

Monitoring Procedure for the Institutional Accreditation of the University of Pécs

Visiting Committee Report

Background of the monitoring procedure

The Hungarian Accreditation Committee (HAC) carried out an institutional accreditation audit based on the Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG 2015) at the University of Pécs in 2017.

In its Decision 2018/2/VI/2, the HAC granted accreditation to the University of Pécs for the period until 31 December 2022 and required that an interim monitoring procedure be carried out during that period.

Decision 2018/2/VI/2 of the HAC and the accreditation report annexed to it stated the following: *“The University has an outdated quality assurance system, which has not been substantially improved since 2011. Without the fundamental improvement of the quality assurance system, the management system of the institution cannot benefit from the functions that a QA system should provide to ensure the continuous improvement of operations and the coordination of the individual areas of operation. The regulation of the system does not incorporate the essential elements required by the ESG 2015, and therefore it should be improved without delay.”*

The University of Pécs submitted its institutional monitoring report by 31 August 2019. The monitoring committee carried out an online visit on 27 May 2020, using the Teams System of the HAC.

Focus of the monitoring procedure

The aim of the visit was not to carry out a complete institutional accreditation procedure but to take assurance that the institution had made progress in improving its quality system and to discuss any issues and dilemmas arising in connection with that work. It was also intended to provide support in order to ensure that the institution will be successful in the institutional accreditation procedure that will be carried out in 2022.

The monitoring procedure focused on the following:

- compliance with Standard 1.1 of ESG 2015: does the institution have quality objectives and a quality assurance policy and strategy; are these in line with its mission and institutional strategy, and are there structures and processes that ensure their implementation;

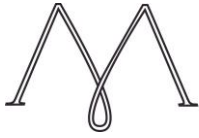
- compliance with the requirement to apply the PDCA cycle, i.e. does the institution ensure the setting and implementation of quality objectives, the follow-up of results, and the setting of new objectives on that basis?

Findings of the monitoring visit

1. The University of Pécs has made substantial progress in developing a quality assurance system at university level. It has renewed its quality management regulation and its university and faculty level quality policies; it sets quality objectives on a regular basis both at university and at faculty level, and it has set up (renewed) quality management boards at both the faculty and university levels. These boards meet two to four times a year, as proven by the minutes of their meetings, and submit reports to the Senate and the Faculty Council. There is regular contact between the boards and the leaders of the university and (rector, vice-rector supervising the boards). The quality objectives and the quality policies are available in English and Hungarian on the website of the University.
2. Substantial progress has been made in the development of several subsystems that are of relevance to quality management, in particular the OMHV system (for student feedback on the performance of the teaching staff) and the TÉR system (for performance assessment), and additional efforts have been made to reduce the dropout rate (TAVISZ feedback service for dropout prevention, mentoring system) and to improve the quality of training (developing a methodology for learning outcome based training development). The structure of training programmes and courses is reviewed in an institutionalised framework. The TÉR and OMHV systems are already functioning properly in certain faculties, and their institution-wide introduction and testing are expected to take place in autumn 2020. In this respect, further progress is needed.

It is not an easy task to develop and operate a coherent quality management system in a heterogeneous institution with 10 faculties; the development of the quality management system is a continuous activity. It is recommended to consider further improvements in the following areas:

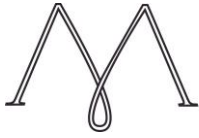
1. It would be useful to prepare a public document that defines the University's medium and long term objectives for a period of 3 to 5 years, as well as the related actions and the indicators allowing for the monitoring of implementation.
2. The quality policy and the quality objectives should be consistent with the strategy of the University (developed as indicated above). Quality objectives are currently set on an annual basis, based on a discussion with the leaders of the University, with the aim to address *ad hoc* problems, and therefore they do not form part of a comprehensive system of quality improvement targets. It would be beneficial to define such a target system (quality improvement strategy) as part of the overall strategy of the University.
3. It is difficult to interpret the role and function of the University's current quality policy. The existing quality policy is a mixture of a mission, vision, values, quality policy value choices and objectives. It is important that the University clarifies the relation of the quality policy to these. The quality policy should also include a



resolution on the leadership's commitment toward the operation of the quality management system.

4. The quality objectives of the University and those of the faculties are currently not closely linked. In the interest of a coherent quality management system at university level, it would be important to place emphasis on the harmonisation of objectives set at the university and faculty levels. To this end, it is recommended that, if appropriate, the quality objectives defined at the university level are also applied at the faculty level. These may be supplemented by additional commitments undertaken at faculty level.
5. The University is making considerable efforts to introduce the OMHV system in standardised form. It should be viewed as positive that, while aiming at standardisation, the specific needs of the faculties are also taken into account. It is important that the University evaluates the experiences with the standardised system on a regular basis, following the interrogation of the system. It is recommended that, following the standardisation of the OMHV system, the University embarks on the standardisation of other surveys conducted at university level (graduate career tracking (DPR), surveys among first-year students and persons leaving higher education, employee satisfaction surveys, etc.).
6. The genuine implementation of the PDCA cycle would require the development of a practice of regular reporting at faculty and/or programme level. There are currently no reports to be submitted in writing on a regular basis at either faculty or programme level, although such reports should serve as a basis for the dean or the trainer in charge of a programme to review the objectives set for a given year, to monitor their implementation and the experiences, and to take corrective action (set new objectives), where necessary. It is recommended that the Quality Improvement Committee should make a proposal for the process and structure of reporting. Such reports could provide a good framework for monitoring the institutional strategy and the quality improvement efforts.
7. It is welcomed that the leaders of the University support the development of a university culture centred around quality and students. One important element of such a culture is that the University strives to actively communicate its quality improvement objectives by calling the attention of those concerned to the objectives set, attempting to involve a broad range of participants and giving feedback of the results to all interested parties. For example, it may be useful to make the reports of the faculties and programmes accessible to students.
8. The members of the Quality Improvement Committee are trainers who perform quality improvement activities in addition to their other duties. It would be useful to have dedicated resources to perform operational tasks, carry out data collection procedures and assist the work of the Quality Improvement Committee. For example, the University could hire one or more employees for doing such work and/or create an organisational unit for quality improvement.

The **overall** conclusion is that the University has taken significant steps and is on the right path towards the development of a coherent quality management system at university level.



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ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE

The implementation of some or all of the recommendations of the Visiting Committee may contribute to the successful accreditation of the University of Pécs due to take place in 2022.

Members of the Visiting Committee:

Chair: Gergely Kováts PhD, associate professor, Corvinus University of Budapest

Members: Ildikó Balatoni PhD, operations director, University of Debrecen

Tibor Csizmadia PhD, associate professor, Pannon University

András Jancsó, student, National Conference of Students' Unions

Szilvia Szabó, HAC programme officer

Date of visit: 27 May 2020