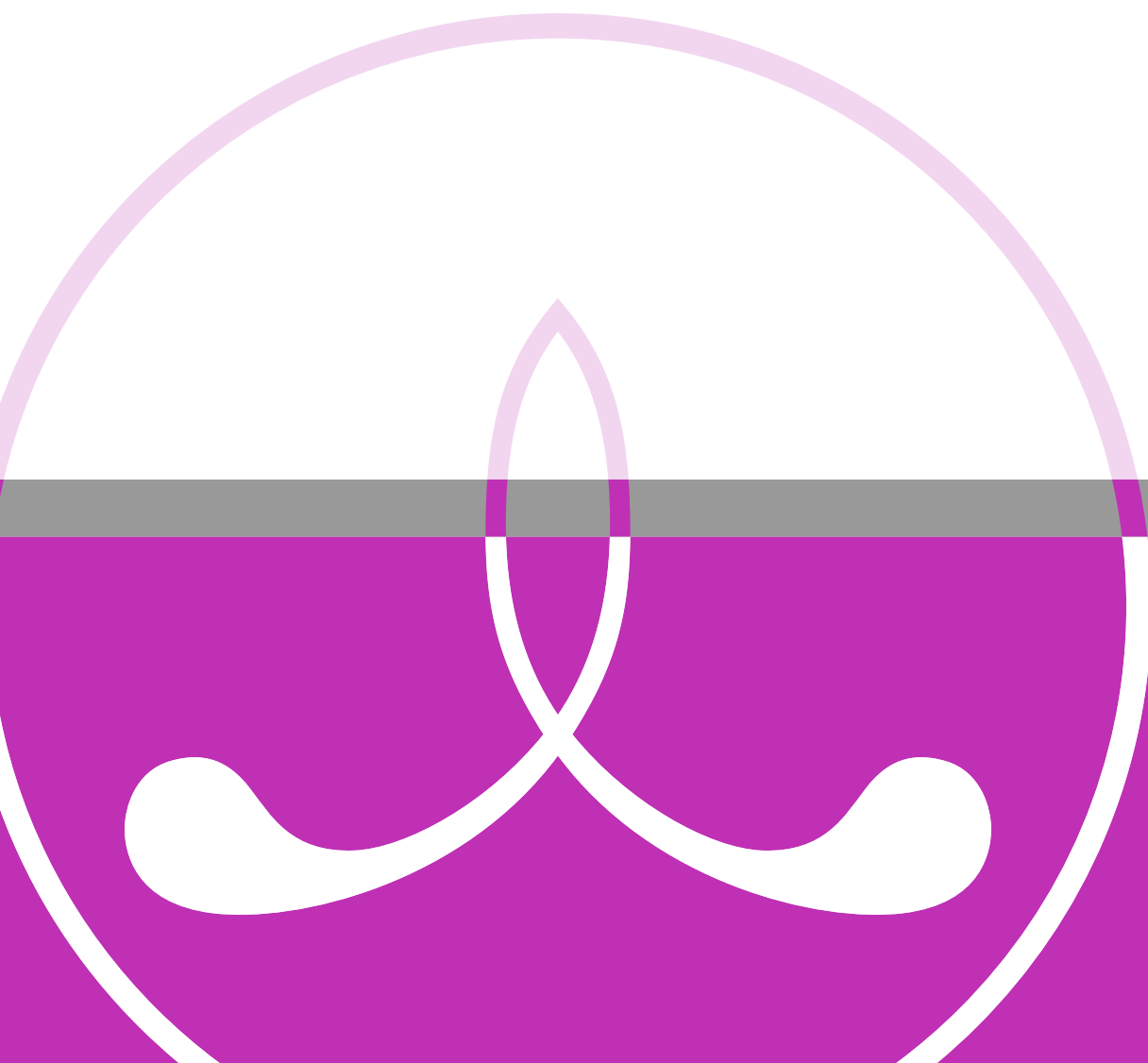

EVALUATION REPORT

EUA/IEP

Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra





EUA (European University Association)

Institutional Evaluation Programme

**ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE ENFERMAGEM DE COIMBRA
PORTUGAL**

IEP EVALUATION REPORT

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FOREWORD

1. THE CONCEPT OF THE EUA INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION PROGRAMME

1.1 THE PHILOSOPHY

Following two successful conferences on the theme of **quality and evaluation**, the Permanent Committee of the then CRE (Conference of European Rectors), which became EUA (European University Association) in 2001, decided in 1993 to offer its then 500 member universities the possibility to be reviewed so that their strengths and weaknesses in the area of quality management might be assessed.

The central mission of the Institutional Evaluation Programme (IEP) of EUA is to strengthen the strategic steering capacity of higher education institutions and to enhance their autonomy and their accountability to the public.

Through this Programme, EUA wishes to offer an external diagnosis provided by experienced university leaders and experts coming from different higher education systems in Europe. This diagnosis should explain the quality nodes and the main actors in the university's daily decision-making processes. It should be a tool for institutional leadership preparing for change. The EUA/IEP does not wish to provide the university with a blueprint for its development; rather the review process is a consultative one or, in Martin Trow's terminology, an "*external supportive review*"¹.

Through an evaluation of higher education institutions in the context of their specific mission and goals, the EUA/IEP actively supports higher education institutions in fulfilling their public mission by providing recommendations on the full range of their activities (research, teaching and learning and service to society) and on their institutional organisation, processes, policies, structures and culture. These supportive recommendations are based on European and international good practices.

By reviewing institutions in different countries, EUA hopes to disseminate examples of good practice, validate common concepts of strategic thinking, and

¹ M. Trow: "Academic Reviews and the Culture of Excellence", Studies of Higher Education and Research, 1994/2.

elaborate shared references of quality that will help member universities to re-orient strategic development while strengthening a quality structure in Europe. The review aims at helping the universities derive the following benefits:

- An increased awareness, across the university, for the need to develop an internal quality culture;
- An increased capacity for setting and implementing strategic goals;
- An effective complement to national quality assurance procedures through the use of peers and an improvement-orientated approach.

1.2 THE METHODOLOGY

The methodological instrument of the Programme focuses on the universities' capacity to change, including their strategic planning and internal quality monitoring, and examines if all the preconditions are assembled to make each and every institution more adaptable and responsive to the changing higher education environment at local, national, European and international level.

More specifically, the EUA institutional evaluation methodology is guided by four central strategic questions:

- What is the institution trying to do (and why)? This (twofold) question refers to the vision, mission and aims of the institution. A clear strategy is important in order to decide on priorities, strategic objectives and the means to reach these objectives;
- How is the institution trying to do it? The evaluation investigates the way in which the institution attempts to fulfil this mission in terms of organisation, governing structures and processes;
- How does the institution know it works? This question points at the necessity to have sound quality arrangements in place. The evaluation team looks at the institutional policies and practices regarding quality and other relevant processes in terms of actors, structures and procedures;
- How does the institution change in order to improve? This is a key question for EUA's institutional evaluations. It is the institution's capacity for change and improvement that allows it to deal with a fast-changing environment and to respond to evolving needs.

The EUA/IEP is committed to continuous improvement and adheres to good international and European practices, such as the European Standards and

Guidelines (ESG) for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area. Currently, the EUA/IEP undergoes an external evaluation which has been commissioned to the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA). This external evaluation is in accordance with the ESG.

1.3 THE HISTORY

In 1994 the Universities of Göteborg, Porto and Utrecht commissioned the then CRE to develop the methodology for the quality review programme and to test it in their institutions. This **pilot phase** of the International Institutional Quality Review was completed in January 1995. Central to the process is a set of **guidelines** developed by Professor Frans van Vught, then Director of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) at Twente University, and Don Westerheijden, also of CHEPS. In 1995-96 a second **experimental** review round took place with the participation of ten universities located in western, central and Eastern Europe. The experiences of the first two years led to minor adaptations in the programme, and the 1996-97 round was the first one in the **«full-grown» CRE Institutional Evaluation Programme**, with 13 participating universities. The total number of universities that have participated in the Programme so far (academic year 2007-08 included) is **191**, seven of which are located in four Latin American countries and one in South Africa. The remaining **183** universities are distributed among **35** European countries and **24** of them have already undergone follow-up evaluations as well.

2. SYSTEM EVALUATION OF PORTUGUESE HIGHER EDUCATION BY IEP

Over the past few years and in addition to the individual institutional evaluations, EUA/IEP has also begun to conduct “coordinated evaluations” at the national or regional level in which all universities or a sample of institutions are evaluated. Since 2001, the IEP has reviewed all universities in Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Ireland, and Slovakia and a number of institutions in Catalonia, Greece and Portugal. These evaluations are usually funded by a governmental agency. Each institution is first evaluated individually followed by an overall general evaluation. The major goal of the system evaluations is to identify the systemic conditions that would serve to increase the dynamic of change in institutions as well as the conditions that would strengthen the anchoring of their national higher education system in Europe.

In Portugal a system-wide extensive, independent, voluntary and objective review of higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics, public and private,

and their units) is being conducted by the EUA/IEP following international criteria and paying special attention to governance mechanisms, access rules, institutional autonomy, funding, internationalisation and other relevant higher education policies. The Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES) has facilitated institutional evaluations for up to ten Portuguese institutions per year, as determined on a voluntary basis, that wish to gain institutional evaluation experience and to have an international supportive evaluation by EUA/IEP aiming at improving management practices and quality assurance procedures. The review of individual institutions follows EUA/IEP's standard practice for institutional review. It also includes some additional objectives which in simple terms are:

- to identify the overall positive characteristics, development status and opportunities available for improvements;
- to examine governance and management systems with suggestions for improvements;
- to explore institutional capacity for adaptation, development and change;
- to learn how students – including non-traditional students – are recruited, life long learning is facilitated, and the knowledge-base of the Portuguese population is improved;
- to examine student exit routes including types, relevance and utility of available qualifications;
- to make recommendations that foster the institution's rationalisation and diversification.

