



EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF LEARNING AND TEACHING

UNIVERSITY OF LUXEMBOURG

CRITICAL SUMMARY REPORT



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*APRIL 2021*



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# 1 Introduction

The Ministry of Higher Education and Research of Luxembourg (the Ministry) requested the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) to carry out an external evaluation of learning and teaching at the University of Luxembourg (UL). The NVAO convened an international panel of experts (see Annex 1) to evaluate both the central, institutional level of the University and its three Faculties: Science, Technology and Medicine (FSTM); Law, Economics and Business (FDEF); and Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (FHSE).

According to the Terms of Reference the following questions guided the external evaluation at both central and decentral level: (i) What is the quality of learning and teaching (with regard to national requirements and international standards)? (ii) Is the quality assurance culture for learning and teaching in line with and adapted to the overall academic strategy of the University? (iii) What are the impacts and effectiveness of the teaching delivered? (iv) What is the role of students? (v) Is the management and governance framework for and within the University fostering a learning and teaching culture and living up to high standards? (vi) How is the University implementing its missions with regards to learning and teaching?

The three Faculties were visited at the same time, on 6-8 October 2020 (see Annex 2). Each panel consisted of about ten experts. The panel members visiting the central level on 22-23 November 2020 had acted as chair, vice-chair, subject expert, educational expert and student expert in the Faculty panels. As a consequence of the covid-19 crisis the anticipated site visits had to be replaced by online interviews.

In the run-up to the visit, the University together with the Faculties produced an extensive self-assessment report with dedicated sections to the central level and to each of the three Faculties. This report included numerous annexes which allowed the panel to prepare properly for the external evaluation of the four entities (see Annex 3 for the documents reviewed by the panels). The experts held several preparatory meetings, both plenary and for each of the four panels. Each external evaluation report was organised along the same evaluation standards, which comprised the topics mentioned in the Terms of Reference (see Annex 4) and followed the headings of the self-assessment report: (i) Educational commitments and strategy; (ii) Educational governance and management; (iii) Learning and teaching; (iv) Quality culture.

On 3 February 2021 the four draft reports were presented by the panel chairs and discussed with the University and the Ministry. Final draft versions considering the feedback from the University and Ministry were prepared and submitted on behalf of the panels to NVAO. After the review of the report by the Board of NVAO the final report was sent to the Ministry and the University.

The evaluation reports are primarily aimed at the institution and Faculties concerned and not at a wider audience. The reports are written to create added value for the University and its Faculties in the light of continuous quality improvement. Hence, the reports give back to the institution and Faculties their own stories, including appreciations, evaluations and

recommendations. They do not only state the observations of the respective panels, but also describe the journey of the panels in collecting information, in exchanging their first impressions, and in clarifying outstanding issues during the interviews.

Following the presentation of the draft evaluation reports early February 2021, the Ministry asked NVAO to produce an additional document. This Critical Summary Report should constitute a synthesis of the four evaluation reports and focus on the findings and recommendations of the panels. The report will become public: it will be available on the websites of the Ministry and the University, and presented to the Parliamentary Committee in charge of Higher Education.

In what follows, the panel findings are organised for each evaluation report and evaluation standard. The text focuses on the panel's internal deliberations, which were held right after the last interview sessions and were described in the respective evaluation reports. The chapters on the evaluations of the Faculties contain an additional section presenting those issues the panels found specific or particularly applicable to one cluster. For the purpose of this Critical Summary Report, the initial text has been somewhat shortened but covers the entire spectrum of panel appreciations. Recommendations are highlighted in the text and compiled in the final sections of the respective chapters. The final chapter provides a different type of synthesis, presenting for each evaluation standard the key findings across all reports.



## 2 Evaluation of the University of Luxembourg: Institutional level

The University of Luxembourg (UL), was created by law in 2003. It is the only publicly funded, degree-awarding university in the Grand-Duchy. The University's mission is education, research, and service to society. At the time of the visit, UL employed over 200 staff while more than 6500 students were enrolled in 14 Bachelor programmes, 43 Master programmes, 4 Doctoral Schools and 13 Certificate programmes. The University is organised in three Faculties and three Interdisciplinary Centres. Many study programmes are multilingual; the teaching languages are English, French, German, and Luxembourgish. The main University campus is in Belval (city of Esch-sur-Alzette), while two other campuses are situated in Limpertsberg and Kirchberg (city of Luxembourg).

The evaluation of the central institutional level of the University was part of a broader exercise including a similar review of the three UL Faculties. The panel did not only study the information materials produced by the University but also took into account their impressions from the online visit to the Faculties and the preliminary versions of the Faculty evaluation reports. During the online visit from 22-24 November 2020, the panel held seven interview sessions with the Student Delegation and student representatives, the academic and student services of the University, the Finance and HR department, the University leadership (Rectorate and Deans), the University Council, representatives from external stakeholders, and the Board of Governors.

### 2.1 Educational commitments and strategy

From its very start in 2003, UL has aimed to be an international research university. Over the years it successfully attracted top quality researchers, initiated high quality research in domains relevant for the Luxembourgish economy, and offered study programmes that are attractive for both national and international students. Due to the University's location and size, its international character is a unique selling point. Despite clear efforts to shift attention to its educational mission, the main focus of UL is on research (and third cycle education). The initial goal of being a small-scale research-intensive university is still evident in UL's emphasis on research in recruitment and promotion policies, in the broadly shared preferences for low student/staff ratios and in the limited efforts to raise student numbers which are often far below capacity constraints.

Nonetheless, the University is paying more and more attention to first and second cycle education and has formulated strategic commitments concerning education. These commitments do not constitute a unified vision on education, but include several relevant elements, such as: a *Charte pédagogique* exemplifying the vision on education; increased attention for a student learner-centred approach; an educational offer that takes into account the skills needs of the professions in Luxembourg; curricula anchored in research with research-informed teaching and a balance between theory and practice; attention to interdisciplinarity by building curricula around thematic niches; a digital strategy emphasising

digital literacy and technology-based learning; a focus on entrepreneurial skills, as well as on multilingualism and language skills.

The University is adopting a self-critical attitude in reflecting on the tensions that exist between these commitments: research-based curricula vs. student and labour market demands for practical skills; accessibility, diversity and national needs vs. attracting high-potential students through more selective admission; technology-enhanced learning vs. the small scale of the University and the importance of personal contacts; and fostering transversal competences vs. curricular overload. The panel agrees with the analysis made by the UL representatives that there is a need to be more selective in determining strategic priorities, to increase the institutional strategic capacity with a comprehensive quality assurance (QA) framework for education, and to better coordinate the strategies across institutional levels. If the University wants to raise its educational impact, it has to accept that this cannot always be reconciled with research interests of being small and selective with research-intensive curricula. At least in some programmes, the small-scale benefits will have to give way to the advantages of having a greater impact on society with more graduates, who possess the required transversal skills and have been educated with technology-enhanced teaching. Most importantly, UL needs to agree on a unified and shared educational vision with a learning and teaching strategy that is an integral part of the overall strategy of the University.

The University applies a four-year planning cycle to secure funding through a multiannual contract with the Ministry of Higher Education and Research. The current four-year plan includes intentions and overviews of the budgetary consequences but no implementation plan with clear actions, timing and distribution of responsibilities. Nevertheless, the overviews show that most strategic commitments concerning education are included in the multiannual contract and they are often operationalised through Key Performance Indicators (KPI). In that case, they are clearly visible and their progress is followed-up and reported on. For instance, there is a KPI in the contract on the number of programme accreditations (which is met); however, the commitment to build a quality assurance system (already alluded to in the 2014-2017 plan and recommended in the 2016 IEP evaluation) is still work in progress. It seems that the strategic process is, at least partially, carried out in function of securing financial resources for the next four-year cycle. Moreover, the communication of strategic plans and initiatives across the University is limited. Strategic initiatives are often seen as coming from the top and associated with (former) University leaders. Strategic planning at Faculty level or as a bottom-up contribution by the Faculties to the University strategy appears to be limited. The next four-year plan covers the period 2022-2025. The University intends to take the results from this external evaluation into account for that plan. **The panel recommends that the next four-year plan include an implementation plan with clear objectives and indicators that enable the monitoring of progress made, and that are reported and communicated throughout the University.** It is also important that the Faculties are fully involved in the development of this plan and that strategic initiatives on University and Faculty levels are aligned.

A very positive development is the formulation of a new strategic plan that looks forward to the next 20 years: it extends the time horizon and strategic scanning, and will be sustained by annual reviews and follow-up of the strategic initiatives, and by internal communication in





order to secure continuous support of academics and administrative staff. The forthcoming four-year plans should be based on this long-term strategic perspective. The Board and Rectorate seem very committed to this new drive. According to the panel, the University Council should be fully involved in this strategic process.

UL has established many partnerships with other universities in the region, in Europe and beyond. Most partnerships focus on mobility, whilst other co-operations concern research and joint programmes. The University aims to create a limited number of strategic partnerships with universities in the neighbouring countries, as well as outside Europe. Fostering strategic partnerships across a wider geographical range would stimulate mobility outside the neighbouring countries, attract international students and broaden UL's international perspectives. The inclusion of UL's Mobility Office in its International Relations Office has benefitted an integral approach to internationalisation. As 45% of UL's student population is Luxembourgish, international students remain important for the viability and growth of the University. As non-EU students comprise 30% of master students and only 7% of bachelor students, there is potential for international growth. However, it is very difficult to attract more non-EU students when the language of instruction is not in English. The tension between the policy of multilingualism and the desire to attract more international students needs to be addressed, and this also goes for the question how the presence of international students can be used to stimulate intercultural and international competences.

The need for a comprehensive internationalisation strategy - recommended in 2016 by an international panel visiting UL in the framework of the Institutional Evaluation Programme of the European University Association - is long overdue. **The NVAO panel recommends that the University formulates and implements such a strategy without further delay.**

Internationalising the curriculum, internationalisation at home and providing better opportunities for students from different national backgrounds to meet and interact with Luxembourgish students and society deserve attention. Likewise, the policy on international partnerships, joint programmes and how these fit into the internationalisation objectives and the 20 years forward strategy needs to be made explicit. In its internationalisation strategy, UL also has to look at its external stakeholders, in particular the government, as multilingualism, visa restrictions, tuition policy, accommodation and cost of living are barriers to attract more non-EU students.

## 2.2 Educational governance and management

At UL, the three governance bodies as stipulated by law are the Board of Governors, the Rector and the University Council. The Board of Governors, and especially its President, have a clear vision on the University's role and ambitions. The Commissioner of the government attends meetings of the Board in a consultative role and allows for a direct communication line with the government. This is a clear arrangement respecting the University's autonomy. Unfortunately, informal communication channels between members of the University community and members of the government may, from time to time, add a political dimension to the discussions, thereby potentially undermining the University's autonomy. The University and the Ministry could analyse whether the current regulations regarding organisational autonomy are not overly constraining the development of UL. The rather hierarchical organisation on all levels may hamper a stronger involvement of students and

staff in decision-making processes. This has led to the creation of working groups and other ad hoc committees to ensure the necessary consultations on the different levels. The panel noted that the University seems to be struggling to give these groups a place within the formal structures.

The new 2018 law has seen university-wide study regulations and ongoing review of academic procedures. The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, who is responsible for the central services for education, is a driving force for changes in the teaching and learning processes. The current excellent cooperation between the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and the Vice-Rector for Research is of great importance for managing change processes in the institution. The central level is formally responsible for the creation and termination of study programmes, the delivery of degrees and the appointment of professors. The Rectorate is at times overburdened with tasks and therefore the decision-making process may be perceived on faculty level as taking too long. The support for the Rectorate seems understaffed.

The new law has also enhanced the advisory role of the University Council, which is a positive development. The University Council has been defining its legal responsibility for approving the general orientations of study programmes; thereby, helping to connect the central level to the faculty and programme level. The Council can play an important and constructive role in advising the University leadership and Board on academic matters, particularly on learning and teaching and other matters affecting the faculties, departments, and programmes. Even if the advice of the Council is non-binding, its membership representing staff and students can provide additional endorsement and/or valuable advice regarding decisions taken by the Rectorate and Board. The competences of the Council are extensive, and its President has a constructive vision on how to fully develop the advisory role of the Council. **The panel recommends that the Rector and the President of the University Council work closely together to see how the Council's role can be fully enhanced by joint agenda setting and proper procedures. The panel also advises the Council to take additional measures to increase student involvement.**

The decision-making, as regulated in the law, is quite centralised at UL: the Board of Governors appoints the Rector, Vice-Rectors, and Deans. The Dean leads the Faculty, under the authority of the Rector, and nominates the Study Programme Directors who are responsible for the entire organisation of the study programmes. The interviews at Faculty level reveal that some Study Programme Directors seem overburdened and are experiencing little support from the central level, and the administrative support seems understaffed. Each Faculty has a Faculty Council which includes staff members and 3 students. This Council has a consultative role for the Dean concerning the organisation of teaching and research activities but lacks any decision-making powers – which is vested in the Dean. The Dean also chairs the Faculty Council.

Following the new law, a departmentalisation of the Faculties was initiated in 2019. The links between education and research can be fostered through this structural change. The organisational changes as a consequence of the departmentalisation differed per Faculty: they were most profound at FHSE whilst only minimal at FDEF. Currently, there are 13 departments at UL led by Heads of Departments, full professors who have been appointed by the Rector and proposed by the Dean. The Dean and Heads of Departments meet in Faculty

management teams. The teaching quota for professorial staff are determined by the Deans, whereas the Head of Departments are responsible for the allocations of teaching in line with defined quotas. The creation of a university-wide policy for teaching allocations and measurement is in development.

The Study Programme Director organises and chairs the Board of Examiners which consists of at least 5 members of the programme's teaching staff. This Board confirms the recognition of credits acquired through prior learning, confirms grades and ECTS obtained by students, decides on student progression, and supervises the organisation of assessments in the programme. There is no overarching Board of Examiners at Faculty or University level. The Study Programme Director plays a very central role, which can lead to a wide diversity in the recognition and assessment practices across programmes. Some coordination, though, may happen in the regular meetings of the Study Programme Directors at Faculty level.

The Study Programme Steering Committee advises the Programme Director and programme staff on the functioning and development of the programme, including opinions on substantial changes to the curriculum. This committee includes also external stakeholders but their representation is minimal. **The panel advises to use the revision of the curricula to enhance the involvement of external stakeholders and alumni in the programme committees.**

Interviewees indicated on the one hand that the necessary Covid-19 measures have a detrimental impact on the well-being of students. On the other hand, the pandemic did speed up innovation in delivering education. The University is to be commended for rapidly shifting from full on-campus to almost full on-line learning and teaching. The digitalisation strategy prepared in 2019 has certainly helped to contribute to this shift. Students are generally satisfied with how the University has handled this. The institution has shown a remarkable capacity for crisis management.

Interviews at Faculty level revealed that in 2020 there have been acute administrative problems in the programme and course registration of students. The IT infrastructure and the capacity of administrative staff and management proved inadequate to tackle the backlash and delays that were caused by the pandemic.

State subsidies from the Ministry of Higher Education and Research are the dominant source of income of the University; the income from tuition fees and research is much smaller. In fact, tuition fees are an almost trivial part of the University's total income. The policy of the Government and the University is to keep tuition fees low for reasons of competitiveness (most universities in the Greater Region have low fees) and to limit financial barriers for accessing higher education in Luxembourg.

State funding is granted in a four-year cycle which provides stability and continuity. Other ministries can also provide subsidies, which may stimulate faculties and units to also secure money with other ministries for certain projects. State funding seems certainly adequate to cover opex and capex. The University, anticipating more frugal government subsidies as a result of the pandemic, initiated savings efforts in recent years through e.g. a decrease in campus services during the pandemic and putting on hold envisaged recruitment of



administrative staff. These savings on administrative staff, in combination with the already lean ratio of administrative to total staff, may add to reported problems with administrative overload for teaching staff and pressure on student services.

The University provided the panel with a clear and instructive note on the budgetary process: there is a transparent and reasonably participatory process reconciling budget income constraints (i.e. income consisting of the government subsidy, tuition fee income, external funds) and expenditures on staff, opex and capex. The University has to present a strategic plan with activity indicators and resources required for HR, opex and capex. The University is almost fully autonomous in allocating the agreed subsidies, provided it respects the HR growth and the funds allocated to renting infrastructure, which have to be approved by the Board of Governors and the Government. Annual budgets for faculties and other units are the result of negotiations between the central level and the units, and the result of the negotiations is subject to decision-making by the Board of Governors.

Staff expenditures take a large share of the budget. However, the University works with a significant number of *vacataires*, which could reduce inertia in reforming or abolishing teaching programmes. Some programmes are initiated by the Government in response to perceived needs in the Luxembourg economy or society, and complemented with seed money. In some instances, the seed money seems insufficient to fully develop what is requested, thereby making a reallocation of resources necessary. Another issue is that the University has several programmes where the number of students is way below the capacity of a programme. It is not clear to the panel what may trigger a programme portfolio review to make sure that resources are allocated in a cost-effective way and keeping in mind the needs of the Luxembourg economy.

The University is stepping up its efforts to promote inclusiveness, equality and diversity. The appointed Inclusion Officer chairs the Inclusion Committee and has a consultative vote in the University Council. The committee's goal is to ensure that appropriate provisions are in place to support students in their studies and personal well-being. Interviewees indicated that a lot of good work is done on inclusion but that students may not always be sufficiently aware of it. UL also has a Gender Equality Committee, chaired by the Gender Equality Officer.

In recent years the University has taken several initiatives to increase student participation, which has resulted in an electoral system for student representatives at programme level, as well as broader student representation across Faculty and University committees and councils. In November 2018 the Student Delegation of the University of Luxembourg was established. Its mission is to represent and promote the interests of all students. The delegates also elect, or serve themselves as, student representatives in the Board of Governors, the University Council, the Inclusion Committee and the Appeals Committee. The Delegation currently consists of eight members with representation from each faculty and from doctoral candidates. Despite these initiatives, participation of students is, in practice, still rather low at every level. UL is struggling to encourage enough numbers of students to stand in elections. Some student representatives are very involved, others do not always participate in the meetings. On the one hand, the student representatives interviewed felt that the University does make changes as a result of student feedback and that students are heard at all levels. On the other hand, only some 30% of students feel sufficiently represented



and motivated to assume a representative role. Many students seem to act and are seen as “client” rather than “partner”. **The panel recommends UL to more actively promote the benefits of student participation**, and to support student delegations in their work. However, for such efforts to be effective, the panel considers that student life and the feeling of living in a student community must be improved.

## 2.3 Learning and teaching

The University takes pride in its small classes, facilitating interaction between teachers and students. Students mentioned that there are high quality staff from different countries, helping them adapt to different settings, and also appreciated staff from the professional field who provide valuable network connections for job opportunities and internships. The teacher/student ratios are excellent (1:12 in Bachelor and 1:5 in Master programmes). This small class size enhances and enables UL’s concept of personalised teaching, which allows teaching staff to engage in a wide variety of pedagogic approaches to teaching rather than follow a learning and teaching strategy per se. Although most students are satisfied with the teaching there are calls for more innovative teaching with a practical view, and less front-of-class teaching. The *Charte pédagogique*, the educational mission statement of the University, does not refer to personalised teaching. The *Charte* is more an outline of principles than a guide, and is thus referred to rather loosely when (re-)designing programmes and curricula. **The panel underlines the need for a comprehensive learning and teaching strategy.**

The University collects the learning outcomes, key content, mode of delivery and assessment modes for each course. An online searchable ECTS course catalogue would be helpful for students. As most programmes (with exceptions mainly in FDEF) are not subject to accreditation or other types of external review, it is difficult to verify the appropriateness of programmes and the adequateness of their delivery. UL has no university-wide mechanism in place to ensure that the learning outcomes of all its programmes are fully aligned with the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework. Moreover, there are no clear University standards or processes for the review of learning outcomes in relation to the content, coherence, delivery and assessment of curricula. This means that it is complicated to spot overlap in curricula, and to check student workload and the validity of assessments. Much seems to depend on the investment at programme level (Programme Director, Board of Examiners, Programme Steering Committee), which results in a wide variety of practices across programmes. An indication that autonomy in course design and teaching methods could be overstretched is the fact that 1/3 of students do not understand how the curriculum fits together.

The University has extensive regulations on student assessment. Each Course Coordinator submits all assessment related information together with the description of the course to the Programme Director, at least two weeks before the beginning of the semester. Student satisfaction regarding feedback on assessments is low, and information on the grading procedures is often not transparent. Oversight of assessment processes and standards appears to be granulated with each programme having its own Board of Examiners. This hampers an assurance of the fairness of the application of assessment processes or standards of assessment across programmes and faculties. **The panel welcomes UL’s intention to set up a central examinations office that assumes responsibility for assessment-related quality assurance.**

UL has set up an academic appeals procedure which is in the process of implementation. Appeals should first be lodged with the Board of Examiners. If rejected, students can appeal before the University's Appeals (Litigation) Committee. The functioning of this committee is regulated by law. Decisions of the Appeals Committee may be contested by a judicial appeal before the Administrative Court. The panel endorses the full implementation of the appeals procedure.

The restructuring of the Finance programmes provided a good example of international benchmarking which enabled the development of a strong curriculum that met international standards. **The panel encourages the University to consider more opportunities for benchmarking in teaching and learning**, with universities in the Greater Region but also with comparable small universities beyond this region. The mandatory mobility of one semester in the Bachelor programmes requires many partnerships with international universities. Closer partnerships enable joint programmes, which are important assets for the University.

The new multilingualism policy will be rolled out in 2021 and provide more linguistic support for students and staff. This is much needed considering UL's ambitions on multilingual policy and the current demand for funding more language courses. The University seems to accept that the new policy may limit the attractiveness of mainly bachelor programmes to international students and points to the 20 Master programmes that are taught in English.

As mentioned before, the student enrolment was facing some serious IT problems in 2020 as a consequence of the turmoil caused by the pandemic. However, administrative difficulties with admissions are a recurring problem. Moreover, international students often face problems with registration, causing long waiting lists between application and final admission, with students possibly accepting admissions elsewhere. The Admissions Office of the Students Department handles applications, enrolment and payments, and prepares diplomas. The responsibility for managing the student lifecycle is shared with Faculties and study programme staff. In the past there were no centralised formal procedures in place to facilitate coordination between these levels. Moreover, the in-house IT platform for student and course management is no longer suitable. The Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs confirmed that the tender process for a new system has been set in motion.

