IEP

EUA-Institutional Evaluation Programme

UNIVERSIDADE DE LISBOA

EVALUATION REPORT

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FOREWORD

1. The concept of the Institutional Evaluation Programme

1.1 Introduction

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 planning
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision making and strategic planning as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

1.2 The philosophy

Following two successful conferences on the theme of *quality and evaluation*, the Permanent Committee of the then CRE (Conference of European Rectors), which became EUA (European University Association) in 2001, decided in 1993 to offer its then 500 member universities the possibility to be reviewed so that their strengths and weaknesses in the area of quality management might be assessed.

The central mission of the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of EUA is to strengthen the strategic steering capacity of higher education institutions and to enhance their autonomy and their accountability to the public.

Through this Programme, EUA wishes to offer an external diagnosis provided by experienced university leaders and experts coming from different higher education systems in Europe. This diagnosis should explain the quality nodes and the main actors in the university's daily decision-making processes. It should be a tool for institutional leadership preparing for change. The IEP does

not wish to provide the university with a blueprint for its development; rather the review process is a consultative one or, in Martin Trow's terminology, an *"external supportive review"*[1].

Through an evaluation of higher education institutions in the context of their specific mission and goals, the IEP actively supports higher education institutions in fulfilling their public mission by providing recommendations on the full range of their activities (research, teaching and learning and service to society) and on their institutional organisation, processes, policies, structures and culture. These supportive recommendations are based on European and international good practices.

By reviewing institutions in different countries, IEP hopes to disseminate examples of good practice, validate common concepts of strategic thinking, and elaborate shared references of quality that will help member universities to re-orient strategic development while strengthening a quality structure in Europe. The review aims at helping the universities derive the following benefits:

- An increased awareness, across the university, for the need to develop an internal quality culture

- An increased capacity for setting and implementing strategic goals

- An effective complement to national quality assurance procedures through the use of peers and an improvement-orientated approach.

1.3 The methodology

The methodological instrument of the Programme focuses on the universities' capacity to change, including their strategic planning and internal quality monitoring, and examines if all the preconditions are assembled to make each and every institution more adaptable and responsive to the changing higher education environment at local, national, European and international level.

More specifically, the IEP institutional evaluation methodology is guided by four central strategic questions which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

- What is the institution trying to do (and why)? This (twofold) question refers to the vision, mission and aims of the institution. A clear strategy is important in order to decide on priorities, strategic objectives and the means to reach these objectives

- How is the institution trying to do it? The evaluation investigates the way in which the institution attempts to fulfil this mission in terms of organisation, governing structures and processes;

- How does the institution know it works? This question points at the necessity to have sound quality arrangements in place. The evaluation team looks at the institutional policies and practices regarding quality and other relevant processes in terms of actors, structures and procedures

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[1]   M. Trow: "Academic Reviews and the Culture of Excellence", *Studies of Higher Education and Research*, 1994/2.

- How does the institution change in order to improve? This is a key question for IEP's institutional evaluations. It is the institution's capacity for change and improvement that allows it to deal with a fast-changing environment and to respond to evolving needs.

The IEP is committed to continuous improvement and adheres to good international and European practices, such as the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. In 2008/9 the IEP itself underwent an external evaluation commissioned from the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). This external evaluation is in accordance with the ESG.

The total number of universities that have participated in the Programme so far is more than 200, ten of which are located in six non-European countries. The remaining universities are distributed among 36 European countries and more than 30 of them have already undergone follow-up evaluations as well.

2. Coordinated evaluations of Portuguese higher education institutions by IEP

Over the past few years and in addition to the individual institutional evaluations, the IEP has also conducted "coordinated evaluations" at the national or regional level in which all universities or a sample of institutions are evaluated. Since 2001, the IEP has reviewed all the universities in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Ireland, and Slovakia and a number of institutions in Catalonia, Greece, Portugal and Turkey. These evaluations are usually funded by a governmental agency. Each institution is first evaluated individually followed by an overall general evaluation. The major goal of the coordinated evaluations is to identify the systemic conditions of the universities in the country that would allow a good dynamic of change in institutions as well as the conditions that would strengthen the anchoring of their national higher education system in Europe.

In Portugal, a system-wide extensive, independent, voluntary and objective review of higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics, public and private, and their units) is being conducted by the IEP following international criteria and paying special attention to governance mechanisms, access rules, institutional autonomy, funding, internationalisation and other relevant higher education policies. The Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) has facilitated institutional evaluations for up to ten Portuguese institutions per year who, on a voluntary basis, wish to gain institutional evaluation experience by having an international supportive evaluation by IEP aimed at improving management practices and quality assurance procedures. The review of individual institutions follows IEP's standard practice for institutional review. It also includes some additional objectives which in simple terms are:

- to identify the overall positive characteristics, development status and opportunities available for improvements

- to examine governance and management systems and make suggestions for improvements

- to explore institutional capacity for adaptation, development and change

- to learn how students – including non-traditional students – are recruited, life long learning is facilitated, and the knowledge-base of the Portuguese population is improved

- to examine student exit routes including types, relevance and utility of available qualifications

- to make recommendations that foster the institution's rationalisation and diversification.

The IEP reviews of individual institutions are complemented by two other recent evaluation exercises of higher education in Portugal. Firstly, ENQA reviewed the accreditation and quality assurance practices of Portuguese tertiary education[2]. Secondly, an OECD review of the tertiary education system and policies[3] has examined the performance of Portuguese tertiary education by reference to other OECD countries and provided recommendations for its improvement[4].

The overall exercise is designed to ensure that the tertiary education system in Portugal gains maximum benefit and input from comprehensive evaluations by teams of experienced international experts and that procedures and processes in place can be benchmarked against best international practice. The results from all these complementary exercises are expected to form part of a broader initiative by the Portuguese government.

3. Institutional evaluation of the "Universidade de Lisboa" (UL)

In September 2007, the Rector of the "Universidade de Lisboa" (UL), Professor António Sampaio da Nóvoa, requested an institutional evaluation by the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of European University Association (EUA). This evaluation has been undertaken as part of the system evaluation of Portuguese higher education institutions, which has been commissioned of IEP by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education of Portugal.

The IEP Steering Committee appointed, as members of the evaluation team for the UL, the following:

- Henrik Toft Jensen, former Rector, University of Roskilde, Denmark, as team chair

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[2]   ENQA: "Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Portugal", ENQA Occasional Papers, Helsinki, 2006.

[3]   OECD: "Reviews of National Policies in Education: Tertiary Education in Portugal", Paris, 2007.

[4]   A significant difference should be identified between the system evaluations made by OECD and the coordinated evaluations made by EUA/IEP. While OECD evaluates directly the whole higher education system at the national level, EUA/IEP's evaluation results from the synthesis of the parallel individual institutional evaluations conducted in a restricted period of time and under concrete and visible terms of reference and on a voluntary basis.

