

**European University Association (EUA)  
Institutional Evaluation Programme**

**FERNANDO PESSOA UNIVERSITY**

***EUA EVALUATION REPORT***

***June 2007***

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## **1 Introduction**

A programme of evaluations by the European Universities Association (EUA) of Portuguese institutions of higher learning forms part of a broader initiative by the Portuguese government. This initiative, which has the objective of informing the reorganisation and rationalisation of the whole national higher education system, consists of two other parts:

- A review by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) of accreditation and quality assurance practices in tertiary education. A report of this review was published in November 2006.
- A review of the tertiary education system by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), with reference to other OECD countries. A report of this review has yet to be published.

EUA, through its Institutional Evaluation Programme, has a strong international reputation in quality assurance, having conducted reviews of more than 150 evaluations in 38 countries over the last thirteen years. The methodology used by EUA promotes strategic improvements and the development of relevant systemic mechanisms. The focus of each review is on a university's capacity to change, including its strategic planning and internal quality monitoring processes. The reviewers also assess if the necessary conditions, both internal and external, exist that would permit the institution to adapt, respond and succeed in the local, national and international environments.

Through the initiative of the Portuguese Ministry of Science Technology and Higher Education (MSTHE) referred to above, evaluation through the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme is open to all Portuguese higher education institutions, both public and private, university and polytechnic. The main objective of this unfolding series of evaluations is to provide the national quality assurance agencies and the higher education institutions with institutional evaluation experience following best European practices, with a view to assisting the institutions in improving their governance, management and quality assurance mechanisms.

More directly and in simple terms, the set objectives of each institutional evaluation are to:

1. Identify overall positive characteristics, development status and opportunities for improvements.
2. Examine governance and management systems with suggestions for improvements.
3. Explore institutional capacity for adaptation, development and change.
4. Learn how students — including non-traditional students — are recruited, life long learning is facilitated, and the knowledge-base of the Portuguese population is improved.
5. Examine student exit routes including types, relevance and utility of available qualifications.
6. Make recommendations that foster the institution's rationalization and diversification.

(In finalising this Report, the Review Team considered how well it may have met the Objectives above. In effect, most of the Report is devoted to areas of direct relevance to Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 6. With respect to Objective 4, the Team is satisfied with how students are recruited at FPU, which seems to be in accordance with nationally regulated mechanisms. The introduction of teaching reforms in line with the Bologna process, the development of a 'virtual university' and 'ambulatory programmes' (Section 5.5) are related to other aspects of Objective 4.)

Fernando Pessoa University (FPU) in Porto, a private university, is one of the first set of ten institutions to be evaluated by panels of experienced experts that have been selected and

given specific training by EUA. Support to FPU for this process was granted by the MSTHE through a competitive process, to which a total of 42 public and private universities, polytechnic institutes and other institutions of higher education applied.

## **2 Process**

Following a formal request from the President of FPU, the Steering Committee of the EUA Institutional Review Programme appointed a review team for the evaluation of FPU. This Team was composed of:

- Professor Regis Ritz, former Rector, Université de Bordeaux, France, as chair;
- Professor Kerstin Norén, Rector, University of Karlstad, Sweden;
- Professor Karol Izydor Wysokinski, former Vice Rector, Maria Curie - Sklodowska University, Lublin, Poland;
- Professor Jim Gosling, Director of Quality, National University of Ireland - Galway, as secretary.

## **3 Institutional Review of Fernando Pessoa University**

### **3.1 Preparations**

The EUA evaluation methodology is guided by four central strategic questions. These questions are:

- What is the university trying to do?
- How is the university trying to do it?
- How does the university know that it works?
- How does the university change in order to improve?

The EUA Team used these questions as fundamental references when evaluating governance, management, capacities, student issues and development at FPU, within the wider national and international strategic context.

In accordance with EUA methodology and guidelines, and in advance of the preliminary visit, FPU sent a 20 page Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to the EUA Team. The SER had appendices with more detailed information about the University. The EUA Team appreciated the work done by the Self Evaluation Team, management and all staff in preparing the SER and considered it to be a good report, in terms of both information and analysis provided. The hard work and very positive attitudes of the Self Evaluation Team were of particular value. The Review Team also received further relevant documents during its visits to FPU, including documentation from individual faculties and other units.

### **3.2 Review Visits**

The Team travelled to FPU for a preliminary visit from 19 to 21 December 2006 and for a main visit from 26 to 29 March 2007. Following its first visit, the EUA Team requested further information, which request was fully complied with.

During the EUA Team's visits, management, staff and students were welcoming, candid and anxious to explain their situations, and convey their understanding of FPU and their roles and experiences. The inputs from students were articulate and frank in praise and criticisms, and the comments of outside partners also included valuable commendations and advice. The

different units across the University were aware of the background to the visits and were prepared for the meetings, at which the discussions were always informal and lively. Overall, interactions were wholly agreeable and constructive.

The EUA Review Team would like to thank the Rector, Professor Salvato Trigo, for his warm welcome and hospitality, and wholehearted and frank engagement with the review process. The Team would also like to thank the senior University officers, faculty directors, other managers, academic staff, administrators, the external partners and, most importantly, the many students involved, for their engagement and hospitality. This applies also to the staff and students of Ponte de Lima College during the second visit of the Team. For staff and students to communicate so well in a foreign language — English — was especially impressive. The Team conveys special recognition for efforts beyond any call of duty to Ms Nadine Trigo, Director of International Relations and Liaison Person for the Review, and the SER Steering Group for excellent preparations for the review and kind attentions in ensuring smooth arrangements for the visits and all their constituent meetings and events.

