

**IULIU HAȚIEGANU UNIVERSITY OF MEDICINE AND PHARMACY,**

**CLUJ-NAPOCA**

***FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT***

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## **1. Introduction**

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of Iuliu Hațieganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Cluj-Napoca. The European University Association's (EUA) Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated the university in 2012 and submitted the report in January 2013.<sup>1</sup> In 2014, the university requested that IEP carry out a follow-up evaluation.

### **1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme and follow-up evaluation process**

IEP is an independent membership service of the EUA that offers evaluations to support the participating institutions in the continuing development of their strategic management and internal quality culture. The IEP is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) and is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR).

In line with the IEP philosophy as a whole, the follow-up process is a supportive one. There is no prescribed procedure, and it is for the institution itself to set the agenda in the light of its experiences since the original evaluation. The institution is expected to submit its own self-evaluation report, which will describe the progress made, possibly indicating barriers to change.

The rationale is that the follow-up evaluation can assist the institution in evaluating the changes that have been made since the original evaluation: What was the impact of the original evaluation? What use has the institution made of the original evaluation report? How far has it been able to address the issues raised in the report? The follow-up evaluation is also an opportunity for the institution to take stock of its strategies for managing change in the context of internal and external constraints and opportunities.

As for the original evaluation, the follow-up process is also guided by four key questions, which are based on a "fitness for (and of) purpose" approach:

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

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<sup>1</sup> The initial evaluation was part of a project entitled "Performance in Research, Performance in Teaching – Quality, Diversity, and Innovation in Romanian Universities", which included the evaluations of 49 universities. A second project entitled "Ready for innovating, ready for better serving the local needs – Quality and Diversity of the Romanian Universities", involved the evaluations of 29 additional higher education institutions in Romania. The IEP published a crosscutting report on all 70 evaluations in 2014.

[http://www.eua.be/Libraries/IEP/IEP\\_RO\\_system\\_report.sflb.ashx](http://www.eua.be/Libraries/IEP/IEP_RO_system_report.sflb.ashx)

## **1.2 The profile of Iuliu Haţleganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy**

Iuliu Haţleganu University of Medicine and Pharmacy (hereinafter UMF-Cluj), is located in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, a large university town in Transylvania. The city includes several other higher education institutions that are grouped into the Cluj Association of Universities to facilitate joint activities, notably in research.

The university is composed of three faculties: medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. There are 7 289 students enrolled at the university, including 2 137 international students from 63 countries; the personnel includes 859 academic staff and 512 administrative staff. All three faculties offer training in Romanian, French and English. Each language track has its own admissions procedure and different tuition fees.

The university and the major study programmes underwent external evaluations by the Agenţia Română de Asigurare a Calităţii în Învăţământul Superior, the Romanian accreditation agency ARACIS, which gave UMF-Cluj a “high degree of confidence” overall and “confidence” in its study programmes (Self-Evaluation Report, p. 3).

Compared to the 2012-2013 period, the general economic situation in Romania appears to be improving and the restrictions imposed on university recruitment have been lifted. Some legal dispositions of the 2011 law, for instance concerning PhD supervisors, have been changed. As a result, the team found the general atmosphere to be more optimistic and heard no reservations about the working conditions in the institution.

A new and well-equipped Research Centre for Functional Genomics, Biomedicine and Translational Medicine is now operational and many initiatives have been taken to improve the educational offer. These aspects are discussed in subsequent chapters of this report.

## **1.3 The evaluation process**

A self-evaluation group had been set up that included 16 members composed of academic leaders, senior administrative staff and one student, and chaired by Vice-Rector Felicia Loghin. It met once to agree the structure of the self-evaluation report and delegated the task of writing it to the two quality assurance (QA) officers. QA staff collected information from the faculties and key administrative services on how they had responded to the initial evaluation report. The deans reviewed the draft report and provided comments.

The self-evaluation report used the list of recommendations following the initial evaluation and provided information on how most of these had been addressed, whether they had been implemented or whether they had been either partially considered or not addressed at all.

It is clear that the initial evaluation report provided the university with a better understanding of how it could represent itself. A number of activities that had been overlooked in the 2012 Self-Evaluation Report were now in evidence, including inter-faculty cooperation within UFM-Cluj and inter-institutional cooperation across the city or region. The Self-Evaluation Report was informative but not always very analytical. This may have been the result of the type of self-evaluation process chosen and the over-representation of senior leaders in the self-evaluation group. However, one of the most interesting passages is to be found on the last page where key future challenges faced by the university are discussed. This proved to be useful during the site visit meetings.

The Self-Evaluation Report of the university, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team on 24 March 2015. The visit of the evaluation team to UFM-Cluj took place from 21 to 24 April 2015 (the schedule of the site visit is to be found in the appendix).

