EUA

European University Association

UNIVERSITY OF ÉVORA

EUA EVALUATION REPORT

December 2007

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. The philosophy and history of the Institutional Evaluation Programme

The long-term aim of the European University Association (EUA) Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is to strengthen institutional autonomy and support institutional change in universities. The evaluation is undertaken from the perspective of the university to ensure understanding of the institutional context and make recommendations to increase the effectiveness of internal governance and management processes and quality arrangements. In this way, the evaluation is responsive to the university's needs, mission, culture and situation and is future-oriented since it emphasises the development of the university.

The IEP is strictly independent from national agencies and government evaluation programmes. The EUA evaluation team consists of rectors or vice-rectors (active or former) and a university professor or other higher education professional as academic secretary. Team members provide an international and European perspective; they all come from different countries, and none of them come from the country of the participating institution.

The EUA team focuses on the institutional decision-making processes and structures, and the effectiveness of strategic planning. It evaluates the relevance of internal quality processes and their use in the strategic development of the university. The IEP evaluation has a formative orientation, i.e. it is aimed at contributing to the development and enhancement of the institution. The IEP is not geared towards passing judgements or ranking or comparing institutions against others.

Over the past thirteen years, EUA has conducted more than 150 evaluations of higher education institutions and in addition 20 follow-up evaluations in Europe and worldwide. Today, EUA's pool of member institutions and associate members includes more than 750 universities and 34 national Rectors' Conferences in 46 countries. From the perspective of the institutions, the major benefits derived from the IEP are an increased strategic capacity and an internal quality culture, both of which are necessary tools for dealing with the future challenges of increasing competition in a global higher education community and a multicultural society.

Since 2001, EUA has conducted sector-wide evaluations in order to identify and give recommendations on systemic challenges and common issues shared by all institutions in a given sector. Examples of sector-wide evaluations are the review of the Irish universities during 2004, Slovakian universities during 2006-2007 and the Portuguese Higher Education system during 2006-2007. In the long-term perspective, EUA intends to contribute to the promotion of a quality culture among European universities, and to disseminate examples of effective strategic management among its member universities.

1.1. Working Method

The institution completes a Self Evaluation Report (SER) which, according to the IEP guidelines, provides a general overview of the institution as well as background descriptive and analytical information. This process

enables the institution to reflect on its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, and provides a basis for the Team to undertake the evaluation.

During the preliminary visit, the evaluation team becomes acquainted with the university and its environment and enhances its understanding of the perspective advanced in the SER. In the main visit, two months later, the focus is on finding out whether, how, and how effectively the university's strategic policies and quality procedures are being implemented throughout the institution.

It should be emphasised that the main preoccupation of the team is to be helpful and constructive. Team members come prepared to lead discussions with carefully prepared questions. Sessions are intended to be interactive. No formal presentations by either university members or the evaluation team are made. The evaluation team's conclusions and recommendations are collected in a report that will be presented to the institution.

2. The Evaluation Team

Prof. Alojz Kralj, former Rector, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, (Chair)

Prof. Jacques Lanares, Vice Rector, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

Prof. Gulsun Saglamar, Former Rector, Istanbul Technical University, Turkey

Andy Gibbs, Director of International Relations, Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland, (Secretary)

3. The Terms of Reference and Special Focus

The aims of the IEP are to assist the university senior leadership and management in their efforts to promote the university's capacity for change and to develop and improve institutional quality processes. The Institutional Evaluation Team's objectives are to conduct an evaluation of the institution in accordance with these aims and to give recommendations to foster the dynamics of change.

Institutions are also able to request consideration of a special focus within the evaluation, and in this instance the University of Evora requested that implementation of the reforms initiated by the Bologna Process be considered.