## 4 Institutional Context

Because the focus of this review was FPU, the Review Team had limited time to examine the external contexts within which FPU must operate. Nevertheless these urban, regional, national and relevant international contexts are highly relevant to the successes to date and to the future of FPU.

### 4.1 Private Higher Education in Portugal

Private institutions are an important component of Portuguese higher education. In 2004–05, 26% of students attended private universities and polytechnics, which accounted for 30% of all graduations in that year.

Private higher education played a very substantial role in growing participation during the 1990's. By 1998, private universities catered for a peak of 14% of all higher education students, as compared to 44% for the public universities. This importance was recognised in 1997 by the extension to students in the private sector of the state student grants system, with an extra allowance because of higher fees.

However, changing demographics and state investment have since led to falling numbers of candidates for higher education and increasing public sector vacancies, respectively. Consequently, many private higher education institutions have ceased activity since 1998.

The operation of the Private and Cooperative Higher Education Act (Decree-Law 16/94) in regulating the creation and operation of private higher education is outlined in subsections 148 to 151 of *Tertiary Education in Portugal* (see Bibliography).

*“The founders may be collective private bodies set up specifically for this objective or foundations whose scope includes such a possibility. [ ] The founder has the responsibility for [ ] administrative, economic and financial organisation and management, but the institutions must have pedagogic, scientific and cultural autonomy, duly specified in their statutes. Consequently, the law establishes that each private [university] must have at least the following governing bodies: a Rector; [ ] a Scientific Council; a Pedagogic Council.”*

While it is also stated that the relations between ‘founders’ or foundations and their higher education institutions is very heterogeneous in existing institutions, it is apparent to the Review Team that these regulations could be seen as unwieldy in other jurisdictions and could be highly constraining when applied to some institutions with particular histories and circumstances (see below).

## 4.2 Characteristics of FPU

FPU was founded in 1992 and recognized as a public interest organisation by the Portuguese state in 1996, at which time Ponte de Lima College was also defined as a statutory body of FPU. The 'Founder' was a professor of linguistics with experience in academic administration, making him also a suitable Rector for the University. FPU is sponsored by Fundação Ensino e Cultura Fernando Pessoa (FECFP), which is "responsible for ensuring the conditions necessary for the normal operation of the University". As a basic guiding principle stated in the FPU's 'Memorandum and Articles of Association':

*FPU is guided by the principles of university solidarity, academic freedom, plurality, freedom of expression, the right to information and participatory educational management.*

The well-publicised motto of FPU is "Nova et Nove" (new things in new ways) and in the SER, a short but comprehensive Mission statement is quoted:

*The mission of University Fernando Pessoa is to provide high quality education services and to be an internationally recognized European teaching and research university, contributing to the promotion of private higher education as a public good, associated with private benefits and based on the over-arching principle of public responsibility.*

In accordance with the Portuguese regulations governing private universities (see above), FECFP is the principal legal entity that represents FPU in all financial and general administrative interactions with external bodies. In accordance with its Articles of Association, the founder of FECFP chairs the Board of Directors of FECFP, and its government and management are centred on members of his family. The Mission of FECFP is stated simply as:

*.... the development of activities to sponsor education, culture, research and vocational training.*

Because the Chair of the Board of FECFP is also the Rector of FPU, close compliance between the objectives and activities of FECFP and FPU is ensured. The government and governance of FPU are discussed further in Section 5.1.

FPU is clearly one of the more important private universities with a large student body (about 4,500 or about 5% of the total current number of students in about 100 private institutions) who take a wide range of academic programmes. FPU academic staff are better qualified than in any other private college, and in some universities in the public sector, as data show that 47.7% of staff at FPU have a PhD (*Tertiary Education in Portugal: Background Report prepared to support the international assessment of the Portuguese system of tertiary education*). The quality of the wide range of buildings and general physical facilities at FPU seen by the Review Team went from good to excellent, and there are current and imminent activities that will result in further academic and physical expansion.

## 4.3 Reading this Report

Because the staff of FPU know their institution well, they should not find that this Report contains many ideas or identifies issues that surprise them. Rather, this Report springs largely from areas identified in the SER. It is based on a desire to attract everyone's attention to a number of important issues and is intended to be seen as encouraging and thought-provoking, with each section culminating in a series of more focused recommendations. Hopefully, taken together, these recommendations will assist in the continued development of FPU as an increasingly significant player in Portuguese tertiary education

## 5 Areas in Need of Special Attention

### 5.1 Governance

#### *Systems of university governance*

Systems of leadership, government and management in universities across the world are highly diverse, even when histories, general cultures and external contexts are relatively similar. Strategic decision making may be highly centralized or located largely in the constituent colleges or faculties; chief executives and deans may be elected by a body of fellows or faculty, or appointed as in a business organisation; reporting lines may be highly defined or diffuse. In older, stable institutions the governance systems will usually have stood the test of time, but quite often are creaking under the strain of rapid change.

Governance may be defined as the 'manner of governing' and in modern usage this covers the degree of consultation and participation in government and management. Good governance as applied to a university can be taken to mean the existence of structures and mechanisms that ensure that all actors, students, staff (administrative and teachers) outside partners and stakeholders, are, in one way or another, associated with the government and life of the university through mechanisms that facilitate consultation and dialogue, and are respectful of a plurality of opinions.

In the EUA publication *Ten Years On: Lessons Learned from the Institutional Evaluation Programme*, the Section entitled 'How is the university trying to do it?' contains a full discussion of various forms of academic leadership and government, establishes some important principles and makes general recommendations.

