European University Association (EUA)
Institutional Evaluation Programme

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY

EUA EVALUATION REPORT

July 2007
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1. Introduction: purpose of the EUA Evaluation

The EUA has a strong international reputation in quality assurance and strategic review having conducted institutional reviews of over 170 universities in 38 countries during the past thirteen years or so. The purpose of the evaluation of Yeditepe University is to contribute to the advancement of the strategic management of the University and to its organisational development, and to enable the University to strengthen its capacity to anticipate and address change. In its deliberations, the EUA Team has assessed and focused on Yeditepe’s strategic priorities and has used this as a basis for making recommendations for the future.

2. Process and methodology

Following a request from the Rector of Yeditepe University, the Steering Committee of the EUA institutional evaluation programme appointed a team for the institutional quality review of Yeditepe. This team was composed of:

- Julio Pedrosa, former Rector, University of Aveiro, and former Minister of Education, Portugal, as Chair;
- Ivan Ostrovsky, former Vice Rector, Comenius University, Bratislava, Slovakia;
- Noel Whelan, Vice President Emeritus, University of Limerick, Ireland; and Chairman, National Adult Learning Council of Ireland;
- Jethro Newton, Dean of Learning and Teaching, University of Chester, UK, as Secretary.

The team undertook a preliminary visit to Yeditepe from 18th February to 20th February, 2007, and the main visit from 13th May to 16th May, 2007.

The EUA methodology is guided by four central strategic questions. These questions, which ensure that quality is examined in its wider institutional context, are:

- What is the university trying to do?
- How is the university trying to do it?
- How does the university know that it works?
- How should the university change in order to improve?

In accordance with the EUA methodology and guidelines, and in advance of the preliminary visit, Yeditepe University sent a 29-page Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to the EUA team. The SER, compiled and authored by the Steering Committee, directed by Prof. Dr. Nilufer Egrican, Vice Rector responsible for Institutional Advancement, analysed the institutional context, norms and values, its quality management processes and quality assurance and quality improvement arrangements, as well as its strategic management and capacity for change. The SER was accompanied by annexes with detailed data on students, staff, finances, various aspects of quality-related work at Yeditepe, and the SWOT analysis undertaken in preparing the self-evaluation report. The EUA team appreciated the work done in the SER and the accompanying documentation, and found them to be of great assistance in enabling them to undertake their deliberations.

For its main visit, the Team requested some additional information and documentation regarding Yeditepe University’s strategic and financial planning; research and human resources planning; the operation and remit of Senate and the Executive Board; some
additional data; and further clarification on several matters. These issues were discussed during the preliminary visit but not fully reflected in the SER. This additional information was provided in advance of the main visit and covered the issues adequately.

During its two visits, the EUA team held discussions with a wide variety of persons, both from inside and outside the university community. These included:
- the Yeditepe University Rector, Vice Rector and General Secretary;
- the Chair of the Board of Trustees;
- representatives of the Self-Evaluation Steering Group established for the EUA review process;
- Faculty Deans;
- representatives of Senate and members of the Executive Board;
- central university staff involved in policy making and planning, and with responsibilities **inter alia** for: Research Planning, Human Resources, Finance, International Office, Research Centres, and Third Mission activities;
- researchers and doctoral students;
- staff and students from the Faculties of Dentistry, Medicine, Engineering and Architecture; Law; Pharmacy; Arts and Science; Education; and Fine Arts;
- student representatives, including officers of the Students’ Council;
- representatives of external Yeditepe stakeholders and partners.

The team would like to thank Yeditepe University, its Rector, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Serpil, its Vice Rector for Institutional Advancement, Prof. Dr Nilufer Egrican, and the Chair of its Board of Trustees, Mr Bedrettin Dalan, for the welcome and hospitality provided during its two visits. Both visits and all meetings were efficiently and pleasantly arranged by the Yeditepe EUA Self-Evaluation Steering Committee that also acted as a very effective liaison group between Yeditepe University and EUA.

The team would also like to put on record the open manner in which it was received across all parts of Yeditepe University and the fruitful discussions which characterised the team’s meetings. During these meetings the team was able to discuss a very wide range of issues linked to the ongoing development of the University, and the role of strategic planning and quality management and quality review processes in this.

3. The present situation of Yeditepe University: observations and findings

3.1 Mission, vision, and general context

Yeditepe University was established as a public corporate body in 1996, by the ISTEK (Istanbul Education and Culture) Foundation, on the initiative of Bedrettin Dalan, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. Yeditepe’s norms and values, articulated on behalf of the university by the Chairman, incorporate the principles of Ataturk. To complement them, Yeditepe’s mission, ‘as a pioneering higher education and research institution, providing a modern and contemporary education throughout its vocational undergraduate and graduate programmes’, is dedicated to ‘cultivating individuals with strong ethical and democratic values who are committed to Ataturk’s principles’. The University’s vision, as a modern university with a national and international orientation, is to be ‘a focal point of academic and professional excellence providing modern education and research programmes, and educating the young generation to compete in the global world’. The University therefore defines its position in the Turkish academic
world in terms of both national educational commitments and modern educational concepts.

In seeking to achieve its vision and mission the university acknowledges that it faces a transformation period, and a new era of development and change, in which the institutionalisation of key structures, systems, and leadership arrangements, appropriate for this phase of development, is of paramount importance. The EUA Team learned that the university’s considerable achievements to date in terms of education, infrastructure, facilities, and entrepreneurial outlook have sharpened its recognition of this need for institutionalisation and organisational change. The EUA Team recognises that, at this phase of its development, the University is actively pursuing a balanced profile of teaching and research and ‘Third Mission’ activities to take the University forward. In its SER, the university makes explicit its desire to maximise the opportunity provided by the EUA self-evaluation process for the realization of its institutionalisation efforts. In view of the significant growth and development of Yeditepe since its establishment in 1996, and future plans for further growth, the EUA team endorses the University’s perspective.

