

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

**UNIVERSITAT POMPEU FABRA  
*EUA EVALUATION REPORT***

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## Foreword

Ten years ago, the predecessor organisation to EUA (CRE), established the Institutional Evaluation Programme as a service to its members in order to contribute to the dynamic and capacity of change of a given university. In 10 years, the CRE (until 2001) and EUA (since 2002) have conducted ca. 200 evaluations in 38 countries. In its focus on the overall institutional quality management and capacity to address change, each Institutional Evaluation (IE) takes as its point of departure the various aims, objectives and plan of the institution to then evaluate whether the ways it proposes to realise the aims are adequate to the stated purpose. Essentially the IE asks the institution what it is trying to do and how it is trying to do it. It then investigates how the institution establishes whether it is successful or not and how it organises the changes it deems necessary. Both the internal and the external review examine the short and long term objectives of the institution as well as the external and internal constraints under which it operates. Very importantly, major strengths and weaknesses are highlighted, opportunities and challenges are identified and strategies are recommended to improve the quality of the institution. The review is intended to help the University to reflect on and discuss its strategies to enhance its quality while taking internal and external constraints into account (quality is understood here as the adequacy of means for purpose).

The EUA International Institutional Quality Review Programme is not concerned with the assessment of the quality of the universities as such, in particular assessing the quality of their teaching and research activities, but it is rather concerned with the assessment and the improvement of the existing mechanisms and processes for strategic management and quality assurance and other conditions which affect its capacity for change. Each Institutional Evaluation offers an external diagnosis from experienced university leaders who come from different higher education systems in Europe. The outside view should explain the quality nodes, main actors in the University's daily decision-making process. It should be a tool for institutional leadership preparing for change. The EUA institutional evaluations do not provide the University with a blueprint for its development nor imperative recipes; nor do they seek to define or apply standardised solutions. They are meant as a support of peers to help the institution improve itself. It is therefore essential that the evaluation is based on a voluntary process and conducted in an open spirit of self-critical discussion. The review process is a consultative one or, in Martin Trow's terminology, an «external supportive review»<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> M. Trow. (1994a). Academic Reviews and the Culture of Excellence', *Studies of Higher Education and Research* 2., Stockholm: Council for studies in Higher Education.

The methodology of each EUA institutional evaluation comprises a self-evaluation process which results in a report that is written and approved by the institution's leadership and relevant governance bodies, as well as an external review. The latter is conducted by a group of peers, composed of current or former rectors or vice-rectors and one academic with a background in higher education management who acts as the secretary of the team. The peer group undertakes two visits:

1. a shorter preliminary visit where the reviewers get to know the institution and the main issues and problems which are in the foreground of current institutional development, bearing in mind the relevant information about the national context.
2. a longer main visit where a wide array of different groups are interviewed to allow a multi-perspective and more in-depth insight into the central processes and issues of institutional development.

Pompeu Fabra **University** (abbreviated «UPF») requested that EUA organise an institutional quality review of the University. The request was made by the Rector of the University, Professor Josep Joan Moreso. The rector's team, the senate, departments and faculties of the University supported the review with their input and active participation.

The review team consisted of:

- Prof. Virgilio Soares (chair of the team), Former Rector of Lisbon University (Portugal);
- Prof. Malcolm Cook, former deputy Vice-Chancellor of Exeter University, UK
- Prof. Páll Skúlason, former rector of the University of Iceland
- Dr. Sybille Reichert, (rapporteur of the team), Director of Reichert Consulting for European Higher Education, Zurich, (Switzerland).

The preliminary visit and the main review visit to UPF took place from 31 January to 1 February and 5 -7 May 2008, respectively.

The team would like to thank the University, its staff and its students for the openness, the willingness to share with us their institutional self-reflection and, last but not least, the very warm welcome experienced during their visits. In particular, the review team wishes to express its deep thanks to the Rector of Pompeu Fabra, Professor Josep Joan Moreso, as well as to the liaison person, Prof. David Sacho Royo, as well as the head of the Studies, Planning and Evaluation unit, Francesc Abad I Esteve, who prepared and organised the two visits in such a smooth, flexible and efficient way that the review team could work in very supportive and effective conditions to fulfil its duties. The team is also very grateful for the hospitality of the UPF. It was indeed a pleasure to work in such a friendly and open atmosphere.

## THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

### 1. Introduction: The Review Process and Self-Evaluation Report of UPF

Within the framework of the self-evaluation process and writing of the self-evaluation report at UPF, members of the self-evaluation group co-operated widely with the academic representatives of the faculties and administration of the UPF. They conducted a large number of interviews with representatives from different groups, faculties and departments. The process seemed to involve a sufficient degree of participation from the community, thus allowing for multiple perspectives and diverse input from institutional groups.

The resulting self-evaluation report was clear and detailed with respect to individual aspects of institutional development. It offered a moderately self-critical attitude. While the report detailed SWOT analyses of various aspects of the institution, it only offered a rather “weak” SWOT analysis of the whole institution. It did not always reflect a sufficient awareness of some of the implications of individual institutional goals and of some of the potential threats which the institution may face in the future. Nor did the report reflect the full range of UPF’s successes and models of good practice, which the peers sometimes identified almost by chance through additional questions and which they found to be remarkable in many respects. However, UPF can be congratulated with regard to the general availability of key data and analysis, thanks to a highly efficient and supportive quality and planning unit which may be regarded as a model of good practice in its readiness to accompany institutional development processes with user-friendly, well-presented, printed and web-based information.