4. The national regional and institutional context

In Portugal, the Government is undertaking a broad review of its higher education sector. In 2005, the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) evaluated the national quality assurance system and made recommendations for changes, which are currently being implemented. The government invited the OECD, through its Directorate for Education, to review the country's higher education system as a whole. The OECD report was due at the time of the preliminary visit. In addition, the Ministry of Science, Technology and Education (MCTES) requested, and supported financially, the evaluation of ten higher education institutions, including public and private universities, and polytechnics, in 2006/07, to be continued in the following years. It has also been agreed that these evaluations will be conducted by EUA with the assistance of the European Association of Institutions of Higher Education (EURASHE), and experts from the USA, Canada, or Australia. Under the terms of the agreement between MCTES and EUA, the objective of the national exercise is to provide both the national quality assurance agencies and higher education institutions with institutional evaluation experiences following the best European practices.

5. Brief assessment of the Self Evaluation Process

The process of institutional evaluation was coordinated by the Pro-Rector for Quality and Innovation Policies. The Self-Evaluation Committee was constituted by a rapporteur, the process coordinator, representatives of seven thematic work groups, the presidents of the Scientific Council and the Pedagogical Council and the president of the Student's Union. The thematic work groups included academic and non-academic staff, students and representatives from outside partners. All the academia was invited to participate in the self-evaluation process and many members of the academic and non-academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students have volunteered to participate in the work groups. Other people were specifically invited, namely representatives from the external partners.

The work of the committee was organised in weekly sessions by theme. The work of each thematic group was structured, allocating questions of the programme outline to each theme and providing answers to them. The conclusions of the thematic work groups and the successive versions of the self evaluation report were made available at the university's e-learning platform, along with EUA's guidelines, the list of participating individuals and other relevant documentation, and comments were welcomed from all staff and students.

The team noted the contribution of staff to the development of the Self Evaluation Review Report which provided a great deal of facts and other data; however the report could have contained more in depth of analysis and synthesis of the information presented.

6. Site Visits

The Evaluation Team undertook a preliminary visit which took place between the 22nd and 24th April. The team met with The Rector, Vice Rectors, Pro Rectors, Management, Teachers, Researchers and students from two departmental areas as well as representatives from central departments and administration and external stakeholders. These meetings helped to confirm and illuminate the information provided in the SER and highlighted the need for further information including demographic data about the region, the regional development plan, breakdown of income streams to the university, outline of decision making structures and proposals for change, detailed information on each programme, policies and details on research and knowledge transfer, including strategy. Much of this information was provided prior to the main site visit.

The main visit took place between 23rd and 26th September 2007. The team met with the Rector, Vice Rectors and Pro Rectors as well as representatives of the self evaluation team, Senate, Pedagogical and Scientific Councils, and students. Additionally the team met with Heads of Department, staff and students as well as staff concerned with lifelong learning, quality, research centres, computer services and the accounting auditor.

The many group and individual interviews provided essential and focussed opinions as well as useful information which increased understanding of internal university processes and context and facilitated better interpretation of the information provided in the Self Evaluation Report

Particularly excellent are good ratings of several research centres by the FTC. These are commended. Very good data were provided about study programmes, enrolled students, major employers, financial indicators, infrastructure, mobility, ISI journal published papers, and the introduction of extensive questionnaires in 2006. Similarly we note as very positive the introduction of quality monitoring indicators. The Self Evaluation Report demonstrated a high level of insight of the challenges facing the University and, during our meetings the management team demonstrated their awareness of and willingness to tackle these issues.

The self evaluation report can usually provide the team with detailed analysis, focussed Strengths /Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis and sufficient information to reflect coherent systems within the organisation. The report could have included further relevant information, including a more detailed SWOT analysis, but perhaps this was due to the extent and pace of change within the university. The team regrets that they could not obtain more information about the legal context and constraints

In general the university organisation, decision making, distribution of responsibilities are described in the Self Evaluation Report. Nevertheless the team also learned that the university is in a flux of changes which has intensified in the last two years. Many of these arrangements and changes are essential and intend to contribute to progress in a positive way. The university is active in improving all major operations including quality processes.