The evaluation team (hereinafter, the team) consisted of:

- Professor Henrik Toft Jensen, former Rector, Roskilde University, Denmark, team chair
- Professor Juan Viñas-Salas, former Rector, University of Lleida, Catalonia, Spain
- Mr Blazhe Todorovski, student, University “Ss. Cyril and Methodius”, Skopje, FYROM (who, for legitimate reasons, had to cancel his participation on the eve of the site visit; unfortunately, he could not be replaced at such short notice)
- Dr Andrée Sursock, senior adviser, EUA, Belgium, team coordinator (who was part of the initial evaluation team in 2012-2013)

The team wishes to thank Rector Alexandru Irimie who showed confidence in IEP by requesting this follow-up evaluation. He created an atmosphere of openness that was conducive to many stimulating discussions with the UMF-Cluj community.

The team is deeply grateful to the Senate president, the vice-rectors, the deans, and the large number of students, academic and administrative staff and external stakeholders, who took the time to meet with them and share their views on the university.

Vice-Rector for Research Felicia Loghin and Ms Corina Morutan (QA office) were instrumental in making sure that all organisational and practical aspects of the site visit were addressed. Their contribution to a successful visit was invaluable and their graciousness much appreciated.

## **2. Governance**

### **2.1 Governance and decision making**

The initial evaluation (first site visit in April 2012) took place shortly after the rector had been elected and the vice-rectors and deans appointed. Three years later, the evaluation team saw continued evidence of a strong and open senior leadership team who listens to staff and students. The rector, the vice-rectors and the deans appear to form a cohesive group that works well together. The deans' offices are housed in a single building, thus facilitating informal communication across the three faculties. As a result, there is a shared view of the university's strategic orientation even if this was expressed only orally and not in writing.

The initial evaluation noted that the 2011 Law on national education placed the rector and the Administrative Board <sup>2</sup>in a position of being the executive arm of the Senate. The relationship between the Senate and the Administrative Board at UMF-Cluj was similar to that between a parliament and a government.

The divided structure of Romanian universities is fraught with problems. To minimise this risk, the decision was taken at UMF-Cluj to invite the Senate president to be a permanent guest of the Administrative Board and the latter to be permanent guests of the Senate. This arrangement was already implemented in 2012-2013 and the evaluation team saw no evidence that it was not working reasonably well three years later, despite some senior academic leaders preferring the situation that was in place before the 2011 law, which allowed deans to be Senate members.

The high number of Senate committees and their overlapping responsibilities with those of the vice-rectors were appreciated to varying degrees: some university members felt that the additional layers were positive in providing added scrutiny of decisions, whereas others felt that it complicated the decision-making processes. These features are common to many other Romanian universities and the initial evaluation had already addressed these issues, most of which are prescribed by law or tradition.

As in 2012-2013, the internal budget allocation is based on the number of students in each faculty and does not seem to raise problems. The university budget is based on two income streams: public funding represents 60% to 70% of the university budget and the second stream is based on tuition fees and project-based income, which

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<sup>2</sup> The Administrative Board is chaired by the rector and includes the vice-rectors, the deans, the director of the Council of Doctoral University Studies (who is also a vice-rector), the director general and a student representative.

totalled 18 million EUR over the past three years. The evaluation team was informed that the financial situation of the university was sound.

The changes took place since the initial evaluation include the following:

- The division of labour in the university was changed and clarified: the deans were put in charge of the academic decisions while the rector took responsibility for improving the administrative management.
- The recruitment of administrative staff had been interrupted during the height of the economic crisis but it is now possible to recruit new staff. As opposed to academic staff numbers that are regulated by ARACIS, a university has more leeway in recruiting for administrative staff. Thus, the administrative capacity was strengthened through both targeted recruitment and staff development. New recruits included staff with higher education degrees increasing from 21.7% to 37.3% which is an important development in line with European trends. The university introduced new staff strategically across the administrative services in order to promote change. In addition, about 100 staff members attended courses to develop their language and computer skills.
- A great deal of effort has been made to clarify the workings of the university, resulting in new organisation charts that present the decision-making structures and the reporting lines. In addition, 197 administrative and 166 academic procedures have been developed to describe how certain activities are handled (e.g. compensation of extra working hours). These procedures had been drawn up by each faculty or department in order to ensure local ownership and transparency.
- More channels of communication, including toward students, have been created, and the existing ones improved (e.g. a new website has been put in place, extensive student brochures published in English, French and Romanian, the use of Facebook to communicate with students, and students' access to their electronic records in a database that the university is seeking to improve). The rector presents his annual report to the whole academic community.

These are positive developments that illustrate the university's capacity to make appropriate changes.

