



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

H.Q.A.A.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS
SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY

Version 1.0

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science of the University of Thessaly consisted of the following five (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Dr. Nikos Ntoumanis _____ (President)
(Title) (Name and Surname)

University of Birmingham, United Kingdom

(Institution of origin)

2. Prof. Theodore Angelopoulos _____
(Title) (Name and Surname)

University of Central Florida, United States

(Institution of origin)

3. Dr. Stefanos Volianitis _____
(Title) (Name and Surname)

Aalborg University, Denmark _____

(Institution of origin)

4. Dr. Nikos Chatzisarantis _____
(Title) (Name and Surname)

National Institute of Education, Singapore _____

(Institution of origin)

5. _____
(Title) (Name and Surname)

(Institution of origin)

The structure of the “Format” proposed for the External Evaluation Report is dictated by the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds generally to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

The length of text in each box is free. Moreover, the various questions may not be answered separately; they only provide a general idea about specific matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

Introduction

- Dates and brief account of the site visit.
- Whom did the Committee meet ?
- Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.
- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.

The external examiners (“we” thereafter) visited the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Thessaly between 22nd and 24th March 2010. The campus of the Department is located at Trikala, a few kilometres outside the city center . We met the Rector and the Vice-Rector of the University, the Head and Vice-Head of the Department, as well as faculty members representing various academic disciplines (physiology, psychology, sports practicals, etc.) and academic ranks, random samples of undergraduate and postgraduate (MSc and PhD) students, as well as post-doctoral researchers, lab technicians, and support (clerical) staff. The departmental staff representatives who were in charge of the evaluation were fully co-operative with us. They made available all module boxes, their undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, books and journal publications, as well as a host of other information related to teaching and research activity. We felt that we had access to any material we thought was important for the undertaking of our duties. In addition, oral presentations were made in relation to the structure and development of the Department, its research output, productivity and objectives, its teaching and learning structure (both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels), and its vision and long-term objectives. In addition, we were offered a tour of the campus and had the opportunity to see seminar rooms, lecture theatres, laboratories, the library, computer room, catering and sports facilities. Furthermore, we visited the Institute of Human Performance and Rehabilitation located within the premises of the Department.

We are happy with the documentation provided by the Department, both in terms of quality and in terms of quantity. Having said this, we felt that more time should be given by the HQAA in the future for similar evaluations. Perhaps the whole evaluation process should have taken place at Trikala. In terms of the self-evaluation document, we felt that some of the provided answers were descriptive and not sufficiently critical and self-reflective.

A. Curriculum and Teaching
<i>To be filled separately for each undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programme.</i>
A1. Curriculum
APPROACH
IMPLEMENTATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively is the curriculum implemented?: • Is the structure of the curriculum realistic? • Is the curriculum coherent and functional? • Is the course material coordinated? • Are there necessary resources and appropriately trained staff to implement the curriculum?
RESULTS
IMPROVEMENT (use of the self-evaluation conclusions) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the academic unit know how it can improve? • What initiatives does it take in this direction?

A2. Teaching

APPROACH: Please comment on :

- Teaching methods.
- Teaching staff-student ratio.
- Teacher-student collaboration
- Adequacy of means and resources.
- Use of information technologies.
- Examination system.

- *Teaching methods used*

The methods used are lectures, seminars, laboratory demonstrations, practical experiences and student teaching and dissertations. In most modules there is combination of more than one teaching methods. The methods are deemed appropriate.

- *Teaching staff/student ratio*

The ratio for the undergraduate studies is 1/18 (lectures), 1/30 (laboratories). We think that the ratio is appropriate.

- *Teacher/student collaboration*

There is sufficient teacher/student collaboration that is extended beyond the stated office hours. However, this is not a homogenous practice and it is different for each teacher. It is felt that it may be helpful if the department develops a more structured approach to ensure a consistent practice.

- *Adequacy of means and resources*

Even though the rooms dedicated for lectures, after copious juggling of the various demands, can suffice the situation is not the same in the rooms dedicated to other teaching methods. Specifically, there is clear lack of adequate space for seminars, computer room, and reading room in the library. There is a need for a more space dedicated to teaching needs. Specifically, a bigger room/space dedicated for the computers available for student use. Further, larger lecture rooms will diminish the administrative load required in the planning of the teaching schedule.

