EUA-Institutional Evaluation Programme

# EL BOSQUE UNIVERSITY

## *FOLLOW-UP EVALUATION REPORT*

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**Contents**

# 1. Introduction

This report is the result of a follow-up evaluation of El Bosque University. The European University Association's (EUA) Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) originally evaluated El Bosque University in 2010 with the report submitted to the university in September 2010. Subsequently the university requested IEP to carry out a follow-up evaluation in 2013.

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

IEP is an independent membership service of 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 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 it know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

## 1.2     El Bosque University and the national context

El Bosque University is a private, non-profit university, located in Bogotá, the capital of Colombia. The main campus is in Usaquén and in 2013 it opened another campus in Chía. The origins of El Bosque are in a medical school founded in the 1970s, but nowadays it offers programmes in a large variety of disciplines, most of which are related to health and quality of life — an area defined by the university as its niche, derived from its basic philosophical tenet of a bio-psycho-social and cultural

approach. This approach runs through all missions of the university and has been made more explicit through the implementation of the current strategic plan.

Today El Bosque has 11 faculties and three departments offering study programmes at two levels: 21 at *pregrado* and 74 at *posgrado* level. In addition they offer a variety of lifelong learning courses. While the number of programmes has not increased significantly since 2009, the number of students enrolled has continued to grow: in the first semester of 2010 there were 8 422 students, in 2013 the first semester counted 11,406 students.

Similarly the number of staff has increased since the first IEP evaluation: in 2010 the university counted 1 100 academic staff members whereas by 2013 this figure reached 1 254. Correspondingly, administrative staff went from 373 to 448. This growth has been coupled with the increase in the university's budget with significant investments in the campus and infrastructure.

El Bosque has had a legal status of university since 1997. Currently, four of its programmes have national accreditation of high quality. The original IEP evaluation took place following the university's decision to work towards an institutional high quality accreditation by the national quality assurance agency (*Consejo Nacional de Acreditación* (*CNA*)). In the beginning of 2012 CNA experts carried out a site visit at the university to define whether the preliminary conditions (*condiciones iniciales*) for an institutional accreditation process had been met. Based on their conclusions CNA decided that the conditions were met and currently the university is preparing for the actual accreditation process, which will take place in 2014. The IEP team studied the feedback the university received from CNA and noted that it corresponds to the observations made by the IEP in the context of the original evaluation or in this follow-up.

## 1.3     The evaluation process

The self-evaluation process for the purpose of this follow-up evaluation constituted part of El Bosque's preparation of a self-evaluation report for the purposes of CNA's accreditation process (El Bosque's self-evaluation report, SER, pp. 56 − 58). The work was mainly coordinated by El Bosque's regular committee in charge of quality assurance matters (*Equipo de Evaluación y Planeación*).

The self-evaluation report, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team (hereafter the team) in July 2013. The site visit of the team to El Bosque University took place from 20 to 23 August 2013.

The self-evaluation report was very informative presenting the context in which the university operates, the main changes that have occurred in the university since the last evaluation, recapitulating the recommendations of the previous IEP team and

also identifying some key challenges the university is currently facing. Thus, it provided the IEP team with an excellent starting point for its work.

The report clearly demonstrated that during the time elapsed since the original IEP evaluation the university has implemented many of the recommendations made in the final evaluation report. The interviews during the site visit confirmed this. Therefore, in the context of this follow-up evaluation the team has chosen not to reiterate the recommendations of the original evaluation one by one, but to focus on those that it deemed most deserve further exploration or that led to a new recommendation.

## 1.4 **The evaluation team**

The team consisted of:

- Virgilio Alberto Meira Soares, Professor, former Rector, University of Lisbon, team chair
- Juan Viñas Salas, Professor, former Rector, Lleida University
- Olav Øye, student, Université libre de Bruxelles
- Tia Loukkola, Head of Unit, European University Association, team coordinator

The team wishes to take this opportunity to thank the Claustro for making the decision to take part in a follow-up evaluation, the Rector Carlos Felipe Escobar Roa and his team – including the vice-rectors and the support staff – for the excellent planning and organisation of the evaluation process, including the site visit. And last but not least, all the staff members and students, who contributed to the self-evaluation process and took part in the interviews during the site visit.