Apart from a recently adopted policy in FDEF, a transparent teaching load policy seems to be lacking. The teaching load quota are part of the contracts with teaching staff and kept confidential. Legally, core professors should have a minimum teaching load and only the Rector is exempt from teaching. These minimum teaching loads may lead to programmes mainly being taught by visiting professors, temporary professors, PhDs or teaching assistants. **The panel recommends to define and implement a balanced staff policy on both research and teaching efforts.** When academic staff is recruited, the candidates' educational profile and capacity to contribute to a given curriculum is considered, but usually does not take precedence above research record and capacity. In fact, the panel considers that in the staff recruitment and promotion policy, research criteria are a more significant component than teaching. Individual teaching load and teaching quality should be considered as an input into the promotion requests. **The panel recommends to develop mechanisms, such as requirements for certificates in teaching, to further emphasise the importance of the quality of teaching.**

UL has a substantial number of external staff (*vacataires*), especially in more professionally oriented programmes. In general, this temporary teaching staff does a great job and they are highly appreciated by students. Teaching staff are accessible but there seems to be no 'culture' of office hours (off-Covid) or time slots where students can reach professors. External teaching staff are particularly difficult to get in touch with, except before and after class on campus. Moreover, the panel noted in faculty interviews that recruitment of external teaching staff is rather informal and that evaluation, guidance and supervision of teaching and learning for temporary professors is not well developed. Particularly, assessment seems a problem in cases where many small courses are taught by visitors or temporary staff, and assessment often resorts to writing papers with weak grading criteria. UL recognises the problem and has conducted an internal audit on external teaching staff. The IEP 2016 evaluation already suggested tutoring in a peer-to-peer mentoring programme. **The University should consider taking up this suggestion and also intensifying its induction and training efforts of both external and internal staff.**

The educational support on the central level is limited to a part of the 21 FTE which comprise the Student Officers who work in the Student Department, plus the admissions team, the mobility office and the housing team. The educational support that realistically can be given to the Faculties is very limited considering the scarce human resources. It became clear in the faculty interviews that the capacity of the educational and administrative support is stressed and that the services at both levels are understaffed. In some areas this leads to complaints by students and frustrations by teaching staff who are faced with too much administrative workload. Teaching staff would also benefit from pedagogical support for their teaching. Support for curriculum development and technology-enhanced learning would also be needed. However, the University seems determined to strictly steer on a lean overhead ratio and recent costs savings will likely aggravate this matter. The University should consider whether shortages of support staff will not be more detrimental to teaching capacity and quality than a less strict approach to the overhead ratio.

The close ties that staff and programmes maintain with the professional world and the good prospects for job opportunities in Luxembourg are strong assets for the University. The establishment of the Career Centre aims to support students in their preparations for the world of work, and is also a resource where recruiters can consult CVs of students. The alumni policy, however, is still a work in progress. There is currently no University system for tracking graduates and no alumni association. A new alumni officer has recently been appointed. This delay has caused frictions with FDEF which had to curb its own alumni engagement efforts because of the intended central initiatives, although FDEF is convinced that the faculty level is more suitable for alumni relations management. **The University might consider setting up an alumni relations system that benefits from standardised use for the University but has sufficient flexibility when it comes to input and data requirements from the faculty level.**

The Luxembourg Learning Centre at the Belval campus is the new, successful library and multifunctional space which has received significant investments, and can be accessed also by the local community. Students are very happy with these modern facilities. At the request of students, the Centre has also opened on Saturdays, and will widen its opening hours to Sunday. There is room for further improvement in the cooperation with the National Library (see section 4.2- session with external stakeholders). The Belval campus, an industrial



heritage site with modern buildings, is a landmark that offers many attractive opportunities for the University. However, students and staff mention that the offices are located in the tower building, far from classrooms and laboratories which does not favour informal encounters and exchanges with students. They are also quite critical about the lack of a conducive student life on campus. There are not enough informal meeting facilities for students and the campus often feels deserted. As there is a lack of student life, students go home after classes. This poses another problem as it can be difficult to reach or leave the campus during certain hours, especially by public transportation. Many students commute to their homes in neighbouring countries or other regions of Luxembourg. Student housing in the vicinity is difficult to get by, often located in small towns and expensive. These practicalities contribute to the feeling of students that they do not really form a community. The faculty interviews also revealed that the rooms available on campus are not always well suited to the study needs of classes, or that rooms could not be scheduled for the same classes on a week-by-week basis. The campus is not owned by the University but by a separate foundation (*Fonds Belval*), which appears to have little understanding for the special requirements of a university. UL is well aware of the challenges experienced by students and staff and believes that over time the *Maison des Arts et des Étudiants* will develop into a true hub for student life. It has also made strides to provide low-cost housing stock to international students. Nevertheless, the panel assumes that these measures cannot take away the lack of flexibility on campus because of the ownership situation. **The panel recommends that the Ministry steps in to broker a solution that results in a vibrant, University campus where students and staff feel at home during and after study/work hours. The government should also consider how public transportation to and from Belval can be improved and commuting time reduced.**

The faculty evaluation reports mention challenges of a different nature at the Kirchberg and Limpertsberg campuses. Although a central location for all faculties at one campus at Belval would aid the feeling of a common University community, the Kirchberg location is beneficial for FDEF because the financial sector, EU institutions and many excellent *vacataires* are in the vicinity. New constructions at the Kirchberg campus and plans for student residences are expected to make it a much livelier hub for learning and student life.

Student services are extensive, ranging from administrative assistance, to well-being and support for international students. It seems that administrative services, despite limited capacity, are very supportive of students. However, the availability of student services could be communicated better as only half of all students reportedly know where to receive help in case of problems, and only a quarter know how to start a student initiative.

Students expressed their concern in several interviews that courses are often too short, which limits to a certain extent in-depth knowledge development and the incorporation of the research dimension. A shift towards courses that span a full semester would help to reorganise student learning, providing opportunity for personal development, interim feedback, and a more profound engagement from students in larger tasks and activities.



## 2.4 Quality Culture

The self-evaluation process at UL and its Faculties has promoted a spirit of critical self-reflection which is clearly visible in the materials. The panel interviews at central and faculty level show a strong informal quality culture, especially in programmes where the student/staff ratios are low. However, the panel underscores the statement by the President of UL's Board of Governors that **there is a strong need to set up a university-wide, documented quality assurance system to maintain and improve quality, and to ensure that knowledge on processes and best practices are not lost when staff leave or retire.**

The University has acted on previous recommendations to develop an institutionalised approach to quality assurance (QA) processes by 'anchoring' this in its Four-Year Plan. As part of that process UL appointed Quality Officers in the faculties and on the central level. These Quality Officers support a bottom-up approach to quality and work together smoothly. A steering group is overseeing their work. **The panel considers that a stronger institutional foundation is necessary, as well as enlarged support to address the forthcoming tasks.**

UL's awareness and commitment to institutionalise a comprehensive QA framework for education has led to the development of the Quality Assurance Framework for Education (QAFE). Some QAFE elements are already in place, others still need to be implemented. When fully implemented, it is important that UL ensures the efficacy of QAFE in assuring compliance with National standards. Central-level quality management at the University confirms adherence to the established review procedure and for monitoring review cycles set by the faculties. This is reported to the Rectorate, University Council and Board of Governors. The four guiding principles for the QAFE (reflection, commitment, agile development and monitoring) are sound and complemented by evident guidelines like confidentiality, good communication and broad participation. The panel considers that QAFE is well thought of and covers the European QA standards and guidelines for institutions (ESG Part 1).

There are no centralised educational services to support the faculties. Resource limitations have made it impossible for UL to make pedagogical and technological support available to staff at the institutional level. The panel agrees to the statement in the self-evaluation report that in order to achieve educational quality and effective QA systems, it is important to provide educational services and pedagogic support to the faculties.

Since 2018, the Office of Statistics and Institutional Research has been providing data for strategic reporting and for implementing surveys of students, staff, and graduates. Although this is clearly an improvement, the data are not used yet for steering purposes and there is no effective management information system in place. The panel hopes that the new system that is up for tender will also generate data and management information to follow-up the strategic commitments. More support staff may be needed to facilitate the operation of this system.

The University sees the revised procedure for programme accreditation as a central tenet of institutionalising the QA system as it creates standards and assessment criteria, in areas such as the teaching process, financial viability, employability etc. Especially at FDEF there is experience with programme accreditation or a desire to obtain accreditation by international

accreditation agencies. Such international accreditations would require a restructuring of programmes into a school, which can only be done after changes in the legislation. More time is needed to enter into a phase of institutional accreditation. More experiences with programme accreditations and the implementation of QAFE will help prepare for institutional accreditation in some years.

A unified framework for student feedback at course and university level, including new student satisfaction surveys, has been developed. However, in many cases the feedback loops are not closed, and feedback is sometimes only informal. The participation of students, graduates and alumni in the completion of quality evaluation surveys is weak. Students should be incentivised to participate in surveys on teaching quality. Other instruments - such as peer review based on objective criteria, student focus groups or alumni interviews - to assess teaching quality could be used to supplement low response rates in surveys.

The response rate to the alumni survey has been particularly low. This resulted in limited data on programmes and employability. There is no effective system for tracking UL graduates and alumni. A professional alumni service has not started yet. **The panel recommends that the University develops and implements an effective system for tracking the latitudinal and longitudinal employment profile of its graduates.** UL is taking a long-term perspective on alumni feedback as a means of reviewing graduate satisfaction deeper into their careers. This is likely to provide, once an alumni tracking system is in place, intelligence about programme design and its benefits for ongoing career management of students and graduates.

## 2.5 Conclusions

For the first time in its existence the University of Luxembourg entered into a comprehensive external evaluation of its teaching and learning. The University set up an extensive self-assessment process involving the University community and its stakeholders. The panel was impressed with the thoroughness of this exercise and the comprehensive documentation it produced. It also appreciated the open and self-critical attitude both in the self-assessment report and the interviews, where participants invariably showed enthusiasm, commitment and professionalism. The panel is confident that the dialogue on learning and teaching will be continued within the University in an open and frank manner. In doing so, the University is encouraged to consider the following major conclusions of the panel.

First, it is clear that the four-year plans have placed a far greater emphasis on teaching and learning. Many of the commitments in this area have led to impressive changes, such as the *Charte pédagogique* and the move towards student-centred learning, the investments in infrastructures such as the Learning Centre, and measures to increase student participation. The current strategic discussions confirm that learning and teaching will have a prominent place in UL's strategy for the future. However, to really put education on an equal footing with research more efforts are needed, e.g. in the centrality of teaching in staff recruitment and promotion policies, the administration supporting the educational function, the campus facilities and investments to improve student life.

The University is a relatively young and small institution which enables direct and informal communication with students and staff. However, there is a formal, hierarchical structure

enshrined in the law with detailed regulations that are tailor-made for the sole public university of Luxembourg. These regulations provide consistency and fairness but can also reduce flexibility and slowdown necessary changes. The small scale fosters personal relationships and leadership styles which, in cases of staff turnover, make continuity in strategic commitments more difficult to achieve. Following up on strategic commitments should not be overly dependent on specific individuals nor should it matter much whether the commitment is part of the University's strategic plan or included in the multi-annual contract.

Therefore, what is needed is that objectives, goals, actions, timelines, responsibilities and resources regarding learning and teaching are put together in a strategy that becomes an integral part of the overall strategy and planning process of the University. This includes a comprehensive internationalisation strategy, as an international student body is essential for the viability of the University. Although similar recommendations and intentions have been made in past it is essential for further progress that these commitments are now followed through. When looking forward to the next four-year planning cycle and to the long-term strategy for the coming 20 years, there can be legitimate confidence that the University will build on the strengths of its achievements to further enhance learning and teaching.

Second, an institutional, integrated QA system is needed to ensure that the quality of learning and teaching takes centre stage in the operations of the University, and that achievement of strategic commitments is monitored and followed up. UL is on the right track with the development of QAFE and by gradually implementing the different elements of this framework. Fears that a university-wide system will stifle faculty cultures, initiatives and autonomy are not justified. An institutional, integrated QA system can play an important role in bringing different quality cultures together. A common structure for developing and maintaining the quality system can be set up in which all levels and their interests are represented so that everyone feels ownership for the quality system. It is necessary, however, that the central level and the quality officers are enabled to take formal responsibility to move things forward. The tendency to fix everything in regulations should be countered with a build-in flexibility to respond swiftly to emerging needs of faculties, without long procedural delays or negotiations between levels. A distinction has to be made between what needs to be standardised so that the system can function well and remains integrated, and what operationally can be left to the decentral level so that the local specificities can be taken into account. For instance, student and alumni questionnaires can have a standardised set of core questions which guarantees comparability but also have a set of unique questions that are tailor-made reflecting specific needs of faculties.

In this system special attention should be paid to the QA of student assessment, including feedback to students, and to ensuring that academic standards are applied across the University. Teaching skills should become a more prominent factor of recruitment and promotion processes, and measures such as the certification of teaching competences should be considered. The concept of personalised teaching cannot be a fig leaf for ignoring modern, pedagogically sound and technological-enhanced learning, but this also requires more support in these areas for teaching staff.

Broad involvement of stakeholders in QA activities is essential to ensure support for the quality system and contribute to a university-wide quality culture. The University Council



consists of such stakeholders and by giving them regular feedback on the results of the quality system and likewise receiving feedback and advice, a broader support can be fostered. Student engagement can be enhanced by excellent student feedback mechanisms, particularly on assessment and grading which is so important for student progress. Student will engage when they feel part of the University community, which in turn reinforces the need to deal with campus challenges and improving student life. The Student Delegation has an important role to play as ambassadors for student engagement in all its different forms and on all levels. Hence, student representatives should be trained and mentored for / during their tasks in order to make their experience both effective and attractive. Finally, in order to encourage student engagement it is essential that positive changes to which students have contributed are communicated well and frequently to all students.

## 2.6 Recommendations

The panel has formulated the following recommendations:

### *Educational commitments and strategy*

- Develop a unified and shared educational vision with a learning and teaching strategy that is an integral part of the overall strategy of the University.
- Add to the four-year plans an implementation plan for learning and teaching with clear objectives and indicators that enable the monitoring of progress made, with follow-up reporting and involvement of the whole University.
- Involve all stakeholders in the strategic process, and the University Council in particular.
- Develop a comprehensive internationalisation strategy, including the issues of international partnerships, joint programmes, internationalising the curriculum, internationalisation at home, the integration of students in the Luxembourgish community, and the multilingualism policy vs. the need to attract international students.

### *Educational governance and management*

- Set up a joint project between the Ministry of Higher Education and Research and the University of Luxembourg to analyse if the current regulations impacting organisational autonomy are not overly constraining the development and flexibility of the University.
- Intensify the cooperation and agenda setting between Rectorate and University Council to fully enhance the advisory role of the University Council in the University's governance.
- Close the gaps in the involvement of external stakeholders and alumni in the Programme Steering Committees.
- Reconsider the savings on administrative staff in view of the administrative overload experienced by teaching staff and the pressure on student services.
- Reconsider the University policy regarding tuition fees in cooperation with the faculties.
- Promote the benefits of student participation and provide more support for student representatives.

### *Learning and teaching*

- Set up, as a matter of priority, the central examinations office that assumes responsibility for assessment-related quality assurance.
- Increase the opportunities for international benchmarking with universities regarding learning and teaching, also beyond the Greater Region.
- Develop mechanisms to further emphasise the importance of quality of teaching, such as requirements for certificates in teaching and a stronger weighting of teaching in staff recruitment and promotion.
- Intensify induction and training of both external and internal teaching staff, and implement tutoring of teaching staff in a peer-to-peer programme.
- Address the understaffing in educational support in a realistic manner: being more ambitious in learning and teaching requires more educational support staff.
- Set up an alumni relations system that benefits from standardised use for the University but has enough flexibility when it comes to input and data requirements from the faculty level.
- Involve the government in brokering a solution for the Belval campus management and access by public transportation, resulting in a vibrant University campus where students and staff feel at home during and after study/work hours.
- Improve the communication to students on the availability of student services.
- Consider shifting to courses that span a full semester (less short courses) to aid student learning, interim feedback, and engagement in larger tasks and activities.
- Optimise resources for instance through shared courses between programmes and faculties.

### *Quality assurance*

- Set up a university-wide, documented quality assurance system to maintain and improve quality; prioritise the implementation of QAfE.
- Give the Quality Officers a stronger institutional foundation and increase their capacity so that they can fully support the implementation of QAfE.
- Ensure that QAfE is equally effective in both assuring academic standards (against National benchmarks) and further enhancing academic provision.
- Expand the experiences with programme accreditation in order to create a greater awareness of and commitment to quality assurance in the faculties, and to prepare the groundwork for institutional accreditation in the future.
- Incentivise student participation in surveys on teaching quality and consider alternative instruments to supplement low response rate in surveys.
- Develop and implement an effective system for tracking the latitudinal and longitudinal employment profile of graduates.

### 3 Evaluation of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine

The Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine (FSTM) aims at conducting internationally recognised research and offering quality teaching programmes relevant to Luxembourg in the areas of Computer Science, Engineering, Life Sciences and Medicine, and Mathematics and Physics. The Faculty distinguishes academically oriented programmes, more professionally oriented programmes and certificate (Life Long Learning) programmes that are usually run with a partner and typically followed by working part-time students. All types of programmes are offered at both bachelor and master level. FSTM's programme portfolio is currently being restructured: in Autumn 2020 it included 8 bachelor and 13 master programmes. The launch of a new Master in Data Science is envisaged.

The panel members involved in the external evaluation of FSTM have studied the information materials and shared their first impressions prior to the site visit. During the online visit from 6-8 October 2020, the panel held 15 interview sessions: three at Faculty level with the leadership and with representatives of student and staff services, and twelve at cluster level, with students, teaching staff and programme leadership of each cluster. The panel appreciated the open way in which both the report on – and the representatives from – the Faculty and the clusters addressed their strengths and ambitions, as well as the obstacles they encountered in trying to achieve some of their aspirations. Moreover, the panel found that most elements it had earmarked for discussion were appreciated very similarly across the clusters.

#### 3.1 Educational commitments and strategy

Strategy-making at faculty level comprises commitments and strategic projects defined at central university level, programme-level objectives, experiences gained in programme implementation, and efforts to position the Faculty on the educational market and towards external stakeholders. It is commendable that the design of new programmes is generally driven by research activities or needs to be formulated by external stakeholders. The *Charte Pédagogique* is not explicitly used to develop new study programmes but is useful for a general orientation; elements of this *Charte* are already be embedded in practice.

The educational commitments of the Faculty seem to be inspired by the predecessor of the University of Luxembourg, which had a strong vocational focus. These principles could be reconsidered and adjusted to fit a university in the tradition of Von Humboldt, which focuses on seeking for truth and insights independently of special interests of stakeholders. In doing so, abilities and knowledge are developed, which makes graduates capable of taking responsibilities in society and the economy. The Faculty programmes seem to do well in this respect, as students indicate they are prepared for both their professional life and further studies.

The Faculty has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. For many identified issues, plans for improvement have already been made, such as moving the programmes to the Belval campus, creating a best practice database, changing the information system for the

management of programmes and students, and creating shared courses. The Faculty uses an effective positioning strategy, offering programmes in niche specialisations. The uniqueness of these programmes attracts students from afar. Aspects that are also appealing to (international) students include the fact that master programmes are in English, registration fees are low, and there is a connection with the Luxembourgish job market. Other reasons for students to choose this University, next to proximity, include the practical orientation, the close connection with teachers, the multilingual bachelor's programmes, the uniqueness and flexibility and specialisation options of some programmes, the research topics, the Belval campus and the dynamics of a young university. Moreover, UL is often recommended by other students.

The Faculty has formulated an ambition to continue to build and strengthen its reputation, aiming at highly qualified students. However, there seems to be a contradiction between selecting the best possible students and offering training opportunities for all local students. Both UL and FSTM pay attention to the integration of the underprivileged population and involvement in community life, since diversity is approached from the point of view of multilingual and multicultural issues, and social involvement is seen as a response to the governmental strategy or the needs of the industry and the job market. The current language policy of UL forms a possible constraint for student influx from other countries than Luxembourg, Belgium and France. Although multilingualism can be seen as a uniqueness and strength, **the panel suggests evaluating this policy in the context of the ambition to be an international university. The panel also suggests using the more attractive predicate 'Engineering' in the name of the Faculty, instead of 'Technology'.**

There is no strategy in place for diversity, i.e. recruiting more female staff and students, non-EU students, students from different backgrounds. However, several clusters indicated it has their attention and should be a priority at Faculty level. The panel recognises the legal barriers for recruiting more foreign students. The reformulation of national regulations on the admission of foreign students would strengthen the attractiveness of FSTM internationally. The influx of international students may be stimulated by the financial support scheme for international students the government is planning to set up, and the extension of exchange programmes.

There are opportunities for co-operation in the Greater Region, and through networks of the professors and departments. There is a strong interaction with the industry and the national institutions in the related fields, both at Faculty and department level, and a significant professional insertion for students. The engagement of external teachers in the programmes leads to a continuous communication and a well-balanced, reciprocal relationship with the industry, and, ultimately, to the industry hiring graduates, which is central to the mission and to the benefit of all involved.

The teaching staff is supportive of the development of processes to reward excellence in teaching in promotion rounds. There is a clear need for transparent rules on teaching duties for each staff category to improve the distribution of the teaching load. Although the criteria for promotions are changing, there are differences between departments and several interviewees indicated that research still is the most important factor. **The panel suggests reconsidering how learning and teaching activities are recognised and rewarded in order to**



**engage staff more widely and consistently.** An alternative line of thinking might be to build upon the ethos of the scholars, instead of introducing control mechanisms to motivate researchers to teach. Regarding digitally enhanced innovative learning environments, **the panel recommends to evaluate the success elements of the COVID-19 period, to integrate good practices at Faculty and programme level, and to provide additional resources to FSTM to hire teaching fellows, instructional designers and learning technologists.**

### 3.2 Educational governance and management

There is a top-down management structure at FSTM. Joint decisions on study programmes are made at Faculty and department level. However, the decision-making possibilities concerning the allocation of means and the recruitment of new staff are limited. There is a low level of self-funding (small classes, low tuition fees), associated with a risk to rely largely on government and industry for funding. Departments may not be aware of financial constraints relevant to their teaching activities. A clear link between the quality of teaching and the allocation of resources seems absent.

The governance at FSTM in relation to learning and teaching comes across as somewhat ad hoc; a formal and systemic approach to educational governance is lacking. Each Department has a Head of Department and regular meetings take place between these heads and the Dean. However, the role of stakeholders in the decision-making process is unclear. Although there are good contacts with neighbouring universities, international networking and benchmarking could be developed more systematically. Also, interfaculty cooperation (e.g. for joint programmes) would benefit from a more systematic approach.

In all clusters, teachers and Study Programme Directors are in very close contact with students and receive their feedback in informal ways. This approach seems to work, but the drawbacks are that the procedure depends on the willingness of the Study Programme Director to engage students and staff in study programme matters, and that student involvement and ownership remain limited. **Changes in the current way of operating should be considered to improve student involvement, and to formalise the input of all stakeholders.** Furthermore, the drop-out of students should be handled more formally, in an administrative way.

The academic freedom of teachers at course level is highly appreciated; teachers experience an adequate degree of autonomy and take responsibility for the content and organisation of their teaching. This freedom makes UL attractive to universally thinking scholars of high standing. The drawback of such freedom is a lack of harmonisation at the Faculty and department levels. The *Charte Pédagogique* could play a role in this, but is not well known or considered by most teachers. One way to improve the situation is more co-operation with other Faculties and Departments and the use of shared courses.

