

**INSTITUTO POLITÉCNICO DO PORTO**  
***EUA EVALUATION REPORT***

*June 2007*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **The EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme**

In 1993 the European University Association (EUA; formerly CRE) took the decision to offer its member universities the possibility of being reviewed in order to assess their strengths and weaknesses in quality management. The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) was introduced to the member institutions in 1994. IEP is, today, a tool for strategic change based on a self evaluation and an external peer review process undertaken by senior international institution leaders. This review process is a consultative and supportive one since EUA does not wish to direct the institution with a solution for its development.

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 has grown to more than 750 universities and 34 national Rectors' Conferences in 45 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.

EUA has, since 2001, 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 (EUA, 2005a), Slovakian universities during 2006-2007 and the Portuguese Higher education system during 2006-2007. In the

long-term perspective, the EUA hopes to contribute to the promotion of a quality culture among European universities, and to disseminate examples of effective strategic management among its member universities.

### **A short summary of the working method**

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.

During the visits the Instituto Politécnico do Porto (henceforth referred to as IPP) was asked to examine:

- how it defines and implements its long- and medium-term aims,
- how it manages its external and internal constraints and opportunities shaping its academic development and
- how it develops and implements its quality enhancement strategies.

During the evaluation process, emphasis was placed on the institution's Self-Evaluation Report in order to contribute to its understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

The Self-Evaluation Report of IPP (2006) followed EUA's Guidelines and provided the EUA Team with the necessary background information and contained both descriptive and analytical data. The report gave a comprehensive general overview of IPP. The Self Evaluation Steering Group explicitly expressed that they appreciated the Self Evaluation process and learned much from it. The EUA Team was impressed by the aims and the procedure set by the

Rector in order to establish IPP as the best Instituto Politécnico in northern Portugal.

*The visits*

The preliminary visit took place from 19 to 21 November 2006, and the main visit was from 18 to 21 March 2007. During both visits, the EUA Team met the President, Professor Vitor Correia Santos, the Pro-President, Luis Miguel Pinho, the Information Systems, Vice-President Professor José Freitas Santos, the Quality Management, Vice-President Professor Rosário Gambôa, the Adjunct-President Marina Sousa, and the Liaison person Dr. Maria de Jesus de Sousa Lima.

During the *preliminary visit* the EUA Team met the President, the Presidential team, the Self Evaluation Structure Group, the Deans at the School of Engineering, at the School of Accounting and Administration, at the School of Music and performing Art, and at the School of Allied Health Sciences together with representatives from the teaching staff, the Directors and representatives of the students from these Schools. The EUA Team also met representatives of external partners (stakeholders), and representatives of the central institutional policy-making staff.

During the *main visit* the EUA Team met the President, the Presidential team, the Self Evaluation Structure Group, the Deans from the seven Schools, representatives of students' unions, representatives of external partners, Dean and representatives of teaching staff at the School of Management and Industrial Studies, Vila do Conde, at the School of Technology and Management of Felgueiras, at the School of Education, the Director of Foundation of Porto Polytechnic Institute, the Library Director, representatives of IPP researchers, and representatives of the academic staff.

The EUA Team wishes to mention that both visits were excellently organised. Moreover, the EUA Team was pleased to note the good working relationship between the Rector and the organising team. The EUA Team thanks the Rector and his team for their generous hospitality

### **The EUA Evaluation Team.**

EUA's Evaluation Team of Instituto Politécnico do Porto consisted of :

- Professor Bent Schmidt-Nielsen, Former Rector of the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Denmark, head of the EUA Team,
- Professor Robin Farquhar, Former President of Carleton University and The University of Winnipeg, Canada,
- Secretary-General Luc Van de Velde, Flemish Council of Institutions of Higher Education, Brussels, Belgium, and
- Associate Professor Airi Rovio-Johansson, secretary of the EUA Team, Gothenburg Research Institute, Göteborg University, Sweden.

### **The structure of the report**

The following first part of the report is an analysis of the context and constraints that influence the opportunities of the IPP and the institutional norms under which the IPP is operating. The second part of the report analyses the IPP's capacity for change and possible areas for improvement. The third part contains the recommendations the EUA Team wishes to make.

## **CONSTRAINTS AND INSTITUTIONAL NORMS**

Rapid societal changes, since the mid-1980s, have placed increasing demands on European governments and on higher education institutions to make them support societal agendas beyond the sole provision of education, research and

development. “Those demands include direct involvement in economic development, regional development, and social inclusion through widening participation; sector skills development; continuous professional development; exploitation of the research base; business innovation and competitiveness; and graduate employability” (Wedgwood, 2006, p. 136). In most European countries the entire framework of higher education is changing from a national to a European and a global framework. One aspect of the educational restructuring and transformation is the governing of education – from government to governance – which also implies a changing role of the state. The Glasgow Declaration states that “Europe needs strong and creative Universities as key actors in shaping the European knowledge society through their commitment to wide participation and lifelong learning and by their promotion of quality and excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation activities” (EUA, 2005b, p. 2).

