

## Marmara University, Evaluation report

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**Marmara University**

***EVALUATION REPORT***

*November 2014*

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## **1. Introduction**

This report is the result of the evaluation of *Marmara University*, Istanbul. The evaluation took place in 2014, with the first visit in March and the second in September.

### **1.1 Institutional Evaluation Programme**

The Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) is an independent membership service of the European University Association (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).

The distinctive features of the Institutional Evaluation Programme are:

- A strong emphasis on the self-evaluation phase
- A European and international perspective
- A peer-review approach
- A support to improvement

The focus of the IEP is the institution as a whole and not the individual study programmes or units. It focuses upon:

- Decision-making processes and institutional structures and effectiveness of strategic management
- Relevance of internal quality processes and the degree to which their outcomes are used in decision-making and strategic management as well as perceived gaps in these internal mechanisms.

The evaluation is 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 the institution know it works?
- How does the institution change in order to improve?

### **1.2 Marmara University’s profile**

Marmara University took its current name and status in 1982, having been established as a state educational institution since 1883. It is currently located on 11 separate campuses, seven on the Asian side and four on the European side of Istanbul, forming a huge university

with many different cultures. Originally established for commerce, the university's longest standing subject areas are business and banking, with engineering taught at Marmara only since the 1990s. Since 1982, the university has expanded rapidly and now comprises 16 faculties, 11 institutes, five schools, four vocational schools, 19 research and application centres and two education centres (Self-Evaluation Report, hereinafter SER, pp. 3-4). Faculties are diverse, ranging from Fine Arts, Business and various Social Sciences, through to Technology, Dentistry and Medicine. The university claims to attract good students due to its comprehensive offer. In February 2014, over 70,000 students were enrolled on a total of 935 programmes (250 short and first cycle programmes, and 685 second and third cycle programmes), making Marmara one of the largest universities in Europe (SER, p.5). The number of students had increased in the academic year 2014-15 to over 80,000, with the university employing over 1500 administrative and technical staff and circa 3000 academics.

Marmara University presents itself as 'a modern world university of the future; with the world class education and mission to train productive individuals, who have ethical values, with the ability to think originally, independently and critically' (SER, p.6). It claims to be "the only polyglot university in Turkey" and its offer of several programmes in more than one language, i.e. Turkish, English, German, French and Arabic, is thought to give the institution a market advantage. The university sees itself in a global context, not only geographically but also educationally, and aims to be an outstanding international university. In 2013-14 the university included 2500 international students from 115 countries and hosts around 450 Erasmus students each year (SER, p.7).

In the wider context of sector developments in Turkey, where the National Qualifications Framework for higher education reflecting the Bologna conventions was established in 2010, Marmara University is presented as a forward-looking institution that strives to meet the expectations of a modern European university. This includes adopting a strategic approach to areas such as research and innovation, student representation, and resource management. In particular, the university has actively strengthened its approach to quality assurance, and in 2012 produced a detailed new strategic plan. The national state rankings, based on factors including publications and citations, were thought by the university not fully to reflect what it believed to be its own particular areas of strength, such as teaching quality and service to society.

The university is responsible to the Council of Higher Education (Council of HE ) in Ankara, which has been under the auspices of the Higher Education Law since 1980. The Council of HE in Ankara oversees and regulates all universities in Turkey. Admissions to particular universities and degree programmes are determined by the performance of students in the national selection examination and their achievement level in high school.

### **1.3 The evaluation process**

The self-evaluation process was undertaken by a group nominated by the rector and vice-rectors which met weekly to discuss progress and collect evidence, building on other recent external quality assurance and accreditation exercises. The self-evaluation report was prepared by six academic members of staff, two specialists and a student council representative. The group agreed the final version of the report, which was then approved by the rector.

The self-evaluation report, together with the appendices, was sent to the evaluation team in February 2014. The two visits of the evaluation team to Marmara University took place on 23-25 March and on 29 September-1 October, respectively. The self-evaluation group gave a comprehensive presentation on the university to the team on the first day of their first visit. The team requested and were provided with some additional documentation during their second visit.