#### *Governance at FPU*

During its visits and researches on FPU, the Review Team spent much time considering the development of FPU, how its leadership and systems of government and management have contributed to this development, and, most importantly, how these systems may need to change in the future to ensure continuing success and further development.

To the Review Team, FPU appears to be highly centralised with respect to overall leadership and (via its foundation) administrative and financial control, but simultaneously fragmented into separate faculties between which communication is more limited. While each faculty has councils for curricular, 'scientific', pedagogical and disciplinary matters, and a separate students' union, the only potentially representative bodies supporting institutional integration shown on the University's organisational diagram (March 2007) are the Council of Directors and the Scientific Coordination Board. While the Council of Directors, made up of the Rector and the three faculty deans, may act as an effective executive group, the latter Board did not figure significantly during our many discussions and was not mentioned in the original SER. The Vice Rector acts as a highly efficient head of central administration. The Review Team noted also that similar high degrees of faculty autonomy appear to be common in other Portuguese universities.

A principle challenge for FPU is continuity and the assurance of its legacy. What works well now may not be capable of ensuring these beyond the next ten or twenty years.

The Team are of the opinion that in FPU, there is strong and effective government and management, but not enough good governance. The effective leadership and charismatic personality of the Rector, a former professor in the public system, are evident everywhere. He has a precise sense of the University's mission and a clear vision of future developments; he is also a highly respected and admired person, at home and abroad. The great temptation for staff is to rely on such exceptional qualities and capacity for work, and to be happy to follow the banner and to accept without question the decisions of a gifted natural leader, omnipresent, efficient and successful.

The Team concluded that a greater measure of good governance at FPU is desirable and that this would be welcome to all, particularly to the Rector himself. During our meetings with staff we often heard the words – expressed as clear desires – ‘consultation’, ‘participation’ and ‘involvement’; not indicating that these do not exist at FPU, but that, like in many institutions, they are needed in greater amounts. For example, the impressively frank SWOT analysis of the SER identified “insufficient commitment in the implementation of strategies elaborated centrally” as a weakness of management; greater representation centrally could help significantly with this.

For example, during our meetings with the SER Steering Group, they insisted on significant benefits that they themselves had drawn from the self evaluation exercise, including:

- A global picture of the institution became clear.
- Different people from different faculties met regularly and exchanged views, and began to identify with the University as a whole.
- Teaching staff and administrative staff discussed important issues with each other.
- Members developed better contacts that facilitated cross-institutional communication and in some cases their effectiveness. Many local views and problems were seen to be global.

Therefore, the dynamism born from the excellent work of the SER steering group must be maintained; self evaluation is a never-ending process, a constant updating; self-knowledge is a key to good management and good governance, a way to make sure the university keeps to its mission and prepares for its future.

The majority of European universities function with a senate or a council that, when properly constituted and organised, helps to make more actors more responsible and more deeply involved in university governance. At best, representatives of teachers, administrators, and of students assemble and exchange ideas on future directions, good pedagogical practice, information on their respective activities in order to foster among all a stronger motivation to participate and a greater corporate spirit. Regular meetings of a senate or council should not dilute what is a precious characteristic of FPU: the capacity of making quick decisions (being proactive) and of being efficiently reactive.

Any changes adopted should also facilitate the interactions of Ponte de Lima with the mother institution in Porto.

*The Review Team recommends:*

1. In the short to medium term, the creation of a representative transversal body that meets regularly to take part in the management of the university, under the guidance of the Rector. It could take the shape of an advisory board; it would accept the responsibility of participating in the process of decision making; above all, it would develop a spirit of cross-institutional collegiality, which is strongly needed.
2. That the Rector convene a University steering group with some external expert members and task it with developing a new governance structure for FPU that will ensure the continued success of FPU, particularly when others must take up the positions of Rector and Vice Rector of FPU, and Chair of FECFP. This group should follow closely the basic guiding principle of FPU quoted above and benchmark with other comparable universities (private and public) in Portugal and abroad. The Team understands that some of the changes needed may be facilitated greatly by alteration of the Portuguese governmental statutes that regulate the current FECFP-FPU partnership and would urge the relevant ministers and their officials to be flexible in the interests of the students and graduates of FPU (see also Section 5.3).
3. The creation of a visiting committee to facilitate and heighten awareness at FPU of the importance of its wider contexts: its region, Portugal, Europe and the wider world. This

committee should have a limited membership of specially selected partners and could convene regularly (perhaps annually) to discuss the mission, vision and plans of Fernando Pessoa University.

## 5.2 Mission and Effective Strategic Plan

### *Importance of a strategic plan*

In formulating a public mission statement, an institution lays out how it sees itself and its roles, and how it wants to be seen. The roles implicit in a 'mission' are responses to selected local, national and international challenges, and consideration of each role should lead logically to the setting of objectives, all with associated measurable parameters. History, past performances and local context will influence strongly mission and objectives, particularly because they may be associated with strategic bonuses, easier or necessary achievements, threats and constraints. The current Mission Statement of FPU is good, but it should be considered for revision as the new strategic plan is being developed.

While a strategic plan has a mission statement and objectives as components, it also includes a carefully considered set of compatible projects that taken together will promote or enable the attainment of all the defined objectives. Strategic plans for the major components of an institution (e.g. faculties and central strategic functions) are also important and must be complementary (or at least compatible) with the institutional plan and with each other.

Strategic planning may be carried out in a manner that develops and consolidates wider participation in university governance. A preliminary widespread consultation process can act not just as a source of valuable ideas, but lead, as the plan takes its final form, to all-level and cross-institutional commitment to the university as represented by the plan. This can also effectively generate a greater feeling of participation in a common enterprise.