- <u>Hannele Niemi</u>, Vice-Rector, University of Helsinki, Finland

- <u>A, Lee Fritschler</u>, professor, University George Mason, President Emeritus, Dickinson College, United States

- <u>Rossella Iraci Capuccinello,</u> PhD student, Universitá Cattolica di Piacenza, Italy

- <u>Dionyssis Kladis</u>, professor, University of the Peloponnese, Greece, former Secretary for Higher Education in Greece, as team coordinator

The preliminary visit and the main visit to the UL took place in March and September 2009 respectively.

- <u>Hannele Niemi</u>, Vice-Rector, University of Helsinki, Finland

- <u>A, Lee Fritschler</u>, professor, University George Mason, President Emeritus, Dickinson College, United States

INTRODUCTION

4.   The evaluation process

4.1   Outline of the two visits

In keeping with the framework of the IEP, the institutional evaluation of the UL consisted of several phases. First, the evaluation team received a 40-page ***self-evaluation report*** (SER) with informative appendices. The SER provides a good illustration of the current situation of the University and its development over the last few years. The SER was produced by a self-evaluation steering group, appointed by the Rector and chaired by the Vice-Rector Prof. Antonio Vallera. The self-evaluation steering group coordinated the overall self-evaluation process as well.

Upon receiving the SER, the evaluation team made a ***first visit*** to the UL on 16-18 March 2009 to get acquainted with the University and to help clarify any issues arising from the SER. The ***second visit*** of the evaluation team took place on 27-30 September 2009. During the two visits, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the situation of the UL with many of its actors and with the main stakeholders, namely:

- with the leadership of the University at central level
- with members of the staff and with students from five out of eight Faculties (Letters, Fine Arts, Law, Medicine and Sciences), from two out of three Faculty-like Institutes (Social Sciences and Education) and from one Research Institute (Molecular Medicine)
- with key-actors of the University (the Deans of all Faculties, the persons in charge of quality assurance, representatives of the Student Union and with members of one of the Pedagogical Councils of UL)
- with key-persons of the administration
- with outside partners (including representatives of public authorities and other stakeholders).

During the two visits, the evaluation team had also intense and in-depth discussions with the Rector of UL Professor António Sampaio da Nóvoa and the Rectorate of the University, as well as with the Self-Evaluation Steering Group and with Doutora Ana Nunes de Almeida, one of the Pro-Rectors of the UL, who was the liaison person of the UL with the evaluation team and who was responsible for the efficient organisation of all those meetings and discussions.

The evaluation team, therefore, had the opportunity to meet the broad spectrum of actors at the UL. At the same time, the evaluation team also had the opportunity to discuss the role of the University with the external partners and their relations with it.

On the last day of the main visit, the chair of the evaluation team, Professor Henrik Toft Jensen, presented the team's ***oral report*** to an audience consisting of the Rector, the leadership of the UL at various levels, members of the university community in general (teaching and administrative staff, researchers and students), as well as external partners. The oral report constitutes the basis of the present ***evaluation report***, which also results from all written information, from interviews with various actors in the University and with external partners and from the evaluation team's observations during the two visits.

4.2 Outline of the review

During the meetings, the evaluation team had the opportunity to interview many leading members of the UL: professors, researchers, members of the administrative staff and students, as well as outside partners of the University. In total, the evaluation team met around 200 staff and students, all engaged in the development of the University, enthusiastic and eager to develop the University. They were all very open and willing and they actively participated in lively discussions with the evaluation team, presenting their views about the quality culture within the University, the mission and the vision of the UL and its dynamics for change and improvement, its current situation (including constraints and opportunities) and its future prospects.

As mentioned already, the self-evaluation process was steered by the Self-Evaluation Steering Group. As mentioned in the SER and as was explained by the Self-Evaluation Steering Group, the self-evaluation process was a positive experience apart from the fact that few people were actively involved. Furthermore, the self-evaluation process helped in a better self knowledge in the University through collecting important data.

The evaluation team appreciated the work done in the SER, which covered almost all issues. This is why, at the end of the first visit, the evaluation team asked for only little additional information, which had to do merely with the teaching staff career status and the policy for quality assurance in the UL. The University provided the requested additional information in the agreed time. The evaluation team considered the SER as an honest and critical analysis of the situation, presenting at the same time the vision and the expectations of the University for the future.

The evaluation team would like to express its sincere thanks to the Rector of the UL, Professor António Sampaio da Nóvoa, and to the liaison person, Doutora Ana Nunes de Almeida, for the efficient preparation and organisation of the two visits which provided the evaluation team with effective working conditions in which to fulfil its duties. The evaluation team is also very grateful for the generous hospitality of the UL. It was indeed a pleasure to work in the friendly atmosphere extended to all the people involved. Finally, the evaluation team wants also to express its gratitude to the people of the UL for the openness and willingness to discuss all issues concerning the University during all our meetings.

4.3 Outline of the evaluation report

The IEP is not concerned with the assessment of the quality of teaching and research activities; rather, it is concerned with the assessment and the improvement of the existing mechanisms and processes for strategic management and quality assurance and, in that context, with the assessment and the improvement of the capacity of the HEIs to adapt to the rapidly developing higher education environment in Europe and in the world.

In this context, the evaluation team's task is to scrutinise the mechanisms existing in the reviewed institution for quality assurance and its capacities for strategic change. This evaluation report, therefore, emphasises the current strengths and weaknesses regarding the capacity for change and

expresses a number of recommendations that may be taken into account in the future development of the UL. Of course, this evaluation report should be read in conjunction with the SER of the UL with the corresponding additional information that was provided to the evaluation team. Furthermore, the comments are based – under the framework of the IEP - on two intense and rather short visits: one two-day first visit and one three-day second visit. The evaluation team also collected a significant amount of information on the Portuguese higher education system, but it is not possible for the analysis to go into such details. The comments and recommendations, therefore, will be confined mostly to major issues of concern within the UL. The recommendations, together with the corresponding reasoning and analysis, appear underlined in the text of the evaluation report. A summary of recommendations is presented on page 24. It should also be noted that throughout the body of the evaluation report, many ideas of the evaluation team appear, which we do not consider as real recommendations but as reflections which UL can discuss.

5.   The national and institutional context

5.1   Higher Education in Portugal

Higher education in Portugal is regulated by Law No. 62/2007 which came into force on 10 September 2007 and which sets out the details of what institutional autonomy will mean for Portuguese HEIs. Further on, the implementation of the Bologna Process to higher education studies in Portugal is ruled by the Law 107/2008.