During the two visits to UPF, the review team had meetings with the Rector, the Vice-Rectors, and other members of the executive team which manages the institutions, other members involved in the self-evaluation group, with faculty deans, department heads, teaching staff and researchers, directors of key support service units, part time teachers, PhD candidates and students. The review team also had two meetings with external stakeholders, representatives of the Social Council, as well as a senior administrator from the Generalitat of Catalunya. The review team visited the eight Faculties of UPF on all four campuses of the university, including some tours of the facilities. (A full programme of the interviews is attached in the annex).

On the final day of the main review visit, the chairman of the review team, Professor Virgilio Soares, presented the team’s **oral report** to the rector and his executive team.

The present **Review Report** resulted from a review of all written information and from the interviews with the different UPF members during the two visits.

## **2. The profile of Pompeu Fabra University**

The Universitat Pompeu Fabra is an institution with an unusually distinctive profile. As a young institution which was founded with a clear ambition to create high quality teaching in a focussed range of disciplines, the university has managed to continue this tradition and spirit of quality and innovation. Evidence for this self-understanding and ambition can be found, for example,

- in its continuous efforts to improve the quality of its teaching and student support, most recently in its handling of the Bologna reforms as an institution-wide introduction of student-centred learning methodology
- in its initiatives to introduce new programmes, with innovative learning and research environments, as exemplified
  - in its unique multilingualism policy and learning environment,
  - the state-of-the-art facilities and cooperative environments of the biomedical research park PRBB,
  - the new Communication Campus, with its interlacing of university and business units,
  - the professional Continuing Education Centre
- in the establishment of very competitive facilities and support services such as the Library, the Studies, Planning and Evaluation Unit, the International Office and the more recently established Innovation Unit.

It seems that, wherever possible and not constrained by legislative or financial constraints, UPF displays a remarkable degree of entrepreneurial spirit, initiative and pragmatism which allows it to make things happen. Such initiatives are helped by enabling institutional attitudes, such as a healthy degree of self-confidence (without arrogance) and optimism (sometimes perhaps overly developed) as well as a generally supportive sense of community. Communication style is comparatively informal, even in the orbit of institutional leadership, and staff and students alike seem to find each other cooperative, open-minded and approachable in general, even in rather competitive departments and research environments. Thus UPF may be described as youthful in all senses. Such assets cannot be emphasised enough since they provide the lifeblood of institutional innovation and self-improvement.

As a result of (and contributor to) the above-described institutional culture, one can observe a well-rooted improvement orientation right across the institution which helps to keep UPF on its toes in the wider inter-institutional competition.

### **3. The Context**

#### **3.1 Constraints and Opportunities in the National and Catalan Context**

The UPF is part of a national system which has seen major changes in recent years: in addition to frequent changes of government, legislation has been changed both at national and at Catalan autonomy level. Most recently, the Bologna structures were introduced in Spain. Other important changes include increasing attention to public-private partnerships and entrepreneurial activity, and active promotion of research at universities. Very importantly, university funds in general have increased significantly in recent years and are likely to grow at a similar rate of 10-11% until 2010. However, funds have not increased at the same rate at Pompeu Fabra since its traditionally privileged “compensatory” funds have continuously decreased in the last decade. Thus, financial growth rates have amounted to ca. 7% p.a. at UPF. Moreover, financial allocation to universities has hitherto not taken account of the quality or performance output of the universities so that UPF’s remarkable rise and success did not lead to concurrent financial rewards. Only in third party competitive research funds, which only make up a small portion of the budget, could UPF increase its income considerably. Currently, plans to introduce a moderate proportion of performance-based funds are being discussed but it is not clear yet when this implementation will take place, how far-reaching it will be in terms of the percentage of the overall institutional grants and whether it will be absolute performance or only performance growth which will be rewarded.

With respect to financial support, it should be added, however, that additional public resources could be accessed in recent years through inter-university cooperation projects and special campus development projects, as well as through increased availability of research project grants. UPF has exploited these opportunities successfully.

On the less supportive side, the national and Catalan context is characterised by a comparatively high degree of prescriptive legislation with respect to university governance and management: These restrict institutional autonomy, with respect to the types and composition of decision-making bodies, as well as with respect to financial management, preventing financial flexibility. A public university can only charge very limited tuition fees, even from non-EU postgraduate students or continuing education students from executive management backgrounds, cannot generate gains, even if these are reinvested in public interest purposes, and cannot change easily from one type of budget line to another, nor from one annual budget to the other. Such constraints do not just disadvantage public higher education institutions vis-à-vis private

ones (which can charge full-cost tuition for postgraduate students for example) but also force them to undertake some initiatives through separate foundations and research institutes. However, the latter may develop their own institutional interests and dynamic which are not necessarily always convergent with UPF interests. Moreover, this means that some very successful competitive initiatives may not even be fully recognisable and marketable as UPF initiatives and successes. These constraints undermine the international visibility and institutional profiling potential of UPF (as well as of other Catalan and Spanish universities)

Another noteworthy feature of the Catalan and Barcelonan context regards the wide range and depth of inter-university cooperation and mobility within the Barcelonan university landscape. It is rare to see such frequent inter-institutional initiatives, common inter-institutional infrastructures and institutes, considering that the participating institutions ultimately have to compete for funds from the same sources. While Catalanian universities may be congratulated on these close cooperative networks, they also run the risk of being less distinguishable as separate institutions with distinct profiles, and of not being identified with some of the most exciting new initiatives (as may be the case for the recently founded Parc Recerca Biomedica Barcelona). The Catalan government should thus ensure that incentives are created not only to share resources and undertake common initiatives, but also to allow for sufficient opportunities for institutional profiling and for increasing their international visibility as competitive alert institutions.