## 2. Governance and management

El Bosque University has undergone important changes since the last evaluation process in 2010. As indicated in the introduction, the university has continued to grow rapidly in size — a major construction and renovation of the Usaquén campus has taken place and in 2013 it opened a new campus in Chía.

The growth has been accompanied by an important institutional development: the organogram of the university has been revised with the number of faculties decreasing as a result; student participation has been formalised to some extent while still leaving the students to organise themselves; some key administrative processes, such as human resources and student admissions, have been centralised; the number and proportion of staff with full-time contracts as opposed to those with part-time contracts has significantly increased; and last but not least, great emphasis has been put on staff development as will be discussed further in the "Research" section of this report.

This development has been underpinned by the strategic development plan (*Plan de desarrollo institucional 2011-2016, PDI*), which was adopted at the end of 2010. This plan takes into account the information generated by the university's self-evaluation process in 2009 (for the purposes of the IEP evaluation) as well as of the recommendations made by the IEP team. It is also based on a thorough analysis of the context in which El Bosque operates, which is one demonstration of the university's overall strength of identifying itself as an active contributor to its environment.

Five strategic priorities were defined in the PDI: strategic and quality development, academic development, student achievement, building a better team and developing the learning environment.[1] Each priority is broken down to programmes, and programmes into projects. To complement and to further elaborate the PDI, a number of policy documents defining various areas have since been elaborated and adopted by the Claustro.

In the IEP team's view, the PDI resembles a kind of modernisation plan for a five-year period, the plan covering most of the activities of the university. In the course of the site visit the team came to understand that among the university leadership as well as the university community as a whole, there is a great commitment to the mission (see PDI, page 58) and priorities set in the PDI.

On this occasion, the team would like to highlight some positive features of the PDI that deserve to be mentioned.

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[1] The priorities (*ejes*) in Spanish are *Desarrollo estratégico y de calidad, Desarrollo académico, Éxito estudiantil, Construimos un mejor equipo* and *Desarrollo el entorno para el aprendizaje*.

First, as mentioned above the PDI covers a period of five years, which allows the organisation sufficient time for implementation and establishes a sense of continuity in the strategic planning. This is particularly important as the team took note of the fact, and regrets it, that the terms of the rector (two years) and Directive Board (*Consejo Directivo*, one year) remain unchanged.

Second, the PDI includes three transversal programmes that the team found of crucial importance: well-being (of the community), information technology and internationalisation.

Third, the PDI defines where the institutional responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of each of the programmes and projects lies. This is something that is often forgotten in the planning phase, which then hampers the development.

When studying the PDI and also the statistics provided demonstrating that the university has made significant progress in many of the areas identified by the PDI, the team was left asking how the university defines whether it has reached its goals or not. Therefore, **in the next PDI**, which is expected to cover from 2016 to 2021, the team recommends that **a timeline with quantitative objectives and indicators for each area is defined**.

In 2010 the evaluation team asked whether the composition of the Claustro was "adequate for a multidisciplinary university and, if not, could and should the composition or the way of functioning be changed somehow to better reflect the diversity of the university as it is today". The team learnt that the Claustro has set up a committee to discuss this (SER, page 70), but that no changes have occurred so far, with the exception of some individual members having changed.

In 2010 the evaluation team also encouraged the university to "**consider including representatives of key stakeholders in some institutional decision-making processes**". On the occasion of this follow-up evaluation, the team would like to insist in this recommendation again. The team fully understands that the question of an adequate composition of the Claustro as a whole needs to be considered before any external members can be appointed to it. However, the team takes this opportunity to enlarge the concept of institutional decision-making processes to include other bodies that make decisions, in particular those that deal with academic matters. For example, **in the faculty councils the inputs of external stakeholders, such as major employers, can potentially be extremely useful when discussing development of new study programmes or adjustments to the existing programmes**.

When it comes to the structure of the university budget, there have been no major changes (SER pp. 46 – 47). The university has managed to attract more funding from other sources than tuition fees, but this increase has been overshadowed by the

major increase of tuition fees, which has followed the growth of student population (see Introduction).