In Portugal, higher education is organised into a binary system consisting of university and polytechnic institutions which are either public or private. The two sectors are distinguished by the degree of their vocational and professional orientation. Universities are high-level institutions delivering Bachelor [*licenciado*], Master [*mestre*] and Doctoral [*doutor*] degrees, while Polytechnics are high-level institutions delivering Bachelor [*licenciado*] and Master [*mestre*] degrees. Regarding research, Polytechnics are required to conduct research that is applied in nature and which has a vocational or professional outlook. Universities by contrast undertake basic research.

Higher polytechnic education in Portugal has been in existence since 1986. According to Article 7 of Law No. 62/2007, the polytechnic education institutions *"are high level institutions oriented towards the creation, transmission and dissemination of the professional culture and knowledge, through the articulation of the study, the education, the oriented research and the experimental development"*. The polytechnic sector includes the polytechnic institutes (Polytechnics) and polytechnic schools which are not integrated into polytechnic institutes; the latter may either be integrated into a University or remain as independent non-integrated polytechnic schools.

The following Tables 1 and 2, illustrate the basic statistical data regarding higher education in Portugal[5].

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[5]   The data in Tables 1 and 2 have been taken from the National Bologna Report for Portugal for the two-year period 2005-2007, which was submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group in December 2006 by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (General Directorate for Higher Education).

Table 1

Number of higher education institutions in Portugal in 2007-08

Distinction according to ownership	University education		Polytechnic education	
	Universities	University schools non-integrated into Universities	Polytechnic institutes	Polytechnic schools non-integrated into polytechnic schools
Public	14	5	15	15
Private	14	33	2	54
TOTAL	28	38	17	69

Table 2

Number and percentage of students enrolled in 2005-06

Types of institutions	Number of students	Percentage of students related to total	Percentage of students related to various groups
Public higher education	**275.961**	**75,0%**	**100,0%**
University education	171.575	46,6%	62,2%
Polytechnic education	104.386	28,4%	37,8%
Private higher education	**91.973**	**25,0%**	**100,0%**
University education	61.754	16,8%	67,1%
Polytechnic education	30.219	8,2%	32,9%
University education	**233.329**	**63,4%**	**100,0%**
Public	171.575	46,6%	73,5%
Private	61.754	16,8%	26,5%
Polytechnic education	**134.605**	**36,6%**	**100,0%**
Public	104.386	28,4%	77,5%
Private	30.219	8,2%	22,5%
TOTAL	**367.934**	**100,0%**	——

It should be noticed, however, that although the university sector was predominant in 2005-06 with 63,4% of the whole higher education student population, it shows decreasing trends concerning the share in the period between 1997-98 (71,3%) and 2005-06 (63,4%), while during the same period the polytechnic sector shows increasing trends from 28,7% in 1997-1998 to 36,6%[6].

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[6] Observatory of Science and Higher Education: "Evolution of the number of students enrolled in higher

5.2   The profile of the UL

The UL was founded in 1911 but its historical roots relate it to the Portuguese University founded in Lisbon in 1288. Being the oldest and the first university existing in Lisbon has led to very close bonds between the identities of both – the University and the city. As stated in the SER[7], *"the growth and the specialisation of the UL is a mirror of the emerging of scientific knowledge in Portugal"*.

Almost all functions of the UL are located in its main campus in close interrelationship with the life of the city. Only the Faculty of Fine Arts is located downtown and only few other functions are scattered around the city and its outskirts.

Under the new statutes of the UL, it comprises today eight (8) Faculties (Letters, Fine Arts, Psychology, Sciences, Law, Medicine, Pharmacy and Dentistry) and three Faculty-like Institutes (Geography and Land Planning, Social Sciences and Education), as well as numerous research entities (Centres and Institutes), including an Institute for Interdisciplinary Research.

According to the SER[8], the total number of students in 2008-09 was 21.689, distributed among the three cycles of studies as follows: 16.103 in first cycle, 4.142 in second cycle (Masters) and 1.444 in third cycle (Doctorate). However, the SER notes that the number of doctorate students is underestimated. At the same time, the number of full-time-equivalent teaching staff was estimated to 1.533 in 2007, while the number of non-teaching staff was estimated to 1.254 for the same year.

In contrast to all major cities in Portugal, which have one and only one public university, in Lisbon the figure is much complex. There are three major Universities (Universidade de Lisboa, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Universidade Nova de Lisboa) with student numbers varying between 16.000 and 22.000, one university Institute (Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa) with 6.000 students, one open university (Universidade Aberta) focusing on distance learning, one large polytechnic Institute (Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa) with 13.000 students and several polytechnic schools (Escola Superior de Enfermagem, Escola Nautica Infante D. Henrique, Escola de Hotelaria). All these are public institutions, but there are also in Lisbon many private universities and polytechnic institutes and schools. Therefore, the position (and the role) of the UL as the first and oldest (and biggest) university in Lisbon should be seen and understood today in the light of the above complex higher education landscape.

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education by district and NUTS II, 1997-98 to 2005-06", 2007.

[7]   UL, Self-Evaluation Report (2009), p. 2.

[8]   UL, Self-Evaluation Report (2009), p. 3-5.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

6.   Linking vision with strategy and strategy with action

In simple words, the vision of the UL is to be a national benchmark as a world-class university, establishing close ties with the local, national and international academic community and also establishing close ties with the city of Lisbon. Today, the UL considers, and reconsiders, its steps towards the future in a changing environment which is determined, on the one hand, by the reforms in Portuguese higher education during the recent years and, on the other hand, by the basic principles of the Bologna Process and the key-characteristics of the emerging European Higher Education Area.

This means that the UL is entering an era of substantial renewal and renovation brought about by changes in the global and domestic environment. During both visits, the evaluation team had the opportunity to realise that the leadership and the members of the university community (faculty, staff and students) for the most part are eager to accommodate to these new demands and build an even better university.

As stated at the SER[9], *"the UL has been the first Portuguese university to complete the process of reform and adaptation to the new model of organisation and governance of higher education institutions (introduced by Law 62/2007). The new Statutes and the Strategic Plan ("Uma Alameda de Futuros") were approved at the end of 2008 and are being implemented in order to build a renewed University of Lisbon"*. The strategy of the UL is built around the following three fundamental aims:

▪   Reinforcing the centrality of research and establishing stronger links between research and postgraduate studies
▪   Restructuring study plans with emphasis on interdisciplinarity and transversality
▪   Reconsidering the governance model of the University and fostering cohesive and effective management.

In that context, one of the key issues today for the UL seems to be the balance between centralisation and decentralisation of structures and basic functions. The UL has resulted from the merging of pre-existing schools with a rich history, and naturally adopted a decentralised model of functioning. It can also be said that the UL follows the decentralised tradition and culture of the Universities of Lisbon in contrast to the situation of the new Portuguese Universities which are more or less centralised. This means that the above mentioned balance is not an easy affair as it has to overcome established attitudes. Therefore, one of the main aims of the measures that the leadership of the UL has taken in order to implement the strategy is to raise the overall institutional allegiance inside the University and to foster comprehensiveness.