3.2. Governance and management

The planning, coordination, governance, and policy-making for higher education in Turkey come under the aegis of the Council of Higher Education (CHE), established by law in 1981. The 1981 legislation also made provision for non-profit foundations to establish higher education institutions. The CHE is responsible for matters relating to instruction and research. Of the 25 foundation (private) universities in Turkey, Yeditepe is the largest in terms of student numbers, departments, and faculty. All Turkish universities are governed by the legislation, rules and regulations of the state, but, as with all private, ‘foundation’ universities, Yeditepe has considerable financial and administrative autonomy. Some private universities which, like Yeditepe, meet certain criteria, may also qualify for state financial/budgetary assistance.

Though private universities are under the direct supervision of the CHE, and new programmes require CHE approval, in accordance with rules and regulations laid down at Board of Trustees level, foundation universities have considerable freedom and autonomy in the management of their own affairs. Only minimum academic requirements and structures are laid down by law. While the Yeditepe University Senate deals with academic matters, including the establishment of academic regulations, administrative regulations are determined by the University’s Executive Board. The University Executive Board, chaired by the Rector, includes Deans of faculties, the Director of the School of Foreign Languages and three representatives elected by the Senate. It meets on a weekly basis and is a key element of the University’s management system. It provides an important forum for the functioning of the Rectorate. The Executive Board deals with personnel issues such as appointments and promotions, and also administrative and minor managerial processes. In terms of decision making, the EUA Team formed the view that, on key resource-related matters, such as staff appointments, the Executive Board reviews issues, makes decisions and sends decisions related to staff appointments only to the Rector for approval.

For academic purposes the university operates a decentralised system, with faculties exercising a clear element of autonomy in academic appointments, promotions, course development, pedagogy, and the development of educational materials. The
management and administrative structure comprises the rector, vice rectors, deans, and department chairs. While in state universities, by law, the rector is nominated by faculty, in Yeditepe, as a foundation university, by law, the Board of Trustees appoints the Rector subject to the approval of the Council of Higher Education. Deans are nominated by the Rector and assigned by the Board of Trustees for three years to manage a faculty. The Dean may assign up to two Vice Deans.

In non-academic matters, such as finance, infrastructure, and procurement, there is strong central control. The highest decision-making body within Yeditepe, as in other private Turkish universities, is the Board of Trustees. The Chairman of the Board of Trustees, on behalf of the Board, is responsible and accountable for the total financial activities of the university. The Rector is appointed by the Board for a four-year period, on the approval of the CHE, and reports directly to the Chair. The Rector is also a member of the Board of Trustees. In this management and administrative structure, the Rector is assisted by three Vice Rectors. One, the Provost, is concerned with academic issues, another, the Dean of Students, is concerned with student affairs, while the third is responsible for institutional advancement, including research and development activities. The Secretary General is responsible for all other administrative matters, and is assisted by three Associate Secretary Generals.

The institution’s mission and vision, as previously described, define what the university is trying to do and what it seeks to achieve. They are crucial in determining what strategies and organisational arrangements should be put in place, and how they might operate. Though acknowledging the strong teaching profile which the University has developed, members of the team formed the view that the present governance and management systems may not be sufficient for the effective development of the high-quality, research-oriented university, with a strong national and international position, and able to compete and thrive in a highly competitive global environment, that Yeditepe wishes to become. The EUA team would encourage Yeditepe to be proactive in these matters and to more effectively express the institution’s strategic intentions and aspirations in its arrangements for governance and management and also for strategic planning.

3.3 Strategic planning

The University’s academic organisation is structured into eleven faculties, offering 52 undergraduate programmes and 66 graduate programmes. Yeditepe is one of the few Turkish universities which has English-based curricula. This is viewed by the university as an important attribute in its efforts to extend its international activities. At the time of the evaluation visit there were 15,229 students (12,628 undergraduate and 2,601 graduate students) and a total of 997 academic and 645 administrative staff. The student-staff ratio for faculties and other schools, based on all academic staff but also including instructors, was 7.74 for undergraduate and 9.5 for graduate education. The University also includes: six graduate Institutes; the most recent of which being the Institute of Biotechnology; three Schools; a Polyclinic and three Hospitals (including a Research Hospital); and four Research Centres.

As noted above, for planning purposes Turkish universities fall under the remit of the CHE which inspects and assesses all universities annually. For the purpose of the
annual assessment, the university prepares an annual activity report. The inspection process focuses on strategic and administrative aspects of the university.

In addition to meeting the requirements of the CHE, Yeditepe is also required to address those of YODEK (the Higher Education Academic Monitoring and Quality Improvement Commission), established in 2005 by the national Inter-University Board, and whose authority is based on national legislation and regulations governing higher education. In accordance with these regulations, Yeditepe, like other Turkish universities, has established an ‘Academic Monitoring and Quality Improvement Committee’ (ADEK). Its remit is to oversee the preparation of a YODEK Strategic Plan, for submission to the CHE, and to be revised annually through a process of self-evaluation. The Plan which the EUA Team saw was based on the results of their 2005 self-evaluation process. The 2006 strategic plan prepared for YODEK sets out the policies, goals and priorities of Yeditepe, and lists a range of academic developments approved by the university. It also identifies strategic developments designed to support the university’s vision and mission. But, as the EUA Team learned, in strict terms it is more concerned with quality evaluation than with strategic, corporate planning of the kind that is undertaken for internal purposes, typically, in northern and western European universities. That said, the EUA Team noted that the YODEK Strategic Plan contains some impressive performance indicators which, though there are gaps in key areas of performance monitoring, illustrate the progress the University is beginning to make in this area.