### *Planning at FPU*

In the case of FPU, the worthy principles and objectives laid out in the memoranda and articles of association of the University and its overarching foundation (FECFP), its achievements in Porto and in Ponte de Lima, its advantages as a private university, and the world view and work of the eponymous and renowned Fernando Pessoa all form advantageous starting points in the refinement of its mission, objectives and plans. Obviously, previous versions of these are equally relevant. However, the existing local and global plans are not sufficiently complementary and mutually supportive.

From the SER and during its visits, the Review Team became aware of the immense work achieved during these past ten years to ensure the quality of the staff (e.g. the early implementation of requirements and encouragements with respect to qualifications and training opportunities) and the quality of the tuition in this young University. It was also evident that FPU has reached a new stage: a stage of consolidation. With a strong foundation one can be ambitious and build high buildings. This is exactly what the management and staff of FPU are doing now, quite aware as they are of opportunities, strengths, but also of dangers and threats in the environment.

The development of PhD programmes, in parallel with the reinforcement of research programmes, is at the heart of this new phase. Individual teachers and researchers are keen to introduce new courses, new projects, new plans for the future. The team was impressed by the strong determination, the innovative spirit, the diversity of new actions in many scientific fields. The College of Post Graduate Studies that is being developed is a perfect illustration of this desired collective spirit, provided the new structure is well integrated in the global organisational structure of FPU.

*The Review Team recommends:*

1. The formation of a Strategic Planning Group with power to create the conditions and the necessary mechanisms for the preparation of a comprehensive University Plan. This Plan should:
  - Take into account the current plans of each faculty and central offices such as the International Relations Office and the Office for Organisational Quality and Excellence. Ponte de Lima College, which has its own strengths, opportunities etc., should also have a plan that is taken into account. (When the University Plan is complete, these plans in turn should be revised to bring them more closely into accord with the new global Plan.)
  - Involve a 'bottom-up' consultative process that involves all levels and categories of University staff.
  - Define priorities for FPU in a supple way, which allows possible adaptation and prevents any rigidity over the years.
  - Review impediments to greater staff contributions to the strategic aims of the university (such as uneven management/administration loads, deficient physical facilities) with a view (as necessary) to setting targets for improvements.
  - Be compact and amenable to easy revision by an agreed procedure that is consultative.
  - Serve to promote the development of FPU as a unit with a common ethos, shared ambitions and institutional pride together with the revised governance structures, and through new multidisciplinary research and educational programmes,.
2. The new Strategic Plan should be known to all members of staff and all students. All members of staff should be highly aware of the essence of the University's mission statement and see the major strategic objectives as shared goals for their own, as well as for the University's future development.

### **5.3 Finance**

#### *Importance of financial status*

Clearly, while an institutional review does not and cannot involve a full financial audit, the financial stability of a university under review is highly relevant. In so far as this is practicable, the reviewers should be satisfied that the institution's financial resources and expectations are sufficient for its operation and development in the foreseeable future, with a margin for the unexpected. Educational quality must clearly dominate most financial decisions. Budgetary procedures should be defined and open to relevant managers, and conform to good practice in equivalent institutions. To facilitate vigorous corporate spirit and identity, these procedures should involve appropriate consultation and negotiation.

#### *Situation at FPU*

The Review Team understands that the Foundation (FECFP) and the University are strongly constrained in their financial and administrative roles by existing legal and governmental regulations and rulings, with the Foundation acting on behalf of the University in most circumstances where established private universities in other jurisdictions such as the United States would act on their own.

From the financial data supplied in the SER, in meetings with the Rector, the Finance Officer and the Chartered Accountant of FECFP, and with all other managers and staff, the Review Team came to the understanding that the financial situation of FECFP/FP represents a

favourable balance between income and expenditure. The fees paid annually by students appear adequate to assure the quality and continuity of courses and programmes, and future developments. Staff salaries and conditions appear to be at least reasonable. The overall impression gained is of an emphasis on cost-effective but high-quality processes and developments, with particular attention being given to using 'in-house' resources, rigorous procurement procedures and direct contracts to purchase equipment and to achieve new capital developments at minimum cost.

The University and FECFP are presently confident enough in their resources, income, and assets, to have recently invested in the purchase and rehabilitation of a new building for the new College of Post Graduate Studies.

*The Review Team recommends:*

1. The development of the University as a legal and financially responsible entity in itself. Enabling action may be required at national government level and the Team would support FECFP and FPU in their effort to achieve this.
2. Annual consultations between the Rector, relevant senior officers and the deans on finance issues. The Team is of the impression that presently budget allocation procedures may be overly centralised. Each faculty and other division may need more advance consultation and a clearer view of their budget possibilities, notably for the launching of new courses or new research actions.

## **5.4 Quality Culture**

### *Background*

Over the last fifteen years, universities across the world have become increasingly conscious that they exist in a world of competition and that the real and perceived quality of their students' learning and their research outputs have become key issues. This competition has local, regional, national, European, and world dimensions, and creates needs for new references, indicators, evaluations, accreditation and benchmarking. Professionally, at European level, important practical roles in the promotion of quality have been adopted by national and international quality agencies, including EUA through its Institutional Evaluation Programme.

International bodies (such as EQUIS for business schools) offer accreditation procedures, and prospective students will increasingly insist on such 'quality marks' when considering academic programmes. Other external agencies, many of them newspapers and magazines, have devised measurement schemes that purport to rank universities in order of overall 'merit', and some publications involved in such rankings have seen their sales soar when the relevant issues go on sale.