In accordance with these aims, the leadership of the UL has organised its future steps around the following five initiatives of major strategic importance:

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[9]   UL, Self-Evaluation Report (2009), p. 1.

- Establishment of five strategic areas around which all education and research activities of the University are reorganised in a multidisciplinary spirit, strengthening at the same time the interdisciplinary dynamics
- Restructuring of academic units (Faculties, Faculty-like Institutes and Research Centres) and establishment of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research
- Setting up of new governance structures
- Modernisation of management processes (aiming also to improve institutional attitude in the UL), the establishment of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre being one of the first steps to that direction
- Establishment of procedures to open up to society and to foster internationalisation.

Furthermore, it is important to note here that, on top of these five initiatives and transversally to them, the leadership of the UL considers quality assurance a separate major priority.

7.   The new strategic model (the five strategic areas)

As mentioned earlier, the establishment of five strategic areas, around which all education and research activities of the University (including Faculties, Faculty-like Institutes and Research Centres) are reorganised, is a key initiative aiming for better coordination and integration of education and research within the University on a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary basis. In that sense, the establishment of the five strategic areas is not regarded as contrasting or opposing the existing academic structure of the University where the Faculties are the basic academic units. As supportive evidence to that, it is interesting to note that, at the same time, it was decided to stick to the existing Faculty structure with Deans and all the organisation of undergraduate teaching. It was decided to continue the Faculties and Research Centres plus three Faculty-like Institutes as places where staff was occupied.

The evaluation team considers the establishment of the five strategic areas in order to enhance collaboration and interdisciplinarity as very interesting. If implemented in the right way, the University as a whole – education, research and services – could benefit from the implementation of these five areas.

However, it seems that this new strategic model has not yet been fully accepted by all Faculties. If the new model is to foster the innovative route of the University, that all aspects of the model must be clarified and the Faculties encouraged to support it. The model should be put in action as soon as possible. In parallel, answers should be given to any doubts on the necessity and the value of the new model.

The evaluation team recommends that the University connect the new structures with the existing Faculty structure. Splitting the University in two parts should be avoided. Having, on the one hand side, a rector structure with five strategic areas, quality assurance and common services and, on the other hand, the traditional Faculty structure without any real connections would be deleterious.

Furthermore, the evaluation team suggests that, to implement these changes, the university leadership develop a clear statement on what are the responsibilities of the different levels and entities in the university organisation. For example, Faculties and Institutes would still be the primary source for matters concerning curriculum and faculty, student and staff evaluation. These responsibilities should be stressed; they might be shared among various Faculties. They would be shared; perhaps they would be strengthened, but not taken away.

The evaluation team considers the new strategic model as a good starting point to the future of the University. Furthermore, it believes that it is important for the University to use this new strategic model to create changes to make itself stronger as a university and as a university more orientated to the surrounding society. This new model should, however, be continuously debated, discussed and elaborated in the whole university community including external stakeholders. The five strategic areas should be starting points for discussion and in a later reflection they can be amended to cope with new challenges. It is important that the areas do not just create new territories but also encourage collaboration between areas.

At this point, the evaluation team would like to stress three factors, which it considers as important for the implementation of a new strategic model.

The first factor is to develop the institution-wide attitude within the university. It is a *sine qua non* for strategic choices to be implemented and for setting strategic priorities in a university. The university leadership should establish concrete policies and undertake the appropriate initiatives in that direction, respecting at the same time the diversities and the specific characteristics of each individual unit. The establishment of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre and of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre are two very good initiatives in that direction. Another significant step would be to offer students the possibility to take courses in Faculties other than the one in which they are registered.

The second factor is the support given to the strategic changes from the leadership of the university, and at the same time, the approval of the strategic changes from the Faculties and the grassroots. The support from the leadership is substantial although there is some fear from Faculties that the University has taken on too much. If results start to emerge soon, fear will diminish and could be replaced by enthusiasm. There is also an undercurrent of fear that the changes would unnecessarily diminish the strength of some of the existing units. These reactions seem quite normal and are well within the bounds of both rationality and expectations. This is why the steps forward must be well prepared and a wide consensus sought.

The third factor is to show quick success of the new plans. One way to foster and speed up implementation of a strategic plan is to show success quickly. This can be achieved by finding manageable, doable projects which could be implemented relatively quickly and would show success. This approach should be taken in other areas as well. The coordinators of the five strategic areas should move quickly to find areas where projects could be taken jointly and make agreements relatively quickly. These areas should be interesting and indications of greater things to come. In other words, success can act as a motive force towards more and further changes.

At the UL, interest in trying new forms and new procedures is in the air. The leadership of the University should take advantage of this moment to bring about change by implementing from the ground up. And, furthermore, it should show success in areas where it is known that success can come and build upwards on that base.

8.   Academic leadership, governance and management

The UL seems to have a rather complex organisational structure with regards to governance. However, as the Rector explained to the evaluation team, this structure has become a necessity for the University in order to combine the rules set by the new Law (less participatory and more governance bodies) with the need for representativeness, transparency and effectiveness.

The new Law provides for two collective governance bodies at central level: the General Council or Board (including also external members) and the Management Board. Furthermore, the new Law leaves each University the responsibility to decide for itself (through its Statutes) whether it will also establish an academic Senate (to improve internal participation and representation) or even other consultative bodies. The UL has established the Senate to ensure wide participation and involvement, and it has also established another intermediate body (the University Council) to ensure more effective coordination between the various levels of governance. At the same time, many responsibilities have been transferred to the Scientific Councils and the Pedagogical Councils at Faculty level for related matters. However, in many of our meetings we were told that the Pedagogical Councils have lost part of their power with regards to education, which has been shifted in practice to the Scientific Councils. In order to ensure the necessary balance, the evaluation team suggests that the Pedagogical Councils should be strengthened with regards to their functions and upgraded with regards to their roles. As the Pedagogical Councils are the bodies which better ensure the equal participation of students, the strengthening of their functions is important also in order to ensure their participation in the governance of the university and to increase the communication between students and teachers.

The evaluation team understands that one of the major concerns of the university leadership is to improve comprehensiveness and institutional spirit within the UL. The relationship between academic leadership at central level and the leadership of the Faculties and other units (Institutes and Research Centres) is a key issue in that direction. The establishment of the five strategic areas is expected to help towards a better coordination and communication (in both top-down and bottom-up bases). Deans are important agents in this work together with the coordinators of the five strategic areas. The coordinators' role should, therefore, be clarified. They are supporting persons and help different Faculties, Institutes and Research Centres to find joint strengths.