To date then, it was apparent to the EUA Team that the University’s approach to strategic planning has been markedly influenced by external requirements. (e.g. Yodek Strategic Plan; and Annual Assessment for CHE). The University acknowledges that it has progress to make in this area and that strategic planning and execution have not been well defined hitherto in terms of process and systems. It has undertaken several initiatives which the EUA Team believes will assist the institution in working towards more appropriate arrangements for strategic and corporate planning. These have included an extensive SWOT analysis conference (May 2006), involving a large number of external and internal stakeholders, along with an Image and Positioning Study, undertaken for benchmarking purposes (January/February 2006).

The EUA Team noted with interest that, in a recent development (March 2007) the University’s Academic Monitoring and Quality Improvement Committee has proposed a new strategic planning initiative, involving the adoption of a model for its own strategic planning, based on the ‘Balanced Scorecard Method’. The University is also establishing an Office for Strategic Management. It is intended that this initiative will provide an overarching framework for enabling Yeditepe’s strategic planning to be taken forward, with strategy, business planning processes, and operational procedures being more closely aligned with mission and vision. The EUA Team welcomes these intentions and fully endorses the progress the University is seeking to make in this important area.

3.4 Corporate information, communication and organisational effectiveness

The Team learned that the University has begun to make appropriate progress in identifying its corporate information needs and in terms of developing a suitable communications infrastructure to support corporate and strategic purposes. With
respect to the former, the University publishes various data, for both external and internal purposes. It has several systems to support the gathering and analysis of management information. The main system (‘ED: Electronic Transformation System’), was adopted in 2001 for archiving and processing various academic and administrative needs, such as student registration, course choice, assessment and grading, and tracking. This system assists the University in developing reports relating to organisational planning, performance, and effectiveness, including annual audit reports for official external purposes, such as CHE inspections and the YODEK Strategic Plan. The EUA Team was informed that, in view of capacity and management problems and deficiencies, ED is to be replaced with a new system, which, in addition to offering greater capacity, will extend to financial operations. The EUA Team was reassured to learn of several recent initiatives designed to address deficiencies in the generation and use of data for performance monitoring purposes, including employability data of alumni, use of student preference data, and performance indicators for corporate and faculty planning. To strengthen its communications capability the University has, through its Vice Rectorate for Institutional Advancement, taken steps to establish a Corporate Communications Office. This Office will put in place mechanisms for facilitating dissemination of information. The EUA Team learned that the Office would survey developments and trends amongst faculty and students. Team members formed the view that it has great potential for supporting efforts to achieve greater institutionalisation of key developments, and generally contributing to the advancement of quality culture at all levels within the University.

The Team would wish to encourage the University in the steps it is taking to enhance capability in corporate information and corporate communication. Team members also urge the University to consider how it might effectively integrate its needs for improved data with its requirements for improved communication, and to align this with both internal strategic planning and organisational performance and effectiveness monitoring purposes, and its obligations in respect of external accountability.

3.5 Quality assurance

To date, as with strategic planning, the general context for quality assurance and wider organisational monitoring reveals a marked external dimension. The principal drivers for quality assurance and quality monitoring at Yeditepe have been largely determined by the external requirements placed upon it by the YODEK Commission, referred to earlier. The EUA Team learned that the terms of reference of the Commission were informed by the EUA’s ‘Quality Assurance Indicators’, and that the Commission had developed a series of regulations and principles for self-evaluation and quality monitoring purposes (May 2006). These are set out in the Higher Education Academic Monitoring and Quality Improvement Guide, whereby Yeditepe, like other Turkish institutions of higher education, was requested to establish its Academic Monitoring and Quality Improvement Committee, referred to in the previous section. This Committee (ADEK) is now becoming well established within Yeditepe University and is responsible, on behalf of Senate, for the university’s academic monitoring and quality improvement processes. The EUA Team notes the importance to the University of these developments and their contribution to organisational development and quality improvement. The Team members view them as a key element of the longer-term process of embedding the principles and practice of self-evaluation.
Through their reading of the documentation provided, and during meetings with faculty members, the EUA Team also learned of various other quality initiatives at the University which signal the increasingly proactive approach to quality assurance which is emerging at Yeditepe. A number of faculties which deliver external services have adopted TQM and ISO9000 quality management approaches to assist them in putting in place quality procedures that can meet external assessment requirements. In addition, an increasing number of faculties and academic departments, such as Engineering and Architecture, and Arts and Sciences, have or are seeking external or certification accreditation by professional or industrial bodies. The EUA Team notes that these initiatives have all contributed to the emergence, albeit stronger in some areas of the University than others, of some of the key ingredients of a quality culture.

The Team were reassured to learn that the University sees the recent establishment of an Academic Quality Monitoring and Improvement Office as a step towards greater centralisation of quality issues and the institutionalisation of a Yeditepe approach to quality, especially for academic purposes. In support of this, in the view of the EUA Team, the University should give close consideration to introducing into the remit of the new office for quality, the responsibility for developing arrangements for annual and periodic quality monitoring and review across the university, including at faculty, department and programme levels. This would also help to underpin the University’s recognition, expressed in its SER, of the role of quality monitoring as ‘an important tool for improvement planning’.