Finally, it should be noted that Barcelona offers a remarkable example of excellent and forward-looking cooperation between university planning and urban development. The Campus initiatives of UPF are closely interlaced with urban regeneration and vitalisation, which bring together architectural, social, communicational and economic considerations into a common reflective and creative horizon. The Catalan and municipal authorities should be congratulated on making such common ventures possible.

### **3.2 Constraints and Opportunities in the International Context**

Given the fact that the UPF does not want to limit its impact merely to a national setting, but explicitly wants to be a significant player in the European Research Area, the following international developments cannot be ignored.

First of all, it should be noted that all across Europe competition between research intense universities seems to be increasing in spite of, or even supported by, an increase of cooperation between institutions. Even the richest and best placed institutions in Europe are beginning to suffer from receding state support and are increasingly turning to third party funding. To obtain such funding previous work and success in a given field is decisive. Hence, the strong tend to be strengthened and the weaker tend to be weakened when bidding for grants from the same competitive research sources (the anti-Robin Hood effect!). To increase competitive position in the European and international arena thus implies concerted efforts to build on outstanding institutional strengths, requiring considerable institutional leadership which may frequently involve controversial and unpopular decisions. Institutions cannot afford egalitarian budget distribution as easily if they want some of their areas to compete successfully. Hence institutions with overly consensus-oriented decision-making structures such as UPF may be disadvantaged in the competition for international visibility and resources.

Secondly, **the cost of research salaries and research infrastructure is increasing significantly**, adding to financial pressures. In light of the cost of research, some countries are even beginning to consider promoting policies of “concentrating excellence”, i.e. of concentrating such investment on a smaller number of already well placed institutions, resulting in reduced opportunities for others to catch up. While Spain has not yet followed this path, its research-intensive institutions are competing with those of countries where some institutions are favoured over others in being granted significant increases in research expenditure in the last few years. UPF will have to take these developments into account when widening the scope of its international research orientation further.

Thirdly, **the competition for the best qualified researchers is becoming increasingly international and fierce**. A few well-placed international research universities are recruiting talents from all over the world. A pull function can be observed whereby those institutions with a significant body of internationally renowned researchers are attracting others much more easily. Since many countries such as the US, the UK and Spain are reporting receding numbers of natural science and technical graduates, the competition for fresh talent is beginning to resemble the one for already

established internationally successful professors with respect to institutional attention and investment.

Fourthly, the above-mentioned increase of international competition among research universities is of course enhanced by the creation of a more transparent European Higher Education and Research Area which allows for **more comparison and mobility across Europe**. Moreover, to allow for optimal positioning in times of increasing costs and stagnating budgets many institutions realise they have to focus their efforts more than ever before and have to complement their own portfolio through cross-border alliances which also allow access to additional markets. UPF is well placed to form such alliances, given its highly active internationalisation record and many exchange agreements.

Finally, there is an international trend which has already been talked about for decades but is now gaining increasing importance for the advancement of science, namely the **need for more inter-disciplinarity to push the frontiers of science forward**. The required new forms of cooperation across the disciplines do not just pose a scientific challenge but are also quite a challenge for institutional development since they demand flexible communication and decision-making across the borders of internal institutional entities like faculties and departments. Hence, many institutions across Europe and the US are worrying about their processes of “horizontal communication” and are setting incentives for internal cross-departmental or cross-faculty cooperation. UPF has openly pointed to these weaknesses in its own institutional functioning and will have to pay considerable attention to addressing this challenge.

The strengths and weaknesses of the UPF which are described below should thus be seen in the light of these developments and constraints in order to be weighted accordingly.

#### **4. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for UPF**

The review team was pleased to find a wide range of institutional strengths at UPF, many of which may be used as models of good practice and international references for institutional innovation.

4.1 To begin with, UPF can make use of an **established brand name and reputation** in Spain and increasing name recognition abroad. In Spain and some parts of the Spanish-speaking world, UPF degrees seem to be widely recognised. In addition, as mentioned above, UPF shows a strong sense of a distinctive institutional profile and identity and a clear sense of its key competitive features: the strong quality culture, the innovative spirit and the high degree of internationalisation.

The only obvious threat to UPF's clear profile and name recognition seems to lie in the Catalan government's tendency to privilege inter-university cooperation over institutional profiling, which may offer benefits of synergies but may go too far to allow for international positioning of well-placed institutions.

4.2 Another obvious strength consists in the **high degree of attention to teaching quality**, as reflected in teachers' comments and considerations and in student comments and surveys. Not only is UPF able to attract many of the brightest students in the region (see the figures of candidates and the available places) or exchange students from abroad, at undergraduate level, or in some of its most internationally oriented graduate programmes, graduates also show remarkable success in labour market insertion, which sees around 90% of graduates find a job within six months of graduation. Moreover, the review team found out during its interviews, students are also clearly pleased and proud to be at UPF. They are happy with the attention they receive, the interaction with and approachability of the teaching staff, the support services, and the infrastructure. Students care about their institution and appreciate that it cares for them. This is an excellent basis on which future recruitment and alumni networks can be built.

Only two weaknesses could be mentioned in the context of teaching and student support: some students reported a **lack of communication between teaching staff**, leading to a lack of coordination of teaching loads and insufficient knowledge of previously taught contents to build on. Secondly, frequent complaints could be heard about the lack of affordable housing. UPF and the Catalan Government may consider renting apartments on a more permanent basis and sub-letting these to students, especially new or international students.