In that context, the evaluation team wants to share some ideas towards strengthening academic leadership:
▪   To promote the vision of the University role in society, the leadership could organise joint public and in-house discussions and try to get as many partners involved as possible

- Synergy of larger research units and multidisciplinary groups would provide best practices (from inside the university itself and from the best international universities)
- To encourage teachers, professors and students to overcome earlier barriers and try to find incentives that make changes attractive, the leadership could provide them with some extra strategic money for their pilot projects, which create a new shared and multidisciplinary culture.

Furthermore, the relationship between academic leadership and management needs to be clarified. Both concepts seem to be diffused (and confused) in the discussion about centralisation and decentralisation. The academic leadership should promote a vision of the university as the holistic unit that has an important mission in a local and global context, while management is more linked with organising cost-effective practical activities in the university. In simple words, efficient management can support the academic leadership. The evaluation team noted that the leadership of the UL keeps the appropriate balance with management, taking full advantage from all existing structures, combining successfully democratic participation with efficiency. At the same time, efficient management can also support the goal of comprehensiveness through common and/or shared functions and structures. Thus, the UL should continue its efforts towards modernisation of management processes. The establishment of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre is one excellent initiative which should be supported and further improved.

In the above context, the evaluation team considers the following actions as improving efficient management and comprehensiveness:

- Organising basic services (including maintenance of building, security, public tenders in acquisitions)
- The common accounting and financing systems (including salary payments, bank management, project management)
- The common information management and communication system
- Creating common, reliable databases for serving academic leadership
- Providing a well-functioning intranet with a single sign-on application for university communication.

With regards to financial management, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss in detail the related issues with the Administrator of the UL, including also the establishment of a new model for allocating resources inside the University. The evaluation team commends the UL for its efforts in financial management and realises that it would be useful for the University to have information on the basic budget from the Ministry of Finance for the next three years.

One issue, that is strongly related to both leadership and management and which the evaluation team considers of significant importance to improve the institutional attitude within the University, is the issue of communication (including also information and data management). It seems that communication is not good enough at the moment. The UL should develop proper initiatives in that direction. Good means of conveying information to students, faculty and staff should be devised. One initiative of this type could be to create a university-wide weekly newsletter with information important for the whole university. This newsletter should also convey a sense of things happening as a result of the hard work of the University community. And perhaps this newsletter could be on-

line. <u>Furthermore, the need of fundamental improvements of data management systems is evident. It includes a comprehensive plan of university-wide data gathering, storage and retrieval system in order to follow up and to have up-to-date information about achieving strategic objectives and performance indicators at faculty and university levels</u>.

<u>Furthermore, the UL should ensure that all the Faculties accept that they are a part of a university-wide single sign-on internet system. Therefore, the University should develop effective structures and processes for collecting and analysing data and information, which will also offer services to the Faculties.</u>

9.   Student-centred teaching and learning in the context of the Bologna Process

The University has come through a considerable amount of course restructuring due to the implementation of the Bologna Process. In this regard, the evaluation team registered a certain amount of confusion among the different members of the academic community on what is the meaning of the paradigm shift to student-centred learning and what is the meaning and usefulness of the learning outcomes approach.

With regard to the redefinition of the courses in terms of ECTS credits based on learning outcomes and student workload, there seem to be different practices in place in the various Faculties. In some of them, the students have pointed out that the credits do not reflect the true total workload (to achieve the defined learning outcomes) or that the same amount of credits has been allocated to different modules irrespective of the workload they entailed.

In this regard, <u>the evaluation team suggests the use of student questionnaires to reassess the consistency between ECTS credits, learning outcomes and the actual workload sustained by students (combining an a-priori evaluation with a posteriori revision or confirmation of it).</u>

The evaluation team would also like to make some further comments at this point. <u>Bologna should be approached in a deeper way than the simple structural changes in the degrees and the cycles of studies. The evaluation team's impression is that the Faculties of the University do not pay the appropriate attention to the impact of Bologna on the relevance of the curricula and on the teaching and learning approaches. Initiatives should be undertaken so that the perception of Bologna becomes clear to leadership, teaching staff and students of all Faculties, making the shift to student-centred approaches a reality; and the relevance of curricula to employability should also be analysed. To that end, the UL should also establish a concrete policy to track and support the employability of its graduates.</u>

The role of the teachers in the student-centred educational approaches is fundamental. But the new Paradigm requires new didactic and learning approaches. The traditional ones cannot help anymore. Therefore, the evaluation team recommends that the UL develop <u>concrete actions in order to improve the pedagogical and teaching competences and qualities of the academic staff, taking due</u>

account of the new approaches. The development of such actions is considered of great importance for the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

Furthermore, the evaluation team received complaints from students in some Faculties concerning the restricted opening hours at the Libraries. It is of paramount importance in this new régime that students have complete accessibility to educational material and means (in both written and electronic form) . Therefore, the evaluation team recommends that the UL should extend opening hours at the Libraries. If this is too expensive as a running cost, UL should consider a central University Library with extended opening hours.

10. Student services

There are several important services for students which are provided by Faculties in different ways and with different levels of effectiveness. The evaluation team has appreciated some of the best practices with regards to student services (some Faculties offer pedagogical and psychological support, some have an active role in organising student placement). However, in other Faculties we have registered the need for better and more systematic placement and counselling services for students. This makes clear that the above best practices need to be shared all around the University. Of course, the evaluation team acknowledges the diversity of the student body and of student needs with regard to pedagogical and psychological support across different Faculties. However, we think that it would be worth considering the option of financing some activities at the central level. Furthermore, the evaluation team believes that the University could also profit from the opportunity given by the creation of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre to enlarge and systematise the services offered to students in this field.

11. Research

Research activity is a high priority of the UL and is mainly conducted through the Research Centres. The strategic goal of the UL for academic restructuring includes the Research Centres as well. Key elements of this goal are a) strengthening of research followed by its integration into the University, b) improvement of interdisciplinarity in research, and c) linking research with graduate studies.

The evaluation team fully supports this strategic goal and its recommendation here refers only to some thoughts concerning implementation. To strengthen research and integrate it into the University means to empower the Research Centres, bringing them at the same time within the scope of the University. Accordingly, the evaluation team also supports the introduction of the full-cost model of accounting in the Research Centres, as well as the need for raising the overheads they pay to the University. At the same time, three parallel needs appear. The first one has to do with the coordination of the decentralised research functions and structures. This seems to be successfully achieved through the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research. The second need has to do with the administrative support for contracted research which should be consolidated inside the UL. The third

need is to ensure that the researchers at the research centres continue to contribute to the teaching at UL.

Furthermore, it should be noted that the UL has a great potentiality in some Research Centres (e.g. molecular biology). It seems that they have found the value of critical mass and synergy. The evaluation team believes that it is important for this kind of culture to give impulse to the whole University. In other words, these bottom-up strengths should be consolidated within the five strategic areas. As for the University as a whole, it needs a long-term joint strategy where Faculties and Research Centres are real actors with their own action plans.