3.6 Finance and resourcing

For funding purposes, as a Foundation University, Yeditepe is financially independent of the Turkish Government’s Treasury Department. Essentially, it receives no income from the state, though some private universities which, like Yeditepe, meet certain criteria, may qualify for some state financial assistance. The principal source of the University’s income is student tuition, with student intake numbers being determined nationally by the CHE on the basis of a quota system. Additional income is obtained through services and products such as health, pharmacy and cosmetics, and through donations. The University expects the value of some aspects of this, such as hospital services, to rise in the future. Historically, academic services to businesses have also generated income through what the University describes as ‘revolving funds’. Income from these funds includes income from recreational facilities, and the sale of University products and publications. The EUA Team learned that the University is coming to the end of a period in which these revolving funds have been invested mainly in the development of its strong Health Science sector, thus affording an opportunity for the University to put this income to a different strategic use in future, to support other areas of academic development which have not hitherto benefited from these funds.

In terms of constraints, the EUA Team learned that the University itself is not subject to any significant external financial controls. However, the Team were informed that many families of potential students are unable to meet the cost of tuition fees and other expenses, with the result that such prospective students may opt to attend a state university. To offset this, the University provides scholarships to almost one third of the student body, some three times the legal requirement for foundation universities.
Essentially then, in terms of finance, there are no financial constraints imposed on the University by external bodies. Moreover, the EUA Team found that, to date, arrangements for finance and resourcing have been markedly centralised at the level of the Board of Trustees, and also the Rector. The latter manages procurement, centrally. The SER indicates that this degree of centralisation reflects national regulations regarding Foundation Universities, whereby the Board of Trustees is the responsible body for the management of financial strategy, and for any budget-related issue, with the execution and implementation being carried out by the Rector and the Executive Board. The EUA Team learned that, for budget-building purposes, the needs of faculties and administrative departments are factored in on the basis of the completion of annual budgeting forms which are submitted to the Rector who, in turn, presents these to the Board of Trustees for the purpose of deliberations on finalising the formation of the annual budget. In operational terms, the University’s regulations determine that the Fiscal Directorate, acting on behalf of the Board, and reporting to an Associate Secretary General, is responsible for the general financial management and accounting of the University.

For the purposes of funding research, the University has established a Research Projects Office, under the direction of the Vice Rector responsible for Research and Development, and Institutional Advancement. The EUA Team learned that, at a corporate level, the University is intending to support research with an internal research fund. While faculties contribute annually, as described, to the central budget building process, from its meetings with faculty members, the EUA Team noted concerns at faculty and department level regarding the lack of a transparent resource allocation model. An additional and linked set of concerns related to the lack of a clear equipment acquisition, repair, and maintenance policy, for both teaching and research equipment. In reflecting on this, the Team took the view that this was a key area for budgeting at faculty level and that the University might wish to reflect on whether there may be advantages to enabling arrangements to be put in place whereby faculties themselves may have a role to play in resource management in this area.

3.7. Human resource planning and staff development

While recruitment of non-academic staff is outsourced to a company owned by the ISTEK Foundation, the University is free to select and appoint teaching and research personnel. This recruitment is carried out by the Human Resources and Planning Department. Given the external legal framework however, its academic promotion and appointment regulations and standards are, determined with reference to Turkish higher education law. The documentary information provided to the EUA Team indicates that recruitment is done on the basis of organisational needs, as identified by deans and directors, and as advised by department chairs. All recommendations on new staffing are taken to the Rector who, in turn, takes these to the Board of Trustees for approval. Issues relating to appointment and promotion are discussed by the Executive Board.

The EAU Team noted, however, that the University did not have an overarching Human Resources Strategy for the purpose of driving its policy intentions on the institution’s future staffing profile, nor a staff development policy document setting out its staff development plans or its priorities for enhancing the capability of its staff, nor a system
of annual or periodic appraisal of staff performance. Moreover, although the University’s academic staffing structure includes research assistants, assistant professors, and associate professors, several factors have contributed to a relatively weak situation in respect of the last category. The EUA Team learned that while the University’s stated policy has been to attract young academics, full-time professors frequently join the University following their retirement from state universities, and that time is needed before younger faculty can progress to become associate professors. Thus, despite the University’s aspirations and intentions, associate professors continue to form a noticeable minority. In its meetings with faculty members the EUA Team also noted a general concern regarding the need for additional technical and administrative support staff in the areas of teaching, learning and research.

3.8 Learning and Teaching

The SER indicates that Yeditepe’s primary objectives relate to education, research, and service (‘Third Mission’) activities. As the EUA Team learned, the University has developed particular strengths in learning and teaching in several areas of academic priority. Its faculties of Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy, together with its Hospitals, have enabled the University to build a notable profile in the Health Sciences, while the Engineering Sciences have also grown in strength. In addition, the University has developed distinctive areas in its portfolio, such as Gastronomy and Culinary Arts. Its curriculum offer of Double Major and Minor programmes, and a range of electives, provides flexibility of student choice and curriculum delivery, and a good basis for interdisciplinary combinations. The EUA Team notes that priority is also given to the development of entrepreneurial skills and employability, this being supported by activities in the area of career development. Of particular significance, are the University’s ambitious plans for growth in the number of postgraduate students and the demands this will place on the University’s planning mechanisms and its faculties.