Having said this, the team had difficulty in gaining a clear transparent picture of university activity and processes. Whilst we appreciate that the pace of change contributes to a rapidly changing profile, we would suggest that the identification of relevant and accurate information in commonly accepted formats which is readily understandable is an essential tool that would assist the whole university to manage the change process. For example, it was made clear that becoming more competitive is a University goal but what was unclear is who the competitors are and how the University compares its performance with others. It is unclear to us whether this information exists but was not made available to us. Furthermore, there was no indication whether the university is using benchmarking for the evaluation of its performance or not.

7. Contexts and Constraints

Context and constraints about the conditions the University of Evora is facing but cannot change or influence owing to it the optimisation and enhancement of university operations, structure, output and quality – all have to take into account the context and constraints and permissible space these limitations are strongly imposing on the university.

The law grants universities in Portugal very wide autonomy however there are still constraints within this which hamper decision making and strategic responses. This autonomy did not substantially facilitate or create

improved performance, quality and competitiveness as expected. Instead it is slowing down the processes and increasing the bureaucracy in many university actions.

To mention some essential constraints and examples of disadvantages/ threats that the university has been facing;

- Unfavourable demographic trends
- Increasing competition of other universities and higher Education providers
- Demanding accreditation practices
- Insufficient infrastructure and laboratory equipment
- Increasing demand for quality and excellence
- Stiffening rules for funding
- Remote and less developed local economy
- Relatively low investment in research and development in the local region

The team is convinced that the University of Evora is aware of these threats, constraints and the associated context and has started to make adaptations in an active and dynamic way, to address the challenges presented by these. Indeed, during the past two years, visible and positively accepted improvements have been made including the introduction of schools and the proposed new operational management model. In this regard the team also highlights internal audit, quality processes, lifelong learning, and improvements in the website. The team also learned about positive developments for increasing research output and combining educational activities. We note the many constraints and the strong tendency for change to suggest that the university continues to adapt, focus and organise its internal activities.

8. General Observations

An appreciation of the constraints and context are essential in order to understand the observations and comments that the team will present about the operation of the University of Evora.

The University of Evora is a young university re-established in 1973. There are over 8000 students including 1600 in second cycle studies. The university awards 26 -33 PhD titles annually. The number of students has decreased slightly since 2005 for two years, but in 2007 the University reports a substantial increase of new enrolments. For a number of reasons the university has a dominant departmental structure with twenty departments and numerous scientific and pedagogical units, favouring separation between teaching and research which is reflected in the structure of 16 research centres. Centres have their own planning, funding and management. We notice that research centres are operated to a large extent by staff from departments and have a low level of employed staff and that the university considers that this separation results in an inadequate integration of teaching and research activities.

In the SER very little, if any, information was provided about the functioning of the General Board, Consulting Board and different units. Departments operate in six departmental areas which gave the team the impression that they are very loosely coupled and co-ordinated therefore possible synergic advantages are less

pronounced in spite of the existence of inter-departmental laboratories. Pedagogy related and research units count for more than 43 units, excluding service and staff units. The team had an impression that the university appears to operate as a confederation of units and presents as fragmented. The team was not provided with a Statute and cannot comment on the matter of interrelations and decision-making processes.

9. Mission

A comprehensive short wording of the mission and the university vision statement was not provided in the Self Evaluation Report, although a short series of statements outlined the University vision and mission.

The SER indicates that the University has the expectation that it will be a critical driving force for local and regional development and that its impact will be reflected at local and regional level. The Evaluation Team agrees that, given the economically, socially and culturally depressed nature of the region, this is essential. To this extent it seems that the University of Evora is a regionally focussed university which has, in addition, identified essential potential in certain areas to be a national or international player. The team supports the utilisation of this potential as a means for driving the national and international reputation of the University of Evora faster and better visibility.