FSTM has handled the COVID-19 crisis in an impressive way: there was a very rapid and seemingly efficient response, with very limited impact on the students' study progress. The pandemic has accelerated the deployment of technology enhanced education. All staff members seemed very knowledgeable and at ease with many mainstream digital resources and blended pedagogy. The interviewed teaching staff across all clusters was very committed



to teaching and to looking after students' wellbeing and learning. This commitment is not limited to the COVID-19 pandemic but a genuine feature of FSTM staff. Students appreciate the open door policy, the strong support structures and experience a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Nonetheless, there is little personal interaction of local students with foreign students, and there are no formal initiatives at Department or Faculty level to initiate integration. A possible solution might be to organise some pairing for national and international students at Faculty level. The maintenance of student and learning facilities (e.g. on Kirchberg) is also critical to consider in this regard.

The peripheral support of teaching staff seems very limited, especially where it concerns the Study Programme Directors, who have an extensive administrative workload. There seems to be little recognition of the role of the administrative staff. Although plans for improvement exist, there seem to be no teaching facilitators who can support theoretical teaching or a sufficient number of learning technologists to facilitate teaching staff with the digital transformation post-COVID. Funding for teaching assistants is available at FSTM but this opportunity is not well-known. According to the panel, **teaching assistant positions and other small-scale initiatives for teacher tutoring and exchanges of good practice could be promoted more.**

The communication between administrators, Study Programme Directors and teaching staff needs to be strengthened. The different campuses and the physical distance between Departments means that spontaneous encounters and cross-fertilization are greatly hampered. Moreover, the separation between staff offices and classrooms and labs does not enhance communication either. Stakeholders could be asked for suggestions how to improve this. **The panel suggests creating a 'buzz' around learning and teaching,** among others by creating discussion fora and communities of practice for academic staff.

### 3.3 Learning and teaching

In terms of national requirements and international standards, learning and teaching at FSTM is overall of good quality. The quality, output and impacts of learning in the different clusters are adequate, also in the perspective of other comparable higher education programmes in Europe, where students tend to spend a semester to study and feel well prepared to do so. On the basis of generic learning outcomes defined in the European and Luxembourg Qualifications Frameworks, the learning outcomes of the respective programmes were redefined. However, the formulation of the learning outcomes is not always explicit.

There is a strong link between teaching and learning in all programmes; at master level there is also a clear connection between teaching and research; at bachelor level the intensity of this connection varies. FSTM encompasses very diverse fields of study and research. Programmes could use this diversity to their advantage and allow students to acquire more competences in other/related fields of study. Some programmes, especially at master level, are highly specific, and their scientific focus could be advertised more. The multilingualism aspect is both attractive and a drawback: while it attracts students, it can also be a strong barrier for non-local students. All bachelor students at UL spend a study period abroad, which is definitely a distinctive feature. However, the international mobility of teaching staff seems rather limited, apart from sabbaticals.

The efforts to increase the attractivity and visibility of FSTM are commendable. Potential students are convinced to enrol at UL through activities such as a '*Cours Préparatoire*' and 'Math Forge'. There are also orientation activities and extensive (informal) tutoring. The recruitment and admission of non-EU students, however, is problematic and the procedure is hampered by the law and regulations.

Programmes are commended for their small learning groups, interactive lectures, hands-on experience, research-enhanced learning, and the study credits allocated to entrepreneurship projects. Students learn to apply knowledge and use critical thinking, both at UL where they gain insight into the research of professors, and in-company. The downside is that the current curriculum structures are variable: overall, programmes consist of many small courses and students can fail on the basis of a very small module. **The panel suggests reflecting upon the pedagogical design, and coordinating this at Faculty level to ensure more coherence and consistency. The panel also advises making the curricula more flexible with additional room for electives, tracks or co-curricular modules and to provide students with adequate information about these options.** Overall, course descriptions are of good quality and accessible, but there is no online catalogue. Most courses use continuous assessment modalities and a final exam, which seem to be constructively aligned with the learning outcomes. To improve the coherence and transparency of evaluation, the formative and summative assessment of courses require more coordination and monitoring.

During COVID-19, weekly tutoring sessions were organised in small subgroups for all students, and extra support was offered where needed. Additional measures were taken to minimise the effect on the quality of learning and teaching, after evaluating the quality of the process with students, teaching staff and administrators. Such evaluation could be done more frequently, with the results being integrated at different levels of the University.

UL has established a new, modern campus, which is still being developed. During the transition period, the transfer between different campuses led to commuting challenges for both students and staff, and to an unequal access to equipment and services. FSTM could use the recent online learning experiences to organise educational activities more efficiently. This includes the revision of timetables (one day- one campus). There is a general consensus that the older facilities need to be adapted, in particular the common areas and the study/ library facilities. If these are weak, local students will spend more time at home and limit the mingling with international students. In addition to improving the student experience, positive feedback on student facilities constitutes an important marketing tool. Finally, if UL and FSTM want to create a blooming student life and increase the value of education, **student housing in particular needs improvement.**

### 3.4 Quality culture

FSTM should be commended for its ambitious attitude and very high working standards. However, there is no standardised coherent QA system in place at the Faculty or the University. There is a risk that programme quality depends too much on individual persons. Hence, **the panel recommends that a basic framework is implemented to formalise internal quality policies.** Procedures for developing new programmes and monitoring programme

objectives have to be made systematic and transparent, to ensure a consistent coverage of all parties involved in the quality control of the Faculty, and facilitate coordination and alignment. This structure should not be rigid, however, to allow for bottom-up initiatives, and should stimulate the ownership of all stakeholders. In addition, a strategy to structurally involve alumni needs to be set up (at faculty or University level), following the very recent appointment of an alumni officer (e.g. alumni organisation, surveys), as well as a formal complaints and appeals procedure for students.

Currently, quality control at FSTM is handled rather informally. This is in part due to the small size of several programmes. Although student feedback can be provided at all times in an informal way, the formal involvement of students in the decision-making processes should be improved. This can be done among others by improving the communication about student participation (most students are not aware of the election system of student representatives at Faculty level) and by encouraging students to self-organise the selection of representatives. Moreover, feedback procedures need improvement as the results of the standard survey after each course and practical are not systematically shared. Hence, students do not feel heard which in turn leads to lack of engagement with formal feedback tools. **The panel suggests that programmes communicate regularly to students on the follow-up they have given to the results of student feedback.** Despite the low response rates, the results of these surveys could be pursued as a line of inquiry to help optimise the quality of teaching, ideally in cooperation with student representatives. Student representatives in turn might communicate the follow-up of survey results and encourage students to fill in future surveys. Students indicated the surveys have more value when organised after the exams, so that feedback on the assessments can be incorporated; they also prefer a digital survey that would enable them to give more detailed comments.

Across FSTM there are several good practices in QA, which should be stimulated: Programme Steering Committees exist in all programmes, involve internal and external stakeholders, and represent a drive for change and continuous improvement. Each programme has a Board of Examiners consisting of experienced teachers including the Study Programme Directors. Finally, the procedure that was used to draft the self-assessment report involved staff and stakeholders at all levels and encouraged positive contributions and interaction. The input from stakeholders at programme level was aggregated at cluster level in order to come up with integrated views. Although the University and Faculty thrive on a top-down culture, there is obviously room for discussing processes bottom-up with all stakeholders, before a consensus is reached. The panel noticed a clear willingness to reflect and to evolve: at FSTM issues and problems are seen as an opportunity for improvement; after all, “Engineering is about problem solving”.

### 3.5 Cluster-specific issues

The previous sections contained the panel findings that are valid across FSTM. Several elements the panel had earmarked for discussion were appreciated very similarly across the programme clusters. In a few cases, however, discipline-specific issues had been raised in the written materials, were picked up by the domain experts of the panel and addressed during the interviews. The panel findings on these specific issues are presented below.

### **Mathematics & Physics**

The Mathematics & Physics cluster features three bachelor programmes and three master programmes. The position of the Mathematics & Physics cluster in Luxembourg in the landscape of neighbouring universities is respectable. Graduates have good job opportunities and feel ready to take up industrial positions as well as an academic career. The Master in Secondary Education is a successful response to the needs of the national job market and the local students. By taking the education of teachers in mathematics and physics for the country seriously, the cluster engages in an important aspect of society.

In the Mathematics & Physics cluster, more decision-making seems to take place at the Department level than suggested in the self-assessment report. The coordination of duties seems to happen in a constructive democratic atmosphere, although the corresponding procedures are directed through the Study Programme Directors.

The study programmes in the Mathematics & Physics cluster have a variety of optional subjects. This allows students to personalise their studies according to their needs. For teachers, there is room for initiatives in both teaching and research. The cluster has an interesting interaction/ servicing role to play, since mathematics and physics as core subjects are needed in other Departments. The panel is enthusiastic about the planned joint master programme in data science with the Department of Computer Science.

In the Mathematics and Physics cluster, the quality of teaching is developed by extensive communication between students and their academical teachers, which all together form a so-called *community of practice*. Although an approved method to develop high quality of teaching for smaller groups, this process could be made more explicit and reproducible, to be used in the other clusters as well. In developing this community of practice, a general evaluation should mainly cover organisational matters and one should be guarded to implement general mechanisms of quality control.

### **Engineering**

The Engineering cluster includes one overarching bachelor in Engineering (with six tracks) and four master programmes in the disciplines of Civil, Mechanical, Electrical and Energy Engineering. These disciplines correspond to the competence and research areas of the Department of Engineering as well as to common profiles requested on the engineering job market – specialisations have been chosen after a benchmark with neighbouring universities.

The panel noted a double ambition in the Engineering programmes to prepare both professionals for the local job market, and offer specialist research in niche fields that attract excellent students from abroad. Within the Department of Engineering, staffing decisions have been disappointing and some strands, such as Electrical Engineering, are under threat. The teaching staff for Electrical Engineering is mostly external, whereas there are mostly permanent professors in other fields. Due to a lack of resources, the number of courses on offer has been reduced. The panel considers that in order for this small Department to remain viable, the core strands should continue to be offered: Civil, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. In this COVID-19 climate, the Department could present requests for staffing, including business cases and clear reference to potential student intake. The panel observed

that the accrediting body is concerned about the minimum number of professors in a discipline.

Despite the interaction among Study Programme Directors, there is a lack of autonomy for decisions on lab equipment in the cluster. Reviewing the management structure would be advisable, to ensure optimal communication lines with the Faculty. On a more positive note, the panel noted that the verbal interviews with foreign applicants have improved the profile of the admitted students. Moreover, a welcome guide written by foreign alumni is published on the website and sent to admitted students. In terms of gender balance, there is only a low level of awareness (of the need and measures required to improve the gender imbalance).

In the Engineering cluster, programme development is still in a transition phase. The panel encourages the on-going process of working on reform and harmonisation of the bachelor programmes, to solve issues raised and to increase the number of joint courses between different programmes in order to avoid repetitions and save resources. There is a good emphasis on project work which naturally leads to efficient research-led teaching. Recently, the number of small modules has been reduced in the bachelor programmes. It would be wise to establish a minimum number of ECTS per module and a maximum number of courses per semester. There is an appropriate array of master programmes. Attractive strategic choices have been made, such as a niche subject (Master in Megastructure Engineering with Sustainable Resources) and the focus on issues such as sustainability, energy efficiency, digitalisation, etc. The critical issues are the facilities on the Kirchberg campus, staffing and ongoing course development. Although the small size of the Department generates challenges with regard to subject coverage and resources, the benefits of a small size environment are well capitalised with good collegiality and informal communications with students.

The panel appreciates that the Engineering cluster pursues programme accreditation: aiming for a professionally accredited programme will also help resolve the tension between the vocational and the academic focus. Accredited programmes will give a boost to the marketing (and the reputation) of these programmes, particularly among international students. When preparing for accreditation, programmes will be revised to include clear learning outcomes, systematic course learning goals and foresee room for the acquisition of soft skills.

### **Computer Science**

The Computer Science cluster comprises three bachelor and three master programmes. One of the aims of the Computer Science cluster is to consolidate existing programmes. The close connection with the local industry and the engagement of the staff are commendable. There is need of a continuous reconsidering which (up-to-date) technology to incorporate in the programme. There is a strong demand of local professionals for Lifelong Learning programmes at both bachelor and master level. It would make sense to teach all courses in English, being the reference language in computer science, to attract other than local students and produce students for the international market.

The cluster's efforts to maintain and improve teaching quality are noticeable and will benefit from a shared and coordinated strategy. The panel appreciates the COVID-related initiative to



find funding from industry to provide all students with appropriate equipment for distance learning.

The cohesion of the teaching staff in the Computer Science cluster is high. Students are satisfied with the content of the programmes, especially at master level. The workload is high, but doable. However, the correlation between workload and credits should be refined. Other points of attention are the absence of electives in some programmes and the clarity of assessment criteria. The organisation of the programmes is sometimes lacking. More coordination is needed in order to adjust the workload/ ECTS and to avoid overlap in the courses. This also relates to the high workload of some staff members. It is positive that there is a plan to optimise resources and that there is interaction and assessment of teaching within the cluster. The panel also appreciates the strong focus on entrepreneurship, the one week orientation programme for incoming master students, and the individual student tutoring for up to six hours a week, offered by hired staff.

The Computer Science cluster might benefit from including students more actively in the (quality assurance of) programmes. Moreover, due to administrative problems, it is currently not possible to stay in contact with alumni in an organised manner.

### **Life Sciences**

The Life Sciences cluster offers one bachelor (Bachelor en Sciences de la Vie) and three master programmes (Master in Integrated Systems Biology; International Master of Science in Biomedicine; and European Master of Small Animal Veterinary Medicine), operated by the Department of Life Sciences and Medicine. The goal of the study programmes is to cover the national need for well-trained scientists, teachers, and experts in this area with a strong basis in biology (bachelor) and with a specific focus on interdisciplinary experimental and computational training (master and doctoral programmes). In the context of the government's strategy to invest substantially in the Health Sciences and Technology sector, new medical training programmes will be established.

The Life Sciences cluster wants to consolidate existing programmes, but also has the ambition to create a Master in Medicine. In this regard, the recent recruitment of a medical science specialist in pedagogy and a triple degree with a French and a German university deserve to be highlighted. The panel notes that some external teaching staff in the Life Sciences cluster have been teaching for a very long period without a permanent position.

In the Life Sciences cluster, the development, flexibility and integration of courses are on the agenda. Currently, the general bachelor programme, and the specialised master programmes are not flexible. The addition of more soft and transversal skills to the curricula could be useful. The different programmes attract motivated students and accommodate them. The panel found that teaching is more developed than the self-assessment report suggests. Although understaffed, teachers are very motivated and invested in the future of the department. The cluster uses many written exams compared to other forms, although there is variation between the programmes. A further positive evolution is that electronic satisfaction surveys are held on each course after receiving the grades.



No personal tutors seem to be assigned to students; the Heads of Programme are responsible for supporting students as they join their courses. The tutoring of first-year students by second-year students is a positive but not formalised, tradition. Indeed, teaching in Life Sciences seems to be of very high quality, with many examples of sound pedagogical approaches: active learning, experiential learning and varied assessment methodologies thus making its programmes more inclusive.

Also the Life Sciences cluster might benefit from including students more actively in the (quality assurance of) programmes. While students are already part of some committees, their presence is not always possible/ impactful. Moreover, due to administrative problems, it is currently not possible to stay in contact with alumni in an organised manner.

### 3.6 Conclusions

During its virtual expedition to the Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine at the University of Luxembourg, the panel has learned a lot about the Faculty, its clusters, study programmes, internal teaching staff, external lecturers, administrators, students and alumni. Overlooking this journey, the following concluding observations are worth repeating.

There is a top-down management structure, with joint decisions on study programmes made at Faculty level. The Faculty develops its teaching and learning strategy in close contact with state-of-the-art research and in collaboration with the industry and public institutions, where FSTM graduates are in high demand. The panel appreciates the strong interaction with the industry and the national institutions in the related fields, both at faculty and Department level. There is a significant professional interaction for students, for example through internships, the engagement of external teachers, and the presence of a Steering Committee for every programme. Students and alumni feel well prepared for both their professional life and further studies. A substantial part of them pursue PhD work.

An ambition of the Faculty is to continue to build and strengthen their reputation, and aim for highly qualified students. The efforts to increase attractivity and visibility are commendable. The Faculty uses an effective positioning strategy, for instance by offering programmes in niche specialisations. Both local and international students are attracted by the connection with the Luxembourgish labour market, as well as the practical orientation of the programmes, the research topics, and the close contact with teachers. Something to reflect upon for some programmes (e.g. Engineering) is a double ambition to train professionals for the local job market, and train specialists and do research in niche fields that attract excellent students from abroad. The panel also suggests keeping in mind the diversity aspect, as approached from a social point of view. A strategy for diversity should be developed and prioritised at Faculty level. The panel endorses the efforts made so far by the clusters, which are hampered by national regulations in recruiting foreign students. A financial support scheme and the extension of exchange programmes may support the influx of international students.

The Faculty has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. For many identified issues, plans for improvement have already been developed. Strengths of the Faculty include the small learning groups, which stimulate interaction between students and teaching staff,

the academic freedom of teachers, the high commitment to learning and teaching of the staff, the orientation activities, and the strong support structure for students. The handling of the COVID-19 crisis by the Faculty is impressive; there was a fast and clearly efficient response, with very limited impact on students' study progress.

These strengths also have some drawbacks. This culminates in the need to formalise internal procedures, concerning for instance the tutoring system, the validation of prior learning, the drop-out of students, and the coordination between Departments and Faculty with regard to developing programmes and sharing courses. Also, international networking and benchmarking could be developed more systematically.

The panel considers the learning and teaching to be of good quality overall. In particular at master level, there is a strong link between teaching and research. Learning outcomes for programmes, however, could be made more explicit. The wide range of disciplines could be highlighted even more by profiling specific programmes as centres of excellence, and by allowing students to follow courses in related fields of study. On the same note, the panel suggests making the curricula more flexible, with more room for electives, tracks or co-curricular modules for ECTS credit. It also proposes to reconsider the current curriculum structure, as the large number of small courses can create an uneven workload and an extra exam load. To improve the coherence and transparency of evaluation, the assessment of courses needs more coordination and monitoring. Overall, the efforts of the clusters to maintain and improve teaching quality and optimise resources might benefit from a better coordination, simultaneously lowering the high workload of staff members and intensive assessment of students.

To facilitate coordination and alignment, and thus the further development of the quality of education, a coherent QA system should be implemented, ensuring the formal involvement of students and all stakeholders in the decision-making processes. A quality framework is important to identify and solve issues and share best practices. This quality structure should be flexible, to allow for bottom-up initiatives, and should stimulate ownership of all stakeholders. It is essential to monitor the programme objectives, to provide structural feedback on evaluations, and to set up a formal complaints and appeals procedure for students. A formal alumni organisation and strategy could be implemented to structurally involve alumni in the development processes.

The panel values the observed drive for change and continuous improvement of the Faculty, as materialised in the creation of the self-assessment report for this evaluation. This exercise has made clear that teaching deserves the focus of the Faculty, and of the University as a whole. The panel endorses the development of processes to reward excellence in teaching. It observes that there is a clear need for transparent rules regarding teaching duties as well as for indicators for the recognition of teaching in career promotion processes. In view of the ongoing digital transformation of education, the panel strongly recommends providing more support for the teaching and administrative staff, specifically for the Study Programme Directors.





Overall, the panel has seen an ambitious staff and satisfied students, and encourages the Faculty to treasure this, to stick to their high working standards, and to continue building on the initiatives and involvement of both staff and students as partners.

### 3.7 Recommendations

This section lists the recommendations which the panel issued in its report on FSTM. The panel advises FSTM to:

#### *Educational commitments and strategy*

- Develop international co-operation (e.g. joint and double degrees), networking and benchmarking more systematically (e.g. Young European Research Universities Network).
- Strengthen the communication lines between and within departments/ campuses, by providing structures such as a teacher room, (online) discussion fora, and communities of practice for academic staff.
- Create transparent rules regarding teaching duties and be attentive to the teaching load.
- Continue to engage in the development of promotion criteria (with objective indicators) which reward balanced excellence in both teaching and research, in order to engage staff more widely and consistently.
- Reflect on the current syllabus, to trim the curriculum with a view to liberating ‘thinking space’ and also time for co-curricular activities.
- Consider reinforcing staff mobility.
- Be attentive that multilingualism can be a problem for foreign students.
- Improve the administrative processes for international students at university level (e.g. deadlines for prior qualifications, student housing).
- Resolve the unequal access to equipment and services on different campuses.
- Design a strategy to attract more diverse (e.g. female) students and staff, as well as for an involvement in the community life.
- Evaluate the successes of COVID-19, and integrate good practices in digitally enhanced innovative learning environments, both at Faculty and programme level.

#### *Educational governance and management*

- Re-introduce personal tutors for all students.
- Provide more support for the teaching and administrative staff, in particular for the Study Programme Directors; create new supporting posts such as teaching fellows, instructional designers, learning technologists and equip departments adequately to enable further growth of faculty members.
- Define a rigorous strategy and workflow to support the excellent work that is already in place. This will inform and support new members of staff and new programmes’ development.
- Address the validation of prior learning and the drop-out of students at Faculty level.
- Formalise the coordination between departments and Faculty with regard to developing programmes and sharing courses (e.g. using the Charte Pédagogique).
- Review the management structure, to strengthen clear leadership at the department level and ensure optimal communication with the Faculty.

### *Learning and teaching*

- Make learning outcomes for programmes more explicit.
- Consider making the curricula more flexible, with more room for electives, tracks or co-curricular modules for ECTS credit.
- Make sure that the attribution of credits is consistent for the same course in different curricula, and that bachelor courses are of consistent quality.
- Reconsider the current curriculum structure to improve students' workload and exam load; for instance, establish a minimum amount of credits (e.g. 5 ECTS) per module and a maximum amount of subjects per semester (e.g. no more than 6).
- Coordinate and monitor the assessment of courses (e.g. clarity of assessment criteria).

### *Quality culture*

- Implement a coherent quality assurance system with control mechanisms, ensuring the formal involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making processes (e.g. use of data and management information system, close feedback loops, monitoring and follow-up-structure).
- Encourage students to take more ownership (e.g. the election process for student representatives at all levels should be better publicised).
- Provide structural feedback on evaluations (e.g. through workshops at faculty level).
- Set up a formal complaints and appeals procedure for students.
- Design a formal alumni organisation and strategy, at Faculty or University level.
- Maximise the benefits of the community of practice.



## 4 Evaluation of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance

The Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance (FDEF) was established in 2003, at the same time as the creation of the University. Since the start FDEF has focused its teaching and research on four interrelated disciplines: law, economics, finance and management. Since 1 January 2020, the Faculty consists of three Departments: Law, Economics and Management, and Finance. While the new structure may suggest that each Department represents a distinct area of teaching and learning, FDEF is an interdisciplinary, multilingual and multicultural body of academic experts who have come together to collectively define its educational mission and vision. FDEF's programme portfolio includes three bachelor, twelve master and two certificate programmes.

