

EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW
OF THE
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
IN ANKARA**

EUA REVIEWERS' REPORT

November 2002

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Foreword.

Following the two successful conferences on the theme of *Quality and Evaluation*, the Permanent Committee of the CRE, the Conference of European Rectors, decided in 1993 to offer its 500 member universities the possibility of being reviewed to assess their strengths and weaknesses in the area of quality management. The European University Association founded in 2000 with the merger of the CRE and the European Conference of Rector's Conferences continued this programme. The EUA offers an analysis of quality structures from experienced university leaders coming from different higher education systems in Europe. This analysis critically examines the quality structures and procedures and identifies the main actors in the university's daily decision-making process. It should be a tool for institutional leadership preparing for change. The EUA does not give a ranking or wish to provide the university with a blueprint for its development; rather the review process is an 'external supportive review'.

By auditing institutions in different countries, EUA hopes to disseminate examples of good practice, validate common concepts of strategic thinking, and elaborate shared references of quality that will help member universities to re-orient their strategic development while strengthening a quality culture in Europe. In 1994 the Universities of Göteborg, Oporto and Utrecht commissioned the CRE to develop the methodology for the quality audit programme and to test it in their institutions. This pilot phase was completed in January 1995. Central in the process of auditing stands a set of guidelines, developed by prof.dr. Frans van Vught, then director of the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies (CHEPS) and Don Westerheijden. From 1995/96 onwards, an auditing round took place with 12 to 15 universities in West, Central, and East Europe participating each year. The Middle East Technical University in Ankara participated in 2002.

The Middle East Technical University (METU) requested the EUA to organise an institutional audit of the University. The request was made by the president prof. Ural Akbulut. The Senate approved the participation and there was a self-evaluation steering group installed chaired by the vice-president prof. Fatos Yarman-Vural, who also acted as liaison person.

The members of the EUA review Team were:

- Professor dr. Helene Lamicq (chair), former rector of Paris XII.
- Professor dr. George Bazsa, rector of the University of Debrecen, Hungary.
- Professor dr. Maxwell Irvine, former rector of Birmingham University, UK.
- Drs. Bas Nugteren (secretary), secretary to the board of Utrecht University.

They would like to thank the METU in Ankara, the rector and his team and the staff and students for the very good arrangements, the warm welcome and the openness. The Team members were impressed by the efforts the University made to accommodate the review and to respond to the questions and demands from the Team. The Team wants to emphasize the warm hospitality and very good arrangements and wants to thank especially prof. Ural Akbulut, prof. Fatos Yarman-Vural, prof. Ahmet Acar and mrs. Ayfer Toppare who took such good care during our

stay. They would also like to stress that they were impressed by the self-evaluation report and the quality of the information given to them by the University.

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Introduction.

The METU is one of the premier state financed institutions of higher education. Founded in 1956 to serve not only Turkey but also the region, English was adopted as the language of instruction. Its aims from the beginning have been to train students in scientific, technical and professional fields of study to meet the technical, economic and social needs of a rapidly changing region.

The METU has five faculties (Architecture, the first faculty, Arts and Sciences, Education, Economics and Administrative Sciences and Engineering) with a total of 37 undergraduate programmes and 4 graduate schools with 67 graduate programmes with almost 20,000 students: 14,500 undergraduates and preparatory and 4,500 masters and PhD students. The students at METU are among the best students in Turkey. Turkey has a national system of admission to university. Yearly 1.5 million students apply for the available university places. Universities select students on the basis of their results in the national exams and their preferences.

The staff numbers 2,400, including 1,550 faculty (professors, associate and assistant professors), 400 instructors and 1,300 research assistants. Most extraordinary is its campus just some miles outside Ankara's city centre. 11,000 acres large and including a wood of over 10 million trees, all planted by the students during the past decades. On the campus there are also very attractive sports and other facilities.

The METU has developed in recent years, in co-operation with local government, a Technopolis and an Incubation Centre, TEKMER. It is one of the new ways it is opening up to society so that it may profit from the university's R&D. Its strategy of opening up to society is not restricted to local industry and public organisations, but is also promoted by its distance education and life long learning programmes. The Team was very impressed by the university's scholarship programme for students, mainly paid for by alumni. A very impressive and also a sign of METU's commitment to society.