From their reading of the University’s documentation and from their meetings with staff and students, the EUA Team learned in some detail of the wide variety of approaches to learning and teaching used across the different departments of the University. This includes educational approaches which emphasise active learning, problem-based learning, and other means whereby student skills and competences can be fostered. It was unclear to the Team whether the University is seeking to make more use of e-learning, or technology enhanced approaches to teaching, learning and assessment more generally. The SER indicates that in terms of preferred pedagogical approaches, the University pays particular attention to achieving and balance between theoretical knowledge and applied skills. In this connection, most students undertake a Graduation Project aimed at integrating theoretical and practical experience, and to develop research skills. The EUA Team commends this aspect of the student experience.

The students with whom the EUA Team met spoke highly of the quality of their learning experience, and the accessibility and support of faculty. But, while noting this, together with the wide variety of approaches to learning and teaching used within the University, the Team became aware of the lack of mechanisms for identifying and disseminating good practice in academic practice and pedagogy. In addition, members of the Team formed the view that the University does not currently have sufficient and appropriate staff development arrangements to underpin the enhancement of learning and teaching.
and academic practice. These are matters upon which the Team would encourage the University reflect.

3.9 Student issues

Alumni

The EUA Team noted that, in its SER, the University described several recent initiatives designed to address deficiencies in the generation and use of data for performance monitoring purposes. Most notably, these included a new Alumni Relations Programme, designed to strengthen alumni relations and to address the need for employability data of alumni, the absence of an alumni office, and the deficiencies in the contribution of the alumni association, which is still in its development phase. The Team also noted the proposed development of the ISTEK Yasam (ISTEK life) Portal that will bring together students and alumni of ISTEK Schools and Yeditepe University, and has potential for contributing towards the University’s efforts in the development of an Alumni network.

Evaluation and feedback

The EUA Team noted that the University’s SER indicated that anonymous student course evaluations are undertaken in the majority of faculties at departmental, though not on a standardised basis. To address this lack of consistency the University has, from the fall of 2006, introduced standardised evaluation forms for all students to complete on an on-line basis when accessing their assessment grades. However, students expressed concern to the EUA Team that, in contrast to their previous experience, the new system is not anonymised. Moreover, it was not entirely clear to the Team whether arrangements for feedback to students on issues they raised were universally adopted or adhered to.

Representation system

For current Yeditepe students the mechanism for student representation at the University is through the Students’ Council. A Vice Rector (Dean of Students) is responsible for the activities and organisation of the Council. At faculty level, student representatives of the Council are able to participate in Board and Executive Board meetings for the purpose of discussing student issues, needs and problems. Similarly, the President of the Students’ Council participates as an invited member of Senate. The EUA Team noted, however, that in view of the national legal context relating to Turkish universities, students are excluded from the formal composition and membership of university committees and boards.

The EUA Team wishes to place on record the marked degree of pride in their university displayed by Yeditepe students during meetings with members of the Team. From meetings with external partners and stakeholders the Team also received confirmation of the employability and maturity of Yeditepe students, their attractiveness to employers, and the extent to which their competencies and skills were valued by the wider society. The Team also notes the range of opportunities for student representation and involvement in quality processes, and were impressed by the lively and thoughtful students with whom they had discussions. Indeed, from its deliberations the EUA Team
believes that, while acknowledging any external, legal constraints, the University has an excellent opportunity to build on the enthusiasm and capabilities of its students for quality development purposes and that it may wish to reflect upon ways in which it might achieve this.

3.10 Research

Having become one of the leading foundation universities for teaching, Yeditepe sees the development of research and the institutionalisation of leadership in research, as one of its main goals for the transformation of the University. To date, in addition to establishing 14 PhD programmes and 43 Masters programmes, linked to its five Institutes and four Research Centres, the University’s research profile reflects the priority given to developing institutional strengths in Health Sciences and Engineering Sciences. Key elements of this are the Yeditepe University Research Hospital, and also its Dental Hospital. Yeditepe’s five Institutes are at different stages of development. The newest, the Institute of Biotechnology, does not yet admit graduate students. The Centre for Strategic Research (YUCSR) has a strong international dimension and, as is evident from the University’s internationalisation plans and current policies, Yeditepe has established many international research and cooperation initiatives. In addition to providing a focal point for research, the Institutes also function as graduate schools and represent an important basis upon which Yeditepe is growing its portfolio of postgraduate programmes and doctoral programmes. The University has ambitious aspirations for growing its capability and student numbers in these areas.

The SER indicates that in seeking to accentuate its research activity the University will encourage and support its staff and graduate students in various ways. The University intends to allocate greater financial resources to support both national and international links and partnerships. The EUA Team learned of a series of developments which, though largely recent in origin, have been instigated at the initiative of the Vice Rector, Institutional Advancement, and which, in organisational terms, are highly significant. A Research Projects Office (RPO) has been established, research support procedures have been put in place, and a research and development web site has been created for the purpose of regularly informing researchers about funding opportunities, and where they can register their research projects and publications. The EUA Team learned that the RPO, which will coordinate all research-related activities, and also play a role in arrangements for the internal funding of research, has been recognised by TUIK, the Turkish Statistical Institution, as an example of good practice in supporting university research. A set of ‘Regulations for Research Projects and Funding’, designed to support and fund internally the enhancement of research, has recently been approved by Senate. The EUA Team also learned from the Rector that a Research Committee was to be established.

The Team was able to confirm, through its meetings with staff, that as part of the effort to build the research strengths of staff, there is good evidence that academics are advised and encouraged at corporate level, through the RPO, to go beyond the resources provided from the University’s own finances by searching for external sources of funding at national level. The EUA Team notes that funding opportunities offered by national bodies such as TUBITAK (the Technological Research Council of Turkey), or the State Planning Organisation (DPT), are advertised widely to faculty members. Similarly, at international level, funding opportunities such as FP6 and FP7 are also
announced to faculty. The Team would wish to encourage the University to continue to make progress with these and other developments which it has planned to support research. The University also encourages researchers to apply for research funds offered by local government, and this is supported by a research protocol agreement with Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (IBB).

