

Teaching_and_Learning_at_UMP_"Grigore_T._Popa"

The university strives to deliver excellence in both teaching and research. The team heard positive accounts of student education at the university from a variety of sources and concluded that students, graduates and stakeholders value the quality of education. The team praise the symbiosis of teaching and research, the focus on linkages between these and the engagement of students in learning about research at all levels.

The SER advises that teaching methods are based on modern learning principles and favour the students' progress, their ability to participate both in the medical research activity and their own development as future professionals during the years of study. The team found many examples of excellent teaching facilities and plans for further development. It was clear through discussions with a number of groups of students that learning was effective. It was also clear that what they valued were high levels of teacher input and availability, which are more commonly associated with traditional teaching methods. It was unclear to the team how the university defines 'modern learning principles' and whether the teaching was based on the need to justify teacher contact time or the learning needs of the students. To this extent, and for reasons cited below, the team recommend that a teaching and learning strategy is developed to further the implementation of these principles.

The team noted that the curricula includes, for each subject of study, a number of hours for self-study, so that the students become aware of their own learning process and have the opportunity to prepare for their professional career and lifelong learning. The balance of this autonomous study time was low compared to teacher contact time and this is contrary to practice in many European universities and Bologna reform orientation. Notwithstanding the constraints imposed by Directive 2005/36/EC this impacts not only on the teaching and learning approaches but also on the development of an e-learning platform and the correct attribution ECTS and student workload.

In the past year an e-learning platform has been implemented university-wide. All students (graduate, master, PhD and residents) have access to a web portal containing both academic and research related information, pertinent to their specific activities and specialties. Direct access to course-related material, students' evaluations, efficient teacher-student communication and collaboration as well as the incentive to integrate new technologies in daily activities are some of the benefits obtained by implementation of this e-learning platform. In addition, a significant improvement in administrative flows and gradual red tape reduction are becoming visible since the implementation of the platform. The team viewed this as a positive and welcome development, which would significantly improve teaching and learning as well as improving communication and information flow. However, for it to be utilised effectively, time for students to access and benefit from the platform should be incorporated into the study programme, otherwise it becomes yet another activity for students to undertake in addition to their already high levels of contact time. The e-learning platform should complement and be integrated with existing learning methods rather than in addition to them.

The university has been implementing ECTS since 10 years for all disciplines and includes these in the final diploma supplement according to the ECTS Users Guide. However the team found inconsistencies and noted a low level of awareness of the credit system amongst students and staff generally. Having said that, the team also acknowledges current inconsistencies between ECTS and professions governed by Professional Qualifications Directive 2005/36/EC.

Overall the team concluded that some very positive steps have been taken to move from a teaching to learning approach. Learning outcomes are present within the curricula and this is highlighted within the SER, however terms such as objectives, competencies are also used both in documentation and in practice, which makes it problematic to see how these are related within an overarching teaching and learning philosophy. The SER advises that 'study programmes/ specializations offered by UMF are rigorously organized, with learning outcomes that are specific for each qualification. General and specific objectives are established for each individual study programme and educational plans are developed with a balanced distribution of study subjects as ECTS credits. All study programmes are studentcentred and tailored to offer specific competencies evaluated by a clear set of examination procedures.' The team observed that there is rigorous examination of programmes but

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that this appeared to be related to fulfilment of a process rather than embedding these practices in the everyday thinking and actions of teaching staff. Further definition and elaboration of approaches contained within a specific strategy would help ensure effective operationalisation of modern learning methods in practice. The team recommend that the university create and elaborate a teaching, learning and assessment strategy based on student centred learning.

The team observed that although representing a substantial constituency of the student body in the university, nursing was not visible in any of the evaluation meetings and only peripherally mentioned in SER documentation. The university should ensure that the principles of excellence in teaching and research apply to all curricula (also nursing), disciplines and students within the university.

Plans to develop library provision were mentioned as a future development within the university and this is welcomed by the team. Students observed that there was shortage of literature, specifically international disciplinary-based literature. The team visited the library and was impressed by the staff and their enthusiasm for bibliographic heritage and books? appreciation but did not observe any substantial emphasis on accessing materials online. In the development of library services the university should ensure it is in line with the needs of students and researchers.

Despite the high value placed on the education at the university by students and stakeholders, students identify that the perceived reputation of Romanian medical education may negatively impact on their employment potential. Evidence suggests that Romanian medical graduates are actively recruited into European health systems and contribute well; however, a negative perception persists. The university may wish to address this concern and it is suggested that the university could use the experience of students and alumni to further enhance their reputation nationally and internationally making them ambassadors of excellence in knowledge and prestige of UMF.

Finally the team observed and heard of many good examples of practice by teachers. It heard that an element of salary can be awarded to recognise excellent performance and that the major part of this was related to research. To promote and incentivise excellent teaching the team recommends that a system of awards and rewards is developed both for individuals (teachers, researchers and students) and functional units that demonstrate excellence in teaching.