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### **External Assessment Report for the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca**

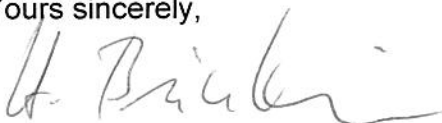
Dear Ms Preda,

please find my report about the evaluation of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca on the following pages. It was an interesting and great experience for me to see the University and also the vivid town of Cluj full of historical sites at still nice late-summer weather.

It was important and helpful that the University provided several persons to translate during the meetings. When I visited the teaching facilities and laboratories the tours were well organized and informative. The most impressive for me was the fact that the UMF educates in three languages, Romanian, French and English.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve as an external evaluator for ARACIS.

Yours sincerely,

  
(Prof. Dr. Heinrich Brinkmeier)

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## **External Assessment Report for the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca**

### **Introduction**

I was appointed by the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (Agenția Română de Asigurare a Calității în Învățământul superior - ARACIS) as an external evaluator of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca (UMF). This report is the result of the evaluation visit that took place in order to externally assess the University. The visit by a committee of experts took place during the period 21-23 October 2009.

The program of the visit was known in advance and followed exactly. I personally took part in all meetings of the evaluation committee that was sometimes extended by members of the university management, including the rector, vice-rectors, chancellor and the deans of the faculties that were assessed. There were three additional meetings, one was open for all students of the faculties and another was held with the teaching staff of the UMF. A third meeting was organized with presidents of the local professional organizations for medicine, dentistry and pharmacy. Cluj-Napoca

I have signed the contract with ARACIS and was bound to respect the methodology of assessment, using my complete expertise in coordination with the local situation and facts.

The evaluation committee comprised the following members: Prof. Delia Podea as the director of the mission, Prof. Daniela Ion as the coordinator, Dr. Oana Preda, the scientific secretary of ARACIS, Victor Caragea and Cristina Cristea as student evaluators as well as Profs. Florain Popa, Adriana Zaiț, Marius Raica, Mihaela Păuna, Ursula Stănescu and myself. The University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca was represented by the Rector, Prof. Constantin Ciuce, the Vice Rector and contact person Prof. Radu Oprean as well as other representatives of rectorate and faculties.

During the evaluation process I have worked closely with Profs. Delia Podea, Marius Raica and Ursula Stănescu, Prof. Radu Oprean organized meetings with heads of Departments and site inspections of teaching and laboratory facilities whenever I asked for it.

The audit at the University began on Wednesday the 21<sup>th</sup> of October 10 o'clock with an assembly of the members of the committee and the representatives of the University. The coordinator, Prof. Daniela Ion, opened the first session, introduced the members of the committee and their responsibilities and introduced also the Rector of the University, Prof. Constantin Ciuce, the vice rectors and the deans of the three faculties for Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy. The further procedure was characterized by working in small groups. Whenever there was time I took the opportunity to visit institutes involved in preclinical teaching and undertook laboratory visits of departments conducting research projects. During the days in Cluj-Napoca I visited the departments of Physiology, Pharmacology, Genetics, Cell Biology, Anesthesia and Intensive Care and the Ion Chiricuta Oncology Institute. Finally, on Friday 22<sup>th</sup> I had an appointment with the vice rector for research and talked to Rodica Marcu, the contact person for international students exchange. The evaluation was terminated at noontime on Friday 23<sup>th</sup> of October with a joint session and concluding remarks of the participants and the director of the mission Prof. Delia Podea.

### **Legal statute, mission and aims**

The University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj-Napoca is legally functioning, being a modern higher education and research public institution of Romania. Its functioning is based on the Memorandum of the Government of January 4, 1991, namely the order of the Ministry of Education and Science no. 4894/22.03.1991. The university started from 1994 as "Iuliu Hațieganu" University of Medicine and Pharmacy (UMF) with the specialties: Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy.

UMF operates with legal personality based on the Constitution of Romania, on the education laws and on the University Charter. The university is open to Romanian and foreign citizens. The university observes and defends the academic freedom and functions under university autonomy conditions. The didactic and research mission of UMF consists in education and training of professionals in the medical and pharmaceutical field.

The university activity is based on a partnership among teaching staff and the students; education is centered on the student and UMF aims to observe the dignity of each member of the academic community.

The University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj-Napoca has a structure with three faculties: the Faculty of Medicine, the Faculty of Dentistry, the Faculty of Pharmacy. Besides the specialties for the first cycle of higher education UMF has also educational programs for secondary (master's degree) and third (PhD) cycles. The UMF aims to continue and further develop scientific research through the agency of research grants, to consolidate collaboration relations with foreign medical faculties and to integrate in the European area of higher education and research.

### **Teaching staff and preclinical teaching**

The human Resource of "Iuliu Hațieganu" UMF is made up of the Teaching Staff and the administrative personnel. The Teaching Staff of "Iuliu Hațieganu" UMF is tenured by contest according to the provisions of the Statute of the Teaching Staff and of the Own Contest Regulation.