- *Use of information technologies*

There is a software for the evaluation of the courses offered that enhances the effectiveness of the process and ensures the anonymity of the students.

Also, there is a software (Centra) designed for video-conference that facilitates interactive long-distance learning and enhances the quality of the shared trans-departmental postgraduate study program that is offered in collaboration with the

T.E.F.A.A. in Komotini.

- *Examination system*

There was no evidence that there is moderation/double marking of the examination (internal or external). Also, the exam key (correct answers) was not available to the University in advance of the exam. It is suggested that in order to improve the impartiality, objectivity and factual correctness of the process, the exam paper and the exam key are made available by the teacher to the University, well in advance of the exam, in order to facilitate the possibility of internal, or external, peer review.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality of teaching procedures.
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?
- Linking of research with teaching.
- Mobility of academic staff and students.
- Evaluation of teaching by students.

- *Quality of teaching procedures*

The quality of teaching is primarily entrusted on the regular departmental meetings where different views and suggestions from the various academic staff are heard and a review and adjustment is taking place at the end of each academic year. There is a possibility for students to participate and provide feedback in this process through participation in the committee's meeting and the evaluation of each module.

A suggestion for improvement is to introduce internal and external peer review of the teaching procedures and their implementation. That could include f.x., occasional observation of a younger teacher from a more senior colleague.

- *Quality and adequacy of teaching material*

The textbooks used are deemed appropriate and adequate. However, in some cases, a considerable delay in the delivery of the textbooks has been noted. In order to account for this possibility, a suggestion may be the collaboration between the teachers and the librarians to cover the anticipated demand.

- *Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?*

Course material is appropriate and it brought up to date sufficiently often.

- *Linking of research with teaching*

In some learning areas, there is no evidence that the teaching is driven, or includes, the research interests of the academic members of staff. Effort should be made to ensure that teaching exposes the students to the research of members of staff.

- *Mobility of academic staff and students*

Based on the Internal Review, there is evidence that there is good mobility of both academic members of staff and exchange students. Of course, the attraction of foreign members of staff is hindered by the fact that the instruction language is Greek (undergraduate). At post-graduate level there is an effort for some teaching in English (presentations notes), even though there are limited courses offered in foreign languages. It is suggested that more courses are taught in English in order to attract more foreign post-graduate students.

- *Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and b) the course content and study material/resources*

A dedicated software has been developed for the evaluation of the above elements. However, there is no evidence of the extent that this feedback is taken into consideration.

RESULTS

- Efficacy of teaching.
- How are discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses justified?
- How are differences in time of study completion and in degree grades justified?
- Does the Department realize the reasons of such positive or negative results?

Teaching practices adopted by staff members are very effective. Students reported that they found modules and use of technology very useful. One strength of the department is that it uses problem based teaching methods that bridge the gap between research and teaching. Problem based teaching methods help students develop a critical mindset that helps them evaluate practices on the basis of evidence.

There was no evidence that there were discrepancies in the success/failure percentages between courses. There was parity between success/failure percentages. Most critical, students seem to complete their degrees on time and there are no differences between students in time to graduation and final degree grades. The department is aware of the degree results and is confident in keeping the functioning of the department.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?
- What initiatives does it take in this direction?



B. Research

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

- What is the Department's main objective in research ?
- How does the Department promote research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure.

The department's research endeavors are described in the internal evaluation documents. The evaluation committee had the opportunity to interact extensively with faculty investigators and graduate students during the two day site visit. Finally, the evaluation committee visited and examined the research facilities/environment available to faculty and students for research. The committee's impressions and recommendations are presented and summarized below.

There are three research laboratories in the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science at the University of Thessaly; 1) the Laboratory of Research and Evaluation of Physical Performance, 2) The Laboratory of Sport and Exercise Psychology and 3) The Laboratory of Sports Management and Recreation. The Department has been very active with significant contributions in the scientific literature. Some of these publications appear in Journals with notable impact factor. It is obvious that there is commitment for high quality research by some of the faculty. It does not appear that the department has set internal standards for assessing research. This probably due to the fact that the department is very diverse. The Department has been successful in receiving national funding as well as funding from the European Union. Of particular importance some faculty in the Department have established strong research collaborations. These collaborations greatly enhance funding opportunities and may help the department in recruiting faculty and graduate students.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

Research efforts are mainly supported by funding received from National and EU programs. Faculty has been very active in pursuing funding to support their research efforts. Funding opportunities are always presented to faculty and faculty is encouraged to participate in efforts to secured research monies. The amount of received funding and the number of funded applications has increased constantly over the years. It is anticipate that these trends will help the department to build a strong research culture.