### *Objective of EUA evaluations*

The EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme (of which this review of FPU is a part) does not attempt to evaluate the quality of teaching, research, administration and services, and community contribution. At best, a general impression is gained from the documentation supplied and meetings with management, staff, students and stakeholders. In the case of FPU, the impression is of generally high standards, dedicated and committed staff, innovation in pursuit of effectiveness, flexibility in the face of external change, and an anxiety to be better and, if possible, the best.

However, the primary task of the Review Team is to examine the processes and mechanisms at FPU that measure the quality of institutional performance and promote and facilitate quality improvement. At their best, quality processes can create shared knowledge, a sense of transparency and openness, and (increasingly as the processes take hold) more reasons to be proud of the institution.

### *Quality a priority at FPU*

FPU is to be commended for having effective student representation on the pedagogical councils of the three faculties and for having a 'studies ombudsman' for each faculty also. From meetings with students it is clear that student feedback is sought and that it can be effective in bringing about improvements. The Review Team saw tabulated data assembled from student feedback forms but reports on feedback from classes were not readily available.

Many universities have by now established quality offices, quality programmes, steering groups for quality. The Team appreciates that FPU has such an office (established in March 2006) and a programme –ProjestQ– for quality promotion, and that the concept of quality assessment and improvement are spreading among all actors at the University. In addition, a number of mechanisms are being implemented to introduce a systematic and coherent process of internal quality assurance and improvement. However, these are relatively new initiatives that are at an early stage and it was not clear to the Review Team that all of the most relevant aspects of this important area are developed sufficiently, such as forward planning, institutional research and the availability of summary reports on student feedback.

#### *The Team recommends:*

1. That FPU consider the report “(European) Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) which includes the principles listed below. These principles may be a useful guide in ensuring that FPU has an efficient and effective quality programme and culture:
  - Guidelines and operational procedures must be agreed at university level.
  - All activities should be evaluated: study programmes, management and governance, staff development, services, research productivity, innovation, finance, etc.
  - Students, staff and stakeholders must be involved permanently. In this respect, students' questionnaires are essential: their feedback must be used to bring about improvement.
  - Results of the evaluation (performance indicators, statistics, etc. must be published and fed into the university log-book or data base (to facilitate institutional research).
  - The work of the quality office brings obvious benefits to the process of strategic planning.
2. The Office for Organisational Quality and Excellence should prepare (in accordance with the principles above), and publicise across the University, a strategic plan and a work programme. These would incorporate the “ProjestQ” and place it in a broader context that will complement and support the new University Strategic Plan.
3. The Office for Organisational Quality and Excellence should benchmark with equivalent units in other comparable universities, both as part of developing its new plan and as an ongoing exercise.

## **5.5 Europe, the Bologna Process and the World of Work**

### *A declaration of growing importance*

The Bologna Declaration, signed initially by five states in 1999, was a crucial step in the development of European education, not least because a total of 45 states have now signed the Declaration. In addition, the basic Declaration has been extended in the Salamanca Convention (2001) and in communiqués from the European education ministers' meetings in Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005). The ultimate goal of the Bologna Process is

a European Higher Education Area in which staff and students have fair recognition of their qualifications and can move with ease.

### *Bologna central to FPU's development*

It is clear that FPU is seriously engaged with the introduction of the Bologna reforms as they apply at the level of individual universities. For FPU the academic year 2006–07 is a particularly important year of transition, with all programmes changing for early-year students. The Diploma Supplement will also be fully implemented. However, complete transition will take much more than one year, as these reforms constitute a process that will lead to a permanent transformation of how students learn and how teachers facilitate learning.

The scale and pace of this reform at FPU is impressive; two very good papers written by the Rector describe its full scope (*Bologna and Students* and *Decalogue for the Transition to Bologna*). The Review Team believes that FPU is undertaking these changes in the right way. While some doubts and misgivings were voiced, all the teachers and students met by the Team appeared to have reacted positively and constructively to the challenges posed. Feedback from students and staff indicates that between semester one and semester two, some adjustments were made, and that levels of satisfaction with the transition were higher in March 2007 than they were in December 2006. In effect, the implementation of these reforms has made visible the capacity of FPU to adapt and change when needed.

The Team wish to encourage everyone in the University to carry on with his/her efforts to make this process fully effective, and would like to make the following points:

- Quality assurance (with the enhancement of quality) has become a central element and key action line in the developing Bologna Process.
- Bologna reforms concern not just programme structures and pedagogical approaches but also university governance.
- Implementation of Bologna reforms can help immensely to make an institution more attractive to prospective students.

The Review Team concludes that certain areas, which need to be emphasised more or strengthened, are particularly important to FPU and its situation in Europe.

### *The Team recommends:*

1. Consolidation of the Bologna reforms achieved by continuous structured training programmes. The major requirement is the support of staff who need to improve their skills in the new teaching methods and technologies; and student feedback should inform these needs.
2. Increased visibility and support for the roles of the placement office and the career office, to increase the importance of work placements and facilitate the employment of graduates, and to enhance overall further relationships with employers, industry and other outside partners in the broader socio-economic world. An emphasis on 'employability' is an important element of the Bologna Process.
3. Support (as they continue to develop) for the innovative 'virtual university' and ambulatory programmes in order to attract new publics with new forms of teaching/learning in the context of Life Long Learning; inventing new kinds of relationships with the University for these new publics. Such programmes represent the best way to improve the University's roles in society and the services it can render to the community.
4. Development of new external communication policies and practices:
  - Improvement of University's website/brochures making all relevant information available in at least three to four selected languages and key information in several more.