The balanced functions of teaching, research and cultural activities are essential for supporting regional growth and promoting social, cultural and economic competitiveness for the region. As a public university, the University of Evora is responsible for operating in the public interest and demonstrating sound spending of publicly provided funding. This, in turn, implies efficiency, cost effectiveness, responsibility to the stakeholders, particularly students, employers and its own staff.

In the current climate of HEI, operational efficiency will be demonstrated not only through sound financial management, but also reflected in student progress, student employability rates, research, creativity, innovation, excellence and competitiveness at large.

The above explains the Evaluation Team's understanding of the University vision and mission and it is this understanding that has guided the team and served as a reference and departure point during the evaluation process. The team recommends that the University considers the above interpretation of its vision and mission and adopts a well shared vision and mission statement ensuring the widest possible ownership amongst all constituencies of the University of Evora.

10. Bologna Process

The university requested a special focus on the implementation of the Bologna Process.

The team noted that the University has recently restructured its programmes in line with the Bologna Process first and second cycles and that this has provided an opportunity to refresh curricula and introduce different methods of teaching and learning. Additionally the team noted the development of internal quality processes, greater consideration of employability of students, aspirations to increase internationalisation and student

mobility. Our conclusion is that the many changes taking place within the university are as a response to the constraints mentioned above. Similarly the Bologna Process was developed to assist universities, amongst other things, in meeting the demands of increased competition and declining national income streams. In preparing the report the team has borne these similarities in mind and suggest that a greater alignment with the Bologna Process may provide guidance in developing strategic plans and operational activity. Our observation is that Bologna generally refers to a process impacting across the range of university activity rather than a once and for all structural change to programmes and a reminder that the Bologna Action lines underpin the process and are not an end in themselves. To this extent the cultural and attitudinal changes that the Bologna Process signals are as important as the technical changes. The decision of the Rector, in 2006, to redefine the competencies of the Pro Rector to emphasise the role of innovation and quality promotion as well as overseeing the technical proposals for adjustment of study programmes in compliance with Bologna structures reflects an appreciation of this point.

The SER states that structural changes were introduced as a result of recent government requirements (p23). Additionally "The adoption of the new teaching/learning paradigm, implied by the Bologna reform, has been quite slow and has faced some resistance on the part of academic staff "(p16) and "total incapacity to regulate human resources is strongly influencing the capacity to implement Bologna reforms." (p20). The SER reflects an awareness of the challenges faced by the university in implementing the Bologna reforms across a range of activities and the team have endeavoured to consider Bologna in each of the sections below.

11. Teaching

Overall, students described a positive university experience and the majority of students that the team interviewed would recommend the University to others. In particular the availability of teachers for guidance and support was highlighted as positive and there were frequent mentions of innovation in teaching and learning. Additionally the students reported a vibrant student community, which in itself was attractive to them. Several students compared their own experiences at other universities and commented favourably on their experience at the University of Evora. Whilst this represents the overall experience there was significant expression that within this the experience was not consistent. There were examples of variations in the standards of teaching and learning approaches both within departments and between individual teachers.

Students also reported satisfaction with e-learning systems which have recently been introduced. The team was impressed by this uptake by both staff and students however felt that, whilst the e-learning platform had increased effective communication, the pedagogical benefits potential had not been fully realised. The education of teachers has recently begun with a promising start. A structured staff development programme would enable further development of student centred learning, e-learning and lifelong learning approaches. This may also be beneficial in ensuring that there was a consistent and positive student experience across the university.

Students are represented in a number of key bodies and committees however, whilst they feel that their views are influential at departmental level, this is not apparent at central university level. It was also noted that

students from the nursing school had no formal representation at all. It is essential to raise student interest in university affairs as they have the right and duty to provide concrete input to influence university life and decision making.