The EUA/IEP reviews of individual institutions are complemented by two other recent evaluation exercises of higher education in Portugal. Firstly, ENQA reviewed the accreditation and quality assurance practices of Portuguese tertiary education². Secondly, an OECD review of the tertiary education system and policies³ has examined the performance of Portuguese tertiary education by reference to other OECD countries and provided recommendations for its improvement⁴.

The overall exercise is designed to ensure that the tertiary education system in Portugal gains maximum benefit and input from comprehensive evaluations by teams of experienced international experts and that procedures and processes in place can be benchmarked against best international practice. The results from all these complementary exercises are expected to form part of a broader initiative by the Portuguese government.

² ENQA: "Quality Assurance of Higher Education in Portugal", ENQA Occasional Papers, Helsinki, 2006.

³ OECD: "Reviews of National Policies in Education: Tertiary Education in Portugal", Paris, 2007.

⁴ A significant difference should be identified between the system evaluations made by OECD and the coordinated evaluations made by EUA/IEP. While OECD evaluates directly the whole higher education system at the national level, EUA/IEP's evaluation results from the synthesis of the parallel individual institutional evaluations conducted in a restricted period of time and under concrete and visible terms of reference and on a voluntary basis.

3. INSTITUTIONAL EVALUATION OF THE “ESCOLA SUPERIOR DE ENFERMAGEM DE COIMBRA” (ESEnfC)

In November 2007, the President of the “Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra” (ESEnfC), Prof. Maria da Conceição Bento, requested an institutional evaluation by EUA. This evaluation has been undertaken by EUA in the framework of its IEP, as part of the abovementioned system evaluation of Portuguese higher education.

The Steering Committee of the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme appointed, as members of the evaluation team for ESEnfC, the following:

- Winfried Müller, former Rector, University of Klagenfurt, Austria, as chair;
- Mette Karoliussen, associate professor and former Dean, Telemark University College, Norway;
- Sanja Brus, former student, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, nominated by the European Student Union (ESU);
- Dionyssis Kladis, professor, University of the Peloponnese, Greece, former Secretary for Higher Education in Greece, as secretary.

The preliminary visit and the main site visit to ESEnfC took place in June and October 2008 respectively.

INTRODUCTION

4. THE EVALUATION PROCESS

4.1 OUTLINE OF THE TWO VISITS

In keeping with the framework of the EUA/IEP, the institutional evaluation of ESEnfC consisted of several phases. First, the evaluation team received a 20-page **self-evaluation report** (SER) with informative appendices. The SER provides a good illustration of the current situation of the School and its development over the last few years, containing also an equally informative introduction to nursing studies in Portugal. The SER was produced by a self-evaluation team, chaired by the President of ESEnfC Prof. Maria da Conceição Bento, and under the coordination and supervision of Prof. José Carlos Pereira dos Santos who was the liaison person with the EUA/IEP evaluation team. The self-evaluation team coordinated the overall self-evaluation process as well.

Upon receiving the SER, the evaluation team made a **preliminary visit** to ESEnfC on 18-20 June 2008 to get acquainted with the School and to help clarify any issues arising from the SER. The **main visit** of the evaluation team took place on 28-31 October 2008. During the two visits, the evaluation team had the opportunity to discuss the situation of ESEnfC with many of its actors and with the main stakeholders, namely:

- with the leadership of the School, with members of the staff and with students;
- with members of the main central bodies of the School (directing board, administrative board, quality board) and with members of the planning commission in charge of the strategic plan 2009-2013 of the School;
- with members of the pedagogical and the scientific boards of ESEnfC;
- with members of the coordinating commissions of two scientific-pedagogic units of the School, namely those related to the areas "Fundamentals of Nursing" and "Mental and Psychiatric Health Nursing";
- with members of the scientific commission of the Research Unit of ESEnfC and with individual researchers;

- with members of the administrative staff, and especially with persons in charge of quality assurance, internationalisation and research;
- with outside partners, (including representatives of public authorities and other stakeholders).

During the two visits, the evaluation team had also intense and in depth discussions with the President of ESEnfC Prof. Maria da Conceição Bento, as well as with the self-evaluation team and with Prof. José Carlos Pereira dos Santos who was responsible for the efficient organisation of all those meetings and discussions. With regards especially to the organisation of meetings, the evaluation team wants to express its satisfaction for the efficiency of the simultaneous translation during all meetings, which was done in an absolutely professional way.

The evaluation team, therefore, had the opportunity to meet the broad spectrum of actors at ESEnfC. At the same time, the evaluation team had also the opportunity to glean the views of the external partners on the role of the School and their relations with it.

On the last day of the main visit, the chairperson of the evaluation team, Professor Winfried Müller, presented the team's **oral report** to an audience consisting of the President, members of the various bodies of the School, members of the School community in general (teaching and administrative staff, researchers and students), as well as external partners. The oral report constitutes the basis of the present **evaluation report**, which also results from all written information, from interviews with various actors in the School and with external partners and from the evaluation team's observations during the two visits.

4.2 OUTLINE OF THE REVIEW

The evaluation team would like to express its sincere thanks to the President of ESEnfC Prof. Maria da Conceição Bento and to the liaison person Prof. José Carlos Pereira dos Santos, for the efficient preparation and organisation of the two visits which provided the evaluation team with effective working conditions in which to fulfil its duties. The evaluation team is also very grateful for the generous hospitality of ESEnfC. It was indeed a pleasure to work in the friendly atmosphere extended to all the people involved.

During the meetings, the evaluation team had the opportunity to interview many leading members of ESEnfC: professors, researchers, members of the administrative staff and students, as well as outside partners of ESEnfC. They

were all very open and willing and they actively participated in lively discussions with the evaluation team, presenting their views about the quality culture within ESEnfC, the mission and the vision of the School and its dynamics for change and improvement, its current situation (including constraints and opportunities) and its future prospects.

As mentioned already, the self-evaluation process was steered by the self-evaluation team, chaired by the President of ESEnfC Prof. Maria da Conceição Bento, and under the coordination and supervision of the Prof. José Carlos Pereira dos Santos. As written in the SER and as was explained by the self-evaluation team, the preparation of the SER resulted from an extensive, inclusive process which was widely disseminated and publicised within the School. In that sense, it proved to be a good, rewarding exercise for those involved to gain a better self-knowledge and to raise their awareness. Furthermore, the self-evaluation process helped in a general better self knowledge in the School through collecting important data. The SER has included also the main conclusions of the strategic plan 2009-2013 of the School.

The evaluation team appreciated the work done in the SER, which covered almost all issues. This is why, at the end of the first visit, the evaluation team asked for only little additional information related to the questionnaires completed by students and a general outline of the Master's programmes which were submitted to the Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education for approval. ESEnfC provided the requested additional information in the agreed time. The evaluation team considered the SER as a honest and critical analysis of the situation, presenting at the same time the vision and the expectations of the School for the future.

4.3 OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION REPORT

The EUA/IEP is not concerned with the assessment of the quality of teaching and research activities; rather, it is concerned with the assessment and the improvement of the existing mechanisms and processes for strategic management and quality assurance and, in that context, with the assessment and the improvement of the capacity of the HEIs to adapt to the rapidly developing higher education environment in Europe and in the world.

In this context, the evaluation team's task is to scrutinise the mechanisms existing in the reviewed institution for quality assurance and its capacities for strategic change. This evaluation report, therefore, emphasises the current strengths and weaknesses regarding the capacity for change and expresses a number of recommendations that may be taken into account in the future development of

ESEnC. Of course, this evaluation report should be read in conjunction with the SER of ESEnC with the corresponding additional information that was provided to the evaluation team. Furthermore, the comments are based on two intense and rather short visits: one two-day preliminary visit and one three-day main visit. The evaluation team also collected a significant amount of information on the Portuguese higher education system, but it is not possible for the analysis to go into such details. The comments and recommendations, therefore, will be confined mostly to major issues of concern within ESEnC. A summary of recommendations is presented at the end of this report.

5. THE NATIONAL, INSTITUTIONAL AND DISCIPLINARY CONTEXT

5.1 HIGHER EDUCATION IN PORTUGAL

Higher education in Portugal is regulated by Law No. 62/2007 which came into force on 10 September 2007 and which sets out the details of what institutional autonomy will mean for Portuguese HEIs.

In Portugal, higher education is organised into a binary system consisting of university and polytechnic institutions which are either public or private. The two sectors are distinguished by the degree of their vocational and professional orientation. Universities are high-level institutions delivering Bachelor [*licenciado*], Master [*mestre*] and Doctoral [*doutor*] degrees, while Polytechnics are high-level institutions delivering Bachelor [*licenciado*] and Master [*mestre*] degrees. Regarding research, Polytechnics are required to conduct research that is applied in nature and which has a vocational or professional outlook. Universities by contrast also undertake basic research.

Higher polytechnic education in Portugal has been in existence since 1986. According to Article 7 of Law No. 62/2007, the polytechnic education institutions “are high level institutions oriented towards the creation, transmission and dissemination of the professional culture and knowledge, through the articulation of the study, the education, the oriented research and the experimental development”. The polytechnic sector includes the polytechnic institutes (Polytechnics) and polytechnic schools which are not integrated into polytechnic institutes; the latter may either be integrated into a University or remain as independent non-integrated polytechnic schools.

The following Tables 1 and 2, illustrate the basic statistical data regarding higher education in Portugal⁵.

⁵ The data in Tables 1 and 2 have been taken from the National Bologna Report for Portugal for the two-year period 2005-2007, which was submitted to the Bologna Follow-Up Group in December 2006 by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education (General Directorate for Higher Education).