The evaluation team (hereinafter named the team) consisted of:

- Professor Henrik Toft Jensen, former Rector, University of Roskilde, Denmark, team chair
- Professor Krista Varantola, former Rector, University of Tampere, Finland
- Professor Ivan Ostrovsky, Vice-Rector, Comenius University, Slovak Republic
- Ms Leila Campos, student, University of Coimbra, Portugal
- Dr Karen Willis, Dean of Academic Quality and Enhancement, University of Chester, UK, team coordinator.

The team thanks the Rector, Prof Dr M. Emin Arat and Vice-Rector, Prof Dr Erol Özvar, the former Rector Prof Dr Zafer Gül, faculty deans and vice-deans and the self-evaluation team for their warm hospitality and for the open discussions. The team would like particularly to thank Mr Aykut Erarslan and Mr Fevzi Cengiz as the liaison contacts who, together with Ms H. Gökçen Öcal Özkaya, efficiently prepared and organised all arrangements and meetings for the visits. Thanks are also extended to our interpreter, and to all staff and student representatives who the team met during their visits.

## 2. Governance and institutional decision-making

The rectorship of the university had changed between the first and second visits of the team. This had also led to a new team of vice-rectors and some other new senior staff and advisers.

During the second visit, the new rector identified to the team five important and ambitious goals for future development:

- to combine all campuses on one site;
- to expand the number of faculty members;
- to promote cooperation with international universities;
- to build even stronger links with industry;
- to stimulate innovation and encourage research activities.

The IEP team found the senior management to be forward-looking and interested in learning from other national systems. Despite the size of the institution, the team formed the impression that there was effective collaboration between the rectorate and the senate which provided a good foundation for change and development.

In discussions with the team, however, many staff at all levels in the university reported limitations on determining strategy, internal decision-making, responsibility and innovation due to the strong influence of the central Council of HE in Ankara. For example, the HE generally decides on whether more or fewer teachers are required for particular subject areas, and also allocates numbers of students, which can lead to institutional difficulties in managing staffing and other resources. All administrative staff must pass a national examination and the university has little scope to choose whom to recruit.

In order to be able to promote a more proactive culture of responsibility and decision-making, *the team therefore would encourage the rector to discuss with the Council of HE in Ankara and with other rectors of state universities the possible scope for less micro-management from the Council in Ankara.*

### 2.1 Strategic Plan

A completely new strategic plan was produced in 2012 to reflect the university's new quality culture. After discussion throughout the university, it was approved by the Council of HE in Ankara, then the Ministry, and had been found useful when applying to accreditation boards. For the past four years, the team was told that the priority had been the Health Campus where a university hospital had been under construction; next priorities were to be the Technopark and the Faculty of Engineering on the new campus. It was the rector's

responsibility to oversee the costs of achieving all targets and to negotiate the priorities with the Ministry of Finance.

The team found much of the university's vision, as represented in the strategic plan, to be predominantly at a strategic level and needed to become more operational. An abstract of the strategic plan (2013-2017), which was provided to the team in English, lists many strategic targets. The team requested sight of the full document, which was subsequently provided in Turkish. Although this was not made available in translation, the scale and format of the full document further strengthened the team's impression that the strategic plan contained numerous detailed targets and specific actions but lacked an overarching sense of educational goals and priorities. The team *recommends that the university discuss and simplify the format of the strategic plan in order to drive forward the future development of the university.*

Furthermore, the team *recommends the rector to create not only goals for the future but also a vision for the everyday work of the university, including opportunities for planning priorities and incentives for day-to-day activities at different levels of the university.*

The team was subsequently advised that the incoming executive team had established new teams in order to prepare a more operational and simpler strategic plan with, aiming to cover the educational goals and priorities.

## **2.2 Decision-making**

The self-evaluation report identifies the rector, the senate and the administration board as the governing bodies of the university (p. 12). Mirroring this structure, each faculty and school also has two main boards. The faculty executive board and department heads decide on education-related matters, for example, changes or additions to the next year's academic programme. Most decisions are then submitted to the university's senate, comprising all deans, directors of institutes, and one member from each faculty, totalling more than 60 members, to discuss matters referred from the faculty executive boards. Many staff expressed the view that decision-making often involved many stages of administration.