- Use of other means as appropriate to advertise compliance with Bologna principle and practices, innovative courses, research and other projects to put Fernando Pessoa University definitely on the map across Europe and internationally.

## 5.6 Internationalisation

### *Most important for smaller countries*

In the not so distant past, even in great universities, international contacts were largely intra-disciplinary and matters for individual initiative. In contrast, nowadays, the degree to which a university is 'internationalised' is a key criterion by which it is judged. Accreditation agencies such as EQUIS insist on substantial degrees of 'internationalisation' with respect to staff and their qualifications, and the student body.

In Portugal such matters may present a significant challenge. Though hardly true in the global or quantitative sense, many abroad may see Portuguese as a minority European language, and many Portuguese students are apparently content to stay within a Portuguese cultural and climatic 'comfort zone'. Also, 'inbreeding' with respect to academic staff qualifications has been cited as an area needing significant improvement in Portuguese tertiary education. In many of these areas FPU may have significant advantages in contrast with some of the older public universities.

### *Exploiting FPU's advantages*

Through its small but dynamic GRI/International Relations Office, FPU has certainly built a solid cooperative network of universities across Europe, Africa and Latin America. The list of contacts is impressive and projects in cooperation with smaller Portuguese-speaking communities abroad are admirable. However, full exploitation of all the possibilities, which could contribute enormously to FPU's public profile, will require an ethos in all staff (particularly academic staff) that is enthusiastically in favour of internationalisation.

However, the numbers of exchange students (both inward and outward) remain quite small, particularly under the Erasmus and Leonardo programmes. It is clear that financial considerations may be very important for many individual local students but perhaps many more do not realise fully the advantages to be gained. As many students as possible should travel and take courses abroad, as this is the best training to become a European citizen and a citizen of the world. The key to success must lie in an alliance of committed staff with an effective international office.

### *The Review Team recommends:*

1. That the International Officer ensure, through inputs to the new Strategic Plan and submissions to management etc., that the preconditions for a vibrant internationalised institution are developed across the University as a whole. These may include:
  - Development (or enhancement) of interlocking policies and action plans to support internationalisation, including:
    - i. Languages and cultural awareness for students,
    - ii. Languages and cultural awareness for staff,
    - iii. Supports for incoming international students, e.g. Portuguese language, culture and social activities with local students.
  - Development of incentives and schemes to encourage teachers and administrative staff to be more mobile and take part in appropriate activities in universities abroad, particularly in countries targeted for student exchanges.

- Designation of responsibilities and (as necessary) revision of job descriptions and conditions of employment to ensure that the work of the GRI is complemented and supported by the faculties and all academic staff.
  - That FPU become a member of EUA and of other important European associations like the Academic Co-operation Association (ACA), European Association for International Education (EAIE), and that FPU representatives participate in meetings and conferences on the evolution of European universities.
  - That student representatives from FPU become more involved in European organisations such as the European Student Union (ESIB), perhaps via a new FPU Student Union (see below).
2. That, given that most incoming international students take their courses through English (or other foreign languages), all teachers and participating Portuguese students should be supported fully to ensure a satisfactory outcome for everybody. Where feasible, the language for the delivery for all such courses should be fixed and known in advance.
  3. That FPU students who have been on foreign placements be used (with incentives if necessary and appropriate) to list and explain the benefits and advantages of time spent in another university abroad to all prospective Erasmus etc. students.
  4. That feedback from all Erasmus students (incoming and outgoing) should be collected systematically, listened to and acted upon when appropriate.

## **5.7 Research**

### *A priority at FPU*

A 'teaching-only university' would be seen by many as a contradiction in terms, so for a new university the development of a culture of research, scholarship and creativity, that is recognised for its outputs locally, nationally and internationally, must be an ongoing prime strategic objective.

Research activities have clearly represented a priority in the development FPU from its early days. The opening of the recently acquired building to be devoted to research and teaching, now undergoing refurbishment (the new College of Postgraduate studies), will increase greatly the research potentials of the University. In many domains of research and scholarship, FPU has already achieved recognition as evidenced by supplied lists of publications. The accreditation of new PhD programmes in science and technology, added to the existing PhD programmes in human sciences, would bring to the University improved credibility and new national and international dimensions. A comprehensive research plan for the coming years will be an essential part of the institutional strategic planning exercise recommended above.

### *The Review Team recommends:*

1. Development of a University research plan that identifies a small number of institutional research themes as an input to strategic planning, and its later adjustment to make it coherent with the new global strategic plan.
2. That continuous care be taken to rationalise the specialties of research centres to ensure that critical masses of researchers are involved in as many as possible of the targeted research themes.
3. Systematic and ongoing actions by the Research Office to ensure consistent success in applications for research funding; including advance identification of suitable funding schemes, the dissemination of scheme details, and the coaching and mentoring of all applicants for research grants. There should also be pre-set quantitative objectives for

gaining, year-on-year, more and more funds for research, from the state, private firms, the EU or other international programmes and foundations.

4. The encouragement and promotion of more research collaborations with public and private research institutions in Portugal and beyond.
5. The encouragement and promotion of even greater participation by UFP researchers in international joint degrees and in the joint supervision of PhD students with staff in other universities of high standing in Portugal, in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

### **5.8 Issues of Direct Concern to Students**

The Review Team see many, if not most, of the recommendations listed above as relevant to supporting or augmenting student learning and growth at FPU, albeit indirectly in some cases. In addition, during discussions with groups of students and staff in Porto and in Ponte de Lima, a number of other issues arose that do not fit easily under any of the subsection headings above.