Table 1

Number of higher education institutions in Portugal in 2007-08

| Distinction according to ownership | University education | | Polytechnic education | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| | Universities | University schools non-integrated into Universities | Polytechnic institutes | Polytechnic schools non-integrated into polytechnic schools |
| Public | 14 | 5 | 15 | 15 |
| Private | 14 | 33 | 2 | 54 |
| TOTAL | 28 | 38 | 17 | 69 |

Table 2

Number and percentage of students enrolled in 2005-06

| Types of institutions | Number of students | Percentage of students related to total | Percentage of students related to various groups |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Public higher education | 275.961 | 75,0% | 100,0% |
| University education | 171.575 | 46,6% | 62,2% |
| Polytechnic education | 104.386 | 28,4% | 37,8% |
| Private higher education | 91.973 | 25,0% | 100,0% |
| University education | 61.754 | 16,8% | 67,1% |
| Polytechnic education | 30.219 | 8,2% | 32,9% |
| University education | 233.329 | 63,4% | 100,0% |
| Public | 171.575 | 46,6% | 73,5% |
| Private | 61.754 | 16,8% | 26,5% |
| Polytechnic education | 134.605 | 36,6% | 100,0% |
| Public | 104.386 | 28,4% | 77,5% |
| Private | 30.219 | 8,2% | 22,5% |
| TOTAL | 367.934 | 100,0% | — |

It should be noticed, however, that although the university sector was predominant in 2005-06 with 63,4% of the whole higher education student population, it shows decreasing trends in the period between 1997-98 (71,3%) and 2005-06 (63,4%), while during the same period the polytechnic sector shows increasing trends from 28,7% in 1997-98 to 36,6%⁶.

⁶ Observatory of Science and Higher Education: "Evolution of the number of students enrolled in higher education by district

5.2 NURSING STUDIES IN PORTUGAL⁷

The integration of Nursing studies at higher education level in Portugal occurred in 1988 (Decree-Law 480/1988). At that time there were 25 public Nursing Schools in Portugal, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, offering courses at three education levels corresponding to the qualifications required for admission to the respective levels of Nursing profession. This means that Nursing studies at that time were not considered as being part of the national education system. It should be mentioned here that the teaching career of the teachers in the Nursing Schools was integrated into the Nursing career and included the following categories: Supervising Nurse, Assistant Nurse and Teaching Nurse.

Decree-Law 480/1988 integrated Nursing teaching into the national education system in Portugal at the level of higher polytechnic education and provided that Nursing courses are to be offered exclusively in Nursing Schools. Eleven years later, the Decree-Law 353/1999 reorganised Nursing studies so that they comprise, on the one hand, the initial training in Nursing (lasting 4 years and granting the academic degree of Licentiate) and, on the other hand, specialised training (Post-Licentiate Specialisation Courses in Nursing) which did not award an academic degree. According to the 1999 Decree-Law, the training in the Nursing area at the levels of Master and Doctoral studies was under the responsibility of the university sector of higher education.

Finally, Law 74/2006 reorganised the higher education system in Portugal according to the principles of the Bologna Process, the polytechnic sector being able now to offer courses in both 1st and 2nd cycles of studies, but without being able to offer doctoral studies (3rd cycle). In that new context, Nursing studies are reorganised too, so that they offer 1st cycle studies, which last 4 years, require 240 ECTS credits and grant the Licentiate Degree, and 2nd cycle studies, which last 2 years, require 120 ECTS credits and grant the Master Degree. In practice, the Post-Licentiate Specialisation Courses of the past are now to be transformed into Master Courses.

Since 2001, the Nursing education in Portugal has been exclusively under the responsibility of the Ministry for Science, Technology and Higher Education (MCTES). The organisational status of the existing Nursing Schools (which had already been converted into Higher Education Institutions of Nursing since 1988) and their positioning in the Portuguese higher education system is rather diversified now. In general, Nursing Schools located in cities where there are Polytechnic Institutes have been integrated into these Institutes, while Nursing Schools located in cities where there are no Polytechnic Institutes have kept the independent non-integrated polytechnic school status. Furthermore, the five (5)

and NUTS II, 1997-98 to 2005-06", 2007.

⁷ The information presented in chapter 5.2 derives from the introductory part of the self-evaluation report of ESEnFC (pp. ii-vii).

Nursing Schools located in cities where there are Universities have been integrated into them, keeping however their polytechnic status. And, finally, the four Nursing Schools in Lisbon, the three Nursing Schools in Porto and the two Nursing Schools in Coimbra have been merged respectively, with the new Schools, keeping the status of independent polytechnic institutes non-integrated either to a Polytechnic or to a University. After this organisational restructuring, the three Schools located in Lisbon, Porto and Coimbra are the biggest Nursing Schools in Portugal, with the Nursing School of Coimbra being the biggest among them in terms of student population and number of courses offered.

5.3 NURSING AS A SCIENTIFIC AREA⁸

Nursing is a profession focused on advocacy in the care of individuals, families, and communities in attaining, maintaining, and recovering optimal health and functioning. Modern definitions of Nursing describe it as a science and an art that focuses on promoting quality of life as defined by populations, communities, families, and individuals, throughout their life experiences from birth through to the end of life.

While the practice of Nursing is as old as humanity, the research discipline of Nursing is quite young. The idea that women needed to be trained as nurses is most closely associated with the work and influence of Florence Nightingale (British pioneering nurse, 1820-1910). Her pledge to Nursing was to put the patient in the best possible position for Nature to act upon him. Since then, this thinking has grown to a philosophy of Nursing practice that takes into account total patient care, considering the physical, emotional, social, economic, and spiritual needs of patients, their response to their illnesses, and the effect of illness on patients' abilities to meet self-care needs. New discoveries in health sciences, like brain research and psychoneuroimmunology (PNI), provide knowledge of the relationship between body and mind. PNI provides new knowledge regarding the interrelatedness of the nervous-, endocrine- and immune systems⁹. It tries to explain the means by which the person's perception and experience of the situation affects the nervous system and through molecular influence affect the immune system's response. PNI also gives nursing an understanding of why patient behaviour and emotion, stress and anxiety, can influence immune function. And it provides Nursing researchers with models to propose interventions to reduce psychological stress among patients. Such interventions will positively impact immune function, and they are an essential component of compassionate and holistic care.

⁸ The analysis presented in chapter 5.3 derives to some extent from the introductory part of the self-evaluation report of ESEnfC (pp. vii-xii).

⁹ "Human Psychoneuroimmunology", Vedhara, K. and Irwin, M. (Editors), Oxford University Press, 2005.

Public understanding of Nursing tends to be limited. If the average person is asked what nurses do, the most likely response is to describe Nursing actions rather than the Nursing knowledge base. They rarely realise that nurses assess the patient's condition, make critical decisions, provide life-saving interventions, teach patients and families about caring for themselves, provide comfort and support, and remain with patients during some of the worst and best moments in human existence. Most people with no direct connection to health care are surprised to learn that nurses can earn advanced degrees that prepare them to provide primary care, be leaders in health care agencies, influence the formation of health care policy, and do research that can determine best health care practices.

The SER of ESEnfC presents an interesting and informative related analysis in its introductory part. The evaluation team had, furthermore, the opportunity to hold extensive discussions on these issues with many people of ESEnfC, and, more especially, with the President of the School. What seems to be clear is that Nursing cannot be considered as a supportive and complementary field to Medicine, but it has its own purposes and aims, it has its own identity. This comes as a result of the reconceptualisation of the notion of health and health care and of the focus shift from the simple eradication of the disease to the understanding of health as a complex, multi-causal process, in which, besides biological and socioeconomic factors, individual and collective behaviours emerge as decisive factors in this process. This fact assigns an important function within the scope of the promotion of health and disease prevention to education in health.

The creation of Research Units in Nursing, inside the universities, in several countries, with undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Nursing, has been considered a fundamental political strategy for the development of the knowledge considered relevant for the exercise of Nursing and has expressed itself in a significant improvement of the quality of health care.

Already in 2003 the Portuguese Nursing Council stated that, within the current legal framework of Higher Education, where there are two subsystems – Polytechnic and University –, the natural place for Nursing teaching in the future will be within the university education, since Nursing is nowadays a knowledge discipline in growing consolidation, with its own research, creating, representing and applying the necessary knowledge for the practice of care, an idea which fits into the concept of university education¹⁰.

Also in the Rapport EUR 12040 FR, Mariana Dinis de Sousa states that it is at the university that nurses will find the most favourable conditions for the development of the scientific methodology and research, as well as of an inter-professional learning, based on the triad "education, practice and research", considered a propitious field for the training of nurses and other health technicians¹¹.

¹⁰ Portuguese Nursing Council: "Document of discussion proposed for meeting with teaching staff in Coimbra", September 2003.

¹¹ Pedrosa, J. and Queiró, J.: "Governing the Portuguese University, Mission, Organisation, Functioning and autonomy", Textos de Educação, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 2005.

From the above analysis and from the extensive and in-depth discussions with key-persons of ESEnfC, the evaluation team is convinced of the specific identity of Nursing and its importance as an autonomous scientific discipline with its own research basis, ensuring for and aiming at its improvement. It is for these reasons the evaluation team considers Nursing as an indispensable constituent of university education. Nevertheless, this is something that has to do with the legislative framework of Portuguese higher education, where Nursing is defined now as polytechnic education, even in schools integrated in Universities, and this contradicts the development of this scientific area. But, on the other hand, Nursing Schools have to build the necessary conditions to function as entities of university level and these conditions have to do primarily with their research capacity and with the qualifications of their teaching staff.

5.4 THE PROFILE OF ESEnfC

ESEnfC is a public independent polytechnic school, non-integrated either within a Polytechnic or a University, which has resulted from the merger of two Nursing Schools: Dr. Ângelo da Fonseca, founded in 1881, and Bissaya Barreto, established in 1971. ESEnfC therefore has long history and experience in Portugal. The merger was finalised in August 2006. Today, ESEnfC is the biggest Nursing School in Portugal.

ESEnfC is located in the city of Coimbra and operates on two campuses: Campus A (since 1978) and Campus B (since 1991). Coimbra is a student city which is dominated by the University of Coimbra, the oldest and one of the largest universities in Portugal. Apart from the University of Coimbra and the Escola Superior de Enfermagem de Coimbra, there is one other public polytechnic institute in Coimbra (Instituto Politécnico de Coimbra) and four private HEIs (Instituto Superior Miguel Torga, Instituto Superior Bissaya Barreto, Escola Universitária Vasco da Gama and Escola Universitária des Artes de Coimbra). The population of the municipality of Coimbra exceeds 150.000, while students studying in Coimbra increase this population by almost 35.000 (with 23.000 of them studying at the University of Coimbra).