12. Internationalisation

Improving internationalisation is one of the main goals of the new strategy of the UL. The evaluation team believes that internationalisation should be improved in two major axes: fostering international cooperation, and networking and increasing international mobility.

The first axis is to be considered among the strengths of the UL. Therefore, the only recommendation here to the UL would be to further improve international cooperation and networking.

With regards to the second axis, however, it seems that there are still things to be done. In that sense, a first recommendation should be that the UL establish policies in order to increase the number of both visiting scholars and incoming students. At the same time, the evaluation team realised that there is a problem with regards to recognition of study periods abroad. It seems that recognition of study periods abroad is not always automatic and is not based on the learning agreement signed by the student. The evaluation team recommends, therefore, that UL ensure recognition, so that students can believe in the credits that are mentioned in the respective learning agreements; otherwise, students will be put off from participating in international mobility programmes. Some Faculties seem to have an efficient system of recognition of study periods abroad. The evaluation team suggests that these cases should serve as examples of best practices to the others.

13. Links with society

As mentioned in the SER[10], *"the UL has always had a strong presence in public debate and in society in general, probably the strongest of all the national universities"*. The SER further considers this fact as not surprising, *"given the small number of universities one generation ago and the centrality of Lisbon"*. The challenge now for the UL is to maintain its strong links with society at large in a new national and local landscape where the offer of higher education services is much higher and too diversified (public/private universities/polytechnics).

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[10]   UL, Self-Evaluation Report (2009), p. 10.

To cope with this challenge is high in the priorities of the UL and opening up to society stands as one of its main strategic goals. In two meetings with external partners, the evaluation team had the opportunity to see the reciprocal desire of both the UL and society to interact. Therefore, <u>the only recommendation to the UL on this issue should be to find ways to develop new initiatives in order to further improve and strengthen links with society. Perhaps, possibilities for new forms of advisory board structures should be explored.</u>

14. Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning should be considered one of the basic means for a university to open up to society. According to the recent Leuven Communiqué (2009)[11], *"Widening participation shall also be achieved through lifelong learning as an integral part of our education systems"* and *"Lifelong learning is subject to the principle of public responsibility"*. Furthermore, *"The implementation of lifelong learning policies requires strong partnerships between public authorities, higher education institutions, students, employers and employees"*. The European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning developed by the European University Association provides a useful input for defining such partnerships.

<u>The evaluation team noted that the UL does not yet include lifelong learning among its higher priorities. However, as already mentioned, it is one of the key issues to opening up the University to society. For that reason, the UL should consider lifelong learning as an ideal opportunity.</u>

15. Quality culture

The term "quality culture" defines the overall attitude of a HEI which focuses on the concept of "quality" and which, thus, applies to issues like quality assurance, quality assessment, quality improvement, etc. In the context of the IEP methodology, quality assurance offers the means through which a university will be in position **to know whether it is doing well**. It certainly comes from the necessity of going beyond data, figures, statistics, quantitative elements and deals with the qualitative dimension. Quality is a central element in European higher education today. Furthermore, it has also assumed a key role in the Bologna Process, and the *"European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education" (ESG)* have already been adopted by the European Ministers in Bergen in May 2005, thus also building a European perspective and a European context for quality assurance in higher education. Furthermore, every country participating in the Bologna Process is committed to establishing its own quality assurance system by 2010 according to the above ESGs.

For its own part, EUA actively encourages its member universities to implement their own internal quality assurance mechanisms and to develop a quality culture shared among universities

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[11]   European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, Leuven Communiqué, April 2009.

throughout Europe. As stated in the Berlin Communiqué (2003)[12], *"in consistency with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework"*. This statement is further specified in the London Communiqué (2007)[13] with a new statement: *"Since the main responsibility for quality lies with HEIs, they should continue to develop their systems of quality assurance"*. It is a task therefore for every European HEI to develop its own structures and procedures ensuring genuine quality assurance.

A great number of HEIs have established internal quality structures (procedures, offices, services, committees, working groups or agencies) evaluating the level of quality of teaching, learning, research, services to students, in the components of the institution including communication, library, budget, computer facilities, etc. They base their work on indicators and standards (both qualitative and quantitative), methods and analyses, some of which are defined at the European level in the form of the above-mentioned ESGs. Nevertheless, quality culture does not start and end only with structures and procedures; every individual enrolled in the institution also has a responsibility to replace non-functional or poorly functional practices with ones that bring better and more effective and efficient results, that contribute to improving the overall quality.

The evaluation team notes with satisfaction that the issue of quality is at the centre of concerns in the UL, and that significant steps have been made towards establishing structures and processes to build and retain a quality culture within the whole University. We have witnessed and appreciated the enormous effort and commitment of the University to develop a system for quality assurance in order to create the conditions for continuous improvement of the university quality in all its aspects.

There has been an inclusive and democratic discussion on the principles that should be the base for the University Policy on Quality Assurance, and the Senate has approved the corresponding policy document. Furthermore, the UL has started the quality work and has taken first important steps in promoting quality culture. To that end, one informal structure has already been established (a Working Group for Quality Assurance – GTGQ), composed mainly of representatives of all Faculties and Faculty-like Institutes and supported technically by the Quality Office (GARA).

When dealing with quality assurance processes, there is always a danger that quality assurance is seen either as a responsibility of only a few committed persons or as feedback questionnaires. In parallel, bureaucratisation is always a threat to the effective establishment and operation of a quality assurance system. These dangers and threats should be considered carefully by the UL in designing and operating its quality assurance system. Furthermore, there is certainly a need for the quality assurance processes to be designed in relation to the needs and situation of different Faculties and of the university community as a whole. This will significantly help in the development of a quality culture. Therefore, the evaluation team suggests that the UL should consider the use of currently existing governance bodies to define a concrete strategy in the field of quality assurance to implement effectively the already approved policy. As an element of this strategy, the quality culture should be diffused into all units and functions of the University. To that end, the informal structure

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[12]   European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, Berlin Communiqué, September 2003.
[13]   European Ministers in charge of Higher Education, London Communiqué, May 2007.

should be transformed into a formal one and become an integral part of the University's statutes, and concrete commitments should be undertaken by all units and functions.

One last comment that the evaluation team would like to make regarding quality assurance is the one related to the questionnaires for assessment of teachers and courses by the students. We commend the University for the partial success with the student questionnaires and will recommend the University to ensure that the questionnaires are used throughout the UL. However, we also recommend that the UL should reconsider the issue of these questionnaires. With that in mind, the UL should consider the need for the results to be publicised and should also consider their impact on the quality of teaching. Furthermore, answers should be found on how to motivate students and teachers to participate actively in the process and make best use of the questionnaires. Finally, the teaching evaluation process should be carried out with the proper methodology and should be integrated into the overall internal quality assurance process.