Considering the threat of decreasing number of national students, UPF is well-placed to compete for the best students if it continues to pursue such quality and service attention.

4.3 Wherever possible, UPF has developed a **high degree of internationalisation**. The exchange activities, especially, are lively and well organised, with an unusually high proportion of outgoing mobility and many well-functioning exchange agreements with good universities, resulting in 1305 incoming mobility students (13%) last year. Some postgraduate programmes and many research groups are also highly international in orientation and student body. UPF is also able to attract a high number of doctoral students from abroad (ca. 47%). In some particularly competitive programmes the proportion is well above this already high average, such as in Economics (86%), Law and Applied Linguistics (64%), Political Science (60%). In some other subjects, these proportions are rapidly on the rise, as for example in health sciences (from 27% in 2002/3 to 42% in 2006/7). Clearly, UPF is successful in expanding its graduate student body and can make use of its growing international name recognition for attracting graduate students from abroad. Nevertheless, UPF should be aware of the increasing international competition, especially at PhD level, and in particular in such highly globalised areas as biomedicine.

In contrast, given the uncompetitive nationally fixed salary scheme and low start-up funds, **recruitment of international researchers in the ordinary institutional orbit is difficult** and has to bypass the institutional recruitment lines, making use of ICREA funds and separate research institute contracts in order to offer competitive conditions. UPF leadership seems to be clearly aware of the threat of introducing two different classes of senior academics (ICREA researchers and “normal” university teachers). In this regard, UPF clearly suffers from legal constraints but has also not made full use of the narrow margins of differentiation which the law offers in terms of salary bonuses. In any case, UPF should combine efforts with other internationally oriented universities in Spain to lobby for differentiated and more internationally competitive university salaries and possibilities of reduced teaching loads, as well as for funds for competitive start-ups resources for new professors, so as to be able to compete successfully in an international context.

4.4 Supporting and complementing the lively drive toward internationalisation, UPF can boast of a strong awareness, **differentiated policy and active support for multilingualism**, which distinguishes it positively from less imaginative responses to globalisation and should be marketed as a pre-eminently European approach to the challenges of globalisation. Multi-lingual practices may also attract particularly creative students from abroad and can be assumed to add considerably to the innovative potential and spirit of UPF’s learning and research environment. The ambitious range of instruments to foster multilingualism may encounter serious limits when it comes to facing a significant increase of postgraduate students from abroad since these tend to expect English and Spanish as working languages but have little time to spend on acquiring additional language competences in Catalan. Postgraduate students

confirmed that they do not have the time to learn both Spanish and Catalan in their full research training schedules. UPF may thus brace itself against resistance that may be put forward by the Catalan authorities or public against a major increase of postgraduates from abroad. (Similar backlash effects have been noted in multilingual Switzerland for example where the increase of English as a working language has undermined the bilingual regime of German and French.)

4.5 In recent years, UPF has also developed **considerable momentum in the expansion of its research capacity** and can now boast a high research involvement of its full-time academic staff (80% are beneficiaries of research grants) as well as a high success-rate in EU programmes (research and mobility programmes) as shown by occupying the third position in Spain (in absolute numbers), in spite of its small size, in grant income from the first call of 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme. There seems to be particularly good opportunities in expanding its research capacity in biomedicine, using the recent excellent infrastructure and close inter-institutional partnerships.

Until now, the research and teaching successes of UPF have also benefited from a **clearly focussed subject portfolio**, which is strongly centred in humanities and social sciences and economics. More recent important additions consist in the expansion into technological subjects which provide strong interface potential with the afore-mentioned subjects, as evidenced in musical technology and computer linguistics, and most recently biomedicine.

4.6 Given the focussed subject portfolio and the fact that scientific breakthroughs and progress occurs more and more often at the interfaces between disciplines, **UPF does not pay sufficient attention to horizontal communication and cross-departmental cooperation**. There are hardly any incentives to set-up overarching research or teaching programmes or other initiatives and the four geographical locations do not make communication among dispersed departments easier. As yet, UPF has **not shown sufficient ability to form inter-faculty centres of excellence or of promoting interdisciplinarity**. This weakness of institutional functioning deserves targeted attention and specific instruments to ensure dynamic further interdisciplinary development.

4.7 An outstanding strength of UPF is its professional, market-oriented and **highly active Continuing Education Centre idEC**. This centre is a private affiliated institute offering courses which have academic directors and a majority of staff from UPF and therefore carry the UPF brand. More than 9000 persons attended idEC's courses last year, out of which around 3000 were enrolled in longer programmes (postgraduate masters and diplomas). In European comparison, this is a remarkable volume of university activity in CE, reflecting both the professionalism of the Centre's

management and marketing, but also its CE-friendly subject portfolio which is as yet strongly focused on economics, business and finance.

Associated with this success, is the challenge of extending this portfolio to include more of the UPF subjects in the CE offer. Such an extension would also be important to ensure sufficient identification between the UPF community and idEC which could otherwise develop into separate cultural and institutional worlds with potentially diverging dynamics. If UPF wants to benefit from the successes and networks of idEC in the future, and even to learn from some of its professional approaches, it will have to strengthen mutual identification and a common intellectual culture.

The networking effects which are associated with active Continuing Education offers are also reported to be important at idEC which has built up an active Alumni network. Clearly, these assets are opportunities to be made use of by UPF in building up its own **Alumni network**.