METU is a very fine and well-respected university and among the best in Turkey and the region. Its ambition is to be an international research university and to develop its profile in the international world of higher education. Improving its research standing is a major challenge, considering the fast changing scientific environment and economic problems of Turkey. As part of its strategy for improving its international profile, METU has already taken steps to meet these goals by improving its relations with other universities in the west and east, because Turkey and the METU are, as someone expressed, 'in-betweens'. Turkey is preparing itself for membership of the European Union and METU supports this strongly.

Higher Education in Turkey consists of 53 state universities and 19 privately founded universities. Almost half of the universities were founded in the past decade, a clear sign of the recognition by the government of the importance of universities for society. The supreme authority for the regulation of higher education is the Council of Higher Education, which is a fully autonomous national board of trustees without any political or government affiliation. All programmes of the universities, state and private alike, must be regularly accredited.

The growth of private universities is of recent years. They do not aim at financial profits but they are funded by – mostly – big industry. The state universities regard them as a real threat because they have much better financial support, so that their salaries are often up to four or five times better than theirs. However, from the point of view of the national government, these privately founded universities are effective in reducing the brain drain from Turkey, which is mainly to the UK and USA. Thus it helps to keep talented scientists and teachers in Turkey without changing the characteristics of the Turkey's national higher education system. But for well-respected institutes as the METU, the private universities as well the attractiveness of good universities in the UK and USA, are felt more and more as a threat.

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METU is engaged in a long term planning process, in developing a new strategic plan. The results of this review will be part of the input for this plan. All departments and faculties are engaged in this process that has just commenced.

There is a feeling of urgency inside the university embarking on a new era. This has all to do with:

- Increasing international competition.
- Competition with the private sector, in the field of staff and students.
- Maintaining status and prestige.
- The European unification and the necessity for universities to increasingly focus on Europe, both as regards education and research, and as regards staff and students.
- A continuous orientation on the needs of society at large in an environment where universities are increasingly competing with one another. In Turkey this is especially the case for the competition with the privately funded universities.

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The review was carried out in various stages in full accordance with the relevant EUA guidelines. Firstly, the University prepared a self-evaluation that forms the basis for the audit team's work. The self-evaluation made by the METU was of excellent quality. The Team made two visits to the University, the first of which was a short visit lasting one-and-a-half days in order to gain a good impression of the organisation and problems of the university, its culture and its place in the national context. This visit took place at the end of February 2002. Following this visit, the University collected and supplied the Team with supplementary data related to a number of topics at the Team's request. The main visit took place from 27 to 29 May 2002. The first day was devoted to discussions with the rector, central administrators, department directors and officials from national and regional government, vice-rectors and members of the university council. The Team met, on both visits, members of all faculties and had discussions with many members of staff, the dean and others, and with students in separate sessions. The Team's findings were communicated orally to a large gathering on the last morning of the visit. The content of this written report is based on that oral presentation.

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The general feeling within the University is that it is preparing for a really competitive future. The Team was impressed by the information the university had collected in

order to underpin the process of strategic policymaking. The Team met many enthusiastic members of staff and competent managers and administrators. The METU surely is well managed. But the Team has some doubts whether the feeling of urgency is widespread enough inside the university as well as some misgivings about the way the policy agenda is being handled. This must be seen in the light of international experiences and the realisation that a university is an extremely complex entity.

Quality is the key word; quality of staff and quality of students. How to consolidate and improve the already existing level of quality? How to respond to threats and how to take advantage of opportunities? The agenda of the METU is an impressive one because it has real ambitions. In the following report the Team presents a number of analyses and suggestions that may support the University, in particular as regards developing a quality strategy. For, in this field, there is certainly room for progress and in a choice of ways in the way in which to pursue it.

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Constraints and institutional norms

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In terms of resources.

The METU emanates an enormous self-esteem and everybody sets much store by quality. Everybody the Team spoke to, students, staff and alumni, all were very proud of METU and were also of the opinion that the METU is a very good university as regards study programmes and science practice, as well as internal cohesion and social dedication. One recognised, however, that in an international comparison such a prominent position will be permanently tested and that over-assessing one's abilities does not befit the METU's good academic tradition.

