University Lusiada of Lisbon

EVALUATION REPORT

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1. Introduction

This report is the result of the evaluation of the University Lusiada of Lisbon. The evaluation took place in 2009-2010.

1.1   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 distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:
- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international 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.

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   The institution and MCTES-funded evaluations

The University Lusiada of Lisbon (hereafter, ULL) is a relatively small private institution (5000 students) located in Lisbon, with two sister institutions in Porto (4000 students) and Vila Nova de Famalicão (1500). It is the 31st Portuguese institution to be evaluated by IEP in the last five years, with funds made available by the Portuguese Ministry for Science, Technology, and Higher Education (MCTES).

1.3   The self-evaluation process

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a small group of 11. This group included the Rector[1], the deans, senior administrative staff and a student (who stopped coming toward the end of the process but was kept informed of up-coming meetings). The self-evaluation group met every two weeks between February and October 2009.

Posters across campus drew attention to the evaluation and encouraged everyone's participation. The deans were asked to consult their academic staff with respect to the "four IEP questions" (cf. 1.1 supra). The central administrative service staff and the students met as two subgroups to discuss these issues. A dedicated web page was created to provide up-to-date information. The self-evaluation report went through several consultation and iterations before it was finalised.

The IEP stresses the self-evaluation process as an important step in the evaluations. When the self-evaluation process is conducted well, it becomes an exercise in change. This seemed to have been the case up to a point at ULL, and the self-evaluation report was not overly analytical or critical. Thus, the self-evaluation report (p. 2) mentions that the process affirmed the trust of the University in its capacity to gather data and in its administrative processes and that the data requested by IEP – although at times burdensome or a revealer of over-bureaucratisation – will be useful for future quality assurance exercises.

1.4   The evaluation team

The self-evaluation report of ULL, along with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team (hereafter, the Team) on 16 November 2009. The Team's two site visits took place on 13-15 December 2009 and 24-27 October 2010, respectively. Initially, the second visit was scheduled for 18-22 April 2010 but was cancelled due to the closure of European airports following the Icelandic volcano eruption. In between the two visits (10-23 March 2010), the University provided the evaluation team with some additional documentation, including:

- Staff data: how many part-time, how many full time
- Full-time equivalent, by age and faculty
- Promotion and staff development policies
- Students: mobility data, graduation rate, law exam success rate, summary of global analysis of student questionnaires
- Institution: expanded SWOT analysis, the new statutes, and a summary of accounts (balance sheets) in English.

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[1] Note: IEP discourages institutions from including the Rector in the self-evaluation group.

The second visit concluded with an oral report to an audience of about 40 participants, including a small number of students.

The evaluation team consisted of:

- Patrick Masterson, Chair, former President, University College Dublin (Ireland) and the European University Institute (Florence, Italy)
- Urs Brudermann, MSc in International Management (Switzerland), currently at the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom
- Andrée Sursock, Senior Advisor, European University Association
- Karol Wysokinski, former vice rector, Marie-Curie Sklodowska University, Poland
- Thérèse Zhang Pulkowski, Team Coordinator, Project Officer, European University Association

The Team thanks Dr Maria Meirelles, Professor de Oliveira and their colleagues, for the thoughtful and effective organisation of the Team's visits and for their gracious hospitality. The Team met the self-evaluation group several times, as well as a large number of students, academic and administrative staff, deans, heads of units and external stakeholders who shared openly their views of the University. All are warmly thanked. Heartfelt thanks are also due to Rector Durão and the Vice Chancellors of the University who met several times with the Team and spoke frankly of their plans, strategic objectives and challenges.

2. Context setting

2.1 The international context

The international context of higher education has changed radically in the last decade. Globalisation and internationalisation have led to greater competition and the jostling of universities to secure a good place in international ranking schemes. At the same time, the opportunities offered by new information technologies and the growing cost of research infrastructures have resulted in a greater stress placed on international and national cooperation and alliances.

Massification of higher education and the central importance of knowledge for the economy have meant that greater stress is now placed on increasing and widening access to higher education, lifelong learning and responding to the needs of a diverse student body through student-centred learning.

In response to these international trends, two main European policies were developed about a decade ago: the Bologna Process and the Lisbon agenda, including the modernisation agenda for universities.

These have led to a range of new policies at national level, which have changed the scope of autonomy, governance, funding, research and innovation policies. These profound changes have increased the importance of institutional strategies, internal quality processes and the engagement of the university in society.