The total no. of teaching positions at the UMF is 753 of which 497 hold the title of PhDs; 32% have the title Professor or Senior Lecturer. The total no. of students at UMF is 6278 making UMF the second largest Medical University in the country.

Thus, the average ratio between the number of teaching staff / students is around the value of 1:8 being generated by the specific conditions of the medical and pharmaceutical education.

Teaching of medical and dentistry students in anatomy, histology, physiology and biochemistry is performed in small groups in seminars and practical courses of between 10 and 20 students. Medical and dentistry students visit main lectures that are performed in six parallel lines, 4 hold in Romanian, one in English and one in French language. Every teacher has to teach, or at least to be able to teach in two languages.

**Comments, estimations and recommendations:** At first sight the ratio between the number of teaching staff and students seems to be adequate. However, some positions will probably be vacant or only part-time occupied. Further, the necessity to teach in two languages could make teaching time consuming at least for assistant lecturers during their first years. At this point I remember the words of Prof. Florian Popa in the first session of the evaluation committee in, who criticized the long time required to obtain the PhD degree at Romanian universities. When I visited the Department of Physiology, I

received the impression that during the teaching period there is virtually no time for research for the lecturers and assistant lecturers, a situation that may prolong the time required to obtain the PhD degree. I have to admit that my impression may be not representative for the whole UMF and may vary from department to department.

Nevertheless, it is recommended to reduce the teaching workload for assistant lecturers before having obtained their PhD and for younger lecturers. This could be achieved by reduction of their overall teaching duties, by generation of additional positions or by temporary exemption of assistant lecturers and younger lecturers. A high quality of teaching and research mostly go hand in hand. Therefore the strategy to establish a balance between teaching and research seems to be important.

### **Material basis**

Based on the documents provided, especially the Institutional Self-Evaluation Report and my own visits in the teaching facilities I noticed that the UMF has its own teaching laboratories, adequately equipped, according to the standards specific to the medical and pharmaceutical education and to the ARACIS norm, for all the subjects of the curriculum plan for which laboratory activity is foreseen. Besides main lectures, preclinical teaching is organized in small groups of students in the presence of supervisors. I visited several seminars and practical courses during teaching activities, especially in physiology and genetics. Practical activities (laboratory seminars, practical courses) of the special disciplines take place in laboratories endowed with modern and appropriate equipment.

Distances between lecture halls, rooms where seminars and practical courses take place, library and hospital are altogether in walking distance or situated in or around the main building of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy. This infrastructural feature of the University is consequently developed, since new research facilities are placed and expanded near by. All the lecture halls I have seen correspond to European standards, with modern presentation equipment.

The two discussions with the students and the Teaching Staff that were hold during the evaluation did not reveal problems related to limited space for teaching or limitations in the equipment in the practical courses.

**Comments, recommendations:** As far as I could estimate during the random inspections of seminars and practical courses, the UMF has reached a high standard of teaching. The procedures of preclinical teaching are very similar as in the German Universities I know. Equipment and sizes of lecture rooms and practical courses, access to the library and use of modern communication techniques seem to be well established and adequate. The fact that teaching is performed in two foreign languages (French and English) in addition to Romanian is highly remarkable and deserves my appreciation.

However, in spite of the good conditions it will be necessary to continuously update and improve the equipment for preclinical teaching. Further, modern developments e.g. in the fields molecular biology and bioinformatics will make it necessary to adjust preclinical teaching curricula, facilities and equipment.

## Students

A total number of 6278 students were registered at the UMF "Iuliu Hațieganu" of Cluj-Napoca within the university year 2008-2009, with different types of financing.

According to the institutional self-evaluation report, the university applies a transparent policy for student recruitment and admission, announced publicly with at least 6 months before application, through adverts in the local and national press and on the university's web site. The admission to the UMF is based exclusively on the academic competences of the candidate, and do not apply any type of discriminating criteria, respecting the principle of equal chances to all candidates. The UMF uses an in-house methodology for the selection of students that is approved by the Senate of the University.

The study programs of the „Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy have been developed in accordance with the fields approved on a national level, and they correspond, at the same time, to the sectorally regularized professions in the European Union. The study programs that were proposed and are now established by the UMF have been evaluated and approved by the TAIEX Expert Committee of the European Union. The latter achievement is obviously an important prerequisite for the professional success of the students educated in languages other than Romanian.

A measure of the quality of the education at the UMF is the result of the residency examination 2008. The Institutional self – assessment report mentions that 80% of the



graduates of the UMF passed this exam so that the Cluj-graduates achieved the first place in the country in this national examination in 2008 and were generally among the first places in the last years.

During the evaluation of the UMF, a meeting between students and the committee was arranged. Though the participation was not too numerous, the commission obtained some insights about the views of the students about their university. There were overall positive, we did not hear many critical comments about the study conditions regarding spaces, equipment and teachers. Some individual positions complained the rather low flexibility of their studies, since they wished to have extra time for laboratory work in research. There were some individual complaints about some teachers in pharmacy, low opportunities of student exchange with universities abroad and low opportunities of sports activities. There was only one point that was more extensively discussed. Some Romanian students felt that in the English and French education series, standards may be lower and exams easier to pass. My question concerning the education in physiology was answered as: "useful and performed at a good standard".