The university's strategy underlines the link between its local, national and international environment and this is supported by its academic profile focused on health and quality of life. However, the discussions with both internal and external stakeholders gave the impression that the university could increase the level of knowledge of its strengths among society at large. As a result, the team suggests to the university to **develop a strategy for external communication on what the university has to offer to the external stakeholders:** whether they are local or international; companies, other organisations or individuals; academics or potential students. This would be a continuation of having defined and analysed its strengths and collecting data on institutional activities as well as having worked on its internal communication (SER, p. 72) in recent years and is also mentioned in the current PDI (pp. 84 – 85). In the long run it might also raise the university's profile and facilitate fundraising.

Another way for the university to strengthen its links with the external environment and raise its profile could be through its alumni. In recent years universities globally have come to realise the potential that exists by maintaining contacts with their graduates throughout their life-time: they can act as ambassadors of the university, but also become important future collaborators as they enter professional life. The team learnt that there is an association for former students of El Bosque and the university has adopted a policy for graduates (*Política de Egresados*). This would seem to give a good basis for the university to **seek ways to boost cooperation with graduates and the alumni association**.

## 3. Teaching

The PDI defines health and quality of life as El Bosque's particular focus areas, themes that overarch the academic offer of the university. In the previous IEP evaluation report, the team called for defining the following: "explore how both individuals and organisations can better understand the role that quality assurance can play in their daily lives, get engaged and work together to take quality forward". The number of programmes created since the last evaluation is very limited, yet the team would have liked, but failed, to find out whether these kind of general rules for introducing new study programmes have been adopted.

The team understands that one of the strengths of El Bosque in terms of teaching (as well as research) in health and quality of life is that it has several disciplines that look at these themes from different perspectives. The team learnt of cases where this strength had been put into use, where there was cooperation across faculties, but did not get the impression that this would be systematically be encouraged, and the examples appeared to be mainly in research and service to society. However, there would be potential for development in this respect. Therefore, the team recommends **fostering cooperation between faculties in academic matters and interdisciplinary in the study programmes**.

Paradigm change to student-centred learning was discussed in-depth during the original IEP evaluation in 2010 and the university received a recommendation to continue the work in this regard. In 2013 it can be noted that the university has made great advances in this direction: the team received material demonstrating this and heard during the interviews of examples as to how the curricula had been changed. While it was reported that, for the most part, there exists a consensus on the need and the implementation of this approach across the university, the team was also informed that some isolated resistance persists. The team invites the university to look into the reasons of this resistance and address the issue and thus **generalise the use of student-centred learning across all disciplines**.

As part of the introduction of student-centred learning, El Bosque has also introduced learning outcomes in the programmes (see *Política y Gestión Curricular Institucional*). However, it is not quite clear to what extent these are being communicated to all concerned, which would be crucial for them to be fully functional. At the time of the site visit, it appeared that the learning outcomes were presented online for some programmes, but not for all. Therefore, the team recommends that the **learning outcomes be posted online in detail, for each programme and for each course**.

The university defines itself as a teaching university that carries out research with social outreach (PDI p. 58) and it makes considerable efforts to ensure the quality and efficiency of its educational mission. In fact, ensuring student achievement

(*éxito estudiantil*) is one of the strategic priorities in the current PDI and there is a separate policy document that elaborates the topic (*Política de Éxito estudiantil*). In this regard there are two aspects to be considered. First, the well-being of the students, which is included in the university's general policy for well-being (*Política de Bienestar Universitario*) and according to the testimonies heard during the site visit, well received and appreciated.

Second is the retention rate, which is high, above national average (SER, p. 34). However, regardless of this overall positive trend, the team noted that there are still some individual programmes, where the graduation rates are considerably lower. Therefore, the team recommends the university to **pay particular attention to the programmes with low graduation rates**. It should analyse the reasons for this and explore ways to correct the situation.

One of the transversal programmes included in the PDI is information technology and in relation to teaching it translates into developing the use of information technology in teaching (see PDI pp. 123 – 126). With this in mind the university has made important investments in its IT-infrastructure and the use of information technology has increased. The team was, however, told that some of the teaching staff do not necessarily feel competent enough to take full advantage of these new possibilities. Therefore, the team recommends the university to **increase the training offered to the teaching staff on pedagogies and the use of information technology in teaching**.

## 4. Research

One of El Bosque's teaching strengths is its close relationship to research in the institution, which allows students to engage in research already during their studies. This should be considered an opportunity to have new generations of researchers within the university.