The METU has a few large resources of wealth, in particular the quality and the quantity of the academic staff and students. Many staff members have international experience, and a considerable number of them took their PhD outside Turkey, amongst other places at the MIT and Berkeley. The Team met many enthusiastic academics and the various data regarding their publications and research experiences the staff's quality. All relevant technical study programmes have recently been accredited by the ABET. The students too were unanimously satisfied with the quality of the university teachers. Their criticism was rather directed to the way in which the quality assurance programme was implemented, to the restraints at the campus, and to the deficiencies in the presented programme, but not to the quality of the teaching staff. The student-staff ratio is adequate according to international standards.

At the same time, the Team heard some general concerns from different sides about the ageing of staff and problems regarding attracting new young talents. But, according to the Team's analysis, aging of staff and the difficulties of attracting new young talent is a simplification of reality. At any rate, the available figures do not strongly substantiate this complaint. This topic is considered later in this report.

Another important resource is the quality of the students. It was mentioned already that the students at the METU belong to the best in Turkey. It draws from the top level of students. Students are proud of being able to study at the METU and many added to this that the instruction in English was one of the clearest added values of the METU. Once graduated, the alumni maintain strong links with the METU. By any international comparison the bond with the METU alumni is exemplary. Numerous alumni associations in Turkey and abroad demonstrate this relationship. (*JK Query: not sure about this sentence: is "home" Turkey? Is the METU Alumni programme the same or better than others?)* The scholarship programme for less well-off students that is mainly paid for by alumni has been referred to above, so that in that and in other respects, the relationship with the METU alumni is considered by the Team to be very strong and fruitful.

The financing of the university, as appears to be the situation with all Turkish public universities, is problematic. Many discussions referred to this difficult situation; in particular the strong lagging behind of salaries due to the high inflation rate of the recent past was mentioned. Even after the government had improved the salaries for some of the university personnel, this still remains a matter of concern for many. But this observation is not sufficient. It is an international phenomenon that society wants more results for relatively less money. Turkey is no exception, although the

economical crisis at the beginning of 2001 and the ensuing inflation clearly plays a negative role. For the Team, however, the fact that, despite the economic situation, the government improved some salaries is a sign that it sets great store by the academic training and scientific research.

However, it is the Team's opinion that the way in which the money is allotted is a clear obstacle in the functioning of the universities. Although some changes in the current procedure of financing the Turkish universities seem to be made the detailed and earmarked allotment of budgets is a restraint on innovation. It is, of course, agreed that universities have to be accountable for their expenditure; all expenditure must be justified. But instead of an aggregated budget there is an itemised budget, which renders the universities very inflexible in reacting to questions and needs of the moment. This procedure is part of a comprehensive set of rules and regulations which state universities are subject to, and which are in clear contrast with the freedom that privately funded universities enjoy. However the Team suggests that the university should explore the possibility of establishing its own internal aggregated financial structure which would allow it some flexibility, however limited, to support particular unscheduled academic developments which it considers appropriate.

The Team was impressed by the science park Technopolis and the TEKMER incubator. Although both have just started, the Team considers the results as promising and the METU is clearly strengthened in their interactions with the business community by this initiative. It is obvious that the METU is open to all possible co-operation with the business community and the public sector.

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In terms of development.

The METU is a well-managed university with clear-cut objectives and first-rate strategies and procedures. As mentioned above, the METU's self-evaluation was one of the best the Team had ever seen. It presented a clear picture of the results achieved and of the issues which were unsatisfactory. Recently a university-wide project has been initiated to realise the long-term strategy and deal with the major policy questions.

Lack of a clear science and technology policy at a national level directed towards innovation, is a negative constraint for universities such as the METU. This results in a lack of stimuli and frameworks to promote co-operation between research groups, or co-operation between universities, other partners and institutions of education. For research and innovation in science a critical mass is required; interaction between disciplines is essential. Lack of a national policy, however, must not mean that the METU should not further develop its own science and technology policy. In the Team's opinion, this is one of the greatest challenges for the METU during the coming period, as will be elaborated on later.