It appears, however, that two aspects deserve attention. Firstly, there is no written document that captures the main strategic orientations of the university that were discussed during the site visit meetings. These are:

- To develop the teaching culture, train students more interactively and prepare them for a globalised environment

- To support the research development, including research grant writing and infrastructures.

Secondly, the team is somewhat concerned by the number of administrative and academic procedures that are mentioned above. Although these procedures contribute to transparency, their proliferation might produce the opposite result of what was intended which is less, rather than more, transparency.

In this context, the team makes the following recommendations to support the further development of the university:

- Formalise and post on the website the mission and vision that were expressed orally. This should be two separate documents that can be found easily on the website by any member of the university community, as well as its external stakeholders and international partners.
- Simplify, reduce and consolidate the number of administrative procedures wherever possible.

## **2.2 Quality assurance**

Several features of the quality assurance approach at UMF-Cluj deserve mention:

- The quality assurance approach seems to be characterised by a participative culture that seeks to involve staff. This is an essential condition for ensuring that QA processes are not bureaucratic and produce improvements. The QA office sees its main responsibilities as monitoring and coordinating the QA processes. The vice-rector for quality assurance works with the vice-deans in charge of the area to ensure coordination across the university.
- A four-prong evaluation has been introduced over the past two years which requires academic staff to submit to a self-evaluation, a peer evaluation, student evaluation and an evaluation by their department heads. The university must decide on the relative importance of the various methods and is working to put the system together. The principle being proposed is that the “owners” of the process will be the department heads and the deans; in other words, each department head would write an action plan to be sent to the dean (rather than up to the central level).
- Academics have been given opportunities for staff development. Thus, a week-long medical course has been developed with academics from the University of Brighton (UK) and the Medical University of Vienna (Austria). Staff development courses are mandatory for young academics, those who receive poor evaluations and any academic staff who apply for promotion.



- The QA office has on its staff a sociologist and a psychologist. Staff benefited from QA training through summer courses in Germany and attendance at international conferences. QA staff wishes to benchmark the office's activities with other European universities' QA offices. These are very positive developments that will ensure that the office continuously improves its operation and that UMF-Cluj remains up-to-date in its QA approach.
- Any curricular modifications go through commissions that include students and external stakeholders (e.g. representatives of the health care system, professional organisations and industry representatives as appropriate).
- The deans meet with student representatives regularly to obtain their feedback.
- Students appreciate improvement introduced as a result of their evaluations but the evaluation team observes that not all students are aware of these changes and that the response rate to the evaluation questionnaires is variable and somewhat unsatisfactory. The fluctuating response rate seems mostly related to the timing (just before the examination period) and the fact that a single questionnaire is used across all courses and seminars. This can result in a student having to complete the same questionnaire and answer the same questions up to 16 times at the end of a semester, when stress is maximal. The consequence is a low level of answers which is not useful as a feedback mechanism.

The team makes the following recommendations to support the further development of quality assurance at the university:

- Improve the student questionnaire by:
  - involving students and academic staff in its design. This will ensure that the questions are clear, relevant and useful
  - varying the questions
  - varying the format, for example, by using discussions in some courses and written questionnaires in others; using a "relay" evaluation model, with small groups of about six students, which involves a first student writing a comment and passing it on to the next student who builds on it, etc., until the last student writes the concluding comment;
  - reviewing the timing of completing the questionnaire so as to avoid the time immediately before the examination period;
  - using the last 10 minutes of the last lectures to ask students to respond to the questionnaire instead of waiting until they return home;
  - developing new questionnaires, e.g. track alumni, evaluate a whole curriculum after the third or fourth year;

- reviewing the initial IEP report (January 2013) which provided many recommendations regarding the use of the questionnaires.<sup>3</sup>
- Ensure continuous improvement, by placing responsibility for action plans resulting from the questionnaires on academic staff, who should discuss, wherever possible, the results and their plans for improvement with their students. In this context, it would be useful to provide the staff with the answers to the open questions of their students' evaluations.
- The evaluation team supports the notion that department heads and deans should be informed of how professors are improving the situation and recommend that they provide the Administrative Board with brief progress reports on an annual basis. Only important, unsolved problems should be referred to the central QA office and the rector's team.

The important principle in the QA area is that the university should ensure that the QA processes contribute to the development of the institution and are not simply a way of complying with the national accountability requirements and allocating salary bonuses to staff. This turns the role of the questionnaires into an administrative activity rather than being a quality improvement orientated activity. Furthermore, promoting an improvement orientation implies that ownership of the QA processes are widely shared and not simply the responsibility of the QA office.

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<sup>3</sup> A EUA study in 2011 provides a very thorough discussion of different ways of collecting student feedback: *Examining Quality Culture Part II Processes and Tools – Participation, Ownership and Bureaucracy*.