ESEnfC currently offers courses in the 1st and 2nd cycles of studies. 1st cycle courses lead to the Licentiate Degree in Nursing with 240 ECTS credits, while 2nd cycle courses lead, at present, to the Post-Licentiate Specialisation Degrees in six different areas. However, the 2nd cycle courses are to be adjusted to the Bologna structures, leading to Master Degrees in the same areas with 120 ECTS credits. ESEnfC has already submitted the related proposals to the General Directorate for Higher Education of the Ministry and is expecting its approval. Apart from these courses, ESEnfC offers also several courses of short duration in various Nursing areas in the context of lifelong learning. The courses offered in 1st and 2nd cycle

and the respective numbers of students enrolled in academic year 2007-08 are illustrated in the following Table 3.

Table 3
1st and 2nd cycle courses offered in ESEnfC and number of students enrolled
(academic year 2007-08)

| Cycles of studies | Degrees awarded | Study fields | Number of students |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1st cycle | Licentiate Degree (240 ECTS) | Nursing | 1375 |
| 2nd cycle | Post-Licentiate Specialisation Degrees (to be transformed to Master Degrees with 120 ECTS each) | Rehabilitation Nursing | 40 |
| | | Maternal Health and Obstetric Nursing | 56 |
| | | Medical - Surgical Nursing | 37 |
| | | Community Nursing | 33 |
| | | Child Health and Paediatric Nursing | 60 |
| | | Mental Health and Psychiatric Nursing | 31 |
| Total number of students (2nd cycle) | | | 257 |
| Total number of students (1st and 2nd cycles) | | | 1632 |

With regards to teaching staff, ESEnfC had 115 teachers in 2007-08 (39 coordinating professors, 64 adjunct professors and 12 assistants). In the beginning of 2008, there were 30 teachers with a PhD out of the total of 115, while 44 out of the remaining 85 teachers are now working on their PhDs (22 of them in topics related to Nursing).

The above figures should be considered in connection with the requirements for teaching staff to be fulfilled by polytechnic institutes and polytechnic schools according to the Law:

- One professor with PhD or one specialist degree holder for each 30 students;
- At least 15% of teaching staff have to be PhD holders on a full-time basis;
- At least 35% of teaching staff have to be specialist degree holders who may equally be awarded a PhD.

The time-limit in which these requirements have to be fulfilled is 18 months from the coming into force of the Decree-Law which shall regulate the awarding of the specialist degree. However, this Decree-Law has not been published so far and, therefore, the time has not started to run yet.

The members of the teaching staff of ESEnfC are distributed among Scientific-Pedagogical Units which correspond to the following eight (8) scientific domains:

- Rehabilitation Nursing
- Maternal, Obstetric and Gynaecological Health Nursing
- Child and Adolescent Health Nursing
- Medical - Surgical Nursing
- Public, Family and Community Health Nursing
- Mental and Psychiatric Health Nursing
- Elderly Nursing
- Fundamental Nursing

With the exception of the last two (Elderly Nursing and Fundamental Nursing), the above Units correspond to the disciplines of the six 2nd cycle courses offered by the School.

The School's concern with research is reflected with the existence of the "Health Sciences Research Unit: Nursing Domain" which is integrated into ESEnfC and which is one of the two Research Units in Nursing in Portugal (the other one being the Research Unit in the Nursing School of Lisbon) that have been accredited by the Foundation for Science and Technology, the entity that is responsible for the official recognition of research units in Portugal.

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW

6. INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Before proceeding to an analytical presentation of our findings, we would like to give a general introductory outline of our impressions for ESEnfC. In fact, the School is in its second year since the merger was finalised (August 2006). The evaluation team is impressed by the effectiveness of this transformation, which can be attributed on the one hand to the leadership of ESEnfC and on the other hand to the positive attitude and collaborative environment inside the School. Of course, it is important that the merger was not imposed from above or forced from outside. It was an internal and voluntary decision. The evaluation team had the feeling that the past did not haunt the meetings and discussions held with the whole School. Of course, we are aware that it was not a transformation without problems. But, the prevailing idea was that the merger was a necessity for the common good and the common progress, for multiplying the pre-existing dynamics, for strengthening the position of Nursing in the national higher education environment by joining forces and by creating the critical mass that was required in order to achieve higher goals. And these higher goals derive from the vision of the School to be *"a national and international reference in the development and affirmation of the Nursing discipline"*¹².

Furthermore, the evaluation team considers ESEnfC to be a Higher Education Institution that looks forward, that looks towards the future, but with a very long history and tradition sustaining it. This is clearly reflected in the School's need to build a strategy for the future and its need to establish a quality culture for the present (and for the future). As we will have the opportunity to analyse later, these are the two prerequisites for a Higher Education Institution to build and steadily improve its capacity for change in a continuously changing world.

The evaluation team was further impressed by the strong commitment of all persons inside ESEnfC, from its leadership to its staff (teaching, research, administrative) and to its students. Perhaps, this is the most substantial strength of the School, which acts as a motive force in most cases. At the same time, this commitment helps considerably in overcoming difficulties and solving problems.

¹² Statutes of ESEnfC, Article 4.

In parallel, it should be stressed that this commitment is extended also to the outside world, i.e. to the region, to society at large. And, in return, ESEnfC enjoys a high reputation in the area as a result of the positive image that it has built.

Furthermore, another issue that the evaluation team wants to stress in this introductory chapter with its general impressions is the one related to the effective and efficient governance of the School. The overall impression is that ESEnfC is a highly professionalised and well organised institution. We had many opportunities to see this during our two visits, but also from our overall cooperation with the institution. Among the various examples, we would only like to mention here the excellent documentation that substantially helped our work in ESEnfC.

To conclude the general impressions, the evaluation team believes that the major issue today for ESEnfC is the need to clarify its identity, to define its positioning at the university level. Even if there are constraints resulting from the existing legislative framework in Portugal, the School has to orient its strategy in that direction. This strategy requires parallel movements of course. For example, it requires a substantial shift of ESEnfC from its present status as a simple teaching institution to a teaching institution with and through research. It also requires reconsidering the internal balance between teaching and research with regards to the workload of teaching staff. Taking initiatives in that direction, means that ESEnfC becomes proactive with regards to strategy and that it works to influence legislation in the same direction.

In the following chapters of the present section of the evaluation report, the main findings of the review will be presented and analysed. This analysis will be restricted only to issues for which the evaluation team makes concrete recommendations. The general issues concerning strategic planning and management, quality culture and capacity for change will be analysed later, in a separate section of the evaluation report (chapters 13, 14 and 15).

7. POSITIONING ESEnfC IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION AREA

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the key issue today for ESEnfC is to clarify its positioning inside the university sector. This is an issue resulting clearly from the analysis made in chapter 5.3 above, but there are too many parallel problems to be solved and many requirements to be fulfilled. The evaluation team understands that we have to deal with two different dimensions; the first dimension has to do with epistemological issues, i.e. with the concept of Nursing as an autonomous scientific area, while the second dimension has to do with organisational or structural issues. We consider the first dimension as being clear enough, at least as it derives from

the preceding analysis in chapter 5.3 of the evaluation report. Therefore, we will elaborate more extensively on the second dimension.

According to Portuguese law, Nursing studies are to be offered at the polytechnic sector of higher education. And, as mentioned earlier, there are three different structures for polytechnic studies in Portugal: a) Polytechnic Schools or Faculties integrated into Polytechnics, b) Polytechnic Schools or Faculties integrated into Universities (but as polytechnic educational entities), and c) independent Polytechnic Schools or Faculties which are not integrated either into a University or into a Polytechnic. ESEnfC is an independent polytechnic. For the evaluation team, it is clear that none of these cases can satisfy the need for upgrading Nursing at university level. Even the case of a potential integration of the School into a University could not be the proper answer. Therefore, the evaluation team fully agrees with the leadership of ESEnfC that the goal for the future should be the integration of the School into a University, but as a university Faculty. Since the existing legislation in Portugal does not allow for such a transformation, ESEnfC has to remain and make its steps forward as an independent institution preparing the ground and all requirements for the next big step which will be to join a university as a university Faculty.

The evaluation team believes that there are strong arguments for upgrading Nursing to university level. The strongest argument has to do, of course, with the concept of Nursing as an autonomous scientific area. If this is true, then this area has to grow and improve autonomously. But autonomous improvement means research, and more especially basic research which may or may not be related to clinical work. Autonomous improvement means to have the right (and of course the ability) to reproduce your scientific potential through the doctoral cycle. These all refer to the university level of higher education. And this is what distinguishes a University from a Polytechnic.

However, upgrading is not only an issue of legislation. It is also an issue of self-capacity. This is where ESEnfC has to focus now. It has to build its capacity in order to be ready for the change. It has to fulfil all necessary requirements in order to convince it has the capacity. For example, it has to fulfil the requirements of the legislation regarding the qualifications of teaching staff for Polytechnics. But this is not enough; it should illustrate that it can build the dynamics to go further. It has to make good use of the arguments. It has to prepare the ground, enhancing, for example, its partnerships with universities.

But, on the other hand, it seems that there are problems to be solved. ESEnfC has to convince the Ministry; it has also to convince the academic community; it needs a strategic alliance with the community of Medicine; it has to convince the Polytechnics community; it has to convince the professional organisation of nurses in Portugal. And we wonder whether it has to convince the other Nursing

Schools in Portugal. This is a huge task, it requires great effort and it has to be integrated into the strategic plan of the School.

The evaluation team is aware that there is a diversity of approaches regarding Nursing higher education studies within Europe. We can find the model of Nursing studies either at polytechnic level, like in Portugal, or at university level. At the same time, there are countries where Nursing studies are at both levels. Following the previous analysis, the evaluation team believes in upgrading Nursing studies to the university level. However, if there are indeed any clear arguments for the parallel existence of Nursing studies at polytechnic level as well, this may come as a response to real needs at the level of health services. However, the evaluation team believes that Nursing, as an autonomous scientific field, needs research in order to improve continuously; this research cannot be done anywhere other than at the university level and this research cannot be done other than by those who are engaged in Nursing.