The team was told that, should a faculty want to establish a new department or change the curriculum, the proposal is discussed first within the faculty, before being considered at the faculty executive board. It is then sent to the curriculum committee of the university, which is responsible for curriculum changes. If approved by the committee, it would then be submitted to senate. Following this, it is progressed to the Council of Higher Education in Ankara for the final decision and approval.

Financial proposals are discussed at the highest level by the administration board for executive matters, and not at senate which deals with educational and regulatory matters. All educational matters, such as admissions of students, are discussed at senate but then must go to the central Council of HE in Ankara for approval. *The team would encourage the senior*



*management to continue to consider ways in which the complexity of the university's regulatory processes might be decreased.*

Students sit on faculty boards and listen to all discussions and decisions, and student representatives can advise informally or communicate requests to the rector or deans. Students are well-supported by staff and feel able to openly express concerns, and deans have the authority to investigate any student complaints. However, students have little formal power or “voice” and systemic mechanisms for them to influence decision-making are not highly-developed in the institution. The team therefore *recommends that the university should consider more coherent approaches and models to increase student engagement and influence in decision-making.*

### **2.3 Budget**

Since 2012, the government has paid undergraduate and postgraduate tuition fees directly to the university, rather than the university taking fee payments from students. Students enrolled on evening classes still pay their own fees directly. The national Ministry of Finance has a department for universities, with which the rector negotiates the following year's budget on an annual basis. The Ministry had approved the move of several campuses to one location but had asked the university to generate some of the funding itself. The team was told that the senior university management allocates funds for investment, through the administration board, for example, for new buildings. The university receives funding from government for additional students but deans explained that this does not necessarily all come to their faculties.

In discussions with deans and other staff, the team found little significant knowledge about the university's budget allocations. The team was advised subsequently by the senior management that faculty allocations were published and accessible. The team was also told that some units, such as the University Hospital and Continuing Education Centre have their own working capital incomes. The team formed the impression, however, that in general there appeared to be little scope for local financial decision-making at present. Staff often referred to, and gave examples of, heavy and complex bureaucracy, both at institutional and national levels. It appeared to be difficult for faculties and departments to make minor investments in computers and other equipment for teaching and research. The team therefore strongly commends the rector's commitment to delegate more decision-making power to faculties and departments and *recommends improved simplicity, transparency and accountability of budget allocation.*

### 3. Teaching and learning

In general, the students whom team met were very satisfied with most of the teaching. Teachers were reported to be easily accessible and very supportive, and these relationships appear to be a considerable strength in most parts of the institution. However, the team formed the impression that, although in many areas the staff/student ratio was good, in some other faculties staff had very long teaching hours. Concern was expressed by some staff that these demands might at times detract from the quality of teaching. The team therefore supports the rector's strategy to try to increase staff numbers where the current teaching burden is high. In addition to this, the team heard from academic staff that some teachers also work at private universities and repeat teaching in the evenings to top up their salaries.

The team was informed that all students had the opportunity to take a double major in every programme, and that any student could take a major/minor combination. However, this can be difficult when the provision is on different campuses, and it could take several years to complete the second major. Overall, students benefit from attending a big university with opportunities to change to a different programme in a cognate area without having to wait to submit a new application. Staff reported generally high success rates in graduation and employment, although the team did not directly see the documentary evidence or data.

Most students report good career development support, with the establishment of internships in some faculties, and alumni links are encouraged in some areas. However, these links appear to be better in some faculties than others and some students referred to graduate employment as a "problem". The team therefore *recommends that further alumni links be developed at faculty and department levels.*

The team heard from students that in some cases individual members of staff were reluctant to update scientific resources or teaching approaches and, for example, continued to use old overhead projector slides. There were indications that the teaching styles of younger staff tended to be different and that they were keener to try new approaches. The team noted the excellent academic leadership of several deans who were very supportive in encouraging their staff to learn and develop their pedagogic practice. The senior management acknowledged the importance of raising the quality of teaching, particularly where faculties and class sizes were growing.