This Declaration enlarges the perspective of higher education by pointing out: “This will be achieved by self-confident institutions able to determine their own development and to contribute to social, cultural and economic well-being at regional, national and European and global level.” On the one hand, the engagement of universities in society is enriching, and on the other hand the universities have to take “the responsibility for providing a broad research-based education to students at all levels in response to society’s growing need for scientific and technological information and understanding” (EUA 2005b, p. 4; EUA 2005c).

The Bologna process (Bologna Declaration, 1999) and its three cycles (Berlin Communiqué, 2003) induce new pressure on institutions in the EU countries. The need of new educational programmes is obvious as is the change of focus from teaching to learning in all modules and programmes in third level education throughout the European Higher Education Area. This shift of focus

calls for a new educational culture in undergraduate and post graduate education. Teachers in higher education need to become aware of the increasing need to acquire new skills and to change roles from being the authority and communicator of knowledge to becoming a creator and facilitator of learning and a monitor of new learning possibilities offered to a variety of student groups (Reichert and Tauch, 2005). To sum up, one of the main features of the Bologna reform is the need improve the traditional ways of describing qualifications and qualification structures. Students' learning outcomes means what students are expected to achieve and how students are expected to demonstrate that achievement. Learning outcomes are used to define and introduce to the students the demands of knowledge and skills of each course and each programme at each level of studies.

In the context of the European educational system as well as in the Portuguese higher education and school system “life long learning” has become a necessity for professional development of researchers, academic teachers, and teachers, at all levels throughout their lives. At the same time, increasing autonomy, deregulation and differentiation as proposed, but not fully implemented, key concepts result in demands for institutional transparency and accountability.

### **Higher Education in Portugal**

In November 2005, the Portuguese government asked OECD to review its higher education system and policies and examine it by reference to other OECD countries and provide recommendations for its improvement. The government also decided that the OECD review should be complemented by (a) a review of the accreditation and quality assurance practices of Portuguese tertiary education by the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA), and (b) an independent, voluntary review of Portuguese higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics, public and private, and their units),

following international criteria, and under the coordination of the European University Association (EUA).

The main questions and themes put forward by the government to the reviewing groups were (Tertiary education in Portugal, April, 2006, Version 1.1., p. 3-4):

“1. *Regulating and accrediting the supply of tertiary education*: How to foster diversity and quality, with the necessary specialisation? Which level of public regulation to facilitate the adequacy of the supply of tertiary education to labour market? How should tertiary education contribute to reform and promote the knowledge base of labour market in Portugal? [...]

2. *Strengthening scientific excellence in higher education*: Which level of public funding to guarantee the adequate level of science and technology and the growth of the knowledge base? Which implications for the organization of the supply of higher education and, in particular, for post-graduation education? Which research and academic careers? [...]

3. *Governance and institutional autonomy in higher education*: Which legal statues and systems foster modern institutions? [...]

4. *Broadening the tertiary education spectrum*: How to enlarge the number of students and help qualify the Portuguese population? Which social support and loan system?”

In general, polytechnics differ from universities in four ways: (1) they have lower graduate unit costs; (2) they give emphasis to practical learning; (3) they supply graduates to specific (mostly intermediate) segments of the labour market; and (4) they do not offer higher degrees through research. In evaluating the cost/benefit of research funding at universities and polytechnics it is important not only to apply general considerations but compare carefully the actual level of research potential and presented quality.

Technology transfer and the development of employable graduates with practical know-how, underpinned by analytical and problem-solving abilities cannot be expected if polytechnics are transferred into simple teaching institutions without any possibilities for applied or basic research within appropriate fields.

It has to be noted that the Portuguese Government has sought to reinforce the expectation that polytechnics will be different from universities and that they should be valued for their different and important role. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is considerable contention about the wisdom of this position, especially as it applies to Portugal's larger polytechnics like IPP.