From data presented to them, the members of the EUA Team were encouraged to note that the University’s initiatives and profile-raising activities are beginning to bear fruit, as the number of research projects grew from 5 in 2005, to 71 projects in 2006. The most recent information seen by the Team, for 2007, indicates that 60 projects are active, 30 pending, and 29 completed (a total of 119). A substantial proportion of these are funded by TUBITAK (38) or by IBB (14), with 30 being supported by Yeditepe. It appeared to the EUA Team that this picture reflects the success which the University is beginning to have in this area, including the ability to compete nationally for new funding streams established by governmental and non-governmental bodies.

In summary, the creation of a Research Projects Office, and the efforts to support applications to external research funding agencies (e.g. TUBITAK, and FP6/FP7), are viewed by the Team as a move in the right direction. The EAU Team was encouraged to note the recent increase in the level of applications and successful bids for external funding. Nevertheless, while noting the significant shift that the University is seeking to effect in the development and profile of its research, the EUA Team also learned from its meetings with faculty members and researchers, about noteworthy constraints on the University’s aspirations in this area. For example, high teaching loads, and limited availability of technical and administrative support, were each highlighted in meetings with staff. This, and the lack of clarity, from the Team’s perspective, as to how the University will secure the desired growth in postgraduate numbers, led the EAU Team to the view that urgent consideration should be given to the matter of an underpinning University research strategy.

3.11 Third Mission activities

Developments in research are complemented by the strong ties the University has built at regional and local level. This is manifested in a range of activities which fall under the general umbrella of ‘Third Mission’ activities. As the SER indicated, and as the EUA Team was able to confirm from its meetings with external partners drawn from a range of public and private stakeholder interests, Yeditepe’s faculties and other organisational units are involved in various partnerships, consultancies, knowledge transfer links, and the provision of services. These activities draw on the research and development expertise of Yeditepe staff. In addition to undertaking research, the University’s Research Centres also contribute significantly to partnerships and Third Mission activities.

During the course of the evaluation, the EUA Team learned that, from a strategic point of view, all research and development activities in the future will have as their focal point a new Technopark initiative. Technopark, to be located on a new campus, will be under the overall direction and leadership of the Vice Rectorate for Institutional Advancement, from where all research-related activities are coordinated. In view of the good range and mix of activities and services which the University has developed in the area of ‘Third Mission’, such as those related to the Continuing Education Centre, and collaboration
with schools, enterprises, local authorities, and regional bodies, the EUA Team is encouraged that the University is taking this area of its future development seriously. The Team believes that Yeditepe is moving in the right direction with the establishment of Technopark.

From the information provided to the EUA Team, and through its discussions with senior managers of the University, it was evident that the University has yet to codify its plans for research and Third Mission activities in the form of a written strategy. The University sees this as an outcome of the new strategic planning initiative based on the Balanced Scorecard methodology, described earlier. In view of the importance of research and Third Mission developments in the context of transformation, and plans for capacity building, the EUA Team strongly encourages the University to make early progress in this area.

4. Challenges for the future: developing organisational culture and capacity for generating and implementing successful change

The EUA Team’s observations and findings, as identified in the previous section, reflect the Team’s distillation of the salient features of Yeditepe’s current situation, and its perspective on the future challenges which the University faces. In respect of the latter, this present section carries forward the Team’s findings; it outlines the basis upon which the EUA Team has developed its recommendations to the University. In the deliberations which follow, and in making their recommendations to the University later in the report, the Team has taken great care to meet the purposes of the evaluation, in terms of contributing to Yeditepe’s strategic development, to the advancement of its organisational culture, and to the University’s capacity for taking forward successful change.

4.1 Governance, management, strategic leadership, and planning

Yeditepe has passed through its first phase of development with notable successes in terms of its academic provision, chosen areas of specialisation, and facilities and infrastructure. The University has now, with the full support of the Board of Trustees, identified an ambitious forward looking project. To date the Board has taken a strong leading role, but Yeditepe is now entering a phase in which it wishes to consolidate progress made while simultaneously aligning the University with the best international standards, in teaching, research, and societal contribution. In the view of the EUA Team, this project is a demanding one, both in terms of the University’s governance model, but also for its strategic and financial planning arrangements. It is ambitious not least because the University wishes to significantly extend its operations beyond the strong base of undergraduate education, into more extensive research and postgraduate activity, and into third mission activities. While the EUA Team has formed the view that the University has the flexibility, determination, vision, and track record to look to the future with confidence and optimism, nevertheless the Team proposes that the University needs a governance structure and strategic planning arrangements which will enable it to manage this project.

The members of the EUA Team have noted the extent to which the University has recognised the importance of strategic planning, and the practical steps it has taken to identify a model, ‘the Balanced Scorecard’ approach, to assist it in carrying forward this
key element of its institutional and corporate agenda. The Team would encourage the University in its efforts to identify organisational structures that will enable it to make full use of its chosen model. In particular, as the University continues to organise its top structure and Rectorate to support this development, it is important that its ‘bottom up’ arrangements for management and business planning at faculty level are suitably organised, aligned and integrated with top level structures and developments. While the development of the University’s Corporate Plan must be clearly focused on internal priorities and external requirements, equally, faculties must contribute on a transparent basis to the institution plan. In a similar vein, the EUA Team also proposes that financial planning and resourcing arrangements, discussed below, must also be adjusted accordingly.