The METU would like to strengthen its international profile in Europe, the USA and the region, as well as within Turkey. The METU certainly has the potential to achieve this. Turkey's preparation for EU membership fits well with METU's internationalisation policy. To this end the METU has established a European Office for the purpose of co-operation with European networks. In this context the Team believes that the METU can present itself as a high-quality university and, being a

Middle East University, as a bridge between East and West. Yet even then the challenge will remain as how to increase the number of students from Europe. In the Team's opinion, the awareness that this is a complex and lengthy process is still insufficiently present within the METU. In particular the question of how to develop the internationalisation at departmental and faculty level is crucial. In addition, it is important that the existing large variety of chiefly individual one-to-one academic contacts be supported but at the same time integrated within the faculty and university networks, so that other staff and students can benefit from them. The good relationship with the regional authorities and the government can be instrumental in this respect, as has been shown before.

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In terms of quality.

As mentioned before, quality awareness is strongly developed within the METU. It is helpful, of course, that the staff and students are, in general, of highest academic quality. The Team notes that the METU pays plenty of attention to internal quality measurements and also external evaluations, such as the ABET accreditation. The Team hardly heard any complaints about quality. However, the absence of a systematic quality assurance programme is noted. What is lacking is a prescribed and agreed quality concept, together with an integrated system within the university by which the quality is not only measured, but also discussed and monitored. It appears to the Team that internal evaluations have a certain degree of non-commitment and there is no office and/or persons with specific responsibility for quality assurance either at university level, at faculty level or at departmental level. The issue of quality assurance must be a serious focus of attention for the METU, especially in view of the growing international competition and the university's ambition to be an internationally recognized research university,. In this context there should also be particular attention given to the involvement of students and stakeholders.

During the many discussions that the Team had, various specific problems and complaints were brought forward, which normally would be raised in a quality assurance system. Students did not experience any problems with the staff, communications were open and always helpful, but the staff members are not always the obvious individuals to address. Students were proud to study at the METU and the study programme also met their expectations well. There was a great appreciation for the quality of teaching and learning, but, all the same, sometimes the Team was also confronted with questions and problems, such as:

- Lack of library books.
- Instructors did not always speak sufficient English to present a training course in English as required.
- Stakeholders, i.e. employers, recruiting graduates from the university, did not have anybody to address with regard to their recommendations concerning the study programmes.
- Interdepartmental study programmes are not well attuned to one another, with as a result that students unnecessarily loose time or have to deal with certain programme sections twice.
- Study programmes are sometimes too heavily loaded.
- Problems with the rules and regulations on the campus.

A good quality assurance system also has information counters for such questions and problems. Regardless of the good relations and the obvious willingness of the staff to respond seriously to students and external persons, a system of procedures and checks is necessary.

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In terms of organisation.

The METU is clearly a well-managed organisation. But the METU too is on the eve of large changes as a result of the growing international competition and as a result of developments in the sciences themselves. This will put ever more pressure on the managerial and administrative organisation. This means that more attention must be paid to the quality of the management and administration and the participation of the university community in the university.

The METU's structure is fairly traditional with a high level of autonomy at the faculties and departments. In practice this poses no problems thanks to the excellent relations between all those involved and the shared pride to belong to the METU. This organisation, however, will come under pressure when more focused choices of policy have to be made. This will put high demands on the academic leadership and on the internal support for decision-making processes. In view of the strong internal cohesion it is to be expected that the university community will be able to resist this pressure, but, all the same, the quality of the management and administration, and the involvement of the university community in decision-making processes will need particular attention. The way in which decisions are prepared and made will have to meet higher requirements than those that sufficed in the past. On the one hand, the decision-making processes will have to be reinforced, also in a formal sense, while on the other hand more and more thematic work across the organisation will be necessary, utilising the various expertises. The internationalisation policy, for example, is perfectly suited for such a thematic approach.