It is the impression of the Team that the student experience at FPU is a generally satisfactory, if highly intensive, one with longer than standard semesters. Attending FPU is more expensive than a public university, so student expectations must be higher. There are also differences between faculties and programmes in the factors that motivate students to choose FPU. Perhaps one general motivating factor is the learning ethos at FPU, which places a much greater emphasis on practice and skills, particularly for vocational courses.

Some of the issues raised are very difficult for the Review Team to make judgments on, including the need for more copies of text books in the libraries or more sets of equipment in practical classes. These are issues for individual programme and course coordinators. Limited spaces for car parking is a perennial, world wide and insoluble (without changing the commuting paradigm) problem. Other issues raised may justify consideration at institutional and/or faculty levels.

#### *The Review Team recommends:*

1. That the student body consider the formation of pan-University union with an elected president who is granted sabbatical leave. Such a structure should be constituted so as to complement the faculty unions and better represent all FPU students at home and abroad.
2. That the University review the accommodation requirements of the faculty student unions, and be generous in supporting any university-wide union that the students may decide to create.
3. That the faculties, as parts of all programmatic reviews, explicitly consider the number of students' contact hours, the 'density' of these hours in any day or week, and overall student workloads and assessment loads with a view to allowing students more time for reflection and extra-curricular University activities.
4. That each faculty review its library places and resources in terms of student ratios and compare these with data from equivalent universities.
5. That the information supplied on every programme contain explicit descriptions of all fees and payments expected over the whole programme.
6. That the provision and capacities of student lockers be reviewed and, if necessary, increased to facilitate students commuting by public transport.
7. That the University, in conjunction with the students unions, develop a needs analysis for University sports and societies facilities, and incorporate the findings into plans for future capital developments.

## 6 In Summary, the Review Team recommends:

### *Governance:*

1. In the short to medium term, creation of a representative transversal body that meets regularly to take part in the management of the university, under the guidance of the rector. It could take the shape of an advisory board; it would accept the responsibility of participating in the process of decision making; above all, it would develop a spirit of cross-institutional collegiality, which is strongly needed.
2. That the Rector convene a University steering group with some external expert members and task it with developing a new governance structure for FPU that will ensure the continued success of FPU in the future, particularly when others must take up the positions of Rector and Vice Rector of FPU, and Chair of FECFP. This group should follow closely the basic guiding principle of FPU quoted above and benchmark with other comparable universities (private and public) in Portugal and abroad. The Team understands that some of the changes needed may be facilitated greatly by alteration of the Portuguese governmental statutes that regulate the current FECFP-FPU partnership and would urge the relevant ministers and their officials to be flexible in the interests of the students and graduates of FPU (see also Section 5.3).
3. The creation of a visiting committee to facilitate and heighten awareness at FPU of the importance of its wider contexts; its region, Portugal, Europe and the wider world. This committee should have a limited membership of specially selected partners with an international dimension, and could convene regularly (perhaps annually) to discuss the mission, vision and plans of Fernando Pessoa University.

### *Mission and Effective Strategic Plan*

4. The formation of a Strategic Planning Group with power to create the conditions and the necessary mechanisms for the preparation of a comprehensive University Plan. This Plan should:
  - Take into account the current plans of each faculty and central offices such as the International Relations Office and the Office for Organisational Quality and Excellence. Ponte de Lima College, which has its own strengths, opportunities etc., should also have a plan that is taken into account. (When the University Plan is complete, these plans in turn should be revised to bring them more closely into accord with the new global Plan.)
  - Should involve a 'bottom-up' consultative process that involves all levels and categories of University staff.
  - Should define priorities for FPU in a supple way, which allows possible adaptation and prevents any rigidity over the years.
  - Should review impediments to greater staff contributions to the strategic aims of the university (such as uneven management/administration loads, deficient physical facilities) with a view (as necessary) to setting targets for improvements.
  - Be compact and amenable to easy revision by an agreed procedure that is consultative.
  - Serve to promote the development of FPU as a unit with a common ethos, shared ambitions and institutional pride together with the revised governance structures, and through new multidisciplinary research and educational programmes,.
5. The new Strategic Plan should be known to all members of staff and all students. All members of staff should be highly aware of the essence of the University's mission statement and see the major strategic objectives as shared goals for their own, as well as for the University's future development.

### *Finance*

6. The development of the University as a legal and financially responsible entity in itself. Enabling action may be required at national government level and the Team would support FECFP and FPU in their effort to achieve this.
7. Annual consultations between the Rector, relevant senior officers and the deans on finance issues. The Team is of the impression that, presently, budget allocation procedures may be overly centralised. Each faculty and other division may need more advance consultation and a clearer view of their budget possibilities, notably for the launching of new courses or new research actions.

### *Quality Culture*

8. That FPU follow the ENQA report “Standards and guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” which includes the principles listed below. FPU should use these as a checklist to ensure that FPU has an efficient and effective quality programme and culture:
  - Guidelines and operational procedures must be agreed at university level.
  - All activities should be evaluated: study programmes, management and governance, staff development, services, research productivity, innovation, finance, etc.
  - Students, staff and stakeholders must be involved permanently. In this respect, students’ questionnaires are essential: their feedback must be used to bring about improvement.
  - Results of the evaluation (performance indicators, statistics, etc. must be published and fed into the university log-book or data base (to facilitate institutional research).
  - The work of the quality office brings obvious benefits to the process of strategic planning.
9. The Office for Organisational Quality and Excellence should prepare (in accordance with the principles above), and publicise across the University, a strategic plan and a work programme. These would incorporate the “ProjectQ” and place it in a broader context that will complement and support the new University Strategic Plan.
10. The Office for Organisational Quality and Excellence should benchmark with equivalent units in other comparable universities, both as part of developing its new plan and as an ongoing exercise.