The eleven panel members involved in the external evaluation of FDEF have studied the information materials and shared their first impressions prior to the site visit. During the online visit from 6-8 October 2020, the panel held a total of twelve interview sessions: three at Faculty level with the leadership and with representatives of student and staff services, and nine at cluster level, with students, teaching staff and programme leadership of each cluster. The panel appreciated the open way in which both the report on - and the representatives from – the Faculty and the clusters had addressed their strengths and ambitions, as well as the obstacles they encountered in trying to achieve some of their aspirations. Moreover, the panel found that all elements it had earmarked for discussion were appreciated very similarly across the three clusters.

### 4.1 Educational commitments and strategy

FDEF has identified key educational objectives (to develop and implement high-quality business and high-quality legal education in and for Luxembourg) and several inter-related strategies to achieve these objectives. There is broad awareness of and support for these objectives and strategies among all internal stakeholders. This broad consensus is due to the fact that FDEF stakeholders already know each other for a long time, that these objectives and strategies have been formulated through a cooperative grassroots exercise, and that both objectives and strategies are reflective of the overall characteristics of what the University as a whole stands for: aspire to the highest standards of international excellence in research and teaching, attract academic talent, supply high quality graduates, focus on the national labour market, on multilingual education and on interdisciplinarity. Similarly, there is wide-ranging awareness and support among the FDEF stakeholders for the policy initiatives that have been taken in the meantime to achieve the educational objectives: the academic recruitment strategy, the teaching load policy, international study programme accreditation and the systematic involvement of FDEF's external stakeholders to ensure the ambitions meet the needs of society, industry and the labour market. Summarising FDEF's state of play in 2020, the SAR contained a SWOT analysis, which was found to be correct and strong.

Notwithstanding these educational objectives, strategic commitments and the SWOT analysis, there was no further comprehensive information on the Faculty mission and vision for the near future – the Faculty was awaiting the outcomes of the university-wide strategy process - nor was there a comprehensive list of quantitative indicators that would allow FDEF to

consistently measure progress on its educational objectives or strategic commitments. While there is a state of play, there is no solid strategic plan answering questions such as: where does FDEF want to be in five years, and in ten years, what positive or negative internal and external factors may it encounter on its way, how many students shall be recruited, how many (new) programmes are envisaged, what financial and (diverse) human resources does the Faculty need to reach its goal and how shall it ensure these resources, etc.? **Hence, the panel recommends that FDEF develop, implement and monitor a Faculty strategic plan to realise its strategic intentions.** Such a plan should contain concrete and agreed indicators (KPIs), as well as explicit timeframes and responsibilities, that will allow to monitor FDEF's performance against the strategic and qualitative goals of the plan.

The FDEF educational objectives and strategies are reflective of the overall characteristics of what the University as a whole stands for. Furthermore, multilingualism and the attention for digitally enhanced innovative learning environments are part and parcel of the vision, strategy and policies of the Faculty and are implemented in the different programmes. FDEF programmes consciously decide on the language of a given course and students explicitly choose UL because of its multilingual setting and offer. This multilingual approach is a unique feature that is implemented consistently and contributes enormously to the employability of students in an international labour market. It offers the University, the Faculty, its study programmes and UL students and alumni an advantage over other alumni in the Greater Region. This advantage particularly applies to disciplinary domains such as Law that are dominated - at least for undergraduate studies - by national and monolingual traditions. While the increased attention to digitally enhanced innovative learning environments has certainly been motivated by the COVID-19 situation, stakeholders were unanimously positive about the speed and quality with which in-class education had been switched to online modes of interactive learning.

The individual strategic commitments are considered relevant and an effective means to realise FDEF's educational objectives. The Faculty and the Departments are proactive in trying to implement these initiatives: FDEF is re-adjusting the balance between research and teaching through its academic recruitment strategy and teaching load policy, it is enhancing its engagement with local industry among others through the outreach officers, and it is boosting its international positioning and commitment to quality through achieving programme accreditation. However, several initiatives are constrained by different external aspects, which all seem to be related to governance. There is a lack of academic resources to fully support the Faculty's teaching portfolio with a view to striking the right balance between research and teaching and between internal and external lecturers. Moreover, the administrative autonomy of the Faculty seems limited in domains where it matters, which seems to be out of kilter with the recent process of departmentalisation and leads to challenges, for instance in relation to cumbersome academic staff recruitment, delays in student admission and only very limited attention to alumni engagement.

Finally, the penetration of the UL-wide vision and strategy at Faculty and Department levels is not fully completed yet. While there may be communication on these important elements, there was a lack of awareness among its interviewees about the central University vision and strategy. Several interviewees did have only scant knowledge of the educational charter or other strategic directions formulated at central level.



## 4.2 Educational governance and management

The governance at Faculty, Department and study programme level is well in place. There is a clear hierarchy and a defined governance structure, featuring managerial support for key strategic needs and a support structure to relieve the burden of Study Programme Directors. The internal structure of the Faculty, its management structure and the decision-making processes seem to correspond well to its three-tier structure. Moreover, the structures seem to work well and are underpinned by an adequate administrative organisation with dedicated and competent service staff. The FDEF administrative organisation chart was very informative and this more so when the service staff brought this chart to life through concrete task descriptions and staffing details during the interviews.

While Departments are new as organisational units, the fact that there are three units is a remnant of old entities that existed prior to the University and the Faculty. The current structure with one Faculty and three Departments is preferred over other types of organisation, such as two separate faculties or one faculty and one business school. The Law Department is perceived as the dominant entity within FDEF; while such a position may have been acceptable in the past based on quantitative indicators, this dominance is much less obvious nowadays. Hearing that until now the Law Department had always provided for the Dean, **the panel suggests that in future the Deanship rotate among the three Departments.**

There is good capacity among the Faculty management and in the Faculty structures to strategically guide education towards its stated objectives and to follow-up on its commitments. However, it is obvious that the Faculty is not entirely independent in this regard but has to rely to some extent on the provisions, structures and resources that are set and delegated at central University level. The overall governance structure seems to be rather top heavy with central decisions on programming in some cases being imposed on faculties and Departments, and without proper resourcing of the units. Moreover, there are disconnects between the central and decentral level. In fact, the main shortcomings regarding educational governance and management seem to come from unclear division of responsibilities between the institutional level and the Faculty level. **The panel therefore suggests that the Faculty and the central University level reflect on the interrelationship between the centre and the Faculty to ensure that clear schemes of delegation exist (for committees and staff roles) and that resources are available to enable FDEF to act responsively and seize opportunities that are in line with agreed strategy.**

On a different note, yet still related to FDEF's capacity to implement educational strategy and commitments, the Faculty, Departments and programmes foster inclusiveness, equality and diversity. Several interviews with different stakeholders have established that programmes and services go at lengths to offer all students adequate intellectual, organizational and material working conditions in Luxembourg and facilitate a study period abroad or an internship in Luxembourg. Similarly, the quality of the support structures for students is good. In this regard, several interviewees bestowed gratitude and admiration upon the Study Programme Administrators (SPA) who perform a very demanding job with an increasingly hectic workload, yet manage to also provide counselling and pastoral tutoring services in addition to the normal tasks of their job description.

The Study Programme Directors (SPD) are indeed the central players of the respective study programmes. Their responsibility is considerable and seems to have been further enlarged in recent times with so-called residual responsibilities. Although they are supported in the execution of their duties by SPAs and service officers who take away part of the work, their position within the programme is not only pivotal but also time-consuming. Notwithstanding its appreciation for their dedication and loyalty to the programmes and the students, **the panel does advise the Faculty to strengthen the role / position of the Steering Committees in order to release some of the central programme weight from the SPDs.** While the fixed set of topics that are discussed at every gathering of the steering committees is positive, this committee could meet more often. Moreover, it might be good to follow a stricter delineation for the Steering Committee and the Examination Board when putting their respective roles and tasks into practice as it is undesirable that meetings of the Examination Board are de facto used to discuss topics that rather ought to be handled by the Steering Committee. Moreover, there is a need to address in a broader context the issue of staff workload and incentives to ensure that the roles of SPD and SPA are desired by new applicants and continue to support the delivery of the Faculty strategy.

The role of students in educational governance and management is an increasingly important issue across higher education institutions in Europe. Student representation is ensured formally across UL and within FDEF but is not always picked up by students to the extent expected. However, students, teaching staff and programme leadership are satisfied with the role students can and do play in providing feedback on course and programme quality and, where applicable, in brainstorming on programme development and design. Students are becoming increasingly aware of the opportunities for, and importance of, expressing their opinion on educational matters. While individual students are already making a difference and do act as proper delegates of their class, programme or Department in steering committees and the Faculty council, there is room for more visibility, more systematic involvement and more training in order for student representatives to be fully prepared for their tasks. **The panel therefore suggests that further thought is given to support student involvement and to ensure that effective arrangements are in place to secure the active participation of students in the Faculty's governance and management structures.**

### 4.3 Learning and teaching

Teaching and learning take up an important role in the life of FDEF stakeholders. The interview sessions with students, alumni, teaching staff, administrators and programme leadership confirmed the many positive first impressions of the panel. While each individual study programme has its own history, strengths and points for improvement – issues that have been and continue to be reviewed at programme level by the international evaluation agency FIBAA - all together, programmes seem to do well in terms of design, curriculum development, research-based education, labour market orientation, student intake, assessment and graduation perspectives.

There is good expertise within the Faculty and Departments for programme design and curriculum development. Programmes are developed using a bottom-up approach, taking into account international and comparative approaches, and adding a typical Luxembourg flavour to it. This results in three foundational bachelor programmes and twelve specific

master programmes each addressing a specific niche within the discipline that is particularly relevant for Luxembourg and responsive to the needs of the local labour market. Furthermore, study programmes adopt a clear pedagogical and methodological philosophy on research-based learning and teaching. The inherent multidisciplinary nature and structure of the Faculty ensures that the perspective of students goes well beyond the key discipline of their study. **The panel thinks that students could be encouraged even more to take up elective courses outside their Department or Faculty, which in turn would lead to more customisation of the study programmes of individual students.**

Students and alumni are generally satisfied with the learning environment, the quality of the teaching and the opportunities the University/Faculty offer to them in view of future employability. Faculty, Departments and programmes are well connected with the local industry, including through a network of external lecturers from industry. This mixture of internal academic staff (teaching the research-based foundations of the discipline and specialism) and external lecturers (offering very specific insights based on their professional expertise) is highly appreciated by students. If anything, **the panel does advise the respective SPDs to look within but also beyond their own individual programmes to ensure that all students have acquired during their study the necessary research methodology courses and academic skills at the relevant level.** While several good practices exist with regard to soft skills acquisition within curricula, the panel thinks **more can be done in general to promote soft skills (such as communication and presentation) as an explicit component of the curriculum.** On a different note, there has been a quick adjustment to the COVID-19 circumstances within FDEF, using this situation across all Departments and study programmes as an opportunity to innovate in education.

Programmes are indeed attracting the student audiences they envisaged: a good deal of young Luxembourgers and international Luxembourg-based students for the bachelor programmes and an interesting mix of high-potential students from Luxembourg, the Greater Region, Europe and beyond in the master programmes. Nonetheless, the panel thinks that **there could be scope for developing a more explicit international student recruitment strategy** – possibly as part of a broader internationalisation strategy – that aligns with the multilingual and international mandate and vision of the University and the Faculty. Furthermore, while student admission is based on sensible and transparent criteria, it seems that admission procedures are unnecessarily lengthy, which in turn leads to programmes not operating at full capacity and/or not enrolling the best possible candidates (as they decide to sign up elsewhere due to administrative delays in their dossier). Moreover, the Faculty and Departments have no direct access to the waiting lists of students who applied for a given programme but did not get accepted right away. Hence, the panel suggests **the Faculty and the central University level to implement the results of their discussions on digitalising admission and enrolment procedures, and which services, at what level, are to be involved in making selection and admission more efficient.**

It seems difficult for FDEF to (have its programmes) set up a proper alumni programme as this is reportedly an issue the central University level wants to coordinate yet fails to set in motion. All stakeholders – not in the least current students – were advocating for a proper alumni scheme. While it might be interesting at central level to have an alumni programme, the real added value of such alumni scheme is at grassroots programme or Department level.

As it is perceived as good practice in the panellists' universities to have alumni associations or schemes at different levels, each with their own rationale, **the panel advises the Faculty (and University) to optimise the outreach policy and tap proactively on the alumni network.**

Study programme staff at FDEF are qualified, dedicated, committed and experienced. Teaching staff and SPDs were invariably enthusiastic about their work, their Department and Faculty, and their students, while students and alumni appreciated the disciplinary competence, pedagogical qualities (both in teaching and assessment) and the availability of the internal teaching staff, as well as the specific insights and exposure to the labour market of the external teaching staff. **The panel suggests FDEF to consider setting up a teaching qualification programme for all teaching staff, both internal and external, to ensure that all staff is familiar with the fundamentals of didactics and is aware of what the University / the Faculty considers good quality teaching.**

While teaching staff quality is certainly up to standard, FDEF seems to struggle with staff numbers: the reported lack of sufficient internal teaching staff and the heavy reliance on external lecturers raises questions of viability and – in the long run – of the sustainability of the programmes, and thus of the educational commitments of Departments and Faculty. The issue is not equally pressing at all Departments: the Law Department has 50% of internal staff, while the Business and Management Department relies for almost 90% on external staff. The current limited number of internal academic staff at FDEF is not only hindering regular academic progress but also makes a thorough quality assurance of courses, staff and programmes more difficult. The current state of affairs in terms of FDEF staff quantity has different dimensions: first, it appears to be difficult to recruit new internal teaching staff because there are not so many valid candidates who fulfil all requirements and because the recruitment procedure is lengthy and cumbersome. Second, contracts with internal teaching staff are agreed upon at central level and feature individualised arrangements on teaching and research load. Third, there is no formal recruitment procedure for external staff, who are hired through individual networks and are not subject to regular staff appraisal. Fourth, the current internal teaching staff are increasingly called upon to fulfil residual tasks, which in turn jeopardises their individual balance between research and education tasks. Fifth, it seems to occur that the central University level (upon instigation of external stakeholders) imposes the Faculty and Departments to develop new programmes without providing adequate resources to design and implement these programmes with new core faculty. The key issue is not so much a particular staff ratio that has to be achieved between internal and external staff, but rather the need for a consistent HR policy. **Hence the panel's suggestion to design an HR policy that allows to hire external teaching staff, monitor their teaching assignments and evaluate their performances based on harmonised procedures across all levels.**

The panel considers that a culture shift is needed across FDEF and the entire University in terms of staff policy. In this regard, the recently adopted FDEF teaching load policy a positive development, as well as the balance that FDEF Departments and Faculty are trying to strike between research and teaching in recruitment and promotion. On the latter point, however, career development is still predominantly based on research rather than teaching. **The panel therefore advises the Faculty (and the University) to develop a range of metrics that support decision-making for promotions that are also based on teaching.** In so far as



external teaching staff is concerned, it is particularly important to develop more transparent systems for the recruitment and employment of external lecturers as well as for the appraisal of their learning and teaching performance. As an add-on to the current reliance on external staff, the programmes should ensure that external teachers are sufficiently accessible outside class hours. As they are often very busy professionals, there is the risk that students are left with little academic and course specific student support in between classes. While the issue of external staff weighs differently on each Department, the panel does suggest that **FDEF put in place a solid network of academic tutors, especially to facilitate the integration and operation of external teaching staff.** The need for a more appropriate balance in the number of internal and external teaching staff (which can differ per programme) does not deny the particular value added of external teachers for the students and the programmes as they bring in new developments from the field and allow programmes to adapt to these developments quickly and flexibly.

On a different note, diversity and gender equality are among the core values of the University and are currently being discussed and operationalised as long-term strategic policy which eventually should have an impact on the way academic staff is teaching and students are educated. While gender equality is actively pursued at Faculty level and each Department is paying attention to it, the Law Department is delivering particularly well on the gender balance between male and female professors.

Finally, the geographical dispersion of the Faculty across several campuses does pose challenges to the delivery of, and student experience in, some programmes. It seems that the Faculty's scattering across four locations hinders not only the intra-organisational cooperation, but also the coordination between Faculty and central University level. **The panel therefore advises the Faculty and the central University level to reconsider, if possible, the geographical dispersion of FDEF.**

#### 4.4 Quality culture

In terms of quality culture, FDEF claimed “we have all the hallmarks of a quality culture [as defined in an EUA publication from 2006] except for a clear understanding of the group's (unspoken) values used.” In fact, the diversity among internal stakeholders is such that “the unspoken values are not unified enough to use them as indicators against which to assess whether we are meeting our key educational objectives via our strategies.” There are indeed no codified values to steer FDEF's quality culture, but there is nonetheless a strong awareness of quality and of the need to systematically enhance quality among all stakeholders – from students and alumni to administrators, internal and external teaching staff, programme leadership and management. Because there is some kind of quality culture within the Faculty – and certainly in an informal and undocumented way at the level of the individual programmes – **the panel advises the Faculty to start defining and documenting explicitly this culture.** The exercise of defining such quality culture will be facilitated by the fact that FDEF is also to consolidate and enhance its internal quality assurance strategy and processes.

Over the years the study programmes offered within FDEF have developed tools and processes that allow it to establish that the quality of individual courses and the respective programmes is ensured and enhanced. The Faculty and programmes deserve recognition for

proactively paying attention to the quality dimension of their courses and curricula. Their efforts have clearly and deservedly paid off, as is shown by the external evaluation reports and the accreditation of these programmes by a reputed international agency. However, **the Faculty, Departments and programmes have now reached a stage of development that warrants a more extensive quality assurance (QA) system that goes well beyond quality controlling the delivery of individual courses and programmes.** This advice aligns with similar recommendations issued at University level by IEP in 2016 and, in so far as the master programmes in Law are concerned, by FIBAA in 2019.

A solid QA policy at Faculty level will naturally ensure the transition from the development to the consolidation phase of the Faculty. Developing robust QA processes, which are informed by data collection, would significantly support the process of programme monitoring and review, and hence continuously improve outcomes and quality. FDEF could develop together with the Departments workable proposals which can support the monitoring and review of their educational offer, improve their performance and student experience, and eventually lead to a comprehensive quality management system. When developing such proposals, the Faculty should consider how it can improve the current levels of formal student engagement, notably with regard to course evaluations, and how it can ensure that the results of student engagement are systematically fed back in the system and towards students.

Ideally, this FDEF QA system should be developed and implemented along the lines of – in co-creation with – the institution wide QA system. While quality assurance is a strategic priority of the University, this priority has not yet resulted in the delivery of an overall and concrete QA strategy. An institution wide QA system will allow the University and its Faculties to develop operating processes and policies that will support and enable Departments to fulfil their potential and fully contribute to University and Faculty wide strategies. Further to its advice on the Faculty strategic plan, **the panel recommends FDEF to use the concrete elements in its overall strategy plan - including KPIs, timeframes and responsibilities - to help shape the concrete QA measures that should be put in place at Faculty (and University) level.**

There is a healthy ambition among several stakeholders to go beyond external programme accreditation, with aspirations towards the application for prestigious Faculty-based recognition. There is still a lot to be developed and enhanced in order to successfully proceed to the next level of Faculty evaluation. As this next level cannot be reached through individual (i.e. FDEF-based) commitment only, there is a clear need for a Faculty-wide QA system that is embedded in a broader framework at University level.

#### 4.5 Cluster-specific issues

The previous sections contained the panel findings that are valid across FDEF. Reflecting on the Self-Evaluation Report, the written contributions at programme cluster level and the nine interview sessions with cluster representatives, the panel noted that the elements it had earmarked for discussion were appreciated very similarly across the programme clusters. Most issues reported up by the panellists, be they positive or critical, applied either throughout the Faculty or had been signalled in one session and were confirmed in other sessions. In a few cases, however, discipline-specific issues had been raised in the written

materials, were picked up by the domain experts of the panel and addressed during the interviews. The panel's findings on these specific issues are presented below.

### **Law**

The panel addressed in quite some detail the purpose of the Law programmes on offer, as well as at the disciplinary expertise available within the cluster to deliver these programmes. The bachelor programme aims to familiarise students with all aspects of law and explains how the legal system in Luxembourg is quite peculiar and more transnational than other national legal systems: any field which is national is offered in both Luxembourg and transnational form, while any specific technical law domain is covered in particular from a Luxembourg perspective. After a common first master year, which can also be followed at a different institution abroad, the second year of the respective master programmes is invariably specific and highly specialised in those areas that are of immediate importance for the Luxembourg labour market. Law students who graduate from UL have studied Luxembourg law and are prepared to follow the training leading to take the local Bar exam.

As a focus of research, the attention to Luxembourg law is developing. When the Faculty started its study programmes in Law, academic researchers were all graduates from foreign Universities and initiated research and scientific doctrine on Luxembourg law while academic literature was incomplete. Now, the research group on Luxembourg law is established and provides academic staff with an opportunity to work in a living laboratory for Luxembourg law. Studying law at UL is a rewarding experience exactly because of its attention to several jurisdictions, its multilingual approach, the high number of international students and its strong focus on the local labour market which is made up of highly educated people who are active in transnational institutions. Any lawyer in Luxembourg – even in remote parts of the country – deals with transnational issues, an international workforce and several languages.

The teaching staff are presenting exactly this peculiar environment to bachelor and master level students in Law – and both students and alumni very much like the experience. They are particularly attracted by the international character of the study programmes, the comparative approach to law education, the small groups and the fact that there is a good balance in classes being taught in French and English. Students appreciated the balanced mixture in teaching by internal academic teaching staff and highly experienced external practitioners. As both the University and the Faculty are networked locally, law students get a good overview of, and introduction to, the Luxembourg labour market.

### **Economics and Finance**

The Economics and Finance cluster features one bachelor programme, one follow-up master and two specialist master programmes. Several programmes contain multidisciplinary elements (e.g. the bachelor programme features law courses), cater for a diverse audience (e.g. master courses opening up to engineering students) or encourage students to take elective courses at other Departments and Faculties. In 2019-2020, two long-standing master programmes were discontinued while two other programmes started. The new programmes were designed taking into account the viewpoints of both internal and external stakeholders, including employers looking for potential graduates and private companies looking for academic content. Changes in the programme portfolio happen at different speeds: adjustments to existing programmes can be implemented swiftly if the dossier is well

prepared, while plans for a new bi-disciplinary bachelor programme was eventually not accepted, notwithstanding significant enthusiasm in the Steering Committee, because it did not fit the next four-year strategy at central University level.

In every study programme, students are exposed to research articles and research-based teaching. Nonetheless, it is possible not to actively acquire research skills in the bachelor programme when a student decides to perform an internship rather than a research project. As these research skills are taken for granted in all master programmes, the panel suggests to add a research seminar either at the end of the bachelor or at the start of the master programme to ensure everybody knows how to deal with research papers and perform research. Some of the master programmes are anyway tailored to the expectations of research interested students.

Courses are taught by a mixture of internal academic staff and external practitioners, with the latter category being in the majority. Students are very much aware of the difference between internal and external staff, see above all benefits in this diversity and suggest maintaining the combination of both types of teachers. In addition to plenary courses with teaching staff, assistants hold small workshops, supervise study groups solving assignments and assess the students' soft skills during presentations. Sometimes students make presentations for external staff, who provide much appreciated constructive feedback on both disciplinary know-how and soft skills.