This is the background for the EUA evaluation of IPP. With reference to the OECD review (September 2007 or later) and the ENQA review (November, 2006), this EUA review of IPP occurs at a time when IPP is in the transition process from the old Portuguese higher education system (a binary system) to the new system within the scope of the Bologna reform, which means that new regulations about various higher education areas are still missing. The OECD report will form a valuable document as a basis for further development of higher education in Portugal. It is obvious that firm statements on the binary system in Portuguese higher education will be important. The Portuguese government is planning to introduce comprehensive new legislation in July 2007 governing higher education and the Institute has a relatively new management team and organisational structure - so IPP is in a state of flux, and the EUA evaluation and its recommendations have to be seen in this context of transition.

## **IPP**

IPP is one of the 23 Institutos Politécnicos in Portugal, founded in 1985 within the framework of the re-launch of the Polytechnic Higher Education sector in

Portugal in 1979. Initially, two units - the School of Education and the School of Music (later including the Department of Performing Art which led to the constitution of the School of Music and Performing Arts) - were the core of IPP. *“Governmental directives led to the integration of the School of Accounting and Administration in 1989 and the School of Engineering in 1989”* (Self Evaluation Report, 2006, p. 3). In 1990 the School of Management and Industrial Studies in Vila do Conde and in 1999 the School of Management and Technology of Felgueiras led to the expansion of the core of IPP. Finally, in 2004, the School of Allied Health Sciences was integrated into IPP. Today IPP consists of seven Schools with a high degree of autonomy (Self evaluation Report, 2006, p. 3). We commend the initiative taken to formulate a precise Strategic Plan for IPP based on a well-defined mission statement and followed by a structured implementation plan with “mile-stones” and monitoring procedure. This initiative should be continued, based on a working group composed of the Presidential team, deans and student representatives.

### **In terms of resources**

Like many European higher education institutions, IPP has to cope with increasing international competition, the increasing cost of education (equipment, buildings etc.), the increasing importance of inter- and multidisciplinary and internationalisation, all in the framework of diminishing educational resources. The governmental budget of most European countries today imposes restrictions on the operation of higher education institutions and affects negatively their research, teaching, and services to the students.

For example, the EUA Team met academics and students at the School of Music and Performing Art who all were happy and proud to belong to IPP, but they all felt that they had too many students for the facilities available. They also pointed out that they needed more space, and showed the EUA Team a building which was supposed to be an expansion area for them – but it needed extensive

renovations, which had not yet started. The academic staff had heavy workload as teachers and on top of that they had an administrative workload. There was an inadequate administrative support staff.

To sum up the needs: (1) expansion of teaching area for the School of Music and Performing Art; (2) more administrative support staff for this School; (3) allocation of resources for research, in terms of reduced teaching time in all Schools; and (4) allocation of resources for Master's or PhD studies for teachers.

Another School with inadequate resources is the newly integrated School of Allied Health Sciences, which needs a new infrastructure and new teaching facilities, for example laboratories, and the laboratory equipment is woefully insufficient.

### **In terms of teaching**

The restructuring of the education programmes to make them compatible with the Bologna Declaration means new Bachelor's and Master's programmes.

The restructuring of subject and courses were done by teams of teachers of the seven Schools in a positive atmosphere. Academics seemed satisfied with the Bologna reforms, but said that there was still work to be done. Teachers told the EUA Team about all the Master's programmes which were sent to the Ministry for authorisation, of which only six have so far been approved for implementation by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

The degree of autonomy of the Schools was discussed in several meetings with academic staff during the visits. Some of them see only a few advantages (and some disadvantages) by being incorporated into IPP (e.g., internationalisation) --

although some inter-School joint curricula are now beginning to get developed; however, the geographic distance among Schools is problematic in this regard.

The EUA Team met undergraduate students, who seemed to be unacquainted with frequent course evaluations. Several of them had studied up to five years and had not been asked to answer a single questionnaire relating to a finished course. The Teaching-Learning Process Evaluation System (SAPEA) needs to be further developed before it suits the expressed aims and it can be done in several different forms. The EUA Team also got examples of course discussions which had been used to give feedback to the teachers of the course. However, if student feed-back is not collected in such cases, the department misses the opportunity to use students' opinions in building a strategy for future development of the educational process.

The students told the EUA Team that they chose to study at IPP because it is more practically-oriented than the University of Porto's programme and because their initial degree can be obtained in 3 years (rather than the 5 it takes to get a degree at the neighbouring University); also, they appreciate the fact that most of their teachers remain active in the professional field while instructing at IPP.

The students' major complaints in more than one School seems to be that (1) they lacked involvement in IPP's policy-making procedures concerning courses and study programmes; (2) their tuition fees are too high (about 900 Euro/year); (3) the government doesn't provide adequate financial support to encourage student participation in Erasmus-type study-abroad semesters; and (4) the particular needs of working students aren't adequately accommodated (e.g., there are insufficient evening and weekend classes available for those who must hold down jobs in order to afford the tuition fees).