Bearing this in mind, the evaluation team makes its very first recommendation No. 1 as follows:

Re 1: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC should establish a clear strategy aiming at its integration into the university sector of Portuguese higher education as a university Faculty. This strategy should contain all the necessary steps in order to prepare the ground, to build proper argumentation, to fulfil all legal and/or substantial requirements, to convince all sectors that have to be convinced both for the necessity of the transformation and for the capacity and the readiness of the School to meet the challenges of the new reality.

8. ISSUES CONCERNING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The major strategic goal, as analysed in the previous chapter, requires concrete steps in the direction of improving and upgrading the research capacity and the qualifications of the human potential of the School. The present evaluation report will deal with these issues later. In fact, these are the key requirements for upgrading the role of the School. However, the evaluation team believes that any strategy, irrespective of the appropriateness of its goals, may prove to be empty words if it is not steered by and if it is not based on strong and effective governance. This is why this chapter is put in the beginning of our analysis.

Governance in ESEnfC has two characteristics, which at first sight may be considered as contradictory. On the one hand we have a strong, effective and efficient

governance, despite the rather complicated and “heavy” system of governance bodies in Portuguese higher education, and on the other hand we have close and good non-formal relationships inside the School, an impressively positive climate guiding the internal relationships. The evaluation team understands that ESEnfC has achieved a remarkable internal balance in its daily operation between governing bodies and individual members of the School community at all levels. This has undoubtedly to be credited to the leadership of the School.

This internal balance and these close and good relationships inside the School make governance effective and efficient even under these complicated structures. We could also add that the presence of the President of the School in most of the governance bodies is actually a guarantee for the continuity of governance.

Financial management is a very good example of effective and efficient management in the School. The evaluation team was surprised to hear that the School does not face serious financial problems, that they enjoy autonomy and flexibility with respect to resources, they have a continuous concern for investments and renovations, resulting to well-kept premises, facilities and equipment.

However, the evaluation team believes that, even in the context of such successful governance, there is room for improvement. This improvement has to be sought in the direction of awareness, inclusiveness, collectiveness and engagement. In a period in which the School has on the one hand to achieve difficult goals and on the other hand to face new challenges, effective and efficient governance alone is not enough. The School needs all its human potential, staff and students. A first step in that direction is awareness. And this requires good information channels, on both top-down and bottom-up bases. A first task, therefore, for the School’s governance is to improve effective internal communication. And, in that context, the evaluation team welcomes the introduction of a student ombudsman as the new management body, with the task of facilitating communication between students and the institution.

The second observation has to do with the students’ active involvement in the School’s affairs. On the one hand for the reasons described earlier and, on the other hand, in order to apply the basic principles of Bologna regarding students’ involvement: “*Students are full partners in higher education governance. Ministers note that national legal measures for ensuring student participation are largely in place throughout the European Higher Education Area. They also call on institutions and student organisations to identify ways of increasing actual student involvement in higher education governance*”¹³. The above mentioned positive climate in the School should not dismiss the role of students. And we should always keep in mind that real (active) involvement of students is, among others, a necessity in order to refresh spirits and ideas.

¹³ Berlin Communiqué, 2003.

Considering the above analysis, the evaluation team makes the following two recommendations No. 2 and 3:

Re 2: The evaluation team recommends that the School's governance establish structures and procedures of effective internal communication, both vertically (on both top-down and bottom-up bases) and horizontally (between the two campuses), in order to improve awareness among all members of the School community. This task applies also to the student organisation and the students' representatives in order to achieve good communication with all students.

Re 3: The evaluation team recommends that the School's governance further support active and equal student involvement in all governance bodies at all levels in accordance with the basic Bologna principles.

9. ISSUES CONCERNING RESEARCH

As mentioned already, improving its research capacity is a fundamental condition for ESEnC to upgrade its status to university level. One component of this improvement is linked to the need for improving the qualifications of teaching staff, but this component will be discussed in the following paragraph of the evaluation report. Here, we approach research as a necessity for qualitative improvement of the School as a whole and for improvement and innovation in the area of Nursing.

Research activities in ESEnC are carried out primarily through the Health Sciences Research Unit: Nursing Domain (UICiSa-dE) which operates in the context of ESEnC, although being independent of it¹⁴. There are currently 112 researchers working in the Research Unit, among which 28 are PhD holders. In fact, the Research Unit acts at the same time as a school for research training for junior researchers. The Research Unit shows a significant activity resulting in solid progress during the last years. It has undergone two external evaluations so far (2004 and 2008) by international panels and it is one of the two Research Units in Nursing in Portugal that have been accredited by the Foundation for Science and Technology, the entity that is responsible for the official recognition of research units in Portugal. It has also to be mentioned that, following the international

¹⁴ The official expression used for the relationship between the School and the Research Unit is that the School hosts the Research Unit.

evaluation of 2008, the Research Unit has recently received from the Foundation for Science and Technology the classification of "Good" and is the first Research Unit in the Nursing area to deserve this classification.

Undoubtedly, doing research in Nursing is a complex activity which demands a general plan that gives room for this type of activity. This is not necessarily an easy task; firstly, because Nursing studies are delivered at polytechnic level in Portugal, where research is not the primary task nor it is restricted to its applied nature, and secondly, because research in Nursing has not yet built its own autonomous identity and profile to compare it with and distinguish from research in other health disciplines. Therefore, Nursing as a science is still not sufficiently recognised by society. The evaluation team could identify these difficulties during its meetings in the Research Unit, where "research" was used interchangeably either for "real" research projects or for clinical intervention projects. Furthermore, the evaluation team realises the importance of the Research Unit for the improvement of the research capacity of the School as a whole. However, it seems that there is not enough relevance of the research projects with the needs of the School or even with the needs of Nursing. This means that efforts should be made in order for a cohesive research environment to be built between the Research Unit and the School.

The last point to be mentioned in this chapter is the one related to research ethics. Research on Nursing deals with human beings. Therefore, research ethics is an essential parallel component for research. The evaluation team is aware that all hospitals have ethical commissions to validate all research proposals or proposals for clinical interventions for their ethical component. However, there is no ethical commission at national or regional level, apart from the one at institutional level at the University of Coimbra. For the evaluation team, visibility of research is also a necessary requirement for ensuring research ethics.

Following the above analysis and complementing it, the evaluation team makes the following four recommendations No. 4-7:

Re 4: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC strengthen the research component of its activities and move from a teaching institution to a teaching institution with (and through) research. To that end, full advantage should be taken of the Research Unit, with the aim of building a cohesive research environment throughout the whole School thus ensuring the research projects are relevant to the needs of the School or the needs of Nursing. Research should be conducted in two directions: to bring added value to the School, contributing to the production of new knowledge for the scientific area of Nursing and to contribute to solving problems related to the profession. Furthermore, the dissemination of research results within the community should be ensured as well.

Re 5: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC strengthen the focus and the sustainability of research. To that end, it has to set priorities and concentrate resources (both financial and human) to obtain critical masses in specific research areas. But, at the same time, it has to link research conducted at various levels and with different characteristics (from big research projects to clinical intervention projects, even to student projects) and to facilitate communication and mobility among researchers. Furthermore, everybody involved in research (from teaching staff and researchers to students) should be much better supported, with their work formally recognised and appropriately valued.

Re 6: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC integrate research into the international scientific community. To that end, it should encourage and ensure scientific publications in international journals, but, at the same time, it should upgrade the already existing Bulletin with publications in English. Furthermore, it should encourage participation of researchers in international conferences but also enhance research with international partners.

Re 7: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC consider the need to ensure the ethical dimension of research, since research in Nursing deals with human beings. To that end, ESEnfC should, on the one hand, foster the visibility of research and, on the other hand, take initiatives in order to establish an ethical commission for research at regional level, integrating the existing structures at the University of Coimbra and at the various hospitals.

10. ISSUES CONCERNING HUMAN RESOURCES

As mentioned already, the evaluation team was impressed by the commitment of teaching staff in ESEnfC. This commitment refers both to their teaching and clinical training tasks and to their involvement in the general affairs of the School. This commitment also refers to the need to improve their scientific capacity, to upgrade their qualifications, not only in response to the requirements set by Portuguese law, but also for the personal development of each individual and with the collective improvement of the School. But, in one of our meetings, we heard also that "*they do research because they like to search for the truth*". And this is

indeed a brave stand from people who are in fact overloaded with teaching and training tasks in the School.

However, we start our analysis from the requirements set by legislation. We are not going to touch upon the quantitative dimension of these requirements. However, the need for improving the qualifications of teaching staff is clear. We will repeat some figures and will try to consider the realism of the goals. In 2007-08, ESEnfC had 115 teachers. There are 30 teachers with a PhD and another 44 working on their PhDs (22 of them in topics related to Nursing) in various Universities in Portugal and abroad (Spain is a common destination). At the same time, there are 112 researchers working in the Research Unit, among which 28 are PhD holders. Of course, the research conducted in the Research Unit cannot lead to PhDs, since Polytechnics cannot provide PhDs. And, as we saw earlier, there is already a problem regarding the relevance of the research conducted in the Research Unit with the real needs of the School and this may well be reflected in the PhDs carried out in the various Universities.

According to this analysis, the School should establish a policy for improving the qualifications of its teaching staff. This policy should comprise two elements. The first relates to the steering of PhDs carried out by the teaching staff and overseeing their content in order to meet the real needs of the School and to bring real added value to it. The establishment of partnerships with Universities for the PhDs carried out by the teaching staff of the School can offer a model for such steering. The second element relates to motivating, encouraging, facilitating teaching staff to upgrade their qualifications by preparing for a PhD. But this should be a systematic, effective and well steered procedure. We are aware of the overload of teaching staff regarding their ordinary tasks (primarily teaching and clinical training) in the School. And we are also aware that this overall load cannot be reduced because it is connected with international regulations affecting Nursing studies (coming from European Union and/or World Health Organisation). However, the teaching staff needs not only to be motivated and encouraged to carry out a PhD, this must also be made easy to do.