The Team recognised already the first steps in this direction, particularly in the way in which the new strategic plan is prepared, namely in a combination of bottom-up and top-down. Yet the Team comments that there it is not clear who is really in charge of the whole process. The Team also got the impression that too few preconditions were made for the input from departments and faculties, such as, for example, regarding the interdepartmental co-operation. But these comments do not alter the fact that the Team has a high esteem for the dedication and direction of this Strategic Plan project. It is an excellent instrument to accommodate processes of change.

Capacity for change

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The mission.

The METU's mission statement expresses the ambition to contribute to the development and application of science for social, cultural, economic and scientific development of humanity and society, and to do this at an international level. In the current discussions within the METU about the ambitions and profile of the institution it strives to consolidate as a research university and at re enforce its international profile as an educational institution. The development of the METU Technopolis, a science park with style, and the Incubation Centre, are intended to reinforce the development and transfer of knowledge towards society.

In the Team's opinion, this mission of the university does not adequately define the ideal balance between research and teaching. This is a discussion item in many universities in Europe. In an international perspective it is tempting to want to focus more on research, especially as one has a reputation in this respect. But as a university the METU is more than a collection of research institutes. One must also ask oneself what is the added value of a university, if one will focus more on graduate courses and research, at the expense of the undergraduate courses. One must wonder whether a university focused on graduate courses will not be subject to even more international competition than a 'full' university.

And certainly, if a university belongs to the cream of a university establishment in a country, one bears an additional responsibility with regards to the training of undergraduates and the selection of future generations of researchers and teachers.

The intention of the METU is good. The strong points that were mentioned to us by the various discussion partners from inside and outside the METU are:

- A good academic environment.
- A strongly involved academic community.
- English as the instruction language.
- Excellent students.
- Good research facilities.
- An attractive campus with good facilities.
- A strong self-awareness.
- A shared vision towards the future.

Crucial to the development of European universities is the extent to which they are seen to be maintaining a good balance between academic freedom and their own development on the one hand, and transparent accountability toward society and efficient management on the other. The context in which universities find themselves is undergoing rapid development as evidenced not only in the discussion on funding, but also in the more consumer-oriented approach being adopted by students. Universities must be able to react swiftly to developments in and demands from society. Science changes also rapidly: new technologies, new insights and observations have drastically altered the scope of many disciplines and it is generally realised that universities are at the threshold of major new developments.

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The institutional politics.

The Team found that there are three areas in the context of institutional development that require special attention in connection with the ambitions and future strategies of the METU.

- The method of financial distribution.
- The research capacity.
- Further systemisation of the quality assurance.

The international trend in university management is the strengthening of the university's autonomy combined with procedures of comprehensive financial accountability. Creating more internal flexibility must go hand in hand with strengthening the accountability in relation to the way in which the funds are used. This is a legitimate question in every modern society. The importance of the way in which funds are distributed and allotted is not to be underestimated in this context. Separate from the discussion whether there are sufficient funds, a lump sum financing offers the universities considerably better possibilities to respond to current requests and to give shape to their own policy than an itemised budget allocation.

The general experience is that an itemised budget allocation every time results in superfluous and unnecessary bureaucracy as well. If there is one reason for state universities to look at privately funded universities with certain envy, it is because of the flexibility that they have and which the state universities do not have. What applies to the allotment to universities, in essence also applies to the internal allotment to faculties and, subsequently, to departments within the universities. Freedom to release funds needed for new developments and to initiate specific projects is essential.

In various discussions, in particular with staff members of different departments and faculties, the position of research assistants was raised. It is the Team's opinion, that many individuals at the METU still have no idea what an important role these research assistants can play, not just as talented individuals, but also as a research capacity. For the university as a whole and for the faculties, they are an available research resource with large scientific potential. The Team also found that they were not always thought of in these terms within the METU. The discussions about the lack of attraction for new talent, and the ageing of the staff, which was pointed out earlier in this report, is, in the Team's opinion, for the time being subordinate to the problems in connection with the developing of the research capacity offered by the research assistants.