### *Europe, the Bologna Process and the World of Work*

11. Consolidation of the Bologna reforms achieved by continuous structured training programmes. The major requirement is the support of staff, who need to improve their skills in the new teaching methods and technologies; and student feedback should inform these needs.
12. Increased visibility and support for the roles of the placement office and the career office, to increase the importance of work placements and facilitate the employment of graduates, and to enhance overall further relationships with employers, industry and other outside partners in the broader socio-economic world. An emphasis on ‘employability’ is an important element of the Bologna Process.
13. Support (as they continue to develop) for the innovative ‘virtual university’ and ambulatory programmes in order to attract new publics with new forms of teaching/learning in the context of Life Long Learning; inventing new kinds of relationships with the University for these new publics. Such programmes represent the best way to improve the University’s roles in society and the services it can render to the community.
14. Development of new external communication policies and practices:

- Improvement of University's website/brochures making all relevant information available in at least three to four selected languages and key information in several more.
- Use of other means as appropriate to advertise compliance with Bologna principle and practices, innovative courses, research and other projects to put Fernando Pessoa University definitely on the map across Europe and internationally.

### *Internationalisation*

15. That the International Officer ensure, through inputs to the new Strategic Plan and submissions to management that the preconditions for a vibrant internationalised institution are developed across the University as a whole. These may include:
  - Development (or enhancement) of interlocking policies and action plans to support internationalisation, including:
    - i. Languages and cultural awareness for students,
    - ii. Languages and cultural awareness for staff,
    - iii. Supports for incoming international students, e.g. Portuguese language, culture and social activities with local students.
  - Development of incentives and schemes to encourage teachers and administrative staff to be more mobile and take part in appropriate activities in universities abroad, particularly in countries targeted for student exchanges.
  - Designation of responsibilities and (as necessary) revision of job descriptions and conditions of employment to ensure that the work of the GRI is complemented and supported by the faculties and all academic staff.
  - That FPU become a member of EUA and of other important European associations like the Academic Co-operation Association (ACA), European Association for International Education (EAIE), and that FPU representatives participate in meetings and conferences on the evolution of European universities.
  - That student representatives from FPU become more involved in European organisations such as the European Student Union (ESIB), perhaps via a new FPU Student Union (see below).
16. That, given that most incoming international students take their courses through English (or other foreign languages) all teachers and participating Portuguese students should be supported fully to ensure a satisfactory outcome for everybody. Where feasible, the language for the delivery for all such courses should be fixed and known in advance.
17. That FPU students who have been on foreign placements be used (with incentives if necessary and appropriate) to list and explain the benefits and advantages of time spent in another university abroad to all prospective Erasmus etc. students.
18. That feedback from all Erasmus students (incoming and outgoing) should be collected systematically, listened to and acted upon when appropriate.

### *Research*

19. Development of a University research plan that identifies a small number of institutional research themes as an input to strategic planning, and its later adjustment to make it coherent with the new global strategic plan.
20. That continuous care be taken to rationalise the specialties of research centres to ensure that critical masses of researchers are involved in as many as possible of the targeted research themes.
21. Systematic and ongoing actions by the Research Office to ensure consistent success in applications for research funding; including advance identification of suitable funding schemes, the dissemination of scheme details, and the coaching and mentoring of all applicants for research grants. There should also be pre-set quantitative objectives for

gaining, year-on-year, more and more funds for research, from the state, private firms, the EU or other international programmes and foundations.

22. The encouragement and promotion of more research collaborations with public and private research institutions in Portugal and beyond.
23. The encouragement and promotion of even greater participation by UFP researchers in international joint degrees and in the joint supervision of PhD students with staff in other universities of high standing in Portugal, in Europe and in the world.

*Issues of Direct Concern to Students*

24. That the student body consider the formation of pan-University union with an elected president who is granted sabbatical leave. Such a structure should be constituted so as to complement the faculty unions and better represent all FPU students at home and abroad.
25. That the University review the accommodation requirements of the faculty student unions, and be generous in supporting any university-wide union that the students may decide to create.
26. That the faculties, as parts of all programmatic reviews, explicitly consider the number of students' contact hours, the 'density' of these hours in any day or week, and overall student workloads and assessment loads with a view to allowing students more time for reflection and extra-curricular University activities.
27. That each faculty review its library places and resources in terms of student ratios and compare these with data from equivalent universities.
28. That the information supplied on every programme contain explicit descriptions of all fees and payments expected over the whole programme.
29. That the provision and capacities of student lockers be reviewed and, if necessary, increased to facilitate students commuting by public transport.
30. That the University, in conjunction with the students unions, develop a needs analysis for University sports and societies facilities, and incorporate the findings into plans for future capital developments.

## **7 Envoi**

Concerning the evolution of European universities, four fundamental aspects are constantly underlined: Governance, Employability, Quality and Internationalisation. FPU is already aware of the importance of these, but as the Review Team has attempted to explore in the body of this Report, constant vigilance is necessary to maintain the necessary emphases and balance.

The work done at FPU to prepare for this review has been effective: the University has shown itself as proactive, attractive and capable of big changes. It is clear that FPU is managed and staffed by dynamic, competent people who are ambitious for its development as a valuable component of the Portuguese higher education system that is recognised as entirely worthy of the appellation 'university'. The challenge continues to be to identify how FPU, its staff and founder can build on their strong legacy of the past ten years to ensure a successful future. In all of this, FPU will benefit greatly from wider, active and more formal participation in its governance.

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