Student drop out rates and study duration are high compared to other countries in Europe. Information on employability suggested that some graduates from as many as twelve programmes were unemployed one year after completion. It's critical for the University of Evora to address this, not only for the sake of the students but also for the university itself due to the impact on funding. All programmes should be scrutinised and restructured to a broader base for better ensuring graduates' flexibility and better prospects of long term employability. To address the drop out rate (particularly in the first year) the university should explore the good practice from other European HEIs which include bridging courses, awareness raising regarding programme delivery, "buddying", improved and timely information, tutoring with greater social integration.

The Bologna reforms call for three cycle programmes. At the University of Evora there are a large number of first cycle (31) and second (57) cycle programmes but only a small number yet developed in the third cycle. The stated aim of the university is for second cycle programmes to have " Strong articulation with scientific domains that outstand by their scientific research" (SER p15) This is the result of several problems, the SER mentions that research is weak and not adequately supporting teaching in general and the team feels that the research culture (SER p14) is still weak and this may hamper the University of Evora's capacity to expand particularly in the third cycle PhD programmes because of accreditation problems (ENQA standards). To address this, the UoE should increase specificity and focus programmes to gain critical mass at second cycle which are linked to favourable research strengths and maybe in partnership with other HEIs to create third cycle programmes.

The team also notes and supports the stated internationalisation activities related to the implementation of first and second cycle programmes. In particular partnership and mobility programme initiatives are sound, while the joint programmes establishment needs to be elaborated in regard of areas and definition of expected benefits. There are One Hundred and One international protocols mentioned in the supplementary information, however it is not specified how many of these are active. It would be more beneficial to develop active strategic partnerships with a concentrated focussed and sound bilateral exchange of students with a limited number of institutions. Additionally the reporting of students and staff mobility should provide not only the number of students but in particular full time equivalent data such as the number of FTE staff or student semesters in order to effectively track the development of mobility.

At the departmental level those barriers which reduce or restrict student mobility should be identified and steps taken to remove these in order to offer an international experience to as many students as possible. More priority should also be given to providing information to students about mobility opportunities. It would be beneficial for staff to plan and spend longer periods at foreign universities, sufficient to establish academic and research links for ensuring joint international co-operation and competing for prestigious grants. This may prove essential in assisting in the achievement of the university strategic goals. Internationalisation is the best means to gain good practices and achieve research collaboration and large grants. The structures of the university in

providing support for co-operation and mobility need to be more effectively and strategically focussed, integrated and content co-ordinated.

For those students unable to benefit from periods of study abroad and to promote incoming student mobility, consideration should be given to expanding the number of programmes taught in a language other than Portuguese. An increase in incoming students will enhance the prospect of developing an Internationalisation at Home policy. It is recognised that the university acknowledges the difficulties in implementing this. "The absence of English taught courses and programmes constrains international mobility, in spite of the current efforts to overcome the situation." (SER p16).

12. Research

The SER (p11) lists the technology and knowledge transfer office, industrial property support office, the preparation of incubation entrepreneurial centre. The supplementary information gave information on the research strategy, restructuring proposals and current research performance. It is evident that the university is aware of the need to improve its research organisation, excellence and output and has taken steps to do this. The information provided shows that more format changes are in progress. The analytical support outlining expectations and proof for how, why and when the proposed activities would improve research performance and output was not presented to the team.

The team is strongly supportive of the activities the university has undertaken to amplify research; we are also convinced that these are positive developments. In spite of this, the team could find no evidence of a well-defined, synthetic and transparent structure with simple performance indicators. To be competitive in EU and global markets, the university has to be competitive particularly in new cultural and social know-how and knowledge production and utilisation. Further discussion on full economic costing of research would improve the insight of the university into which areas are potentially competitive.

Current research output is displayed in a format which does does make for easy comparisons. The competition is not mentioned nor output goals in regard of national and particular regional needs and possible obstacles. The average current output in published ISI papers, research grants obtained, PhD's granted and staff mobility are evidently low. Clear outcome-based evaluation of research results is required to monitor activity, abolish obstacles, initiate support where needed and thus ensure better progress.