The university's research intensity has increased significantly in the past few years. The increased commitment to research and personal development of the teaching staff was demonstrated in the documentation as well as the discussions with the staff. The number of staff members holding Masters' and doctoral degrees has increased in a very short time (SER, p. 41) creating a new kind of enthusiasm around research. The results of this increased intensity in research are already visible with the growth in number of publications (SER, p. 79). For the university, this creates a new, yet positive challenge: how to provide these new Master and doctoral degree holders with opportunities for further development in order to foster the university's research capacity, notwithstanding the existing and well-known financial constraints at all levels. The team recommends the university to address this in an active manner and to **continue to stimulate the professional development of the teaching staff**, regardless of their level of degree.

In this regard, it should be remembered that not all the staff members necessarily wish to engage intensively in research. The recently adopted human resources policy (*Política de Gestión del Talento Humano Académico*, p. 29) defines four possible dimensions in which a staff member can develop their skills and progress in their careers.[2] Nevertheless, whilst the current internal statutes of the university, which date from 2002, are very clear on the rules for promotion of staff members, they do not take into account this kind of diversification of career paths. Therefore, the team recommends **revising the internal statutes (*Estatuto docente*) so that they better reflect the existing institutional policies** and take account of the different orientations and strengths of the staff members.

Returning back to research, the team took note of investments in the research infrastructure (such as laboratories) in research years. This has been made possible by the increase in the resources dedicated to research activities (SER, p.69). This increase has mainly happened through the university's own investments, not so much by the increase from external sources, which is largely explained by scarcity of competitive resource funding at national level. In this context the team encourages

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[2] "*El académico desarrolla su vocación académica en cuatro posibles orientaciones, complementarias y no excluyentes. Son ellas:*
*›› La Vocación de la Enseñanza-Aprendizaje*
*›› La Vocación del Descubrimiento*
*›› La Vocación del Compromiso*
*›› La Vocación de la Integración.*"

the university to **strategically focus its own funding for research on research topics and groups that have potential to generate external revenue or attract external funding, if given the seed money.**

On a slightly related issue, the information provided to the team regarding the research groups and their reach in terms of disciplines and topics led the team to ponder over the question of critical mass. Critical mass is increasingly seen as a success factor in research and in particular in the fields of medical and biosciences, where a major part of the research in El Bosque can be found. Therefore, the team remains slightly concerned for some research fields that appear to lack this critical mass. One way of ensuring the critical mass would be to **multiply the partnerships with other universities and research groups working in the same disciplines** thus aiming to share knowledge, facilities and perhaps also tap into research funding that would not be in El Bosque's reach, if it worked alone.

Further, the team did not get a clear response on how various research interests of the staff and faculties are prioritised and thus whether there is a clear sense of direction, when it comes to developing the university's research profile, within the overall focus on health and quality of life. Therefore, the team urges the university to **develop an explicit research policy** that would address these questions as well as present a plan for attracting external research funding. This policy would ideally be based on the existing orientation within the university towards research dealing with the social and health problems that are typical to the geographical area where Colombia is located.

## 5. Service to society

The university's mission statement (PDI, p. 58) underlines El Bosque's commitment to the areas of health and quality of life as well as to the need to respond to the local – as well as regional and international – needs. This commitment to the society had already been noted in the IEP final evaluation report in 2010.

Through the interviews and the material received the team was able to note that this aspect of the university's mission is well internalised by the community and engagement remains high. As a result, there is research that is closely related to resolving local problems in the field of well-being and health. It is the team's firm view that the university should **continue to promote this commitment and focus on finding solutions to social, health and educational challenges**, where the university's current strengths lie.

Taking account of this focus, the new hospital that is being planned has potential to offer the university a completely new dimension to its engagement with the community. Therefore, the team sees great potential in this project and encourages the university to **take full advantage of the new hospital to strengthen its social corporative responsibility**.

The team further notes that the university has significant agreements with social and public organisations, but partnerships with the private sector are not that common and could be further developed. In this context, the team takes note of the project to create an office in charge of knowledge transfer of the research results (*oficina de transferencia de resultados de investigación, OTRI*). The team finds that there is great potential in this project and urges the university to **set up OTRI and include in its remit issues related to intellectual property** making full use of changes in the legislation that might offer the university new opportunities.