[http://www.eua.be/pubs/Examining\\_Quality\\_Culture\\_Part\\_II.pdf](http://www.eua.be/pubs/Examining_Quality_Culture_Part_II.pdf)

### **3. Learning and teaching**

The team wishes to make two preliminary and important observations about the learning environment.

Firstly, learning and teaching is recognised as an essential part of the mission at UMF-Cluj. Academic staff members are aware that their students expect pedagogical innovation and up-to-date information and knowledge and they seem to be putting efforts into developing good teaching. This is provided, for instance, through the well-equipped medical skills simulation laboratory, which the students would like to use more intensively.

All faculties offer professional counselling to address the problems that students may encounter. Tutors and mentors for residency students are also available. All academic staff hold mandatory office hours (two hours/week), including the deans and vice-deans. Academic staff members are sensitive to the demands and needs of students who appreciate the easy access to their teachers and the fact that they are encouraged to pursue and develop their intellectual interests.

Students also value the good support that the university provides to their organisations and to their extra-curricular activities, including involvement in Medicalis, the International Congress for Medical Students and Young Doctors. Students expressed the belief that they are being prepared for a European life and not only for their professional lives in Romania.

The international orientation of the university is confirmed by the international evaluations that UMF-Cluj has undergone recently. The Faculty of Medicine initiated two international evaluations, by the Conférence Internationale des Doyens et des Facultés de Médecine d'Expression Française (CIDMEF) and as a participant of the EMEDIQUAL project;<sup>4</sup> the Faculty of Pharmacy underwent an initial and follow-up evaluation by the Conférence Internationale des Doyens des Facultés de Pharmacie d'Expression Française (CIDPHARMEF) (cf. Self-Evaluation Report, p. 3).

Secondly, there are no university hospitals in Cluj which is not an ideal situation. UMF-Cluj has thus entered into a large number of agreements with clinics and hospitals in the city which involve exchanges of services. For example, the university buys equipment that is placed in the hospitals and can be used for both patient care and medical research and the university selects heads of hospital departments. There is evidence that all those involved wish to ensure that this situation works as well as possible so as to deliver good medical training and good health care. The size of Cluj and its strong identity is helpful in this regard. The city provides a sense of community

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<sup>4</sup> The EMEDIQUAL project sought to improve curriculum by introducing interactive forms of learning and teaching at the bachelor level in medicine.

that is supported by the close personal and professional relationships and pride in being recognised as an important regional medical centre.

The evaluation team spent time looking at several aspects of learning and teaching. Its main findings include the following:

- UMF-Cluj is introducing new ways of teaching, such as problem-based learning (PBL) in medicine and some interactive pedagogy in dentistry and pharmacy, as well as new types of examinations. A professor from the Medical University of Vienna trained the academic staff in Cluj over a period of several years to use PBL. PBL was introduced as a pilot study and is now used for the first-year students in medicine. Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) was used as a pilot study in the third and sixth years and was much appreciated by students.
- As in the previous evaluation in 2012-2013, although students continue to request more practical courses, and the university pays attention to the request, the balance between theoretical and practical courses does appear to be satisfactory. For instance, the medical curriculum can be represented in the form of a “Z”: from theory to practice and back to theory.
- The residency programme for future physicians seems to be working well. The Ministry of Health establishes the number of residents of which there are 2000. Each one is allocated to a hospital bed where they are trained in taking care of all patients using that bed over a period of time. The clinics and hospitals provide interns with the required clinical experience. While each academic has two contracts – one with the university (full-time) and the other with the hospital (part-time) – the training of residents is ensured by teaching staff and by physicians who do not receive extra income for this.
- The external stakeholders observed that they are able to contribute to updating the curricula, as illustrated by the integration of the needs of the ageing regional population in some courses (e.g. the increase in chronic disease), following their request. The university organised focus groups with external stakeholders to elicit their views on the medical study programmes.

These are good developments. Other aspects, however, deserve some attention:

- Although, as compared to the 2012-2013 evaluation, greater attention appears to be paid to the integration and support of the students enrolled in the French and English sections, the team was concerned to observe the high drop-out rate in the French section, which was partly explained by the relatively weak background of students from North Africa.

- 16 international students decided to remain in Cluj for their residency and sat the residency test in Romanian while the others went back to their home countries. The team learnt that some of the French students require extra psychological and academic support when they prepare the French residency examination, the “*épreuves classantes nationales*” (ECN). At the moment, the use of electronic resources to prepare the ECN is limited to students who underwent medical training in France but discussions are underway with the French ambassador and the Institut Français de Cluj to provide extra support and, notably, to allow the Cluj medical students access to the academic resources. This would be an important step forward.
- Nursing seems to be relatively overlooked and suffers from the scarcity of modern equipment.
- Although students do have access to an online library, they report that some of their Romanian medical textbooks (in hard copies) are out of date.
- A number of students have complained about their crowded timetables and the lack of flexibility in their curricula.