2.2   The Portuguese context

Like many other European countries, Portugal has changed the legal framework in which its higher education institutions operate to respond to international trends and to integrate Portuguese higher education institutions fully in the European research and higher education area. Many of the changes are affecting the public institutions more than the private ones, except in two respects: requirements for staff qualifications have been raised for all universities, which must have one member of staff with a PhD for every 30 students and at least 50% of staff with PhDs must be fulltime[2]; all study programmes have to be subjected to an accreditation process carried out by an independent, new agency.

To the extent that competition and lack of cooperation between private and public institutions have been features of the Portuguese higher education system, the new policies represent opportunities for ULL:

- Thus, governance changes have been more significant for the public universities, in effect bringing them closer to the autonomy hitherto enjoyed by private institutions and causing less disruption in the latter.

- The same set of requirements for staff qualifications applies to both private and public institutions and is an opportunity to upgrade qualifications in private institutions and to bring them more into line with their peers in the public sphere.

- The previous QA agency was criticised by private institutions for being too close to the public institutions[3]; an independent agency should bring more legitimacy to the accreditation of private provision.

These changes represent opportunities for ULL to increase its academic legitimacy and to demonstrate its quality.

This being said, there are aspects of the Portuguese environment that constrain the development of universities:

- An unfavourable set of demographic and structural factors include: the low education attainment at school level, both in quality and in the relatively low number of high-school graduates as well as a declining birth rate and an ageing population[4]; a binary system – with polytechnics and universities – with little articulation between the two subsectors; and the unfavourable position of private universities in Portugal, which lack, as a group, public support.

- The traditional level of public expenditure for higher education and research has been relatively low in Portugal and it is likely that the current economic crisis will have a negative impact on future public funding.

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[2] Cf. Chapter 47, Law 62-2007 of 10 September.
[3] Cf. the 2006 ENQA review of the Portuguese accreditation and quality assurance processes: http://www.enqa.eu/files/EPHEreport.pdf
[4] Cf. the 2007 OECD's review of tertiary education in Portugal: http://www.oecd.org/document/14/0,3343,en_33873108_33873764_39713934_1_1_1_1,00.html

Thus, ULL must find ways of maintaining its current enrolments and growing its research profile in an inauspicious environment.

2.3   The institutional context and current strategic goals

ULL was created in 1986 and re-charted as a foundation in 2003. It has four faculties and the Lusiada Institute of Research and Development (ILID) that houses seven research centres. It has recently absorbed the oldest Portuguese school of social work. It enrols 5000 students, of which about 750 are pursuing masters' (excluding the integrating master in architecture) or doctoral studies. There are 338 academics and 150 administrative personnel working at ULL.

During its first 18 years, ULL has been focused on undergraduate teaching. With the arrival of the current Rector six years ago and the more rigorous staff qualification requirements introduced by the new higher education act, the University has embarked on a strategy to strengthen its research activities while continuing to develop its education quality, with the aim of becoming a destination of choice for students and to be recognised both nationally and internationally. The evaluation report takes into account these institutional objectives.

3.   Main observations and key recommendations

The following sections provide a snapshot of key aspects of university activities and a range of recommendations based on these observations.

3.1   Teaching and learning and student life

Teaching and learning has been a top priority at ULL and has been conducted very successfully. ULL graduates seem able to find jobs and to be valued by employers as much as their peers from public universities. This is all the more remarkable that private institutions are not the destination of choice for many of the best Portuguese students. Therefore, while a number of students chose ULL for its clear strengths in particular fields, many start out with a relatively weaker academic background. Thus, there is evidence that ULL provides value-added in its learning process. The small class size, the good relationships between student and teachers, the open-door policy of its academic staff are certainly main factors in this achievement.

In addition, ULL has developed some very innovative study programmes and some very highly-rated programmes. There is a small degree of interdisciplinarity: upon approval, students can take courses outside their faculties; there are master courses that involve teachers from different faculties and some professors who teach in several faculties.

Its day and night course provision increases scheduling flexibility and thus ULL's attractiveness to students, including working students and lifelong learners. It is worth noting that night classes are not confined to a specific category of students. By opening them up to any student, there is an opportunity to mix ages and backgrounds and enrich the learning process.