### **Business and Management**

The Business and Management cluster consists of one bachelor programme and three distinct master programmes. The foundational bachelor programme provides a good balance between theory and practice, including professional skills such as leadership; the Accounting and Audit master prepares for a career in Luxembourg; the Logistics and Supply Chain master is a high-end programme with an international audience; and the master in Entrepreneurship and Innovation prepares students for a career as entrepreneur. Several curricula were designed by looking at benchmark programmes across the world and adding a distinctive Luxembourg flavour. The diversity in study programmes is also reflected in the students who enrol for the programmes, their geographical and educational backgrounds and their career aspirations. Across this diversity, students and alumni concurred in their appreciation of the disciplinary expertise of the teaching staff (both internal and external), the accessibility of the study programme directors and the availability of academic tutors who are genuinely interested in their students. Moreover, international students explicitly mentioned the individual support they received from service staff in finding accommodation or a student job.

In line with the purpose of the respective study programmes, there is a good balance in the courses between theoretical know-how and practical skills. Compared to other clusters, the share of practice in Business and Management courses is higher, with students estimating that the practical element take up between 50% and 65% of the study time. These courses are taught by a mixture of internal academic staff and external practitioners, with the latter category largely outnumbering the former. Students are aware of the high number of external teaching staff and see great advantages in also having external staff teach courses because they are the real-life experts with hands-on expertise and well connected on the Luxembourg labour market. Moreover, the recent establishment of outreach officers who are in contact

with external stakeholders is an important and positive development for the future of the Faculty, Department and study programmes.

FDEF was the first Faculty to demonstrate programme quality through external accreditations and has deservedly obtained such recognition. With regard to the Business and Management programme cluster, there have been so-called informal “watercooler sessions” to discuss the possibility of setting up a structure that would resemble a business school, but these discussions are still at an embryonic stage. The leadership at Faculty, Department and programme level are aware that AACSB or EQUIS accreditations would boost the reputation of the UL and its business and management programmes. At this moment, however, it is too early to prepare for such world-class accreditations because the internal quality assurance system is not yet up to par. This is not problematic nor surprising given that only five years ago the first study programme was submitted for external evaluation. Moreover, these accreditation bodies expect students to be educated in topics such as responsible management and sustainability. While ‘accelerating a societal shift to sustainability’ is one of FDEF’s key educational objectives, this is not yet systematically embedded in the respective curricula, even though two programmes are dedicated to sustainability. In sum, the panel found that there is an organic formation of quality assurance processes in place, but the organisation of quality assurance at Faculty or Department level is not yet sufficiently mature. If these next level accreditations are to be pursued, then the central University level will also have to step in and support this quality assurance development process.

## 4.6 Conclusions

During its virtual expedition to the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance at the University of Luxembourg, the panel has learned a lot about the Faculty, its Departments, study programmes, internal teaching staff, external lecturers, administrators, students and alumni. Overlooking this journey, the following concluding observations are worth repeating.

A first conclusion is that after almost fifteen years of existence, the Faculty has reached a good level. FDEF has established its own objectives and strategy, it has developed a range of relevant and interesting study programmes, it has attracted a good number of local and international students, and its day-to-day teaching and learning chores are performed by competent and committed teaching staff and administrators.

A second conclusion is that FDEF, as part of a bigger institution, aligns with the vision of the University of Luxembourg. With the UL, the Faculty shares not only the same legal framework, but also a common vision of what higher education in Luxembourg should look like: multilingual, international, small-scale, research-based, profession-oriented, and at the service of society in general and the Luxembourg labour market in particular. These features represent exactly what studying at FDEF is like.

A third conclusion is that in terms of operationalising the Faculty’s strategy along the lines of the evaluation criteria, FDEF has reached a level that is quite remarkable for an academic institution of such young age. In so far as educational commitments, governance, teaching and learning, and quality culture are concerned, FDEF is performing up to standard.



A fourth conclusion is that notwithstanding its achievements, there are a few elements in the system that seem to impede the Faculty from reaching (even) better results. There are disconnects between the central University level and the decentral Faculty level, which concern a variety of topics and require first and foremost a more fundamental reflection on the interrelationship between the University and the Faculty, including a transparent division of responsibilities across the levels with appropriate budgetary implications. Another point of improvement concerns staff policy and the way in which Faculty and Departments are trying to strike a balance between internal and external teaching staff, and between research and teaching in recruitment and promotion. Apart from harmonising the recruitment and appraisal policy of external staff, a culture shift is needed within the Faculty (and the University) to put research and teaching on equal footing for promotion. Furthermore, the geographical dispersion of FDEF across several campuses is challenging the delivery of programmes, the wellbeing of students, and the cooperation within the Faculty and towards the central University level.

A fifth conclusion is that FDEF has now reached a stage in its development where further advancement requires new and challenging steps in terms of strategic planning and quality assurance. The current educational objectives and strategic commitments of the Faculty constitute a good overall framework but require a solid and more comprehensive strategic plan with a larger number of concrete indicators, explicit timeframes and responsibilities that will allow to consistently monitor FDEF's performance and progress on these objectives and commitments. Secondly, and relatedly, FDEF's efforts on programme quality now warrant a more extensive QA policy with a Faculty-wide (and possibly University-wide) QA system that goes well beyond quality controlling the delivery of individual courses and programmes. Robust QA processes, which are informed by data collection, will support the monitoring and review of the educational offer, and improve both programme performance and student experience.

In sum, the intrinsic quality of the teaching staff, the specific niche offer of the study programmes and the key features of studying in a multilingual, international, small-scale and labour-market oriented setting at UL, constitute attractive selling points of the Faculty. Having encountered dozens of committed individuals who spoke with great enthusiasm about their programme, service, Department and Faculty, the panel is convinced that it must be a nice experience to study or work at the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance of the University of Luxembourg.

## 4.7 Recommendations

This section lists the recommendations which the panel issued in its report on FDEF. The panel advises FDEF to:

- Develop, implement and monitor a Faculty strategic plan in order to realise its strategic intentions.
- Have the Deanship rotate among the three Departments.
- Strengthen the role / position of the Steering Committees in order to release some of the central programme weight from the Study Programme Directors.

- Support student involvement and ensure that effective arrangements are in place to secure the active participation of students in the governance and management structures.
- Encourage students even more to take up elective courses outside their Department or Faculty.
- Promote soft skills (such as communication and presentation) as an explicit component of the curriculum.
- Develop a more explicit international student recruitment strategy.
- Strike the right balance between internal and external teaching staff.
- Set up a teaching qualification programme for all teaching staff, both internal and external.
- Put in place a solid network of academic tutors, especially to facilitate the integration and operation of external teaching staff.
- Define and document explicitly the Faculty's quality culture.
- Develop a more extensive quality assurance system that goes well beyond quality controlling the delivery of individual courses and programmes.
- Use the concrete elements in its overall strategy plan - including KPIs, timeframes and responsibilities - to help shape concrete quality assurance measures that should be put in place at Faculty (and University) level.

Furthermore, the panel calls upon both the Faculty and the central University level to:

- Reflect together on their interrelationship in order to ensure that clear schemes of delegation exist (for committees and staff roles) and that resources are available to enable FDEF to act responsively and seize opportunities that are in line with the agreed strategy.
- Discuss how the admission process can be optimised and which services, and at what level, are to be involved in making selection and admission more efficient.
- Develop a range of metrics that support decision-making for promotions that are also based on teaching.
- Design an HR policy that allows to hire external teaching staff, monitor their assignments and evaluate their performance based on harmonised procedures.
- Optimise the outreach policy and tap more proactively on the alumni network.
- Reconsider, if possible, the geographical dispersion of FDEF.
- Work on a broad quality assurance framework (at central level) within which FDEF is able to develop its own quality assurance system.



## 5 Evaluation of the Faculty of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences

The Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (FHSE) is the largest of the university's three faculties. It employs some 500 staff and more than 2100 students are divided over four bachelor and twenty master programmes. Students and lecturers come from all over the world: FHSE profiles itself as a highly heterogeneous, multicultural and multilingual environment. The Faculty features five Departments - Humanities, Education and Social Work, Social Sciences, Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Geography and Spatial Planning – and the Luxembourg Centre for Educational Testing. For the sake of this evaluation, the study programmes were presented and discussed in four clusters: education and social science; humanities; psychology and health; and spatial planning and European governance.

The twelve panel members involved in the external evaluation of FHSE have studied the information materials and shared their first impressions prior to the site visit. During the online visit from 6-8 October 2020, the panel held a total of sixteen interview sessions: four at Faculty level with the leadership and with representatives of student and staff services, and twelve at cluster level, with students, teaching staff and programme leadership of each cluster. The panel appreciated the open way in which both the report on - and the representatives from – the Faculty and the clusters had addressed their strengths and ambitions, as well as the obstacles they encountered in trying to achieve some of their aspirations. Moreover, the panel found that several elements it had earmarked for discussion were appreciated very similarly across the four clusters.

### 5.1 Educational commitments and strategy

The Faculty prioritised a number of strategic commitments in the SAR. These include optimising the administrative structure of the Faculty, the creation of new job profiles, the development of new study programmes, cross-curricular elements and digitisation. There are also a number of shared values specific to the Faculty, such as interdisciplinarity and internationality, multilingualism, transversal and transferable skills, orientation towards research, a focus on practice and the concept of the '*citizen student*'. Overall, the Faculty has an ambitious and innovative strategy, supported by a differentiated structure of responsible committees and positions, and clearly states its core values. The leadership of the clusters and the Faculty was generally open and self-critical in discussing their strategy and values.

The study programmes at FHSE have a particularly strong orientation towards topics and study fields of high relevance to the Luxembourgish society. The Faculty supplies graduates who are immediately employable in the public sector in Luxembourg, including teachers, social workers and psychologists. Furthermore, FHSE maintains strong links with political actors, cultural institutions, archives and the journalistic and media industry of the country. This societal orientation of the study programmes, combined with the fact that UL is the only publicly funded higher education institution in the country, puts FHSE in a unique position as it appears to be the ideal partner to respond to societal needs. This unique position brings with it both opportunities and challenges, of which the Faculty leadership seems to be fully



aware. It has developed the interesting concept of the '*citizen student*' which regards students as partners rather than consumers and which encourages both students and staff to take teaching and learning seriously and as a matter of mutual interest.

The *Charte Pédagogique* identifies common pedagogical values for the whole University. It states that learning at UL is interactive and research-based, while student autonomy is fostered, and their feedback is used. Learning is multilingual and international. These values are widely known and shared among the teaching staff, and interviewees provided a large number of examples on how these values are applied in courses and assignments. The panel noted that the *Charte* is widely supported and **recommends that the Faculty take this a stage further by making an operational translation of the document**. Although the *Charte Pédagogique* is described as "*a foundational strategic document*", it seems to be more of a vision statement on learning and teaching, one that highlights a number of overarching elements of the University's education, rather than a clear implementable strategy.

Interdisciplinarity and cross-curricular elements take up a prominent position in the FHSE programmes: interdisciplinarity is implemented consistently in day-to-day education: for instance, the programme *Bachelor en Cultures Européennes* is a liberal arts degree pursuing among others an integrated interdisciplinary reflection on the origins, development and future of Europe and European cultures. This attention to cross-disciplinary elements requires a lot of cooperation within the Faculty, and beyond: FHSE does not only encourage interdisciplinarity in its own study programmes, but also with other faculties, as demonstrated by the *Master en Enseignement Secondaire*. In this case, students receive their pedagogical training mainly at FHSE while the Department of Mathematics from the Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine (FSTM) provides prospective teachers with mathematics expertise. The Master in Border Studies realizes cross-boundary interdisciplinarity by integrating eight disciplines, three languages and four universities from three countries in one programme. FHSE should be commended for the way it achieves interdisciplinarity, which enables to offer truly unique study programmes, such as the *Master Theaterwissenschaft und Interkulturalität*.

The teacher training programmes play an important role at FHSE as they deliver the vast majority of new teachers in Luxembourg. This position is not always convenient, since the government relies heavily on the Faculty to tailor the study programmes to the needs of Luxembourgish primary and secondary education. The panel noted in the self-evaluation report that "*Negotiations between scientific rigour and political needs turn out to be rather difficult here, and raise questions of academic freedom*". In the *Bachelor en Sciences de l'éducation* (BScE), future pre-school and primary education teachers are trained. This results in some 80 graduates per year, when in fact 400 new teachers are needed each year in Luxembourg. Although the government is pushing UL to train more students, the government also requires primary school teachers to be fluent in English, French, German and Luxembourgish, thereby drastically restricting the number of prospective students for the programme. Furthermore, new legislation that has not only resulted in mandatory traineeships (and consequently a prolongation of the study programme), but also lead to an increase in competition, since a recent law enables graduates from bachelor programmes at other (non-Luxembourgish) universities to apply for teaching positions directly. These measures resulted in the teacher training programme becoming less appealing to prospective

students. **The panel recommends the leadership of the Faculty and University to negotiate a joint strategy for teacher training**, balancing the needs of the country with the needs of maintaining high quality education.

A distinctive feature of FHSE programmes is their multilingualism, which recognises the daily reality in Luxembourg where several languages are spoken. Each course is taught in a certain language, and students are strongly encouraged to use this particular language as much as they can. Both students and lecturers indicated that this is dealt with in a flexible manner, as students can choose in which language they submit their essays. A number of FHSE programmes have specific language requirements, such as the *Bachelor en Cultures Européennes – Germanistik (BCE-GE)* requires knowledge of German on C1 level, or the primary teacher training programme assuming proficiency in four languages. Each programme clearly communicates its language requirements. Students are generally satisfied with the quality and accessibility of the language courses offered by UL.

The University's and Faculty's policy on languages, however, can be at odds with the aim of attracting international students, especially when those international students feel obliged to acquire additional language skills in order to study successfully. On the one hand, high potential international students who do not master German or French may be discouraged by the way in which the multilingual policy takes shape in some programmes and courses. On the other hand, the multilingual aspect reflects the Luxembourgish context and is part of a clear learning and teaching strategy. **The panel suggests FHSE and its programmes to adopt a language policy that goes towards the multiculturalism and internationalisation of its learning and teaching**, rather than having a formal approach towards language regulation in the study programmes.

Another characteristic of Luxembourg is its multiculturalism. UL sees itself as a multicultural institution. Just as Luxembourg has many inhabitants from neighbouring countries, there are many academics from neighbouring countries teaching at UL. The student population is a mixture of Luxembourgish and international students, the latter often from neighbouring countries. The panel wonders to what extent the concept of multiculturalism can be understood as an objective, as it is regarded in the pedagogical charter, rather than a consequence of circumstances. Nevertheless, bringing different nationalities together has a remarkable benefit in terms of academic culture. The academic staff brings in research and educational traditions from a large number of renowned universities abroad, and this unique mix gives rise to a strong Luxembourgish academic tradition of its own. In this regard, the mandatory international mobility for all bachelor students and the international outlook of FHSE with its joint study programmes across borders are strong assets.

Digitisation is one of the strategic commitments of the Faculty. FHSE has come already a long way in this regard. The panel heard from several interviewees how this early focus on digitisation has led to a smooth response to the global pandemic. Students testified that they could count on a variety of support measures during the lockdown. According to the panel, this smooth response is also indicative of an effective crisis management of the Faculty.



## 5.2 Educational governance and management

At Faculty level, educational governance and management is set up in an accessible way for all actors involved. The new university law has given the Faculty more autonomy over its budgets. The choices made in this respect by the Faculty, for example with the Merit-Based Funding Scheme for institutes, have been well thought through and are endorsed by the panel. The financial resources of study programmes are excellent: despite the low tuition fees, it appears that the University, the Faculty and the study programmes generally have sufficient resources at its disposal to fulfil their primary function.

In its governance, the Faculty emphasises the interaction and role of the different stakeholders. There seems to be a democratic approach towards the involvement of not only staff and students, but also external stakeholders. FHSE is to be commended for this highly participatory system: there are many links between the Faculty and its stakeholders, whose viewpoints are taken on board in the decision-making process. The involvement of employers in the early stages of new programme development is particularly noteworthy. The teacher training programmes do not only train prospective teachers, but also provide professional development opportunities for current teachers. Other study programmes, notably in the Psychology and Health cluster, also benefit from strong employer involvement.

Some of the issues encountered by different stakeholders seem to have the same origin. Students indicated that the enrolment procedure is particularly cumbersome and inefficient. They also testified to their experience of being redirected towards various websites and online platforms in order to obtain access to programme-specific information. Alumni had to wait a considerable amount of time to receive their diplomas, making it difficult to apply for further study programmes or jobs. The programme leadership is faced with the problem that high potential candidate students do not find their way to the study programmes because the marketing system, and more specifically the University website, is not sufficiently well designed towards the needs of the respective study programmes and cannot be adapted flexibly. Lecturers reported problems with the booking and rebooking of classrooms, which is arranged via a central IT system. This often results in weekly lessons being booked into various auditoria, causing much confusion. Most of these problems seem to find a common cause in bureaucracy associated with the central administration, leading to increased workloads of the Faculty administration in order to compensate. **The panel advises a better connection between the central administration and the day-to-day reality of those involved in the study programmes. In addition, the panel suggests the University to reflect on how the central services can be set up in such a way that they really support the needs of the programmes to the satisfaction of students and staff.**

The Faculty student services consist of an impressive and hardworking group of people, who go to great lengths to help everyone involved in the programme with their day-to-day matters. Students reported excellent administrative support for their outbound international mobility, while lecturers spoke of a good back office for teaching. However, in some clusters there were also critical remarks referring to an overload of work and insufficient capacity in the services departments. It seems that these service departments and their staff are hardly involved in quality enhancement matters. This is a missed opportunity because the group, with its first-hand experience of problems encountered by both students and staff, is very

well placed to contribute to quality processes. **The panel therefore recommends involving the Faculty service departments in quality assurance.**

FHSE's approach to student recruitment combines digital and face to face communication. Through the University website, information is shared about the different study programmes, and digital marketing for the master programmes is pursued via recruitment portals. It seems that there is room for improvement in coordinating / aligning the tasks related to recruitment at programme, faculty and central university level. Currently, applicants for certain master programmes have to wait too long before their admission is confirmed. This results in the programme losing good candidate students to other universities. Moreover, there are recurring administrative issues that are not dealt with appropriately at the central level and make programmes miss out on prospective students who cannot find their way in the study programme descriptions. Finally, the technical capacity of the IT system arranging admission and registration is too weak. All these elements are very unfortunate, given that both students and lecturers are very satisfied and even proud of what UL and FHSE have to offer and would like to see this more effectively marketed. **The panel therefore recommends that the University works out a clear strategy around the recruitment of prospective students based on the needs of the study programmes, and that it deals with the recurring administrative and technical issues.**

Master programmes at FHSE that have no corresponding in-house bachelor degree (such as the Master in Architecture) sometimes find it difficult to assess the entry competences of (international) students. Students arrive from various universities across the world and it takes the programme one semester to bring all students to the same level.

In terms of student participation, student representatives are active at different levels throughout the University. First, there are the initiatives at the programme level, in which all students have their say, such as the course evaluations. Furthermore, student representatives from each cohort have a seat in the programme steering committees, in which they can address issues encountered during their studies. The Faculty Council reserves three seats for student representatives. It enables students to discuss problems they encounter in the programme or during their internships and to propose solutions. Their input also proved very useful during the pandemic, as students provided lecturers with feedback on their new digital way of teaching. Overall, student input is greatly appreciated. Nonetheless, there seems to be considerable discrepancy in student participation across programmes. Although student representatives can be elected by their peers, it appears to be common practice that the most articulate and committed students are approached by the Study Programme Director or a lecturer and asked to participate in a steering committee. It therefore seems that there is not so much an organised and professionalised student council in place that actively sets its own agenda. **The panel recommends that FHSE communicates more openly about the possibilities for student representation and develops a more formalized approach to student participation and representation** in order to make it a standard part of the regular policy and governance processes.

Many stakeholders expressed the desire to exchange good practices more systematically. The existing consultative bodies, such as the programme directors' meetings, constitute a good platform for regular discussions on quality enhancement. Students lack a discussion platform



at central University level: it seems there is no overall student council that brings together the experiences of students from different study programmes or faculties. **The panel therefore recommends FHSE to create the necessary platforms that could monitor and share what is going on at the level of the study programmes**, which could be the starting point of a fitting professional development approach.

### 5.3 Learning and teaching

All FHSE students the panel spoke to were unanimous in appreciating their experience at the University of Luxembourg. A number of elements in the educational learning environment ensure that the education the students receive at the Faculty is unique, including the internationality, the approachability of their lecturers, the short communication links with the administrative staff and the strong support students receive. Moreover, there are many advantages to favourable staff-student ratio. It is precisely because of the small class groups that education tailored to the needs of the student is not just a nice ambition but an actual achievable goal. The proximity between teaching staff and students has the great advantage of allowing day-to-day problems to be dealt with quickly. Given that the University projects a growth in student numbers, it is not clear whether the current teacher-student ratio of 1:15 can be maintained in the future. While this is an ongoing discussion between Faculty and central level, the University is committed to having a favourable student-teacher ratio.

FHSE should be commended for the way **research-based education** is a living reality in its study programmes. Many lecturers are researchers with an impressive CV who are using their own research as well as that of others in their lectures. Several examples of good practice demonstrate that students indeed receive education that is research based. Moreover, there are strong parallels between the foci of the research activities and the programme curricula. Nonetheless, it is not clear to what extent these good practices result from an overarching strategy rather than being anecdotal illustrations since there appears to be a great variety in how research-based education is operationalised across study programmes. **The panel therefore recommends developing a strategy on research-based education and teaching methods at Faculty level**, with regular evaluations to monitor the successful application of this strategy.

Furthermore, it seems that in the nexus teaching and research, the latter is more appreciated and recognised when it comes to promotion procedures of teaching staff. In fact, teaching experience plays a minimal role in the recruitment of new staff. The lecturers interviewed are in favour of rewarding the teaching component more than it is the case. FHSE has already undertaken some steps towards valuing teaching more, for instance with the new job profiles or the Faculty's Merit-Based Funding Scheme, with which it aims to encourage involvement in teaching. The University also offers professionalisation opportunities for teachers. This, however, is considered a voluntary option at the request of the individual lecturer.

UL has recently moved to modern new buildings on the **Belval Campus**. This former industrial site was transformed and reportedly features state of the art classrooms. Despite the many opportunities offered by the new buildings at Belval, a number of concerns have arisen since the University's move to the campus. The campus management by the *Fonds Belval* is perceived to be quite rigid and has shown little understanding for the needs of the university.

Since the university is not in control of the building management, courses are held in different classrooms every week and it is difficult to reallocate rooms flexibly. Moreover, there are hardly any possibilities to organise student activities and thus develop some kind of student-life, which leads to frustration among both students and staff. **The panel recommends that the Ministry of Higher Education and Research seeks structural solutions by entering into negotiations with the Belval Fund to give the University a significant say in the management of the campus.**

The limited development of student life on campus is also caused by the remoteness of the campus, the difficulty in finding affordable and appropriate housing in the vicinity of the campus, and the limited public transport. With regard to the latter, **the panel recommends that the Ministry of Higher Education and Research seeks structural solutions for making the campus more accessible by improving public transport.** All these factors result in students going straight home after their lessons, since they have a long commute ahead and because there are simply no places available for them to linger, such as a student lounge or a coffee bar. It seems that Belval looks more like a business and banking centre than a university campus.