In the light of these issues, the team makes the following recommendations:

- Address the drop-out rate issue, especially in the French section and consider that, regardless of the level of the students, they all need to be supported to ensure their success, whether this support is through tutoring, mentoring or psychological.
- Closer ties with the Institut Français de Cluj and the Corporation de médecine de Cluj might bolster the safety net and provide a sense of community to the French students, particularly those preparing the ECN.
- Consolidate the quality of nursing studies, including the renewal and completion of available equipment.
- Update the medical textbooks.
- Review the student timetable to ensure that it is manageable.
- Continue the extension of PBL to more courses and more disciplines and introduce Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) and case presentations.
- Increase the flexibility of study programmes by offering students the possibility of taking electives at other faculties and promote joint courses across faculties, notably for transversal skills.

- Consider extending the opening hours of the medical skills laboratory (which would require hiring more technicians) for the benefit of the students and to fully use the big investment.

## **4. Research**

During the initial evaluation of 2012-2013, research in UMF-Cluj had slowed down due to lack of funding. Today, the evaluation team was able to observe an improvement in the situation at the university.

UMF-Cluj's financial situation had been well managed during the economic crisis and competitive funding is available from the university in order to finance research activities.

The new Research Centre for Functional Genomics, Biomedicine and Translational Medicine is well equipped and housed in a building that provides a good working environment. Its 25 researchers are working on several research projects and publishing in peer-reviewed journals. The university received an award from the Romanian ministry that recognises its research quality. A university journal is listed in Scopus. The Self-Evaluation Report (p. 13) mentions that in 2009-2014 "the total number of publications in ISI journals with impact factor was over 1563". The university is now communicating about its research through a "White Book".

The university will extend its research activities thanks to the MedFUTURE project, which is described in the Self-Evaluation Report (p. 13) as the "Development of Integrated Research Infrastructure for Advanced and Translational Medicine to Increase International Scientific Competitiveness in the Health Fields". This project received 8.3 million EUR from the European Regional Development Fund to provide research facilities to the three faculties as well as to other universities, research institutes, business, and local authorities.

This project provides further evidence of a culture of inter-institutional cooperation. Indeed, the university is part of a 34 inter-faculty and inter-university research project that is funded by the Romanian Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation.

The doctoral candidates are trained under the umbrella of a single doctoral school but there had been discussions about setting up three doctoral schools, one per faculty, in order to offer specialised training to doctoral candidates.

In summary, there is improved infrastructure, recognition of research activities and a growing research culture. These developments are supported by a combination of large-scale research projects that are supported by the rectorate (and funded externally), as well as smaller initiatives (75 research projects) that have received competitive funding from the university and allow individual researchers to branch out in areas that are not necessarily covered or linked to the large-scale research projects. Staff are aware of the importance of international peer-reviewed publications and engage in research partnerships locally, through the Association of

Cluj Universities, and internationally, notably by making good use of Romanian researchers who have emigrated abroad.

In order to develop its research strengths further, UMF-Cluj is recommended to:

- Develop and make available to students and potential international partners an online research database that will list the past and current activities of all research-active staff. This would complete the information provided in the “White Book” and allow students to identify which research teams to join, enable international researchers to identify likely candidates for partnerships and promote research among academics.
- Given the size of UMF-Cluj, a single multidisciplinary doctoral school seems to be a viable option. In order to respond to the need of specialised training, it could evolve toward providing a common core for transversal skills training and specialised tracks for each faculty. This would fit with the European trend, which consists of minimising the number of doctoral schools in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness and promote an interdisciplinary environment.
- Encourage academic staff to seek external funding by i) providing administrative support for grant writing and ii) using the available university research funds as co-funding for the successful grant applications.
- Continue to encourage international research partnerships as an essential basis for winning European funding.



## **5. Service to society**

The initial evaluation of 2012-2013 praised UMF-Cluj for its constructive relationships to a wide range of external stakeholders who appeared to be very supportive of the university. This positive impression was confirmed during the follow-up evaluation visit. The team met a number of stakeholders including representatives of professional associations, health insurance, health providers and the regional authorities and found that they were as appreciative of UMF-Cluj as the group of external stakeholders whom the evaluation team had met three years previously.

The discussions with the external stakeholders and the members of the university confirmed that the notion of social responsibility is central to the university and its three faculties. It is integrated into the curricula and the responsibility for service to society is lodged at the highest university level as the joint duty of the rector and the three deans.

Activities include an outreach programme that involves visiting high schools and inviting high school students to attend a two-week summer programme at the university.