Financial aid is available based on merit (if a student maintains at minimum a 16-point grade average). Recently the University has provided scholarship or tuition discounts to help some students in economic difficulties.

Finally, ULL has understood the spirit of the Bologna Process by shifting to student-centred learning. Thus, students have to work more autonomously while tutoring help was developed. The University recognises that this requires a cultural change – for both teachers and students – and that the quality of students' work has not improved yet but it sets as its overall objectives to improve critical thinking skills and to balance theory and practice in order to enhance students' employability.

The introduction of Bologna was also seized upon to create an office responsible for internal quality processes. Most notably, the University has evaluated the implementation of Bologna tools as the process was ongoing (cf. Section 3.5 for more details) and has noted that students do not seem to understand fully how ECTS works and what the Diploma Supplement is about. On the basis of the meetings held with students, the Team is able to confirm the students' limited knowledge of these issues.

With respect to student life in general, students seem to be satisfied with their experience at ULL. They value the flexible course schedule, the easy access to their teachers, the vibrant associative life and the opportunities offered for extracurricular activities. They note that students' initiatives are welcomed and sometimes funded. That the University views students holistically is shown by the Bologna questionnaire that asks students about their extracurricular activities and their engagement on campus – both of which have been shown to be essential in contributing to academic success[5].

With respect to student support services, the Team notes that academic advising is done informally by the academic staff. A Career Office has been established recently. Based on students' comments, however, it seems to be underused, even although the Office makes efforts to communicate to third year students what jobs are currently available.

In addition, both doctoral students and staff praised the computerised library resources but some undergraduates noted the weakness of some administrative services (cf. Section 3.7 for recommendations on the latter point).

It is in the context of these largely positive observations that the following recommendations are made:

▸ Every effort should be made to increase understanding of ECTS and the Diploma Supplement among students. Since academic advising is done by the teaching staff, it would be important to ensure that all teachers have a grasp of these issues as well.

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[5] Pascarella, E.T. & P.T. Terenzini (2005) *How College Affects Students: Volume 2, A third Decade of Research,* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

▸ In addition, ECTS offers the opportunity to promote greater interdisciplinarity across the faculties. This could be more fully exploited on the model of the new Jazz study programme.

▸ The worsening economic situation is likely to have two effects:

- To place a greater burden on the Career Office. Lack of time did not allow the Team to visit this office but the general recommendation is to make every effort to enhance it and ensure its capacity to respond to demands. ULL might want to consider sending its staff on visits to similar offices elsewhere to further develop the office's capacity.

- To entice graduates to stay on for a master. This seems to be already happening and the University has offered some scholarships to its graduates who want to enrol in a master's programme. Therefore, it will be important to set target numbers for students at each level – bachelor, masters and PhD – and to make preparations for enrolling more postgraduates. As mentioned earlier, there about 85% bachelors currently enrolled and ULL might want to think about a mix of 70-80% undergraduates and the rest divided between the master and PhD levels.

3.2 Research

One of the main goals of the current leadership is to strengthen research activities based on education strengths. Steps have been taken to promote a research culture. These include:

- Encouraging students and staff to undertake PhD studies. The doctoral work of about 40 staff is funded by the University. The Team notes, however, that not all academic staff members seem aware that funding is available.

- Supporting the publication of PhD theses and research papers in ULL's own journals.

- Structuring research in order to increase funding: recently, a research institute (ILID) was created for the three campuses. ILID houses several research centres, some of which have received good ratings from the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). The existence of research structures is a national requirement to receive public funding. Accordingly, FCT recognition resulted in public funding flowing into the University and supporting its research.

In addition, ULL has ensured that the research centres are closely linked to the University through the appointment of the Rector as head of ILID (the Rector also chairs the Scientific and Pedagogical Councils), thus avoiding the recurrent challenges caused by the quasi-autonomous status of many such research centres in Portuguese universities[6].

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[6] EUA-IEP (2009) Interim report on institutional evaluations undertaken in Portugal in academic years 2006-07 and 2007-08, pp.7-8. http://www.eua.be/iep/activities/coordinated-evaluations.aspx

Much has been achieved in a short span of time but the Team noted that two aspects of doctoral education may require further attention:

- There is lack of official policy with respect to PhD supervision. It is not a formal part of the supervisors' workloads, and academic staff have a very varied workload. In addition, some PhD candidates have one supervisor; others have two, with the additional one sometimes being a member of another university. While there are positive aspects to having external supervisors, the Team observes that there is lack of consistency in who and how many supervise PhD candidates and that the traditional, "one-to-one apprentice" relationship seems to prevail.