In accordance with these aspects of the Team’s conclusions, two recommendations are put forward. Firstly, the EUA team would encourage the University to be proactive in reviewing its present organisational chart regarding governance and management arrangements, thereby ensuring that it accords with and fully reflects the organisational measures it has recently taken and the priorities it has set. In the view of the EUA Team, this would ensure that managerial line authority emanates unambiguously from the Rector to the three Vice Rectors, each of whom has a range of cognate managerial functions, and then downwards to faculties through the heads of departments. It would also provide the basis for ‘bottom up’ dialogue and interaction from the level of heads of department to the Vice Rectorate, and onwards to the Rectorate and Executive Board. Secondly, the Team strongly encourages the University to make progress with the initiative it has commenced to enable it to become a strategy-focused organisation, and to support its own, corporate development while also enabling it to meet external requirements. In respect of this second recommendation, and in view of other conclusions set out in this section of the report, the University may wish to give consideration, as it makes progress with its strategic planning, to the merits of developing a suite of supporting strategies, or strategic statements, which would support and underpin Yeditepe’s Corporate Plan. In particular, given the University’s stated goals and priorities for change and transformation, areas such as research, learning and teaching, human resource development, and quality, might each be considered as requiring clear strategic statements, aligned with and informing the University’s overarching plan for development.

4.2 Finance and resourcing

The degree of centralisation of the University’s arrangements for finance, resource allocation, and annual budget formation, reflects the governance and management arrangements that have successfully steered Yeditepe University to its present stage of development. From their discussions with the University, and in their deliberations and reflections, the EUA Team has formed a view of possible future arrangements which it invites the University to consider. Though noting the considerable achievements made to date by Yeditepe through deployment of a centralised model, the University may wish to consider the merits of introducing changes in its approach to financial and business planning, budget formation and management, and resource allocation. In view of the transformation challenges it currently faces, and the growth it wishes to secure in areas such as research and third mission activities, and development of the academic staff base, the University may see this as an opportune juncture, in terms of its future development, to review its existing centralised financial model, and consider replacing it
with a five-year rolling investment and financing contract between the Board of Trustees and the University and its Rectorate. Under such a contract, the Board of Trustees would consider for approval the overall investment plan for the development of the University and monitor the overall delivery and successful implementation of the agreed plan. As a consequence, full responsibility for the day-to-day management of the University would fall upon the Rectorate. It is in this context that the EUA Team has put forward one of its key recommendations. Arising from that recommendation, the Team would envisage that such an approach would be mirrored at other levels, including that of the faculty, with similar business and financial planning arrangements and agreements being undertaken between the Rectorate, Deans of faculty, and department heads. The underlying purpose of this recommendation is that it provides a means of stimulating the achievement of strategic goals and encouraging both ownership and accountability in such matters, at all levels.

4.3 Corporate information, communication and organisational effectiveness

In the view of the EUA Team, a key element of the successful development of organisational culture within Yeditepe, and capacity building for change, centres around communication and corporate information, and how these are used in the period ahead to support and monitor organisational effectiveness. The steps the University has taken, and the progress made to date in these areas, have been described earlier in the previous section of this report. In essence, the Team’s view is that future governance arrangements, strategy development, and management and leadership, require communication arrangements and mechanisms which will generate corporate ownership, accountability and transparency at all levels, and secure effective ‘buy in’ from staff and managers.

4.4 Human resources and staff development

While the EUA Team notes that the human resources function is influenced by its obligations to meet and respond to external, legal requirements, on the basis of their meetings and discussions with senior managers, members of the Team came to the view that, as a progressive Foundation University which is looking to the future, Yeditepe has sufficient flexibility to develop new ways of working within the relative constraints of this legal framework.

In this, the development of a Human Resources Strategy and Staff Development Policy would appear to be crucial. For example, the Team members formed the view that successful capacity building for the University’s future - for research, teaching, and Third Mission activities - will require strategy and policy to be developmental and forward-looking in order to strengthen the competitiveness and ability of staff, and to support the career development of younger academic staff, including researchers. Further, it was apparent to the EUA Team that new national developments in the funding of research (for example, from TUBITAK and IBB) represent an important opportunity for increasing the number of postgraduate and doctoral students, a key element of future intentions, and that an internal policy was also required to complement this. Accordingly, given that the prioritisation of research is a key area for development, and that the University has a continuing concern for enhancing learning and teaching and academic practice, the EUA Team recommends that this should all be clearly reflected in the University’s staffing policy and human resources strategy. Within this, a
carefully designed policy for young staff recruitment and allocation of duties should also be considered. In essence, the Team came to the view that a specific and clearly defined plan should be drawn up for personnel and staff development purposes.

4.5 Teaching and learning

The EUA Team saw clearly that there are significant developments taking place in teaching and learning at the University, not least the strong emphasis being place on developing postgraduate studies at Masters and doctoral levels. As Yeditepe seeks to make progress in this area, it will no doubt wish to acknowledge the important contribution that the academic community can make in helping it to achieve its aspirations. With this in mind, the Team recommends that the University needs to consider the stimulation of an open internal debate, at department level, to enable it to reach a balanced, competitive and forward looking offer of undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

On the broader front, while noting the enthusiasm and commitment of staff, as Yeditepe seeks to establish itself as a leading university for high quality learning and teaching, the EUA Team believes that it is timely for the University to assure itself that it has in place the necessary policy and infrastructure for supporting educational development activities amongst its staff. This inevitably links to matters relating to human resource development and policy, and to support for staff continuous professional development (CPD) more generally. Consequently, in their recommendations the EUA Team encourages the University to consider whether it has the necessary arrangements to facilitate pedagogic development and the enhancement of academic practice. In reflecting on this the University might wish to consider the merits of developing a University-wide strategy for learning and teaching, with identifiable links to other areas of University strategy.