The University of Evora is currently not capitalising on and fostering competitive advantages it may have by synergies of possible interdisciplinary research activities in certain areas. There are great possibilities that the University should start to use for enhancing reputation, excellence and visibility. The university should urgently define and select some agreed areas and priorities for enhancing university reputation, international visibility and research excellence at large.

13. Quality

Improving quality is at the heart of the Bologna Process. The development of quality culture implies changes in behaviour, attitude and activity which go beyond quality assurance and leads to changes in existing norms and values. The designation of a pro Rector responsible for Quality, with a dedicated team, is a signal that the university recognises the importance of the quality agenda and of developing internal quality processes. The process has begun but the culture needs to be created and linked to the mission strategy and all major operations of the university.

The evaluation team identified two main strands of related activity that have commenced but need further development. Firstly the collection of relevant, timely information that can inform decision making and highlight areas for improvement, the second is the development of a quality culture. It is suggested that paying attention to the latter will vastly increase the utility of the former. This needs extensive efforts at all levels to realise the transformation into quality culture.

All departments, units, staff and students should contribute inputs to the enhancement of the QA system and the development of a Quality Culture. This is essential for establishing shared and wide ownership. It is essential the system provide transparent, timely and immediate feedback to students, staff and university main bodies. The responsibility for acting and also providing support where needed, must be transparent, simple and clearly defined, including the timing for action.

The main expectations of internal quality systems and procedures are twofold. First, to identify adverse performance and trends quickly and providing enough possibilities and time to avoid critical situations. Secondly, to provide future-oriented analytical and synthetic input for constant and gradual improvement of quality at all levels and in all activities including student progress, expectation, education, research, administration, mobility or internationalisation. Comparing the quality assurance activities and arrangements described in the SER and supplementary information provides very few and minor confirmations of points one and two. Our statement is not a surprise to the university. The team strongly recommends that all the current activities for enhancing quality assurance at University of Evora are urgent.

Several measures have already been taken but the integration of these activities into a coherent quality system remains to be done, particularly with regard to closing feedback loops. If the QA system had been in a good standing some recent developments may not have happened. For example a large number of programmes were affected by falling demand and the loss or suspension of state funding pending compliance with minimum student numbers. Similarly, more than half of research centres are not successful in attracting or entitled to compete for national research funding. Only very recently was it realised that even the research output and performance constitutes a threat for the expansion of very much needed PhD programmes.

In a short time the University of Evora must establish shared and European best practice, tuned norms and values and take all necessary actions to establish and gain acceptance of an internationally comparative and competitive quality culture.

14. Autonomy and Management

The present law invests significant autonomy in the University of Evora, in some aspects, certainly more than in many other European countries. There is also a great deal of autonomy and independence of departments, research centres, be it by law or delegated. This wide autonomy with substantial fragmentation and numerous Heads, Chairs, Presidents and Directors does not seem to be supporting shared quality and performance nor progress and change. This fragmentation tends not only to slow processes and progress but also reduces transparency and slows decision-making and increases bureaucracy. This wide autonomy and fragmentation is today more or less outdated because wide ranging autonomy of a unit is not beneficial in the absence of relevant support services and a strong and efficient University management. Globalisation and competition is setting the criteria for good university operations and these current practices lack cost effectiveness, efficiency and competitiveness. The University of Evora must adapt to these changes and strive for efficiency, reduction of red tape and should make use of the given comparative advantages to enhance its competitiveness.

Competitiveness is built on research excellence, superior graduates and learning outcomes, Creativity, innovation and university leadership also contribute to this. No University is capable of being excellent in all areas. The University of Evora, with so many programme specialities, has to determine its priorities and strategies for enhancing its standing and international competitiveness.

