



## Résumé of the Site Visits (April, May, June 2013)

In general the site visits were very well prepared, helpful, interesting and informative, useful for clarifying a number of issues, especially regarding the vision, the strategies, and some best practices existing. They also confirmed findings from the quantitative and qualitative indicators and much more:

### 1. Feedback on the site visit: suitability for open issues

- The site visits enabled the IMS expert team not only to confirm the data provided by the Faculty, but also to gather additional information, clarify inconsistencies and questions, look behind the numbers and relate them to the real setting. It gave the experts a thorough overview of the internationalisation activities and internationality level of the Faculties.
- For the Faculties the visit of the IMS Expert team created an opportunity to discuss and reflect on internationalisation from many dimensions, with the participation of various Faculty actors. For the first time different people involved in internationalisation, whose activities are rarely analysed and looked at altogether, with relation to each other, met in one place. The level of Faculty awareness of what is happening in terms of internationalisation in their own institution has significantly increased. This exchange was offered at a different level though. It is obvious that more opportunities for talks occurred on the 3 days-based site visits than on the 1 day-based ones. Nevertheless a 2days-based site visit turned out to be the best pattern to adopt in the future.
- The vast majority of study programmes have been accredited by external authorities and quality assurance systems are in place.
- Some talks with mobility students helped to get background perspectives and showed up some minor issues concerning the integration of incoming students.
- Some faculties offered a very helpful intercultural training for supervisors of PhD students
- In some faculties the student body is both international and internationalized, approximately 70% of all students have international mobility experiences
- In two of the faculties the vast majority of the staff, both academic and administrative, speaks English
- The research has a very international focus with many international collaborations
- Faculties that also offered a language training center should check if the connection to the faculty is close enough

## 2. Lessons learned for IMS label vision and methodology

- For the future labelling process it would be very helpful to have a two-timed site visit, with one visit at the beginning of the process (self-presentation of the medical school) and a final visit to sort out any inconsistencies or open issues.
- Most important outcome for a label: the label guarantees that possible partners have an acceptable level of quality in internationalization
- IMS needs to be discussed internally to establish how and whether an association would fit the faculty's interest; they go for strategic partners and now they want to go for strategic partners in Asia and in Africa. The association could help if it is global and not European
- The audits for research education highlighted that when the academic environment is at top internationalization level you have ceiling effects and it is difficult to improve it further.
  - It is easier to make people come rather than go
  - Meetings of doctoral students could be interesting but we have to be sure what makes them go

Suggestion 1: setting up a working group in a global IMS association on how to structure PhD recruitment and preparation (e.g. through a research master program)

Suggestion 2: the association could serve in implementing tools and methods to answer difficult problems; for example, in order to assess the outcomes of students outgoing mobility maybe one could make memo© a compulsory in IMS universities
- The data gathering activity for IMS made them aware about which are aspects of relevance and where they were considered before, which are relevant but no data existed so far, and what aspects were not relevant
- Indicator on international conferences: do not ask the attendance but only the number of conferences where a presentation or a poster were given
- Students confirmed that the label should look at such internationalisation aspects as **support and information services for students** (including pre-arrival information), internationalisation at home, interaction between foreign and domestic students etc. An IMS should have a broad mobility offer, but at the same reasonable, cooperations should be based on more active, deeper collaborations – now often the list of possible destinations is long, but many partnerships are only on paper. Furthermore students pointed out the importance of **qualifications recognition** between schools (transparent mechanisms, procedures), smooth validation process, more comparable curricula, joint courses, projects
- Faculty participants (all groups) stressed the need for **deeper collaborations** between international partners
- It has been a very **interesting experience also for the IMS experts' team** to be informed in utmost open and constructive atmosphere about the considerable efforts already done on internationalisation, but also the remaining challenges in the context of sometimes quite centralised national educational systems with, after all, a limited degree of autonomy.

## Conclusion

- Building a network of influential international medical schools could help to give ideas more power and political influence even on a local level.
- Site visits are essential in order to evaluate the internationalisation standard of a medical faculty and have shown that there is a need to standardize the evaluation criteria. This is part of the IMS Label Handbook which will be available at the end of the project.
- Internationality is already present in many faculties, but quite often there is still a lack of strategic planning. To establish a strong structure about how to implement internationalisation in the faculties will be one of the challenges for the future.