  European universities, however, are moving away from this traditional form of supervision toward multiple supervision as well as arrangements based on a contract between the doctoral candidate, the supervisor(s) and the institution. In this context, many universities are thinking of ways to raise and ensure standards of supervision, e.g., by developing professional training for supervisors.

- In addition, PhD candidates are not always part of a research centre. Those that are not seem to be working in isolation – albeit in close contact with their supervisors. Therefore it seems important to break this isolation through the creation of a doctoral school. The rapid establishment of doctoral schools has been one of the most significant developments in European higher education in the last five to eight years. These are seen as important in fostering an intellectual community and providing a locus for developing doctoral students' transferable skills. Such a structure is lacking at ULL.

Given these observations, the Team encourages the University to take the following steps in order to ensure further success in research:

▸ Foster an intellectual community through a doctoral school that would organise, e.g.: (i) regular seminars where PhD students, from broadly defined disciplinary fields, can share their research, their problems, etc. and (ii) regular (albeit less frequent) meetings of all doctoral students and supervisors across the University.

  A doctoral school would be the place to develop doctoral students' transferable skills to prepare them to work in a variety of contexts. It estimated that around fifty per cent of current European doctorate holders are employed outside academia – in businesses, governments, the service sector and other education sectors – holding both research and non-research positions and it is unlikely that the figure will decrease[7]. Thus, while there is consensus that original research has to remain the core component of all doctorates, there is increased recognition in Europe of the importance of transferable skills training for all doctoral candidates as a means of improving their employment prospects and career development both in and outside academia.

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[7] EUA (2009) *Collaborative Doctoral Education: University-Industry Partnerships for Enhancing Knowledge Exchange* (DOC-CAREERS Project), By Lidia Borell-Damian, Brussels: European University Association, http://www.eua.be/publications/

There is a large diversity in the organisation of doctoral education across Europe, both at national level and between institutions. Some include master students and others do not. Different routes are being chosen, tailored to the specific profile, mission and goals of each institution. ULL will need to consider how best to achieve its goals, particularly whether the inclusion of master students would serve to strengthen its PhD pipeline[8].

▸ Develop policies for supervision workload – i.e., guidelines should be set that limit the number of students – and recognise it as an integral part of the work. It might be suitable also to expand the number of supervisors to two.

▸ Encourage all PhD students to publish internationally and not simply in the University's own journals and consider developing an on-line archive of PhD theses.

▸ With respect to funding, it would be important to communicate to staff on the financial support available for PhD study and to use every opportunity to increase funds for PhD research activities such as attendance at conferences, supporting fieldwork or archival research, etc.

3.3 Relationship to society

Engagement in society has become an important feature of today's universities. At ULL this takes several forms. Student internships are available in a range of disciplines. The University organises public conferences on topical issues and has a number of research contracts with public authorities or private companies. Most notably, ULL's departments of Social Work and Architecture are working on a joint project to revitalise disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Lisbon. Some of the research centres are engaged in applied research, e.g.: a project on the costs and benefits of parishes; an Observatory (co-funded with a Ministry) to study dropout rates in secondary schools.

The Team met with ten external partners who expressed satisfaction with their partnership with ULL. They noted that the University responds to their needs, notably by providing tailor-made courses. It is worth noting that these courses are open to all students – not only professionals seeking up-skilling. This is a positive feature and an evidence of an education approach that integrates lifelong learning instead of fencing it off.

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[8] ULL could consider joining EUA's Council for Doctoral Education, which would provide an opportunity to exchange with peers: http://www.eua.be/cde/Home.aspx.

In addition, The European University Association (EUA) recently adopted a set of recommendations for doctoral education. While strongly supporting universities setting up structured doctoral programmes and doctoral schools, the recommendations emphasise the individual character of the doctorate and the need to use institutional structures to support and give space to the development of individual researchers and their research projects, Cf. *Salzburg II Recommendations*:
http://www.eua.be/Libraries/Publications_homepage_list/Salzburg_II_Recommendations.sfl b.ashx

Finally, ULL has recently created an Alumni Office and plans are underway to organise a reunion to celebrate ULL's 25th anniversary.