The team supports the ongoing work and commitment of the senior management, and suggests that academic staff might spend a minimum number of hours on continuing professional development (CPD) each year. The university might also consider the benefits of a peer observation of teaching scheme. The team *recommends that a learning and teaching unit be established, either at university or possibly faculty level, to support the pedagogic development of academic staff and to share existing good practice.*

The team formed the view that teaching staff generally had a good knowledge of the Bologna process and structures but that for many their understanding and application of the concepts of student-centred learning and outcomes-based learning were still relatively weak. One way of strengthening this would be for staff to be encouraged to learn through broader contact with universities in other countries. Although there were a few exceptions, on the whole the team found that these ideas and practices were not yet embedded in teaching and assessment practice so *recommends that teaching staff develop more pedagogic knowledge about student-centred learning and learning outcomes, and apply these in their practice.*

A major strength of the provision at Marmara is that programmes in many areas are taught in languages other than Turkish, including English, German, French and Arabic. One issue brought up by some Master and PhD students was that they would prefer to be permitted to write their dissertations in English. However, this option was not always available and it was acknowledged that they might need more language support to do this successfully.

The team was informed that a unit had been established to develop programmes for supporting all students and staff in their skills in writing, speaking and conducting projects in English. The team affirms these developments and *recommends that the university sustain and further develop its teaching in a range of languages, providing support for academic writing skills in English where necessary for both students and staff. This should continue to be offered, as now, at low cost to students.*

Some students also expressed concern about communication, for example, about class changes or cancellations, which some felt to be too frequent.

The team were impressed by the commitment of many staff members teaching professional and industry-related programmes and who maintained close connections to current work practice in their areas; although this could increase their workload, it also created considerable benefits and practical opportunities for students. A preference for more practical learning earlier in their courses was expressed by some students. Whilst the team thought that professional and industry-related courses should consider including more practical learning nearer the start where possible, it was also important for students to be reminded of the fundamental importance of theory in a university education.

An overwhelming response from the students showed that they were of the firm opinion they were receiving a very good education, and were confident regarding the knowledge and skills they were gaining. Most compared their experience very favourably to that of students in other institutions.

## **4. Research**

Academic staff was generally encouraged to carry out research but the team heard that currently the responsibility and drive for this rested largely with the individual. The team noted that there was no evidence about research reports in the SER and that in the university's SWOT analysis, publications and citations were listed as a weakness. The team were informed that currently many of the citations and much of the published research for the university were produced by a small proportion of faculties, and found that engagement in and emphasis on research was unevenly distributed between faculties.

As has been previously noted, the team were told by staff in some faculties that they were required to teach more hours than colleagues in other faculties, which reduced their time and capacity for research. The team learned that faculty members also often teach additional hours in other institutions, and that this could make it difficult to cope with the research requirement for promotion from associate professor to full professor. Assistant professors are assessed on their publications every two years to establish whether their output meet the criteria for promotion, and are then considered by a panel including externals. Without publications they could not be promoted, so would remain in their current position. In some faculties, staff who focused on teaching and learning did not have the ambition to conduct research, which they thought brought scant rewards; they viewed Marmara primarily as a teaching institution, not as a research university.

Academic representatives agreed that it was demanding to be a full professor, teaching both undergraduates and postgraduates and carrying out research as well as publishing in high level journals. This was particularly the case where there were high intakes of student numbers. Some staff reported that it was not easy to build up a research team or to integrate in an interdisciplinary way with colleagues and share ideas from other departments or subjects. Some also alluded to the particular challenges of combining teaching, clinical practice and research.

The team heard that when recruiting new staff, attention is paid to whether the applicant is ambitious and has research studies in the relevant field. For a research assistant, good language ability is also sought. Although there is some staff recruitment from other universities, Marmara often prefers to appoint from their own students. The team found that PhD and Master students contribute to the development of the university's research capacity.

Those undergraduate students who had research opportunities within their curriculum, for example an annual conference, valued these as highly advantageous for their CVs. Those who were encouraged to undertake independent research, supported by very good relationships with their professors, thought this opportunity to be a particular strength of Marmara University.