In terms of educational facilities and resources, it was not clear how new programmes are vetted in terms of financing. This also applies to the processes to set up curricula and assure the quality of their content. These observations are made based on the reported experiences of the Master in Architecture, which was launched in 2017-2018 and is in need of more space for its workshops and exhibitions/presentations. The Faculty have gone to great lengths to provide a larger working space, but the programme would still benefit from a large design studio with the necessary facilities and daylight. Moreover, the programme needs more research materials such as books and scientific magazines.

Teaching staff support the provisions set in the UL-wide *Charte Pédagogique* and adopt the concept of **personalised teaching**, in which authentic approaches to teaching are appreciated and stimulated. Most lecturers are satisfied about the concept of personalised teaching and perceive this to be in line with academic freedom. Students, however, reported teaching as being "*a mixed bag of beans*", with a lot of variation between lecturers. Overall, students are rather satisfied with their teaching staff, who interactively involve them in the subject matter and make dialogue possible during the lessons. Teaching staff experience a large amount of freedom as a great deal of confidence is put in their teaching skills. Also the concept of personalised teaching seems to depend on the personal choices and teaching skills of individual staff rather than based on an overarching method for learning and teaching. The staff interviewed was positive towards sharing teaching practices and experiences on a more structured basis. **The panel therefore recommends FHSE to provide the necessary means and platforms to not only share good practices, but also to enable teachers to participate in the development of the learning and teaching culture of the University, and to work on a common policy and method for learning and teaching.**

As UL and FHSE are rather young, its academic culture relies heavily on academic staff and traditions from abroad. This multiculturalism and experience with various national traditions in academia is an indispensable added value for the University and the education it provides. Nevertheless, this situation also brings challenges, for example concerning the grading of

assessments. The differences in national grading traditions of international lecturers can lead to different marks being awarded for the same achieved learning outcomes. This, in turn, causes a certain amount of frustration among students who expressed a need for clear and objective grading criteria. **The panel therefore recommends the Faculty works on a calibration in marking, while the University would do well to provide an overall assessment grading framework** outlining which achievements resonate with average, good or excellent grades.

The materials and the interviews have shown that study programmes at FHSE have clearly defined learning outcomes at programme, module and course level. Moreover, curricula and learning outcomes are predefined, controlled and aligned by the Study Programme Director in cooperation with the Steering Committee. However, the panel could not establish who or by what means an oversight of the bigger picture of these learning outcomes defined by the study programmes is maintained. In this regard it was not clear how FHSE ensures that study programmes from the same level indeed correspond to one another. It seems that an implicit benchmark is implemented through the involvement of academics from different universities and countries who are contributing their experience. External experts who are seated in the Steering Committees may also encourage benchmarking against international standards. Nonetheless, there is little sign of a formal benchmark that structurally assesses whether individual study programmes are meeting the required qualification criteria. **The panel therefore recommends FHSE to set up structural mechanisms to ensure that the final level of each study programme is compliant with national and international requirements.**

## 5.4 Quality culture

At faculty level, the FHSE quality officer reports to the Dean and consults with his colleagues from other faculties on the development of new study programmes and joint projects. Over the years, FHSE has pro-actively taken initiatives to enhance educational quality: its statistical experts developed course evaluations that are now used across the entire University; staff was already working on the development of a digital learning environment pre-COVID and shared its experiences with other colleagues throughout UL when they switched to distance learning.

The Steering Committee is an important consultative body in each programme. All stakeholders are represented in the committee and provide input to the curriculum. In addition to 'regular' actors such as students, lecturers and alumni, some specific groups have a seat in dedicated programmes: for instance, the Ministry of Higher Education and Research is represented on the steering committee of teacher training programmes, as are the internship supervisors. Steering committees meet approximately once each semester and enable the programmes to implement the highly participatory approach envisaged by the Faculty. The FHSE should be commended for the way in which the views of all these different stakeholders are taken into account in decision-making processes and the strong link this creates with, for instance, the professional field.

In terms of alumni involvement, there seems to be no clear policy at the level of study programmes. Although several programmes have good practices in place and do involve their alumni structurally in the (re)shaping of the curriculum via the steering committee, this does



not result in an effective and common strategy across programmes. FHSE would like the university to track its graduates better, rather than depending on the informal networks of individual lecturers. Hence, FHSE and programme management would find it useful if more data on alumni could be generated in order for study programmes to obtain more information on the employability of their graduates. **The panel recommends developing a formal alumni tracking system.**

It seems that FHSE is fast and efficient in adapting its study programmes. Based on feedback provided by students, curricula were adjusted the next year. The Master in Psychology changed part of its programme in view of upcoming changes in the German legislation concerning the psychotherapist profession, to the great relief of many German students. This flexibility is both an opportunity and a challenge. On the one hand, it ensures that the programmes can react swiftly when new problems arise, and it has the great advantage that stakeholders feel involved and notice that their feedback is being used and appreciated. On the other hand, it is not clear to what extent continuity and consistency are ensured in the long run. For example, former alumni and current students from the same programme testified to having very different experiences regarding research-based education. The quick adaptation of curricula brings along the risk of ad-hoc alterations, which in turn may lead to inconsistencies in the underlying long-term vision of the study programmes.

The proximity between teachers and students allows for many everyday problems to be dealt with quickly. This flexibility is undoubtedly an asset. However, the tendency to resolve problems in vertical corridors also leads to issues remaining ‘under the radar’, resulting in the top level having little understanding of what is going on at grassroots level in the study programmes. It seems that problems are often solved through a so-called ad hoc ‘fire-brigade approach’ rather than adopting a systematic quality assurance approach. The panel considers that there is a need for a delicate balance between flexibility and structure. This observations may also explain why response rates for student surveys are rather low, since students feel they can address issues directly with the lecturers. Moreover, some interviewed students indicated that they address their student representatives in order to remain anonymous in giving feedback. This, in turn, results in underestimating the need for programme optimisation in quality and monitoring activities.

It is one of the benefits of a young university to bring in excellent staff from universities abroad. Their knowledge, experience and good practices in education and research manifest themselves very well in the FHSE study programmes. Nevertheless, these good practices often remain at the level of the individual lecturer or particular study programme. The interviewees testified to be in favour of a platform where these good practices could be picked up and exchanged in a structural way. The development of the FHSE quality culture is still in its early stages. While FHSE management has developed a strategy toward the future, it seems that a systematic approach towards strategic commitments, their implementation and monitoring, is still lacking.

In the self-evaluation report, FHSE states that quality management is more about educational development than quality assurance and that quality management focuses not on programme benchmarking but on supporting programmes and instructors, and on creating new opportunities and inspirations in the field of teaching. While quality enhancement is





certainly an important aspect of quality assurance, programmes should also look into their compliance with national and international quality standards. The significant differences in the (way) learning outcomes (are developed) seem to indicate that there is no systematic procedure in place for benchmarking and that learning outcomes are not monitored at a higher level. **The panel therefore recommends developing a quality assurance system that structurally follows up on FHSE's strategic commitments and regulates procedures such as the development of learning outcomes and the benchmarking exercises.** This, in turn, requires FHSE to clearly identify the responsibilities of the respective QA actors.

## 5.5 Cluster-specific issues

The previous sections contained the panel findings that are valid across FHSE. Several elements the panel had earmarked for discussion were appreciated very similarly across the programme clusters. In a few cases, however, discipline-specific issues had been raised in the written materials, were picked up by the domain experts of the panel and addressed during the interviews. The panel's findings on these specific issues are presented below.

### Education and Social Sciences

This cluster offers among others teacher training programmes, with three bachelor programmes giving access to three master programmes. The programmes in this cluster have a strong affinity with Luxembourg society and mainly train students to become civil servants, such as teachers or social workers. It is remarkable that, despite the international profile of the University and Faculty, these programmes have a strong focus on Luxembourgish students, with a minimum knowledge of two to four languages being a prerequisite for the teacher training programmes. The cluster also includes the part-time *Master Management und Coaching im Bildungs- und Sozialwesen* and the research-oriented programme Master in Social Sciences and Educational Sciences.

The teaching training programmes require full proficiency in Luxembourgish, which significantly reduces the chances of success for international students. Students appreciate the language centre of the University, where courses are reimbursed and extra credits can be earned. Students indicated that they are represented on both the Faculty Council and the programme steering committees. Moreover, they confirmed that there is little student life on the Belval campus. The panel gathered from the interviews that developing a master programme in social work might be an interesting course of action as bachelor students seem to be discouraged by the lack of a follow up programme. The cluster offers professional development opportunities for primary and secondary school teachers, which results in strong links with the professional field. Staff interviewed indicated that the current HR policy does value the quality of their teaching but when it comes to recruitment and promotion, the quality of their research plays a bigger role. The study programme directors play a crucial role in managing the different aspects of a programme and do exchange best practices at Faculty level. The cluster / programme management confirmed that there is a big demand for teacher training graduates.

### Humanities

The Humanities cluster covers the broad *Bachelor en Cultures Européennes* (BCE), which is a liberal arts study programme where students focus on one of the five fields: English Studies,

*Études françaises, Germanistik, Histoire, or Philosophie.* The programme emphasises interdisciplinarity and encourages students to leave their comfort zones and explore the connections with related fields of study. At master level, seven programmes are on offer, which align with the BCE specialisation tracks. These programmes are research oriented and prepare for programmes in the Doctoral School in Humanities and Social Sciences.

The programmes in this cluster target a heterogeneous audience of local and international students from different age groups. Students are allowed to produce course work in their preferred language. Students are participating in the programme and faculty structures, and nominate a class representative. They suggested that information could be offered in a more centralized way, e.g. on one online platform, rather than students having to look for information in several places. The diversity of study programmes is also visible in the diversity of the teaching staff. Research-based education is an important feature of the programmes, and students are invited to participate in symposia and research projects. The development of an assessment culture is still underway, with assessment and grading being the object of programme-specific discussion but not at a more aggregate level. Furthermore, students seem to play an important role in the programme steering committees. The QA office puts at disposition a common framework to help develop programme learning outcomes.

### **Psychology and Health**

The Psychology and Health cluster features a Bachelor in Psychology and five master programmes: the fulltime Psychology programmes focusing on Psychological Intervention and on Evaluation and Assessment, and the parttime programmes in Psychotherapy, *Médiation* and *Gérontologie*.

The international group of students appreciate the favourable student-staff ratio, as well as the support they get from faculty and university services. Students can provide input to the quality of the programmes and their feedback effectively leads to adaptations. Also in this cluster, research-based education is an important feature with students being involved in research projects and with attention to methodology early on in the curriculum. While programme representatives are aware of the European and Luxembourgish quality frameworks, it seems that currently there is little to no systematic exchange on learning outcomes between different study programmes. The *Charte Pédagogique* is considered an educational mission statement for both University, Faculty and programmes. Interviewees subscribed to the values in the charter. In terms of professional development opportunities, staff would appreciate more support in terms of pedagogical tools.

### **Spatial Planning and European Governance**

The Spatial Planning and European Governance cluster consists of four master programmes in Architecture, Border Studies, European Governance and Geography and Spatial Planning. The programmes operate independently of one another, each with its own autonomously determined curriculum and separate governance structures. Nevertheless, all programmes share the common goals of providing a solid academic foundation and of training students to become highly skilled professionals for both national and international labour markets.

Most programmes in the cluster have English as the main language of instruction, yet allow students to express themselves in their preferred language. Students mentioned that in terms

of support they are very pleased with – and rely far too much on - the study programme secretaries because the central University administration is often quite disorganised. Although the infrastructure is not always perfect (housing shortage, classroom allocation and distribution), the teaching approaches appear to be inclusive and participative. Also in this cluster, research-based education is very important with new staff being recruited mainly through research grants, which in turn results in research skills being the most important factor in the recruitment process. Interviewees indicated that there are agreements within study programmes on how grading should be organised and implemented, there are no faculty- or university-wide tools available. In order to optimise the learning environment, all programmes involve different stakeholders, including students and alumni, with whom they are in constant dialogue. Interviewees indicated that they would be in favour of a formal alumni tracking system.

## 5.6 Conclusions

During its virtual expedition to the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences at the University of Luxembourg, the panel has learned a lot about the Faculty, its clusters, study programmes, internal teaching staff, external lecturers, administrators, students and alumni. The panel was pleased with the openness of the leadership and the other stakeholders and found that the Faculty is fully aware of its own strengths and weaknesses. The panel heard many positive elements that makes studying at FHSE truly unique. A number of critical elements were addressed as well, notably the lack of a formalised quality assurance system. Many of the issues encountered could, therefore, be tackled by developing a robust QA system as this will allow to monitor the Faculty's strategic commitments, goals and targets, and assure that the high academic standards are met. Moreover, by establishing the necessary standardized procedures at Faculty level, the study programmes will not feel the need to re-invent the wheel over and over again when it comes to calibration of grading, the development and benchmarking of learning outcomes, etc. Overlooking the panel's journey, the following observations are worth repeating.

Notwithstanding its relative young age, FHSE already has many achievements to its credit and excels in a number of aspects, notably in its interdisciplinary approach, research-based education and favourable staff-student ratio. The Faculty aims at a strong affinity with the needs of Luxembourgish society by the nature of its programmes, while simultaneously bringing in a great number of nationalities with its teaching staff and students. Nonetheless, there is a certain contradiction in aspiring to be an international research university and at the same time wanting to uphold national employment needs. The Faculty complemented UL's vision on learning and teaching in the *Charte Pédagogique* with its own strategic commitments and shared values. Commitments such as multilingualism, interdisciplinarity and digitisation have been applied in practice, with digitisation moreover enabling a smooth response to the global pandemic. However, these good practices did not seem to be the result of an overarching operational strategy with formal targets and goals and a consistent implementation in study programmes. The panel recommends developing such operational strategy in order to provide the study programmes with the necessary tools for adopting a more systematic approach to fulfil and implement this strategy.

Educational governance and management is well described and features a democratic approach towards the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes. The panel recommends involving the FHSE student services more in reflecting on quality enhancement processes. Moreover, the panel noted that several issues at FHSE level - such as the admission processes of students, the recruitment and marketing toward prospective students, the swift transmission of new diplomas and the system of room allocations - would all benefit from a more effective and efficient set-up of UL's central administration. Student input is taken into account in various ways, by means of informal consultations and solutions on programme level, by including a student representation on the Faculty Council and the programme steering committees, and through course evaluations. Nonetheless, formal student involvement can be enhanced, hence the panel's recommendation to develop further the formal participation processes and to communicate more extensively the possibilities for participation to all students.

The favourable staff-student ratio provides students with a unique learning environment that allows close proximity with lecturers. Several lecturers are leading researchers, and all lecturers share the aim to enable research-based education. The concept of personalized teaching stimulates authentic approaches to teaching are stimulated and demonstrates a high level of confidence in the teaching staff. Although it acknowledges that these elements provide added value for education, the panel considers that these features are consequences of a given context rather than the result of a predetermined strategy. Furthermore, the panel found that the Belval Campus offers many possibilities, but does not yet manage to establish a real student life on campus. The panel therefore recommends that the Ministry of Higher Education and Research seeks structural solutions for making the campus more accessible and helps the University to gain a more significant say in the management of the campus.

FHSE demonstrates that a new University can bring in excellent staff from other universities abroad. Their knowledge, experience and good practices in education and research manifest themselves well in the FHSE study programmes. Nevertheless, these good practices often remain at the level of the individual lecturer or specific to a particular study programme. The panel subscribes to the suggestion of the interviewees to create an overarching platform where good practices can be picked up and exchanged. In this way, a relevant professional development culture can be established. This is all the more important given that the development of a quality culture in the Faculty is still in its early stages. A more systematic approach towards strategic commitments, by operationalizing performance indicators and clear goals, should lead to quality enhancement. The panel noted that compliance with national and international standards also requires further attention: there are quite some differences in the learning outcomes of the respective study programmes. Although there are references to the national quality framework, the panel strongly recommends developing a formalized approach toward benchmarking.

## 5.7 Recommendations

This section lists the recommendations which the panel issued in its evaluation report on FHSE. The Faculty has a good understanding of its strengths and challenges. For some of the issues encountered, the panel found that the Faculty's possibilities for seeking solutions is



limited, therefore some of the recommendations formulated below are addressed towards the University or the Ministry. The panel advises FHSE to:

#### *Educational commitments and strategy*

- Provide an operational translation of the educational values mentioned in the Charte Pédagogique with clear implementable objectives and formalized goals;
- Negotiate a joint strategy for teacher training, balancing the needs of the country with the needs of maintaining high quality education;
- Develop a formal approach toward the language regulation in the study programmes.

#### *Educational governance and management*

- Connect the study programme and administration more effectively to the central level;
- Reflect on how the central services can be set up in a way as to really support the needs of the programmes to the satisfaction of the students and staff of these programmes;
- Involve the Faculty student services in the reflection on quality enhancement processes;
- Work out a clear and effective approach toward student recruitment, based on the needs of the individual study programmes;
- Resolve the recurring technical issues affecting the admission process and the allocation of classrooms;
- Formalize student representation and communicate to all students the possibilities therein, involving the student body in doing so;
- Create the necessary platforms where study programmes can be effectively monitored to ensure the parity of assessment outcomes and alignment with national benchmarks.

#### *Learning and teaching*

- Develop a strategy on research-based education and teaching methods with regular evaluations to monitor the successful application of this strategy;
- Enter into negotiations and seek structural solutions with the Belval Fund in order for the Faculty to obtain a significant say in the campus management;
- Use the offices of the University to lobby for better transport links to the Belval campus, making it more accessible;
- Provide the necessary means and platforms to not only share good practises, but to also enable the teaching staff to participate in the wider development of the learning and teaching culture of the University;
- Work on a common policy and method for learning and teaching;
- Develop a calibrated system on grading that enables objectivity in marking between different lecturers;
- Work out an overall assessment grading framework which outlines which learning achievements correspond with which grades;
- Set up structural a system to benchmark the intended end level of graduates from study programmes with corresponding study programmes abroad;
- Work out an overall strategy to verify if learning outcomes of study programmes are compliant with national and international requirements;
- Formalize a professional development approach that builds on the good practices of individual teachers being shared and discussed.

#### *Quality culture*

- Create a QA system that allows a follow-up on the Faculty's strategic commitments;
- Set up formalized procedures that regulate the development of learning outcomes and the benchmarking thereof;
- Identify clearly the actors and their responsibilities within quality assurance processes;
- Develop a formal alumni tracking system that not only enables the establishment of a network, but also provides the study programmes with data on the professional field.



## 6 Critical Summary Report University of Luxembourg - Overview per Topic

### Critical Summary Report University of Luxembourg - Overview per Topic

	University of Luxembourg	Science, Technology & Medicine	Law, Economics & Finance	Humanities, Education & Social Sciences
<b>Commitments and Strategy</b>				
mission goals and strategic plans	UL acknowledges that the strategic commitments concerning education do not represent a unified vision on education and that tensions exist between these commitments. UL needs to agree on a unified and shared educational vision with a learning and teaching strategy that is an integral part of the overall strategy. UL needs to be more selective in determining strategic priorities, to increase the institutional strategic capacity with a comprehensive quality assurance framework for education, and to better coordinate the strategies across institutional levels. Strategic planning at faculty level or as a bottom-up contribution by the faculties to the University's strategy appears to be limited.	The educational commitments of the faculty seem to be inspired by the predominance of the University of Luxembourg, with a strong vocational focus.	The penetration of the UL wide vision and strategy at faculty and department levels is not fully completed. The educational objectives and strategies are reflective of the overall characteristics of what the university, as a whole, stands for. The penetration of the UL wide vision and strategy at faculty and department levels is not fully completed.	The Faculty prioritized a number of strategic commitments and features a number of shared values specific to the Faculty.
commitment to L&T				
mid-term and long-term plans	The four-year plan includes many intentions and overviews of the budgetary consequences but no implementation plan with clear actions, timing and distribution of responsibilities. Most strategic commitments concerning education have been followed up in the plans. There is no effective management information system in place. The communication of strategic plans and initiatives across the University is limited.	The faculty has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. For many identified issues, plans for improvement have already been made.	There is wide-ranging awareness and support among the FDEF stakeholders for the policy initiatives that have been taken in the meantime to achieve the educational objectives. The Faculty made a SWOT analysis, which the panel found to be correct and strong. There seems to be no comprehensive information on the faculty mission and vision for the near future. There is no comprehensive list of quantitative indicators that would allow FDEF to consistently measure progress on its educational objectives or strategic commitments.	The ambitious and innovative strategy of the Faculty is supported by a differentiated structure of responsible committees and positions, and reflects a clear statement of the core values.
general higher education environment				
digitally enhanced innovative learning	The pandemic did speed up innovation in delivering education.	COVID-19 has accelerated the deployment of technology enhanced education. It is recommended to evaluate the successes of the COVID-19 period, to integrate good practices, both at faculty level and programme level, and to provide additional resources to the Faculty to facilitate this (e.g. teaching fellows, instructional designers, learning technologists).	Digitally enhanced innovative learning environments are part and parcel of the vision, strategy and policies of the Faculty and are implemented in the different programmes. The enhancement of innovative learning environments has certainly been motivated by the COVID-19 situation.	Digitization was put forward as one of the strategic commitments of the Faculty. This early focus on digitization has led to a smooth response to the global pandemic.
pedagogical charter	The Charte Pédagogique has been taken up by programmes and faculties to some degree, but the commitments are not systematically followed up. However, lots of elements are taken up as part of other projects. A few elements are also picked up in the strategy process, concerning a student-focused teaching approach, but so far there has not been a systematic approach to monitoring to what extent the <i>Charte Pédagogique</i> has been included in programmes or courses.	The Charte Pédagogique, identifying common pedagogical values of relevance to existing educational practice, seems to be a University and Faculty level strategy and is not explicitly used in setting up new study programmes. Nevertheless, it is found to be useful for a general orientation and aspects of it may already be embedded in practice.	The Pedagogical Charter was launched centrally and contains interesting elements, yet it was not followed up with concrete implementation guidelines, leaving a lot to be decided and to be organised by the programmes.	The values of the Charte Pédagogique are widely known and shared among the teaching staff. It constitutes a vision statement on learning and teaching, one that highlights a number of overarching elements of the University's education, rather than a clear implementable strategy.
multilingualism	The new multilingualism policy will be rolled out in 2021 and will provide more linguistic support for students and staff. The tension that exists between the policy of multilingualism and the desire to attract more international students needs to be addressed in a way that pragmatic solutions overstate stem ideology.	Multilingualism can be seen as a uniqueness and strength, it is attractive but can also be a drawback. It is mainly an issue in the bachelor programmes.	Multilingualism is part and parcel of the vision, strategy and policies of the Faculty and is implemented in the different programmes. The multilingualistic approach to be a unique feature that is implemented consistently and contributes enormously to the employability of students in an international labour market.	Multilingualism is a recognition of the daily reality in Luxembourg. The multilingual aspect is a consequence of the Luxembourgish context as well as part of a clear learning and teaching strategy. The University sees itself as a multicultural institution. The academic staff brings in research and educational traditions from a large number of renowned universities abroad, and this unique mix can give rise to a strong Luxembourgish academic tradition of its own.
international dimension	The international character is a unique selling point. The inclusion of the Mobility Office in the International Relations Office has benefited an integral approach to internationalisation. It should be addressed how, beyond language competences and the mandatory study abroad period, full use can be made of the presence of the international student population in stimulating intercultural and international competences.	A faculty-wide effort for more visibility and towards attracting international students is currently being undertaken, for instance through developing strategic partnerships with international universities. Obstacles for international students to study in Luxembourg are the comparatively high living costs and the lack of financial support for students. Also, non-EEU students can encounter visa problems, and be faced with unrealistic deadlines.	There is scope for developing a more explicit international student recruitment strategy – possibly as part of a broader internationalisation strategy – that aligns with the multilingual and international mandate and vision of the University and the Faculty.	The mandatory international mobility for all bachelor students, as well as the international outlook of the Faculty with its joint study programmes across borders are strong assets.
small scale	The teacher/student ratios are excellent (1:12 in Bachelor and 1:5 in Master programmes). This small class size enhances and enables the University's concept of personalised teaching. In case of growth, the small scale benefits will have to give way to the advantages of having a greater impact on society with more graduates, who possess the required transversal skills and have been educated with technology enhanced teaching.	The panel appreciates the small learning groups for students, which stimulate interaction, the interactive lectures, hands on experience and research enhanced learning, and the allocated ECTS credits for entrepreneurship projects.		Students greatly appreciate their experience at the University of Luxembourg: the education the students receive at the Faculty is unique, including the internationality, the approachability of their lecturers, the short communication links with the administrative staff and the strong support student services. Many advantages are linked to the favourable staff:student ratio and the proximity between teaching staff and students.
service to society	Over the past 17 years, the emphasis was on the priorities within disciplines (medical science, computer science, finance, etc.); now that strong disciplines are present, the focus can shift towards interdisciplinary to tackle new challenges for society such as health, digitalisation, and being sustainable.	There is a lack of acknowledged attention in the programmes to the underprivileged population and the involvement in community life, since diversity is approached exclusively from the point of view of multilingual and multicultural issues, and social involvement is seen as a response to the governmental strategy or the needs of the industry and the job market.	There is wide-ranging awareness and support among the FDEF stakeholders for the policy initiatives that have been taken in the meantime to achieve the educational objectives; external stakeholders are systematically involved to ensure the ambitions meet the needs of society, industry and the labour market.	The Faculty study programmes are oriented towards society with topics and study fields that are of high relevance to Luxembourgish society. The concept of the <i>citizen sciences</i> .
link with professional world	The close ties that staff and programmes maintain with the professional world and the good prospects for job opportunities in Luxembourg are strong assets for the University.	The uniqueness of these programmes attracts students from afar. Aspects that are also appealing to [international] students include the fact that master's programmes are in English, registration fees are low, and there is a connection with the Luxembourgish job market. There is a strong interaction with the industry and the national institutions in the related fields, and there are opportunities for co-operation in the Greater Region.	Students see great advantages in also having external staff teach courses because they are the real life experts with hands on experience who are well connected on the Luxembourgish labour market.	The study programmes within this cluster have a strong affinity with Luxembourg society and mainly train students to become civil servants, such as teachers or social workers. This position is not always a convenient one, since the government relies heavily on the Faculty to tailor the study programmes to the needs of Luxembourgish primary and secondary education.
inclusiveness, equality and diversity	The University has been stepping up its efforts in promoting inclusiveness, equality and diversity. A lot of good work is done on inclusion but students may not always be sufficiently aware of it.	There is no strategy in place for diversity, but several clusters indicated it has their attention and should be a priority at faculty level.	Faculty, departments and programmes foster inclusiveness, equality and diversity. Gender equality is an issue that is actively pursued at faculty level. Each department is paying attention to it, and the law department can demonstrate good progress.	