The Team's recommendations include:

▸ Develop the Alumni Office, which can, *inter alia*, be a powerful resource to promote the development of the University: e.g., co-funding research, advising on curriculum development, developing outreach to school leavers, advising new graduates on career prospects, etc.

This would involve, as a first step, tracking all graduates. ULL would then be in a position to communicate with them through an electronic newsletter (possibly through social networks such as Twitter or Facebook for those who use them) and invite them to campus for public conferences, exhibits, class reunions, etc. These activities would cement a long-term relationship with alumni who would be in a position to open doors to the University in various areas of society.

▸ Strengthen public support of ULL by creating the position of External Relations Officer to communicate achievements of the University, students and staff.

▸ Develop further the University's engagement in society and its capacity to work with stakeholders. This would involve the following steps: (i) identifying and targeting stakeholders according to the strategic objectives of the institution; (ii) establishing long-term partnerships by building trust, evaluating risks setting long-term objectives, and developing an exit strategy, i.e., criteria on which to base the decision to terminate a relationship.

3.4   Internationalisation

Increasing internationalisation is one of ULL's strategic goals. Internationalisation can contribute to strengthening ULL's educational and research capacity through increased attractiveness to international students and researchers, to cross-cultural and political understanding and economic development (educating knowledge workers and global citizens), and to improving ULL's positioning in Portugal.

At the moment, there is a small International Office that serves all three Lusiada universities and manages a small number of bilateral agreements in 11 European countries. In the academic year 2009-2010, this resulted in 104 incoming and 39 outgoing ERASMUS students, thus reflecting a modest increase from 94 and 33 respectively, in 2008-2009. The bulk of mobile students are in architecture, coming from, or going to Italy.

Incoming students feel welcomed by their teachers and the International Office but have expressed concerns that the available Portuguese course is too short (one month), offered too early both in the morning (8 am) and in the academic year (not all Erasmus students have arrived) and taught by one teacher who has to work with a multilingual class.

Outgoing students seem concerned about the recognition of study abroad and do not understand how their grades are assessed and why they are sometimes lowered when they return. This seems to act as a brake on outgoing mobility.

Whether incoming or outgoing, ERASMUS or "free movers", many mobile students complained about the insufficient documentation and information available.

The Team's recommendations include:

▸ Enhance recognition of ECTS from abroad and explain how grades are evaluated.

▸ Enhance information and documentation for the "free-movers", whether outgoing or incoming students.

▸ Develop a language policy for the provision of courses in other languages and consider establishing a "language lab".

▸ Build on the already established International Office to support the institution's, the staff's and the students' international goals.

▸ Expand the definition of internationalisation beyond mobility programmes and apply it to all activities. In this context, some of the questions that ULL might want to address include[9]:

- Will the University internationalise at home, abroad or both?

    - "Internationalisation abroad" generally includes some of the following activities: recruitment of international students, strategic institutional alliances, staff and student exchange, research and educational partnerships, etc.

    - "Internationalisation at home" refers to the integration of an international perspective in study programmes, foreign language instruction, embracing different teaching cultures to adapt to different learners' needs, staff and student development of intercultural understanding, etc.

- Which international partnerships will be required in order to achieve the desired aims?

- What further resources are required to support a widening of international activities?

- Do ULL academic and administrative staff have the skills and qualifications needed to achieve set objectives? How might they need to be developed?

- As internationalisation expands, responsibilities and decision-making processes regarding international issues will need to be established. Will

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[9] Cf. Middlehurst, R. (2009) Developing institutional internationalisation policies and strategies: an overview of key issues, *EUA Internationalisation Handbook*, B-1.1-1, Berlin: Raabe Verlag

there be a vice-president for internationalisation? Will there be committees for international affairs, or will existing committees be entrusted with the additional task of taking care of international matters?

3.5   Governance, management and decision making

Private universities in Portugal have the possibility of being not-for-profit institutions. This has been Lusiada's choice even although any surplus is taxed and thus such a status constrains its ability to roll over funds.

In addition, ULL was the first institution in Portugal to establish a foundation (a choice now open to Portuguese public universities). The Minerva Foundation, located in Lisbon, manages the three sister institutions through an Administrative Board.