It seems that there is a lack of planning for the optimal employment of the research assistances i.e., optimal for the new talent and optimal from the university or faculty's research policy. Remarkably many research assistants reported that they did not know who actually decided upon their job specification and the way in which they are employed. It seemed that some departments had no policy with regards to the attraction and employment of research assistants, but that they left this to the individual professors. In the Team's opinion this means that a large potential is not fully utilised. Of course, formulation of a research and technology policy comes first. Such a policy must formulate which are the spearheads in the research programme, in which way one strives to increase the innovating power, how additional funds can be acquired from the government and the business community, and in which way the research programme can be given shape by co-operating with other research groups

within and outside the university. But indeed by involving a planned research assistant potential, this policy may be more easily realised.

Earlier reference was made to the existing strong awareness of quality within the university, and with good reason given the METU's status. The systematic measurement of the scientific results, the systematic analysis of the teaching qualities by, amongst other things, polls and panels amongst students, and the limited linking of remunerations to these results, can assist in emphasising the importance of quality. Calling for international visitations (ABEP, EUA) does this as well. Nevertheless, the Team thinks that a next step is required, which is a matter of clearly formulated standards and processes, responsibilities and procedures. Throughout the entire organisation it must be clear where the responsibility for quality assurance lies, what this entails and in which way students are involved, as far as the quality of teaching and learning are concerned. It is not just the teaching qualities of academic staff members, but also the way in which programmes have been organised and the facilities provided, which must be a subject of quality assurance. The standards must be set at university level and there must also be specific responsibilities allocated.

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Mid and long-term strategies.

The METU has, as mentioned above, commenced with the formulation of a new strategic plan. In this plan the development of its own research and technology policy, as well as the strengthening of the internationalisation programme, will, without any doubt, be important chapters. In the Team's opinion, three elements play a role in the development of the university's research and technology policy, is so far as management of human resources is concerned: exploiting the capacity of research assistants, attracting and keeping talent, and permanently motivating older staff members. As regards the internationalisation programme, the achievement of convergences between the university and departmental policy will be crucial.

Much has already been said about the important topic of utilisation of the research assistant potential. But the Team sees in such an approach also good pretexts for a couple of problems that were signalled by many, namely in relation to the acquisition and holding on to new talent, and with regard to the ageing of the staff. A developed policy regarding research assistants will certainly contribute to the acquisition of research assistants, although the Team realises that the problem of acquiring and holding on to new talent is more complex. Yet it is important that the research assistant be given a clearer position in the organisation and a clear job description. More attention must also be paid to the coaching and development possibilities of the assistant. This will be of direct benefit to the METU itself.

The acquisition of academic staff talent already starts with the undergraduates and graduates. In this respect, the Team took note, and with approval, that the METU enters into agreements with other universities about exchanges during the graduate stage in advance of research assistantships. For new talents this offers good prospects to develop themselves in the scientific field and to gain experience in other academic environments. It is recommended to consider whether such a systematic approach could also be extended to a number of universities abroad. Of course, one could first think of those universities, which the METU has already many contacts

with, and where METU graduates complete their training on an individual basis and gain research experience during several years.

Offering attractive training prospects is a very important acquisition factor in a culture, in which one is proud of belonging to the METU. It is also essential to be able to offer positions for young scientists who have completed training. Within the given financial scope, the possibilities in this respect are by definition limited. And certainly at departmental level this often depends on coincidences and on the departure of older staff members. These are issues the universities have only limited control over, but the Team has the slight impression that the METU could develop more possibilities in this area. In the first place by further developing the research and technology policy including succession planning rather than a dependence on serendipitous departures. And secondly by extending the already existing exchange programme of young researchers.

Internationalisation has been brought forward several times in this report. There will no doubt also be plenty of attention for this in the strategic plan and the appertaining discussion. Especially in the context of international orientation has the METU a good reputation. But, as all discussion partners agreed, this status must be fought for, as it were, once again every day. Recently the METU has taken a number of good initiatives to reinforce its internationalisation programme. The opening of a European office was a particularly important step. The fact that Turkey is not yet a member of the European Community is, of course, an obstacle for universities at the METU's level. Having access to all large international research projects and being able to make use of international funding schemes are of prime importance for internationally-focused universities, regardless of whether they are located in Turkey or in any other country. The purpose of the METU's European office is facilitating the linking to large international networks. The various discussions showed a wide support for this, but some doubt remained for the Team concerning the office's effectiveness. International experience of, amongst others, the current members of the European Community have shown that exchange of students at a substantial level is a lengthy and complex matter the difficulty of which should not be underestimated. But with some money and enthusiasm, much can be reached in relatively short time.