Research institutes at Marmara are related to the faculties but are separate entities, with their own budgets. Mostly faculty members teach in the institutes, but some also have full-time staff. To the team, these units appeared to operate more as graduate schools responsible for the administration of postgraduate programmes than as research centres. Some financial support for research is available to individuals through the Scientific Research Project Unit (BAPKO), for which the application procedure is simple and transparent. The new executive administration of the university has also already introduced further types of project funds to encourage faculty members to pursue research, including rewards for staff who source their project funding from outside the university. Overall, though, the team also formed the view that currently there are too few incentives for staff to do research and a lack of structures to promote research. However, the team were informed by the university's senior management of plans to increase the funds for research and particularly the budget for international scientific collaboration. The new leadership team was planning to promote organisational growth and income in order to increase research capabilities in all faculties.

In this context, the team would encourage a discussion in the university about the role of institutes in the university. The team would also encourage a move away from an individualistic approach towards a more department or faculty based approach, to better support those staff who are already successful and also those aspiring to do more research. The team therefore *recommends that the university develop a research policy and appropriate supporting structures for research.*

## 5. Service to society

In discussion with a group of employers and stakeholders, the team was given a number of good examples of the university's responsiveness to industry, including the development of its pharmacy programme, collaboration over innovations in technology and medicine, and projects in defence and construction. Efforts were made to involve students in these activities. Employers reported to the team that students from Marmara demonstrated strong ambition and adapted very quickly to new environments.

The team was told that the technology development unit worked to support small and medium-sized businesses, financially and through providing incubation units, and created opportunities to put theory into practice, thus supporting the commercialisation of scientific research. Income-generating consultancy activity was provided by faculties, and accreditation with professional bodies was sought wherever appropriate.

Some faculties appeared to be more fully engaged with public activity than others. In clinical areas, professors also gave lectures and students had practical classes and training opportunities in the university hospital. The team found that some faculties provided very good preparation of their graduates for employment, but also learned from discussions with some students that others had a weaker relationship with the labour market. Students were greatly in favour of internships where these were available through their faculties' workplace links.

From their discussions, the team *invites the university to consider the potential benefits of establishing faculty-based units advising on research and knowledge transfer to the public and to industry.*

The Continuing Education Centre provides courses for the public and mostly uses specialist lecturers. The team were also informed that the distance learning department was working with the board for disabled people to enable more disabled students to study. A collaborative project on design for disabled people had been undertaken, and the university was starting to look at how to make buildings more accessible for disabled students. It was felt that these initiatives also helped to shape students' positive attitudes towards disabled people in society. The team was subsequently informed that each faculty had a unit specifically designed to support disabled students to engage in the university community.

The team *recommends that the university increase the visibility of its contacts with the community and further extend opportunities for delivering benefits to the community.*

## **6. Quality culture**

Through meetings with senior management representatives and through the SER, the team was advised that responsibility for quality remained at both university and faculty levels. The main senior responsibility for quality in education lay with the three vice-rectors. Centrally, there was a strategy development board, a quality coordination unit and a Bologna coordination unit.

A quality culture had started to be applied in the university using the Total Quality Management (TQM) approach. The university had been awarded four stars under the European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM) process and the EFQM format and criteria were now used for reports to government. The TQM/EFQM approach was reported to fit best with the administrative services. In terms of academic activities, the Diploma Supplement and ECTS Labels had been achieved. Some faculties were very willing to apply to accreditation boards and had successfully achieved national professional body recognition; where relevant, some faculties were also keen to seek wider international accreditation.

The university recognised that, notwithstanding these quality process successes, there was still room for improvement in some faculties. The general opinion expressed to the team on several occasions was that whilst newer assistant professors tended to accept European trends and the Bologna Process, ownership varied between faculties. Some more established staff were reported to be more resistant to student-based approaches to learning and teaching. The approach taken by their deans was to try to engage and influence them through discussion. The team found, however, that in some faculties academic staff expressed little awareness of university level quality assurance structures or the TQM approach.

It was reported to the team that general ownership of the culture of quality assurance was sought by consultation throughout the university, although not all staff with whom the team spoke were aware of this. Senior managers explained to the team that when the Minister of Education changed, the university was able to change its strategic plan, so a survey had been undertaken of all faculty members. However, some policies were directed by the Council of HE in Ankara and could not be changed. The team was informed that the university was still working on the issue of academic evaluation of the faculties, and that there was some speculation that the government might provide mandatory regulation on faculty reviews.

