

Internationalisation_at_UMP_"Grigore_T._Popa"

The mission of the UMF is to be recognised as a great research university, a European leader in research and excellence in education, dedicated to the positive impact in the lives of its students, graduates and staff, as well as the local, national and international communities.

The university reports in the SER that it has a long history of building international relations, which, although limited during the communist regime, UMF's international outreach in both research and education started to develop after 1990 and was a strategic focus ever since. The team found that there is generally a good international perspective and positive views are held by international students and those students who have experienced exchange programmes.

There is a focus on international activity across a range of university functions both in developing partnerships and relationships with overseas universities and as in utilising international benchmarks as a focus for benchmarking, comparison and strategic development. The issue of benchmarking is mentioned elsewhere in the report.

The team noted the level and extent of international activity and its contribution to university life. The overall impression of the team was that whilst there are commendable pockets of international activity, the university is not making the most of it to become internationalised or to become an international university. The developments and relationships often appear piecemeal and developing in a way that does not build capacity or critical mass. The team observed a lack of clear goals for internationalisation activities. The team recommend that an internationalisation strategy is developed which maximises existing opportunities through targeted actions with clear leadership.

The university has proved to be successful in attracting international students and has large cohorts of English and French speaking students. These students bring a rich vein of international experience to the university and this could be used to develop internationalisation within the home curriculum. Both home and international students report that they mix socially and at university organised functions but not for teaching and learning experiences. The team recommend that to optimise the international activity of all students, the university should maximise the potential of the international student body through shared curricula activity. It is suggested to use synergies between the programmes given in English and French with the corresponding Romanian programmes.

International students speak highly of their experiences and are extremely positive about their learning experiences. They report some good induction information and activities. They identify that their experience could be improved by further developing induction and support services to integrate them within the university and the city.

Incoming and outgoing students on exchange programmes also reported positively on their experiences and identified positive benefits to their student experience. The team visited the international office and was impressed by the volume and quality of work undertaken by the staff. Despite this, there were many students who seemed to be unaware that such exchange opportunities existed. The team conclude that there was a lack of information flow concerning international mobility programmes, grants and co-operations and not enough support (administrative, language, financial) for interested students. The team note that investment in more human resources in the international office would provide more information and opportunities for students. This would enable, inter alia, the utilisation of current positive student experiences to promote student exchange.

In terms of research, international collaboration is described, in the SER, as vast and expressed by the high number of formal collaboration agreements in place with research universities in Europe and the rest of the world. These agreements materialised in common research projects recently awarded by the EU. The team heard that strategic partnerships had been set up with French universities and suggest that this type of targeted activity should be part of an internationalisation strategy.

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This would enable links with a key recruitment area to be developed and would also help build reputation linked to employability of students as evidence suggests a strong and effective presence in international labour markets. Coupled with this, the team recommend that as part of an internationalisation strategy the university should gather quantitative and qualitative evidence on employability and workforce impact to build reputation.

Students report a lack of current international literature in UMF libraries and the team encourage the university to rectify this as part of their library development. This is linked to the development of a language policy within the university. The team recommend that the university define and practice a clear language policy which would assist in recruitment, increase employability, increase potential for co-operation and publication in high impact journals.

The university has a number of staff who have worked overseas and staff development approaches have encouraged an outward looking international perspective. However the staff group is almost exclusively Romanian and whilst the team recognise external barriers to international recruitment they note that human resources is not internationalised within the university and that consideration should be given to how this may be achieved.