For example, only half of the teaching staff without a PhD are now working on their PhDs (44 out of 85). However, this appears to be random occurrence rising out of the staff's own desires and capabilities. This same ratio could have obtained as the result of a policy setting the goals for the whole School regarding the production of the PhDs. This policy should introduce the desirable rates for PhDs (number of PhDs per year) and should create priority lists and set time-limits (considering availability, preferences and readiness of the teaching staff) and, finally, it should include the appropriate measures to help the PhD candidates (sabbaticals, reducing workload etc.)

The last comment of the evaluation team in this chapter regards the issue of recruiting future teaching staff, which is equally important when we deal with

human resources. ESEnfC needs a concrete policy in this area too, especially in the light of extremely high workload the teaching staff has at the moment.

Considering the above analysis, the evaluation team makes the following two recommendations No. 8 and 9:

Re 8: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC establish a policy for improving the qualifications of its teaching staff. This policy should comprise two elements. The first element is related to steering the PhDs carried out by the teaching staff and overseeing their content in order to meet the real needs of the School and to bring real added value to it. The establishment of partnerships with Universities for the PhDs carried out by the teaching staff of the School can offer a model for such steering. The second element has to do with motivating, encouraging, facilitating teaching staff to upgrade their qualifications by conducting a PhD. But this should be a systematic, effective and well steered procedure. For that purpose, ESEnfC should introduce sabbaticals, provide opportunities and financial support for teaching staff to participate in national and international conferences, research collaborations and advanced training courses, should provide "seed money" for research in order to assimilate new researchers starting their PhDs, and, finally, should reduce the teaching and clinical training overload through a new internal balance between duties, etc.

Re 9: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC establish a policy with regards to the issue of recruiting future teaching staff, which should occur in a way that takes due account of the strategic priorities of the School. This means that the School should define concrete research and teaching profiles for future recruitments, so that the new teaching staff brings concrete added value to the School.

11. ISSUES CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF BOLOGNA

As mentioned already, the study programmes of ESEnfC are being restructured in order to adapt to the Bologna model of two cycles (since we refer to polytechnic studies). In fact, this restructuring refers only to the 2nd cycle of courses, where the old Post-Licentiate Specialisation Courses (and Degrees) will be replaced by Master Courses (and Degrees) in the respective specialisation fields. This means that 1st cycle courses remain in ESEnfC as Licentiate Course (and Degree) in Nursing, lasting 4 years and requiring 240 ECTS credits for graduation.

Adapting the study programmes to the Bologna structure requires clarifying some important issues. According to the pre-existing structure, only 1st cycle courses led to an academic degree (Licentiate), while the Post-Licentiate Specialisation Courses (recognised by the Portuguese Nursing Council and giving access to the category of Specialist Nurse) did not offer an academic degree and they lasted 18 months. According to the Bologna structure, the Post-Licentiate Specialisation Courses are to be transformed into Master Courses and to offer an academic degree (Master Degree), while the duration of studies increases to 4 semesters, with the last semester used for the Master dissertation. It seems that the existence of a 2nd cycle academic degree does not induce in fact any significant change to the existing professional characteristics of the degrees, since the Decree-Law No. 74/2006 defines Master Degree for polytechnic education as ensuring "*predominantly the acquisition of professional specialisation on the part of the student*" (Article 18, par. 4)¹⁵.

From the above analysis, the evaluation team understands that Master Degree is an academic degree ensuring professional specialisation and that, in that sense, Master Courses should be considered as an upgrading of Post-Licentiate Specialisation Courses, but without losing their professional characteristics. The evaluation team is aware that there is still some tension in Portugal between Nursing Schools and the Ministry on the one hand and the nurses' organisation on the other, regarding the level of specialisation for nurses. Similar problems are common in many European countries, when restructuring the degree systems in order to adapt to the Bologna structures, while maintaining the professional perspective.

Nevertheless, the evaluation team believes that there is an important task for ESEnfC now. It has to elaborate on two different (and somewhat contradictory) issues. On the one hand, it has to define the profile of the new degrees maintaining the required competences of the Nursing profession (within the confines of a polytechnic institution) and on the other hand it has to prepare the ground for a future School at university level. It is the direction that the Master Courses will take which have to be reconsidered for the future. The different definitions given by the law, which distinguish Master Courses between university and polytechnic education, show the way in which ESEnfC will have to work. To our mind, the key issue in this work will be the balance and the links between clinical and theoretical studies. However, the existence of a research component to the Master Courses linked to the dissertation and covering at least one semester (according to the programmes that have been submitted for approval to the Ministry) offers a good basis upon which to build a well-balanced programme.

Moving away from structural issues, the Bologna Process should be considered in its real substance which has to do with the shift in the Educational Paradigm

¹⁵ See also the different definition of Master Degree for university education according to par. 3 of the same Article, providing that Master Degree ensures "*the acquisition of an academic specialization on the part of the student, resorting to research, innovation or deepening of professional competences*".

in higher education, i.e. with the shift from a “teaching oriented” to a “learning oriented” educational approach, with the emphasis put on the students on the basis of the concepts of “competences” and “learning outcomes”. In that context, the Bologna reforms appear as a challenge to reconsider the structure and the content of the curricula, to reconsider educational methods, to reconsider the relevance between the various cycles of courses and also their relevance to employability, to reconsider the roles inside the educational process. Bologna offers an opportunity to ESEnfC to improve the comprehensiveness of Nursing studies, expanding them to new areas, broadening the education base through lifelong learning programmes, developing joint study programmes with other institutions of both the polytechnic and university sectors. In that sense, Bologna should be considered as an opportunity and as a challenge for positive change.

Bearing in mind the above analysis, the evaluation team makes the following two recommendations No. 10 and 11:

Re 10: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC work towards clarifying the profile of the two cycles of courses both in the present condition of a School at polytechnic level and in the desired future condition of a School upgraded to university level. This is a difficult task for ESEnfC and requires in-depth analysis of both the educational and professional components of the problem in order to build the necessary documentation and argumentation in that direction. Furthermore, ESEnfC should undertake the proper initiatives to establish a wide debate with the Ministry, the professional organisation of nurses, and the communities of universities and polytechnics. In that debate, however, ESEnfC should be in a position to explain and analyse not only the scientific purposes for such an upgrade but also the content of the studies under the new conditions and the level of the new competences.

Re 11: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC use Bologna as an opportunity and as a challenge for positive change apart from its structural component on degree structures. In that sense, ESEnfC should reconsider the structure and the content of the curricula, the overall educational methods, the relevance between the various cycles of courses and also their relevance to employability, and also to reconsider the roles inside the educational process. In the same sense, ESEnfC should use Bologna as an opportunity to improve comprehensiveness of Nursing studies, expanding them to new areas, broadening the education base through lifelong learning programmes, developing joint study programmes with other institutions of both the polytechnic and university sectors.

12. ISSUES CONCERNING INTERNATIONALISATION

In the modern European higher education landscape, internationalisation has to be one of the core issues in the strategic planning of a HEI. Both from the SER and from all meetings with key actors in ESEnfC, it is quite clear to the evaluation team that ESEnfC has to build properly and improve continuously its international profile. This is a necessity that corresponds to the desire of the School to be upgraded to university level. The evaluation team was impressed by the commitment of all people engaged in the National and International Relations Office of the School and by their work. However, the evaluation team believes that emphasis should be put on specific policies to foster internationalisation. In that context, the evaluation team makes the following recommendation No. 12:

Re 12: The evaluation team recommends the following with respect to internationalisation:

- ESEnfC should increase the mobility of its students, teaching staff and administrative staff through existing or new European and international programmes based on reciprocity;
- ESEnfC should develop a language policy to motivate its students and staff to learn foreign languages, but also to offer courses in English addressed to incoming foreign students;
- ESEnfC should increase its networking with universities and polytechnics abroad (even beyond the Community of Portuguese Language Countries) for more contacts and exchanges and to enhance internationalisation of its curricula and, even more, to establish joint programmes leading to joint degrees;
- ESEnfC should develop study programmes with added value to attract both foreign students and teaching staff in order to support internationalisation at home.

THE CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

13. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

The first methodological question in the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme is, "What is the institution trying to do (and why)?" and refers to the vision, the mission, the aims of the institution and its mid- and long-term strategies. This question, together with the second one, "How is the institution trying to do it?", forms the process through which the institution draws up its strategic plan. Then, we have the third question, "How does the institution know it works?" which actually deals with the quality culture that dominates the overall functioning of the institution. And, finally, the fourth question, "How does the institution change in order to improve?" defines the operation of change as such and identifies the capacity of the institution to transform its vision and mission into appropriate strategies and operational plans to be implemented within reasonable timeframes.

In this chapter of the evaluation report, we will deal with issues concerning strategic management, i.e. with issues related to the first two methodological questions, while in the next two chapters we will deal with issues concerning quality culture and the operation of change respectively. All major issues covered in the three chapters of this section should be considered as aiming jointly and interchangeably to enhance the capacity of ESEnFC for change.

As mentioned already, the vision of ESEnFC is to be "*a national and international reference in the development and affirmation of the Nursing discipline*"¹⁶. This is a very ambitious vision, which requires a strategic plan in both the medium-term and the long-term perspectives in order to be achieved. What the School has done so far is to develop a medium-term (5-year) strategic plan 2009-2013. Starting with a 5-year plan was not an issue of weakness; it was their choice to make a strategic plan extending for no more than 5 years. Additionally, they did not want this 5-year plan to be very ambitious. They preferred to make a realistic plan with concrete goals requiring concrete actions for their implementation. It seems that their concern was to make a plan in which they could succeed and to learn from the overall process, regarding both the formation and the implementation of a plan.

¹⁶ Statutes of ESEnFC, Article 4.

The evaluation team had many opportunities to discuss issues related to the strategic plan 2009-2013 of ESEnfC. In that context, a specific reference needs to be made to the in-depth and informative discussion with members of the Planning Commission that prepared the plan. The evaluation team wants to stress the fact that although the ambitions for the strategic plan 2009-2013 were realistic and somewhat modest, as explained earlier, the effort put into this process was disproportionately great. Apart from the Planning Commission, we are aware that more than 60 persons were involved in the exercise of the strategic plan starting from the beginning of 2008. And we have to note, furthermore, that the strategic plan 2009-2013 is followed by an action plan containing 72 actions to be implemented.

