with Gral Medical).
- Include student representatives in all committees where feasible.
- UNEFS should further exploit its unique position with regards to close collaboration with sport clubs, federations, Olympic committee, alumni and medical institutions to promote its image.
- Continue to develop research activity: form research partnerships with medical, pharmaceutical, sport, industries; establish research partnerships with national and international universities.
- Develop documentation, library and information services.
- Improve internationalisation by a clear strategy, the development of more courses in foreign languages and stronger links with foreign universities: Join international professional networks (EAIE, IUA, EUSA, FISU, ENAS) and explore: Erasmus+, CEEPUS, TEMPUS, 7FP, DAAD, Marie Curie.



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- Professionalisation by the appointment of a full-time employee of some missions is required: international affairs, communication and image, quality assessment, grants application.