The commitment to serving society translates into a number of volunteering activities involving students (e.g. working in hospices, retirement homes, emergency services, orphanages, etc.) and participating in the public health initiatives of the local and regional authorities (e.g. education activities, prevention campaigns, etc.) It should be emphasised that students receive credits for their volunteering activities and this constitutes good practice. In addition, students contribute actively to hospital care where they are a resource as well as having the opportunity to learn, and this also constitutes an important aspect of the university's service to society.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, external stakeholders are involved in curriculum revisions. In addition, the university lends its expertise to a range of organisations, including industrial R&D. Thus, the Faculty of Pharmacy has research projects with Sanofi S.A., France (in cooperation with the University of Mainz) and AstraZeneca PLC, UK.

UMF-Cluj offers a wide range of lifelong learning courses (486 courses for about 4000 participants). Some of these courses are supported by up-to-date and costly medical equipment. The departments approve the courses in their discipline which are then published in a university brochure and advertised nationally.

A vice-rector for postgraduate courses is responsible for this area but the process seems fairly decentralised. The university receives 30% of the fees while the remainder is destined to the departments and the teachers receive compensation in kind (e.g. a new laptop).

Some of the courses appear to be quite small-sized, although this is sometimes justified by the nature of the course. The initial evaluation in 2012-2013 had noted that enrolment was weak and declining; the situation has remained the same and appears to be the result of competition from other providers (who sometimes hire UMF-Cluj academics).

On the basis of this evidence, the overall impression gained by the team is that the relationship with external stakeholders seems to have diversified since the initial evaluation and appears to be structured and long-standing. It involves a range of mutually beneficial activities that have excellent societal value.

The evaluation team is concerned, however, about the high numbers of lifelong learning courses while the number of learners is relatively small and declining. The key question to be addressed is the overall cost of lifelong learning courses to the university in relation to the income derived from them. Therefore:

- The team recommends that the university reconsider the following recommendation provided in the initial evaluation report: “Analyse the lifelong learning activities from two vantage points: their real costs and the reasons for the recent decline in the number of registrations. This is an area where evidence-based decision-making is particularly important in order to respond as closely as possible to societal needs and to keep the university’s balance sheet in order.” (IEP evaluation report, 2013, p. 15). This analysis should be made while being aware that service to society is also demonstrated by offering these courses.
- Instead of competing with other lifelong learning providers consider partnering with them and formalising a framework agreement to regulate the external use of UMF-Cluj academics.

## **6. Internationalisation**

The initial evaluation of 2012-2013 praised UMF-Cluj for its strategic interest in internationalisation and identified a number of issues for improvement. The evaluation report included a range of recommendations, most of which appeared to have been addressed in the interval.

The report recommended that the university should address obstacles to mobility (e.g. the inflexibility of some study programmes, recognition issues). Evidence was provided that attention had been paid to the recognition process in the framework of the 100 Erasmus partnerships, but it is unclear how effective the change has been. Furthermore, as in other Romanian universities, mobility between incoming (40) and outgoing (80) students remains unbalanced.

There are also 20 bilateral exchanges, including one with the University of Iowa that brings 20 students to campus every year, and involvement in several international networks.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Faculty of Medicine underwent two international evaluations recently by CIDMEF and as part of the E-MEDIQUAL project, while the Faculty of Pharmacy underwent an initial and follow-up evaluation by CIDPHARMEF.

The English track was created in 1997, followed by the first French track in 2000. Today, UMF-Cluj continues to attract international students to its English and French tracks even though there is no marketing for this - the alumni act as informal ambassadors and 20% of the best international students' tuition is covered by the university. UMF-Cluj's international intake in the French and English sections represents 30% of the overall student body.

Nevertheless, as mentioned in Chapter 3, there are concerns linked to i) the performance of students in the French track; and ii) the French students' professional prospects when they return home. In addition, some of the international students observed that the information on the website is less comprehensive in French and English than in Romanian.

The university recognises the challenge of having so many international students. Counselling is available and the university supports their student organisations, and international students are represented in faculty councils and the Senate. In addition, the university organises events to help integrate the international students (e.g. intercultural dinners and artistic programmes, sports events, trips, dances) and offers elective courses to introduce them to Romanian culture and society.

While there was no evidence of an internationalisation strategy (a development that was recommended in the initial evaluation), the university has used international networks and partnerships to improve learning and teaching and to strengthen its

research potential. Both staff and students are given opportunities to apply for funding that would allow them to attend international conferences.

Given this evidence, the team recommends:

- Selecting more carefully the international students to the French track and supporting those who have been admitted through counselling, tutoring and mentoring.
- Continuing to put efforts into ensuring that European professional societies in medicine, pharmacy and dentistry are aware of the quality of training provided by UMF-Cluj.
- Reviewing and completing as necessary the web-based communication for the French and English tracks.