For a private university, quite a considerable proportion of the university's students originate from less wealthy social backgrounds (SER pp. 28 – 29). During the site visit the team noted that this is a feature that both the leadership and the teachers seem to consider valuable and in line with the university's bio-psycho-social approach and focus to quality of life. Among other means, El Bosque offers scholarships to students coming from less wealthy backgrounds and the number and the amount spent on these grants has grown slightly in recent years (SER, p. 35). The team considers this demonstration of El Bosque's social responsibility an important feature of the university and encourages the university to **continue to facilitate the access of students from less wealthy backgrounds**.

## 6. Internationalisation

Both the original IEP evaluation in 2010 and CNA's feedback in 2012 identified internationalisation as one of the key challenges for El Bosque. And indeed, while the team found that while both the university leadership and community at large are aware of the importance of internationalisation, it still remains a marginal phenomenon at the university. When examining the statistics on international mobility and collaboration, one concludes that progress has been made, but it is happening slowly. The indicators remain modest.

It is only with respect to the number of collaboration agreements that the statistics show a decrease and in this case because the university carried out an analysis and rationalisation of the agreements. This can be considered a positive step because it will allow the university to focus on strategic partnerships in the future rather than having many agreements that are not really working in practice.

In recent years, the university adopted a policy for internationalisation (*Política de Internacionalización*) and established international affairs as one of the working areas of a central planning office. This would indicate that the major building blocks for further development are in place: motivation, policy and support structures.

However, two major challenges remain. First one is funding. It is clear that in an environment, where there are no large funding programmes available for all (such as some European Union programmes in Europe), any large-scale mobility will rely heavily on financing by the individual taking part in the mobility. Therefore, the team commends the university for its internationalisation policy taking account of the "internationalisation at home" measures.

As part of its internationalisation strategy, the university has also introduced joint degree programmes with some foreign universities and the team recommends the university to **continue to look for ways to develop more of these joint programmes**.

The second major challenge identified by the team is the lack of English skills both among the staff as well as students. While it is natural to examine and give importance to partnerships that are based on the Spanish language and for instance in French, as the university has done, English is an uncontested *lingua franca* particularly in the disciplines related to natural sciences, medicine and biosciences. Therefore, in order to have access to the top-notch scientific articles and develop research cooperation, English skills are absolutely vital. Thus, the team urges the university to **make it a clear priority that all members of the university community familiarise themselves with English.**

The students and teachers the team met during the site visit were aware of the university's aim to promote its international activities and students knew that they are expected to have English language skills in order to graduate. Still, the

institutional measures to support the students to achieve this required level of language skills are not considered sufficient. Therefore, the team decided to make some additional suggestions as to how the university could improve English language skills:

The university already has a language centre that offers language courses. The teachers can take these courses for a reduced fee. In many cases, the students can take these courses as elective courses in their degree programme by paying an additional fee. The team proposes to **consider introducing compulsory courses in English in the curriculum of each programme**. Another way to incorporate studying English in the curriculum would be to include classes in English language, study material in English and exercises in English in the students' programmes.

The latter proposal, however, requires a certain level of language competences from the academic staff as well. In order to address this, the team suggests a two-fold approach. In terms of the existing staff, the university should **increase the offer and encourage the participation of the staff in English language courses**. In addition, when it comes to engaging new staff members the team proposes that the university **examines the possibility to have English language skills as a preferential asset[3] for hiring a teacher.**

Finally, in order to foster the existing collaborations, promote El Bosque as a destination for students and academics abroad and encourage El Bosque's own students and academics to visit other institutions, the team recommends the university to **systematically use the contacts and networks that the teachers and students, who have international experience, have established**.

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[3] Preferencial asset should be understood in this context as "*condición prioritaria*".

## 7. Quality culture and assurance

In the 2010 evaluation report the IEP team concluded that El Bosque had a quality culture system in place with a strong commitment to quality and shared institutional values, but called for the university to take advantage of the momentum created by the 2009 self-evaluation process to establish a quality assurance system, which the team found lacking.

Now, three years later, it is clear that the cultural aspect of quality culture is still in place. But in the past years the university has made great progress in establishing and consolidating institutional quality assurance processes to complement that commitment.