**The expertise and relations and networks of idEC should also be used to extend UPF's business partnerships and to establish professional marketing activities.**

4.8 As mentioned in our remarks about its institutional culture, UPF staff and leadership seem generally strongly committed to the institution and well-disposed towards taking initiatives to improve its provision and performance in all respects. These underpin UPF's **highly developed quality culture**, which is supported by a remarkably efficient quality and planning unit that helps to connect quality assurance with institutional development. A good range of quality tools for institutional development, ample material for strategic analysis, sufficient qualitative input from students and graduates, and regular academic staff appraisal, all contribute to ensuring continuous improvement. Students feel that they are taken seriously, as they notice feed-back to their suggestions.

The only important draw-backs in its quality orientation consist, first of all, in UPF's **insufficient financial performance incentives** and its insufficient use of output-based resource allocation, not only the one imposed by the Catalan government but also internally. For example, UPF should use the freedom given by the law to differentiate salaries according to performance in teaching and research (Art.72 Catalan Law) more systematically -- an option which would be supported by the responsible Social Council. At present and in accordance with the law (Art. 72), additional teaching and research performance fees are defined by the university and are subject to approval by the autonomous government (Generalitat). UPF leadership and members of the Social Council were also quite aware of the **importance of central discretionary funds**, which current resource levels and structures do not seem to allow but are well worth fighting for to ensure flexible adaptation to new demands and use of new opportunities. Secondly, there is **hardly any noteworthy evaluation and quality development of administrative staff and processes**, which contrasts curiously with the comprehensive quality approach which seems to reign in all other matters at UPF.

4.9 Another feature of UPF, which may be seen as a strength, as well as a weakness, is the **strong consensus-orientation in its decision-making processes**. While large representative governance bodies are largely imposed by the Spanish and Catalan laws, the latter offer more leeway than is currently used to provide an adaptive competitive environment (see recommendations). In general, the review team found UPF's governance structure to be cumbersome, inefficient and hardly in line with the spirit of initiative which can otherwise be observed in the institution. Not only are there too many decision-making bodies (Consejo de Gobierno, Claustro Universitario, Consejo Social); the Claustro and Consejo de Gobierno are also clearly too large to allow for serious debate and collective decision-making. Thus decision-making has to occur in informal parallel structures which prepare the formal decisions. It seems that the Consejo de Gobierno and especially the 250 member Claustro are ritualised *fora* which, especially in the latter case, are regarded as a waste of time by most busy students or staff. In this way, the professed function of letting the community participate in key strategic decisions is actually not ensured.

The Social Council also lacks effectiveness since it has too many functions, especially considering that its members are full-time professionally active elsewhere, and clearly the Council is in need of greater focus on a few key strategic functions. It is also politicised in its composition, a fact which is imposed by the Catalan law. Nevertheless, the committed members have undertaken many worthwhile initiatives, especially in the area of encouraging entrepreneurialism and professional management in UPF. Given its many connections and good will, the Social Council could be made further use to help expand public-private partnerships.

In general, UPF would benefit from fewer and smaller decision-making bodies with a few representatives who are not only there to discuss decisions but are also responsible for implementing such decisions would create a less cumbersome, more credible, more truly participatory and more effective decision-making structure.

There are three additional weak-points associated with UPF governance. First, there are too few actors who identify with the interests of the whole institution. Currently the deans and department heads understandably defend the interests of their own units and most representatives on decision-making bodies represent some group rather than the whole institution.

Second, the **double structure of departments and faculties for largely similar groupings is cumbersome and unnecessary**. Most representatives shared the view that there is no reason to uphold this double structure. In practice, many parts of the institution had shared steering groups, with deans and department heads interacting regularly. Where the two functions are filled by compatible individuals, this structure seems to be good working practice.

Third, there is a **surprising discrepancy between the highly motivated and committed students** the team encountered **and the lack of student participation in**

**governance.** The review team was concerned in hearing from a number of highly engaged students that student participation in institutional governance was found to be unattractive since the representative groups tend to be dominated by radical groups which make constructive discussions difficult. A participation of students in institutional affairs which is reflective of the majority of UPF students is clearly an important desideratum.

4.10 UPF offers **strong support services**: the review team was impressed by the dedicated staff and directors of the international office, the student information service, the career service, the recently established Innovation Unit, all of whom seem to enjoy improving and extending their services as much as resources allow. Especially the effective establishment and encouraging successes of knowledge transfer activities show significant further potential.

4.11 Students and staff confirmed the review team's impression that UPF can boast **good and often even state-of-the-art infrastructure** (buildings, libraries, learning resources, labs). Most of all, the review team was impressed by the recent and current campus developments which consider not only the number of square metres needed and what they are to be used for (lab space, teaching space, work places) but also wider communication and cooperation demands and the overall potential of interaction between different groups, institutions (incl. university groups and companies). Most recently, the new Communication Campus seems to offer a wealth of new opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation, business partnerships and dynamic interfaces with society.

4.11 Last but not not least, UPF's printed and electronic **information material** is comprehensive, user-friendly and very attractively and professionally designed. The aesthetic culture of institutional self-presentation and artefacts (information and physical infrastructure) reflects the institution's key attributes of being youthful, innovative and committed in its quality-orientation.