## Critical Summary Report University of Luxembourg – Overview per Topic

	University of Luxembourg	Science, Technology & Medicine	Law, Economics & Finance	Humanities, Education & Social Sciences
<b>Governance and Management</b>				
<b>governance</b>				
structures to develop/implement strategy	The decision-making, as regulated in the law, is quite centralised. The rather hierarchical organisational structure given by law is complemented by working groups, committees and regular meetings for the necessary consultations on the different levels. The University seems to be struggling to give these groups a place within the formal structures.	The governance of the Faculty in relation to learning and teaching comes across as somewhat ad hoc; a formal and systemic approach to educational governance is lacking. The role of stakeholders in the decision-making process is unclear. Notwithstanding the fact that there is a top-down culture, there is obviously room for discussing processes bottom-up with all stakeholders, before a consensus is reached.	Overall governance structure seems to be rather top heavy. The administrative autonomy of the faculty seems limited. Governance at faculty, department and study programme level is well in place. There is a clear hierarchy and a defined governance structure. Structures seem to work well and are underpinned by an adequate administrative organisation with dedicated and competent service staff.	Educational governance and management results in an accessible system for all actors involved.
funding	State subsidies are the dominant source of income of the University. There is a transparent and reasonably participatory process reconciling budget income constraints and expenditures on staff. Tuition fees are an almost trivial part of the University's total income.	There is a low level of self-funding (small classes, low tuition fees), associated with a risk to rely largely on government and industry for funding.	There is a lack of academic resources to fully support the faculty's teaching portfolio with a view to striking the right balance between research and teaching and between internal and external lecturers.	The financial resources of study programmes are excellent.
role of students in governance	There are several initiatives to increase student participation. UL has an electoral system for student representatives at programme level, as well as broader student representation across faculty and University committees and councils. Despite the University's initiatives, participation of students is, in practice, still rather low at every level. The panel heard in the interviews that there is quite some diversity in student engagement.	There is very close contact with students and feedback often takes place in informal ways. Student involvement and ownership remain limited. The formal involvement of students in the decision-making processes should be improved.	Student representation is ensured formally across UL and within FDEF but is not always picked up by students to the extent expected. Students are becoming increasingly aware of the opportunities for, and importance of, expressing their opinion on educational matters. Students and staff are satisfied with the role students can and do play in providing feedback on course and programme quality.	Student representatives are active on different levels throughout the University. There is a considerable discrepancy in terms of student participation when looking at the different study programmes. There is not much of an organised and professionalised student council in place that actively sets its own agenda.
<b>management and organisation</b>				
management structure	Particularly the rather hierarchical organisation on all levels may hamper a stronger involvement of students and staff in decision-making processes and lead to ad hoc committees with which the University struggles to fit in the structures given by the law. Departmentalisation of the faculties was initiated after the law of 2018 opened up this possibility. The links between education and research can be fostered through this structural change.	There is a top-down management structure. More decision-making seems to take place at the department level than suggested in the self-assessment report.	There are disconnects between the central and decentral level. In fact, the main shortcomings regarding educational governance and management seem to come from unclear division of responsibilities between the institutional level and the faculty level.	The educational governance and management results in an accessible system for all actors involved.
crisis management + leadership	The institution has shown a remarkable capacity for crisis management.	The handling of the COVID-19 crisis by the Faculty is impressive; there was a fast and clearly efficient response, with very limited impact on students' study progress.	There has been a quick adjustment to the COVID-19 circumstances within FDEF, using this situation across all departments and study programmes as an opportunity to innovate in education. Stakeholders were unanimously positive about the speed and quality with which in-class education had been switched to online modes of interactive learning.	The smooth response to the COVID-19 pandemic is also indicative of an effective crisis management of the Faculty.
<b>capability to implement/develop L&amp;T agenda</b>				
general higher education environment	The Rectorate is at times overburdened with tasks and therefore the decision-making process may be perceived on faculty level as taking too long. The support for the Rectorate seems understaffed. Faculties experience acute and sincere administrative problems.	There seems to be little recognition of the role of the administrative staff. There is no evidence for the existence of teaching facilitator to support theoretical teaching, or enough staff to enable the digital transformation that was required during the COVID crisis and is likely to be required as teaching moves towards more evidence-based teaching.	The expertise/capacity to strategically guide education is present within the faculty structures to deliver on this element. The Faculty is not entirely independent but has to rely to some extent on the provisions, structures and resources that are set and delegated at central university level.	
support structures for students	The educational support on the central level is limited. Educational and administrative support at the University seems understaffed. The University seems determined to strictly steer on a lean overhead ratio and recent cost savings will likely aggravate this matter. There are no centralised educational services to support the faculties. Also at faculty level, educational and administrative support is also stressed at faculty level. Administrative services, despite limited capacity, are very supportive of students. At the same time the availability of student services could be communicated better.	There is an open door policy and strong support culture for students.	The quality of the support structures for students is good. Programmes and services go at lengths to offer all students adequate intellectual, organizational and material working conditions in Luxembourg and facilitate a study period abroad or an internship in Luxembourg.	Faculty student services consist of an impressive and hardworking group of people who experience an overload of work as there is not enough capacity in the services departments. Problems seem to find a common cause in bureaucracy associated with the central administration, leading to increased workloads of the Faculty administration in order to compensate. There seem to be recurring administrative issues that are not being dealt with appropriately at the central level.
<b>Learning and Teaching</b>				
<b>teaching quality and HR policy</b>				
staff quality	There are high quality staff from different countries. Staff from the professional field are also appreciated as they provide valuable network connections for job opportunities and internships.	Strengths of the faculty include the small learning groups, which stimulate interaction between students and teaching staff, the academic freedom of teachers, the high commitment to learning and teaching of the staff. On the other hand, a large part of teaching staff seems to be mainly research driven with teaching as a secondary activity.	The study programme staff at FDEF seemed to be qualified, dedicated, committed and experienced. There is good expertise within the faculty and departments for programme design and curriculum development. It would be a good idea to set up a teaching qualification programme for all teaching staff, both internal and external, to ensure that all staff is familiar with the fundamentals of didactics and is aware of what the university / the faculty considers good quality teaching.	There is a large amount of freedom entrusted to the teaching staff, demonstrating a great deal of confidence in their teaching skills. Students seem rather content with their teaching staff. Teaching staff would like to share teaching practices and experiences with colleagues on a more structured basis.
staff quantity	The University has a substantial number of external staff. The temporary teaching staff does a great job and is highly appreciated by students as it makes education more professionally and practically oriented.	The part of temporary teaching staff is variable according to the programmes. They are generally appreciated by the students, even if some lack training in teaching.	FDEF seems to struggle with staff numbers; the reported lack of sufficient internal teaching staff and the heavy reliance on external lecturers raises questions of viability and – in the long run – of the sustainability of the programmes, and thus of the educational commitments of departments and faculty. The limited number of internal academic staff is not only hindering regular academic progress but also makes a thorough quality assurance of courses, staff and programmes more difficult.	
teaching load	A transparent teaching load policy seems to be lacking, except for the recent policy adopted in FDEF. The teaching load quota is part of the contracts with teaching staff and kept confidential. Teaching staff are accessible but there seems to be no "culture" of office hours.	There is a need for transparent rules regarding teaching duties for each staff category and corresponding monitoring, to improve the distribution of the teaching load.	FDEF is the first Faculty to establish a teaching load policy, which is a positive development.	
recruitment and career policies	Despite the efforts made to shift the attention to the educational mission, research criteria are a more significant component than teaching in the staff recruitment and promotion policy. Individual teaching load and teaching quality should be considered as an input with transparent indicators into the promotion requests. In the Competitive Promotion Policy, teaching is one of the four assessment areas.	The Faculty is developing processes to reward excellence in teaching. There is a clear need for transparent rules regarding teaching duties as well as for indicators for the recognition of teaching in career promotion processes.	A culture shift is needed across FDEF and the entire university as career development is still predominantly based on research rather than teaching. FDEF is re-adjusting the balance between research and teaching through its academic recruitment strategy and teaching load policy. There is a need for a consistent HR policy where external teaching staff are hired, and their teaching assignments monitored and evaluated based on harmonised procedures.	The panel learned that research is most appreciated and recognised in promotion procedures of teaching staff.



## Critical Summary Report University of Luxembourg - Overview per Topic

	University of Luxembourg	Science, Technology & Medicine	Law, Economics & Finance	Humanities, Education & Social Sciences
learning / programme quality				
(inter)national requirements	Academic standards should be uniform in the institution and comply to national requirements. There seems to be little awareness of the existence of a national qualifications framework, enabling the University to set its own standards and create its own framework.	With regard to national requirements and international standards, the panel considers the learning and teaching to be of good quality overall.	All master programmes had either been internationally accredited, were in the process of reaccreditation or were about to be submitted for initial accreditation. The faculty and programmes deserve recognition for proactively paying attention to the quality dimension of their courses and curricula. Their efforts have clearly and deservedly paid off.	The Faculty could set up structural mechanisms to ensure that the final level of each study programme is compliant with national and international requirements. To this end, an international benchmarking exercise should also be carried out.
benchmarking	The panel encourages the University to consider more opportunities for benchmarking in teaching and learning.	The programmes mainly have an internal focus with less attention to benchmarking/ comparisons with other institutions.	Programmes are developed using a bottom-up approach, taking into account international and comparative approaches, and adding a typical Luxembourg flavour to it.	An implicit benchmark is implemented through the involvement of academics from different universities and countries who are contributing their experience. There is currently little sign of a formal benchmark that structurally assesses whether individual study programmes are meeting the required qualification criteria.
alignment of learning outcomes	The University has no university-wide mechanism in place to ensure that the learning outcomes of all its programmes are fully aligned with the Luxembourg Qualifications Framework. The University collects, for students' information, the learning outcomes, key content, mode of delivery and assessment modes for each course. An online searchable ECTS course catalogue is an international requirement and should be implemented.	On the basis of generic learning outcomes defined in the European and Luxembourg Qualifications Frameworks, learning outcomes were redefined. However, they are not always explicit. The quality, output and impacts of learning in the different clusters are found to be adequate.	All together, programmes seem to do well in terms of design, curriculum development, research-based education, labour market orientation, student intake, assessment and graduation perspectives.	It is unclear who or by what means an oversight of the bigger picture of the learning outcomes defined by the study programmes is maintained, to ensure that study programmes from the same level correspond to one another. The significant differences in the learning outcomes and the development thereof indicate that there is no systematic procedure in place for doing so, nor are these learning outcomes followed up at a higher level.
curriculum	The Study Programme Steering Committee advises the Programme Director and programme staff on the functioning and development of the programme, including opinions on substantial changes to the curriculum. The University has made changes, e.g. to the curriculum, as a result of student feedback.	The panel suggests reflecting upon the pedagogical design, and coordinating this at faculty level to ensure more coherence and consistency. Also, the panel would advise to make the curricula more flexible – with more room for electives, tracks or co-curricular modules. Academic freedom of teachers at course level is highly appreciated. There is a lack of harmonisation at the level of departments and faculty.	The inherent multidisciplinary nature and structure of the faculty ensures that the perspective of students goes well beyond the key discipline of their study. Students could be encouraged even more to take up elective courses outside their department or faculty. More can be done in general to promote soft skills (such as communication and presentation) as an explicit component of the curriculum. The programmes should ensure that external teachers are sufficiently accessible outside class hours.	The Faculty has fast and efficient ways of adapting the study programmes. Flexibility is an opportunity as well as a challenge. On the one hand, it ensures that the programmes can react swiftly when new problems arise, and it has the great advantage that stakeholders feel involved and notice that their feedback is being used and appreciated. On the other hand, the panel wonders to what extent continuity and consistency are possible in the long run. The processes to set up curricula and the assurance of content quality are not clear.
learner-centred	An indication that autonomy in course design and teaching methods could be overstretched is the fact that 1/3 of students do not understand how the curriculum fits together.	A great commitment to learning and teaching in all clusters. Students feel well prepared for both their professional life and further studies.	Students and alumni are generally satisfied with the learning environment, the quality of the teaching and the opportunities the university/faculty offer to them in view of future employability. Programmes are indeed attracting the student audiences they envisaged.	Personalised teaching is put forward as the dominant mindset. Across the Faculty and the programmes the panel did not encounter a common concept of personalised teaching based on an overarching method for learning and teaching.
evidence-informed teaching	Courses are often too short, which limits to a certain extent in-depth knowledge development and the incorporation of the research dimension.	There is a strong link between teaching and learning, and between teaching and research.	The study programmes adopt a clear pedagogical and methodological philosophy on research-based learning and teaching. Nonetheless, it is important to ensure that all students have acquired during their study the necessary research methodology courses and academic skills at the relevant level.	The panel noted during the interviews that research-based education is a living reality within the Faculty. There are strong parallels between the foci of the Faculty's research activities and its curricula.
student mobility	The mandatory mobility of one semester in the Bachelor programmes requires many partnerships with international universities.	Distinctive for the University's educational offer is the mandatory mobility semester for all bachelor's students. However, there seems to be low international mobility of the teaching staff.	Study programme staff are very much in favour of student mobility and internships even if the courses followed abroad are not entirely aligned with the learning goals of the "mixed" courses. There is good (administrative) support for students going abroad.	The mandatory international mobility for all bachelor students is a strong asset. How this international experience of the students was used in the study programmes, however, remains an open question. Students reported excellent administrative support for their outbound international mobility.
admission / intake	The student intake was facing some serious IT problems in 2020. Administrative difficulties with admissions are a recurring problem. The need for close coordination between these levels was hampered by a lack of centralised, formal procedures in the past.	The recruitment and admission procedures for non-EU students are problematic, hampered by law and regulation.	Student admission is based on sensible and transparent criteria. Admission procedures are unnecessarily lengthy.	The enrolment procedure is particularly cumbersome and inefficient. Students were redirected towards various websites and online platforms in order to obtain access to programme-specific information. Alumni had to wait a considerable amount of time to receive their diplomas. Assessing the entry competences among students is not always a straightforward matter.
assessment	The University has extensive regulations on student assessment. Student satisfaction regarding feedback on assessments is low, and information on the grading procedures is often not transparent. Setting up a central examinations office that assumes responsibility for assessment-related quality assurance (foreseen for next academic year) should have priority.	To improve the coherence and transparency of evaluation, the assessment of courses needs more coordination and monitoring. Overall, the efforts of the clusters to maintain and improve teaching quality and optimise resources might benefit from a better coordination, simultaneously lowering the high workload of staff members and intensive assessment of students.	Students and alumni are generally satisfied with the pedagogical qualities of staff both in teaching and assessment. Overall, they found the assessment well organised, varied and transparent. In this regard they referred to a section on the Electronic Learning Environment featuring detailed information per course including learning goals and assessment methods.	The differences in national grading traditions of international lecturers can lead to different marks being awarded for the same achieved learning outcomes.
campus				
learner's infrastructure	The Luxembourg Learning Centre at the Belval campus is the new, successful library and multifunctional space which has received significant investments, and can be accessed as well by the local community. Students are very happy with these modern facilities.	The maintenance of student and learning facilities (e.g. on Kirchberg) is critical.	The IT infrastructure is outdated.	The provision of necessary research materials such as books and scientific magazines is currently not adequate.
premises	Offices are located in the tower building, far from classrooms and laboratories which does not favour informal encounters and exchanges with students.	The new campus is modern. The older facilities need to be reviewed, particularly those related to student activities. Student housing in particular needs improvement (i.e. affordable housing). The different campuses and physical distance between different departments means that spontaneous encounters and cross fertilization of fields is greatly hampered.	The geographical dispersion of the Faculty across several campuses does pose challenges to the delivery of, and student experience in, some programmes.	Despite the many opportunities offered by the new buildings of Campus Belval, a number of concerns have arisen since the University's move to the new site. The campus management by the <i>Fonds Belval</i> is perceived to be quite rigid and is a significant cause of these concerns. The remoteness of the campus is an aspect that, in itself, contributes significantly to the limited development of student life.

## Critical Summary Report University of Luxembourg - Overview per Topic

	University of Luxembourg	Science, Technology & Medicine	Law, Economics & Finance	Humanities, Education & Social Sciences
<b>Quality Culture</b>				
L&T quality culture				
quality culture	<p>The University views the variation between faculties and the subsequent alignment with local conditions as a strength of its quality culture. There appears to be a strong motivation for quality enhancement, especially in programmes where the student/staff ratios are low.</p>	<p>There is no explicit promotion of a culture of quality to enhance and develop the quality of education.</p>	<p>While there are indeed no codified values to steer FDEF's quality culture, there is nonetheless a strong awareness of quality and of the need to systematically enhance quality among all stakeholders. According to the panel, there is some kind of quality culture within the Faculty.</p>	<p>The development of the quality culture of the Faculty is still rather in its early stages.</p>
quality assurance	<p>UL has developed a Quality Assurance Framework for Education (QAFE). Some elements of QAFE are already in place, others still need to be implemented. The four guiding principles for the QAFE (reflection, commitment, agile development and monitoring) are sound and complemented by evident guidelines like confidentiality, good communication and broad participation. UL has appointed Quality Officers in the faculties and on the central level. The panel considers a stronger institutional foundation and possibly enlarged support, in view of the tasks to be carried out, necessary. However, there is a strong need to set up a university-wide, documented quality assurance system to maintain and improve quality, and to ensure that knowledge on processes and best practices are not lost when staff leave or retire in the coming years. UL could develop an institutionalised approach to quality assurance processes by 'anchoring' this in their Four-Year Plan.</p>	<p>Quality control is handled rather informally. A formal university-wide quality control process is lacking. The Faculty does not have a standardised, coherent quality assurance system.</p>	<p>The Faculty is quality controlling the delivery of individual courses and programmes and now requires a more extensive QA system that goes well beyond. There is a clear need for a faculty-wide QA system that is embedded in a broader framework at university level.</p>	<p>A systematic approach toward how these strategic commitments are actually being implemented and measured, is still lacking. The tendency to resolve problems in vertical corridors, also leads to issues remaining 'under the radar', resulting in the upper levels having little understanding of what is going on within the study programmes. Good practices often remain at the level of the individual lecturer or particular study programme. The processes to set up curricula and the assurance of content quality are not clear.</p>
Programme Steering Committee / Board of Examiners	<p>There is no overarching Board of Examiners for the University, and the Programme Directors play a very central role, which can lead to a wide diversity in the recognition and assessment practices across programmes. The composition of the PSC includes internal and external stakeholders but their minimum participation is indeed minimum, with the exception of some study programmes which have a broader participation of stakeholders.</p>	<p>There are Programme Steering Committees in all programmes, which involve internal and external stakeholders, who provide active interaction and represent a drive for change and continuous improvement. The Board of Examiners consists of experienced teachers.</p>	<p>The panel does advise the faculty to strengthen the role / position of the Steering Committees in order to release some of the central programme weight from the SPDs. The Faculty could follow a stricter delineation for the Steering Committee and the Examination Board when putting their respective roles and tasks into practice.</p>	<p>An important consultative body of each study programme is its steering committee, which enables the study programme to implement the highly participatory approach envisaged by the Faculty.</p>
external quality assurance	<p>The University sees the revised procedure for programme accreditation as a central tenet of institutionalising the QA system as it creates standards and assessment criteria, in areas such as the teaching process, financial viability, employability etc. More time is needed to enter into a phase of institutional accreditation.</p>		<p>The faculty has at disposition tools and processes that allow it to establish that the quality of individual courses and the respective programmes is adequate. The programmes are proactively paying attention to the quality dimension of their courses and curricula and have been submitted for external accreditation.</p>	
stakeholder involvement	<p>A unified framework for student feedback at course and university level, including new student satisfaction surveys, has been developed. In many cases the feedback loops are not closed, and feedback is sometimes only informal. The alumni policy is still a work in progress. There is no effective system for tracking graduates and alumni of the University.</p>	<p>The quality of the programmes is too dependent on individual persons. A strategy to structurally involve alumni needs to be set up.</p>	<p>FDEF is enhancing its engagement with local industry among others through the outreach officers, and it is boosting its international positioning and commitment to quality through achieving programme accreditation. It seems difficult for FDEF to (have its programmes) set up a proper alumni programme as this is reportedly an issue the central university level wants to coordinate yet fails to set in motion.</p>	<p>The Faculty puts emphasis on the interaction and role of the different stakeholders, not only staff and students, but also external stakeholders. Stakeholders desire to exchange good practices more systematically. Employers are involved in the early stages of new programme development. There is no unambiguous policy on involving alumni in the study programmes.</p>

## 7 Annexes

### 7.1 Annex 1 - Composition of the panels

The **institutional panel** consisted of the following independent international experts for the evaluation of the institutional level of the University of Luxembourg:

- **Alain Verschoren** †, chair faculty panel FSTM  
*Em. Professor Mathematics, former Rector University of Antwerp*
- **Marta Pertegás**, chair faculty panel FDEF  
*Professor Private International Law and Transnational Law at Maastricht University, and part-time Professor of Law at University of Antwerp*
- **Hans de Wit**, chair faculty panel FHSE  
*Professor and Director of Center for Internationalisation of Higher Education, Boston College*
- **Marie-Jo Goedert**, educational expert, vice-chair faculty panel FSTM  
*Executive Director of Commission des titres d'ingénieur (CTI), France*
- **Walter Nonneman**, subject expert, vice-chair faculty panel FDEF  
*Em. Professor Economics at University of Antwerp, former Board member KBC Bank, Board member of Fluxys Belgium NV, former chair of accreditation panels in Luxembourg*
- **Anthony Dean**, subject expert, vice-chair faculty panel FHSE  
*Em. Professor of Performing Arts, University of Winchester, Board member of EQ-Arts*
- **Rolf Heusser**, subject expert faculty panel FSTM  
*Former director Swiss National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration, lecturer University of Zürich, member QA advisory committee Luxembourg*
- **Matthew Kitching**, student expert, member faculty panel FDEF  
*PhD student Higher Education Administration at Lancaster University, MBA at Herriot-Watt University, Student Board member of EQ-Arts, extensive QA review experience.*

The institutional panel was supported by:

- **Mark Frederiks**, process coordinator and secretary
- **Pieter Caris**, process coordinator and secretary
- **Dagmar Provijn**, process coordinator and secretary.