More synergy can and must be achieved between the university, faculty and departmental policies as far as internationalisation is concerned. The Team heard about the initiative of a faculty to set up its own international office which is a good initiative that is worth following as long as it is part of the overall university policy. Indeed, convergence can only be achieved by co-operation and by linking the numerous individual networks to the university network and vice versa.

The operation of change.

As somebody remarked during the review, 'without tasks, any plan will be a dream'. This expressed the feelings within the METU very well; there is a general awareness that results are obtained with concrete activities. The successful organisation of such activities and of the management of change requires, on the one hand, a basis in the form of plans, but, on the other hand, also specific attention to the quality of implementation processes and management. The METU's policy agenda for the years to come is quite full and demands the optimum use of not only the available scientific staff, but also the supporting and administrative staff. The involvement of the non-scientific staff makes sense because of their expertise, but also because of the support required for the implementation of the policy.

- At the moment, the supporting and administrative staff members, as well as the students are completely absent in the various governing and managerial processes. Not just at university level, but also at faculty level, whereby their contribution and support for specific subjects can be worthwhile.
- There is lack of an HRM programme for supporting and administrative personnel; there is no training for new functions and no job exchange programme within the university.
- Management and management supporting processes, in the opinion of the Team, could be further professionalized at all levels. This means assigning clear responsibilities, laying down unambiguous procedures where necessary, laying down standards that the performance in a function must meet and taking care of education and training of staff members for the various functions.
- The same could be said, in the view of the Team, of the professionalizing of the leadership. First and foremost by making time available for leadership. Many of the academic leaders as deans perform their management in addition to their teaching and research. This gives time management an increased significance. At many European universities, these positions are recognised as full-time occupations, certainly in the case of larger faculties.
- Leaders should have access to training opportunities, as is the case in all organisations, where leadership skills are trained and honed. In this respect, the University should consider tailored courses based on its own situations: linking to real situations and target-setting in the context of the METU.
- Lastly: each administrative body, deans and rectorate should have some budgets in order to stimulate innovation and to act as a kind of lubricant to keep the wheels of change turning. Seed money is a normal administrative instrument, and essential in getting processes up and running.

REVIEW SUMMARY

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Role of quality in the university's strategy.

Quality is a key issue for the leadership and the rank and file, also at the Middle East Technical University. The METU has an impressive standing in the field of quality. The quality of students and academic staff is justifiably praised. But, from an international perspective, METU's claims to quality will be under continuous scrutiny. For the METU it is crucial to organise the available and potential resources in such a way that the METU will continue to be an internationally recognised research university in the future as well. For one of Turkey's top universities there is actually no alternative.

The self-evaluation of the METU indicated the need for a number of changes in:

- The growing international competition and growing internationalisation.
- The increasing demand from society for knowledge: educational programmes must be more market oriented and research must be more society driven.
- The way the university is managed must be more efficient and professional.

What is needed in the first place, in the review team's opinion, is the sense of urgency that still seems to be lacking in many individuals. There is a broad consensus about the developments and challenges the METU is confronted with, there is a broad consensus about the ambitions of the METU, but there is no consensus yet about the sense of urgency.

The EUA review addresses the mechanisms of quality. Is quality defined and are processes to promote quality recognised and described? Have objectives been formulated, plans been drawn up and responsibilities assigned? Do the structure and rules suffice to achieve the set objectives and to substantiate the assigned responsibilities? These questions are under discussion here, not just as far as the quality of learning and teaching is concerned, but also in relation to research as a derivative of both, and the quality of management. Only good management can advance the quality of teaching and research. Administration and management are necessary to adapt decisions and to start up and guide processes. Funds can be obtained by taking combined action. International collaboration requires support and co-ordination of networks. The effective deployment of resources provides room for development.

In this context the project the METU initiated to develop a new strategic plan is a very important step. The Team pointed out that within this strategic discussion there are several subjects that require special and immediate attention

An institutional research and technology policy, including a policy as regards the (potential of) research assistants at all levels.