The questionnaires are a good starting point. However, the evaluation team suggests that this work should also be accomplished by other actions, like the following ones:

- Monthly joint discussions between students and teachers (coffee mornings etc.
- Using "focus-group" students selected by students themselves to act as informants for providing feedback about issues that should be changed or improved (many practical things can be done fairly fast)
- Share experiences and best practices between faculties
- Organise pedagogical support for teachers (this is a long term process and for this the university level plan is needed – see also paragraph 9).

As a concluding remark, the evaluation team recommends that the UL should further strengthen its internal quality culture processes, continuously improving their effectiveness. The compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines regarding internal and external quality assurance should be ensured in the most systematic manner. To that end, the Working Group for Quality Assurance should undertake a more active role, becoming part of the formal structure contributing to the overall responsibility for internal quality assurance throughout the university but especially at departments where there is little awareness of the importance of this process. The result of the quality analyses should be widely disseminated throughout the University as the best way to foster, through better knowledge of the institution, a sense of belonging, a spirit of collegiality, a stronger identity.

16. Capacity for change

Alongside quality assurance issues, the IEP focuses on the ***capacity for change***. The reason for this is a widespread conviction that European HEIs are exposed to increasing ***demands*** from society and the labour market and in many countries they are also exposed to growing ***competition*** from other institutions of higher education. Especially with regards to European HEIs, the new landscape connected to the emerging European Higher Education Area and the principles of the Bologna Process are one more reason and necessity for change.

If the HEIs do not seize the initiative themselves and show their capacity for change and their adaptability to new conditions in an era of mass higher education, then there may be the **risk** that even the important core academic values, which we undoubtedly all want to preserve, might be in jeopardy.

HEIs have always had, and still have, the twofold duty of **defending** traditional values and of **leading** society into new areas (and new eras). There have been periods in their very long history, when HEIs were too successful as defenders of tradition at the price of **isolation** from society and petrifaction. But fortunately enough, we can also look back to times when HEIs were true centres of **innovation** in many respects.

The capacity for change requires firstly the identification of all the factors requiring change, as well as of the features and the content of the change needed. Secondly, it requires each HEI to determine its own mission in conjunction with the changes needed and to set its priorities. Thirdly, it requires determining the strengths and weaknesses of each HEI with respect to its own identity and characteristics and to the existing external conditions. Finally, it requires an efficient mechanism to assess continually the course of each institution towards its objectives, towards the changes required. What we have to ask ourselves is whether the traditional organisation and leadership of a HEI will be capable of fulfilling its task at the beginning of the 21st century.

The evaluation team wants to stress that **capacity for change is a sine qua non condition for a HEI in a modern society**. The capacity for change requires a clear mission, inspired vision and realistic objectives for the institution. It also requires effective strategic planning and the establishment of a quality culture. Furthermore, it requires tools such as action plans and milestones. These are the internal requirements. There are, of course, external requirements as well. They have to do with resources (both financial and human), with the legislative framework and the relationship between HEIs and the state (autonomy), which have to encourage and support the institutions in strengthening their capacity for change, and, finally, with the relationship between HEIs and the society at large following the principle of the public responsibility for (and of) higher education and research and the quest for real accountability.

Apart from these internal and external requirements, the capacity for change requires, above all, inspiration. It requires inspired, motivated and determined people. It is extremely important to realise that elements of strategic planning do not themselves change HEIs. Changes in institutions have to be driven by people: staff and students and an inspired leadership making sure that the actions in the action plans are under way and that the milestones are achieved.

Concerning the UL, the evaluation team has to acknowledge that **change** was the key concept in almost all our contacts with the people of the University, and primarily with its leadership – the Rector and his rectorate team. The commitment of the University to change was not only clear but also commanding and pressing. The strategic plan of the UL serves the need for change. The concrete actions in the context of the action plan serve also the same need. Under these circumstances, the evaluation team has only to acknowledge that the UL traces with solid steps its way towards the necessary change for its own improvement and that it fulfils all requirements to succeed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

17. Conclusions

For the evaluation team it is clear that the UL is an institution with great possibilities. It has a good reputation in Portugal and in the world. It has a plan in place which could move the University forward on several fronts. Yet, it must meet many challenges at the same time. It has to face issues deriving from the on-going changes in Portuguese higher education and in European higher education as well.

These challenges should be considered as opportunities for UL. On the one hand, they offer a clear perspective for the future and, on the other hand, they operate as driving forces motivating and stimulating all actors inside the University. From the evaluation team's viewpoint, the UL has many strengths to rely on in order to face its fascinating future. But we want to stress here only the most important among them: a visionary, effective and inspiring leadership; the commitment of its people (staff and students); and a positive atmosphere internally.

We have seen a university with many qualities in teaching and research. We have also seen a university on the move; with many new initiatives, partly due to changes of the university law, partly due to university policy. The University is now in the middle of the changes. We should, therefore, wait for the results. Nevertheless, our analysis has convinced us that the UL is heading in the right direction for its future.

It is in that context that the evaluation team tried to approach the work done so far by the UL. Our recommendations are intended to be a contribution to the process of change and to help the UL to make the most of the opportunities open to it and to cope with the threats scattered along its route to the future. At the same time, our report aspires to function as an inspiration for the University as a whole, but more specifically for all those people, students and staff, who have a concern for its future.

18. Summary of recommendations

We summarise here the main recommendations, as they have appeared underlined in the text above.

Paragraph 7: The new strategic model (the five strategic areas)

1.   It seems that the new strategic model (five strategic areas) has not yet been fully accepted by all Faculties. If the new model is to foster the innovative route of the University, all aspects of the model must be clarified and the Faculties encouraged to support it. The model should be put in action as soon as possible. In parallel, answers should be given to any doubts on the necessity and the value of the new model.

2. The evaluation team recommends that the University connect the new structures with the existing Faculty structure. Splitting the University in two parts should be avoided. Having on the one hand side a rector structure with five strategic areas, quality assurance and common services and on the other hand the traditional Faculty structure without any real connections would be deleterious.

3. Furthermore, the evaluation team suggests that, to implement these changes, the university leadership develop a clear statement on what are the responsibilities of the different levels and entities in the university organisation.

4. The institutional attitude within the university is a *sine qua non* for strategic choices to be implemented and for setting strategic priorities in a university. The university leadership should establish concrete policies and undertake the appropriate initiatives to that direction, respecting at the same time the diversities and the specific characteristics of each individual unit. The establishment of the Interdisciplinary Research Centre and of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre are two very good initiatives in that direction. Another significant step in that direction would be to offer students the possibility to take courses in Faculties other than the one in which they are registered.

5. It is important that the leadership of the UL shows quick success of the new plans. One way to foster and speed up implementation of a strategic plan is to find manageable, doable projects which could be implemented relatively quickly and would show success.