## **5. Key Issues and Recommendations for UPF's Future Development**

### *5.1 Mission and profile*

In less than 20 years, the Universitat Pompeu Fabra has managed to establish itself as one of the leading universities of the Iberian Peninsula, with name recognition in Spain as well as abroad, especially in the Spanish-speaking world but also among many European and US institutions. It has achieved such name recognition because of its manageable size, focussed portfolio, unmitigated attention to the quality of its provision and, last but not least, in the first decade of its existence, to some privileged support and resources from the Catalan government. In the foreseeable future, UPF will face the challenge of consolidating this success and ensuring resource increases from other sources which will compensate for the ceased privileged support from the Generalitat. **UPF should take good care not to underestimate the advantages of its limited size for its quality orientation.** Any expansion in volume and portfolio will have to remain compatible with UPF's core profile and key attributes, and will have to look after qualitative links between the existing and the new parts of the institution.

The most important challenge ahead in the coming years consists in securing the sort of resources that are needed to keep its high quality profile sustained. For this task, UPF should enlist all of its alumni and friends and the networks which many of its members entertain to mobilise support, both in view of government support as well as in view of additional private sources of income. Any campaign to mobilise support should focus on concrete, highly competitive projects which symbolise and develop the key profile of UPF, differentiating it clearly from more mainstream higher education institutions.

### *5.2 Strategy development and Capacity for Change*

In its strategic documents and planning processes, UPF shows its willingness and capacity to think and act strategically. In light of the concluded planning phases and the imminent 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, the decision to write a strategic plan 2009-15 is good and well-timed. **UPF should focus on this document as a single plan which may act as a real guideline for action, with annual updating to keep it alive and adaptable to changing conditions.** UPF should avoid developing other strategic plans at the same time, but should keep this core plan as the unifying guideline which should be short, simple and realisable, with a few precise aims that people can commit to. The aims should be formulated in concrete terms without too much detail, leaving room for flexible action, but in pursuit of clearly set objectives and targets.

With respect to particular aims, UPF should consider the implications of the growth plan for the distinctive profile and sustainability of UPF, so that new additions, such as the planned expansion of biomedicine, do not water down the profile and ambitions of the

institution. As expansion is planned mostly at the postgraduate level, only the most internationally competitive high-performing areas should be chosen as bases for further growth. The review of departmental plans by the central academic commission responsible for academic hiring should be followed closely by institutional leadership to ensure the highest quality standards in recruitment as well as to look after possible links between hiring processes (sometimes cluster hiring may achieve better international visibility and success).

For reasons given under 5.1, UPF should pay significant attention and time in close collaboration with the private sector. For this purpose, UPF should make use of the existing expertise and contacts of idEC and its Board of Trustees, and of the Innovation Unit, and of the Social Council. It should seek coordinated approaches of key companies and potential sponsors and donors so as to move the hitherto only project-based sponsoring onto the level of more long term institutional partnerships. It is vital for UPF to recruit both a professional marketing director as well as to introduce a fund-raising and alumni support unit which underpins the institutional networking efforts.

### *5.3 Governance*

Given the large overlap between faculties and department and the wider agreement in the community regarding the superfluous double structure, UPF should merge departments and faculties by letting the departments and faculties jointly propose names for steering teams which would contain a department/faculty head responsible for teaching and quality assurance and a vice head responsible for research (or the other way round), in addition to a department/faculty manager who would ensure the smooth operation and financial management of the unit. The rector would then appoint a steering team of “dean”, “vice dean” and chief operating officer from the proposed names. These changes would still conform to the current law since the two separate labels of “faculty” and “department” are retained, while the actual functioning would involve just one structure.

The deans would then become part of rector’s governing team, and would be given some institutional tasks to ensure that they do not simply act as representatives of their department’s interest only but are able to develop institution commitment and identification. Once the deans take over some of the institutional core tasks, the number of vice rectors can be reduced accordingly so that the overall management team retains a manageable size.

The role of the legally prescribed Social Council will have to be reassessed so that it may focus on a few strategic functions, rather than the full list of more than 30 tasks which it is currently addressing, but which make it *de facto* more of a *pro forma* operation than a real strategic organ. Otherwise the evident good will, sense of initiative

and identification, and the scarce time of the members would not be put to sufficiently worthy use.

At the same time, UPF should try to convince the government of the need for a change in Social Council nomination procedure so that it may develop more forcefully into a genuine board of trustees. If the Social Council develops into a Board of Trustees, UPF may consider using members of idEC Board of Trustees for the UPF board.

Finally, governance could be made more effective by reducing the number of members in the Senate (Claustro) to a manageable size (under 50) and by merging the Senate with the *Consejo de Gobierno*. This would put the effort of the members to more effective use and would prevent waste of time in unnecessarily long meetings which do not lead to institutional improvements.

#### *5.4 Quality Development and Financial Management*

UPF's quality support system is clearly a remarkable model of good practice: it comprises different complementary instruments for evaluation of teaching and learning, excellent access to information, wealth of relevant data, and helpful analyses, thus providing an effective and very efficient service (given the few people who provide this service). UPF should continue this success story and be sure **to communicate it sufficiently in its institutional self-presentations**.

Of the few improvements that may still be suggested, the most obvious one consists in addressing the insufficient attention to the quality of administrative services. While some services have taken some initiatives themselves, UPF should make sure that the administrative services in general undergo the same attentive quality evaluation and development regime as the academic services. Promotion, rewards and, in rare cases, dismissals may be based on such evaluations; but most importantly, administrative processes may be organised more efficiently on the basis of its findings.

Secondly, UPF could take more care in **spreading good practice across departmental boundaries**, as, for example, in the case of allowing for sufficient academic travel funds across the whole university, to make conference attendance or similar basic academic operations as unbureaucratic as possible.

In some cases, institutional standards should be established, e.g. as regards institutional conditions of part-time teachers (e.g. whether their main income comes from outside UPF or not).