The **FSTM panel** consisted of the following independent international experts for the evaluation of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Medicine (FSTM) and the clusters Mathematics & Physics, Engineering, Computer Science and Life Sciences:

- **Alain Verschoren** †, chair faculty panel FSTM  
*Em. Professor Mathematics, former Rector University of Antwerp*
- **Marie-Jo Goedert**, educational expert, vice-chair faculty panel FSTM  
*Executive Director of Commission des titres d'ingénieur (CTI), France*
- **Rolf Heusser**, subject expert faculty panel FSTM  
*Former director Swiss National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration, lecturer University of Zürich, member QA advisory committee Luxembourg*

- **Maurizio Ferrari Dacrema**, student expert faculty panel FSTM  
*PhD student Information Technology at Politecnico di Milano University, ANVUR QA student experts pool*
- **Rainer Kaenders**, subject expert cluster Mathematics & Physics  
*Professor Mathematics and its Education, University of Bonn*
- **Ignas Gaiziunas**, Student expert cluster Mathematics & Physics  
*MSc student Theoretical Physics and Astrophysics at Vilnius University, ESU QA student experts pool*
- **Henry Rice**, subject expert cluster Engineering  
*Professor Mechanical Engineering, Head of the School of Engineering, Trinity College Dublin*
- **Anna Klampfer**, student expert cluster Engineering  
*MSc student Material Science at Technical University of Vienna, AQ Austria reviewer, steering committee ESU QA student experts pool*
- **Brigitte Plateau**, subject expert cluster Computer Science  
*Professor Information Studies at Grenoble Institute of Technology*
- **Lara Schu**, Student expert cluster Computer Science  
*MSc student Computer Science at TU Kaiserslautern, student expert for several German QA agencies*
- **Ana Costa-Pereira**, subject expert cluster Life Sciences  
*Senior Lecturer Faculty of Medicine, Imperial College London*
- **Sebastian Neufeld**, student expert cluster Life Sciences  
*MSc Neuroscience student at Albert-Ludwigs Universität Freiburg, German QA student experts pool*

The FSTM panel was supported by:

- **Carlijn Braam**, secretary
- **Pieter Caris**, process coordinator

The **FDEF panel** consisted of the following independent international experts for the evaluation of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance (FDEF) and the clusters Law, Economics & Finance, Business & Management:

- **Marta Pertegás**, chair faculty panel FDEF  
*Professor Private International Law and Transnational Law at Maastricht University, and part-time Professor of Law at University of Antwerp*
- **Walter Nonneman**, subject expert faculty panel FDEF  
*Emeritus Professor Economics at University of Antwerp, former Board member KBC Bank, former chair of accreditation panels in Luxembourg*
- **Fabrizio Trifirò**, educational expert faculty panel FDEF  
*Head of Quality Benchmark Services, UK NARIC*
- **Matthew Kitching**, student expert faculty panel FDEF  
*PhD student Higher Education Administration at Lancaster University, MBA at Herriott-Watt University, Student Board member of EQ-Arts, extensive QA review experience*

- **Astrid Stadler**, subject expert cluster Law  
*Professor in Civil Law, Civil Procedure Law, International Private Law and Comparative Law at University of Konstanz*
- **Elena Kantorowicz-Reznichenko**, subject expert cluster Law  
*Assistant Professor Erasmus School of Law, Erasmus University Rotterdam*
- **Jakub Bakonyi**, student expert cluster Law  
*Master student in Law at Jagiellonian University, ESU QA student experts pool*
- **Patrick Vanhoudt**, subject expert cluster Economics & Finance  
*Deputy Economic Adviser and Member of the College of Staff Representatives at European Investment Bank, Luxembourg*
- **Sofiia Dunets**, student expert cluster Economics & Finance  
*Master student in Economic Analysis at Kyiv School of Economics, QA student experts pool of Ukrainian Association of Students*
- **Christian Koenig**, subject expert cluster Business & Management  
*Associate Professor and former Associate Dean of International Affairs at ESSEC Business School, member of accreditations panels in Luxembourg*
- **Duco Mülder**, student expert cluster Business & Management  
*Bachelor Economics and Business Economics at Erasmus University Rotterdam, student at Leiden University, NVAO QA student experts pool*

The FDEF panel was supported by:

- **Mark Delmartino**, secretary
- **Dagmar Provijn**, process coordinator

The **FHSE panel** consisted of the following independent international experts for the evaluation of the Faculty of Humanities, Education and Social Sciences (FHSE) and the clusters Education & Social Sciences, Humanities, Psychology & Health and Spatial Planning & European Governance:

- **Hans de Wit**, chair faculty panel FHSE  
*Professor and Director of Center for Internationalisation of Higher Education, Boston College*
- **Martin Valcke**, educational expert faculty panel FHSE  
*Professor Educational Sciences, Ghent University*
- **Anthony Dean**, subject expert faculty panel FHSE  
*Emeritus Professor of Performing Arts, University of Winchester, Board member of EQ - Arts*
- **Srbuhi Michikyan**, student expert faculty panel FHSE  
*Master's student in Sociology, Yerevan State University, member of ANQA Student expert's pool (Armenia)*
- **Harm Kuper**, subject expert cluster Education & Social Sciences  
*Professor Further Education and Educational Management, FU Berlin*
- **Salome Dzagnidze**, student expert cluster Education & Social Sciences  
*Master's student in Educational Sciences, Tallinn University, student expert national QA agency of Georgia (NCEQE), member of ESU QA student experts pool*

- **Christine Berberich**, subject expert cluster Humanities  
*Reader in Literature and Global Engagement Lead, University of Portsmouth*
- **Giorgio Guerra**, student expert cluster Humanities  
*Master's Student in History and Philosophy at Università degli Studi di Sassari, ANVUR QA student experts pool*
- **Winnie Gebhardt**, subject expert cluster Psychology & Health  
*Associate Professor, lecturer in Health Psychology, chair of the Psychology Masters' Programme Committee at Leiden University*
- **Laura Ritter**, student expert cluster Psychology & Health  
*MSc in Psychology, University of Cologne; MSc in Cognitive Science (exp. degree 2021) Specialisations: Neuroscience & Cognitive Psychology; German national student accreditation pool and ESU QA student experts pool*
- **Constanza Parra Novoa**, subject expert cluster Spatial Planning & European Governance  
*Associate Professor Division Geography and Tourism at KU Leuven*
- **Albert Gili Moreno**, student expert cluster Spatial Planning & European Governance  
*Master student in Political Analysis at the Open University of Catalonia, Student Board member of EQ - Arts, ESU QA student experts pool*

The FHSE panel was supported by:

- **Roxanne Figueroa Arriagada**, secretary
- **Mark Frederiks**, process coordinator.

All panel members have signed the NVAO Code of Ethics.

## 7.2 Annex 2 – Schedule of the online review

### *Evaluation of the 3 Faculties and 11 Clusters*

Time	Monday 5 Oct	Tuesday 6 Oct	Wednesday7 Oct	Thursday 8 Oct
08:30		Login of the panel members	Login of the panel members	Login of the panel members
08:45		Preparation of interviews	Preparation of interviews	Preparation of interviews
09:00				
09:15		<b>Session 1.1</b> Faculty leadership	<b>Session 2.1</b> <b>C2-C6-C9</b> Students and alumni	<b>Session 3.1</b> <b>C4-C11</b> Students and alumni
10:15		Break	Break	Break
10:30		<b>Session 1.2</b> Faculty student services	<b>Session 2.2</b> <b>C2-C6-C9</b> Teaching staff	<b>Session 3.2</b> <b>C4-C11</b> Teaching staff
11:30		Break	Break	Break
11:45		<b>Session 1.3</b> Faculty academic & staff services	<b>Session 2.3</b> <b>C2-C6-C9</b> Cluster leadership	<b>Session 3.3</b> <b>C4-C11</b> Cluster leadership
12:30				
12:45	Evaluation and conclusions			
13:00	Preparatory meeting panel chairs	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break
13:15				
14:00	Break + login cluster panels	Preparation of interviews	Preparation of interviews	<b>Session 3.4</b> Optional (parallel) interviews
14:30	Preparatory meeting cluster panels (parallel)	<b>Session 1.4</b> <b>C1-C5-C8</b> Students and alumni	<b>Session 2.4</b> <b>C3-C7-C10</b> Students and alumni	
15:00				
15:15		Break	Break	Exchange of the results and outcomes of the cluster reviews per faculty & evaluation of the faculty
15:30				
15:45	Break	<b>Session 1.5</b> <b>C1-C5-C8</b> Teaching staff	<b>Session 2.5</b> <b>C3-C7-C10</b> Teaching staff	
16:30				
16:45	Preparatory meeting panel chairs	Break	Break	Preparation of plenary exchange by panel chairs
17:00		<b>Session 1.6</b> <b>C1-C5-C8</b> Cluster leadership	<b>Session 2.6</b> <b>C3-C7-C10</b> Cluster leadership	Plenary exchange of results & outcomes of the cluster and faculty reviews
17:15				
17:45-18.30		Evaluation and conclusions	Evaluation and conclusions	

## ***Evaluation of the institutional level***

### **Sunday 22 November 2020**

13.00 – 13.15	Login panel
13.15 – 14.30	Panel meeting (discussion of compilation first impressions, faculty reports, and results of open consultation)
14.30 – 14.45	Break
14.45 – 15.45	Panel meeting (preparing questions for interviews)
15.45 – 16.00	Break
16.00 – 17.00	Session 1: Student Delegation and student representatives
17.00 – 17.15	Break
17.15 – 19.00	Panel meeting (preparing interviews)

### **Monday 23 November 2020**

08.50–09.00	Login panel
09.00–10.00	Session 2: Academic & student services
10.00–10.20	Break
10.20–11.20	Session 3: Finance and HR
11.20–12.30	Panel meeting and lunch break
12.30–13.30	Session 4: Institutional leadership
13.30–13.45	Break
13.45–14.30	Session 5: University Council
14.30–14.45	Break
14.45–15.30	Session 6: External Stakeholders
15.30–15.45	Break
15.45–16.30	Session 7: Board of Governors
16.30–18.00	Panel meeting: preliminary findings, conclusions and recommendations





### 7.3 Annex 3 – Documents reviewed

- “External Evaluation of Learning and Teaching at the University of Luxembourg 2020”. Self-assessment report – Institutional level
- Annex 1 – Evaluation process
  - Annex 1.1 Terms of Reference
  - Annex 1.2 Self-assessment methodology
- Annex 2 – Higher education in Luxembourg
  - Annex 2.1 The higher education system in Luxembourg
  - Annex 2.2 The Luxembourg qualifications framework – Overview
  - Annex 2.3 Report on referencing the Luxembourg qualifications framework to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and to the Qualifications framework in the European Higher Education Area
  - Annex 2.4 The national Diploma Supplement
- Annex 3 – Strategic commitments
  - Annex 3.1 Charte Pédagogique
  - Annex 3.2 Digital Strategy Committee, Conclusion Report, 2019
  - Annex 3.3 Multilingualism policy
  - Annex 3.4 The multiannual planning processes 2014-2017 and 2018-2021
  - Annex 3.5 The Third Four-Year Plan of the University of Luxembourg 2014-2017
  - Annex 3.6 The Fourth Four-Year Plan of the University of Luxembourg 2018-2021
  - Annex 3.7 Contrat d’Établissement Pluriannuel entre l’État et l’Université du Luxembourg, 2014-2017
  - Annex 3.8 Contrat d’Établissement Pluriannuel révisé entre l’État et l’Université du Luxembourg, 2014-2017
  - Annex 3.9 Contrat d’Établissement Pluriannuel entre l’État et l’Université du Luxembourg, 2018-2021
  - Annex 3.10 Contrat d’Établissement Pluriannuel révisé entre l’État et l’Université du Luxembourg, 2018-2021
  - Annex 3.11 EUA Institutional Evaluation Programme, University of Luxembourg Evaluation Report 2016
- Annex 4 – Governance and regulatory framework
  - Annex 4.1 The amended Law of 27 June 2018 on the organisation of the University of Luxembourg
  - Annex 4.2 The amended Internal Regulations of 21 May 2019 of the University of Luxembourg
  - Annex 4.3 The amended Study Regulations of 5 May 2020 of the University of Luxembourg
  - Annex 4.4 Law of 12 August 2003 creating the University of Luxembourg
  - Annex 4.5 Grand-ducal regulation of 22 May 2006 concerning the obtainment of bachelor and master degrees of the University of Luxembourg
  - Annex 4.6 Competence distributions
  - Annex 4.7 Job descriptions for education support and quality assurance
  - Annex 4.8 Departmentalisation
- Annex 5 – Academic policies and procedures
  - Annex 5.1 Admissions
  - Annex 5.2 Recognition of prior experience
  - Annex 5.3 Student assessment
  - Annex 5.4 Infractions and fraud
  - Annex 5.5 Student mobility
  - Annex 5.6 Leaves of absence

- Annex 5.7 Appeals
  - Annex 5.8 Study programme creation
  - Annex 5.9 Course description template
  - Annex 5.10 QM survey
  - Annex 5.11 FDEF Teaching load policy
  - Annex 5.12 Competitive promotion policy
- Annex 6 – Study programmes
  - Annex 6.1 List of study programmes
  - Annex 6.2 Study programme rules and regulations
- Annex 7 – Cluster reports (for the 11 clusters of FSTM, FDEF and FHSE)
- Annex 8 – Student evaluations
  - Annex 8.1 Student surveys – overview
  - Annex 8.2 Course feedback
  - Annex 8.3 Student satisfaction survey
  - Annex 8.4 Graduate survey
- Annex 9 – Data
  - Annex 9.1 Educational data
  - Annex 9.2 Financial plans
  - Annex 9.3 HR plans
- Annex 10 – Annual reports
  - Annex 10.1 Annual report (Year in Review) 2019
  - Annex 10.2 Annual report (Year in Review) 2018
  - Annex 10.3 Annual report 2017
  - Annex 10.4 Annual report 2016
  - Annex 10.5 Board of Governors Activity report 2019
  - Annex 10.6 Board of Governors Activity report 2018
  - Annex 10.7 Board of Governors Activity report 2017
- Annex 11 – The University's response to the Covid-19 lockdown

#### *Additional documentation*

- Course handbooks, study guides, course descriptions
- FIBAA accreditation reports FDEF
- Quality Management Framework For Teaching and Learning within Faculty of Law, Economics and Finance
- Learning outcomes
- Study brochures and flyers
- Study brochures (Student Services)
  - Brochure: Formations Bachelor
  - Brochure: Master degree programmes
  - Flyer: Studying at the University of Luxembourg
  - Exchange students' guide
  - International Relations at the University of Luxembourg
  - Brochure: My University
  - The University of Luxembourg at a glance, 2019
- Strategy process timeline
- Financial planning and budget allocation at the University



## 7.4 Annex 4 – Clarifications of the Terms of Reference

<i>Section of the report (chapter 4)</i>	<i>Terms of Reference</i>
<p><b>Educational commitments and strategy</b> Guiding education and providing purpose: How does the University interpret its educational mission? Which values, objectives and strategic projects is it committed to? How do they cohere?</p>	<p><b>1. Mission, goals and strategic plans in L&amp;T:</b> The evaluation shall review the University's commitment to L&amp;T and how it is translated in terms of purpose, budget, mission and strategy. The mid- and long term plans with clear qualitative and quantitative goals and targets shall also be evaluated regarding their existence, their ambition and whether they can be reached.</p> <p><b>6. General higher education environment:</b> According to its four-year plan for 2018-2021, the University of Luxembourg has the ambition to become an international leader for digitally enhanced innovative learning environments in the upcoming years. Furthermore, the law requires that both bachelor and master programmes should be multilingual. Hence, the evaluation shall include an assessment of how these two priorities are integrated in higher education in terms of vision, strategy and policies and implemented in the different programmes.</p>
<p><b>Educational governance and management</b> Enabling and structuring (governing) the provision of education: What are the organisational structures (responsibilities, competences, procedures, interactions) through which strategy is supposed to be made and implemented? What has been the University's capacity to strategically guide education towards objectives and follow up on commitments?</p>	<p><b>3. Governance:</b> The evaluation shall analyse the relevant governance in relation to L&amp;T, both internally and externally (MESR, Government, etc.) This includes also funding matters, non-financial support by the government, and the level of achievement regarding indicators and the further development of new indicators in L&amp;T.</p> <p><b>8. Management and organisation, incl. budget:</b> In this broad evaluation task a number of topics shall be evaluated, including the management structure, the decision making processes including management in case of a crisis, the use of the granted financial and organisational autonomy according to the law, the budgeting processes, the financial record and the quality policies and related points. A further topic to be evaluated is the appropriateness of the internal structure of the University and the leadership performance on all levels, i.e. central, faculty, departments and units. The evaluation shall</p>

	<p>review the capability (on all levels) to implement and develop the L&amp;T agenda of the University.</p> <p><b>6. General higher education environment:</b> The evaluation shall analyse if the University fosters inclusiveness, equality and diversity in order to offer all its students adequate intellectual, organizational and material working conditions in Luxembourg and during the mobility period. This includes the assessment of higher education policies in place, as well as the general support structures for students.</p>
<p><b>Learning and teaching</b> Providing education and enabling, facilitating and certifying learning (through teaching, infrastructure, campus, etc.): Through which practices, provisions, policies, procedures and other measures is the University enabling students to learn and complete their studies, in alignment with the objectives defined at the level of vision and strategy, and how successful is it in this respect?</p>	<p><b>4. Learning quality:</b> The evaluation shall assess first the clarity and ambition of the L&amp;T agenda and strategy. In a next step, it shall evaluate the quality, output and impacts of learning in the different units and put these into perspective with the record of other comparable HEIs in Europe. The quality of learning &amp; teaching is understood as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- learner-centred;</li> <li>- based on learning outcomes which are in line with the content, methods and examinations of the programme and/or course and meet the objectives set by them;</li> <li>- programmes linked to a level of a qualification as defined by the Luxembourg qualifications framework;</li> <li>- evidence-informed teaching practice;</li> <li>- based on pedagogic research,</li> <li>- connected with appropriate funding for its activities;</li> <li>- adequate and readily accessible learning resources and student support;</li> <li>- adequate learners' infrastructures;</li> <li>- high standards of academic achievement (high levels of student satisfaction, high employment rates of graduates, policies improving retention and completion rates etc).</li> <li>- having in place a student and programme analytics structure, that supports the development of effective policies for student success.</li> </ul> <p>The evaluation should also include the assessment of the quality of programme design, delivery and monitoring of assessment methods in terms of coherence and transparency, as well as of the quality and availability of the commonly used documents in higher education (course catalogue, diploma supplement).</p>

	<p>Learners' infrastructures include classrooms, learning centre, student affairs office, accommodation/housing, restaurants/cafes, student associations, sport and leisure facilities, ombudsman-like structure, and any other infrastructure learners have access to.</p> <p>Special attention should also be paid to recognition procedures (e.g. admission procedures, validation of prior learning)</p> <p><b>5. Teaching quality and human resource policy:</b> The evaluation shall include a review of the teaching enhancement strategy, the recruitment and career policies, the teaching performance of academic staff (in terms of quantity and quality), as well as stakeholder involvement in the teaching experience. Matters of internal and external training and the supply of lifelong learning courses for academic staff shall be evaluated. Academic staff encompasses all staff with a right to teach (internal staff in faculties and centres, external lecturers ("vacataires").</p> <p><b>7. Campus:</b> The evaluation shall review whether the University premises are appropriate but also well used and supportive to intra- and inter-organisational collaboration in the context of L&amp;T. This is especially important for the Belval campus.</p>
<p><b>Quality culture</b> Assuring and developing the quality of education: What are the systems, procedures, resources, and practices put in place and pursued with the intention to learn about, align and improve the three above-mentioned aspects, and how well do they work?</p>	<p><b>2. L&amp;T quality culture:</b> The evaluation shall consider whether and how the University promotes a culture of quality of L&amp;T in terms of structure, processes and outcomes. It should take into account questions about policies on staff development, public and community engagement, culture of pedagogic research and inquiry, evidence-informed teaching practice, monitoring system of L&amp;T activities, engagement with all relevant stakeholders etc.</p>