Against this background, it is evident that the quality of teaching and student learning must be the future focal points. In the discussions with academics and students, the EUA Team found that IPP lacks systematic quality assurance procedures. The EUA Team found a few examples of such systems which were established and regularly used for instance at the School of Accounting and Administration, School of Education and School of Management and Industrial Studies. Two other school, namely the School of Engineering and the School of Management and Technology in Felgueiras, use quality assurance systems in accordance with ISO 9001:2000.

Evidently, IPP does not steer nor monitor an overall quality assurance system which focuses on undergraduate education in order to amend and reform the organisation of undergraduate teaching and courses (such as unbalanced mixtures of theory and practice or weak interdisciplinarity) with the aim of changing student learning from mere reproduction of facts to deep learning and understanding of the content of teaching and the education programmes.

To build a quality culture in IPP and all schools based on international experience and best practice, EUA's documentation (Froment, E., Kohler, J., Purser, L. and Wilson, L., 2006; Sursock, 2006) and ENQA's *Standard Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher education Area* (2005) is recommended. In a long term perspective, a marketing strategy focused on quality of the study programmes can make it easier for IPP to attract its students from all over Portugal and not only from the surrounding region.

### **In terms of research**

Taking into account the lack of funding and the lack of formal recognition attached to research in IPP, the EUA Team admires the enthusiasm for this activity. The number of PhD degrees already conferred to staff members or in progress forms an excellent background for further development.

In terms of research, the EUA Team met a number of teachers who had teaching and research as their duties, but only 20 % of their time could be devoted to research. If IPP wants to be known as a research institution, it needs to build in more resources for research into the Strategic Plan for the next five years. Specifically the teachers need to be allocated time to be devoted to research or to their PhD studies.

There is a great probability that qualification of the teaching staff and research performance in the future will play a more significant role in funding and recognition of the institute. The present enthusiasm among the academics in this area should be nurtured. The EUA team found that researchers felt that the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education's allocation of 25% less money to IPP and polytechnics for research as compared with universities was a matter for deep regret.

IPP needs to develop a Research Strategy to guide the few research projects which have started and which collaborate with national universities as well as with foreign partners. New research projects should be examined in the light of institutional strategy and not only based on researchers' interests.

### **In terms of organisation**

IPP consists of seven Schools with a high degree of autonomy. This means that the IPP management group is heavily dependent on the acceptance of the Schools in implementing new, or changing established, cultures. Being Portugal's largest national Polytechnic Institute it has strong regional influence and possibilities to build strong relations to industries and neighbour institutions in knowledge transfer projects.

So far, networking is fairly undeveloped with various international, national and regional players in the knowledge transfer sector. Within IPP the EUA Team

was presented with only limited synergies in this area among the Schools. The management team is fully aware of these problems and has the ambition to develop strategies to tackle them in the new Strategic Plan for the next five years.

## **THE CAPACITY FOR CHANGE**

A central general competency of higher education institutions is the capacity to change an ability to adapt to new prerequisites and new working conditions. The most important challenge to universities is the internal and external pressure integrated in the cultural and social aspects of changes. The EUA Team acknowledges that the work and the process of transformation and change within IPP are in progress.

### **The mission**

An important prerequisite for strategic planning is the formation of a clear and well defined mission statement.

In the Self-Evaluation Report (2006, Appendix. 6) the IPP is committed: “To educate, within a higher education context, for “learning to learn,” “learning to do” and “learning to be.”

According to the Self Evaluation Report this mission statement has three supporting strategic objectives:

“**Striving for Excellence** through a continuous improvement in teaching and learning, research and the delivery of services, associated with quality assessment mechanisms.

**Consolidation and Growth** through the development of synergies and the promotion of scale economies adjusted to the present and future needs of the strategic guidelines.

**Differentiation** within the dimensions of institutional intervention, namely the educational offers and the teaching modes, potentiating the Polytechnic perspective and a pro-active attitude (SER, 2006, p. 6).”

The EUA Team agrees that these statements are formulated strategies and not an answer to the fundamental question: *“What is the mission of IPP?”* In formulating a well defined mission statement the demands from society and the needs of education from the environment should be considered by IPP.

### **Constraints**

The inadequate funding has to be increased both for the education the Polytechnic provides and its research. The timing of the new Law and the Strategic Plan has to be observed and the management team has the responsibility for their coordination. The restriction of educational programmes to 1st and 2nd cycle with no PhD-programmes is a severe obstacle for the management team.