The evaluation team considers the strategic plan 2009-2013 an excellent piece of work, showing the capacities of the School. However, and although it reflects the ambitious vision of the School to be a national and international reference in the development and affirmation of the Nursing discipline, it does not touch upon the difficult issue of being a university level institution. We understand that this is a difficult, delicate and complex issue. It requires hard effort, it requires strategic alliances, it requires a wise strategy. This means, in other words, that it should be clearly stated in the vision of the School and it should be consolidated into the next long-term strategic plan of ESEnfC followed by the necessary actions, at a first level in order to create the appropriate conditions and fulfil the requirements to achieve the goal and at a second level in order to take the first steps successfully under the new conditions. And this means also that the School should be proactive in its strategic orientation and work to establish the necessary conditions, even to influence legislation.

Considering the above analysis, the evaluation team makes the following recommendation No. 13:

Re 13: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC now proceed to the development of a long-term (10 to 15 - year) strategic plan, utilising the experience gained from the formation of the medium-term strategic plan 2009-2013 and integrating its main elements in the new plan. Furthermore, ESEnfC should consolidate into this long-term plan its vision to be upgraded to university level, followed by the necessary actions to fulfil all requirements of a university institution with respect to curricula, research, staff qualification, internationalisation etc. And, furthermore, a permanent structure and a systematic procedure should be established in ESEnfC which will continuously monitor not only the implementation of the strategic plan, but also the validity of its objectives.

Nevertheless, and irrespective of the establishment of the appropriate structures and procedures, the efficiency of the strategic management in a HEI is affected greatly by the way in which a clear strategic perspective dominates the functioning of its leadership and of its governance, decision-making and management collective processes. This means that all respective bodies should be in a position to take strategic decisions, i.e. decisions that will improve the strategic goals of ESEnfC. And, moreover, an important task for the leadership of any HEI is to **inspire** and to **lead** the community in the context of such strategic perspectives.

14. QUALITY CULTURE

The term "quality culture" defines the overall attitude of a HEI which focuses on the concept of "quality" and which, thus, applies to issues like quality assurance, quality assessment, quality improvement, etc. It certainly comes from the necessity of going beyond data, figures, statistics, quantitative elements and deal with the qualitative dimension. Quality is a central element in European higher education today. Furthermore, it has also assumed a key role in the Bologna Process, and the "*European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Higher Education*" (ESG) have already been adopted by the European Ministers in Bergen in May 2005, thus also building a European perspective and a European context for quality assurance in higher education. Furthermore, every country participating in the Bologna Process is committed to establishing its own quality assurance system by 2010 according to the above ESGs.

In parallel, EUA actively encourages its member universities to implement their own internal quality assurance mechanisms and to develop a quality culture shared among universities throughout Europe. As stated in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), "*in consistency with the principle of institutional autonomy, the primary responsibility for quality assurance in higher education lies with each institution itself and this provides the basis for real accountability of the academic system within the national quality framework*". This statement is further specified in the London Communiqué (2007) with a new statement: "*Since the main responsibility for quality lies with HEIs, they should continue to develop their systems of quality assurance*". It is a task therefore for every European HEI to develop its own structures and procedures ensuring genuine quality assurance.

A great number of HEIs have established internal quality structures (offices, services or agencies); they act as internal evaluators, intent on defining the level of quality of teaching, learning, research, services to students, in all the components of the institution (from communication to library, from budget to computer facilities, etc.). They all base their work on well-established indicators (both qualitative and quantitative), methods, analyses that are defined at the European level in the

form of the abovementioned ESGs. Nevertheless, quality culture does not start and end only with structures and procedures; every individual enrolled in the institution has also a responsibility to replace non-functional or poorly functional practices with ones that bring better and more effective and efficient results, that contribute to improving the overall quality.

The evaluation team notes with satisfaction that the issue of quality is at the centre of concern in ESEnfC, and that significant steps have been made towards establishing structures and processes to build and retain a quality culture within the whole School. The establishment and operation of the Quality and Assessment Board (QAB), provided in the statutes of ESEnfC, is a good sign in that direction. Significant steps are also the earlier evaluations of the predecessor Schools (Nursing School Dr. Ângelo da Fonseca and Nursing School Bissaya Barreto) by ADISPOR (Association of Portuguese Polytechnic Institutes), which show the existence of tradition in quality issues, and the evaluations of the Research Unit by international panels under the supervision of the Foundation for Science and Technology, which show the extent of the School's concern for quality. Finally, the overall culture for quality in ESEnfC can be identified through the participation of ESEnfC in the evaluation of Portuguese HEIs by EUA which was based on an extensive and inclusive self-evaluation process widely disseminated and publicised within the School.

One last specific point that the evaluation team wishes to raise regarding quality assurance is the procedure of assessment of teaching and courses by the students. This process is quite common in most European countries. Students have the opportunity – and also the obligation – to evaluate both the courses and the teachers by anonymously filling a questionnaire. The evaluation team is aware that students' questionnaires are already in use in ESEnfC. However, it seems that there is room for further improvement of the process. We were informed in our meetings with students that in some cases students do not take the whole process seriously or that they are not sincere when filling the questionnaires (even if it is an anonymous process). For the evaluation team, there is one explanation for that, and it has to do with the existing close relationships of students with teachers that allow for a face-to-face effort for improvements. Of course, this is one important element of the positive climate existing in ESEnfC. However, quality culture means much more than good interpersonal relations; and it requires effective structures and processes.

Considering the above analysis, the evaluation team makes the following recommendations No. 14 and 15:

Re 14: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC further strengthen its internal quality culture processes, continuously improving their effectiveness. The compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines regarding internal and external quality assurance should be ensured in the most systematic manner. To that end, the Quality and Assessment Board should undertake a

more active role, taking the overall responsibility for internal quality assurance, also utilising the experience and the expertise gained so far from the self-evaluation process in the context of the institutional evaluation by EUA. The result of the quality analyses should be widely disseminated throughout the school as the best way to foster, through better knowledge of the institution, a sense of belonging, a spirit of collegiality, a stronger identity.

Re 15: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC pay increased attention to the teaching evaluation process and should foster its effectiveness and reliability. The teaching evaluation process should be carried out with the proper methodology and with a visible impact on the improvement of teaching, and should be integrated into the overall internal quality assurance process.

15. CAPACITY FOR CHANGE

The general perspective

Alongside the quality assurance issues, the EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme focuses on the **capacity for change**. The reason for this is a widespread conviction that European HEIs are exposed to increasing **demands** from society and the labour market and in many countries they are also exposed to growing **competition** from other institutions of higher education.

If the HEIs do not seize the initiative themselves and show their capacity for change and their adaptability to radically new conditions in an era of mass higher education, then there may be **risks** that even the important core academic values, which we undoubtedly all want to preserve, might be in jeopardy.

HEIs have always had, and still have, the twofold duty of **defending** traditional values and of **leading** society into new areas (and new eras). There have been periods in their very long history, when HEIs were too successful as defenders of tradition at the price of **isolation** from society and petrification. But fortunately enough, we can also look back to times when HEIs were true centres of **innovation** in many respects.

The capacity for change requires firstly the identification of all the factors requiring change, as well as of the features and the content of the change needed. Secondly, it requires each HEI to determine its own mission in conjunction with the changes needed and to set its priorities. Thirdly, it requires determining the strengths and weaknesses of each HEI with respect to its own identity and characteristics and

to the existing external conditions. Finally, it requires an efficient mechanism to assess continually the course of each institution towards its objectives, towards the changes required. What we have to ask ourselves is whether the traditional organisation and leadership of a HEI will be capable of fulfilling its task at the beginning of the 21st century.

The evaluation team wants to stress that **the capacity for change is a sine qua non condition for a HEI in a modern society**. The capacity for change requires a clear mission, inspired vision and realistic objectives for the institution. It also requires effective strategic planning and the establishment of a quality culture. Furthermore, it requires tools such as action plans and milestones. These are the internal requirements. There are, of course, external requirements as well. They have to do with resources (both financial and human), with the legislative framework and the relationship between HEIs and the state (autonomy), which have to encourage and support the institutions in strengthening their capacity for change, and, finally, with the relationship between HEIs and the society at large following the principle of the public responsibility for (and of) higher education and research and the quest for real accountability.

Apart from these internal and external requirements, the capacity for change requires, above all, inspiration. It requires inspired, motivated and determined people. It is extremely important to realise that elements of strategic planning do not themselves change HEIs. Changes in institutions have to be driven by people: staff and students and an inspired leadership making sure that the actions in the action plans are under way and that the milestones are achieved.

The specific perspective of ESEnfC

ESEnfC has undergone significant changes over the last few years. The merger in itself was a significant change; but, also, the consecutive changes in Nursing education, the evolution with regards to Nursing as an autonomous scientific area, the continuous changes in the Portuguese higher education, and the need to adapt to the challenges of the emerging European Higher Education Area through the Bologna Process were changes requiring continuous adaptation to new situations. ESEnfC has indeed already proved many times its capacity to change quickly and radically. Furthermore, the evaluation team had the opportunity to realise that the will for change is strong in ESEnfC and its motivation to meet the new challenges and to follow the winds of change is evident. This is a real strength for ESEnfC.

The evaluation team believes that ESEnfC is now at a crucial crossroads. On the one hand, it has the difficult task of working hard to meet all the challenges described above. And, on the other hand, it has to work even harder to meet the major challenge which is to consolidate the positioning of Nursing studies at university level and to fulfil all requirements (both legal and academic) for a

university level institution. Most of the recommendations that the evaluation team made in the previous chapters go in this direction and aim at giving ESEnfC ideas and proposals on how to succeed in this difficult task. In an effort to recapitulate, the evaluation team makes the following last recommendation No. 16:

Re 16: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC should state clearly its vision to be an institution at university level and should establish a focused strategy aiming at that goal. To that end, ESEnfC should work continuously to strengthen its position in three parallel axes: a) to consolidate the positioning of Nursing at university level, b) to continuously and steadily improve quality at all levels and to fulfil all requirements to be an institution at university level, and c) to build its strategic alliances.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

16. CONCLUSIONS

As stated earlier, for the evaluation team it is clear that ESEnfC is at a crossroads. It has to meet many challenges at the same time. It has to face issues deriving from the on-going changes in the Portuguese higher education and in the European higher education as well. It has to face issues regarding the nature and the status of Nursing as an autonomous scientific area and its positioning in the higher education area. Within this complex context, it has to clarify its own profile and identity and to impose its own positioning as an institution of university level. To that end, it has to put emphasis on research and on the qualifications of its teaching staff, by establishing a new balance between research and teaching/training.