4.6 Research

The transformational goal of further development and institutionalisation of research, and the various initiatives, opportunities, and stated intentions which have emerged to support and stimulate research and third mission activities, have been noted earlier report. In looking towards the immediate future, and beyond that into the medium term, there are two areas where the EUA Team feel the University should seek to take action at the earliest opportunity. Firstly, funding of research demands clarity, openness, and transparency so as to stimulate the directions in that the University wishes to pursue and encourage. By seeding initiatives in this way, the University will be better placed to develop the capacity of its staff to be competitive and successful on a regional, national, and international basis. With this in mind, the Team recommends that, at the earliest opportunity, the University develops and communicates a clear funding policy to support the development of research. Secondly, the EUA Team also recommends that constraints which exist in relation to the development of research, and already noted earlier in this report (such as teaching loads, research infrastructure, technical staff support, support for attendance at international conferences), should be addressed on a planned and measured basis. As was alluded to earlier, in the Team’s view these two issues can be regarded as signifying that urgent consideration should be given by the University to the matter of the development of an all-embracing University Research Strategy.
4.7 Quality assurance and quality improvement

The EUA Team is confident that the University has shown a good degree of preparedness to identify quality assurance arrangements which will carry it forward into the future. The general lines of senior managers’ thinking, along with various initiatives, at central and departmental level, provide a sound basis upon which a sustainable culture of quality, supportive of organisational development, can be built. Reflecting this, the EUA Team includes in its recommendations a strong pointer that the University should continue to make progress with the institutionalisation of quality assurance. The Team formed the view that there is progress still to be made by the University in the development of an overarching academic quality framework extending across Yeditepe’s faculties and departments, and drawing together and integrating the various elements of progress and development made to date. Such a framework should include processes for monitoring, review and improvement at university level and at the level of the academic unit. This, in the view of the Team, would assist the University’s general desire, as stated in its SER, to undertake planned improvement.

4.8 Student issues

The EUA Team gained a positive impression on a number of student-related issues, both in terms of actual arrangements and current activities, and also in relation to potential and scope for future development. It is evident that the University has alumni who wish to be involved in and to contribute to the future well-being of Yeditepe. With this in mind, in their recommendations the Team indicates that it wishes to encourage the University in the development of an effective Alumni network. Equally, members of the Team were impressed by the degree of willingness of students to embrace formal representation and participation opportunities, and also to be involved in less formal activities, such as clubs and societies. Even so, it appeared to the Team that there remained yet unexplored opportunities and that the University might wish to look for additional ways of securing student involvement in University matters, beyond clubs and societies, and particularly in representational and quality processes. Thus, while it is noted that there are legal requirements of which the University must take account, Yeditepe has excellent students who wish to contribute more and, in light of this, the Team recommends that there is scope for the University to work with students to strengthen the effectiveness of the systems for student representation and involvement.

5. Recommendations

The recommendations of the EUA Team relate to matters which have a direct bearing on the development of Yeditepe University’s capacity for taking forward successful change.

**Governance, strategic planning, and management**

The EUA team would encourage the University to be proactive in reviewing its present organisational chart regarding governance and management arrangements;

The EUA Team strongly encourages the University to make progress with this initiative to support its strategic development and also to meet external requirement;
The EUA Team recommends that the University reviews the existing centralised financial model, and consider replacing it with a five-year rolling investment/financing contract, for the development of the University, between the Board of Trustees and the University.

**Human resources and staff development**

Given that the University is prioritising research as a key area for development, the EUA Team recommends that this should be clearly reflected in its staffing policy and strategy;

The EUA Team also proposes that consideration should be given to the development of a carefully designed policy for the recruitment of young staff, and to the allocation of duties and responsibilities.

**Teaching and learning**

As Yeditepe seeks to establish itself as a leading university for high quality learning and teaching, the EUA Team encourages it to review and consider whether it has the necessary arrangements to facilitate pedagogic development and enhancement of academic practice;

Since the University is now putting a strong emphasis on developing postgraduate studies, the EUA Team recommends that it needs to consider the stimulation of an open internal debate, at department level, to reach a balanced, competitive and forward looking offer of undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

**Student issues**

The Team formed the view that there is scope for the University to work with students to strengthen the effectiveness of the systems for student representation and involvement;

The Team wishes to encourage the development of an effective Alumni network.

**Research**

The Team recommends that the University develops a clear funding policy to support the development of research;

The Team also recommends that constraints which exist in relation to the development of research be addressed, and that this should include issues such as teaching loads, research infrastructure, and technical staff support.

**Quality assurance and quality improvement**

The EUA Team strongly recommends that the University continues to make progress with the institutionalisation of quality assurance.
6. Envoi

The EUA Team wishes to thank the University for the excellent arrangements for its visits and the work undertaken by the Team, and also for the generous hospitality extended by the University and its staff. As has been noted at various points in this report, the University is facing a transformation period. It has been a great pleasure to discuss with staff, students, and external stakeholders, the strategic challenges now facing Yeditepe University, and the opportunities available for meeting these. The Team hopes that the University finds its comments and suggestions helpful and supportive in its planning for the future. We believe that Yeditepe is well placed to achieve its future goals and aspirations, and we wish the University well in its next stage of development.