UPF may also **improve its quality orientation further by introducing rewards** (through increased pay, or sabbaticals, or research grants etc.) for high quality performance. Likewise, central quality development and financial management should also introduce prioritised funding for well-performing departments, with quality indicators reflecting the various customs of the different disciplinary cultures.

Another challenge for the medium term will consist in creating **incentives for strategic inter-departmental initiatives to improve horizontal communication**, for programme

development and coordination as well as around common larger areas of academic interest. Benchmarking with other European universities will reveal that clustering of larger themes may not only offer very attractive interdisciplinary programmes for postgraduate students but may also be a very welcome approach to mobilising interest, partnership and support from external partners.

### *5.5 Teaching, students and student support at UPF*

As mentioned before, UPF has shown great commitment to teaching quality. In recent years this has become evident again in its successful and meaningful introduction of Bologna structures which have been used to introduce student-centred learning across the institution. Different forms of interactive teaching and learning have been defined as the four pillars of the new programmes, increasing significantly the number of hours which students spend in independent learning, team tasks and project work. However, interviews with students and staff reveal significant imbalances of contact hours and independent learning in some departments (in a few cases students may have as little as three or four contact hours, which does seem too low). Perhaps UPF should reconsider the balance between contact hours and independent learning, **in consultation with the students.**

To support students' counselling and teaching of interactive seminars and exercises, teaching assistants have proved to be an effective option, both at many universities in the English-speaking university world as at some departments of UPF. The university should consider spreading this option more widely, with common quality standards of didactic induction for the teaching fellows, and stipends to support these graduate students fully so that they do not have any additional duties beyond their teaching commitment. It must also be ensured that their graduate research work does not suffer from the teaching assistantship.

With respect to student support services which seem generally well handled, UPF may consider merging student support units into a one-stop shop (with satellites on the 4 campuses), to increase user-friendliness and synergies and to improve the flow of information among the different support units.

In career counselling, UPF may want to involve part-time teachers, who bring together professional experience and insights into UPF standards and student profiles, in subject specific career counselling. Other institutions have also benefited from alumni acting as professional mentors for more advanced students, which may be an attractive option for UPF as well. In addition to support for career insertion of students, such mentoring may also serve to increase the institutional identification of UPF alumni with their alma mater, provided some additional networking events support such mentoring commitment.

The only aspect of UPF support which seemed to be in very urgent need of improvement is the insufficient accommodation available. Given the high cost of living and rents in Barcelona, UPF may consider renting some reasonable accommodation on a permanent basis so as to sublet them to students, especially first year students from out of town or from abroad.

### *5.6 Research development at UPF*

The review team did not have the mandate to evaluate research quality. But some aspects of research training and management may be commented upon. First of all, it seems that the rapid expansion of the postgraduate offer would benefit from closer inter-linkage with the idEC offer. Programmes should be developed jointly, even if the ultimate degree has to take different forms and labels for legal reasons. The marketing to attract students from abroad could also be organised jointly. In particular, the review team took note of the impressive marketing successes of idEC in Latin America which may be incorporated more fully to UPF marketing.

While doctoral students seemed generally content with their supportive research environment, some improvements could be made to increase their professional effectiveness in their later careers: Such improvements would include optional skills training for doctoral candidates, which would be welcomed by students and which may range from research project management to presentation skills, entrepreneurial skills (e.g. how to write a business plan), and most importantly, support for academic writing in English. While some such support may be included in some doctoral supervisors' coaching it often is not, which disadvantages some candidates in their later career development. Moreover, the career office should extend its services to introduce career advice for doctoral candidates since a majority of PhD students tend to embark on non-academic careers as experience shows.

Finally, UPF should consider introducing institution-wide quality standards and training for doctoral supervisors, since not all academics are equally gifted good research training coaches and mentors.

## **6. Recommendations for the Spanish and Catalan Government**

1. The Catalan Government should be made fully aware of the high quality and many good practices developed at Universitat Pompeu Fabra and should help the university sustain and develop these high standards, which clearly support the reputation, position and future success of the region. The Catalan support should not just be symbolic and rhetorical but should show its commitment to rewarding quality in concurrent resource allocation.
2. The Catalan Government should be congratulated in its plans to introduce performance-based resource allocation and should implement these plans as soon as possible. The allocated resources should reflect current performance differentials between institutions, not just future increases of performance. Otherwise the successes of institutions such as UPF will be undermined.
3. The Spanish and Catalan Governments should reduce the number of prescriptions they impose through the Higher Education Acts on university governance. Universities should have more freedom to design effective ways of governing their future, and should even be able to benefit from competing with others through different models of governance.
4. In particular, the Spanish government and law should grant more autonomy to universities to develop their key decision-making bodies, such as on the membership and functions of the Claustro Universitario and the Consejo de Gobierno, as well as the definition of the internal units and nomination of their leaders, with only general principles of participation and representation laid down. The Catalan government in turn should reconsider the definition, functions and nomination procedures for the Social Council so as to allow it to be more effective and strategic in its function, more akin to a board of trustees which helps to develop the interests of a university against the larger background of social and economic developments.
5. The Catalan government should thus ensure that incentives are created not only to share resources and undertake common initiatives, but also to allow for sufficient opportunities for institutional profiling and for increasing their international visibility as competitive alert institutions.
6. The Catalan government should also seek to loosen the restrictions on tuition and on the possibilities of making profits as long as public institutions can ensure equal opportunity for citizens and can prove reinvestment into public interest ventures.