**Comments, recommendations:** I was positively surprised by the self-confident behaviour of the students and the open discussion between students and the committee. This may indicate a good discussion culture also in the University and a quite good relationship between students and teaching staff. Apart from some individual opinions about some details it turned out that the students of the UMF are highly motivated and largely satisfied with their study conditions. Concerning the comparability of the Romanian, English and French education series, rectorate and deans should carefully evaluate teaching contents and standards to maintain equal standards and outcomes.

In conclusion, education at UMF is characterized by a transparent and fair admission process for students based on the academic competences of the candidates, by a good infrastructure concerning buildings, spaces and library, high quality of teaching and study programs that were evaluated and approved by the European Union and by an excellent outcome indicated by the results of the national residency examinations. Thus, the conditions for Romanian and foreign students at UMF seem to be overall excellent.

## Research

Scientific research activity is part the mission of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy Cluj-Napoca and is regarded as the driver of the university's development. In 2007, the Senate of the UMF has adopted a Research Development Strategy. Further, the UMF has a founded a Department of Research development and a doctoral school that ensures the formation of young researches. Furthermore, the UMF runs a Scientific Council that has responsibilities of monitoring and reporting about research and research development. In addition the Scientific Council performs syntheses arisen from national and European policy regarding scientific research and recommends to the Senate the guidance of the directive lines of the effort to sustain university research.

The development of the research activities during the last five years at the UMF is characterized by a growing number of national research grants won by UMF. The no. grew from 22 in 2004 to 67 in 2008. Further, during the years 2006 to 2008 the UMF obtained as a coordinator or partner 7 international projects within the FP7 of the European Union. The total value of the projects run in the university at present exceeds 30,000,000 RON (approximately 7 million euros) In the same time a growing number of publications in ISI listed journals appeared.

During my stay at the University of Medicine and Pharmacy I visited several research laboratories with an internationally competitive standard. The best equipped and most convincing diagnostic and research laboratories I saw in the Ion Chiricuta Oncology Institute. In combination with the fact, that the Departments of Gastroenterology and Chirurgie III (abdominal surgery) are among those Departments with the highest numbers of national grants, the UMF has a strong focus on gastroenterology and on the analysis and research of cancer of the gastrointestinal tract. The recent publication in the journal "The Lancet" showing the results of a clinical study having been performed at the Oncology Institute (Ciuleanu et al., 2009) is an indicator of the significance and excellence of this institute.

**Comment, recommendations:** Research at the UMF is characterized by the successful development of competence and international relevance in the field of gastroenterology and on cancer of the gastrointestinal tract. Research in other fields is less successful, if publications in highly ranked international journals are used as the indicator. The reasons for this are difficult to analyze during a three-day evaluation. Probably the following points contribute: The Romanian system to support research in form of grants was little



developed before 2004. Thus, there is no long history of research on that basis in many departments at the UMF. International competitiveness cannot be achieved in such a short time.

It is difficult to answer how research can be improved in additional fields of clinical and basic medical research, since it depends on local circumstances, objectives of the management, involved departments, persons taking an initiative, etc. It would be very desirable to establish further research centers or collaborative research programs at the UMF Cluj-Napoca. Within a medical faculty of that size, several collaborative research programs could principally be developed. This would however require a lot of financial support and has to be prepared and guided. Many universities or faculties have a budget and an own system to financially support initiatives for small collaborative projects. Financial support for such projects, provided by the faculty or university, can be a starting point for the preparation of significant grant applications to national or European organizations. It is recommended to include, clinical and preclinical departments of medicine and dentistry and also departments of pharmacy into collaborative research programs. This may have several positive effects: 1. It can improve communication and collaboration within the faculty or whole university. 2. It will prevent too much diversity in the research and can lead to concentration and focusing on few fields. 4. It will improve the international visibility of the UMF. 4. It could prevent migration of the best researchers to other universities in Romania and to abroad and thus maintain and improve teaching quality at the UMF. Other important points are international collaboration and exchange of researchers with other institutes, national and international, and the contribution to international scientific meetings.

In some places there exists a fruitful collaboration between the local or national industry and the universities. There are also European funds to support the regional development by supporting research and development in companies, universities and collaborative projects. It is recommended to analyze these programs and take advantage of them.

### **Concluding remarks**

Based on the analysis of the self-assessment report as well as on the evaluation, I have seen an active and vivid university with interested and engaged students. The „Iuliu Hațieganu” University of Medicine and Pharmacy of Cluj-Napoca successfully developed

teaching and research conditions and also the infrastructure and this raises many hopes for the future.

I would like to thank the Rector, the vice Rector, the deans of the faculties and all the university staff for their hospitality and support during the evaluation.

Further, I would like to thank ARACIS for giving me the opportunity to serve as an external evaluator.

Greifswald, Germany, 26.11.2009



(Prof. Dr. Heinrich Brinkmeier)