The Department's research infrastructure is rather poor. The department does not have neither the facilities nor the instrumentation to support research in applied sport sciences. Research is facilitated mainly through the Institute of Human Performance and Rehabilitation (IHPR). Therefore, the IHPR is an asset for the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science. This is particularly important for faculty in the areas of Exercise, Health, and Human Movement. It is almost impossible to conceive any research effort in the areas above mentioned without the resources available in the IHPR. Therefore, it may be important for the department to allocate funds to build its own infrastructure. This will eventually establish the infrastructure and autonomy that is necessary for research sustainability. The Department has a high volume of publications and research presentations. Some of these publications appear in Journals with high impact factor. It is also very evident that the quality of publications has improved in the recent years. Given these trends it is expected that number of quality publications and impact research will

continue to grow in the near future. It is also obvious that faculty in the department has established strong collaborations in Greece and abroad. It should be noted, however, that some faculty made minimum contributions in the research efforts of the department. This discrepancy in research efforts among faculty requires attention and needs to be addressed because it may be important for the department's development, growth and viability. If this discrepancy is not rectified it will hinder the department's potential to attract young and established investigators.

RESULTS

- How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?
- Is the department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?
Rewards and awards.
- Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents etc.

The Department has clearly articulated its research objectives. As it has been noted above the research productivity of the department is notable. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the department has reached its research objectives. Of particular importance the department has produced several quality publications that appear in prestigious journals. These trends are very encouraging because underscore the department's potential. It is important that the Head of the department and senior faculty continue to emphasize the importance of quality publication to junior faculty. In addition, senior departmental leadership should mentor junior faculty towards the development of research focus. This has the potential to drive the research efforts towards projects of higher quality and thus may greatly enhance the visibility of the department which at the present time modest.

IMPROVEMENT

- Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.
- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

The department has made some significant accomplishments in research. Those who have contributed in these efforts need to be commended for their motivation and zeal. The recommendations note below if implemented may help the department achieve prominence and distinction.

1. **Allocation of resources.** There is a limited number of resources (i.e., equipment, space) available for research in the department. The lack of resources does not equally affect all disciplines since the department is very diverse. The department benefits from presence of IHPR at the present time but a long-term resolution of this issue needs to be explored.
2. **Develop Research Focus.** The department should develop research foci and try to attain prominence in these areas of research. This will allow a better and more effective allocation of resources but more importantly it will help identify investigators that "fit" in the department's research agenda. It appears that research foci are not developed as a result of thoughtful consideration.
3. **Implement Faculty mentorship programs.** There is no evidence that such a program exists at the present time.
4. **Modify Faculty Appointments (Research Track).** To enhance research quality

and productivity the department should consider modifications of existing faculty appointments. Faculty with established (or developing) research agendas, or young investigators with promising research potential should be given a reduced teaching load.

C. All Other Services

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

APPROACH

- How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).

The department feels that it offers satisfactory services to teaching staff and students, but it acknowledges current constraints due to gaps in funding, staffing and infrastructure. We believe that it would be useful for the department to organise a survey among its staff and students in order to obtain more concrete data on the levels of satisfaction for the provided services. This survey could identify areas of priorities for immediate action. Our experience from talking to staff and students in the Department is that they are, by and large, proud to be associated with the Department and relatively happy to work or study there.

We are not aware of any departmental procedures to simplify administration. To some large extent the Department is possibly bound by national legislation for Higher Education, however, when and where possible, it is advisable that a review of administrative procedures is undertaken. Teaching staff use electronic procedures for collecting student feedback, communicating with students and among themselves and for making available teaching and learning material. Interactive e-teaching material (e.g., Blackboard) would be a useful addition.

There does not appear to be a departmental policy to increase student presence on campus, however, we do not believe that such a policy is needed. Student presence in lessons is monitored and, in many subjects is compulsory.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department’s administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).
- Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity etc.).
- Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations.

The department has a clear administrative structure. The department could benefit from having a more formal allocation of responsibilities for key roles by developing small and flexible committees that would focus on a) Research Strategy and Monitoring and b) Teaching and Learning Quality and Enhancement. Administrative staff complained to us about outdated IT software provision. In terms of staffing, the current numbers seem adequate.