The Portuguese legal framework ensures the autonomy of the university vis-à-vis the foundation in academic matters. The responsibilities of the Rector are academic, while financial matters are taken up by the Foundation and managed by the Vice Chancellors (who have an academic background). The University has a Directive Council whose membership currently overlaps with the Administrative Board of the Foundation. Thus, there is a single, over-arching body for all the Lusiada Universities and a compact decision-making group. This results in flexibility and a capacity to make expeditious changes in an evolving context. Continuity in leadership has ensured the quick development of ULL over the course of its relatively short existence.

As a result of this division of responsibilities, the Vice Chancellors' academic profiles, and the fact that the Rector attends the Administrative Board meetings, ULL manages to strike a balance between commitment to academic values and a concern for cost-effectiveness.

ULL has two university councils: the Pedagogical Council and the Scientific Council, both chaired by the Rector. The University statutes were changed recently to ensure a better articulation between the research institute (ILID) and the Scientific Council, which will now include representatives from the research centres. As part of the change brought to the statutes, the number of students to be included in the Pedagogical Council was increased to 50% of membership.

Deans are nominated by the Rector and appointed by Directive Council for one year, renewable. In practice, the Team saw examples of longer term of service (e.g., in one case: ten years). Faculties have their own councils and organise meetings of their pedagogical teams in order to ensure internal coordination and the quality of teaching provision.

However, despite the small size of the University, the membership overlap in many decision-making bodies and the frequent meetings, internal communication does not seem optimal as evidenced by the relative lack of knowledge of the official support of doctoral study for staff (cf. Section 3.2).

Finally, a few years ago the campus in Vila Nova de Famalicão was established as a separate entity. The Porto campus is not officially a separate university. There is some cooperation across the three campuses (e.g., a single computerised information system, a single International office, shared library resources through interlibrary loans, ILID), which raises the question of whether closer cooperation of these three entities should not be further developed, particularly because the overall enrolment size is manageable: about 10 000 students across the three campuses.

Given these observations, the Team offers the following recommendations:

▸ Enhance cooperation, at various levels, across the three universities to avoid unnecessary duplication and to increase critical mass, e.g., by promoting shared services and joint academic programmes.

▸ Improve communication of decisions by various decision-making bodies (e.g., to deal with misunderstanding about PhD support, cf. Section 3.2) while remembering that supply does not create demand. In other words, creative ways must be found to ensure that information reaches its targets and is not simply made available.

▸ Establish a consultative committee with external stakeholders to enlarge input in the definition of mission and strategy and to ensure effective delivery within a changing environment.

3.6   Internal quality

A Quality Office was created and internal quality processes were developed when the Bologna Process was introduced three years ago. The first step was to develop a questionnaire to assess the implementation of Bologna. In the first year, all students received this questionnaire and responding to it was a requirement of registration. In the second and third year, ULL administered the questionnaire to a sample of students. This is a rather interesting and unique initiative that allowed the University to take steps to improve implementation and showed good capacity to manage change.

On the heels of this initiative, ULL developed two questionnaires to evaluate teaching: one for students, the other for staff. This is now administered regularly and allows a comparative and longitudinal analysis of data.

The results of these questionnaires are used to improve performance and to review courses. The evaluation approach to teaching takes into account disciplinary cultures and seems to be based on arrangements that place the student at the centre and that lodges the responsibility of annual analysis of evaluation results with the pedagogical teams who make recommendations to their faculty. The Team received contradictory information about the role of the Pedagogical Council in discussing the results of these evaluations.

As a result of teaching evaluations, teachers have become interested in their own evaluation results and deans ask for specific analysis of their faculties. The

importance of ensuring quality is evidenced by the weekly "Wednesday morning" meetings held with the Rector, the deans and the Quality Office.

In addition, there are external evaluations of research centres and a range of activities to ensure quality. For instance, teachers must submit a detailed plan of their lectures (including a bibliography and the identification of learning outcomes); there are frequent coordination meetings in the faculties; the University ombudsman (*provedores*) meets with student representatives every semester in each faculty.

Finally, the Quality Office has plans to develop further the internal QA process by tracking employment of graduates, developing a survey of administrative staff and encouraging researchers to study the collected institutional data.

It is in this developing and enlightened environment that the Team makes the following recommendations:

▸ Review existing internal quality practices against "Set 1" of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance[10] in order to ensure that all aspects are addressed.

▸ Ensure that all service departments such as libraries, computer lab, student support service, etc., are evaluated periodically and that evaluation results are discussed in the Pedagogical Council.