## Annex: Programmes of the Site Visits to Pompeu Fabra University

### Programme of preliminary visit, 31st January – 1st January 2008

<i>Day</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>What and who?</i>	<i>Where?</i>
January 30 <sup>th</sup>		<b>Arrival</b> of evaluation team	
		<b>Briefing meeting</b> Evaluation team alone	Hotel
	21.00	<b>Dinner</b> Evaluation team, with rector (Josep Joan Moreso) and liaison person (David Sancho)	To be determined
January 31 <sup>st</sup> Morning	9.00- 9.45	<b>Meeting with rector</b>	Mercè building (Attic room)
	9.50-10.20	<b>Meeting with vice-rectors</b>	
	10.30-11.15	<b>Introduction meeting</b> Evaluation team and liaison person	
	11.15-11.30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	11.30-12.20	<b>Meeting with self-evaluation group</b> Self-evaluation steering group, evaluation team, and liaison person	
	12.30-13.30	<b>Meeting with management board</b> Evaluation team, manager and vice-managers	
	13.30-14.30	<b>Lunch</b> Evaluation team and liaison person	
January 31 <sup>st</sup> Afternoon	14.30-15.20	<b>Tour of campus / main university locations (I)</b>  Evaluation team and liaison person	1. <i>Media and Communication Campus</i> 2. Barcelona Biomedical Research Park (PRBB) 3. Ciutadella Campus
	15.30-16.20 parallel	<b>Visit to faculties “A” and “B”</b> Faculty “A”: - Studies of Economic and Business Sciences / Department of Economics and Business - Studies of Law / Department of Law <sup>2</sup> Faculty “B” - Studies of Health and Life Sciences / Department of Experimental Sciences and Health  Deans of Study and Directors of Department	Faculty “A” Ciutadella Campus  Faculty “B” Mar Campus
	16.30-17.15 parallel	<b>Visit to faculties “A” and “B”</b> Academic staff	

<sup>2</sup> “Faculties” have been defined on a geographical basis and they include two or more centres, since our university is organized in smaller units, called studies. Meetings with deans will also include directors of department given that the latter are responsible for graduate degrees ( Master Oficial)

	17.25-18.10 parallel	<b>Visit to faculties “A” and “B”</b> Students	
	18.15 -19.00	Tour of campus/ main university locations - Main Library - Classrooms - Computer rooms	Ciutadella Campus
	19.00-20.00	<b>Debriefing meeting</b> Evaluation team alone	Merce Building (Attic room)
Evening	21.00	<b>Dinner</b> Evaluation team alone	To be determined
Here, the same type of schedule as in the day before (some time) between meetings) February 1 <sup>st</sup> Morning	9.00-10.00 parallel	<b>Visit to faculties “C” and “D”</b> Faculty “C” - Polytechnic School/ Department of Technology Faculty “D” - Studies of Audiovisual Communication - Studies of Journalism - Department of Journalism and Audiovisual Communication  Deans of Study and Directors of Department	Faculty “C” Ocata Building  Faculty “D” Rambla Campus
	10.00-10.45 parallel	<b>Visit to faculties “C” and “D”</b> Academic staff	
	10.45-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
	11.00-11.30	<b>Visit to faculties “C” and “D”</b> Students	
	11.30-12.30	<b>Meeting with external partners</b>	
	12.30-13.30	<b>Debriefing meeting</b> Evaluation team alone	Merce Building (Attic room)
	13.30-14.00	<b>Meeting with liaison person</b> Evaluation team, liaison person	
		14.00	<b>Lunch</b> Evaluation team, rector and liaison person
	Afternoon	Departure of evaluation team	

**Programme of the Main Visit : 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

<b>Day 1. Monday, the 5<sup>th</sup> of May</b>		
<i>Time</i>	<i>Who?</i>	<i>Where?</i>
9.00-9.45	Rector	Mercè
9.55-10.30	David Sancho/ Self-evaluation group	Mercè building (Attic room)
10.40-11.20 parallel	Group A: Vice-rector of Lecturers Group B: Vice-rector of Linguistic Promotion	
11.30-12.15	Vice-rector of Economy and Promotion	
12.25-13.00	Administrator and/or vice-administrator of economy	
13.10-13.55	Head of the Studies, Planning and Evaluation Unit	
14.00-15.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
15.00-15.45	Síndic de Greuges (UPF Ombudsman)	Mercè building (Attic room)
16.00-16.45	Support Services	
17.00-18.00	Social Council and Economy and Business Forum	
<b>Day 2. Tuesday, the 6<sup>th</sup> of May</b>		
9.00-9.45 Parallel	Deans of Study and Directors of Department: Group A: 1. Department of Political and Social Sciences/ Studies of Political Science and Public Management/ Studies of Labour Science 2. Department of Humanities/ Faculty of Humanities Group B: 3. Department of Translation and Philology / Faculty of Translation and Interpretation 4. Degree in Advertising and Public Relations	Ciutadella Campus  Rambla Building
9.50-10.35	Academic staff	
10.40-11.25	Students	
11.30-12.25	Part-time teachers / International postgraduate students	
13.00-14.00	Generalitat (Autonomous government) representative	Mercè building
14.00	<i>Lunch</i>	
Afternoon	Evaluation team alone. Preparation of the oral report	Mercè building
<b>Day 3. Wednesday, the 7<sup>th</sup> of May</b>		
10.00-10.30	Rector	Mercè building
10.30-11.00	Adaptation of the oral report (Evaluation team alone)	
11.30-13.30	Presentation of preliminary conclusions to: - Self-evaluation group - Executive Council - Manager and vice-managers	