Academic services and infrastructure for students are satisfactory, by and large, but there is room for improvement. The students use a well-equipped library that offers access to a large variety of printed and electronic material. There is also a small computer cluster which offers free wireless internet access and has many essential software for preparing student coursework.

In terms of improving the current infrastructure for student services, we believe that the department needs:

1. More and larger lecture theatres.
2. Better and more sports facilities for teaching and recreational purposes.
3. Space for private studying in the library.
4. More computers in a larger computer cluster.
5. To facilitate access to and use of the building facilities by physically disabled individuals.

Some of the students we met also felt that the quality of the food provided by the refectory was good but could be improved. It is important that the department prioritises the development of a tutor-tutee mentoring system by which each member of academic staff is responsible for dealing with welfare problems of a number of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?
- How does the Department view the particular results.

As explained above, the administrative services are, by and large, satisfactory. Student services have considerable room for improvement to meet international standards. The department recognises the need for improvement in terms of student services and infrastructure.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?
- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

The department has not identified any ways or methods to improve the services it provides to students. However, no such questions were asked by the H.Q.A.A. in the self-evaluation document. Having said this, it is important that a systematic plan is developed to improve and monitor the quality of student experience. Student satisfaction surveys with a) the overall course and b) with the quality of provided services could be carried out at the end of each academic year.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

The department has some collaborations with the industry, local education and administrative authorities and cultural organisations. Such links are important, in particular as far as the training of students in teaching physical education is concerned. It is recommended that such links are strengthened, especially in cases where there is reciprocal benefit (e.g., in terms of knowledge transfer to local society).

D. Strategic planning, perspectives for improvement and potential inhibiting factors

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Strategies, programming and actions.
- Potential inhibiting factors at state, institutional and departmental level.

The goals and strategic priorities and actions of the department are in the right direction and, if implemented successfully, can increase its research status, teaching provision and improve the quality of student experience. In particular, the plan for a new school of kinesiology is in the right direction as it will separate those students who want to specialise in physical education and those who want to focus more on theoretical subjects. The plans for research are relatively broad and should be made much more specific; further they should be linked to an internal research monitoring scheme. A common observation across all articulated objectives is the lack of a mechanism that will evaluate how these plans will be implemented and assessed.

Inadequate funding is a major inhibiting factor at a state level. In particular, funding for research purposes is almost non-existent. The Department has had some success in securing external income from non-state sources (industry, EU) and is strongly encouraged to intensify its efforts to secure more funds from such sources. Another inhibiting factor at the state level is the lack of autonomy of the Department, and the University at a more general level, to make decisions of substantial importance as such decisions have to be ratified by the Ministry of Education. We strongly recommend that Universities are offered greater autonomy to make strategic decisions about future priorities as it is common practice in North American and Western European countries. At the very least, where state approval is required, the state should undertake the responsibility of responding to University requests within a short period of time. At the institutional level, an inhibiting factor is the scattering of the University across various towns as this limits somewhat cooperation across departments. The geographical location of the department at Trikala is another inhibiting factor as it was reported to us that many school students prefer to study for their first degree in major cities. We suggest that the department undertakes a marketing campaigning to attract more students from outside the area of Thessaly. However, geographical location does not seem to be a limiting factor as far as attracting postgraduate students is concerned. At the departmental level an inhibiting factor is shortage of staff; we were told that the last academic appointment was made four years ago. Also, it seems that cross-staff collaboration is somewhat limited and not based on any systematic approach. The mentality of a small minority of staff regarding evaluation of their research and teaching productivity and effectiveness is also another major limiting factor. We believe that evaluation should start internally through policies that ensure appropriate monitoring and incentivising mechanisms.

E. Conclusions:

For each particular matter, please distinguish between under- and post-graduate level, if necessary.

- Conclusions of the E.E.C. and recommendations on:
 - (a) the development of the Department to this date.
 - (b) the Department's quality assurance.

We feel that the Department has made a very good effort since its inception to establish itself as a leading institution for physical education and sports science in Greece and as a respectable institution at an international level. Those in charge of the Department have important aspirations, dedication and motivation to lift the Department to higher levels of efficiency, performance and recognition. The Department

Recommendations for Teaching

Recommendations for Curriculum

Recommendations for Research

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. _____	
2. _____	
3. _____	
4. _____	
5. _____	