## 7. Conclusions

The team appreciated the dynamic atmosphere and the optimism that prevails at UMF-Cluj. The university is steered by a leadership with a vision and a strategy, and deans and vice-deans who are eager to contribute to the quality and development of the university. Academic staff members are committed to improve the quality of teaching, while they show concerns about developing their research activities. Students are proud of the university and its quality and their feeling of pride is shared by the external stakeholders. The university administration is in the process of being strengthened which is essential in order to free academic staff from mundane administrative work and support the further development of the university.

The evaluation team wishes the university well and encourages UMF-Cluj to continue in its chosen strategic trajectory.

### Summary of the recommendations

#### ***Governance: decision-making and quality assurance***

- Formalise and post on the website the mission and vision that were expressed orally. This should be two separate documents that can be found easily on the website by any member of the university community, as well as its external stakeholders and international partners.
- Simplify, reduce and consolidate the number of administrative procedures wherever possible.
- Improve the student questionnaire by:
  - involving students and academic staff in its design. This will ensure that the questions are clear, relevant and useful
  - varying the questions
  - varying the format, for instance, by using discussions in some courses and written questionnaires in others; using a “relay” evaluation model, with small groups of about six students, which involves a first student writing a comment and passing it on to the next student who builds on it, etc., until the last student writes the concluding comment
  - reviewing the timing of completing the questionnaire, trying to avoid the time just before the examination period
  - using the last 10 minutes of the last lectures to ask students to respond to the questionnaire instead of waiting until they return home
  - developing new questionnaires: e.g. track alumni, evaluate a whole curriculum after the third or fourth year
  - reviewing the initial IEP report (January 2013), which provided many recommendations regarding the use of the questionnaires.

- Ensure continuous improvement, by placing responsibility for action plans resulting from the questionnaires on academic staff, who should discuss, wherever possible, the results and their plans for improvement with their students. In this context, it would be useful to provide the staff with the answers to the open questions of their students' evaluations.
- The evaluation team supports the notion that department heads and deans should be informed of how professors are improving the situation and recommend that they provide the Administrative Board with brief progress reports on an annual basis. Only important, unsolved problems should be referred to the central QA office and the rector's team.

### ***Learning and teaching***

- Address the drop-out rate, especially in the French section and consider that, regardless of the level of the students, they all need to be supported to ensure their success, whether this support is tutoring, mentoring or psychological.
- Closer ties with the Institut Français de Cluj and the Corporation de médecine de Cluj might bolster the safety net and provide a sense of community to the French students, particularly those preparing the ECN.
- Consolidate the quality of nursing studies, including the renewal and completion of the available equipment.
- Update the medical textbooks.
- Review the student schedule to ensure that it is manageable.
- Continue the extension of PBL to more courses and more disciplines and introduce Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) and case presentations.
- Increase the flexibility of study programmes by offering students the possibility of taking options at other faculties and promote joint courses across faculties, notably for transversal skills.
- Consider extending the opening hours of the medical skills laboratory (which would require hiring more technicians) for the benefit of the students and to make full use of this large investment.

### ***Research***

- Develop and make available to students and potential international partners an online research database that will list the past and current activities of each

research-active staff. This would complete the information provided in the “White Book” and allow students to identify which research teams to join, enable international researchers to identify likely candidates for partnerships and promote research among academics.

- Given the size of UMF-Cluj, a single multidisciplinary doctoral school seems to be a viable option. In order to respond to the need of specialised training, it could evolve toward providing a common core for transversal skills training and specialised tracks for each faculty. This would fit with the European trend, which consists in minimising the number of doctoral schools in order to increase efficiency and effectiveness and promote an interdisciplinary environment.
- Encourage academic staff to seek external funding by (i) providing administrative support for grant writing and (ii) using the available university research funds as co-funding for the successful grant applications.
- Continue to encourage international research partnerships as an essential basis for winning European funding.

#### ***Service to society***

- Reconsider the following recommendation provided in the initial evaluation report: “Analyse the lifelong learning activities from two vantage points: their real costs and the reasons for the recent decline in the number of registrations. This is an area where evidence-based decision-making is particularly important in order to respond as closely as possible to societal needs and to keep the university’s balance sheet in order.” (IEP evaluation report, 2013, p. 15). This analysis should be made while being aware that the service to society is also demonstrated by offering these courses.
- Instead of competing with other lifelong learning providers consider forming partnerships with them and formalising a framework agreement to regulate the external use of UMF-Cluj academics.

#### ***Internationalisation***

- Select more carefully the international students to the French track and support those who have been admitted through counselling, tutoring and mentoring.
- Continue to put efforts into ensuring that European professional societies in medicine, pharmacy and dentistry are aware of the quality of training provided by UMF-Cluj.
- Review and complete as necessary the web-based communication for the French and English tracks.