It appeared to the team, however, that the institution was not yet making maximum use of its own internal extensive information and data that it was required to collect and submit to the Council for HE in Ankara. The collection of data seemed to be undertaken as a compliance exercise and regarded more as a constraint than as a source of evidence to enable self-reflection and analysis for the purposes of planning and enhancement. The team could not find any systemic internal focus on monitoring student performance outcomes, for example,

or evidence of how data is routinely interpreted, understood or used at local faculty or departmental level. The team therefore *recommends that the university develop its use of information and data on performance in order to strengthen its own internal approaches to evaluation, planning and enhancement.*

At faculty level, the faculty board, including professors, assistant professors and also student representatives, considered every course addition or programme change. It was their responsibility to examine the details before forwarding them to the curriculum committee, and then to senate.

The team heard that every class had one elected student representative; these all then elected one department representative, who together then elected a faculty representative; these jointly then elected a university level representative. Examples given of action taken as a result of student complaints included the setting up of an automatic Wi-Fi connection to tablets, and the extension of library opening hours. Another example was given of how the curriculum of a specialisation had been changed to include more practical work after students had complained to the vice-dean that it was too theoretical. Other examples identified instances where complaints had been addressed, but only for the following year's students.

However, the team was advised by students that their representatives were spokespersons rather than decision-makers, and that they would like to have more information on how to influence changes in relation to the quality of teaching.

The team learned that badly-performing teachers could not be dismissed by the university as they were government employees. This was thought by some staff to be "unfortunate", and it was the responsibility of the department head or dean to manage the situation. Two deans confirmed that should student surveys or complaints indicate poor teaching, they would approach the teacher confidentially to discuss and offer support, but that this was a sensitive issue. Student representatives could consult the dean individually and the team noted that good practice was also to meet with them regularly every month. A complaint might also be discussed with the class. If the problem was not serious, it would be dealt with within the unit, but more fundamental problems would be reported to a more senior level.

The team was informed by staff of an unfortunate instance which illustrated the constraints under which the university operates in terms of managing the performance of its academic staff. Regarding this particular case, the team were also able to verify from public news sources that the university had attempted to deal honestly and ethically with a professor found to have plagiarised the work of an academic from another institution. Although the university had reported the offence to the Council of HE in Ankara, and sought removal of the individual's academic titles and termination of his employment due to the infringement of research ethics, the Council of HE in Ankara had declined to act on the grounds that the case had not been reported and processed within a prescribed timescale.

Notwithstanding this outcome, the team highly commends the university for responding to this situation robustly and in accordance with academic integrity.



Unlike high school teaching, where a professional qualification was required, a university teacher is usually only required to hold a PhD. Two of the faculties saw it as important to develop training programmes for teaching their subjects; the team heard that one organised a general introductory short course for new staff but that another had found it difficult to recruit a good teacher for their proposed programme. There was speculation that the government might introduce criteria for teaching performance.

The team learned from both staff and students that open dialogue enabled direct informal feedback from students to teachers. From discussions with different faculties, the team formed the view that use of formal student surveys giving feedback on teaching was very variable and that the results could be inconsistent. Some faculties used standard systems, such as student questionnaires, but the use of these was not universally required by the institution. The team heard that on some courses students were expected to complete feedback surveys online before being permitted to see their grades. It was suggested by some staff that students responded to survey questions online with less thought and consideration than when they completed paper-based questionnaires, and that the latter therefore provided a more reliable source of feedback.

Good practice on feedback systems was shared on a faculty or department basis but not across the university. Further consideration was being given as to how to improve the system for students to give feedback, which the team advises should focus on students' academic experience of the quality of teaching and learning resources, with a view to driving improvement and enhancement. The team recognises the limitations of imposing a standard universal system and would encourage academic staff to engage in discussion to develop shared understandings at local level, whilst considering examples of good practice elsewhere in the university.