Certainly, UoE is aware that a new model of structure and management is much needed. The team are alert to the essential points that the UoE should be aware of, that different "packaging" by itself does not raise quality of the "content and performance". Any restructuring should obey the rule that function precedes form as proposed in Aristotle's philosophy. Autonomy is useless if not supported by good results and orchestrated by management and functionality of all levels. Units should and must maintain sufficient autonomy for ensuring their flexibility, adaptation to changes and responding quickly to emerging possibilities. The educational research and autonomy for income generation should be maintained. Decisions influencing policy, vision, mission, quality, norms, values, reputation, standing, priorities, new staff selection and cost efficiency are matters for the top management. The introduction of a new Higher Education law has already instigated restructuring and adaptation within the university. The team are unable enter the debate and endorsement of possible new organisational models since the information that was provided for them was based on current operations and earlier legislation. Additionally, the team have been unable to access details of the new legislation. The shared model and added management, division of powers, responsibilities evidently must be elaborated by the University in accordance with new legislation.

The team is not able to make sound proposals in this regard since we have not obtained a sufficient analysis of current operations, a comprehensive SWOT analysis, a synthesis and goal specification in a wider context nor a proposal how the University of Evora intends to master their restructuring. The restructuring without a good analysis and understanding of the current situation and without a realistic shared vision, strategic plan may not deliver the expected benefits.

The team is aware of the urgency for restructuring particularly because of the new law introducing new constraints and context changes. All the future-oriented operations enhancements in all areas are strongly dependent on good and efficient management. Integration and not centralisation should be the goal of restructuring. The integration should follow the principles of maximal autonomy of sub-units in a positive way. A creative relationship amongst the hierarchy of management level and units is essential.

It is important to make test out sound solutions of the reforms, the verification of expected advantages and improvements before acceptance of changes. The changes should follow the issues of cost efficiency, efficiency, transparency, response time, sound division of powers and responsibilities. All of these new solutions have to support and ensure growth, accountability, creativity and international competitiveness with reputation and quickly establish the good standing of the university

15. Capacity for change

The team are aware that the UoE has strategic plans that take account of legislative and societal changes. These plans were not available to the team and it is therefore not possible to comment on the adequacy of these. The team's comments on capacity for change reflect their view of the key issues to be addressed.

The fragmented structure has created a confederation of autonomous departments, research centres and some units. The departments have a dominant influence in regard to appointing and promoting staff, with insufficiently developed internal quality processes, academic based management, and collective responsibility which drastically reduce the capacity for change.

Furthermore, academic collective decision-making does not promote efficiency and excellence but supports averaging and solidarity. The outside world, demands of society, the region, the economy and competition are changing much faster compared to the ability of University of Evora to adapt and change. In order to improve its capacity for change and adaptation the university needs to improve two areas in particular. Firstly, the services and understanding of society, customers' and stakeholders' needs, but also to improve the responsiveness to outside changes and demands. The team considers that these areas of UoE could be faster and more efficient in operation. These factors restrict the university's capacity to take a pro-active stance.

Secondly, the perception of the team is that the university culture, norms and values could be more orientated to external demands and may be quicker to respond to these without the need for external pressure. The University monitoring of opinions, demands and emerging opportunities needs to be decisive and coupled with the university strategic planning, management at all levels. It should follow the aim of providing timely information, support and enough flexibility for rapid action and change. This may put the UoE in a position to respond rapidly and to capitalise on emerging possibilities in a much more profitable, efficient and rewarding way.

The accountability for accommodating change must be embedded and fostered at all levels of operation. This demands adequate culture norms and values supporting change.

Excellence in capacity of change displace pro-active adaptation in university operations but also in activities like making proposals to the regional society for new knowledge opportunities, proposals for supporting enhancement and growth for the local and regional economy.

16. Conclusion and recommendations

16.1. Mission

The team recommends that the University consider the above interpretation of its vision and mission and adopt a well-shared vision and mission statement ensuring the widest possible ownership amongst all constituencies of the University of Evora.