- Pressing ahead with internationalisation, in particular directed towards connection to European networks and create more internal synergy of activities.
- Further professionalizing of the management by, amongst other things, training of the support and administrative staff.
- Formulating a policy to arrive at a more systematic quality assurance programme, starting from the many first-class activities in this field that are practised already by the METU, such as the 'pink forms' and the WEB pages.

- Reducing inefficiencies within the university, such as overlaps in the study programmes.
- Utilising more optimally the facilities and existing space; the procurement of expensive equipment must be checked with the planning elsewhere within the university, requests regarding space must be balanced against the already available space on offer.
- Considering whether it is possible to improve the facilities, such as the library and the availability of books.

Long-term processes.

Strategy is intrinsically linked to quality. It is based on a critical analysis of strong and weak points, both in research and in teaching. The quality of administration is revealed in the process of adoption of decisions that follow, and the quality of management is shown in how effectively this is performed. The formulating of a new strategic plan provides the METU with an excellent tool to bring about changes to realise the METU's ambitions. A tool, not more, but not less either.

It goes without saying that the quality of learning and teaching is realised on the shop floor, in the classroom and in the research project. But a clear policy and a strong management are essential to achieve the upholding and reinforcement of quality, to exploit the available resources to the full and to prepare for the future. This makes demands on the way in which the strategic plan will be drawn up. The way in which it is drawn up will also contribute to the result. The METU has chosen for a broad forum for discussions about the strategic plan, to let the shop floor talk. This is very wise for more than one reason. The shop floor has the knowledge and must to a large extent also take care of the implementation. The Team would yet like to stress that central direction and central setting of frameworks are essential. In particular as regards the developments in science itself, an interdisciplinary approach will be necessary and, hence, an approach at university level is required. The increasing interaction with society also stresses the importance of direction and the setting of frameworks at university level. As funds will be limited hard decisions must be made by a strong management.

This emphasises the importance of clear and effective decision-making processes, of efficient and effective implementation and of an adequate management that also must ensure support for decision and implementation within the university. This also applies to the way in which the strategic plan will be discussed, laid down and implemented. The Team cannot criticize the way in which the rectorate started the strategic debate and has a great regard for the ambitions and the broad set-up that is aimed at.

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Academic leadership.

Leadership in academic communities is a particularly subtle process. A university is a professional working community and, as is well known, its control is complex. Leadership must be exercised decisively and be recognised; and that, at universities, is where danger lurks: leaders, i.e. the rector and deans, run the risk of becoming alienated from the academic community.

The METU's academic leadership, at various levels, faces great challenges. It must not be underestimated what this will mean in practice. The demands made on the leadership are high and will become higher and higher. The METU has many excellent leaders in numerous functions; the quality of the rectorate is beyond any doubt. But the road to Europe is still long and the international competition is great. The Technopolis has made a tremendous start but is still at the beginning. Disciplines, certainly in the technical area, develop themselves continuously and make new demands all the time on the research environment and on researchers, as well as on pedagogy and the teaching staff. Is the METU up to this?

Much will depend on whether the existing atmosphere of mutual trust and open communication will remain intact. The Team observed a great mutual trust and excellent communication between students and staff, between deans, within the rectorate and between the various sections of the management. But academic leadership also needs cultivation, as international experience has demonstrated, particularly specific training for top professionals. This concerns training with respect to the context of leadership, the aims and activities of METU and internal collaboration and communication. The Team believes that mutual trust and recognition and team building at university level under a strong, well-trained, leadership can lead to the successful implementation of the strategic plan.

Conclusion.

The review team was impressed by the standing and functioning of the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, its energy and dedication to society. The METU is a university to be proud of and it has every reason to keep the spirit high. Due to its standing the METU has high ambitions. And the METU has the potentials to make its ambitions come true. There is no alternative to looking forward and meeting the challenges that derive from internationalisation, developments in science itself and growing demand from society. However, with strong and continuous leadership and full dedication of the rank and file of the university, the Team has every confidence that the METU will surely progress and consolidate its standing as a research university of international standing.