The team therefore *recommends that the university assist all faculties and departments to develop effective systems for collecting feedback from students and for acting on these at local level.*

## 7. Internationalisation

The university has stated its ambition to become an outstanding international university in the SER, and this was reinforced by the senior management. The university's engagement with EFQM, and gaining the Diploma Supplement and ECTS labels, underlined its commitment to extending its international horizons. Important steps had also been taken towards this by teaching in a total of five different languages, which requires relevant faculty staff to be fully competent in those languages respectively. The university's student population included almost 3000 international students from over 115 countries.

The team identified a strong awareness among students and staff of the need for greater internationalisation. Staff have opportunities to attend and present papers at conferences abroad but would like these to be more readily accessible. Employers and stakeholders also suggested that exchange programmes for talented researchers with overseas universities would help to strengthen internationalisation.

Several students commented emphatically to the team that more lectures should be delivered in English and that there should be more opportunities to use English actively, beyond mere translation of terminology and literature. They expressed their recognition of this as important for their future careers. Where programmes were taught in English, students acknowledged that although difficult this was highly beneficial, particularly in subjects where most publications were in English.

There were a total of almost 1000 Erasmus students, 475 incoming and 525 outgoing, and the university was involved in the Mevlana exchange programme. There were also some non-bilateral arrangements for sending students on placements, as the opportunity for students to study abroad was thought to be advantageous. The team found the international office to be strongly committed to providing high standards of care for incoming students and support for those students leaving to study abroad. Students generally informed the team that they would like more agreements and opportunities for international exchange programmes and that Erasmus exchanges were in high demand but that funding was limited. The team therefore would encourage the university to find more opportunities wherever possible to increase internationalisation and diversity of opportunities and perspectives, in the interests of its students and wider society.

The team *highly commends the university for its active commitment to increased internationalisation and recommends that it continue to develop these opportunities.*

## **8. Conclusion**

The team found that the students they met at Marmara University highly valued the quality of their educational experience and the reputation of their institution. This is a large and still fast-growing university, where the diversity of academic provision and student population, together with the commitment of its staff, provide a strong basis for continued development and increasing success. In the view of the team, the university is well-placed to engage proactively with the future and to gain further confidence in its own capabilities and maturity. In doing so, the university is advised to develop further structures and mechanisms to promote enhancement in all areas and to consolidate its sense of responsibility and accountability to itself and to its students.

### **Summary of the recommendations**

#### **Governance and institutional decision-making**

The team

- encourages the rector to discuss with the Council of HE in Ankara and with other rectors of state universities the possible scope for less micro-management from the Council in Ankara;
- recommends that the university discuss and simplify the format of the strategic plan in order to drive forward the future development of the university;
- recommends the rector to create not only goals for the future but also a vision for the everyday work of the university, including opportunities for planning priorities and incentives for day-to-day activities at different levels of the university;
- encourages the senior management to continue to consider ways in which the complexity of the university's regulatory processes might be decreased;
- recommends that the university should consider more coherent approaches and models to increase student engagement and influence in decision-making;
- strongly commends the rector's commitment to delegate more decision-making power to faculties and departments and recommends improved simplicity, transparency and accountability of budget allocation.

#### **Teaching and learning**

The team recommends that

- further alumni links be developed at faculty and departmental levels;
- a learning and teaching unit be established, either at university or possibly faculty level, to support the pedagogic development of academic staff and to share existing good practice;

- teaching staff develop more pedagogic knowledge about student-centred learning and learning outcomes, and apply these in their practice;
- the university sustain and further develop its teaching in a range of languages, and provide support for academic writing skills in English where necessary for both students and staff.

### **Research**

The team recommends that

- the university develop a research policy and appropriate supporting structures for research.

### **Service to society**

The team

- invites the university to consider the potential benefits of establishing faculty-based units advising on research and knowledge transfer to the public and industry;
- recommends that the university increase the visibility of its contacts with the community and further extend opportunities for delivering benefits to the community.

### **Quality culture**

The team recommends that

- the university develop its use of information and data on performance in order to strengthen its own internal approaches to evaluation, planning and enhancement;
- the university assist all faculties and departments to develop effective systems for collecting feedback from students and for acting on these at local level.

### **Internationalisation**

The team

- highly commends the university for its active commitment to increased internationalisation;
- recommends that it continue to develop these opportunities.