Paragraph 8: Academic leadership, governance and management

6. In order to ensure the necessary balance, the evaluation team suggests that the Pedagogical Councils should be strengthened with regards to their functions and upgraded with regards to their roles. As the Pedagogical Councils are the bodies which better ensure the equal participation of students, the strengthening of their functions is important also in order to ensure their participation in the governance of the university and to increase the communication between students and teachers.

7. The UL should continue its efforts towards modernisation of management processes. The establishment of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre is one excellent initiative which should be supported and further improved.

8. With regards to financial management, the evaluation team suggests that it would be useful for the University to have information on the basic budget from the Ministry of Finance for the next three years.

9. Communication (including also information and data management) seems that is not good enough at the moment. The UL should develop proper initiatives in that direction. Good means of conveying information to students, faculty and staff should be devised. One initiative of this type could be to create a university-wide weekly newsletter with information important for the whole university. This newsletter should also convey a sense of things happening as a result of the hard work of the University community. And perhaps this newsletter could be on-line. Furthermore, the

need of fundamental improvements of data management systems is evident. It includes a comprehensive plan of university-wide data gathering, storage and retrieval system in order to follow up and to have up-to-date information about achieving strategic objectives and performance indicators at faculty and university levels.

10. The UL should ensure that all the Faculties accept that they are part of a university-wide single sign-on internet system. Therefore, the University should develop effective structures and processes for collecting and analysing data and information, which will also offer services to the Faculties.

Paragraph 9: Student-centred teaching and learning in the context of the Bologna Process

11. Bologna should be approached in a deeper way than the simple structural changes in the degrees and the cycles of studies. The evaluation team's impression is that the Faculties of the University do not pay the appropriate attention to the impact of Bologna on the relevance of the curricula and on the teaching and learning approaches. Initiatives should be undertaken so that the perception of Bologna becomes clear to leadership, teaching staff and students of all Faculties, making the shift to student-centred approaches a reality; and, also, so that relevance of curricula to employability should also be analysed. With that in mind, the UL should also establish a concrete policy to track and support the employability of its graduates.

12. The evaluation team recommends the use of student questionnaire to reassess the consistency between ECTS credits, the learning outcomes, and the actual workload sustained by students (combining an a-priori evaluation with a-posteriori revision or confirmation of it).

13. The evaluation team recommends that the UL develop concrete actions in order to improve the pedagogical and teaching competences and qualities of the academic staff, taking due account of the new approaches. The development of such actions is considered of great importance for the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

14. The evaluation team recommends that the UL should ensure more opening hours at the Libraries.

Paragraph 10: Student services

15. With regards to psychological and counselling services to students, the evaluation team believes that the University could also profit from the opportunity given by the creation of the Common Resources and Shared Services Centre to enlarge and systematise the services offered to students in this field.

Paragraph 11: Research

16. To strengthen research and integrate it into the University means to empower the Research Centres bringing them at the same time within the scope of the University. Accordingly, the evaluation team also supports the introduction of the full-cost model of accounting in the Research Centres, as well as the need for raising the overheads they pay to the University. At the same time,

three parallel needs appear. The first one has to do with the coordination of the decentralised research functions and structures. This seems to be successfully achieved through the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research. The second need has to do with the administrative support for contracted research which should be consolidated inside the UL. The third need is to ensure that the researchers and the Research Centres continue to contribute to the teaching at UL.

17. The evaluation team believes that it is important that the research culture give impulse to the whole University. In other words, these bottom-up strengths should be consolidated within the five strategic areas. As for the University as a whole, it needs a long-term joint strategy where Faculties and Research Centres are real actors with their own action plans.

Paragraph 12: Internationalisation

18. With regards to international mobility, the evaluation team recommends that the UL establish policies in order to increase the number of both visiting scholars and incoming students. At the same time, the evaluation team realised that there is a problem with regards to recognition of study periods abroad. It seems that recognition of study periods abroad is not always automatic and is not based on the learning agreement signed by the student. The evaluation team recommends, therefore, that the UL ensure recognition, so that students can believe in the credits that are mentioned in the respective learning agreements.

Paragraph 13: Links with society

19. The only recommendation to the UL on this issue would be to find ways and develop new initiatives in order to further improve and strengthen links with society. Perhaps, possibilities for new forms of advisory board structures should be explored.

Paragraph 14: Lifelong learning

20. The evaluation team noted that the UL does not include yet lifelong learning among its higher priorities. However, as already mentioned, it is one of the key issue to opening up the University to the society. For that reason the UL should consider lifelong learning as an ideal opportunity.

Paragraph 15: Quality culture

21. The evaluation team suggests that the UL should consider the use of currently existing governance bodies to define a concrete strategy in the field of quality assurance to implement effectively the already approved policy. As an element of this strategy, the quality culture should be diffused into all units and functions of the University. To that end, the informal structure should be transformed into a formal one and become an integral part of the University's statutes, and concrete commitments should be undertaken by all units and functions.

22. The evaluation team commends the University for the partial success with the student questionnaires and recommends the University ensure that the questionnaires are used throughout the UL. However, the evaluation team also recommends that the UL should reconsider the issue of

these questionnaires. With that in mind, the UL should consider the need for the results to be publicised and should also consider their impact on the quality of teaching. Furthermore, answers should be found on how to motivate students and teachers to participate actively in the process and make best use of the questionnaires. Finally, the teaching evaluation process should be carried out with the proper methodology and should be integrated into the overall internal quality assurance process.

23. As a concluding remark, the evaluation team recommends that the UL should further strengthen its internal quality culture processes, continuously improving their effectiveness. Inspiration from the European Standards and Guidelines regarding internal and external quality assurance should be used. To that end, the Working Group for Quality Assurance should undertake a more active role, becoming part of the formal structure contributing to the overall responsibility for internal quality assurance throughout the university but especially at departments where there is little awareness of the importance of this process. The result of the quality analyses should be widely disseminated throughout the University as the best way to foster, through better knowledge of the institution, a sense of belonging, a spirit of collegiality, a stronger identity.

ENVOI

Coming to the end of this report, the evaluation team feels the need to express once again its sincere thanks to the people of the UL for the excellent arrangements provided to make our two visits a challenging and delightful, although very intensive, experience. At the same time, the evaluation team wishes to thank the UL for the generous and overwhelming hospitality.

The evaluation team wants also to express its gratitude to the staff and students of the UL for the openness and willingness to discuss with us all issues concerning the University during all our meetings. It has been a great pleasure and a very stimulating experience for us to be introduced to the UL during this specific and crucial period both for Portuguese higher education, but, also, for higher education in Europe at large.

As a final word, the evaluation team has been positively impressed by the commitment and the engagement of all people in the UL, especially of its leadership. We are convinced that the initiatives undertaken by the leadership of the UL are contributing to take the University in the right direction and we strongly support the leadership along this road.