These challenges should be considered as opportunities for ESEnfC. On the one hand, they offer a clear perspective for the future and, on the other hand, they operate as driving forces motivating and stimulating all actors inside the School. From the evaluation team's viewpoint, ESEnfC has many strengths to rely on in order to face its fascinating future. But we want to stress here only the most important among them: its capacity and its experience in facing difficult situations so far; the commitment of its people (staff and students); an effective and inspiring leadership; an impressively positive atmosphere internally. Our analysis has convinced us that ESEnfC is heading in the the right direction for its future.

It is in that context that the evaluation team tried to approach the work done so far by ESEnfC. Our recommendations are intended to be our own contribution to the process of change and to help ESEnfC to make the most of the opportunities open to it and to cope with the threats scattered along its route to the future. At the same time, our report aspires to function as an inspiration for the School as a whole, but more specifically for all those people, students and staff, who have a concern for its future.

17. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Before coming to the end of this evaluation report, we summarise here the main recommendations, as they have appeared in the respective chapters of the text.

Positioning ESEnfC in the higher education area

Re 1: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC should establish a clear strategy aiming at its integration into the university sector of Portuguese higher education as a university Faculty. This strategy should contain all the necessary steps in order to prepare the ground, to build proper argumentation, to fulfil all legal and/or substantial requirements, to convince all sectors that have to be convinced both for the necessity of the transformation and for the capacity and the readiness of the School to meet the challenges of the new reality.

Issues concerning governance and management

Re 2: The evaluation team recommends that the School's governance establish structures and procedures of effective internal communication, both vertically (on both top-down and bottom-up bases) and horizontally (between the two campuses), in order to improve awareness among all members of the School community. This task applies also to the student organisation and the students' representatives in order to achieve good communication with all students.

Re 3: The evaluation team recommends that the School's governance further support active and equal student involvement in all governance bodies at all levels in accordance with the basic Bologna principles.

Issues concerning research

Re 4: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC strengthen the research component of its activities and move from a teaching institution to a teaching institution with (and through) research. To that end, full

advantage should be taken from the existence of the Research Unit, with the aim of building a cohesive research environment throughout the whole School thus ensuring the research projects are relevant to the needs of the School or the needs of Nursing. Research should be conducted in two directions: to bring added value to the School, contributing to the production of new knowledge for the scientific area of Nursing and to contribute to solving problems related to the profession of Nursing. Furthermore, the dissemination of research results within the community should be ensured as well.

- Re 5:** The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC strengthen the focus and the sustainability of research. To that end, it has to set priorities and it has to concentrate resources (both financial and human) to obtain critical masses in specific research areas. But, at the same time, it has to link research conducted at various levels and with different characteristics (from big research projects to clinical intervention projects, even to student projects) and to facilitate communication and mobility among researchers. Furthermore, everybody involved in research (from teaching staff and researchers to students) should be much better supported with their work formally recognised and appropriately valued.
- Re 6:** The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC integrate research into the international scientific community. To that end, it should encourage and ensure scientific publications in international journals, but, at the same time, it should upgrade the already existing Bulletin with publications in English. Furthermore, it should encourage participation of researchers in international conferences but also enhance research with international partners.
- Re 7:** The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC consider the need to ensure the ethical dimension of research, since research in Nursing deals with human beings. To that end, ESEnfC should, on the one hand, foster the visibility of the research and, on the other hand, take initiatives in order to establish an ethical commission for research to be established at regional level, integrating the existing structures at the University of Coimbra and at the various hospitals.

Issues concerning human resources

Re 8: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnFC establish a policy for improving the qualifications of its teaching staff. This policy should comprise two elements. The first element is related to steering the PhDs carried out by the teaching staff and overseeing their content in order to meet the real needs of the School and to bring real added value to it. The establishment of partnerships with Universities for the PhDs carried out by the teaching staff of the School can offer a model for such steering. The second element has to do with motivating, encouraging, facilitating teaching staff to upgrade their qualifications by conducting a PhD. But this should be a systematic, effective and well steered procedure. For that purpose, ESEnFC should introduce sabbaticals, provide opportunities and financial support for teaching staff to participate in national and international conferences, research collaborations and advanced training courses, should provide "seed money" for research in order to assimilate new researchers starting their PhDs, and, finally, should reduce the teaching and clinical training overload through a new internal balance between duties, etc.

Re 9: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnFC establish a policy with regards to the issue of recruiting future teaching staff, which should occur in a way that takes due account of the strategic priorities of the School. This means that the School should define concrete research and teaching profiles for future recruitments, so that the new teaching staff brings concrete added value to the School.

Issues concerning implementation of Bologna

Re 10: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnFC work towards clarifying the profile of the two cycles of courses both in the present condition of a School at polytechnic level and in the desired future condition of a School upgraded to university level. This is a difficult task for ESEnFC and requires in-depth analysis of both the educational and the professional components of the problem in order to build the necessary documentation and argumentation in that direction. Furthermore, ESEnFC should undertake the proper initiatives to establish a wide debate with the Ministry, the professional organisation of nurses, and the communities of universities and polytechnics. In that debate, however, ESEnFC should be in

a position to explain and analyse not only the scientific purposes for such an upgrade but also the content of the studies under the new conditions and the level of the new competences.

Re 11: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC use Bologna as an opportunity and as a challenge for positive change apart from its structural component on degree structures. In that sense, ESEnfC should reconsider the structure and the content of the curricula, the overall educational methods, the relevance between the various cycles of courses and also their relevance to employability, and also to reconsider the roles inside the educational process. In the same sense, ESEnfC should use Bologna as an opportunity to improve comprehensiveness of Nursing studies, expanding them to new areas, broadening the education base through lifelong learning programmes, developing joint study programmes with other institutions of both the polytechnic and university sectors.

Issues concerning internationalisation

Re 12: The evaluation team recommends the following with respect to internationalisation:

- ESEnfC should increase the mobility of its students, teaching staff and administrative staff through existing or new European and international programmes based on reciprocity;
- ESEnfC should develop a language policy to motivate its students and staff to learn foreign languages, but also to offer courses in English addressed to incoming foreign students;
- ESEnfC should increase its networking with universities and polytechnics abroad (even beyond the Community of Portuguese Language Countries) for more contacts and exchanges and to enhance internationalisation of its curricula and, even more, to establish joint programmes leading to joint degrees.
- ESEnfC should develop study programmes with added value to attract both foreign students and teaching staff in order to support internationalisation at home.

Issues concerning strategic management

Re 13: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC now proceed to the development of a long-term (10 to 15 - year) strategic plan, utilising the experience gained from the formation of the medium-term strategic plan 2009-2013 and integrating its main elements in the new plan. Furthermore, ESEnfC should consolidate into this long-term plan its vision to be upgraded to university level, followed by the necessary actions to fulfil all requirements of a university institution with respect to curricula, research, staff qualification, internationalisation etc. And, furthermore, a permanent structure and a systematic procedure should be established in ESEnfC which will continuously monitor not only the implementation of the strategic plan, but also the validity of its objectives.

Issues concerning quality culture

Re 14: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC further strengthen its internal quality culture processes continuously improving their effectiveness. The compliance with the European Standards and Guidelines regarding internal and external quality assurance should be ensured in the most systematic manner. To that end, the Quality and Assessment Board should undertake a more active role, taking the overall responsibility for internal quality assurance, also utilising the experience and the expertise gained so far from the self-evaluation process in the context of the institutional evaluation by EUA. The result of the quality analyses should be widely disseminated throughout the school as the best way to foster, through better knowledge of the institution, a sense of belonging, a spirit of collegiality, a stronger identity.

Re 15: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC pay increased attention to the teaching evaluation process and should foster its effectiveness and reliability. The teaching evaluation process should be carried out with the proper methodology and with a visible impact on the improvement of teaching, and should be integrated into the overall internal quality assurance process.

Issues concerning capacity for change

Re 16: The evaluation team recommends that ESEnfC state clearly its vision to be an institution at university level and should establish a focused strategy aiming at that goal. To that end, ESEnfC should work continuously to strengthen its position in three parallel axes: a) to consolidate the positioning of Nursing at university level, b) to continuously and steadily improve quality at all levels and to fulfil all requirements to be an institution at university level, and c) to build its strategic alliances.

ENVOI

Coming to the end of this report, the evaluation team feels the need to express once again its sincere thanks to the people of ESEnfC for the excellent arrangements provided to make its two visits a challenging and delightful, although very intensive, experience. At the same time, the evaluation team wishes to thank ESEnfC for the generous and overwhelming hospitality.

It has been a great pleasure and a very stimulating experience for the evaluation team to be introduced to ESEnfC during this specific and crucial period both for Portuguese higher education, but, also, for higher education in Europe at large. It has also been a privilege and a sheer joy for us to meet so many enthusiastic and highly committed people. We wish to point out the openness and good atmosphere of the discussions with the academic staff, the students and the stakeholders and wish to say how much we appreciated it.

The evaluation team has been positively impressed by the commitment and the engagement of all people in ESEnfC, especially of its leadership. The evaluation team is convinced that the initiatives undertaken by the leadership of ESEnfC are driving the School in the right direction and strongly supports the leadership along this road.

Finally, we would like to share the following last words with everyone in ESEnfC: You should follow your legitimate ambitions; you should strive for excellence; you should use your strengths and your ideas to take initiatives; you should trust in the future and be self-confident; you should trust in your capacities; you should become a university level institution in the field of Nursing with the certainty that, in this way, you add real value to the health care profession.