### Appendix: Schedule of the site visit

Tuesday, April, 21 <sup>th</sup> 2015			
Time	Activity	Participants	Location
Afternoon	Arrival of evaluation team		
15.30	Briefing meeting	Evaluation team alone	Hotel Meeting Room
18.00 – 18.45	Presentation of the institution by its leadership	Evaluation team University's Leadership	Hotel Meeting Room
19.00	Dinner	Evaluation team  Liaison person, Vice-Rectors and Deans	Hotel Restaurant
Wednesday, April, 22 <sup>th</sup> 2015			
Time	Activity	Participants	Location
09.00 – 09.50	Meeting with the Rector	Evaluation team  Rector	Rector's office
10.00 – 11.30	Meeting with Self-Evaluation Group	Evaluation team  Board of Directors (Vice-Rectors, Deans, Administrative Director, Economic Director, HR Director) and Quality Assurance Department	Senate Meeting Room
11.45 – 12.30	Meeting with the QA staff, QA unit staff and academics responsible for QA issues	Evaluation team  Quality Assurance Department's Director, Manager and QA staff	Senate Meeting Room
12.45 – 14.00	Lunch	Evaluation team with the board of directors	University Restaurant

14.20 15.10	–	<b>Meeting with the Deans and Deans' Council</b>	Evaluation team  Dean and Vice-Deans of the three faculties and a representative of nursing	Senate Meeting Room
15.20 16.00	–	<b>Meeting with students</b>	Evaluation team  Students from all three faculties, including a nursing student	Senate Meeting Room
16.10 17.00	–	<b>Meeting with Senate representatives</b>	Evaluation team  President of the Senate	Senate Meeting Room
17.10 18.00	–	<b>Meeting with outside partners</b>	Evaluation team  Stakeholders from the Health Sector	Senate Meeting Room
18.10 19.00	–	<b>Debriefing meeting</b>	(Return to the hotel)  Evaluation team alone	Hotel Meeting Room
Evening		<b>Dinner</b>	Evaluation team alone	Hotel Restaurant

**Thursday, April, 23<sup>th</sup> 2015**

<b>Time</b>		<b>Activity</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Location</b>
08.30 09.00	–	<b>Meeting with the dean of Faculty of Medicine</b>	Evaluation team  Dean, Faculty of Medicine	Faculty of Medicine Conference Room
09.00 10.00	–	<b>Meeting with academic staff members of Faculty of Medicine</b>	Evaluation team  Academic staff - Medicine	Faculty of Medicine Conference Room
10.00 10.30	–	<b>Meeting with students of Faculty of Medicine</b>	Evaluation team  Students, including foreign students - Medicine	Faculty of Medicine Conference Room
10.30 11.00	–	<b>Simulation Center</b>	Evaluation team  Vice Dean, Faculty of Medicine	No. 23, Marinescu Street

11.00 11.15	–	<b>Break</b>		
11.15 11.45	–	<b>Meeting with the dean of Faculty of Pharmacy</b>	Evaluation team Students, including foreign students - Pharmacy	Faculty of Pharmacy Conference Room
11.45 12.15	–	<b>Meeting with academic staff members of Faculty of Pharmacy</b>	Evaluation team Academic staff - Pharmacy	Faculty of Pharmacy Conference Room
12.15 12.30	–	<b>Meeting with students of Faculty of Pharmacy</b>	Evaluation team Students, including foreign students - Pharmacy	Faculty of Pharmacy Conference Room
12.30 13.00	–	<b>Research Center for Functional Genomics, Biomedicine and Translational Medicine</b>	Evaluation team Vice-Rector for Research	No. 23, Marinescu Street
13.15 14.15	–	<b>Lunch</b>	Evaluation team Chair, self- evaluation group	Restaurant
14.15 15.15	–	<b>Meeting with international researchers and international graduate students</b>	Evaluation team International researchers International graduate students	Senate Meeting Room
15.30 20.00	–	<b>Debriefing meeting</b>	(Return to the hotel) Evaluation team alone	Hotel Meeting Room
20.00 21.00	–	<b>Dinner</b>	Evaluation team alone	Hotel Restaurant
21.00 23.00	–	<b>Drafting oral report</b>	Evaluation team alone	Hotel Meeting Room

Friday, April, 24 <sup>th</sup> 2015			
Time	Activity	Participants	Location
09.00 – 09.50	<b>Concluding meeting with the Rector</b>	Evaluation team Rector	Senate Meeting Room
10.00 – 10.30	<b>Adapting oral report</b>	Evaluation team alone	Senate Meeting Room
10.30 – 11.30	<b>Oral report</b>	Evaluation team University's Leadership Self-Evaluation Group	Senate Meeting Room
12.00 – 13.00	<b>Lunch</b>	Evaluation team Self-Evaluation Group	University Restaurant
13.00	<b>Departure of evaluation team</b>		