Because of the lack of research money the EUA Team suggests that IPP develop and establish a culture of fundraising from external resources. Academics need to be engaged in applied research or development to ensure that IPP offers education programmes, based on knowledge from research as well as applied knowledge, in accordance with demands from external stakeholders. Such activities have also to be built into the new Strategic Plan.

## **Opportunities**

IPP is the largest Polytechnic in Portugal with an established name and a good national reputation. The leadership of IPP is firmly devoted to fulfil the vision and expand the mission of the institution and to formulate a Strategic Plan and an action plan for the future.

The EUA Team met institutional pride among teachers, students and staff; in particular, student leaders noted a substantial improvement in their relations with institutional management since the new President took office and appointed an Assesor for Student Services. Furthermore, the Deans demonstrated a clear commitment to working together as a cohort in the interest of fostering IPP's advancement as a more integrated organizational entity. The restructured programmes and courses offered to the students have a high degree of multidisciplinary thinking and reflection, which influence the educational culture of IPP.

## **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **In terms of institutional management and strategic planning**

We commend the management of IPP for taking the initiative to formulate a precise Strategic Plan for IPP based on a well-defined mission statement and followed by a structured implementation plan with “mile-stones” and monitoring procedure.

*We recommend that this initiative be continued based on a working group composed of the presidential team, deans and student representatives.*

Throughout IPP we have met with a high commitment to serve the surrounding society whether they be the communities or the financial and industrial sectors.

*We recommend that this commitment should play a substantial role in the strategic planning and be articulated closely with financial administration, human resources policy and quality management.*

*The internal funding should be based on clear and well known indicators consistent with the formulated strategic planning.*

We have learned from external partners about the high interest in drawing IPP researchers into university or community projects. Such activities compensate for lack of internal funding can to some degree and will in any case open IPP to national and international programmes.

*We recommend that the proposed networking be stimulated at IPP level, with respect to possibilities for regional and national collaboration and under the umbrella of internationalisation. Consideration might be given to the establishment of advisory councils at IPP and school level, based on active participation of external stakeholders and led by the interests of these stakeholders.*

The legal power will remain with the structure based on legislation.

### **In terms of quality management**

We have seen quality assurance (QA) implemented at some schools but we have not seen a fully integrated IPP-based quality culture programme. QA is a critical issue and there are European and international best practices available such as EUA's concept of quality culture. QA is not only a question of well-formulated questionnaires.

*We recommend that IPP stimulates an institution-wide QA programme to ensure an integrated implementation based on a uniform system of best practice.*

### **In terms of research**

Taking into account the lack of funding and the lack of formal recognition attached to research, we admire the enthusiasm for this activity.

The number of PhD degrees already conferred to staff members and the number of PhD programmes in progress forms an excellent background for further development.

*We recommend that IPP should formulate a research strategy in line with its institutional mission and strategic plan, but we also urge that this strategy be realistic in light of expected funding. The plan must give a clear indication of activities characterised as: research, development and service to industry and society.*

Here, too, networking is of high importance.

### **In terms of education and teaching**

The transformation of educational programmes in accordance with the goals of the Bologna Declaration requires reforms of present curricula. This offers a good opportunity for the introduction of new programmes and an improved focus on the learning process as such.

*We recommend that IPP use this opportunity to rethink its learning processes at an integrated level based on already achieved experience and in close collaboration with the primary stakeholders: the students.*

### **In terms of societal and regional development**

We have noticed an institution-wide interest in networking stimulated by presidential commitment.

*We see this as a very positive development and recommend that this activity be strengthened in order to give room for study activities linking two or more schools and stimulating multidisciplinary study programmes.*

We see an interest in regional involvement at IPP which is especially strong at the two satellite campuses, Vila do Conde and Felgueiras.

*We recommend that this networking commitment be stimulated for the benefit of regional support and in order to stimulate employability of IPP graduates.*

Through our discussions and from the visit to Foundation of Porto Polytechnic Institute (FIPP) we have learned about an active organisation facilitating technology transfer between IPP and external stakeholders – technology transfer in areas where legal or institutional constraints could be a hindrance without FIPP. We are impressed with this activity and we urge that the activity be stimulated in close coherence with research activities and research strategies within IPP.

## **ENVOI**

We extend special thanks to Dr. Maria de Jesus de Sousa Lima and her colleagues for their helpful efforts and careful attention to all our logistical arrangements, to the Self Evaluation Group, and to all students, academics and staff, department heads, deans and executive officers for their time and attention. Finally, we thank the President Professor Vitor Correia Santos, Pro-President Luis Miguel Pinho, Information Systems, Vice-President Professor José Freitas Santos, Quality management, Vice-president Professor Rosario Gambôa and the Adjunct-President Marina Sousa.

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