▸ The main objective of internal quality processes is to improve quality levels. Thus the approach should include good feedback loops into the decision-making structure and involve staff development in order to support further improvement of the learning process. Beyond increasing the academic qualification of staff, which ULL is doing, this could include pedagogical development to support the shift to student-centred learning and the new role of teachers as facilitators of learning rather than *ex-cathedra* lecturers. An academic development structure such as a "Learning and Teaching Unit" would offer workshops and individualised training to interested teachers, as well as a library of relevant material and equipment to develop student-centred learning.

▸ In order to have a well-functioning quality assurance system, which can operate based on reliable and current data, the institutions should consider using the Integrated Information System to analyse student performance data in order to understand patterns of success and failure in specific courses and to improve the activities.

▸ With time, internal quality processes run the risk of becoming bureaucratic and slow down the creative potential of an institution. Therefore, it is important to ensure that these processes continue to allow a reasonable degree of risk taking

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[10] ENQA (2005) *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*, http://www.enqa.eu/pubs_esg.lasso

and failure, which are two essential ingredients for innovative research and education.[11]

3.7   Human resources

The quality of their human resources is the crucial ingredient that ensures the success of universities. At the moment, whether full time or part time, about 20% of academic staff hold a *licenciado*, 32% a master and 46% a PhD. This breakdown varies by fields, with some faculties having a larger number of PhD holders.

There is clear evidence that ULL has decided to invest in its personnel. Thus, ULL encourages both academic and administrative staff to improve their qualifications by taking courses in the University or pursing a PhD. Financial aid is available: 44 administrative staff were pursuing a bachelor at the time of the first site visit and about the same number of academic staff, a PhD.

The quality of academic staff is ensured by a rigorous promotion procedure that considers teaching performance (based on the students' evaluations) and research activities and publications. Applications for promotion go through the faculty, an external committee, the Rector, and the Administrative Board. Currently 50% of applicants are encouraged to reapply and are told what steps are needed in order to strengthen their applications.

The relatively flexible employment practice (with about seven different contracts) means that ULL has room to diversify its academic staff profiles and to adapt to changing circumstances.

While ULL seem to be focused on ensuring the quality of academic staff and increasing the qualifications of both administrative and academic staff, like many European universities it seems to be overlooking the importance of administrative functions. Expanding the institutional portfolio of activities, however, leads to the creation of new administrative functions and the need for a more professional management, more professionally trained staff at all levels, and more sophisticated management tools. In many universities, the growth in the number and professionalism of administrative staff means that functions that were filled temporarily by academic staff are on the decline and that the process of professionalising institutional management is emphasised.

Therefore, the Team recommends that:

▸   Comparable to the career provisions for academic staff, arrangements should be made for the quality enhancement of administrative staff. This can be done through professional development courses that would up-grade administrative and management skills. In addition, ULL should consider introducing individual

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[11] EUA (2009) *Improving Quality, Enhancing Creativity: Change Processes in European Higher Education Institutions*, Brussels: European University Association, http://www.eua.be/Publications.aspx

annual performance evaluations and offer mobility opportunities across the institution (and possibly between institutions).

4. Conclusions

ULL is a good university that functions in a difficult environment: e.g., weak secondary schooling and the relative lack of public support for private universities. The successes it has achieved so far are due to its compact and stable leadership and an excellent atmosphere that contributes to maintaining a sense of pride in belonging to the University.

The challenges ULL faces are significant if only because of the growing and more acute competition in Europe and internationally and the current economic crisis which is likely to last for several years. ULL, however, is a unique university in many regards and should build upon its unique characteristics. It can do so several ways:

- By taking advantage of its status as a private institution which provides relatively more flexibility and autonomy

- By building on its strengths – particularly, on its well-established, excellent teaching and its capacity to develop innovative study programmes (such as Jazz, Security or Sustainable Construction) – and develop niches for research and teaching

- By strengthening its academic reputation through the quality of its partnerships, whether these are international or local (through the future alumni network and the external stakeholders)

- By diversifying its funding streams through externally-funded research, contract research, philanthropy, sponsorship, etc. These activities are essential to grow and support research activities and increase the share of research funding in a budget that is currently primarily based on tuition fees.

The Team is confident that the University Lusiada of Lisbon has the appropriate strengths to deal with this set of challenges: foremost among them is a pervading sense of itself as a dynamic and young institution that has managed to succeed and innovate against difficult odds. This self-perception will serve it well in the years ahead.