The team commends the university for its continuous self-evaluation cycle, which forms the basis of its quality assurance system, an integral part of its strategic management. This way the university has ensured that a self-evaluation culture is embedded in all aspects and units of the university, as part of their daily operations. In doing this the department for evaluation and planning (*división de evaluación y planeación*) has also been strengthened.

As part of the quality assurance system, both the evaluation of teaching and the curriculum has been systematised and evidence was provided that follow-up actions are taken based on the results of these evaluations. A continuous evaluation of the teaching staff has also been consolidated. A third major strength of the system is the flow of information between different levels of organisation, which has been set in place through regular reporting and the use of data gathered in *SIQ (Sistema de Información de Calidad)*.

Considering the state of art of El Bosque's current system and how it could be further developed, the team suggests to the university to **seek ways to encourage faculties to share with each other any good practices that they may have developed to complement the institutionally established ones**. While this would disseminate the practices developed at grass-root level, where and when practices can be applied in other contexts as well, it can further promote the sense of ownership for quality and encourage innovative thinking thus reducing the perception of quality assurance as merely a bureaucratic exercise.

Speaking of bureaucracy; the team learnt during the site visit that at the moment the members of the university community are satisfied with the institutional quality work. They find it useful and meaningful both at an institutional and personal level as they feel that they can use it as a tool for personal development and witness positive developments in their daily environment. However, having heard testimonies of numerous meetings that take place at faculty and programme level, the team cannot help reflecting on the right balance between the workload and the

gains achieved through it. Therefore, the team encourages the university to **try to avoid an overload of administrative tasks, including meetings, generated by the quality assurance system so that the benefits achieved are not lost in the process**.

## 8. Conclusions

This report should be understood as a genuine improvement-focused report written with the aim of supporting El Bosque to develop further. In other words, it is because the team acknowledges the tremendous work done by the university in recent years in managing an important institutional change process that the team is confident that El Bosque has the capacity to address future challenges and in that context address the recommendations made in this report.

As discussed in this report the change process has covered teaching, research, internationalisation, human resources, to mention a few, but yet with great attention paid to  quality. The team hopes that this approach can be maintained and the next PDI will be able to consolidate the evolution of the university.

While the speed of change may seem rapid, it clearly has the support of the university staff who find the change justified.. This gives the university leadership a good basis to continue to implement the existing ambitious plans. The IEP team hopes that the recommendations made in this report can be of assistance to the university and wishes El Bosque all the success in this process.

### Summary of the recommendations

- define for each area a timeline with quantitative objectives and indicators in the next strategic plan

- consider including representatives of key stakeholders in some institutional decision-making processes, including academic decision-making at faculty level

- develop a strategy for external communication on what the university has to offer to the external stakeholders

- seek ways to boost  cooperation with the graduates and the alumni association

- fostering cooperation between faculties in academic matters and interdisciplinarity in the study programmes

- generalise the use of student-centred learning across all disciplines

- Publish online intended learning outcomes for each programme and for each course

- pay particular attention to the programmes with low graduation rates

- increase the training offered to the teaching staff on pedagogies and the use of information technology in teaching

- continue to stimulate the professional development of the teaching staff

- revise the internal statutes (*Estatuto docente*) so that they better reflect the existing institutional policies

- strategically focus its own funding for research to research topics and groups that have potential to generate external revenues or attract external funding, if given the seed money

- multiply the partnerships with other universities and research groups working in the same disciplines

- develop an explicit research policy

- continue to promote this commitment and focus on finding solutions to social, health and educational challenges

- take full advantage of the new hospital to strengthen its social corporative responsibility

- set up OTRI and include in its remit issues related to intellectual property

- continue to facilitate access of students from less wealthy backgrounds

- continue to look for ways to develop more of these joint programmes

- make it a clear priority that all members of the university community familiarise themselves with the English language

  o consider introducing compulsory courses in the English language in the curriculum of each programme

  o increase the offer and encourage the participation of the staff in English language courses

  o examine the possibility to introduce English language skills as a preferential asset for hiring a teacher

- use systematically the contacts and networks that the teachers and students, who have international experience, have established

- seek ways to encourage faculties to share with each other any good practices that they may have developed to complement the institutionally established ones

- try to avoid an overload of administrative tasks, including meetings, generated by the quality assurance system so that the benefits achieved are not lost in the process.