16.2. Bologna Process

Current practice in implementing Bologna reforms should be extended to promote the cultural and attitudinal components which accompany structural changes and enhance appreciation of the need for change. In keeping with the notion that Bologna is a process which encompasses all areas of university activity, this general recommendation applies to the recommendations below, which have taken account of the implications of the Bologna process

16.3. Teaching

To build upon existing good practice in some areas, it is recommended that a structured staff development programme is instituted which would enable further development of student centred learning, e-learning and lifelong learning approaches within a strategic and institution wide context. Identification and dissemination of good practice in teaching and learning would also contribute to a more consistently positive student experience across the University.

It is essential to raise student interest in university affairs. They have the right and duty to provide concrete input to influence university life and decision-making. A system of student representation which allows participation at all levels across all areas should be developed

All programmes should be scrutinised and restructured to a broader base for better ensuring graduates' flexibility and better prospects of long term employability. To address the drop out rate (particularly in the first year) the university should explore the good practice from other European HEIs which include bridging courses, programmes, "buddying", improved information, tutoring and greater social integration

The university shouldl ensure better student-centred learning, linked more clearly to research; increase specificity and the focus of programmes, linked to research strengths at second cycle, to gain critical mass. Consideration should be given to strategic partnerships which will support this and also enhance capacity and content of third cycle programmes.

To accelerate and intensify the process of internationalisation, at the departmental level those barriers which reduce or restrict student mobility should be identified and steps taken to remove these in order to offer an

international experience to as many students as possible. More priority should also be given to providing information to students about mobility opportunities. To promote incoming student mobility, consideration should be given to expanding the number of programmes taught in a language other than Portuguese. An increase in incoming students will enhance the prospect of developing an Internationalisation at Home policy

The University should review its bilateral agreements with external partners and focus on active partnerships rather than quantity. Additionally a more coherent reporting system for student and lecturer exchange should be implemented.

The third cycle programmes need careful consideration and enhancement along the lines of best European practice

16.4. Research

The university should urgently define and select some agreed areas and priorities for enhancing university reputation, international visibility and research excellence. PhD studies and collaborative studies in international leagues are the best means for assisting research growth and overall pedagogical performance and a clear strategy for development in this area should be identified.

The team recommends that the university introduce simple, efficient outcome based evaluation of research results, to monitor activity and progress together with full economic costing which will enable sustainable priorities to be determined.

Competitive advantage should be fostered by exploring possible interdisciplinary synergies in research activities

16.5. Quality

The European Standards and Guidelines for the EHEA should serve as a reference for the enhancement and operationalisation of the QA system at University of Evora.

All departments, units, staff and students should contribute inputs to the enhancement of the QA system. This is essential for establishing shared and wide ownership.

It is essential the system provide transparent, timely and immediate feedback to students, staff and university main bodies. The responsibility for acting must be transparent, simple and clearly defined, including the timing for action.

Existing practices should be further developed to enhance the skill level of teachers and the quality of learning.

16.6. Autonomy and Management

A revised and tested university structure and model of management which reduces fragmentation, speeds decision-making and addresses the negative effects of departmental autonomy and is directed towards a

focussed, coherent institutional strategy is required. This may involve a reduction in the numbers of departments and departmental heads and directors.

16.7. Capacity for change

It is clear that university leadership is aware of the need to change across a range of activity. This needs to be communicated to the wider university community so that they become more aware of the drivers for change. Accountability for accommodating change must be fostered and embedded at all levels of operations to ensure the development of adequate cultural norms and values that support change.

Clear communication of university vision, mission and strategy, in particular related to regional growth and development, would increase pro-activity and enhance capacity for change

ENVOI

The EUA team wishes to thank the university once again for the excellent arrangements made for its visit and work, for the hospitality offered and for the opportunity to get to know an interesting institution in a complex situation. It was a great pleasure to come to UoE and to discuss with staff, students and external stakeholders the challenges which UoE faces in its next phase of development and the various strategies currently being adopted to meet these. We hope that our comments and suggestions have been helpful, and we wish the university the best for the stimulating future it is facing.